



Management Studies
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka



7th Interdisciplinary Conference of Management Researchers (ICMR 2022)

Ethical Academic Leadership in Economic Turbulent Times

ABSTRACTS

**Faculty of Management Studies
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka**



**7th Interdisciplinary Conference of Management
Researchers (ICMR 2022)**

Ethical Academic Leadership in Economic Turbulent Times

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Faculty of Management Studies
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
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PREFACE

Recognizing the importance of having an intellectual dialogue on Ethical Academic Leadership in Economic Turbulent Times, the 7th Interdisciplinary Conference of Management Researchers (ICMR 2022) was organized by the Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. Four eminent Professors in Management related fields namely, Prof. David A. Aaker, Prof. Steve H. Hanke, Prof. Suhaiza Zailani, and Prof. D.G. Dharmarathna attended the conference as keynote speakers to share their insights under the theme of “Ethical Academic Leadership in Economic Turbulent Times”. More than sixty peer-reviewed research papers were presented under ten different tracks namely, Accountancy, Finance, Banking & Insurance, Management, Human Resource Management, Marketing & Supply Chain Management, Education Management, Health Management, EcoBusiness Management and Tourism & Hospitality Management. This conference provided a great opportunity for the researchers, professionals, policy makers, and undergraduates to discuss and share their research findings relating to key global issues in the field of management while providing them a platform to develop a global network in their disciplines.

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MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



It gives me great pleasure to pen this message for the 7th Interdisciplinary Conference of Management Researchers (7th ICMR) organized by the Research and Publication unit, Faculty of Management Studies (FMS) of the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. I believe that the conference theme, *“Ethical Academic Leadership in Economic Turbulent Times”*, addresses a timely need globally as organizations and individuals are under immense pressure to be resilient and uplift economic development in the post- pandemic era. Further, I am of the view that this conference serves as an ideal platform to initiate discussions between academia and industry on how to survive and thrive in the post Pandemic challenges emphasizing the current economic crisis and political escalation between countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the distinguished keynote speakers and scholars who have contributed to the ICMR by disseminating their research findings, all session chairs, and our sponsors for their continued support and interest in us. Last but not least, I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Dean, the organizing committee and all the staff members of the Faculty of Management Studies for making this conference a success. Together with these efforts, the quest to make the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka a world-class university will definitely be possible.

Prof. R.M.U.S.K. Rathnayake
Vice-Chancellor
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



It gives me immense pleasure to send this message for the 7th Interdisciplinary Conference of Management Researchers (7th ICMR) organized by the Research and Publication Unit, Faculty of Management Studies (FMS) of the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka with Emerald Publishing as the academic partner on the theme “Ethical Academic Leadership in Economic Turbulent Times”. I believe this is a timely and important theme for the country, as well as for the whole world since we all have faced a dilemma in terms of resilience and economic development in the post-pandemic era. Specially, Sri Lanka has faced a more vulnerable situation in this post-pandemic prevailing economic and political crisis. The conference will serve as an ideal platform for researchers, academicians, practitioners, industrialists, and policymakers to share ideas, collaborations, and cooperation in the fields of Management and Social Sciences.

The Faculty of Management Studies is accredited as an “A” graded Faculty by the Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka, with “A” grades for all its degree programmes. Being a state university and a consumer of public funds, we are highly conscious of academic excellence. The Faculty is dedicated to pursue an excellent teaching and research culture, and to delivering high-quality education in a picturesque and peaceful environment for our students and all other stakeholders. We have identified our academic responsibilities by organizing the 7th ICMR to create a global platform for researchers in different fields to research and disseminate solutions to emerging issues and challenges.

I take this opportunity to welcome and thank all our keynote speakers, distinguished guests and academics who take part virtually for their valuable contribution. Also, I express my heartiest gratitude and appreciation to all the researchers who have produced excellent studies and who have stepped up to explore and present their valuable and significant findings at this research platform.

I also take this opportunity to extend my deep appreciation to the conference chair, secretary, co-chairs and other members of the organizing committee for their commitment to ensuring the success of this conference.

Wish you all the best!

Prof. Athula C. Gnanapala
Dean - Faculty of Management Studies
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: ICMR 2022

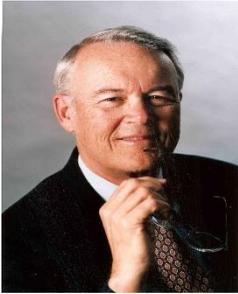
As the conference committee, we are delighted and honored to bring this welcome note to the 7th Interdisciplinary Conference of Management Researchers (7th ICMR) organized by the Research and Publication Unit, Faculty of Management Studies (FMS) of the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. This year has been significant, as we, the FMS, organized the ICMR for the 7th consecutive time, founded in 2016. Our theme, *“Ethical Academic Leadership in Economic Turbulent Times,”* addresses a timely need globally as business firms and individuals are under tremendous strain to be resilient and uplift economic development in the new normal.

To achieve the targeted vision of the ICMR, 65 international and local abstracts were accepted to this year’s conference based on rigorous peer review. The world’s renowned academics, namely Prof. Steve Hanke, Prof. David Aaker, Prof. Suhaiza Zailani, and Prof. D.G. Dharmarathna enriched the conference as keynote speakers. The diversity of the research domains they represent would ensure that the conference will focus on its essence, fostering interdisciplinary research. Mr. Lalith Senevirathne, the Group Chief Executive Officer of SLT Mobile, delivered an invited speech on integrating ethical practices to ensure business resilience during the new normal. We would like to convey our heartfelt gratitude to the keynote speakers and the invited speaker, who have spent valuable time enlightening our audience with their thought-provoking ideas.

As you all know, the success of a conference depends on many people who worked hard in planning and organizing it. We are constantly amazed by the support given by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. R.M.U.S.K Rathnayake, and our Dean, Prof. Athula Gnanapala, who have an evident desire to uplift the research culture within the community in which we live. In particular, we would like to thank the Research and Publication Unit and scientific committee for their wise advice and brilliant suggestions for organizing the conference. All recognition should go to the committee members who have all worked extremely hard on the details of important aspects of the conference programs. We also extend a note of appreciation to the academia for their thorough and timely reviewing of the papers. Most importantly, we thank the presenters for enriching the conferences with their invaluable research findings. On behalf of the Conference Committee, we look forward to seeing you at the 7th ICMR, to be held online, from November 16th and 17th, 2022.

Conference Committee - 7th ICMR
Faculty of Management Studies
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

KEYNOTE SPEECH OF PROFESSOR DAVID A. AAKER



The future of branding: how to become a winner in a world defined by increasingly frequent disruptive innovations?

As a keynote speaker of the 7th ICMR, I am delighted to share my thoughts on the role of branding in perhaps the two most important strategic areas facing businesses as we advance. The first is how to become a winner or at least a survivor in a world of increasingly frequent disruptive innovation where the only way an organization can grow is to create new subcategories defined by customer “*must haves*” and enabled by brands that perform four critical tasks.

The second is to become a leader in developing programs addressing societal challenges such as climate change and inequality. Branding is vital as signature programs and brands are needed to guide, inspire communication, and enhance a partner business brand.

Wish you all the best!

Prof. David A. Aaker
Professor Emeritus of Marketing and Public Policy
Berkeley's Haas School of Business, University of California
Vice Chair at Prophet

KEYNOTE SPEECH OF PROFESSOR STEVE H. HANKE



Insights into Sri Lanka's inflation and currency crisis and the way forward

Sri Lanka is facing a classic currency crisis. This is only one problem among the several other problems. Sri Lanka is very weak institution when you look at the world bank governing indicators. Government effectiveness is very low. Political stability and absence of violence in terrorism is also very low. Regulatory quality in Sri Lanka is also very low. Rule of law is very low. Voice and Accountability is very low. It is lower than India and Thailand as well as, lower than most of the developed countries in the world. Control of corruptions is again very weak. This means that, if you depend again on IMF programs, that program will also fail like all other IMF programs you had at the past (For instance, Sri Lanka has had 16 IMF programs and is discussing the next one). Almost all the IMF programs will depend on Central bank of Sri Lanka. Central Bank is the problem of the country. As long as you have a central bank, Central bank will be entered to the Fiscal authorities in the government and you end up with currency problem and inflation problem. What to do?

You should install a currency board system just like you had it from 1884 until 1950, when the country named as Ceylon. The currency board system you had at that time worked very well. What is a currency board?

A currency board is a monetary institution that has no monetary policy, but has exchange rate policy. A currency board is an extreme form of a pegged exchange rate, where a government would set a specific fixed exchange rate. The establishment of such a board would take away from the Central Bank the management of exchange rate and money supply. The system would not allow governments to print money to pay down deficits.

Currency board regimes are commended for their rule-based nature, and are known to keep inflation under control. What would happen to the rupee if it was issued by a currency board? It would become a clone of whatever the anchor currency happens to be. For example, the U.S. dollar.

If you had a currency board, and you had a fixed exchange rate for the Sri Lankan rupee with the US dollar, and it was backed 100% with US dollar reserves, the rupee would be the same thing as the U.S dollar. If you didn't like the rupee, you'd take it into the currency board and exchange it at the fixed exchange rate and

receive your U.S dollars at that fixed exchange rate. That would be the end of it. In effect you would be indifferent to the Sri Lankan rupee or the U.S dollar; they would be the same thing. In fact, it would technically be the equivalent of dollarizing and getting rid of the rupee. But if you want the rupee, you have a fixed exchange rate with a currency board. That's what happens.

The exchange rate system that you have in Sri Lanka is what's called a pegged exchange rate system. These systems actually contain a number of types, including "managed floating," "pegged but adjustable," "crawling pegs," and so on. In a pegged system the central bank has a monetary policy, but it also has an exchange rate policy and those two invariably end up in conflict and a balance of payments crisis erupts as a result of that. Most developing countries have pegged exchange rate systems, and that is precisely why they invariably end up with a balance of payments crisis on their hands.

The beauty of the fixed exchange rate system, or a currency board, is that it provides discipline to the fiscal authorities because the currency board cannot extend credit to the fiscal authorities. So, there's a hard budget constraint. And the reason they can't, is that if the fiscal authorities wanted to receive more rupees, they would have to go to the currency board and give the currency board U.S dollars in exchange. So, there's no creation of credit under that system.

What you find in currency board countries is that you not only have the advantage of this smooth, free-market mechanism for adjusting the balance of payments, but you also have a hard budget constraint put into the system. It's like a straitjacket around the fiscal authority. So, what you've witnessed – the wild spending and so forth in Sri Lanka – that couldn't happen with a currency board, because the fiscal authorities would be in a straitjacket and so would the monetary authorities, because remember I said that with a currency board you have no monetary policy. No discretionary monetary policy.

