



15TH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE

*Economic Revival, National Security, and Sustainability through
Advancement of Science, Technology, and Innovation*

29TH - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022

MANAGEMENT, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND
HUMANITIES

ABSTRACTS



GENERAL SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA DEFENCE UNIVERSITY



15TH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE

ECONOMIC REVIVAL, NATIONAL SECURITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY
THROUGH ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION

MANAGEMENT, SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

ABSTRACTS



General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University
Ratmalana, Sri Lanka

This book contains the abstracts of papers presented at the Management, Social Science and Humanities Session of the 15th International Research Conference of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka held on the 29th and 30th of September 2022. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, without prior permission of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka.

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Message from the Secretary, Ministry of Defence



I am indeed delighted to pen this message whilst extending my earnest felicitations to the KDU on this significant occasion of the annual International Research Conference. At this juncture, I would also like to congratulate the Vice-Chancellor and the team for continuing the tradition of organising this conference consecutively for the 15th time, despite the numerous economic and social challenges faced by the country in the post-COVID environment.

Further to that, I am delighted to perceive that this year's conference theme; 'Economic Revival, National Security, and Sustainability through Advancement of Science, Technology, and Innovation' focuses on the National Economic Growth and National Security as core concepts, and suggests that 'economic development' and 'security' of a country should always go hand in hand. Therefore, this conference would undoubtedly become a forum for academia to discuss an area of absolute need in the development interests of our motherland.

Moreover, I am pleased to witness that KDU, under our ministerial guidance, is setting an example for all other universities in Sri Lanka in progressing research in many academic fields. I hope this year's conference will produce a significant research outcome that the policy community of Sri Lanka could utilise to support the present development drive of the country. Further, I would like to urge the conference organisers to explore the possibility of distributing the outcomes of the conference to all the relevant Ministries and Departments of the country so that said entities could link with the researchers and employ their valuable research outcomes for the benefit of the nation.

I wish that KDU IRC 2022 will enhance the wisdom of all the participants to serve Mother Lanka for a better tomorrow.

GENERAL KAMAL GUNARATNE (Retd)

WWV RWP RSP USP ndc psc MPhil
Secretary - Ministry of Defence

Message from the Keynote Speaker



It gives me immense pleasure to send this message on the occasion of the 15th International Research Conference of the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU). I would like to congratulate KDU for being able to conduct its International Research Conference in 2022, consecutively for the 15th time. It is not an easy task to organize such a momentous event particularly under many difficulties and challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic situation and social and economic crisis. It is gratifying to witness that KDU, the only Defence University in the country, has been able to transform a challenge into an opportunity, as it usually does.

The theme of the conference, namely the “Economic Revival, National Security, and Sustainability through Advancement of Science, Technology, and Innovation,” is very timely and of great significance for deliberation in expert panels of this conference. The nexus between National Growth and National Security is closely interwoven. The ‘economic revival’, ‘sustainability’ advancement’ and ‘security’ of a country cannot be compartmentalized and discussed in isolation of each other. There is no security for a nation without economic and social progress, and likewise, economic and social progress cannot be achieved without stability and a secure environment. I hope various panels of this conference will be able to discuss many facets of economic revival, national growth, sustainability and security and their interconnectedness. These two areas have a direct bearing on the development of Sri Lanka, a country which succeeded in ending a 30-year long separatist war. In the context of the present need for robust development, it is absolutely necessary to engage in serious research which leads to discoveries as well as policy-oriented recommendations. Therefore, all academic establishments must provide a conducive space for their intellectuals to reach new frontiers in research. I am glad that KDU is setting an example for all other universities in Sri Lanka in this regard. I hope this year’s conference will produce significant research outcomes that the policy community in Sri Lanka could utilize for the benefit of the country. I wish this conference all the success.

HON PROF SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

Former Minister of Commerce, Law & justice, India

Message from the Vice Chancellor



The International Research Conference (IRC) of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University held for the 15th consecutive year is significant in terms of the continued contribution of the University to the field of research in diverse disciplines much needed for the progression of the nation, especially in the face of unprecedented challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the current economic crisis in the country.

The conference themes carefully selected by KDU each year have addressed contemporary needs of the country that are linked up with national security perspectives, and they are complementary to the development paradigm of the country. This year's theme "Economic Revival, National Security, and Sustainability through Advancement of Science, Technology, and Innovation" encompasses a wide range of research possibilities for scholars of different disciplines to engage in much useful research relevant to the current issues faced by the nation.

