

Young Accountants' Research Conference - 2026

Book of Abstracts



University of Sri Jayewardenepura

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ஸ்ரீ ஜயவர்த்தனபுர பல்கலைக்கழகம்

Young Accountants' Research Conference – 2026

Book of Abstracts

Department of Accounting
Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce
University of Sri Jayewardenepura
Nugegoda
Sri Lanka
<https://mgt.sjp.ac.lk/acc/>

16th February 2026

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Message from the Vice Chancellor University of Sri Jayewardenepura



It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to all participants of the Undergraduate Research Day (URD), conducted as part of the 22nd International Conference on Business Management (ICBM) 2026, hosted by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The URD is a meaningful platform that celebrates undergraduate scholarship and encourages young researchers to engage in inquiry, evidence-based reasoning, and academic communication skills that are essential for the future of our nation and the global community.

Aligned with the ICBM 2026 theme, “Inclusive and Responsible Management for a Circular Economy and Digital Future,” the URD reflects the importance of building research capacity from the early stages of higher education. Undergraduate research not only strengthens critical thinking and problem-solving but also nurtures responsible citizenship by encouraging students to examine real-world issues with curiosity, integrity, and social awareness.

The University of Sri Jayewardenepura remains committed to supporting academic excellence and creating opportunities for students to develop as confident, ethical, and competent knowledge creators. I am pleased to note that the URD brings together diverse research topics and innovative perspectives from our undergraduates, and I trust that the experience will motivate them to pursue further research, professional growth, and meaningful contributions to society.

I convey my sincere appreciation to the organising committee, departmental coordinators, supervisors, reviewers, and all staff members for their dedication to making the URD a success. I also congratulate all student presenters featured in this proceedings volume and wish them every success in their academic and professional journeys.

Senior Professor Pathmalal M. Manage
Vice Chancellor
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Message from the Dean Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce



On behalf of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC), University of Sri Jayewardenepura, I warmly welcome you to the Undergraduate Research Day (URD) held in conjunction with ICBM 2026. The URD is a proud academic initiative of the faculty that showcases the creativity, discipline, and commitment of our undergraduates as they present research conducted across multiple fields of business and management.

This year's overarching conference theme, "Inclusive and Responsible Management for a Circular Economy and Digital Future," provides an important context for undergraduate scholarship. Many of the challenges we face today—environmental pressures, social inequalities, governance concerns, and rapid technological change—require thoughtful analysis and evidence-based solutions. The URD encourages our students to contribute to these conversations early in their academic journeys, strengthening not only their research competence but also their sense of responsibility to society.

At FMSC, we place strong emphasis on cultivating a research culture that extends beyond postgraduate study. Through research supervision, methodological training, and academic platforms such as URD, we strive to empower students to develop analytical thinking, academic writing, and professional presentation skills that will benefit them in both academia and industry.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the URD organising team, departmental coordinators, supervisors, and evaluators for their support in ensuring the quality and success of this event. I also congratulate all student researchers whose work is presented in this proceedings volume, and I wish you a rewarding and inspiring URD experience.

Prof. Dushan Jayawickrama
Dean, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Message from the Co-Chairs of the International Conference on Business Management (ICBM) - 2026



We are pleased to present the Proceedings of the Undergraduate Research Day (URD) conducted as part of the 22nd International Conference on Business Management (ICBM) 2026, organised by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The URD is designed to provide an encouraging and scholarly platform for undergraduates to share their research, build confidence in academic communication, and experience the standards of academic dissemination and peer review.

Guided by the ICBM 2026 theme, “Inclusive and Responsible Management for a Circular Economy and Digital Future,” the URD recognises that responsible and inclusive solutions require contributions from all levels of the academic community, including emerging researchers. The student papers featured in this volume reflect a diverse range of topics and approaches, demonstrating the ability of undergraduate research to generate valuable insights relevant to organisations, communities, and the broader economy.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the supervisors, reviewers, evaluators, departmental coordinators, and organising committee members for their commitment and support. We also commend all student presenters for their effort, curiosity, and professionalism in completing and presenting their research. We trust that the URD experience will inspire our undergraduates to pursue lifelong learning, uphold academic integrity, and continue contributing to knowledge creation in meaningful ways.

We hope this proceeding volume serves as a lasting record of their scholarly achievement and encouragement for future research endeavours.

Dr. Isuru Manawadu, Co-Chair, ICBM 2026

Dr. Sepali Bamunusinghe, Co-Chair, ICBM 2026

International Conference on Business Management (ICBM) 2026

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Message from the Head Department of Accounting



I take great pleasure in extending my congratulations to the "Young Accountants' Research Conference 2025" (YARC 2026), the sixth undergraduates' research forum hosted by the Department of Accounting in conjunction with the 22nd International Conference in Business Management at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The primary objective of this event is to cultivate a research culture among the undergraduates of the Department. Therefore, I am delighted to convey this congratulatory message to the YARC 2026.