Let me finish by going through some examples of modern currency boards which I have prepared and installed. One, is Estonia in 1992. No preconditions and I have design and installed a currency board within 30 days. Estonia had just gained its independence from the Soviet Union. At that time, they didn't even have a post-Soviet constitution. And in June of 1992, we set up a currency board and we got rid of the Ruble. The Russian Ruble was the currency. We got rid of that and introduced the Estonian Kroon, and it worked perfectly. And by the way, the important thing there was that we set that up in less than 30 days. From the time I introduced the idea, until the time it was implemented it was less than 30 days. It worked perfectly. It smashed inflation right away, Estonia got a local currency and stability was established.

And while stability might not be everything; everything is nothing without stability. So that was Estonia. The IMF, by the way, gave it rave reviews. All of the IMF's Article IV reports that came after June of 1992 were very positive. The currency board was very successful.

Then, in 1994, PM Slezevicius brought me into Lithuania and I became part of the government, where I operated as a state councilor. We put in a currency board in 1994, mainly because PM Slezevicius wanted a hard budget constraint in the system. He wanted to put the central bank into a straitjacket so that it couldn't extend credit to the fiscal authorities. He wanted to discipline the system.

The main purpose when it came to Estonia was to get rid of the Russian Ruble and establish its own currency. In Lithuania, the main purpose was to impose a hard budget constraint on the fiscal authorities.

Then in Bulgaria, I was President Petar Stoyanov's' chief advisor in 1997 and they had hyperinflation at that time. The inflation rate peaked at 242% per month.

We implemented the currency board in July of 1997. It then smashed the hyperinflation and put discipline into the system. The banking system had been insolvent before that. By the end of 1998, it was all solvent. And, by the end of 1998, money market rates had plunged to 2.4% per year.

Back then, the Deutsche Mark was the anchor currency for the Bulgarian Lev. And the Bulgarian Lev was trading at a fixed exchange rate with the Deutsche Mark with reserves of 100% of the Lev being emitted.

Bulgaria still has a currency board. It has the second-lowest debt to GDP ratio of any country in the European Union. And that's because of the hard budget constraint. The central bank that operates as a currency board cannot extend credit to the fiscal authority. So, no matter what government is in power, the budgets are more or less balanced in Bulgaria.

So, all three of these, with perhaps the exception of Lithuania, were installed during hot crises, and all worked extremely well. Indeed, they have all consistently received rave reviews by the IMF over the years. And in Bosnia, the situation was very tense, because you were right in the middle of a civil war situation.

Professor Steve H. Hanke
Professor of Applied Economics
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimor

KEYNOTE SPEECH OF PROFESSOR SUHAIZA ZAILANI



Applying Behavioural Insights to Public Policy in Malaysia: Post Pandemic Challenges

Malaysia is one of the most vaccinated nations, with 98% of the adult population having been immunized. During a meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, the significance of behavioural science, specifically behavioural insight, in modifying the behaviour of individuals was extensively explored.

What exactly is behavioural insight, and why is it so crucial to post-pandemic challenges? During the early phase of the pandemic, some questioned the importance of behavioural science in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus and questioned the efficacy of vaccination research. During the epidemic, it was rumoured that medicine, including pharmaceuticals and medical treatment, was the most crucial factor. In actuality, both medicine and behavioural science play crucial roles in containing the COVID-19 virus. Medicine has a significant role in laying the foundation for health, whereas behavioural sciences encourage the public to place a premium on health. The primary objective of behavioural insight is to provide pertinent knowledge, incentive, and/or direction for achieving desired results. Malaysia and other nations have demonstrated the efficacy of behavioural insight through the innovative deployment of nudges to improve health precautions and assist individuals in remaining safe and healthy.

Studies have demonstrated that the nudges technique can alter people's behaviour provided it is properly developed and administered at the appropriate time and location. Indeed, nudge methods have been employed as a tool to direct or influence the behaviour of individuals. Studies have demonstrated, for instance, that employing a traffic-light label to encourage healthy food choices is a potential technique for improving cardiovascular health compared to other types of nudges. The inadvertent spread of the COVID-19 virus has bolstered the use of behavioural understanding, namely nudges, to enhance health measures and minimize disease transmission. Banners, text messages, signage, reminders, etc., were used to remind individuals of the suggested transmission-prevention measures, including hand washing, wearing a face mask, and social isolation.

Since the COVID-19 transmission rate decreased, majority of Malaysians took the required precautions. With the rising number of persons who are vaccinated and revaccinated, the impact of behavioural insight is more apparent during vaccination and booster programmes. To urge and motivate individuals to be vaccinated, posters, messaging, text reminders, and educational videos on the dangers and benefits have been employed. The United Kingdom, the United States, Bulgaria, and other developed and developing nations have demonstrated that behavioural insight efficiently improves policy and assists in focusing on how individuals act in order to enhance the system, quality of life, and health. In recent years, officials in Malaysia have implemented more behavioural insight into public policy in order to improve the effectiveness of such initiatives. In addition to the Ministry of Health, various government and corporate agencies in Malaysia have formed behavioural insight teams and nudging units. Consequently, it is believed that the technique will guide individuals toward the desired behaviour for a higher quality of life and greater well-being.

Prof. Datin Sri Dr. Suhaiza Zailani
Faculty of Business and Economics
University of Malaya

KEYNOTE SPEECH OF PROFESSOR D.G. DHARMARATHNA



The Emerging Trends in Banking and Financial Services

It is with great pleasure that I am taking part in this conference. In line with the conference theme, I expect to discuss emerging trends in banking and financial services (BFS). World trade is, in large part, dependent on the availability of reliable and cost-effective sources of financing.

Banks and other financial institutions are vital in facilitating trade-led growth and development. They are now considering alternative operating models and evaluating emerging technologies to achieve many benefits. Looking at some key trends re-shaping the BFS industry makes it easier to understand the transformations undertaken by financial institutions to stay relevant in the future. These trends include the ongoing digital transformation, the emergence of FinTech companies, the increasing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics, and rethinking the concept of money. In this context, the first trend that we can see is digital money. The digitization of money forever alters our relationship with money to the extent that physical money could disappear entirely. We have seen that already six hundred currencies have vanished in the last thirty years. Currently, the European Central Bank is working on digitalized Euro, the US is working on digital dollars, and it's not unthinkable that digital currencies will replace more currencies. The digitalization of money will also have more personal data that will be increasingly intertwined with our money. So, information about us could be embedded in our money and transactions. For example, payment systems could become largely invisible, and payment systems for goods and services could be taken automatically based on our identity.

The next trend that can be seen is more and more the rise of financial apps. Facilitating this new wave of digital money, mobile payment apps and so-called "digital wallets" are emerging. Mobile payment apps allow users to pay for things (for example, via contactless payments) and transfer money to others. What's important about this trend is that many of these apps and services are being offered not by traditional banks but by tech giants and digital-native startups, such as Apple, Google, Samsung, and PayPal. Powered by data and AI capabilities, this new breed of fintech providers is threatening the long-

established monopoly that traditional banks and financial service providers have over money and payments.

Changing consumer expectations for more personalized and intelligent services is another trend we can realize in the future. The data associated with digital transactions can offer helpful insights about customers' spending patterns and even cross-sell other relevant FBS in the future. For example, UK, Metro Bank has an intelligent tool called insight, which analyses the customers' spending patterns and marked predictions about whether they are likely to exceed their credit limit before their next transaction.

Subsequently, the next significant trend that you can see at present is Blockchain. The Blockchain is shaking up the foundations of traditional business models with peer-to-peer lending, smart contracts, and digital payments, eliminating intermediaries and speeding up underlying processes. Blockchain is expected to save as much as USD 20 Billion in annual operating costs for the BFS industry, prompting an increasing number of banks to deploy the technology in commercial production. In addition to Blockchain, cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Ripple are slowly gaining traction, questioning the need for physical cash. The next trend is fairer services with people at the center. Many FBS companies have not necessarily treated customers at the center, and then companies like Royal Bank of Scotland, for example, have reimagined their data strategy with people at the center who ask how can we use data to provide a better service helping over. And the last trend that I have identified is more toward green operations and investments. The environment is one of the biggest challenges, and banks realize that their operations, whether they invest, have a tangible impact on climate change. So, we need to investigate over operations, for example, making sure that our data centers are green and can be. For example, Germany's wind Cloud Datacenter is now carbon negative. Investments are also crucial for financial services that start opting out of funds that invest in fossil fuel, which would become increasingly important for consumers in the future.

Prof. D.G. Dharmarathna
Professor in Finance
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

INVITED SPEECH OF MR. LALITH SENEVIRATHNE



Maintaining Investment Confidence in a Time of Economic and Social Challenges:

Whilst Some Past Lessons from the Telco Industry, Sri Lanka is going through a challenging period widely impacted by volatile market conditions, including socio and economic pressures, and shrinking sources of credit, businesses confidence is tested in terms of agility, strategy, and most of all on innovation. We all know that the story of Sri Lanka has been a roller coaster since independence nearly seventy-five years ago. Management in general today is caught in a storm and the loss of confidence in the face of it has become pervasive, almost a herd mentality. But we forget that this cyclical storm in one form or another has been a part of doing business in this country with the exception that this time there is a sense of giving up.

If we look at the resilience we have built up as a result of this cyclical storm, management can rebuild confidence, and indeed the need of the hour is that management has to step on to the plate, for they have to lead the battle and be the frontliners. This economic crisis is indeed a charter for businesses and leaders to rewrite and rethink how to do things differently. This is a time of unprecedented opportunity to rethink offerings, markets, business processes, and organizational structures—and to improve them to achieve growth.

Today, we see that adopting digital technologies has a significant impact on the creation of economic sustainability and social value. If we take our company SLT-Mobitel, we continue to empower businesses with cutting edge technological solutions that can fulfill the aspirations of all Sri Lankans. But we need multiple businesses backed by their investors and management to think of the problems that require innovative solutions. We at SLT Mobitel are ready to support you, backed by our six hundred strong expert technologists and our unmatched island wide infrastructure and manpower reach, to develop and get the reach for the solutions you think of.

After all, for a sailor, no matter how strong, the direction of the wind is not an obstacle for him to reach his destination. On behalf of SLT Mobitel, our best wishes to the industry representatives and delegates to the 7th Interdisciplinary Conference of Management Researchers (ICMR) 2022.

May you have two productive days of interaction, fun and camaraderie to build back confidence to take risk in adversary.

