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CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Track - Accounting, Business, and Management

**25th INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE
RESEARCH CONFERENCE
(IPRC) 2025**

"DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION"



25th International Postgraduate Research Conference (IPRC) - 2025

“Digital Transformation in Green and Sustainable Innovation”

Conference Proceedings

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"Digital Transformation in Green and Sustainable Innovation"

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Message from the Vice-Chancellor



It is with great pleasure that I write this message of felicitation for the 25th Annual International Postgraduate Research Conference (IPRC), organized by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Kelaniya. This is the flagship research conference of our University, a forum for researchers and scholars to share knowledge, information, exchange experiences, to present innovative concepts and research.

Celebrating its Silver Jubilee this year, the IPRC has consistently demonstrated our University's strong commitment to promoting research excellence. This year's theme of Digital Transformation in Green and Sustainable Innovation aims to inspire new perspectives on how digital transformation can drive environmentally responsible and inclusive growth.

As in past years, the conference will be conducted under four tracks:

1. Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine
2. Accounting and Business Management
3. Humanities and Social Sciences
4. Multidisciplinary Studies

As the University of Kelaniya expands its offering of postgraduate programs, with particular attention to multi-disciplinary studies and the promotion of interdisciplinary research, we strive to nurture the next generation of scholars who will contribute to the sustainable development of our country. Our vision of digital transformation of our University echoes the national vision of digital transformation of our country's economy. We hope that all those who participate in IPRC 2025 share our desire to embark on this promising and exciting journey, which also brings its own challenges.

I thank the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Snr. Prof. Priyani Paranagama, the Deputy Registrar / FGS Mr. Lakmal Wijeratne, the Senior Assistant Bursar / FGS Ms. Sathishka Gonapeenuwala, and the conference Organizing Committee, for all the hard work that they have put into organizing this event. I would also like to thank the researchers, reviewers, editors, and other academics who contributed in numerous ways to ensure the success of this conference.

Senior Prof. Nilanthi Renuka de Silva

Vice-Chancellor
University of Kelaniya

Message from the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the International Postgraduate Research Conference (IPRC) 2025, hosted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Kelaniya. This year's conference is particularly special as we commemorate the silver jubilee, marking a quarter-century of commitment to advanced research, academic excellence, and knowledge dissemination.

The theme of IPCR 2025, "Digital Transformation in Green and Sustainable Innovation," reflects our dedication to addressing contemporary global challenges through cutting-edge research and interdisciplinary collaboration. The conference provides a distinguished platform for postgraduate researchers, scholars, and practitioners from around the world to present their work, exchange ideas, and foster innovation that contributes meaningfully to sustainable development and technological advancement.

As the oldest and most pioneering research conference at the University of Kelaniya, IPCR has successfully held 25 consecutive annual conferences, and continues to serve as a flagship event in our academic calendar. This milestone is a testament to the unwavering commitment of the Faculty of Graduate Studies to encourage advanced research, support academic inquiry, and cultivate a vibrant intellectual community.

IPRC 2025 symbolizes the vision and mission of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, where knowledge is recognized as a powerful tool to affect change. Through promoting analytical skills, openness to new ideas, and research excellence, FGS empowers its graduates to make a meaningful impact in society. The conference is an opportunity to showcase innovative postgraduate research, engage in thoughtful discussions, and build collaborations that will shape the future of green and sustainable innovation.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all participants, keynote speaker, plenary speakers, presenters, and organizers for contributing to this landmark event. Let us come together to make IPCR 2025 a celebration of academic excellence, global collaboration, and transformative research.

Senior Prof. P.A. Paranagama
Dean
Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Kelaniya

Message from the Chairman of the Research Council



It is with great pleasure I write this message to the International Postgraduate Research Conference (IPRC) 2025 organized by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Kelaniya. Since the first conference in 2000, the Annual Research Symposium of the Faculty of Graduate Studies has been an important event of the University Research Calendar. The IPRC 2025 marks a significant milestone, being the silver jubilee edition of this flagship postgraduate research event.

IPRC 2025 is truly a multidisciplinary research symposium with dedicated tracks for Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine; Accounting and Business Management; Humanities and Social Sciences; and Multidisciplinary Studies. It provides an international platform for researchers to share their findings, exchange ideas, and explore innovative solutions for sustainable development.

This year's theme, 'Digital Transformation in Green and Sustainable Innovation,' reflects how research can be transformative and help to foster a sustainable ecosystem. I am confident that the Conference will generate new ideas, methodologies, and collaborations to uplift the research environment, culture, and output of the University.

I wish all the very best for the Faculty of Graduate Studies and IPRC 2025.

Professor Sachith Mettananda

Chairman

Research Council

University of Kelaniya

Profile of the Keynote Speaker - Prof. Piergiuseppe Morone

Full professor of Economic Policy, Unitelma Sapienza – University of Rome, Department of Law and Economics, Roma, Italy

Ph.D., Science and Technology Policy – University of Sussex, UK, M.A., Development Economics – University of Sussex, B.A. (cum laude), Economics – University of Bari, Italy



Piergiuseppe Morone is a Full Professor of Economic Policy at Unitelma Sapienza with a strong interest in green innovation and sustainable circular bioeconomy, pushing his research at the interface between innovation economics and sustainability transitions, an area of enquiry that has attracted growing attention over the last decade. His work regularly appears in prestigious journals in innovation and environmental economics. In 2023, published with Cambridge University Press a textbook titled “The Circular Bioeconomy: Theories and Tools for Economists and Sustainability Scientists”.