Recognizing its leadership in Sri Lankan accounting education, the Department identifies that fostering a research-centered learning culture will encourage students to develop critical, logical, and innovative thinking skills while improving their academic writing skills. This approach will contribute to the establishment of a culture of excellence in scholarly pursuits. YARC provides an opportunity for emerging researchers to share their novel findings related to the field of accounting. By presenting their scholarly contributions, these individuals can unlock pathways to pursue postgraduate studies and careers in various domains.

I humbly express my aspiration that this research conference fosters innovative learning experiences and sustains intellectual discussions among academicians, scholars, and students. On behalf of the Department of Accounting, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the presenters who have accomplished their final-year research studies.

Furthermore, I commend and express my gratitude to the organizing committee of YARC 2026: Ms. Amali Henadirage, Ms. Nathasha Kaumadi, Mr. Gayantha Jayasooriya, Mr. Janith Dayarathna, and Mr. Akila Gamage for their dedication and tireless efforts in ensuring the success of this event.

Prof. D.N. Samudrage
Head, Department of Accounting
Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Organising Committee - YARC - 2026



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Mr. Akila Gamage

Table of Contents

TECHNICAL SESSION 1 – CORPORATE REPORTING AND TAXATION

Integrated thinking and firm performance: Evidence from Sri Lankan listed companies	3
--	---

Abeywickrama, J.P.L.N. and Cooray, T.

Responses of investors and managers to the integration of ESG factors into company valuation: The case of a business conglomerate in Sri Lanka	4
---	---

Alagiyawanna, T.P. and Senarathne, S.

The impact of corporate social responsibility on corporate tax planning: Empirical evidence from Sri Lankan listed companies	5
---	---

Devadason, R.V. and Udayashantha, P.D.C.

Sectoral resilience of listed companies in Sri Lanka over external shocks with reference to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic crisis	6
---	---

Dilhara, J.A.S. and Udayashantha, P.D.C.

How consumer food sector companies connect integrated reporting with the SDGs and the challenges involved: A case study of Ceylon Cold Stores PLC	7
--	---

Kapukotuwa S.K. and Samudrage D.N.

The impact of mandating the Tax Identification Number (TIN) on taxpayer compliance	8
---	---

Liyanaarachchi, L.L.P.N. and Gunarathne, N.

Factors affecting the voluntary tax compliance of individual taxpayers in the Western Province of Sri Lanka	9
--	---

Pethiyagoda, W.G.R.N. and Sandaruwan, H.M.T.G.C.

Impact of firm-specific factors on the financial performance of listed material companies in CSE Sri Lanka	10
---	----

Rathnayaka, M.N. and Herath, M.A.N.R.

The impact of tax awareness on tax perception among non-accounting undergraduates: A survey based on state universities in Sri Lanka	11
---	----

Thathsarani, L.P.P.N. and Udayashantha, P.D.C.

TECHNICAL SESSION 2 – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, AUDITING AND ASSURANCE

Forensic accounting knowledge & skills, techniques, experience related to cyber fraud: Evidence from the Sri Lankan banking and finance sector	13
---	----

Jayasinghe, D.N. and Ajward, R.

External auditors' perception of the responsibility for fraud detection in public listed companies in Sri Lanka	14
--	----

Naveendri, W.T. and Senarathne, S.

Factors affecting workplace asset misappropriation in Sri Lanka: The moderating role of	
--	--