Mr. Lalith Senevirathne
Group Chief Executive Officer
SLT Mobitel

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ACCOUNTANCY

**AUDIT COMMITTEE CHARACTERISTICS AND EARNINGS
MANAGEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM COMPANIES LISTED IN COLOMBO
STOCK EXCHANGE, SRI LANKA**

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Better financial reporting methods are correlated with strong corporate governance. Managers have greater incentives to disclose confidential information to the users and less motive to manage earnings since agency conflicts are minimized. This study aimed to examine the influence of audit committee characteristics on the earnings management of listed companies in Sri Lanka. Secondary data of listed firms on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) for the five years from 2017 to 2021 was used. For data analysis, 107 companies listed on CSE were selected as the sample and a quantitative technique was employed. Audit committee size, audit committee independence, audit committee financial expertise, and audit committee meetings were proxies for audit committee characteristics, while firm size and leverage were considered as control variables. This study used discretionary accruals as a signal of the presence of earnings management. The techniques of Pearson's Correlation and panel data regression were employed to estimate the association between the audit committee characteristics and earnings management. The empirical findings revealed that audit committee independence and audit committee meetings significantly influence the earnings management of listed companies in Sri Lanka. Therefore, there is strong evidence that a low level of audit committee independence and audit committee meetings have a major effect as a device in mitigating earnings management. This study contributes significantly to improving one's understanding of the interactive role of audit committee characteristics.

Keywords: Audit committee characteristics, audit committee financial expertise, Colombo Stock Exchange, earnings management

THE IMPACT OF ACCOUNTING INFORMATION SYSTEMS ON INTERNAL AUDITING IN MANUFACTURING FIRMS OF SRI LANKA

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Accounting Information Systems (AIS) have become increasingly important in the corporate world, which have transformed how firms collect, record process, store and disseminate accounting information. Internal auditing, on the other hand, became required because of business success and it boosts operational efficiency by identifying and addressing process defects and errors. The study focuses on identifying the impact of AIS on internal auditing by focusing on the end-user perspective where efficiency, reliability, and data quality of AIS were identified as the most often used good characteristics of AIS, while concentrating on the impact of those characteristics on internal auditing. A quantitative methodology was used, and a questionnaire was issued to internal auditors in manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka, and 108 people responded, with the data being analyzed using regression analysis. The results indicated that AIS has a significant, positive impact on internal auditing, with data quality being the most significant element for internal auditors. Internal auditors may assess the AIS's effectiveness, but they are less concerned with its reliability. Organizations may gain insight into the qualities internal auditors may look for in an AIS as a result of this study's emphasis on the significance of AIS to them. Since auditing is directly related to data, internal auditors are particularly concerned with the quality of the data produced by the AIS so that management may take it into account while adopting AIS. Organizations could implement AIS that is better suited for internal auditors by leveraging the study's conclusions.

Keywords: Accounting Information Systems, data quality, efficiency, internal auditing, manufacturing firms

BANKING & INSUARANCE

WOMEN'S DOMINATING ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING: A STUDY BASED ON WOMEN'S BANK

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Rural women play a significant role in supporting their households and communities in providing food and nutrition security, caring for children and elderly, generating income, and improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being. Most often, playing their roles, special attention goes to their decision-making process and resource allocation. In the midst of extensive literature written around various aspects of women's life, there seems to be vacuums waiting to be filled by Women's bankers telling their stories of how they make decisions and resource allocation. In light of this, the study investigates how women are involved in the decision-making and resource allocation processes achieving the maximum output in the context of Sri Lankan Women's Bank collectives. A literature review, thematic analysis, in-depth interviews, and observations are used to achieve the study's goals. In-depth interviews with ten rural women affiliated with the Sri Lankan Women's Bank provided primary data. The qualitative data were analysed and organised topically with specific goals in mind. As per the investigation, the study found out that in the decision-making process, leading the team is mainly done by the team leader, and controlling depending on the mutual trust of team members. Furthermore, Women's Bank equitably allocates resources among their members as the way of satisfying all needs and requirements of team members. As per findings, women dominate the process of resource allocation based on team working and agreements.

Keywords: Decision-making, resource allocation, women's bank

DETERMINANTS OF BANKING SERVICES SELECTION BY SALARIED EMPLOYEES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DOMESTIC SYSTEMATICALLY IMPORTANT BANKS IN COLOMBO AREA

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Domestic Systematically Important Banks (DSIBs) are the pillars of the banking sector and customer acquisition and retention are the essential aspects of their success. Customer retention is critical for a bank to remain competitive and robust since financial liberalization and technical innovation have created a highly competitive environment for the Sri Lankan banking industry. Banking firms search how customers choose their bank and how they evaluate bank performance in such a competitive environment. The purpose of the study is to examine the determinants of selecting the banking services in DSIBs as highlighted by the currently salaried cadre and provide recommendations to improve on these factors. Authors used positivism as the research philosophy with a deductive research approach using mono method quantitative research approach. The researcher has chosen a sample of 395 banking customers from a group of salaried employees in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Descriptive and inferential analyses were used to analyze field results. The data revealed that service quality and convenience were the two most important aspects to consider while choosing a DSIB. Security, people's influence, and the price of the services are also regarded as necessary, respectively. Among the actors, friendly/ pleasing manners of staff, knowledgeable staff, quick/prompt service, protection given for privacy, and confidentiality and availability of mobile and online banking solutions were the most important attributes that the respondents have selected in pursuing the DSIB service selection. The study concluded that the selected five criteria have significant associations in agreement with the studies considered in literature review.

Keywords: Bank selection, Domestic Systematically Important Banks, salaried employees, service selection

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON CUSTOMER ORIENTATION IN THE INSURANCE SECTOR OF SRI LANKA

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It has been observed that gaining knowledge about customer expectations and satisfaction enables insurance companies to improve customer orientation. Insurance is in the service sector where the product is to manage “risks” of the customer and its impact is of significant in the light of customer satisfaction. This study is significant to the Gross Domestic Product of Sri Lanka. Total employees in the insurance field are approximately 19,437 and according to the Morgan table the sample size was decided as to collect data from 338 respondents. The study was designed with an epistemological standpoint of positivism with a deductive approach using quantitative data collected through a questionnaire. Findings were analyzed using frequency tables, correlations, and Chi-square testing to interpret the data collected. The study found that in the insurance sector, customer orientation, job satisfaction, employee engagement and training and development are the key influential factors. Findings pointed towards strong to high moderate relationships between dependent and independent variables tested. It is recommended that customer orientation should be improved by empowering the sales staff by providing sufficient training in a timely manner while improving employee engagement using techniques.

Keywords: Customer orientation, engagement, insurance, training and development

THE ROLE OF HEALTH-RELATED PERCEPTIONS ON MOBILE PAYMENT ADOPTION: EVIDENCE FROM THE MOBILE BANKING INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

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This study aimed to determine the impact of health-related views on mobile payment adoption in Sri Lanka using the Health Belief Model and Technology Acceptance Model. The scale used to quantify each construct was based on earlier research, with modest alterations to fit the pandemic situation. An online survey was administered to acquire data from 243 undergraduates using the convenience sampling technique. Data were analysed using structural equation modelling. The findings revealed that health consciousness, perceived ease of use, and usefulness have a significant positive relationship between attitude and behavioural intention to mobile payments. Moreover, the attitude has a significant positive relationship with mobile payment usage. As the health consciousness increases, the usefulness and intention to use mobile payments are escalating. Thus, bank managers can focus on this new customer segment. Accordingly, they can use their promotional campaigns to highlight the importance of shifting toward m-payments during the pandemic times.

Keywords: Attitude, health consciousness, mobile payment adoption, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness

ECOBUSINESS MANAGEMENT

GREEN PROCUREMENT PRACTICES IN THE APPAREL FIRMS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY FROM THE APPAREL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

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Despite the identification of various green procurement practices, drivers and challenges in the adoption of green procurement, the variation of the level of their adoption by businesses, and why the adoption of green procurement is varied among organizations that are not well explained in the existing literature. The present study aimed to identify the green procurement practices of two selected apparel manufacturers operated in BOI zones in Sri Lanka and explored why the adoption of green procurement varied between them. The qualitative comparative case study approach was adopted, and thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected through ten in-depth interviews. The study found that both firms were using similar green procurement practices to procure product-related items. However, there is a noticeable variation when procuring plant-related items. Moreover, the adoption of green procurement among these two firms varies due to consumer desire, the commitment of the top management, employee awareness of green procurement and perceived business benefits. This study concluded that the adoption of green procurement in the selected two apparel firms were influenced by various internal and external organizational factors, namely consumer desire, the commitment of the top management, employee awareness of green procurement and perceived business benefits of green procurement.

Keywords: Apparel firms, green procurement practices, plant-related green procurement, product-related green procurement

FACTORS INFLUENCING MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES' GREEN CREATIVITY IN SELECTED APPAREL ENTERPRISES IN SRI LANKA

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Sustainability management plays a dominant role in business entities across the world. The concept of green creativity has become a central topic among the industry and scholars recently. As there is no evidence that there are Sri Lankan studies on green creativity of managerial employees in the apparel industry, this research fills that theoretical and contextual gap. The problem of this research is "Why do managerial employees in the apparel enterprises of Sri Lanka demonstrate lack of green creativity?" The purpose of the research was to examine the individual and organizational level factors that influence the green creativity of managerial employees. In provision of the Ability Motivation Opportunity (AMO) theory, the researchers selected green transformational leadership as an organizational-level factor and three individual-level factors; green self-efficacy, green intrinsic motivation and green extrinsic motivation as independent variables to examine their direct impact on green creativity. To attain this purpose, researchers used quantitative methodology and collected primary data from 127 managerial employees in three leading apparel enterprises in the Western Province of Sri Lanka using the convenience sampling method. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The results revealed that green intrinsic motivation positively influences green creativity. The research implications provided empirical evidence for a positive impact of green intrinsic motivation on green creativity of the managerial employees in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Green creativity, green extrinsic motivation, green intrinsic motivation, green self-efficacy, green transformational leadership

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT OF PASSIVE SOLAR HOUSES IN SRI LANKA

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Ecological awareness and care for future generations promoting the eco-trend and energy independence contribute to the improvements of living standards by reducing the consumption of conventional energy. In that concern, the concept of passive solar housing has obtained world concern for achieving Environmental Sustainability (ES) in the construction industry. Passive solar buildings are designed to keep occupants at a comfortable temperature using the house's physical structure and site conditions alone. Therefore, countries around the world today are focusing on passive solar design techniques. The passive solar design technique is a practical concept related to energy that is more suitable for equatorial countries, such as Sri Lanka. Therefore, this research mainly focused on evaluating the ES of passive solar houses in Sri Lanka. This research employed a deductive approach under the quantitative research design. The survey method was used as the suitable research strategy. Initially, key literature was reviewed and 16 ES factors influencing passive solar housing were identified. The identified factors were evaluated by conducting a questionnaire survey with 40 selected industry professionals. As the key findings derived through analysis, ES factors were evaluated and listed in terms of the levels of influence on passive solar houses in Sri Lanka. According to the findings, management of rainfall including dry and rainy seasons, the natural location of the land and the surrounding natural vegetation, the trajectory of the sun (sun path), the use of eco-friendly housing materials and natural ventilation were identified as the critical factors. Accordingly, a framework for assessing the environmental sustainability of passive solar houses in Sri Lanka was developed as the main implication of this research.