He is the coordinator of the Bioeconomy in Transition Research Group (BiT-RG) and the director of the School of Sustainability Studies and Circular Economy (SUSTAIN). Moreover, he is/was involved in several European projects (including: H2020, BBI-JU, Life, Erasmus+, COST, Horizon Europe and CBE-JU) acting as scientific coordinator, vice-chair and WP Leader. He was an Economic Advisor to the Italian Minister of the Environment, Land and Sea Protection, till February 2021. Piergiuseppe is Editor in Chief of Societal Impacts (ELSEVIER) and Associate Editor of several other prestigious journals.

Since April 2022, Piergiuseppe has been the vice-chair of the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU) Scientific Committee.

Plenary Speaker - Prof. Janaka Yasantha Ruwanpura

*Schulich School of Engineering, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Calgary,
Canada*

*Ph.D., Construction Engineering and Management – University of Alberta, Canada (2001)
M.Sc., Construction Management – Arizona State University, USA (1997)
B.Sc. (Hons), Quantity Surveying – University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka (1992)*



Professor Janaka Yasantha Ruwanpura is a highly respected academic, researcher, and global leader in construction engineering, project management, and international higher education. He is currently a Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at the Schulich School of Engineering, University of Calgary. He recently concluded over 11 years of service as the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Research (International), during which he significantly advanced the university's international engagement and reputation.

During his tenure as Vice-Provost International, Professor Ruwanpura played a pivotal role in shaping and implementing the University of Calgary's international strategy. His leadership led to the creation of several collaborative degree programs, research partnerships in countries like China and Mexico, and the acquisition of more than \$57 million in research and infrastructure funding. He also secured over \$25 million in international development grants and more than \$5 million for student research internships through MITACS. Notably, he became the first Canadian and non-American to be elected Executive Chair (2019–2021) of the Commission of International Initiatives of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU). Professor Ruwanpura's work has earned him numerous prestigious accolades, including the Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award (2022) and fellowships with the Canadian Academy of Engineering (FCAE), the Engineering Institute of Canada (FEIC), the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering (FCSCE), and the National Academy of Construction, USA (NAC). In 2022, he was also recognized as a Gold Seal Certified Professional by the Canadian Construction Association.

Abstract of the Plenary, Session One: Igniting Research Excellence: Building the Next Generation University for Global Impact

This plenary will present an evidence-based eleven-point framework for advancing institutional research excellence, drawing on global best practices and implementation experience from leading universities. The framework emphasizes transdisciplinary research clusters, targeted funding strategies, publication culture, international collaborations, and industry-engaged innovation. It also highlights internal enablers such as performance-linked incentives, structured research support, and the role of postdoctoral and community engagement. Using this framework, the presentation proposes a tailored roadmap for developing a comprehensive Research Strategy for the University of Kelaniya. Key components include aligning research with national and global priorities, building flagship institutes, and strengthening partnerships for co-funded, high-impact research. The session will demonstrate how strategic planning and structured implementation can transform research ecosystems, improve institutional rankings, and position universities as regional leaders in innovation, knowledge creation, and sustainable development.

Plenary Speaker - Prof. Channa De Silva

*Professor of Chemistry, Head of the Department, Department of Chemistry & Physics,
Western Carolina University, USA*

*Ph.D., Chemistry - University of Arizona
B.S., Chemistry - University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*



Dr. Channa De Silva is a Professor and Department Head of Chemistry & Physics at Western Carolina University, USA. He completed his B.S. degree in Chemistry with First-Class Honors at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, in 2000 and earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry with a GPA of 4.0 from the University of Arizona, USA, in 2007. From 2008 to 2010, he worked as a Research Associate at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, in Materials Science and Engineering at the University of Arizona, and the Bio5 Institute at the University of Arizona, USA. His research focuses on developing metal-based nanomaterials for biotechnological applications and conducting computational studies of materials containing lanthanide and actinide metals.

Dr. De Silva has received numerous teaching and research awards, including the University of North Carolina Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, USA (2025), the Brinson Honors College's Faculty and Staff Excellence Award, Western Carolina University (2025), the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award (2025), Winner, FACULTY 3 Minute Research Talk (3MR), Western Carolina University, USA (2025), Teaching Award from the College of Arts & Sciences at Western Carolina University (2022), Visiting Faculty Program Scholar from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) (2021), SoCon Faculty Member of the Year Award (2019), and Innovative Scholarship Award (2017).

In his free time, he enjoys playing music, including Sri Lankan music, northern Indian music, and an American folk genre called Appalachian music.

Abstract of the Plenary Session Two: Artificial Intelligence in Chemistry Research: Transforming Discovery, Design, and Education

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping the landscape of chemical research and education, offering transformative capabilities across molecular design, reaction prediction, process optimization, and teaching. Recent advancements highlight AI's growing role in both undergraduate and graduate-level chemistry, with applications spanning drug discovery, materials science, and sustainable chemical engineering. AI-driven platforms such as ChemCopilot and IBM RXN are streamlining retrosynthesis planning, reaction yield prediction, and real-time process monitoring. Large Language Models (LLMs), including finetuned systems like GVIM, are being integrated into intelligent research assistants capable of molecular visualization, SMILES string processing, and literature retrieval.

These tools not only enhance research productivity but also democratize access to advanced computational methods. Educationally, AI's integration into chemistry curricula is gaining momentum. Workshops and teacher training programs are fostering Technological Content

Knowledge (TCK), preparing educators to bridge the gap between scientific innovation and classroom instruction. The 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, awarded for AlphaFold's protein structure prediction, underscores AI's interdisciplinary impact and its relevance to future career pathways. Despite its promise, challenges remain in data quality, model interpretability, and ethical deployment. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure scientifically sound and socially beneficial outcomes. This abstract invite discussion on the strategic incorporation of AI into chemistry research and education, emphasizing its potential to accelerate discovery, enhance pedagogy, and prepare students for AI-driven scientific careers.