perceived strength of internal controls	15
<i>Prabhath, P.A.D.C. and Ajward, R.</i>	
Impact of family financial socialization and financial literacy on awareness of investment scams among management university students in Sri Lanka	16
<i>Sathsarane, G.M.H. and Kariyawasam, A.H.N.</i>	
Emotional intelligence and occupational fraud tendency: A survey of young accountants in Sri Lanka	17
<i>Kumudeshka, K.S. and Sandaruwan, H.M.T.G.C.</i>	
The impact of time pressure on audit quality with professional commitment as a moderator: An empirical study in Sri Lanka	18
<i>Silva, S.D.S. and Senevirathne, S.M.C.P.</i>	
Navigating the nexus: Related party transactions through corporate governance lenses	19
<i>Wijsekara, M.H. and Kariyawasam, A.H.N.</i>	
TECHNICAL SESSION 3 – SUSTAINABILITY AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING	
From nature to numbers: Integrating benefit-based tree valuation into accounting practices for non-plantation companies	21
<i>De Silva, N.D.I.J. and Manawadu, I.</i>	
Perceptions and awareness of sustainable development among accounting undergraduates.....	22
<i>Fernando, R.M.N.U. and Samudrage, D.N.</i>	
The intention to adopt environmental accounting practices of tea smallholders: Evidence from Sri Lanka	23
<i>Madanayaka, M.G.P.C. and Cooray, T.</i>	
Barriers to implementing sustainable procurement in urban councils of North Western province, Sri Lanka.....	24
<i>Piumini, K.B. and Manawadu, I.</i>	
The impact of factors affecting the readiness for the adaptation of decentralized financing among listed companies in Sri Lanka	25
<i>Sandamini, A.M.N. and Gunawardana, K.D.</i>	
How internal stakeholders contribute to sustainable development goals achievement in plantation sector companies: a case study of Kelani Valley Plantation PLC.....	26
<i>Wetakepotha, W.G.T.B. and Samudrage, D.N.</i>	
TECHNICAL SESSION 4 - TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN ACCOUNTING	
Exploration of computerized accounting systems in the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka	28
<i>Faham, M.H.M.Y. and Kariyawasam, A.H.N.</i>	
Exploring the impact of accounting benefits on ERP user satisfaction: A study of Sri Lankan organizations across accounting and finance roles.....	29

<i>Gunarathne, M.K.D.S. and Karunarathne, K.</i>	
The impact of ERP systems on financial performance and supply chain efficiency in Sri Lankan companies	30
<i>Gamyra, M.M.H. and Karunarathne, K.</i>	
The impact of enterprise resource planning systems implementation on management accounting decisions in Sri Lankan manufacturing organizations	31
<i>Jayasinghe, K.C. and Gunawardana, K.D.</i>	
Factors affecting the adoption of cloud-based ERP systems for accounting reporting in companies listed on the CSE	32
<i>Kumarasinghe, M.K.P.N. and Gunawardana, K.D.</i>	
The impact of the level of digital transformation on labour productivity in publicly listed companies in Sri Lanka	33
<i>Marasinghe, M.C.S. and Senaratne, S.</i>	
Impact of business analytics on organizational financial performance of S&P SL20 indexed CSE listed companies in Sri Lanka	34
<i>Munasinghe, T.N. and Gunawardana, K.D.</i>	
Leveraging data analytics and visualization to optimize risk management practices: Perspectives from the consumer food and beverage sector.....	35
<i>Vidushan, O.C. and Gunarathne, N.</i>	
Leveraging data analytics and visualization to optimize risk management practices: perspectives from the health sector	36
<i>Perera, D.G.M.M. and Gunarathne, N.</i>	
Analysing the behavioral intention of accounting students towards the use of artificial intelligence in the future accounting profession.....	37
<i>Tharuka, M.H.R. and Gunarathne, N.</i>	
TECHNICAL SESSION 5 – ACCOUNTING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPME	
Skills and attitudes acquisition disparities of accounting internships: Implications of duration of internships and sector.....	39
<i>Abeywickrama, H.A.L.I. and Herath, M.A.N.R.</i>	
Factors discouraging accounting undergraduates from enrolling in and continuing professional accounting courses: Evidence from Sri Lankan Accounting undergraduates	40
<i>Harshani, G.L. and Manawadu, I.</i>	
The influence of ethical ideology and emotional intelligence on the ethical judgment of future accountants in Sri Lanka	41
<i>Jayasuriya, H.M.M.L. and Herath, M.A.N.R.</i>	
Perceptions of accounting undergraduates on the auditing profession: An empirical study of state universities in the Western province of Sri Lanka	42
<i>Kariyawasam, D.I. and Senaratne, S.</i>	

Case of a national university in Sri Lanka disseminating academic knowledge to make a difference in professional life in public practice	43
<i>Madushani, H.H. and Cooray, S.</i>	
Accounting undergraduates' perceptions of the value of accreditation exemptions: A case study from a Sri Lankan university	44
<i>Nimnada, H.M.N. and Henadirage, A.</i>	
Role of university accounting education in developing professionals in the sphere of public practice in Sri Lanka	45
<i>Perera, P.J.M. and Cooray, S.</i>	
Exploring students' selection of taxation as a career through the lens of social cognitive career theory: A case study of a Sri Lankan university	46
<i>Rajapaksha, R.H.V.T.D. and Seneviratne, S.M.C.P.</i>	
Case of a national university in Sri Lanka disseminating practical professional knowledge to make a difference in professional life in public practice	47
<i>Ranasinghe, Y. and Cooray, S.</i>	

**TECHNICAL SESSION 1 – CORPORATE REPORTING AND
TAXATION**

Integrated thinking and firm performance: Evidence from Sri Lankan listed companies