Keywords: Construction industry, environmental sustainability, passive solar houses

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

FACTORS INFLUENCING FINANCIAL BEHAVIOUR OF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS: EVIDENCE FROM KALUTHARA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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Financial behaviour explains how human emotions, biases, and cognitive limits in processing and responding to information influence financial decisions such as investments, payments, risk, and personal debt. It is vital to recognize and comprehend the overall effects of financial actions on one's circumstances and to make the proper cash management, precautions, and budget planning decisions. The purpose of the study was to determine the factors that influence the financial behaviour of development officers in Sri Lanka. The data were collected using a quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires, and the sample of 93 respondents was chosen using the stratified random sampling technique. Regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings of the study demonstrated that financial literacy, financial self-efficacy, and socio-economic position had a positive and significant impact on development officers' financial behaviour. As per the results of the study, the most significant influence on development officers' financial behaviour was their socio-economic background. The results revealed that all of the independent factors of the study have a significant impact on financial behaviour. As a result, the findings of the study provide direction for future researchers to develop more financial variables. The study has a drawback in terms of generalizing the findings because it only investigated the Kaluthara district. Future researchers can replicate the study in a variety of scenarios to get a more generalized insight.

Keywords: Financial behavior, financial literacy, financial self-efficacy, social economic status

IMPACT OF SRI LANKAN ECONOMIC CRISIS ON FINANCIAL INTEGRATION BETWEEN INDIA AND SRI LANKA: A PANEL ARDL APPROACH

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This study examines the financial integration between India and Sri Lanka amid the ongoing Sri Lankan economic crisis. For accomplishing this objective, daily data of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) were taken for the past 10 years as a proxy for the economic barometers of both countries. The study applied the Panel ARDL approach intending to test the horizon of the relationship i.e., long run or short run relationship and the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) method for identifying the intensity of interdependence between the two stock indices. The study also tried to gauge the impact of the current economic crisis in the relationship between India and Sri Lanka. Results of the Panel ARDL approach indicated that no long-run cointegration exists between Indian and Sri Lankan stock markets. Results of OLS suggested that CSE accounts for 44% variation in NSE and this relationship further deteriorated during the crisis period.

Keywords: Economic crisis, financial integration, Ordinary Least Square, Panel ARDL approach

THE DETERMINANTS OF CORPORATE INTERNET REPORTING IN SRI LANKAN LISTED COMPANIES

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Corporates witnessed an intensifying concern about corporate disclosure practices using the internet. As a result, corporates disclose financial and non-financial information using corporate websites (i.e., Corporate Internet Reporting-CIR). Accordingly, the paper aimed to examine the factors that impact the level of CIR of listed companies in Sri Lanka. The research followed a quantitative approach with a sample of 122 listed companies using a stratified random sampling method. An empirical-based disclosure index was developed containing three categories (i.e., Content, User Support and Presentation Criterion) to measure the level of CIR. Further, corporate governance, firm size, listing age, internationalization, profitability, liquidity, leverage, and industry type were empirically sourced as determinants of adopting CIR. Collected data were analysed using correlation analysis, followed by multiple regression analysis. The correlation analysis revealed that there is a positive correlation between corporate governance, firm size, leverage, and a negative correlation between internationalization, and industry type which is classified based on environmental sensitivity with CIR adoption. However, the regression analysis revealed that the factors of firm size, leverage and internationalization have a significant impact on the level of CIR adoption. Hence, these three factors are considered as determinants of the CIR adoption level in Sri Lanka. The findings added value to the persisting dearth of evidence on CIR research. Further, the findings suggested extensive practical implications for corporates, decision-makers, and regulators on CIR practices. Specifically, the findings provided an understanding regarding corporate characteristics that impact CIR, which may assist corporates to determine strategies for enhancing their disclosure practices with the internet.

Keywords: Corporate governance, corporate internet reporting disclosure index, internationalization

IMPACT OF EXCHANGE RATE ON STOCK PRICES THROUGH MEDIATING EFFECT OF INFLATION RATE AND INTEREST RATE: EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKA

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Sri Lanka is experiencing a foreign exchange shortage, which has reduced its ability to purchase food and fuel and led to a complete default on its international debt. This economic vulnerability has created a political instability in the country. Accordingly, this situation has been directly impacted to the Colombo Stock Exchange since investors will remain under a fear of losing their wealth. Thus, this study aims to examine the relationship between exchange rate and stock prices through interest rate and inflation being they are the most critical economic indicators for the current economic crisis. Monthly data were collected for the period from June 2014 to May 2022 and dollar rate was used as the exchange rate, three months treasury bill rate was used as the interest rate and inflation rate announced by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka based on the National Consumer Price Index, was used as inflation rate. Structural equation modelling was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that the exchange rate had significant negative relationship with stock prices. Sobel test indicated that the interest rate significantly mediated the relationship between exchange rate and stock prices while inflation rate was not. Authorities should take actions to create political stability immediately while restructuring its debts to reduce dollar out flows. If they are able to control, however, the exchange rate fluctuations while reducing imports and increasing exports, it will be a proper solution to have good economic condition of the country. Then, they can secure the financial market of the country, increasing the confidence of the investors of the market.

Keywords: Colombo Stock Exchange, exchange rate, inflation rate, interest rate, stock prices

BOARD COMPOSITION AND DIVIDEND POLICY: A CASE OF LISTED CONSUMER SERVICES FIRMS IN SRI LANKA

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At the turn of the twenty-first century, the collapse of well-known companies all over the world has been identified as a result of governance malpractices and exposing the inevitability of good corporate governance. Dividends are the most effective way to resolve agency conflicts and increase shareholder wealth. As a result, the composition of corporate boards and dividend payout policies are contentious issues in emerging markets, particularly in Asian countries. Furthermore, existing empirical studies conclude that a company's dividend distribution policies are influenced by board characteristics in a mixed manner. Thus, the aim of this paper was to investigate the impact of board attributes on the dividend policy of listed companies in Colombo Stock Exchange in order to solve this puzzle in a unique way. Board size, independence, gender diversity, and meetings were used to measure the board attributes, and dividend per share is used to measure the dividend policy. This study employed a quantitative technique, with panel data gathered from the annual reports of listed companies of consumer services sector from 2016 to 2021. A sample of twenty-five listed consumer services companies were selected randomly for this study. Further, the study used descriptive and Ordinary Least Square with random effects model. The findings showed that board size has a positive significant relationship with dividend per share, whereas board independence, board gender diversity, and board meetings have no significant impact on dividend policy. The findings suggested that companies with strong board attributes have an impact on the dividend policy of publicly traded consumer services companies during the period.

Keywords: Board attributes, consumer services sector, dividend policy

DETERMINANTS OF SRI LANKA'S FOOD INFLATION: A QUANTILE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

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Food share is a high proportion of Sri Lanka's household expenses. Continuous food inflation is a challenge in the economy due to the eroding of household real income and malnutrition-related issues. This paper investigates the determinants of food inflation in Sri Lanka applying quantile regression and analyzes monthly data from January, 2015 to December, 2021. The contribution of this study to the literature is two-fold: (1) Investigating the determinants of food inflation in the Sri Lankan context, which had been neglected in the literature, particularly in a time of hyperinflation in food items, (2) Methodologically, mean-value based estimation approaches had been applied in the past studies, but they are not able to capture the tail dynamics. This analysis overcomes a hitherto prevalent limitations with the support of quantile regression. The effect of the agricultural Producer Price Index and oil prices on food inflation is positively and statistically significant across all the specified quantiles. In addition, World Food Price Index and exchange rate fluctuations are important drivers of food inflation at the 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th quantiles, while the money supply influences food inflation at the 25th, 50th, and 75th quantiles. The research performs a series of robustness tests and confirms the validity of the main findings of the benchmark model. Substantial differences in the effect of money supply, exchange rate, agricultural Producer Price Index, World Food Price Index, and oil prices in different quantiles of food inflation exist, which is important for formulating policy for food security and safety net-related issues.

Keywords: Agricultural Producer Price Index, exchange rate, food inflation, narrow money supply

PERSISTENT FISCAL DEFICIT AS A DETERMINANT OF INFLATION IN SRI LANKA: ARDL APPROACH

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Fiscal deficit is an important issue in developing countries as it can have impacts on macroeconomic variables such as inflation. The present study examined the persistence of fiscal deficit as a determinant of inflation and focused on long-run co-integration between inflation and fiscal deficits in Sri Lanka from 1977-2019. Inflation was taken as the dependent variable and the study was based on autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) to investigate the long-run relationships among the variables and the error correction model (ECM) to examine short-run dynamics. The co-integration among the variables was indicated through the bound test approach when inflation was the dependent variable. The bound test suggested the presence of co-integration among the variables when inflation is taken as the dependent variable and hence the long-run relationship between inflation and fiscal deficit in Sri Lanka. The policymakers should think of increasing the revenue through taxes in order to bridge the fiscal deficit.

Keywords: ARDL, Co-integration, Error Correction, Fiscal deficit, Imports, Inflation, Nominal wage rates

MANAGEMENT

FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION OF WORK FROM HOME BY PUBLIC SECTOR TEACHERS IN SRI LANKA

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The COVID-19 pandemic, which caused social isolation and forced everyone to work from home, started impacting Sri Lanka in March 2020, causing many sectors to opt for remote working. In response to the situation, the authorities made school education also remote, resulting in stakeholders facing many challenges. The subject of the study focuses on the job satisfaction of government teachers. Past studies have revealed multiple factors that influence the job satisfaction of teachers who work from home that include Information Technology (IT) infrastructure, work-related stress, and safety. The pilot survey revealed that IT infrastructure impacts the job satisfaction of teachers who work from home and gender may act as a moderating variable. Despite its importance, there have been fewer studies in this research area, especially focusing on the lockdown period. Based on positivism as the ontological approach, the study followed the quantitative methodology as the research strategy. An online questionnaire with 34 questions was used as the instrument to collect data. The stratified sampling technique was used and data were collected from 380 teachers in the state sector schools of the western province of Sri Lanka. Further, structural equation modelling was used as the main analysis technique. Findings showed that IT infrastructure issues and work-related stress have a direct significant positive impact on job satisfaction, and it is moderated by gender. The findings revealed that the study will be useful to improve the job satisfaction of teachers as working from home will continue as a practice for various reasons despite the gradual disappearance of the pandemic.