My own experiences in digital transformation initiatives have underscored the importance of combining technological, social, and economic insights. Gender equality is a crucial focus, especially regarding workforce participation. Through initiatives like 'She Returns,' which supports women re-entering the workforce after maternity leave, we see how multidisciplinary research can solve real-world challenges by bridging gaps in productivity and equality. Academia plays a pivotal role in encouraging cross-disciplinary innovation. However, achieving this requires shifting from specialization to integration, breaking institutional barriers, and promoting collaboration. It is only through collective effort where technologists, economists, sociologists, and policymakers join forces that we can shape a prosperous future. In conclusion, Sri Lanka's path forward embraces innovation and research that transcends boundaries. Together, we can build a resilient economy driven by inclusive growth, ensuring that research not only advances knowledge but also transforms lives and creates lasting societal impact.

Plenary Speaker - Prof. Jane E. Stewart

*Associate Professor of Plant Pathology, EIC Forest Pathology, Dept of Agricultural Biology
Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, USA*

*Ph.D., Plant Pathology - Washington State University
MS, Forestry - University of Vermo
BS, Biology - University of Oregon*



Dr. Jane E. Stewart is an Associate Professor of Plant Pathology in the Department of Agricultural Biology at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, USA. Her research focuses on forest, shade, and fruit trees, addressing critical issues in tree health through the lens of plant pathology. Dr. Stewart brings extensive expertise in fungal biology, population genetics and genomics, molecular diagnostics, and the management of plant pathogens particularly invasive and emerging pathogens affecting trees.

Over the course of her career, Dr. Stewart has published more than 100 scholarly manuscripts spanning various forest and tree crop pathosystems. Her research emphasizes the speciation of tree pathogens and explores host-pathogen interactions at multiple levels, from the microbiome to the molecular scale. She is also actively engaged in developing practical management strategies to combat tree diseases and enhance sustainable forestry and agriculture.

In addition to her research, Dr. Stewart teaches undergraduate and graduate courses at Colorado State University. Her undergraduate course, Tree Health and Management, covers a wide array of tree diseases and insect pests along with their management practices. She also teaches a graduate-level course on Fungal Biology and Genetics, sharing her deep knowledge and research experience with the next generation of plant pathologists.

Dr. Stewart's research program has a global focus, aiming to improve understanding of the biology, ecology, genetics, and management of emerging tree pathogenic fungi. She currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the internationally recognized journal Forest Pathology, reflecting her leadership and influence in the field.

Abstract of the Plenary Session Three: Characterizing Patterns Associated with Airborne Microbial Communities in Forest and Grassland Ecosystems

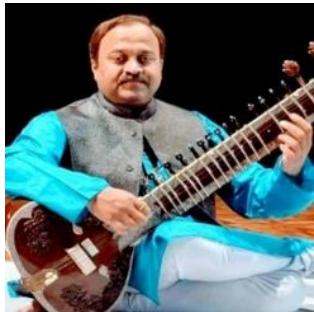
Understanding how and what types of microorganisms move through the air is important for early warning detection systems for human and ecosystem health. The atmosphere harbors a diverse and dynamic reservoir of microorganisms, yet their distribution, especially for fungi, in the atmosphere and response to environmental variation remains a subject of ongoing investigation. In this study, we compared airborne bacterial and fungal communities in subalpine forest and steppe grassland sites, over diel, vertical, and seasonal gradients. Air samples were collected at three heights over four months at the subalpine forest with concurrent sampling in the steppe grassland during two of those months. We observed that fungal communities had greater site-specific variability and sensitivity to environmental factors than bacterial

communities. This was most apparent in the subalpine forest, where vertical stratification and diel cycles significantly structured microbial diversity. In comparison, bacterial communities were temporally dynamic but showed weaker responses to local environmental conditions and minimal site-level differences. This may indicate broader dispersal and a ubiquitous set of bacterial taxa. Environmental drivers such as atmospheric moisture and air pressure influenced microbial beta-diversity in the subalpine forest, while air temperature and wind speed impacted diversity in the steppe grassland, again highlighting ecosystem-specific responses. Despite compositional differences, a group of shared bacterial and fungal taxa was consistently detected across sites. Most of these shared taxa were detected at greater heights in the subalpine forest. This, along with wind patterns moving eastward from the subalpine forest towards the steppe grassland, indicates potential atmospheric transport between sites, with taxa dispersal being filtered by height. These results underscore the role of ecosystem structure, meteorological conditions, and air mass movement in shaping the aero biome. Our data suggest that airborne microbial communities are shaped by both local emission and long-range atmospheric transport processes.

Plenary Speaker - Dr. Rajesh Shah

Professor in Sitar, Department of Instrument, Faculty of Performing Arts, Banaras Hindu University, India

*Ph.D., Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India
M.Mus., Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India
B.Com., Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur, India*



Prof. Rajesh Shah is a distinguished artist and academic in the field of Indian Classical Instrumental Music, specializing in the sitar. Born on June 15, 1966, into a culturally rich Gujarati family, he inherited his passion for classical music from his father, Sri Narottam Das Shah. Over the course of his illustrious career, Dr. Shah has established himself as a leading figure in sitar performance, pedagogy, and music composition, contributing significantly to the propagation and preservation of India's classical music heritage.

Currently serving as a Professor in the Department of Instrumental Music at the Faculty of Performing Arts, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Prof. Shah has also held key academic positions, including Dean of the Faculty and Head of the Department. A Grade 'A' artist of All India Radio and Doordarshan, he is renowned for his solo sitar recitals, jugalbandis (duets), and orchestral compositions, both in India and abroad.

Prof. Shah's musical foundation was shaped by the rigorous training he received under the guidance of Late Sri Govind Raoji Nayak and the late Dr. Ramdas Chakravarti of BHU, followed by advanced tutelage from Pt. Amarnath Mishra of the Banaras Gharana. Deeply rooted in the Saini Gharana tradition, his sitar style is noted for its clarity, creativity, and expressive depth.