It is heartening to note that the number of papers submitted for the conference has increased despite the challenging circumstances, which is a positive indication of the enthusiasm growing in the country on development and security related multi-disciplinary research. In this respect, I am extremely glad that the KDU's efforts in expanding higher educational opportunities, increasing quality of higher education, enhancing research and innovation, linking up research with the industry and so on have increasingly been acknowledged by many, which is also reflected in the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking, 2022 table, where KDU has been ranked 2nd in Sri Lanka for Quality of Education and 4th in the overall ranking in the country and in the 801-1000 range globally.

KDU IRC also creates a sound platform to initiate collaborative research at both national and global levels, and I invite all participants to use this conference to make lasting and productive connections and networks at the individual, institutional, national, and international levels to envisage and explore mutually beneficial research possibilities and higher education experiences for the future.

While appreciating the commitment of the organizers of this year's conference, I wish you all, the presenters and participants taking part in the conference all the very best, and I hope you will enjoy every moment of this two-day academic endeavour.

MAJOR GENERAL MILINDA PEIRIS

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Vice Chancellor
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

Message from the Conference Chair



For the 15th consecutive year, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), organises its International Research Conference (KDU IRC 2022) under the theme of “Economic Revival, National Security, and Sustainability through Advancement of Science, Technology, and Innovation”. It is with great pleasure and honour that the organising committee extends its compliments to all of you taking part in KDU IRC 2022. Holding the KDU IRC 2022, under the patronage of the Vice Chancellor, amidst many challenges encountered throughout the year, was a remarkable experience for me. I believe that the organising committee accomplished a very successful mission.

Despite the economic crisis, KDU IRC 2022 is a tremendous opening for many researchers all over the world encompassing various disciplines such as Defence and Strategic Studies; Medicine; Engineering; Management, Social Sciences and Humanities; Law; Built Environment and Spatial Sciences; Allied Health Sciences; Basic and Applied Sciences; Computing; Criminal Justice and Technology to present their research to fellow scholars, professionals, and students.

In this context, we have assembled excellent thought-provoking scientific sessions under the conference theme of this year, and it is remarkable to highlight your participation, at this conference through a highly competitive selection process. In addition, world-renowned invited speakers will deliver keynote and plenary speeches while covering a wide range of important sessions with great networking opportunities and providing solutions using science, technology, and innovation. It is the esteem of the conference to bring together a diverse group of people to disseminate high-quality and novel research results, which will assist to chart our journey forward to reach new heights.

Finally, I would like to extend my best wishes to all the presenters, authors and participants, joining the KDU IRC 2022 on site or online, and I hope that all of you will find this conference informative, enjoyable, and encouraging to feel the experience of KDU hospitality during these two fruitful days.

DR KALPA W SAMARAKOON

PhD, MSc, BSc, MACS (USA), M.I.Biol (SL), C.Biol (SL)
Conference Chair
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

Message from the Conference Secretary



Together with the committees and participating academia of this university, I share the immense pleasure and honour of perseverance with the 15th International Research Conference of KDU (KDU IRC 2022), amidst many challenges, under the patronage of our Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor.

The timely congregation for IRC 2022, of all our staff, students and contributors from faculties all over the world, under the theme “Economic Revival, National Security, and Sustainability through Advancement of Science, Technology, and Innovation”, is of paramount importance in this current climate of the global recession.

Whilst thanking all of you, I express my sincere hope that this would be an ideal platform for academia and professionals to discuss economically viable intelligent solutions for diverse problems for the nation to emerge stronger out of the recession, with the ability to provide equitable health, food, and social security, quality education, and enforcement of law and order in our country, for the betterment of our society.

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ORAL PRESENTATIONS

An Industrial Archaeological Study of Bridges Built during the British Period in Kandy and Suburbs (Based on Selected Sites)

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As a result of the Industrial Revolution during British Colonial rule, during the period 1815 – 1947, many bridges were built in Kandy and surrounding areas. With the commencement of plantation Industry in the Upcountry, a highway was built from Colombo to Kandy in 1820 to transport the plantation produce to the Port of Colombo. The British built a number of civil engineering structures, including bridges and culverts, along the highway and other roads. Sir Edward Barnes, then Governor of Sri Lanka, paid special attention to the construction of bridges and culverts in Kandy and surrounding areas. The craftsmanship and construction materials used in the contemporary bridge technology were varied from the brick arched bridges to iron bridges. There have been many examples of such erections in Kandy and surrounding areas. Major Thomas Skinner, John Fresher, Captain Gordon and Captain A. Brown were at the forefront of the design and construction of bridges during the period under the supervision of the Royal Department Engineering. At present, due to public negligence and various development projects, many bridges in Kandy and its Suburbs are being destroyed without any investigation into their value. The methodology of this research paper consists of field research and library survey methods. The study found that bridges more than a hundred years old could be turned into archaeological monuments under the Archaeological Act. The main objective of this research is to identify bridges built during the British era in an around Kandy and Suburbs.