Abeywickrama, J.P.L.N. and Cooray, T.
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

Integrated thinking facilitates integrated reporting (IR) by showing how an organization creates or erodes value over the short, medium, and long term. Despite its growing importance, there is a dearth of empirical research that measures the extent of integrated thinking and examines its impact on firm performance. This study addresses this gap by assessing the level of integrated thinking and analyzing its impact on firm performance among Sri Lankan public listed companies (PLCs) that publish integrated reports.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study adopted a quantitative approach. The sample comprised 60 PLCs that follow the International Integrated Reporting Council Framework and publish integrated reports for three consecutive years, from 2021/22 to 2023/24. Data was collected from the published integrated reports of the sample companies using manual content analysis. Integrated thinking was measured using a pre-defined schematic. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and panel regression were used as analytical strategies.

Findings:

The findings indicate that Sri Lankan PLCs that adopt IR have a moderate to high level of integrated thinking. However, the level is not consistent across firms as some demonstrate substantially higher integrated thinking than others. Further, integrated thinking has a positive impact on firm performance, suggesting that higher integrated thinking aligns with stronger financial performance.

Practical implications:

This study adds practical value by focusing on Sri Lanka, a developing country with a high IR adoption rate. The findings show that IR works best when it is supported by strong integrated thinking, and that companies with higher integrated thinking tend to show better firm performance. These insights are useful for managers and policymakers because they focus on key areas that can improve performance, strengthen decision-making, enhance stakeholder engagement, and support better overall business results.

Originality/ value:

This is a pioneering attempt to evaluate the impact of integrated thinking on firm performance based on a developing country that has a high IR adoption.

Keywords: Firm Performance, Integrated Reporting, Integrated Thinking, Sri Lanka, Value Creation

Responses of investors and managers to the integration of ESG factors into company valuation: The case of a business conglomerate in Sri Lanka

Alagiyawanna, T.P. and Senaratne, S.
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

This study examines how the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors are integrated into company valuation and the responses of investors and managers to such integration. While prior literature extensively addresses ESG integration in valuation models, limited attention has been given to stakeholder perceptions after integration. Accordingly, this study addresses the research questions of which ESG factors are integrated into company valuation, how ESG integration is operationalized within a valuation framework, and how investors and managers respond to ESG-integrated valuation outcomes.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study adopts a qualitative case study approach based on a Sri Lankan business conglomerate that follows an integrated sustainability framework. ESG factors are identified using a disclosure index developed in accordance with IFRS S1: General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability-related Financial Information. ESG integration is implemented within a Discounted Cash Flow valuation model through adjustments to discount rates and cash flows. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with the managers and the investors of this business conglomerate to assess stakeholder responses to the valuation outcomes following ESG integration.

Findings:

The findings indicate that the case organization demonstrates approximately 80% compliance with IFRS S1 disclosure requirements, reflecting structured ESG governance, strategy, risk management, and metrics and targets. Integration of ESG factors into the valuation model influences key valuation parameters, including the weighted average cost of capital, leading to observable changes in firm value. Investor responses highlight ESG integration as a mechanism for risk mitigation and long-term value creation, while managers perceive ESG integration as enhancing corporate legitimacy and reputation. Despite these positive perceptions, challenges remain in quantifying ESG factors and ensuring consistency across disclosure frameworks.

Practical implications:

The study provides insights for practitioners on incorporating ESG considerations into valuation practices using IFRS S1-aligned disclosures. The findings highlight the importance of structured sustainability reporting and support the use of ESG-integrated valuation models in investment decision-making, while also identifying challenges faced in the measurement and standardization of ESG factors.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes to the ESG valuation literature by combining an IFRS S1-based disclosure index, DCF valuation analysis, and stakeholder perceptions within a developing country context. It offers empirical evidence on investor and manager responses to ESG-integrated valuation, where a gap currently exists in research.

Keywords: Company Valuation, Discounted Cash Flow, ESG Integration, IFRS S1, Investor Response, Manager Response, Sri Lanka

The impact of corporate social responsibility on corporate tax planning: Empirical evidence from Sri Lankan listed companies

Devadason, R.V. and Udayashantha, P.D.C.

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

Recent studies suggest that business organizations have been motivated to invest in corporate social responsibility activities as a measure of minimizing their corporate tax payment to the government. This study focuses on identifying the nature of the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Tax Planning among Sri Lankan listed companies.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The population for this study consisted of the public listed companies in the Colombo Stock Exchange in Sri Lanka, excluding companies in the Banking and Finance industry, due to their unique regulatory environment and accounting standards that differ significantly from those of other listed companies. Accordingly, a sample of 100 listed companies based on market capitalization was considered for this study. Data were collected from the annual and sustainability reports of the sample companies, which were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Findings:

Findings from the study point out that there is no significant relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Tax planning among Sri Lankan listed companies.