An active performer, Prof. Shah has presented concerts and conducted workshops across Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia, including notable appearances in Germany, Austria, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, UAE, and Nepal. In addition to his international reach, he is a respected educator who has mentored over 16 Ph.D. scholars and numerous postgraduate students. Many of his disciples now serve as faculty members in reputed universities and cultural institutions worldwide.

His commitment to inclusive education is exemplified by his longstanding work with visually impaired students, whom he has trained in the intricate art of sitar performance. He has also composed and directed several orchestral works specifically for visually impaired musicians, earning recognition at international platforms such as Vienna and across Indian cities.

Prof. Shah has authored the book "Sitar Vigyan: Prayog Evam Shastra" and contributed extensively to academic journals and conference proceedings at both national and international levels. His research interests span from traditional raga interpretation to music therapy, music education, and comparative musicology.

Beyond teaching and performance, he has served on various academic and administrative bodies, including as a member of Boards of Studies and selection committees in universities such as Visva Bharati University, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Awadh University, and M.S. University, Baroda. He has also acted as a convener and resource person in numerous interdisciplinary workshops and seminars focused on Indian classical music.

Through his artistic excellence, academic contributions, and inclusive teaching philosophy, Prof. Rajesh Shah continues to be a guiding force in the world of Indian classical instrumental music.

Abstract of the Plenary Session Four: Rendition of Similar Ragas in North Indian Classical Music

North Indian Classical Music, or Hindustani music, is built upon the intricate and deeply aesthetic concept of the raga a melodic framework for improvisation and composition. Each raga is defined by a unique set of notes (swaras), characteristic phrases (pakad), and mood (rasa), which together create a distinct identity. However, within this rich system exists a fascinating phenomenon the presence of similar ragas, whose tonal structures and emotional colors overlap, yet whose renditions must remain distinct through nuanced expression.

Many ragas share the same or nearly identical scales but differ in their treatment, ornamentation, and emphasized notes. For instance, Raga Desh and Raga Khamaj both use the komal nishad (flat seventh) and shuddha nishad (natural seventh), yet their melodic contours and emotional intent diverge significantly. Desh evokes the freshness of monsoon and a feeling of longing, while Khamaj carries a romantic and serene flavor. Similarly, Raga Bhupali and Raga Deshkar share the pentatonic scale (using Sa Re Ga Pa Dha), but the former flows with a lyrical, devotional sweetness, while the latter projects brightness and vigor through sharper tonal emphasis and a more forceful rendition.

The distinction among similar ragas primarily depends on intonation, movement, and emphasis. The vadi (most prominent note) and samvadi (second most prominent note) play a crucial role in shaping the identity of a raga. Ornamentations such as meend (glide), kan swar (grace note), and gamak (oscillation) further add character. The choice of tempo (laya), rhythmic cycle (tala), and mood (bhava) also influences how the listener perceives one raga from another, even when the note structures are similar.

Experienced performers internalize these subtleties through years of training under the guru-shishya parampara. A successful rendition of similar ragas demands deep understanding and restraint knowing precisely how to explore the raga's potential without encroaching upon the domain of another. The artist's improvisation (vistar, alap, taan) must unfold within the grammar of the chosen raga, revealing its individuality through creativity grounded in discipline.

Thus, the rendition of similar ragas in North Indian classical music exemplifies the art's philosophical depth the coexistence of similarity and uniqueness, structure and freedom. It is this delicate balance that sustains the immense beauty and complexity of the Hindustani raga tradition, allowing it to evolve continuously while preserving its timeless essence.

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Moderating effect of managerial job insecurity on the relationship between perceived overqualification and promotability of subordinates: a study in Sri Lanka's IT sector

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In today's dynamic IT industry, manager-employee relationships strongly influence career outcomes. This study examines how perceived overqualification of subordinates by the line managers affects promotability ratings of subordinates and whether managers' job insecurity moderates this link. Drawing on the Social Comparison theory, we argue that insecure managers suppress the advancement of overqualified subordinates, perceiving them as potential threats to their own job security. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing judgmental sampling to identify suitable manager-subordinate dyads, which resulted in data from 180 employees nested under 18 managers in mid-sized Sri Lankan IT firms. Employees provided data on their perceived overqualification and managerial job insecurity, while supervisors provided data on promotability ratings of subordinates. Results from hierarchical linear modelling revealed a positive relationship between perceived overqualification and promotability ratings ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < .01$), indicating that overqualified employees were generally viewed as more promotable. However, this effect was contingent on managerial insecurity as the interaction term was significant ($\beta = -0.27$, $p < .05$; $\Delta R^2 = .06$). Simple slope analysis showed that when managers were highly insecure, perceived overqualification negatively predicted promotability ($\beta = -0.45$, $p < .001$), whereas under low insecurity, the positive relationship existed ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < .05$). These findings highlight the double-edged nature of overqualification, where it can enhance promotability, when the managers do not feel insecure. But insecure managers may block the advancement of subordinates to protect their positions. This contributes to the job insecurity theory by showing how self-preservation motives influence evaluation processes. In light of this, organizations should mitigate managerial insecurity and provide necessary training to managers to leverage overqualified talent fairly. Limitations include the study's focus on mid-sized IT firms in Sri Lanka, which may restrict generalizability to other organizational contexts. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs and examine additional contextual moderators, such as organizational culture and leadership, to clarify when overqualification is beneficial or penalized.