Keywords: *British era, bridges, Kandy*

Current Challenges and Opportunities for Entrepreneurship and Development of SMEs in Post-Conflict Areas

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Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a key role in regional development in the process of job creation, GDP growth, innovation, equitable income distribution, resource utilisation and socio-economic development and poverty reduction in any economy. Despite Sri Lanka's abundant human capital and natural resources due to its 26-year civil war, its potential in the SME sector has not been fully realised. The main objective of this study is to examine the current role of SMEs in various industries, understand their contribution to the economy and determine the potential of promoting SMEs across the country, including war-affected areas. The subjects of this study include all entrepreneurs living in post-conflict areas. In-depth interviews were used as the main source of data collection, mainly semi-structured interviews, and the results of the research are analysed by thematic analysis. The study found that Sri Lanka has a huge opportunity that can be used to develop this important sector. This paper also seeks to identify policy changes needed to strengthen the role of SMEs in economic development. In addition, the research shows that medium-sized enterprises (between 40-99 employees) have relatively high productivity, and their contribution to added value, total output and job creation is better than those of micro and small enterprises. In war-affected areas, the sector has great potential to flourish, given the high levels of human capital and natural resources.

Keywords: *entrepreneurs, post-conflict area, SMEs, thematic analysis*

Peace in Afghanistan in the Time of Taliban

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The present global order has been turned into a competitive one due to the empowered regional superpowers, superpower rivalries upon fulfilment of political, economic and strategic agendas and concepts of Legitimacy, Sovereignty, Religious extremism and Democracy. Afghanistan, being a battleground for many years, has experienced violations of its external and internal sovereignty under the globalised justifications on terrorism. When Taliban took over the control of the Afghan territory, how could Afghanistan reach their futuristic opportunities while safeguarding the own national interests? Hence the external and internal interventions towards Afghan political context, the futuristic governance process and strategic approach based legitimate policy implications emerge as the objectives of the study. Since being a qualitative study in nature, conceptual & theoretical knowledge on secondary sources becomes vital upon findings of the research. The facts on the sudden power transition from Afghan government to Taliban, the existing vacuum due to the United States' departure, newly implemented Taliban ruling system and finally the upcoming opportunities for Afghan Society, emerge as crucial concerns in the midst of a decisive political instability. Deprivation of hopes of the Afghan citizens, took place with the recent foreign economic sanctions, rigid social policy implications and violations of human rights by Taliban instead of establishing democracy and rule of law, which Afghanistan was expecting for decades.

Keywords: *human right, legitimacy, sovereignty*

Impact of Experiential Marketing on Tourists' Destination Loyalty for Sustainable Tourism (Evidence from Tourists' Cultural Destinations in Sri Lanka)

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World tourism has greatly promoted the existence of destinations to provide more social, economic, and environmental benefits. Therefore, all tourist destinations consider sustainability as their main tourism goal. There are many studies that discuss empirical marketing, tourist satisfaction, destination image and destination loyalty rather than measuring the impact of these variables on sustainable tourism. Judging from the situation in Sri Lanka, although Sri Lanka has many world heritage destinations to promote the development of sustainable tourism, almost all cultural destinations do not have a place to attract tourists. In addition, these studies do not deal with the impact of experiential marketing on sustainable tourism through image, satisfaction and loyalty. This study uses three intervening variables to bridge the gap in cultural destinations in Sri Lanka. 513 tourists were interviewed, representing all tourists who visited Sri Lanka in 2019. By analysing all the data through AMOS software, the researchers achieved all the research objectives and answered all the research questions. The results of the study enabled the researchers to propose adaptive strategies for the attention of marketing authorities in all destinations in Sri Lanka, which will help promote experiential marketing in sustainable tourism through destination, tourist satisfaction and loyalty in cultural destinations in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *experiential marketing, tourists' satisfaction, destination image, destination loyalty, sustainable tourism, cultural destination*