Keywords: Information technology infrastructure, job satisfaction, public sector teachers, work from home, work-related stress

TRUST AND CULTURE IMPACTING ON INFORMATION SYSTEMS: A STUDY OF AN OIL COMPANY IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Previous studies explored factors that impact information security, but research lacks a comprehensive understanding of managing information security through the lens of local Arab culture. This study used a quantitative research approach in which a web-based questionnaire was administered to a representative sample in a Saudi Oil Company. 247 usable responses were analyzed using structural equation modelling. The initial model linked the six factors that were latent in the literature. Accordingly, it was connected to trust, workplace culture, leaders, western technology, and employees' alignment with information security. However, that model found to be inadequate and following analysis of the pilot data from three pilot phases, a final parsimonious model showed eight interconnections between six new emergent factors. That model contained belief, expectations, and trustworthiness of co-workers, workplace culture and supportive leadership, trustworthiness towards others, Western information technology satisfaction, data privacy, and information system security compliance. The key finding indicates that workplace culture alignment, and supportive leadership fully mediate the relationship between belief, trustworthiness, and expectation of co-workers and information system security compliance. Hence, this research makes a novel contribution by modelling the information systems through the lens of the Arab region and leads the way for further research in the context of information security culture in the Arab region.

Keywords: Arab culture, information systems, trust

THE MOTIVATING FACTORS TO START SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO KALUTARA DISTRICT

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A social enterprise is a company that has its primary goal to achieve particular social goals while operating under a commercial structure. The purpose of this study was to discover what drives social entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka to start new social businesses. The study enhances the generation of new knowledge linked to the Sri Lankan social entrepreneurship environment by examining motivational factors for starting social enterprises, which is a previously unexplored subject in the Sri Lankan context. The study employed an inductive research approach with data gathered through focus group discussions and outdoor observations. Five focus group interviews were conducted with 25 social entrepreneurs chosen from different divisions in the Kalutara district. The study findings discovered that social problems entrepreneurs meet through networks, educational backgrounds, religious commitments, lived experiences, and personal attributes as motivating factors for starting social enterprises. As recommendations, the government should play a critical role in fostering a conducive climate for social entrepreneurs by providing infrastructure facilities encouraging public-private partnerships to attract donors, offering volunteer information, and improving social entrepreneurship education at universities, institutions, and other educational establishments to create social entrepreneurs. Knowledge generated through the current study will be contributed to conducting empirical studies for future research and implications for policymakers.

Keywords: Motivational factors, social enterprises, social entrepreneurs

THE ROLE OF RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP IN RURAL BUSINESSES: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

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Responsible leadership is crucial for rural businesses in the United Kingdom as it provides dynamic relationships based on social construction within a contextual process where managers, employees, and other stakeholders deploy rooted responsible principles to ensure business survival and sustainability in their actions. Previous studies investigated responsible leadership in terms of reorientation of the current management system, sustainable decision-making process and the need for more partnerships in the organisations. However, there is a need for responsible leadership principles to be implemented in rural business, supported by relevant research and evidence that will bring benefit to all stakeholders. Systematic review studies on responsible leadership and rural businesses in the United Kingdom are scarce. From this viewpoint, the main purpose of this research is to foster the knowledge of the role of responsible leadership in rural businesses through incorporating innovation and responsible business practices by constructing a new approach to rural businesses. Combined keywords (“Responsible Leadership” and “Rural Business”) using a Boolean operator were searched on the Scopus database; a total of 449 documents were found. Finally, 66 articles were retained after limiting the articles to the United Kingdom and English language only. Thirty-eight journals, twenty-seven books and one conference proceeding were referred to developing the conceptual model. The model consists of responsible leadership as the independent variable, innovation and responsible business as moderators, and rural business and sales growth as the dependent variables. However, further research is required to validate the conceptual model using quantitative research.

Keywords: Innovation, responsible business, responsible leadership, rural business, sales growth

A ROADMAP FOR INDUSTRY 4.0 ADOPTION FOR THE SRILANKAN APPAREL INDUSTRY

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Industry 4.0 is a collection of advanced technologies that are connected and interact with each other for improved performance. The apparel industry should rapidly respond to the volatilities of the fashion industry to remain competitive. However, Industry 4.0 technologies have not reached full penetration in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. This study has explored Industry 4.0 implementations in the Sri Lankan apparel sector and developed a roadmap encapsulating the critical steps in the adoption process. A series of structured interviews were conducted with ten information technology and innovation experts from apparel firms that have adopted Industry 4.0 technologies. Content analysis was performed to identify the technological, organisational, and environmental factors to be considered when adopting Industry 4.0. A roadmap for Industry 4.0 adoption has been proposed by analysing the interview data. Workforce development, standardisation of information systems, integration with supply chain partners, developing regulations for data security and governance, developing management competencies, and developing external stakeholder support have emerged as the stages of the roadmap respectively. Findings also revealed the strategic importance of adopting Industry 4.0 technologies and the benefits that are lagging due to the lower adoption of Industry 4.0. The roadmap may serve the apparel firms as a guide for successful digital transformation towards Industry 4.0 to streamline the technological, organisational, and environmental factors that may act as a driver or barrier in the transformation process. However, the roadmap is a stepping-stone in the digitalisation process where each apparel firm must fabricate the process of transformation based on the company's competencies, strategy, capabilities, and financial constraints.

Keywords: Apparel industry, digital transformation, Industry 4.0

OBSTACLES ANALYSIS TO IMPLEMENT A UNIVERSAL NON-CONTRIBUTORY BASIC PENSION IN SRI LANKA

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Sri Lanka is heading toward an ageing society, and existing pension programmes do not provide adequate income and coverage for the elderly community, and old-age poverty is significant. According to the International Labour Organization, the Universal Non-Contributory Basic Pension (UNCBP) would be the answer. The study attempted to find the significant obstacles to implementing UNCBP in Sri Lanka. A quantitative method was employed to identify significant obstacles out of nine obstacles from previous literature by following the paired sample t-test of Ouda's method using the data from a questionnaire survey of 86 relevant professionals selected by the purposive sampling method. Compared to the other seven obstacles, the study identified that the instability of policies and lack of public understanding of pension systems have a more significant impact. To increase the accuracy and find any other important components, a broad-scaled and multi-dimensional study is required. This study was the initial effort to pinpoint the challenges to implementing UNCBP in Sri Lanka and maybe elsewhere. Thus, it would provide a fresh perspective on the study of pensions in ageing countries. Additionally, it advances the understanding and opinions of academics and officials about pension reform to lessen old-age poverty.

Keywords: Non-contributory basic pension, obstacles to pension reforms, universal pension

IMPACT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE FREELAN ENTERPRISES (PVT) LTD

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There are few studies directly concentrated on the impact of quality management practices on productivity. Most of the researchers found that there is a positive relationship between quality management practices and productivity. Recently, it was found that there are many issues in the quality management practices of the company, which impacts the poor productivity level of the organization. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to determine the impact of quality management practices on the company's productivity. A structured questionnaire was distributed by using the stratified random sampling technique. 73 employees were selected as the sample from all the employees available in the organization. To analyze the data, correlation and regression analysis were used. The correlation analysis findings indicated a strong significant relationship between the quality management practices and company's productivity. Further, the regression analysis showed that there is a significant impact of quality management practices on the productivity of the company. It is recommended to improve the quality management practices to enhance the organization's overall productivity. Moreover, the findings will be benefited future researchers, managers, and shareholders in taking a decision based on quality management practices and productivity.

Keywords: Productivity, Total Quality Management

FACTORS DETERMINING INDIVIDUAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES FROM SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITIES

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Becoming an entrepreneur is one crucial thing, which has become a necessity for the survival of the livelihood and the country presently. However, still there is a riddle about which factors determine the entrepreneurial orientation of undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find out the effect of educational support, relational support and structural support on the entrepreneurial orientation of management undergraduates from Sri Lankan state universities through the lens of social exchange theory. The deductive approach was utilized in this study. In this approach, educational support, relational support and structural support were used as the independent variables to predict the impact on individual entrepreneurial orientation. It was examined in a sample of 391 management undergraduates from state universities, with the help of the online questionnaire through the convenient sampling method. Research findings concluded that all three factors such as educational support, relational support and structural support have a significant impact on the individual entrepreneurial orientation of management graduates. However, structural support has an uppermost impact level on individual entrepreneurial orientation than others. It is revealed that the more structural support, the more orientation the undergraduates would have. This study would shed new light on the entrepreneurial orientation of young graduates from Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Educational support, entrepreneurial orientation, relational support, structural support.

IMPACT OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OF PROFESSIONALS ON THE PROJECT SUCCESS IN THE SRI LANKAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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The construction industry worldwide is widespread with unethical behaviours. Professionals' unethical behaviour is a significant factor that has affected the performance and the success of the construction project. Those common unethical behaviours include unfair conduct, fraud and bribery, collusion, and conflict of interest occur in developing and developed countries as well. This research paper assessed the application of ethical conduct among industry professionals toward the project success of the construction industry. Accordingly, the study used a mixed approach having qualitative and quantitative techniques and for the identification of factors, a review of the literature was undergone. To identify the impact of the factors, a web-based questionnaire was distributed among 40 professionals such as quantity surveyors, civil engineers, architects, project managers and contractors within the Sri Lankan construction industry. To identify the mitigation approaches, interviews were conducted by selecting 10 industry professionals with more than 10 years of experience as the sample. With the analysed data, it was identified that the construction sector in Sri Lanka experiences unethical practices due to personal interest, lack of time, political involvement, high competition to get a project, and lack of law enforceability. Further, this study concluded that the necessity of existing an ethical code which can be legally acted, a system to ensure that the construction professionals are continual with the mandatory standard, duties and behaviours, training and education in ethics suggested as approaches for fighting against unethical behaviours.

Keywords: Industry professionals, project success, unethical behaviour

HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF SRI LANKAN FIRMS? A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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This study aimed to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses, their operations, and the financial conditions in Sri Lanka. A sample of nineteen executive-level employees from nineteen companies registered in the Colombo Stock Exchange in Sri Lanka was interviewed. The thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data. It showed the instability of the contemporary situation in the companies, in which, with the pandemic situation most of the large-scale operating companies have been closed either permanently or temporarily. The financial condition was categorized into main sub-themes such as business profitability, liquidity problems, the balance of payments, working capital, and cash flows and was highly impacted during the COVID-19 outbreak. The findings of the study helped to improve the favourable image of Sri Lankan companies by facilitating solutions to overcome the challenges and difficulties and are beneficial for the relevant government parties to amend policies and investors to make prudent investment decisions. As a maiden study, this study focused on investigating the pandemic's impact on business operations and has developed a nine-step plan for organizations, employees, and the government in minimizing the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses.