Keywords: Employee promotability, IT organizations, Manager-Subordinate relationship, Job insecurity, Overqualification

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Factors affecting the life insurance policy lapsation A study focused on life insurance policy discontinued customers in Kandy district

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The insurance sector in Sri Lanka has displayed sturdy growth in the recent past. However, Life Insurance Policy Lapses (*LIPL*) in the insurance sector are a crucial factor in the industry's growth. They occur due to non-payment of premiums before the policy accrues a surrender value, which has increased notably for both new policies issued and total policies in force. Furthermore, the penetration of life insurance in Sri Lanka remains very low compared to other developing countries in the South Asian region. The Insurance Regulatory Commission reported that the total number of lapsed life insurance policies reached 304,125 in 2022, compared to 267,306 in 2021. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the factors affecting *LIPL*, with a focus on lapsed life insurance policy-holding customers from three leading insurance companies in the Kandy District. The conceptual framework of this study was developed using empirically validated variables identified through a comprehensive literature review, including independent variables such as after-sales service (ASS), unethical sales behavior (USB), and transparency of the sales process (TSP), whereas the dependent variable is *LIPL*. With an objectivist ontological stance and a positivist epistemological stance, the study adopted a quantitative approach. Accordingly, the study sample ($n = 100$) was selected using systematic sampling, with the unit of analysis being individuals (lapsed life insurance customers). Data were collected through an online questionnaire survey, and hypotheses were tested using bivariate correlation and linear regression. The outcomes revealed a moderate positive correlation between unethical sales behavior and *LIPL*. Furthermore, ASS, USB, and TSP have a direct impact on *LIPL*. The value of ($\beta = 0.078$) indicated that USB had the strongest influence on *LIPL*. The recommendations, based on the findings, are to promote ethical sales behavior, such as providing adequate explanations, accurately forecasting risks, and offering sufficient insurance options.

Keywords: After-sales services, Insurance, Life Insurance Policy Lapsation, Transparency of the sales process, Unethical sales behavior

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Moderating effect of job specialization on the relationship between employee perceptions of high-performance work systems and job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector

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In Sri Lanka's apparel sector, employee job performance is a critical determinant of productivity, quality, and competitiveness. Organizations are increasingly adopting High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) to enhance employee performance outcomes. However, how employees perceive these systems and how individual job characteristics influence their effectiveness remain underexplored. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study investigates the relationship between employees' perception of HPWS and their job performance, with the moderating effect of job specialization. Dyadic data were collected where employees responded to items on perceptions on HPWS and job specialization, while their immediate supervisors rated employee job performance. A total of 209 valid dyads (employee-supervisor) were obtained through convenience sampling, with 15 supervisors evaluating the performance of multiple subordinates. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between perceptions of HPWSs and employee job performance, revealing a significant positive association ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that positive perceptions of high-performance work systems are linked to better employee performance. Regression analysis was employed to assess the impact and interaction effects. The results demonstrated that job specialization moderated the effect of HPWS on job performance (interaction term $\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that the positive impact of HPWS on performance is stronger among employees in highly specialized roles. This study contributes to SET by emphasizing how perceived organizational support, reflected through HPWS, fosters reciprocal employee behavior in the form of enhanced performance. The moderating role of job specialization highlights that the effectiveness of HPWS may depend on the nature of employees' roles. This study's cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data limit the generalizability of findings. Despite using dyadic data, response bias may still be present. Future research should consider longitudinal designs and explore additional moderators like organizational culture or leadership style to enhance the understanding of the effectiveness of HPWS.

Keywords: Employee supervisor dyads, High Performance Work Systems (HPWS), Job performance, Job specialization, Social Exchange Theory (SET)

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High-performance work practices and employee innovative performance in Sri Lanka's banking sector: The moderating role of knowledge sharing

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In Sri Lanka, the banking sector plays a crucial role in driving economic growth by facilitating transactions, accumulating savings, and directing capital investments. Recent technological advancements, such as mobile and online banking, have heightened the necessity for innovation at the employee level, bolstered by efficient human resource management practices and the sharing of internal knowledge. Notwithstanding this trend, there exists a paucity of empirical investigations that examine the contributions of high-performance work practices to innovative performance within the banking sector in Sri Lanka. Anchored in Social Cognitive Theory and the Ability Motivation Opportunity framework, this research examines the impact of High-Performance Work Practices (HPWP), which encompass selective recruitment, training, performance-based incentives, and participatory decision-making, on the innovative performance of employees. Additionally, it examines whether knowledge sharing serves as a moderating variable in this relationship. A cross-sectional survey was administered to 250 bank employees using the convenience sampling technique. Data analysis conducted using SPSS indicated a significant positive correlation between HPWP and employee innovative performance ($r = 0.48, p < .01$). Furthermore, knowledge sharing significantly moderated this relationship ($\beta = 0.27, p < .01$), implying that the incidence of innovation is enhanced when employees actively engage in knowledge sharing. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on HRM and innovation in emerging economies. It offers pragmatic insights for banking institutions striving to cultivate innovation through the implementation of strategic HR systems and the promotion of collaborative cultures. However, the study's dependence on a single-sector, cross-sectional design constrains its generalizability and causal inference. Future investigations could adopt longitudinal methodologies across a variety of service sectors for better findings.

Keywords: Banking industry, High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs), Innovative performance, Knowledge sharing, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

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Simulation of a queuing system using ARENA: A case study from the Sri Lankan retail industry