Peer-Assessment: Sri Lankan English as a Second Language Teachers' Perception

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Peer-assessment offers various benefits. There is empirical evidence that peer-assessment enhances learner performance, develops cognitive and metacognitive skills, professional skills, personal and intellectual skills, and social competencies. Also, previous studies on affective factors of peer-assessment such as motivation and anxiety suggest that peer-assessment reduces learner anxiety and stress and enhances confidence and motivation. In spite of these benefits, peer-assessment is not common in educational settings. Teachers, the key stakeholders in education, also tend to hold reservations regarding peer-assessment. Therefore, the present study was conducted using six English teachers teaching in a compulsory English course in a state university in Sri Lanka to explore their perception regarding peer-assessment in English writing class. Qualitative data obtained through one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews were analysed using content analysis method. The results of the present study revealed that the participants believed that peer-assessment helps learners develop their cognitive and metacognitive skills, personal and intellectual skills, some professional skills and that it saves teachers' time. Also, they believed that peer-assessment motivates learners. However, they identified limited English language proficiency and friendship as some key challenges to effectively implement peer-assessment in the language classroom. Group-based peer-assessment and active teacher participation as a facilitator in the peer-assessment process were proposed as solutions to overcome these challenges and ensure successful implementation of peer-assessment in the English classroom. Taken together, the findings of the present study provide strong empirical support for the use of learner-centred peer-assessment in the English writing class in university and other similar contexts.

Keywords: *peer-assessment, perception, English writing*

A Framework to Support Automobile Maintenance Decisions in Militaries Using Analytic Hierarchy Process

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The performance and reliability of the car has greatly affected the smooth functioning of the military system. The army has a large fleet of vehicles, including multi-purpose vehicles. However, a military organization cannot meet the maintenance/maintenance requirements of its fleet simultaneously, therefore maintenance must be given priority. In addition, military organizations do not have sufficient resources to handle all internal maintenance, and hence some maintenance must be outsourced. However, the military's expectations for outsourcing are very different from for-profit commercial companies, therefore determining the right maintenance activities is critical, but also challenging. This paper uses the Analytic Hierarchy Method (AHP) to develop a framework to support automotive maintenance decisions. The framework provides a simple platform for maintaining priorities and selecting the best maintenance method. In the proposed method, maintenance priority determination is based on car criticality. Criteria for maintenance priority and selection of maintenance methods are selected from previous literature. Then AHP was used to calculate their relative importance. Finally, two scoring models were developed to calculate car criticality and to select maintenance methods. The simplicity of the score format makes it easy for users to use, and the digital results enable maintenance personnel to make decisions quickly and intelligently.

Keywords: *automobile maintenance, decision support framework, maintenance prioritization, best maintenance approach, analytic hierarchy process*

Creative Tourism as a Strategy for Strengthening Creative Economy in Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka facing dual problems of weak creative economy performance on the one hand and the non-adoption of creative tourism on the other provides the background to the study, and the introduction of 'creative tourism' is considered a strategy for addressing both problems simultaneously. Despite worldwide adoption of creative tourism, little research has explicitly examined destination level creative tourism strategy development, and a ready-to-use framework to provide guidance and direction to countries does not exist to date. This informed the purpose of this research which addresses its research statement: What are the components of creative tourism strategy? A three staged study that comprises of both quantitative and qualitative methodology was adopted. A multi-journal review was conducted in stage 1 to identify the creative tourism strategy components used by previous studies. In stage 2, using normative Delphi technique creative tourism strategy components appropriate for Sri Lanka were identified and the findings were validated in stage 3 using a survey. The study found 22 creative tourism strategy components that fits well with both typical stages of strategy development and Porter's Diamond model. The study provides a unique contribution to existing knowledge as it is underpinned by hybrid lenses of strategic management and marketing theory that seems rare in creative tourism research. The need for collaborative partnerships between various stakeholders led by the government is considered the main implication to practitioners to ensure the successful introduction of creative tourism to Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *cultural industries, creative economy, creative tourism, creative tourism strategy*

HIV through the Eyes of Others: Communication Campaigns over 30 Years

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Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) has existed for nearly a century. However, HIV gained notoriety as late as the 1980s, mainly due to many American homosexual men's diagnosis. It was soon stigmatised, given its sexual transmission. The media contributed to this stigmatisation; some early campaigns equated HIV with AIDS and both with death. However, a more positive note of acceptance, advocacy and lobbying can be now seen. The research aims to understand marketing and communication messages for HIV and AIDS and provides a telescopic view of the effort for 30 years since 1985. This desk review assessed the confluence between HIV and communications and the future of campaigns. The theories such as the health belief model, ABC, reasoned action, social learning/cognitive, diffusion of innovation, fear management, gender and power, agenda setting, risk perception attitude framework, risky choice and attributes, valence framing effects, framing effects, social behaviour change communication (SBCC), and empathy were identified through logical arguments to best fit the research objectives, which helped narrow literature, campaigns and platforms. The literature points to a shift to social media and argues for its effectiveness; it posits that social media, due to its availability and social component, is a preferred method for young people and even a private method that can be effectively utilised in reaching vulnerable populations. This paper expects that a detailed look at social media will help governments create content effective on those platforms, while a historical view will assist local and national policymakers in future campaigns. To this end, it analysed 58 papers from both the global North and South.