Keywords: Business operations, Colombo Stock Exchange, COVID-19, financial condition

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

CULTURE OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYEE AMBIDEXTERITY IN IT COMPANIES IN COLOMBO DISTRICT: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

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Employee ambidexterity directly links with organizations' survival in today's dynamic business environment. Ambidextrous employees are passionate about their work, perform better and increase the productivity of their organizations. Literature on the ambidextrous behaviour of employees specifically emphasizes that employees are encouraged to use both exploratory and exploitative behaviours in their daily job to attain higher levels of performance. Even though, management continuously takes actions to encourage the ambidextrous behaviour of employees, the lack of ambidextrous behaviour has become one of the critical aspects which require attention. Hence, the current study aims to examine the impact of the culture of employee empowerment on employee ambidexterity and the mediating effect of intrinsic motivation based on the insights obtained through the Self-Determination theory. Data were gathered through a survey, from a sample of 169 Information Technology (IT) professionals from three IT companies in the Colombo district. Simple regression and mediator analysis were applied using SPSS Hayes Process in analyzing data to identify the impacts and mediating effect between variables. Findings revealed a positive impact of the culture of employee empowerment on employee ambidexterity which is partially mediated by intrinsic motivation. Hence, empowering atmosphere not only directly increased employee ambidextrous behaviour but also enhanced employee intrinsic motivation, which caused ambidexterity.

Keywords: Culture of employee empowerment, employee ambidexterity, intrinsic motivation, self-determination theory

STRESSORS IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY BEFORE AND DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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The objective of this article was to compare stressors in hospitality and tourism industries prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Articles were gathered from the World of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Mendeley using specific keywords, namely “stressors”, “tourism and hospitality”, “employee” for the purpose of synthesizing existing research on stressors affecting hospitality and tourism employees from the year 2000 until 2022. A total of 45 articles were found that matched the criteria. According to the systematic review of literature, stressors among hospitality and tourism employees prior to COVID-19 can be divided into two broad categories namely, occupational stress and emotional stress, while after the pandemic emerged with another category of stress themed induced stress. Accordingly, occupational stress consists of workload, task characteristics, work-life balance, unrealistic objectives, competition in career development, role ambiguity, and management and/or customer behaviour. The emotional stress, on the other hand, consists of emotional exhaustion, lack of empathy, lack of support, inadequate feedback and being undervalued. Finally, stressors during COVID-19 include perceived health risk, psychological safety, threat and risk of contagion, stigma and social exclusion, job insecurity, and slashing of financial benefits. The results of this study enable industry and stakeholders to strategize efforts to reduce stressors in the workplace and improve employees’ levels of stressors and eventually result in tourist satisfaction.

Keywords: COVID-19, tourism and hospitality, stressors

IMPACT OF PUSH, PULL, AND PERSONAL FACTORS ON TURNOVER INTENTION OF MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES: A STUDY OF APPAREL AND TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN POLONNARUWA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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The apparel sector has a vital place in the economy and it is observed that millennial employees have a high tendency to leave organizations. Millennials are different compared to previous generations by changing their jobs quickly. Even though many studies focused on factors caused for employee turnover, very limited studies have examined how the push, pull, and personal factors impact the turnover intention of millennial employees in the apparel industry. So, the main objective of this study was to explore the impact of push, pull, and personal factors on the turnover intention of millennial employees. The study was based on the quantitative methodology in which a survey method was used to collect data, and the data was collected through a questionnaire. The sample consisted of 325 millennial employees who worked as machine operators in three apparel and textile organizations in the Polonnaruwa district, using a cross-sectional study design and simple random sampling technique. 15 items were measured under push, pull and personal factors and 10 items were measured under the turnover intention. Results revealed that push, pull and personal factors have a positive impact on the turnover intention of millennial employees in the apparel sector. The study recommended that maintaining sufficient pay methods, reducing job stress, providing a positive working environment, etc. can reduce the turnover intention of millennial employees in the apparel sector. The study is advantageous for apparel sector organizations to know about the most affected factors to millennial employees' turnover intention

Keywords: Millennial, personal factors, push factors, pull factors, turnover intention

IMPACT OF JOB SATISFACTION ON JOB ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES: A CASE STUDY OF STAFF GRADE OFFICERS IN WESTERN PROVINCIAL COUNCIL, SRI LANKA

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The prevailing economic crisis in Sri Lanka compels to bring several reforms to the public sector to trim the massive number of employments. Despite the other concerns, it highlights the necessity of revitalizing the workforce optimally. Therefore, job satisfaction and job engagement are of paramount importance to organizational performance in accordance with the overwhelming research in developed countries. This study aimed to find out the most affecting factors of job satisfaction and its relevance to job engagement among executives in the public sector. The dearth of research in the Sri Lankan public sector in this regard and the multidimensional role of the executives in their multitude of services led to selecting the staff grade officials serving in the Western Provincial Council as the stratified random sampling method. The quantitative approach was followed and a self-administered online questionnaire was used to measure their job satisfaction and job engagement. Findings obtained from the 90 respondents were analyzed using multiple linear regression. Results revealed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and job engagement exist among the staff grade officials. Further, this study summarized all the observed factors affecting job satisfaction, i.e., remuneration, performance appraisal, career development opportunities, support of co-workers and subordinates, nature of work and appreciation and recognition positively influenced job engagement. Insight into these findings would benefit to reinforce the mechanism for better public service delivery, at this vital stage to bloom Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Job engagement, job satisfaction, public sector employees

RECONCILIATION IN POST-CONFLICT SRI LANKA: AN INSIDE PERSPECTIVE OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PEACEBUILDING PROGRAMMES

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Since the civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009, governments have implemented a variety of programmes to advance the process of reconciliation. However, after 13 years of that victory, Sri Lanka is still struggling to acquire reconciliation in the country and it appears far off. So, it is questionable that though there are lots of institutes and programs to implement reconciliation within the country, why Sri Lanka has yet failed to acquire it. Accordingly, the overall objective of the research was to investigate the effectiveness of the peacebuilding mechanism adopted by Sri Lanka, 2009-2020. Overall, this research is qualitative in nature and both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were collected by experts via structured interviews and the purposive sampling method was used. The secondary data were collected using various journal articles, governmental and non-governmental reports, legal reports, websites, and books. Also, the study has utilized content analysis and a descriptive narrative to analyze the findings. This study will be significant especially for academics and policymakers as it fulfilled the knowledge gap in the areas of conflict transformation and reconciliation. Also, this study will aid with useful observations and conclusions to our society or to any other society engaged in a reconciliatory process in a post-conflict situation in adopting the right practice along with the right standards. Also, despite multiple peacebuilding efforts by the government, the move towards peacebuilding programmes in Sri Lanka remains ineffective.

Keywords: Conflict transformation, peacebuilding, post-conflict

CONCEPTUALIZING PERSONALIZED APOLOGY

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At the outset, Business Entities (BE) provide goods and services to rational consumers, allowing the market to function. While providing a service, mistakes are inevitable, which are referred to as "errors". Errors that occur due to poor service hurts the consumer. According to experimental research, refusing to honour a ₹5 coupon would be ideal for the client, but lacks affordability in the long run. The required strategy goes beyond an effective approach that reduces dissatisfaction and restores engagement. In search of this answer, the article proposes a question, "Can BE use the behaviour analytical data to go ahead with a personalised apology?" In the modern marketing context, BE uses data analytics to tap into our behaviour to provide personalized features compiling and storing our information to give us accurate service. Similarly, saved data and analysis can also be used to determine our behaviour for offering a personalized apology, which can convince and helps us to understand the organisation's empathy and responsibility. In addition, a personalized apology will show their willingness to make amends. The article explains through applying the concept of personalized apology for the poor performance of entertainment search engines. The success of this new concept will be difficult to share without empirical evidence. Therefore, companies and researchers must work in the long run since "mistakes are not forgiven in the absence of an apology".

Keywords: Behavioural analytics, errors, personalized apology

MODERATING EFFECT OF PRESENTEEISM ON PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND JOB ENGAGEMENT: A SYSTEMATIC ATTEMPT TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT OF NOMOLOGICAL NETWORK

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Presenteeism is a novel concept in behavioural studies and largely focused on its prevalence, determinants and consequences on the well-being of both employees and organizations. Though there is a growing interest among academicians and practitioners in respect of the relationship/impact of organizational support practices and job engagement, there is a gap in the theoretical as well as empirical knowledge about the mediating or moderating effect of presenteeism on the relationship between organizational support practices and job engagement in the workplace. Thus, this paper systematically reviewed the literature and revealed that less attention has been paid to valuing the presenteeism of employees to enhance the job engagement of employees by the organizations even though this phenomenon commonly exists in practice. The objective of this paper was to propose a nomological network of moderating effect of presenteeism on perceived organizational support and job engagement based on a systematic review of the literature. The findings of the review resulted in identifying the relationship between perceived organizational support and job engagement and also identifying the moderating effect of presenteeism on the relationship between perceived organizational support and job engagement. Finally, this review proposes a nomological network which is useful to test and understand the relationships among the reviewed concepts empirically in the future.

Keywords: Job engagement, perceived organizational support, presenteeism

MARKETING AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

ROBOTIC SERVICE QUALITY: A SRI LANKAN PERSPECTIVE

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Automating services using robots is accelerating in contemporary organizations. However, without creative human integration such technologies cannot be effectively augmented. Thus, this research attempts to answer how robotic service quality impacts customer satisfaction while considering the mediating role of employee creativity. A structured questionnaire was designed using validated scales to administer among the SAP implemented manufacturing and services organizations in Sri Lanka. 210 valid responses were received. Both measurement models and structural models were analyzed using the partial least squares structural equation modelling technique. The relationship between robotic service quality and customer satisfaction was found significantly positive while employee creativity was mediated partially between robotic service quality and customer satisfaction. This research is one-of-a-kind research conducted on robotic service quality in the Sri Lankan context, where service automation using robots is emerging. Thus, research aids academics and practitioners to improve customer satisfaction while empowering employee creativity. Further, this research enlightens policymakers to design a technology disruption strategy which encourages organizations using robotic services widely to improve customer satisfaction while addressing the knowledge gaps in applying robotics services by facilitating training and development opportunities.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, employee creativity, robotic service quality

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CUSTOMER JOURNEYS: A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY

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With the growing relevancy of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in marketing, there is a need for extant research to investigate how AI has contributed to enhancing customer journeys. Thus, this research aims to accumulate knowledge about AI and customer journeys from published works. The Scopus database was scraped by using specific keywords. Initially, 864 papers were found for the period between 2000 to 2022. After careful investigation, 213 publications across 47 countries published by 666 scholars were retained for the bibliometric analysis. Accordingly, both Bibiloshiny and VOSViewer were utilised for deriving co-authorships, co-occurrences, citations, bibliographic coupling and co-citations analysis. The average number of citations per article was 9.592, whilst the collaboration index was 3.37. The findings mainly revealed key authors, affiliations, total citations, key journals, and most published countries using performance analysis and science mapping techniques. Co-occurrence under all keywords produced seven important clusters such as machine learning, learning algorithms, recommender systems, sales, commerce, decision support systems and electronic commerce. On the other hand, co-citations based on cited sources classified four clusters connected to the journal of consumer research, computers in human behaviour, journal of marketing research and management science. The article contributes to academics and practitioners understanding of the prominent AI applications to customer journeys in the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stage. Therefore, this research provides a unique reference for future research to extrapolate AI technologies that amplify customer experience.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, bibliometric analysis, customer journeys