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The purpose of this study was to optimize customer flow by minimizing unnecessary waiting times in a popular Sri Lankan bookshop, where long queues during peak hours have led to customer dissatisfaction. The study aimed to identify inefficiencies in the current system and propose feasible queue management strategies that improve service delivery without substantial resource or infrastructure investments. Data were gathered from two counters through direct observation of 150 customer interactions per service counter during a typical weekend, documenting key service timestamps including arrival, initiation, and completion of service. A quantitative research design was employed, and a simulation model replicating real-time customer behavior was developed using ARENA software. Three queuing strategies were evaluated: assigning two resource persons only to the busiest counter, assigning two resource persons to each counter, and adding a new counter staffed by one person. The current system showed inefficiencies, with an average waiting time of 9.67 minutes and an average of 46 customers in the system. Among the alternatives, the second strategy, which involves allocating two resource persons to each counter, demonstrated the best balance, with reduced waiting times of approximately one minute, improved workload distribution, and cost-effectiveness. The findings of this study align with international applications of simulation-based queuing models, such as optimizing postal service operations in Slovakia and improving banking service efficiency in Brazil. These examples illustrate the broader applicability of simulation in addressing customer waiting challenges across diverse service sectors and countries. Overall, the study highlights that simulation modelling provides practical, evidence-based insights for optimizing retail operations in resource-limited contexts. The implications suggest that adopting such strategies can enhance customer satisfaction, reduce employee workload pressure, and help managers make economically viable decisions for sustainable retail service improvement.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Operations management, Queue simulation, Retail optimization

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External auditors' perception of adopting computer-assisted audit techniques in Sri Lanka: Moderating effect of demographic factors

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The technological environment change leads auditors to advance their audit profession by using electronic systems to achieve better output more effectively. However, many auditors in developing countries prevent the use of Computer-Assisted Audit Techniques (CAATs) and rely on traditional techniques, stating the complexity of the task and the lack of proper training and understanding of CAATs. This research aimed to identify the perception of external auditors in Sri Lanka towards the behavior of adopting CAATs in their work, while examining the factors that impact the adoption of CAATs. CAAT's behavior of adoption can be identified through the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model. The research population consisted of external auditors currently working in Sri Lanka. Data were collected through a convenience sample of 132 external auditors via an online survey, and SPSS was used to analyze the data. The external auditors' perception of adopting CAATs was favorable, with a mean value of 4.09. The regression analysis indicated that all the independent variables —performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, and individual factors — significantly impacted the dependent variable, behavioral intention to adopt CAATs (p -value < 0.05). The correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between all the independent variables and the dependent variable. Thus, matching the performance expectancy of external auditors, introducing user-friendly tools, providing organizational support, and providing higher resources could be some ways audit firms could increase the perception of external auditors on using CAATs. The moderating effect of demographic factors, including age, gender, and experience, on the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was examined using hierarchical regression analysis. However, age only moderated the relationship between effort expectancy and behavioural intention to adopt CAATs.

Keywords: Auditor's Perception, CAATs Adoption, Demographic factors, External auditors, UTAUT

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Relationship between digital literacy and career adaptability of middle-aged and older employees with perceived organizational support as a moderator

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Amidst increasing digital transformations in the workplace, the presence of middle-aged and older employees (aged 45 to 64 years) is on the rise due to demographic shifts. Many of these employees are actively engaged in upskilling themselves to remain relevant and effective in the workplace. In response, organizations are taking deliberate measures to support their adaptations to these changes. However, the extent to which their digital literacy is associated with adaptability in the workplace, and how organizational support relates to this situation, remains underexplored. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between digital literacy and career adaptability among middle-aged and older employees (aged 45-64), as well as the role of perceived organizational support in moderating this relationship. Grounded in life course theory and adopting a quantitative approach, data were collected from a sample of public and private sector employees in the Colombo District, using both an online questionnaire (administered via Google Forms) and a physical survey (n = 305). The results reveal a strong correlation between digital literacy and career adaptability among middle-aged and older employees, suggesting that those with higher levels of digital literacy are more effective in navigating changing work roles and tasks. Perceived organizational support was found to moderate this relationship. The study concludes that enhancing digital literacy among middle-aged and older employees can strengthen their career adaptability, and organizational support plays a key role in this association. Furthermore, it is recommended that middle-aged and older employees take steps to enhance their digital literacy in order to remain effective in the workplace.

Keywords: Career adaptability, Digital literacy, Middle-aged and older employees, Perceived organizational support

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Unlocking Sri Lanka's tourism potential through influencer marketing: A study of challenges and opportunities in promoting Sri Lanka as a tourist destination

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As Sri Lanka navigates its post-pandemic landscape and confronts its internal economic obstacles, the significance of the hospitality and tourism sector remains a vital contributor to the country's economy. With the rapid rise of social media platforms and digital content creators, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool in shaping global perceptions of Sri Lanka. This study was aimed to explore how influencer marketing would shape the tourism industry. The challenges faced by influencers and tourists, and the opportunities of influencer marketing as a tool in promoting tourism were specifically examined, adopting a qualitative methodology. Data collection was done using semi-structured interviews conducted with twenty-six participants, comprising both local and global travel influencers, tourists, and industry experts. The data collected was analyzed thematically. The results highlighted that the influencers had to face several challenges in terms of ethical and legal, economic, environmental, engagement, exposure, and collaboration issues. The tourists encountered several issues, namely sponsored content disclosure, influencer bias, transparency, communication barriers, mismatch, and lack of information. Even with those challenges, the study uncovered nine areas of opportunity, including community building and collaboration, enhanced tourist experience, sustainable tourism, technological integration, business and economic development, niche tourism, government engagement and policy support, strategic marketing, and a focus on micro-influencers. The study's findings offered insights on the subject that were of practical and academic importance. The findings emphasized the necessity for ethical practices, honest communication, and accountability among influencers to foster credibility and to support responsible tourism marketing. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of systematic collaboration among stakeholders, the professionalization of influencer roles, and the development of strategic policy frameworks. By addressing those factors, influencer marketing would serve as a powerful and sustainable tool to strengthen Sri Lanka's tourism sector, contributing to its growth and resilience.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, Sri Lankan tourism, Travel influencers.