Practical implications:

The findings from this study imply that companies invest in corporate social responsibility activities, possibly due to other reasons, such as brand enhancement, but with no intention of minimizing their tax expenses, thus providing evidence for the need for further research to be carried out in determining the true intentions of organizations behind their investment in corporate social responsibility activities.

Originality/ value:

There is a dearth of studies on the relationship between Corporate Social responsibility and Corporate Tax planning in developing countries like Sri Lanka. Thus, this study contributes to existing literature by providing evidence on the nature of the relationship between Corporate Social responsibility and Corporate Tax planning among Sri Lankan listed companies.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Tax Planning, Developing Countries, Sri Lanka

Sectoral resilience of listed companies in Sri Lanka over external shocks with reference to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic crisis

Dilhara, J.A.S. and Udayashantha, P.D.C.

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

The COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent economic crisis altered the global financial landscape. Sri Lanka experienced the same impact of the pandemic with its unique economic downturn fueled by many country-specific factors. The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the sectoral performance of the companies listed in the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) during the period from 2016 to 2024, segmenting into four critical phases: pre-pandemic, pandemic, economic crisis, and post-economic crisis.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The research utilized quantitative methods such as descriptive statistics to evaluate the sector-wise performance through the aspects of risk and return. Descriptive statistics captured average sectoral returns and their variability, while the Generalized Autoregressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity (GARCH) model was employed as a secondary measure to validate and compare volatility across industries.

Findings:

The analysis revealed a heterogeneous sectoral response to external shocks. While the pandemic initially disrupted the market, most sectors recorded relatively stronger performance during this phase. In contrast, the economic crisis led to widespread declines, with most sectors generating negative returns. Real estate, banks, and retailing exhibited the weakest resilience, reflecting poor returns and heightened volatility, whereas telecommunication services, food and staples retailing, and materials emerged as the most resilient sectors.

Practical implications:

The findings assist investors in identifying resilient sectors for portfolio diversification during crises. Policymakers may use the insights to design targeted sector-specific recovery measures, while corporate leaders may leverage the evidence to enhance risk management and strategic decision-making during periods of economic uncertainty.

Originality/ value:

The study produced valuable insights for investors in building their investment portfolios, policymakers in determining recovery actions for a crisis, and corporate leaders in driving their organizations through uncertainties to tackle similar uncertain circumstances in the future.

Keywords: COVID-19, CSE, Economic Crisis, Sectoral Resilience

How consumer food sector companies connect integrated reporting with the SDGs and the challenges involved: A case study of Ceylon Cold Stores PLC

Kapukotuwa S.K. and Samudrage D.N.

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

This study explores how the case company has connected integrated reporting with Sustainable Development Goals and how Integrated Capitals were connected with SDGs. The study further explores the challenges they have encountered during the preparation of integrated reports in past periods and how to overcome the challenges by utilizing the recommendations provided.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

A case study approach was followed to maintain an in-depth understanding of the main research objectives. The data collection used to derive the findings was primarily based on the semi-structured interviews with five participants from the empirical site and on analyzing the documentation published by the organization. The data analysis was done under the theoretical framework of legitimacy theory.

Findings:

The key findings of the study include the integrated reporting process and the process of SDG reporting of the empirical site. It explains how the empirical site has designed the process in terms of its strategic focus and compliance requirements. It further includes that the challenges encountered were the collection of data from different parties inside the organization, validating the accuracy of the provided information from a financial lens, and maintaining the structure of the integrated report while adhering to constant changes in disclosure requirements due to global changes to the concepts.

Practical implications:

The study highlights the evolution of reporting practices relating to Integrated Capital and SDGs within the company, offering guidance for others seeking to adopt similar approaches, while also capturing diverse stakeholder perspectives on the process. It also highlights the challenges of the process, making it convenient for other organizations to derive their practices by addressing the challenges upfront.

Originality/ value:

The originality of this research lies in the qualitative and industry-specific lens, unlike much of the existing literature that adopts quantitative or mixed method approaches. The study provides insights into an in-depth analysis of designing the Integrated Reporting and SDG process of an organization, and upfront explanations on the possible challenges.

Keywords: Case Study, Integrated Reporting (IR), Legitimacy Theory, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

The impact of mandating the Tax Identification Number (TIN) on taxpayer compliance

Liyanaarachchi, L.L.P.N. and Gunarathne, N.