IMPACT OF CUSTOMER-SALESMAN RELATIONSHIP ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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This research aimed to examine the impact of perceived factors of the customer-salesman relationship on customer loyalty. This study attempted to contribute to the knowledge of how Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies in Sri Lanka can retain their customers by making them loyal through customer-salesman relationships. This paper examined the relationships between a salesperson's ethical sales behaviour, customer-perceived confidence benefits, consumer satisfaction, consumer trust and customer commitment thereby considering to which party the customer is loyal. The sample size selected for research constitutes 384 customers as a representative sample under random sampling, and these respondents belong to the Nuwara Eliya district. Multiple regression and correlation coefficient was used to examine the hypothesized relationship. According to that, ethical sales behaviour and trust posited a negative and significant impact on customer loyalty and satisfaction, confidence benefits and commitment posited a positive and significant impact on customer loyalty. The finding indicated that the salesperson plays a key role in retaining customer loyalty to the firm. Therefore, FMCG companies in Sri Lanka should pay more attention to customer-salesman relationships and should encourage their salespersons for that.

Keywords: Customer loyalty, customer-salesman relationship, Fast Moving Consumer Goods

INFLUENCE OF BRAND EQUITY ON PURCHASE INTENTION FOR NATURAL HANDWORK

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This research aimed to identify how brand equity influences the purchase intention of natural handworks. Haritha Design uses the brand equity variables to evaluate how they influence purchase intention. Purchase Intention was identified as the dependent variable which is used to evaluate the relationship between brand equity and its variables. The independent variables were brand equity, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association, while the dependent variable was purchase intention, which is analysed and evaluated using previous literature. Haritha Design customers were used as the target population to collect data. The sampling method used was the simple random sampling method and 340 respondents participated in this study. Data were gathered by Haritha Design consumers as a primary data collection method using a questionnaire which was distributed as a Google form. The reliability of the variables was analysed using Cronbach Alpha Value and all 6 variables were considered to be reliable. The correlation Coefficient was used to measure the strength of the variables which all dependent variables confirmed to influence Purchase Intention. Hypotheses were tested and five variables were accepted.

Keywords: Brand equity, natural handwork, purchase intention

SMART CONTAINERIZATION AS A DETERMINANT OF SUPPLY CHAIN VISIBILITY IN SEA FREIGHT CARGO: A CASE STUDY OF APPAREL INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

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The apparel sector draws considerable attention in the Sri Lankan economy as the main export market and it requires exclusive service towards buyers as fast delivery, secure and quality products with optimal planning and execution. As the majority of the apparel supply chain occurs through sea freight, hence, there is a significant demand for more visibility for the end-to-end movements. The concept of smart containerization has become popular with the prevailing problems and enhancing visibility, reliability and efficiency demands as a result of technological innovations. The study was conducted based on the apparel industry in Sri Lanka for understanding the concept and the related influencing factors in enhancing the performance of the supply chain process. The study followed the qualitative approach and case study strategy in methodology. In-depth interviews were conducted selecting six experienced professionals from the logistics and supply chain sector in the leading apparel export organizations in Sri Lanka. NVivo assisted in the transcript coding process while deriving the influencing factors. The study explored technological, financial and social avenues and influences as a contribution to the inbound and outbound logistics process of the apparel industry.

Keywords: Apparel industry, sea freight, smart containerization, supply chain management, supply chain visibility

IMPACT OF GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE PERFORMANCE AND MODERATING EFFECT OF INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURE.

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Parallel to the rapid population growth, manufacturing as one of the supply chain practices should be increased to fulfilling their requirements. Due to the advancement of industry and technology, the needs of human beings are constantly changing and the process of supplying goods and services becomes more complex. Reasoning competition and profit maximization, the manufacturing sector creates severe environmental problems and social problems as well. Under this scenario, conducting research has begun on how manufacturing should take place while conserving the environment. Although several research have been conducted to examine this relationship, moderating effects of pressures on this relationship have not been investigated within the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, this research aimed to identify the impact of green supply chain management practices on a firm's triple bottom line performance and to examine the moderating effects of regulatory pressure as the institutional pressure. 100 large-scale manufacturing companies were selected as the sample through the convenience sampling method. Moreover, a questionnaire survey was employed for the data collection and data was analysed through confirmatory factor analysis. Findings indicated that significant positive relationship between green supply chain management practices and triple bottom line performance i.e., environmental, economic, and social. Moreover, findings emphasize that there are no significant moderating effects of regulatory pressure on this relationship. This explored knowledge will encourage practitioners to implement green practices within their supply chains and it enables the country to achieve sustainable goals.

Keywords: Green supply chain management, institutional-pressure, triple bottom line performance

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY-BASED WELLNESS TOURISM PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY BASED ON DOWN SOUTH, SRI LANKA

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Spa and wellness tourism is a global phenomenon where almost all tourist destinations promote spa and wellness tourism as their marketing and economic strategies. Sri Lanka as a popular tourist destination caters to this trending market too. There are only 15 registered spa and wellness centers in the southern province which is quite controversial to the real count of the existing centers along the Southern coastal line starting from Hikkaduwa, Galle, Unawatuna, Weligama to Mirissa where it provides a considerable density of the spa and wellness centers in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study identified the issues and challenges faced by spa operators in the selected area. The qualitative research approach was used and a case study research design was chosen as the research design. The primary data were collected through nine semi-structured interviews with spa and wellness center operators employing the judgmental sampling technique. The thematic analysis highlighted the challenges in five different areas such as lack of government involvement in regulating the spa and wellness centers, difficulties in recruiting female therapists, the bad community image towards the industry, unprofessional operators, and negative expectations of local customers as the existing issues. Finally, the researcher recommended strategical and effective solutions to protect and enhance spa and wellness tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Down south, issues and challenges, spa centers, wellness tourism

EXPLORING THE TYPES OF HARASSMENT FACED BY FOREIGN TOURISTS IN SRI LANKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN AND SOUTHERN PROVINCES

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Tourism in Sri Lanka is a largely contributing to the economic and social development of the country. This study is exploring the types of tourists harassment faced by foreign tourists in Sri Lanka with special reference to Western and Southern provinces. The study was conducted through a qualitative approach and data were collected through both semi-structured interviews and observation methods. The sample consisted of 53 participants representing people who were engaged in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. It included 34 foreign tourists, 2 tourists police officers, 6 service providers, 9 tourists guides and 2 vendors. Convenience and purposive sampling methods were used to collect the data from August to October 2019. The collected data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. This study found that vendor harassment is the main type of harassment though it is a minor reported harassment type according to the tourist police reports. Further, service provider harassment, sexual harassment, drug peddling, cheating and theft were identified respectively under this study as harassment types. This study gives sound evidence that the country needs to pay the attention to minimize the tourist harassment issue and will explore the foundation to develop relevant policies to introduce to the tourism industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Complaints, harassment, tourism

TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS, PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE AND SATISFACTION WITH CULINARY TOURISM IN SRI LANKA

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Culinary tourism is one of the boosting segments of tourism that highly affects tourist visitation. Tourists travel all around the world to taste different cuisines. This study was conducted using the mixed-method research approach. An online questionnaire survey was conducted using 127 respondents. Multiple regression analysis was applied to examine the effect of tourists' expectations on tourists' satisfaction and especially reveal the mediating effect of perceived performance on the relationship between tourists' expectations and tourists' satisfaction. The results of the qualitative analysis are grouped into themes and the themes included staff performance and satisfaction with food. Further, it disclosed that Sri Lankan cuisines can be promoted around the globe by combining elements of other traditions of different countries. Therefore, the results showed that culinary tourists expect a wide choice of food with different flavours and textures. Tourists value a favourable atmosphere to consume food and the presentation of food matters too. This information would be particularly useful for destinations interested in promoting culinary tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Culinary tourism, perceived performance, tourist expectations, tourist satisfaction

ATTITUDE, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND INFRASTRUCTURES AS MOTIVATING FACTORS TO VISIT MALAYSIAN ECOTOURISM DESTINATIONS

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This study was conducted to examine the motivating factors in ecotourism participation in Malaysia. Ecotourism is a growing industry that includes visiting natural regions that are untouched, pristine, and capable of providing tourists with experiences, education, and environmental sustainability. Despite the growing interest in ecotourism, motivational factors that lead to ecotourism participation in Malaysia remain limited. Thus, the objective of this study is to investigate whether, attitude, interpersonal relationships, and infrastructures have a significant contribution towards tourists' motivation in ecotourism. The empirical analysis was carried out among tourists in Malaysia collecting 232 responses using Google forms. Descriptive, reliability and Pearson's correlation analysis were performed. Attitude, interpersonal relationships, and infrastructures were found to have a significant moderate correlation with motivation. The study indicated that attitude is the strongest factor followed by interpersonal relationships in explaining ecotourism motivation in Malaysia. This study provided novelty on factors that motivate tourists to participate in Malaysian ecotourism. Accordingly, the findings of this research can help public and private companies to improve the tourism supply, create sustainable plans and potentially develop more efficient marketing planning towards ecotourism according to the motivating factors.

Keywords: Attitude, ecotourism, infrastructure, interpersonal relationship, motivation

A COUNTRYSIDE CAPITALIZATION APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL TOURISM: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RIDIGAMA, SRI LANKA

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Spiritual tourism, including wellness tourism, was a rising global trend even before the pandemic. As the pandemic eases and the world gradually returns to international travel, places known for their spiritual energy and significance might become popular destinations. Therefore, this study focused on developing a sustainable spiritual tourism model by capitalizing on the resources in Ridigama. In order to construct the proposed model, this study adopted a situated-cognition approach to identify the spiritual landscapes, sociocultural/community landscapes and built & natural settings present in Ridigama village. Because of the village's religious landmark, Ridi Viharaya, the study's findings suggested that the Religious-Spiritual Tourism Continuum would form the basis of this model. The area's natural and sociocultural resources, however, have the potential to enhance the model's worth. As a result, it encompasses tours for religious education, yoga and meditation, stays in spiritual caves, tours of spiritual communities, and tours for spiritual aesthetics. In order to enhance value generation and sustainability, these model parameters have to be linked with ecotourism, historic tourism, and community tourism.