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Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting on the financial performance of licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a vital component of organizational performance, particularly within the financial sector. This study examined the impact of CSR reporting on the financial performance of licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. By focusing on three key dimensions —environmental, economic, and social- it illustrates how sustainable and ethical practices contribute to the success of banks in this context. The research aimed to determine whether CSR reporting has a positive effect on the financial performance of banks. It was hypothesized that an increased disclosure of CSR practices would lead to improved financial outcomes, as measured by Return on Assets (ROA). Additionally, bank size was considered as a variable that might influence the strength of this impact. The study sought to provide valuable insights into the practical implications of CSR within the Sri Lankan banking industry. To address these questions, data were collected from the annual reports and official websites of 22 licensed commercial banks over a ten-year period, from 2014 to 2023. CSR disclosures were categorized into environmental, economic, and social dimensions, while ROA served as an indicator of financial performance. The findings revealed that CSR reporting had a significant positive impact on financial performance. Notably, the economic and social dimensions of CSR were particularly influential, while the environmental dimension exhibited a positive but more variable effect. Larger banks demonstrated greater benefits from CSR initiatives, suggesting that the size of the organization can also enhance the effectiveness of these practices. This study demonstrates that CSR reporting not only contributes to societal and environmental improvement but also has a positive impact on financial growth. Accordingly, banks are encouraged to strengthen their CSR efforts, especially in the economic and social areas, to achieve better financial outcomes.

Keywords: Bank size, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Financial performance, Return on Assets (ROA)

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The relationship between fraud risk management practices and financial performance of banking sector in Sri Lanka

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This study explores the relationship between fraud risk management practices and the financial performance of the banking sector in Sri Lanka. Fraud risk management practices were categorized into preventive, detective, and responsive practices, which served as the independent variables in this study. Financial performance was measured by ROA, and it served as the dependent variable of the study. A research gap exists in investigating the relationship between fraud risk management practices and financial performance in the banking sector of Sri Lanka, as no prior studies have addressed this within the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to investigate the relationship between preventive, detective, and responsive fraud risk management practices and the financial performance of the banking sector in Sri Lanka. The study incorporated secondary data from annual reports to obtain ROA for 2023, and primary data collected through Likert-scale questionnaires. The sample consisted of all thirty banks in the banking sector. A quantitative methodology was utilized. The collected data were analysed using SPSS version 23. Spearman's rho correlation analysis was used to identify the relationship. The findings revealed strong positive relationships between all three fraud risk management practices and financial performance, with preventive practices showing the strongest association. The results emphasize the importance of a comprehensive fraud risk management framework that integrates proactive prevention, effective detection, and timely response measures. Future researchers could apply the study across different industries and explore additional microeconomic factors and longer time horizons to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their relationship with financial performance.

Keywords: Detective fraud risk management practices, Financial performance, Preventive fraud risk management practices, Responsive Fraud risk management practices, Return on Asset

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The Impact of Intellectual Capital on Financial Performance in Listed Insurance Companies in Sri Lanka

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The objective of this study is to examine the impact of intellectual capital (IC) and its main components - capital employed efficiency (VACA), human capital efficiency (VAHU) and structural capital efficiency (STVA) on financial performance with a specific focus on return on assets (ROA) as a performance indicator. This study analyzes data collected from 10 insurance companies listed on the Sri Lanka Stock Exchange over a 12-year period from 2012 to 2023. The Value-Added Intellectual Coefficient (VAIC) method is used to evaluate the financial performance of these insurance companies. The financial performance of insurance companies in Sri Lanka is assessed using Return on Assets (ROA) as the key indicator. To test the hypothesis of the study, descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were applied, which provide a comprehensive evaluation of the relationships between the variables. To analyze the impact of intellectual capital on financial performance, the study was conducted with secondary data obtained from annual reports in CSE. The results reflect that the value-added intellectual coefficient with its components has a positive impact on financial performance. Among them, human capital and structural capital significantly affected the financial performance of the insurance sector in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, Capital employed is not significant. Overall, the intellectual capital and its components are significantly affected to financial performance in listed insurance companies in Sri Lanka. The main limitation of this study is the use of the VAIC method, which has certain shortcomings in measuring intellectual capital. Additionally, the research is limited to listed insurance companies in Sri Lanka, making the findings less generalizable. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights for future research, supports cross-industry comparisons, and enhances understanding of how intellectual capital can improve financial performance, particularly in emerging economies.

Keywords: Financial Performance, Insurance Companies, Intellectual Capital, Sri Lanka, VAIC, Value Added

Impact of forensic accounting knowledge on fraud management in Sri Lanka

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Fraud management in companies in Sri Lanka is an issue of contemporary importance. This study aimed to look at the effects of forensic accounting expertise on the effectiveness of fraud management. The study used a deductive methodology and relied on information gathered from 249 accounting professionals working in Sri Lanka's dynamic financial environment. Within the framework of this study, fraud management was positioned as the dependent variable, while accounting skills, legal background, knowledge of procedures, and forensic accounting expertise emerged as the independent variables of particular interest. To unravel the intricate dynamics of this relationship, a multifaceted analytical approach was employed, encompassing descriptive statistics, factor analysis, Correlation test, and the robust inferential technique of multiple linear regression. Specifically, the findings unveiled a noteworthy and statistically significant impact of legal background, comprehensive knowledge of procedural intricacies, and a profound understanding of forensic accounting principles on the effectiveness of fraud detection mechanisms. This empirical evidence underscored the pivotal role played by forensic accounting knowledge in equipping professionals to detect and mitigate fraudulent activities, thus fortifying the financial integrity of organizations in Sri Lanka. Notably, while legal background, procedural awareness, and forensic accounting knowledge emerged as formidable contributors to effective fraud management, this study showed that the Accounting Skills of practitioners do not exhibit a statistically significant influence on the outcome of fraud management. This finding, though unexpected, contributes valuable nuance to our understanding of the factors that shape effective fraud management practices.