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

This study examines the impact of mandating the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) on taxpayer compliance among self-employed individuals in Sri Lanka. The research is motivated by the need to understand whether the compulsory implementation of the TIN enhances compliance behavior and to identify the key challenges taxpayers face in adopting the system within a developing country context.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study adopts an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach. In the quantitative phase, primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 120 self-employed individuals in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The data were analysed using simple linear regression techniques in SPSS to assess the relationship between taxpayer awareness, system user-friendliness, the legal environment, and tax compliance. Based on the quantitative results, respondents were categorised according to their compliance intentions. In the qualitative phase, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into the motivations and barriers influencing TIN adoption. The study is theoretically grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the TCOS framework.

Findings:

The findings indicate that mandating the TIN has a positive influence on taxpayer compliance; however, its effectiveness is significantly shaped by taxpayer awareness, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use of the system. The qualitative findings reveal multiple barriers to TIN adoption, including technological challenges such as limited access to digital infrastructure and low digital literacy; social challenges such as mistrust in government institutions; organisational and commercial constraints related to inadequate record-keeping systems and perceived compliance costs; and personal challenges such as low tax literacy and resistance to formalisation. These challenges moderate the overall impact of the TIN on compliance behavior.

Practical implications:

The study provides important implications for policymakers and tax authorities by highlighting the need to improve taxpayer education, simplify TIN registration and usage processes, and strengthen institutional support mechanisms. Addressing the identified barriers could enhance voluntary compliance and improve the overall effectiveness of digital tax administration initiatives in Sri Lanka.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes to the limited empirical literature on TIN implementation and tax compliance in developing economies by providing evidence from Sri Lanka using a mixed-methods approach. By integrating behavioral and technological perspectives, the study offers context-specific insights that are valuable for both academic research and tax policy formulation.

Keywords: Taxpayer Compliance, Tax Identification Number, Taxpayer Awareness

Factors affecting the voluntary tax compliance of individual taxpayers in the Western Province of Sri Lanka

Pethiyagoda, W.G.R.N. and Sandaruwan, H.M.T.G.C.

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

Voluntary tax compliance, a critical aspect of tax administration, ensures sufficient revenue for public goods and services without the need for coercive measures. Each country has its own tax rules and regulations, as well as a unique strategy for managing tax compliance. In response to that, this study mainly focuses on examining the factors that influence voluntary tax compliance among individual taxpayers under two categories, namely socio-demographic factors and economic determinant factors.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study's population consisted of individual taxpayers aged 18 years and older in the Western province of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, a sample that consisted of 202 taxpayers was selected using a convenience sampling strategy. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data, which were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings:

Key findings from the study indicate that among socio-demographic factors, age, education level, and occupational status have significant positive impacts on voluntary tax compliance. However, gender and religious background do not show a significant relationship with tax compliance. Among economic-determinant factors, tax rates, the tax system, and trust in government authorities play critical roles. Additionally, the study highlights that those with fixed monthly incomes demonstrate higher voluntary compliance levels, while those with variable incomes exhibit lower compliance.

Practical implications:

The findings of this study will be helpful in informing a variety of parties, including organizations, policymakers, government entities, educators & etc. This study will help create a populace that is better informed and accountable, improve the integrity of the tax system, and boost government revenue, which is essential for sustainable development and the provision of public services.

Originality/ value:

This study adds value by delivering context-specific insights into voluntary tax compliance in Sri Lanka, an underexplored setting. It professionally integrates socio-demographic and economic determinant factors to inform more effective and targeted tax policy design.

Keywords: Economic-Determinant Factors, Socio-Demographic Factors, Voluntary Tax Compliance

Impact of firm-specific factors on the financial performance of listed material companies in CSE Sri Lanka

Rathnayaka, M.N. and Herath, M.A.N.R.

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

This study examines the impact of firm-specific factors on the financial performance of listed material sector companies in Sri Lanka. Given the mixed empirical evidence in prior literature, the study aims to bridge the existing knowledge gap by investigating how firm size, firm age, sales growth, leverage, and liquidity influence financial performance, while also assessing the moderating effect of interest rates.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study adopts a quantitative, deductive research approach using secondary data collected from the annual reports of material sector companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange. The sample comprises 17 listed material companies over a seven-year period from 2017 to 2023. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed using SPSS version 27 to test the hypothesized relationships and moderating effects.

Findings:

The findings reveal that firm size has a significant positive impact on financial performance measured by Return on Assets, while leverage and liquidity exhibit a significant negative impact. Firm age and sales growth show an insignificant relationship with financial performance. Further, interest rate demonstrates a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between leverage and liquidity and financial performance, whereas its moderating effect on firm size, firm age, and sales growth is statistically insignificant.