Keywords: *communication campaigns, HIV, media campaigns, social media*

Consumer Awareness on Big Data and its Impact on Consumer Privacy with Special Reference to Franchise Fast Food Chains in Sri Lanka

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Organizations are increasingly turning to using big data to better predict customer behaviour. The main objective of this study was to explore consumers' understanding of big data and its impact on consumer privacy and to analyse these factors based on consumer opinions. This study was conducted using quantitative methods and data were collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to investigate consumers' perceptions of big data and customer privacy, data security and customer service information seeking for franchised fast-food chains in Sri Lanka. The population of this study included consumers between the ages of 20 and 35 living in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and probability sampling was used to collect data from 113 consumers who franchise fast food restaurants. Relevant analysis and expert verification methods were used to test the effectiveness of the research. Cronbach's α was used to test the reliability of the variable. Multiple regression analyses were used to estimate parameters and examine the effect of mediators through Sobel testing. Based on the results, the significant impact of information seeking and consumer privacy on franchised fast-food chains in Sri Lanka was determined. Consumer awareness was tested as a mediator and the Sobel test shows that it has no mediating effect. This study was concentrated in one area, Colombo, and therefore, the stability of the model should be tested in multiple regions. The study recommends that consumers exercise caution when providing personal information to third parties to avoid these difficulties.

Keywords: *big data, consumer privacy, consumer awareness, data security, customer service information search*

“Eye Care and Blindness Literacy”: The Need for Defining a New Construct

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Globally, at least 2.2 billion people experience near or distant vision problems, or blindness. This includes people with long term vision impairment, issues related to at least one billion of them could either have been prevented or have not been addressed. Lack of awareness about eye health, blindness, and the life led by the sightless contribute much to this regrettable situation. Having recognized the knowledge gap in literacy and social research, a comprehensive research study was carried out to characterize a new construct called ‘Eye Care and Blindness Literacy’. As the first step, this paper establishes the need for characterizing such a new construct. It argues that components of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF model) of the World Health Organization could be successfully adapted to conceptualise this multidimensional construct. The characterisation of this ‘Eye Care and Blindness Literacy’ construct would help to improve public awareness on the issue. Thereby, the eye health and wellbeing of sighted people in general would be improved. This also could be used to promote social inclusion of this vulnerable community, which would in turn make a substantial contribution towards enhancing the quality of life of people with visual impairment and blindness.

Keywords: *eye care and health, literacy research, visual impairment and blindness, social inclusion*

Technical Competency Development Need Analysis for Naval Technicians

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“Type-training” has been the main technical skill enhancement programme targeted at naval professionals in many small and medium scale naval forces. Even though these programmes draw significant number of resources, periodically, the level of effectiveness of such programmes requires more investigation. The objective of this study was to examine the implications of different training attributes on technical skill competencies. This study developed a survey questionnaire to collect data from 150 respondents in active service, who followed the type-training programmes. The investigation shows a linear relationship between the training attributes and technical skill competencies supporting the hypotheses proposed for the study.

Keywords: *type-training programs, technical skills, training success factors, technical competency development*

Investigating Resistance to Covid-19 Vaccines and Its Underlying Causes: A Descriptive Study of Young Adults in Sri Lanka

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The coronavirus disease has posed a significant threat all over the world. Vaccination has been identified as the most effective and safest solution to recover from the pandemic. However, vaccine hesitancy stands out as the foremost barrier to global vaccination coverage. The purpose of this study is to explore prevalence of the Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among young adults in Sri Lanka. This research was carried out as a quantitative cross-sectional survey, which is majorly based on five districts in Sri Lanka. An online questionnaire collected data from 601 young adults aged 15 to 35 years, who were selected through crowdsourcing and a simple random sampling technique. According to descriptive statistics, Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy has gradually increased over three phases of hesitancy: initial doses (37%), booster doses (59%), and response to future vaccination (60%). Females, married respondents, and Sinopharm recipients were the most hesitant, with side effects and allergy issues being the most common concerns. In terms of vaccine awareness, the majority show less awareness, owing to their increased exposure to social media information (60%). Furthermore, 34% of respondents, the vaccine was prescribed because it was mandated by a third party. Besides, this study provided extensive information about the Covid-19 immunisation programme and its impact on vaccine hesitancy and refusal. The study's findings are concerning, and stakeholders must consider the identified gaps in order to execute mitigation plans in future vaccination programmes.