Keywords: Countryside capitalization, Ridigama, Ridi Viharaya, Spiritual tourism

SUSTAINABLE CAPITALIZATION OF RESOURCES ON MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN MUDALIWATTA, SRI LANKA

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In recent decades, mountains have become inseparable natural landscapes and community participation is an inevitable criterion of sustainable tourism. Although Sri Lanka embraces varieties of mountains and community landscapes, Mudaliwatta is one of the blessed landscapes of natural and human geographical resources. The study intended to explore the diverse natural and human geographic resources and the magnitude of Mountain Community-based Tourism (MCBT) for sustainable development in Mudaliwatta. Resource exploration and community interpretation led the study to adopt qualitative case approach to elucidate the diversity of resource bases and naturalistic interpretation of the community. Data were collected from the primary sources using focus groups, in-depth key informant interviews via judgmental sampling technique, observations, and artifacts. Empirical findings, narrative analysis of community interpretations through interviews, focus group discussions, observation and field notes reveal the mountain-based natural and cultural diversity of Mudaliwatta. The tangible and intangible heritage are adding further monumental values to the mountain landscape. Although prevailing conventional tourism embraces a shallow touch on natural and community landscapes, natural and human geographical resources have not been capitalized sustainably. In conclusion, Mudaliwatta inevitably demands MCBT to anticipate a wide range of tourism opportunities available for the local communities through sustainable capitalization of natural and human geographic resources. Developing and establishing the responsible MCBT value chain in mountain landscapes will help the local community to eradicate poverty while ensuring sustainable development.

Keywords: Mountain Ecosystem, Mountain Community, Mountain Community Based Tourism

HEALTH MANAGEMENT

THE INFLUENCE OF FAST-FOOD CONSUMPTION ON THE OUTGROWTH OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE COLOMBO DISTRICT

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Fast food has mainly contributed to increasing Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and it is estimated that more than 65 percent of today's population is suffering from NCDs. Therefore, the objectives of this study are, first, to identify the reasons for the high consumption rate of fast foods, and second, to identify the consequences and influences of fast foods consumption on an escalation of NCD. This study used an exploratory research design and a qualitative approach. The study was conducted at Bandaranayke Memorial Ayurvedic Research Hospital in Nawinna and Borella Ayurveda Teaching Hospitals. NCD patients and NCD clinic doctors were the two main groups used in the data collection procedure. Purposive sampling was used to select fifteen NCD patients and ten Ayurvedic doctors to collect the primary data through semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed by using content analysis. The fast food has become a popular concept in Sri Lanka. However, it consists of high amounts of harmful ingredients, and repeated oil use leads to NCDs. The patients have eaten fast food because it was convenient, available, tasty, and busy at work; they disliked homemade food; traditional food was neglected; and social media advertising. Frequent high consumption of fast food destroys people's physical and mental health and leads to NCDs. On the other hand, the consequences of NCDs affect people's disabilities, employee productivity and labour force, financial waste, and family members' lives etc. Therefore, reducing fast food consumption and promoting traditional food consumption can prevent the consequences of NCDs.

Keywords: Consumption, fast food, non-communicable diseases

HEALTHCARE SERVICE QUALITY AND PATIENT SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON GOVERNMENT AYURVEDIC HOSPITALS IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

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For many years, Ayurveda has been practiced extensively in Sri Lanka by traditional practitioners as well as licensed practitioners. The Ayurvedic sector is currently facing competition from western medical practitioners and traditional practitioners in providing healthcare services. However, there is no clear evidence about how the patients/consumers have perceived the service quality of the Government Ayurvedic hospitals and institutions. Therefore, the primary objective of this study was to identify the impact of service quality on patient satisfaction in government Ayurvedic hospitals in Anuradhapura district. The study was carried out using 124 patients who received the service from the government Ayurvedic hospitals in Anuradhapura district through convenience sampling technique. A conceptual model was developed using service quality as the independent variable and patient satisfaction as the dependent variable to conduct this study. The five dimensions of the 5Q Model such as quality of the object, quality of the process, quality of interaction, quality of infrastructure and quality of atmosphere were used to measure the service quality dimensions of the hospitals. The regression analysis results revealed that the quality of the object, quality of the process, and quality of interaction positively contributed to the patient's satisfaction while the quality of infrastructure and the quality of atmosphere dimensions negatively contributed to patients' satisfaction. Therefore, it is necessary to take appropriate actions to improve the quality of infrastructure and the quality atmosphere to improve the service quality of the hospitals and to enhance extensively the patients' satisfaction with the Government Ayurvedic hospitals particularly in Anuradhapura district and generally in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Ayurveda, ayurvedic treatments, health services, patient satisfaction, service quality

DOES URBANIZATION LEAD TO DIABETES? WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MATARA DISTRICT

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As a result of rapid urbanization, the lifestyle of the people is changing. Imbalanced lifestyle creates more diabetic patients to the society. The main objective of this study is to explore the impact of urbanization on diabetes. Blood sugar levels of patients were considered as the dependable variable, while three indicators of urbanization (bad diet, limited physical activities, and bad mental health) were taken as the independent variables of the study. 370 patients representing Matara district were taken as the sample of the study. Data was collected using questionnaires and was analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. Results showed that, proper food habits and higher level of physical activities had a negative relationship with diabetes. Poor mental health and blood sugar level showed a positive relationship indicating good mental health cause a lower level of blood sugar. It can be concluded that urbanization has a significant impact on diabetes. The main hypothesis which is urbanization leads to diabetes, was verified, and the influence of sub hypotheses were also confirmed. The age group of 45-55 shows more prevalence of diabetes. This research is generating new knowledge and achieved new sight on the prevention of diabetes and making the healthy future generation to the world.

Keywords: Diabetes, food habits, mental health, physical fitness, urbanization

THE ROLE OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY OF HEALTH WORK ASSISTANTS IN GOVERNMENT AYURVEDA HOSPITALS IN SABARAGAMUWA PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

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In the present context of medical treatments, Ayurveda is influential among the general public in many ways. It was noted that existing Ayurveda treatments by Health Work Assistants have led to a chaotic situation requiring considerable empirical investigation. This study intended to uncover the significant role of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) along with the knowledge and skills of Health Work Assistants (HWA) in order to improve the service quality of HWA at government Ayurveda hospitals. The qualitative case study design was adapted to unveil multiple realities from the natural setting. Data were collected from 25 HWAs and 12 medical officer in-charges using semi-structured interviews. The verbatim transcribed interviewed data from both respondent groups were analysed using the content analysis method. Findings revealed unclear criteria of the recruitment and selection process, political intervention, and uneven distribution of knowledge and skills of HWA are the causes behind poor service. Although HWAs' training and the skill-building process have taken place through on-the-job training, peer group and off-the-job training, consistent and formally established CPDs are not found. The findings intensify the inevitability of appropriate policies on the recruitment and selection process and regular CPD to enhance the knowledge and skills for improving service quality. Further, the study revealed that many of HWAs are currently engaged with more responsible duties other than their duties assigned by the appointment letter. Responsibilities and services beyond the formal duties intensify the CPD of HWA inevitably.

Keywords: Ayurvedic health services, ayurvedic health policies, continuous professional development, health work assistants, service quality

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

IMPACT OF INFORMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ON ACTIVE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Learning can be broadly characterised in two major forms, thus formal and informal learning. Formal learning defines education offered in conventional classroom setting which is delivered by a trained teacher. On the other hand, informal learning relates to learning that occurs outside of the classroom setting. These informal learning environments can include libraries, clubs, sports facilities, students' accommodations, online communities and other external engagements in other organizations. Formal learning is curriculum-driven to meet predetermined learning objectives, in contrast, the main aims in relatively informal learning environments (if any are set) are identified by the individual learner and others in a space where learning takes place through some form of social influence. From the social influence theory perspective, this study develops a framework that suggests the students learn from their social interactions constructively based on their experiences outside of a structured classroom setting. Informal learning provides additional opportunities for learners to explore topics of interest using an array of resources (both digital and non-digital). Drawing on the above, this paper presents pedagogical implications of learning that takes place in informal settings on active learning strategies in formal educational settings in higher education.

Keywords: Active learning, formal learning, informal learning, social influence theory

REASONS FOR UNDERGRADUATES' ATTITUDES TOWARD ONLINE LEARNING

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While online learning was implemented voluntarily in some countries, it is the pandemic that forced many countries to embrace online learning as the only strategy for continuing the education of university students. Even though Sri Lanka was returning to normalcy and reverted to a full onsite learning mode or hybrid mode, the current economic catastrophe Sri Lanka is facing has changed online learning yet again. Although the previous studies focused on many aspects of online learning, students' attitudes towards online learning and the reasons behind those attitudes received rare attention. In this background, this paper aimed to explore the reasons for university students' attitudes toward online learning based on nearly two and half years of experience. Under the qualitative methodology, 20 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were held with students from various disciplinary backgrounds representing both private and state universities. The data were analysed by coding the transcribed interviews sentence-by-sentence and identifying inductive codes. These codes were then collated into categories. The data analyses revealed that while there are no students who have extremely positive or extremely negative attitudes, many of them believe in online learning during crises. Also, in general, participants' attitudes toward online learning were mixed in nature since they felt positively as well as negatively about online learning depending on psychological, teaching methods, online learning environment, administration, colleagues, and crisis-driven reasons. This study is unique as it explored why students think and feel positively or negatively toward online learning during multiple and prolonged crises, based on subjective viewpoints. Finally, the study provides implications to higher education institutions of the present context and beyond to improve future online learning effectiveness.

Keywords: Crises, COVID-19 pandemic, online learning, online learning attitudes

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH ONLINE LEARNING TEACHING TOOLS IN THE NON-STATE HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF SAEGIS CAMPUS, SRI LANKA

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Online education is now the latest trend in the global education sector after the COVID-19 outbreak. In Sri Lanka, 27 Non-State Education Institutes (NSHEIs) have been established by now as degree awarding Institutes due to the rapidly growing demand. With the development of technology, the NSHEIs had to adopt online learning and teaching due to COVID-19 restrictions for physical gatherings. Recognizing the components that impact students' satisfaction will permit NSHEIs to lay out methodologies to guarantee the nature of the improved change. This study proposed a model that affect student satisfaction by taking into account three aspects of online teaching and learning tools: quality of delivery, quality of technical assistance and service quality. Then, the effect of each aspect on students' satisfaction was assessed utilizing SERVQUAL Model. When studying the responses of 400 students at the Faculty of Management and Faculty of Computing of Saegis Campus, one of the NSHEIs in Sri Lanka, it was found that the nature of specialization help ought to be improved, explicitly preparing, and empowering lecturers to utilize techniques that permit students participation and engagement.

Keywords: Online learning, online teaching and learning tools, service quality, students' satisfaction

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