Practical implications:

The results provide valuable insights for managers, investors, and policymakers by highlighting the importance of managing internal firm characteristics and capital structure to enhance financial performance, particularly in an environment of fluctuating interest rates.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing sector-specific evidence from the Sri Lankan material sector and by incorporating interest rate as a moderating variable, thereby offering new insights into the dynamics between firm-specific factors and financial performance in an emerging market context.

Keywords: Firm Age, Firm Size, Leverage, Liquidity, Return on Assets, Sales Growth

The impact of tax awareness on tax perception among non-accounting undergraduates: A survey based on state universities in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

The taxation system of Sri Lanka struggles with a narrow tax base and low voluntary tax compliance, due to limited public awareness and understanding of taxation. As future taxpayers, non-accounting undergraduates' (NAUs') tax perceptions significantly influence long-term tax compliance. This study examines the impact of tax awareness, through tax knowledge, tax education, socioeconomic factors, and government tax initiatives, on tax perceptions among NAUs in Sri Lankan state universities.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

A quantitative, descriptive study was conducted using a cross-sectional survey. Primary data was collected from 380 NAUs selected through convenience sampling from selected state universities in Sri Lanka. Data were collected using a structured five-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, reliability tests, and multiple regression analysis using SPSS 25.0.

Findings:

The study found that tax awareness significantly influences tax perception among NAUs in Sri Lanka. Tax knowledge and socioeconomic factors indicated the strongest positive impact on tax perception, while government tax initiatives had a weaker yet significant effect. However, tax education demonstrated a significantly negative influence.

Practical implications:

The findings emphasize the need to strengthen tax awareness initiatives targeting young individuals. Incorporating basic tax education into NAUs' curricula and improving access to simplified tax information could enhance positive tax perceptions and promote voluntary tax compliance.

Originality/ value:

Focuses on NAUs in Sri Lanka. It contributes to the limited empirical documentation pertaining to tax awareness and tax perception in a developing country and provides valuable information with respect to tax policy and educational reforms.

Keywords: Non-Accounting Undergraduates, Tax Awareness, Tax Knowledge, Tax Perception, Sri Lanka

**TECHNICAL SESSION 2 – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, AUDITING
AND ASSURANCE**

Forensic accounting knowledge & skills, techniques, experience related to cyber fraud: Evidence from the Sri Lankan banking and finance sector

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Purpose:

Rapid technological advancements have increased cyber fraud risks in the banking and finance sector, creating a growing demand for forensic accountants with advanced competencies. This study examines perceptions of professionals involved in cyber fraud detection on their knowledge and skills, techniques, and experience required for effective cyber fraud detection in the Sri Lankan Banking and Financial sector. Further, it assesses the root causes of cyber fraud under the four dimensions of the Fraud Diamond Theory in the Sri Lankan context.

Design/methodology/approach:

Adopting a quantitative approach in the positivistic paradigm, data were collected using a structured questionnaire from 309 professionals involved in cyber fraud detection in Sri Lankan banking and financial institutions. The purposive sampling technique was used, and the data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Findings:

In terms of knowledge and skills, economic damages estimation, computer forensic auditing skills, and synthesis of discovery and analysis results were rated as highly important. In terms of techniques, forensic interviewing techniques, trend comparison over time, and internal control evaluation and red-flag analysis were identified as crucial techniques among several skills. In terms of experience, accountancy services-related experience, computer science and software expertise, and risk assessment and management experience were considered essential. Finally, significant cyber fraud causes were identified across opportunity (e.g., overrides of internal controls by management), pressure (e.g., pressure to meet business and personal targets), rationalisation (e.g., obligation to assist family financially), and capability dimensions (e.g., capability to exploit new technologies)

Practical implications:

The findings highlight the need for banks, regulators, and professional bodies to strengthen forensic accounting training and cybersecurity frameworks to enhance cyber fraud detection.

Originality/value:

This study provides novel and in-depth empirical evidence from Sri Lanka by examining forensic accounting competencies and cyber fraud root causes using the Fraud Diamond theoretical lens.

Keywords: Cyber Fraud Detection, Experience, Forensic Accounting, Fraud Diamond Theory, Skills and Knowledge, Techniques

External auditors' perception of the responsibility for fraud detection in public listed companies in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

This study examines external auditors' perceptions regarding their responsibility for fraud detection, prevention, and reporting during financial audits of Public Listed Companies in Sri Lanka. In addition, the study investigates whether the perceptions of external auditors vary based on demographic factors such as gender, work experience, and designation.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study adopts a positivistic paradigm and follows a quantitative research approach. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed among external auditors holding positions as Audit Managers, Audit Supervisors, and Audit Seniors/Senior Accountants in Sri Lanka, due to their direct involvement in audit planning, execution, and responsibilities related to fraud detection and reporting. A total of 112 valid responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, independent sample t-tests, and one-way ANOVA.