Keywords: *Covid-19, hesitancy, young adults*

The Role of High-Performance Work Practices on Employees' Innovative Work Behaviour: Evidence from Hospitality Industry in Colombo District

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The objective of this study is to strengthen the role of high-performance work practices (HPWP) and provide an in-depth analysis to reveal these practices and the innovative work behaviour of employees in the hotel industry in Colombo District. (EIWP) Associate. To achieve this goal, we collected responses through a structured questionnaire to assess the impact of efficient work practices on employees' innovative work behaviours. These samples were selected by convenience sampling methods assuming that the data obtained from samples of 307 employees of the Colombo district hotel industry were examined. Empirical analysis of data collected from employees and high-performance work practices have a significant and positive impact on employees' innovative work behaviour (IWB). This research is meaningful to Sri Lankan companies and can increase employees' understanding of HR practices and innovative behaviours and ultimately see their impact on employee productivity.

Keywords: *High Performance Work Practices (HPWP), Employee Innovative Work Behaviour (EIWB), selection and recruitment, training and development*

Investigating Occupational Stress & Work from Home Experience of Female University Academics in Sri Lanka with Special Reference to Covid-19

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The aim of this research is to explore the occupational stress and Work from Home (WFH) experience of female academicians in Sri Lankan universities throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. A mixed research method was adopted where quantitative and qualitative research designs were used. Occupational Stress Index questionnaire (OSI) and in-depth interviews were utilised for the data collection purposes. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were employed for the data analyses. A sample of 348 female university academics from state and non-state universities were selected by using multistage stratified sampling for quantitative objectives. The findings revealed that most of the female academics from state universities experienced the highest level of occupational stress compared to the female academics from non-state universities. Considering the stress levels of inexperienced academics, highest level of stress was reported from the state universities compared to the academics of non-state universities. Moreover, role overload was recorded as the factor that contributed to the highest level of stress among academics while the lowest stress contributing factor was reported as the powerlessness. Twelve participants those who participated in the survey were randomly chosen for the in-depth interviews. Outcomes of the thematic analysis revealed five main themes related to coping mechanisms: physical, cerebral, creative, communal and psychological.

Keywords: *Covid-19, female academicians, occupational stress, Sri Lankan universities, work from home experience*

Informal Care for Disabled and Elderly Population in Contemporary Sri Lankan Society

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The role of the family in providing care is a historical and culturally rooted practice in Sri Lanka. Regardless of ethnicity, people are devoted to protecting the family, the most loving and warm nest for many people to spend their lifetime. Caring for people with disabilities and caring for the elderly have been an embedded practice in the Sri Lankan family system, however, due to rapid economic and socio-cultural changes a shift in the caring tradition has been observed. This study, therefore, aimed to explore the current informal caring practice among Sinhalese people with disabilities and elders. The study has focused on the care, cultural aspects of the care, social organisations, and the organised structure to provide care. In addition, social relations of care and the community support and assistance to provide care at the community level were also studied. The study was conducted in the Hapugoda No: 405 Grama Niladari Division in the Harispattuwa Divisional Secretariat of the Kandy District and the findings derived from the study are used to identify the significance of the informal care and the care providers, challenges faced by the care providers and the opportunities to enhance the informal care provisions in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *care practices, social organisation, culture of care*

A Study on Undergraduates' Perception on the Transition of Learning from On-Campus to Online

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Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948. After experiencing economic upheavals and recessions, Sri Lanka is trying to provide more higher education to children on campus. Hence, interaction among students has been achieved and educational achievements have surpassed those of developed countries. In this rapid transformation, undergraduates must adapt to virtual platforms accordingly. According to the literature, new terminology has arrived in Sri Lanka, although technological development in Sri Lanka is lagging behind due to the popularity of COVID-19. Although it is a new platform, it manages through many difficulties. Considering the above, the purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence undergraduate students' view of online learning and how to use it to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of online education. As a sample, 373 undergraduate students were selected for quantitative research using simple random sampling. A structured questionnaire was used as the quantitative part of the data collection method. Finally, as part of data analysis in quantitative research, a linear regression model was used as a statistical estimate of parameters. As a statistical tool for quantitative research, SPSS (Ver: 22) was used. According to research results, the most significant transformation occurs in terms of social and cultural barriers. That is a big difference from negative to positive. The second clear difference was in terms of technical constraints, where a minor factor became a significant value. Personal and curriculum-related barriers have slowly changed.