Keywords: Forensic Accounting knowledge, fraud management, Sri Lanka

Improving sustainable procurement in the context of the Bangladesh public sector organizations

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Bangladesh is a South Asian country which is the 33rd economy in the world and spends about 25 billion US Dollars on public procurement annually. During procurement public sector organizations traditionally consider lowest price, ignoring social and environmental impacts. The United Nations in 2015 declared 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 associated targets; the Goal 12.7 emphasized to promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities of the countries. Sustainable procurement is an approach that takes economic, environmental and social sustainability into account when making any purchasing decisions. Maximum of the developing countries including Bangladesh did not make any specific provision for the consideration of environmental and social factors in making public procurement decision; this is why the study is required. The objective of this study is to develop a Framework for Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) in Bangladesh. A mixed-method has applied to collect qualitative primary information and then converted into quantitative data through LIKERT Analysis. One-sample t-test was conducted to examine whether various factors were supposed as barriers & drivers of SPP. Hypothesis testing analysis was also conducted to assess the significance of various barriers & drivers in promoting SPP. The study results found that the high cost of sustainable products, absence of clear laws, and the lack of knowledge as significant obstacles. Budgetary limitations and political resistance further hinder progress, while supplier resistance is viewed as a lesser concern. The study also found that Government policies and top management support emerge as the most influential drivers, alongside employee initiatives and societal awareness. Environmental management systems and alignment with United Nations goals also play a motivating role to implement SPP. The strong driver is that Bangladesh enacted Sustainable Public Procurement Policy and Sustainable Public Procurement Guide by giving responsibility to the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority for implementing SPP, but no Sustainable Public Procurement has been started till now. For gradual implementing SPP, procurement documents shall be made in line with SPP and SPP training to be provided to the employees of Public Procurement Organizations.

Key Words: Bangladesh, barriers, drivers, public procurement, sustainable procurement

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Impact of ESG Performance on Capital Structure: Evidence from Sri Lanka

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This study investigated the impact of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance on the capital structure decisions of listed companies in Sri Lanka, an emerging market increasingly embracing sustainability reporting in corporate practice. Guided by agency and trade-off theories, the study examined how the three ESG factors-environmental, social, and governance performance affect firms' debt and equity choices while taking industry type and firm size into account. Using 336 firm-year observations from the top 50 listed companies in the Colombo Stock Exchange during 2018-2024, the analysis adopted a quantitative approach based on secondary data extracted from the annual and sustainability reports. A Sustainability Reporting Scoring Model in line with Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards and World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) regulations was used to quantify ESG performance, and the debt-to-equity ratio served as a stand-in for capital structure. The hypotheses were tested using Panel Least Squares (PLS) regression, which was backed up by diagnostic tests for cross-sectional dependency, autocorrelation, and heteroskedasticity. The results revealed that firms with stronger governance frameworks tend to use more debt due to greater lender confidence and transparency. The results also showed that governance performance positively and significantly influences capital structure. Conversely, social performance and leverage showed a strong inverse relationship, suggesting that socially conscious businesses favor lower debt levels to maintain stakeholder trust. The relationship between environmental performance and capital structure was found to be generally negative or weakly associated. Furthermore, it was determined that, whereas business size and industry type may not significantly influence the ESG-capital structure link, larger and non-financial enterprises often maintain lower leverage. The results underscored the crucial role of governance in shaping financing strategies within developing economies, highlighting that social and environmental factors exert less consistent impact. The study contributes to the limited body of empirical research on ESG and finance in South Asia and offers insights for corporate leaders, investors, and policymakers to align sustainable initiatives with sound financial management.

Keywords: Capital Structure, Colombo Stock Exchange, ESG Performance, Sri Lanka

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The Moderating Role of Job Specialization on the Relationship Between Perceived High-Performance Work Systems and Employee Job Performance in Sri Lanka's Apparel Sector

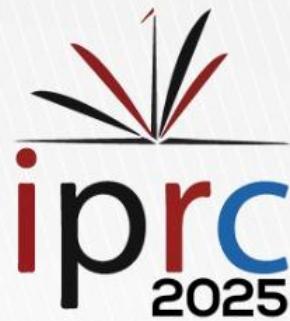
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In Sri Lanka's apparel sector, employee job performance is a critical determinant of productivity, quality, and competitiveness. Organizations increasingly adopt High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) to enhance employee outcomes. However, how employees perceive these systems and how individual job characteristics influence their effectiveness remain underexplored. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study investigated the relationship between employees' perception of HPWS and their job performance, examining job specialization as a moderating variable. Data were collected using the dyadic survey method, where employees responded to items on perceived HPWS and job specialization, while their immediate supervisors rated the employees' job performance. A total of 209 valid dyads (employee-supervisor pairs) were selected through convenience sampling, with 15 supervisors each evaluating the performance of multiple subordinates. The data were analyzed using SPSS. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between perceived HPWS and the employee's job performance, revealing a significant positive association ($r = 0.39, p < 0.01$). This indicated that higher perceptions of supportive and performance-oriented HR practices are linked to better employee performance. To assess the impact and interaction effects, regression analysis was employed. The results demonstrated that job specialization significantly moderated the effect of HPWS on job performance (interaction term $\beta = 0.24, p < 0.05$), indicating that the positive impact of HPWS on performance is stronger among employees in highly specialized roles. This study contributes to SET by emphasizing how perceived organizational support, as reflected through HPWS, fosters reciprocal employee behavior in the form of enhanced performance. The moderating role of job specialization highlights that the effectiveness of HPWS may depend on the nature of employees' roles. This study's cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data may have limited the generalizability of findings. Despite using dyad data, response bias may still be present. Future research should consider longitudinal designs and explore additional moderators like organizational culture or leadership style to enhance the understanding of HPWS effectiveness.

Keywords: High Performance Work Systems (HPWS), Job performance, Job specialization, Social Exchange Theory (SET)

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