Keywords: *modality, online learning, undergraduate perception, constraints, transition*

An Analysis on How Current Social Media Trends Affect the Transformation of Sri Lankan English Morphological Processes; A Study Based on ‘Aunty Netta’ YouTube Channel

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Regular changes in language can be identified as a common phenomenon in most countries, including Sri Lanka. Accordingly, such deviations have caused dramatic changes in all major languages in use. From a societal perspective language change can be identified as a historical and also a contemporary feature. Even though many tend to misunderstand this phenomenon as a situation where corruption occurs, in reality this shift is unavoidable and it occurs due to various socio-cultural reasons. Accordingly, Sri Lankan English (SLE) is one of the languages that is constantly influenced by various languages and social aspects. Among them in the present context social media platforms perform a crucial role in causing a number of language changes. In fact, various morphological processes can be identified in SLE due to the social media influence. The present study is based on eight selected videos from “Aunty Netta” YouTube channel by Nimmi Harasgama. The data analysis is conducted according to the morphological processes found in the selected videos by incorporating some theoretical frameworks developed by scholars. Collected data was classified according to four morphological processes; borrowing, compounding, affixation, and reduplication. According to the conducted study, it is revealed that compared to other morphological processes, borrowings from other language roots retain the largest number of entries in SLE.

Keywords: *morphological processes, social media, SLE*

Architecting the Nation from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, and the Role of the Evil Other

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Nation narration is instrumental in the process of nation building, and diverse narratives disseminated by leading political figures of Sri Lanka have had a significant impact on shaping the national identity of the country. However, in the process of nationbuilding, these leaders have often constructed another, who, in most cases, is evil. The present study aims to investigate this phenomenon by analysing two texts produced at significant political junctures of Sri Lanka, namely, *A Message to the Young Men of Ceylon* by Anagarika Dharmapala (1922) and the President's Speech to the Parliament on the defeat of the LTTE by the former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa (2009), with a view to critiquing the theories and politics of nationalism, nation construction, and nation narration imbued in the two texts vis-à-vis the concept of the other (Bhabha, 1996) via an in-depth textual analysis. The key theories utilised in critiquing these narratives are nation-building and narration theories of Homi Bhabha (1990) and Frantz Fanon (1963). The analysis revealed that both narratives have created another/s as a foil to the homogenous Sri Lankan nation the speakers envisioned, which poses a threat to the implied unified nature of the nation.

Keywords: *nation narration, nation-building, us vs. the other dichotomy, Anagarika Dharmapala, Mahinda Rajapaksa*

Assessment of the Knowledge and the Use of Metacognitive Reading Strategies among ESL Learners

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Metacognitive awareness can be categorised as one of the most influential strategies in developing effective readers. It becomes very useful for university undergraduates as they are expected to involve in extensive reading for their academic activities. Further, this enhances the learner autonomy and critical thinking skills. Hence, the current study aimed to assess the awareness and the use of metacognitive strategies among the selected sample of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in Sri-Lankan universities. The online survey was carried out as a descriptive cross-sectional study. An online questionnaire developed in English was used to gather data. The questionnaire was shared on social media platforms for a period of two weeks. The questionnaire comprised of two sections, one focused on demographic information, and a separate section was allocated for the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI). Informed consent of the participants was obtained before the data collection. The data analysis was performed using SPSS 23.0, including the descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test and Turkey Post hoc test on one-way ANOVA. The majority of the participants were female (62.9%; n=83) Law undergraduates. With regard to the self-evaluation, majority of the study participants (51.5%; n=68) were identified as average readers. The study findings have revealed that the mean values of the GRS, PSS and SRS were at a medium level. Hence, it is recommended to make necessary interventions to understand awareness of metacognitive strategies of reading among university undergraduates. It will also be useful in implementing new strategies in language teaching, planning and helping the students to improve their critical thinking skills and mindfulness.

Keywords: *metacognitive awareness, undergraduates, reading skills*

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Micro-Level Determinants and Profitability of the Licensed Long-Term Insurance Companies in Sri Lanka

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With the rapid changes in the corporate sector, the relevance of insurance companies has gradually increased. They are very important and have contributed significantly to the development of the country. Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the micro-level factors that affect the financial success of insurance companies in Sri Lanka. Five independent factors are used to assess financial performance, including the ratio of return on assets and underwriting dependence, commission ratio, underwriting premium ratio, leverage and company size. From 28 insurance companies accessible in this study from 2013 to 2019, eight long-term licensed insurance companies were randomly selected as samples. Second information obtained from companies and IBSL (Insurance Commission of Sri Lanka) annual reports is required. Multivariate analysis and descriptive statistics are the statistical methods used in this survey. According to the research, only underwriting dependence shows a statistically significant positive effect on the rate of return on assets. Return on assets will be statistically negatively affected by return commission rates, underwriting rates, debt, and firm size, which is significant.

Keywords: *insurance, micro level, reinsurance, return on asset*

Impact of Mindfulness on Technostress: A Theoretical Integration

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With the emergence of the pandemic period, technology played a crucial role in facilitating distant work settings. This results in significant benefits given to both individuals and organisations. However, with excessive use of technology by individuals, the concept of "technostress" emerged. The current theoretical review suggests mindfulness as a factor which reduces technostress. Thus, drawing on the transaction-based approach, the current paper attempts to conceptualise the impact of mindfulness on technostress. The proposed model and propositions showed influences of mindfulness on technostress and its dimensions. Moreover, the current paper suggests insights to the practitioners on the actions which need to be taken on reduction of technostress among employees using mindful practices.

Keywords: *information technology, mindfulness, technostress*

Factors Affecting the Success of Rural Marketing in Sri Lanka: Special Reference to Small Electric Appliances

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The rural market can be identified as a solid utility market opportunity that can be exploited through better marketing strategies. Rural marketing is a marketing strategy that involves planning and implementing marketing activities in rural areas to achieve marketing objectives. Sri Lanka consists of many rural areas. Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the factors affecting the success of rural marketing in Sri Lanka. In conducting the research, the 4As model was determined as a theoretical model. The 4As model is customer-centric and the 4Ps is an organization-oriented model. Therefore, this study is based on customer opinions. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing the success of rural marketing strategy in Sri Lanka and identify the most influential factors. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data and then pilot tests were conducted based on samples from 16 rural consumers. The final survey data was collected from 125 rural consumers living in Monaragala through an online questionnaire, and then the collected data was analysed using SPSS (Ver: 25.0) software. Based on the results of the multiple regression analysis, affordability is considered to be the only factor that has a significant impact on the success of rural marketing. Therefore, based on experience, it is concluded that affordability plays an important role in rural marketing in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *rural marketing, acceptability, affordability, accessibility*

The Mental and Physical Health of the Sri Lankan Professional Esports Players

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Esport is a multi-player video game that is organised and played individually or in teams, particularly among professional players, and it is rapidly growing around the world. The purpose of this study was to assess the mental health and physical activity level (PAL) of Sri Lankan professional male Esports players. To complete the current study, a cross-sectional study was carried out using the quantitative research method. Data were collected from 216 professional male Esports players (age: 12 to 45 years) using the WHO self-reporting questionnaire 20 (SRQ-20) and the International Physical Activity Questionnaires (IPAQ). The association between demographical parameters, mental health, and physical health was measured and tested using the chi-squared test, and binary logistic regression with a 95% confidence level was used to identify the risk factor for Common Mental Diseases (CMD). This study concludes that Esports has an effect on Esports participants' mental health and physical activity level. It can be suggested that if players promote healthy lifestyle habits and physical exercise, they may make life easier and more ideal.

Keywords: *CMD, esports, mental health, PAL*

Feasibility of Distance-Monitoring Intervention on Sedentary Time and Physical Activity among Sri Lankan Adolescents

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COVID-19 restrictions such as the closure of schools and parks, and the cancellation of youth sports and activity classes around Sri Lanka may prevent children from achieving recommended levels of physical activity (PA). The prime aim of this study was to examine the feasibility of distance-monitoring concept on sedentary time (ST) and PA of Sri Lankan adolescents. The study was conducted by using concurrent triangulation design under the mix method research approach. Data were obtained from 347 male and female adolescents aged between 13-17 by using multistage sampling technique. Data were obtained from WHO STEPS instrument for PA and Adolescent Sedentary Activity Questionnaire (ASAQ) for ST. Parents also reported children BSP through Children's Sleep Habits Questionnaire (CSHQ). At follow-up, the overall retention of participants was 347 (82.6%) and the treatment fidelity rate was 87.5%. The study found that the PA level of the respondents increased significantly from 784.7 MET/min per week to 831.7 MET/min per week ($p<0.05$). The ST also decreased significantly from 3490 min/per week to 3332 min/per week ($p<0.05$). The study also showed that 66% of adolescents adhered to the recommended guidelines using distance monitoring. According to the thematic analysis students and teachers' perception on this was an even chance to accept this and parents seems to think its impractical and it is quite a challenge to implement. Distance monitoring has potentials in regulating and decreasing SB among adolescents in Sri Lanka and it is feasible.

Keywords: *distance monitoring, adolescents, PA level, sedentary behaviour*