Findings:

The findings indicate that external auditors perceive fraud as a major concern in Sri Lankan Public Listed Companies. While external auditors acknowledge their responsibility for detecting and reporting fraud, they largely view fraud prevention as a management responsibility. The results further reveal that auditors' perceptions do not significantly differ based on gender. However, significant differences were observed based on their work experience and designation, with more experienced auditors and those in managerial positions in audit firms demonstrating a stronger sense of responsibility towards fraud detection and reporting.

Practical implications:

The findings highlight the need to strengthen fraud detection practices in Sri Lankan Public Listed Companies by enhancing auditors' professional judgment, promoting proactive audits, and improving auditor-management communication. Continuous training and experience, especially for less experienced auditors, are crucial. The results also provide insights for regulators, accounting bodies, and audit firms to improve audit quality and corporate governance in Sri Lanka.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes to the limited empirical literature on external auditors' fraud-related responsibilities in the Sri Lankan context. By focusing on external auditors' perceptions and demographic variations, the study provides context-specific evidence that extends prior international research and offers valuable implications.

Keywords: Audit Responsibility, External Auditors, Fraud Detection, Public Listed Companies, Sri Lanka

Factors affecting workplace asset misappropriation in Sri Lanka: The moderating role of perceived strength of internal controls

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Purpose:

This study aims to examine the factors influencing workplace asset misappropriation in Sri Lanka, based on the SCORE model that comprises Stimulus, Capability, Opportunity, Rationalization, and Ego, while further analysing the moderating effect of the Perceived Strength of Internal Controls. The study responds to the identified empirical dearth of research integrating internal control perceptions within fraud behaviour models in the Sri Lankan context.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study followed a quantitative research approach in the postpositivist paradigm and employed a survey questionnaire developed based on existing literature. Data was collected from 410 employees working in private sector companies in Sri Lanka, and the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Structural Equation Modeling technique.

Findings:

The result shows there is a significant positive impact of perceived stimulus, rationalization, capability, and ego on asset misappropriation, while the opportunity did not have a significant impact. Further, the findings revealed that the perceived strength of internal controls moderates the impact of stimulus, opportunity, capability, and ego on asset misappropriation, while it does not moderate the relationship between rationalization and asset misappropriation.

Practical implications:

The study highlights the need for strengthening internal controls, fostering an ethical culture, and implementing targeted anti-fraud strategies to mitigate multiple behavioral drivers of asset misappropriation. Organisations should address employee pressure management, internal control quality enhancement, fraud response policies, and capability-sensitive role designs.

Originality/ value:

This study seeks to address the dearth of studies in Sri Lanka by integrating the SCORE fraud model with perceived internal control strength as a moderating factor. It extends existing literature beyond traditional fraud frameworks and contributes insights relevant for policymakers, corporate governance bodies, and fraud risk specialists.

Keywords: Asset misappropriation, Internal control system, SCORE model, Structural Equation Modeling

Impact of family financial socialization and financial literacy on awareness of investment scams among management university students in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of family financial socialization and financial literacy on the awareness of investment scams among management university students in Sri Lanka, using the Theory of Planned Behavior as the underlying theoretical framework.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study follows a positivist paradigm with a quantitative research approach. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 214 management university students in Sri Lanka using simple random sampling. Data were analyzed using SPSS 23, applying descriptive statistics, Spearman's correlation, and multiple regression analysis to examine relationships among variables.

Findings:

The findings of this study suggested that family financial socialization plays a vital role in shaping the young university undergraduates' awareness of investment scams. On the other hand, having adequate financial literacy will guide students in being vigilant against investment scams. Overall, the results suggest that family-based financial learning plays a more influential role than financial knowledge alone in enhancing students' ability to recognize and avoid investment scams.

Practical implications:

The study highlights the importance of integrating family-based financial education and structured financial literacy programs within universities. Policymakers, educators, and financial regulators can use these findings to design targeted interventions, awareness campaigns, and curriculum enhancements aimed at protecting university students from investment scams.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes original empirical evidence from a developing country context by jointly examining family financial socialization and financial literacy in relation to investment scam awareness. It extends existing literature by applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to financial fraud awareness among university students in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Awareness of Investment Scams, Family Financial Socialization, Financial Literacy, Sri Lanka, University Students

Emotional intelligence and occupational fraud tendency: A survey of young accountants in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

This study aims to address the existing gap by examining the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and occupational fraud tendency of young accountants in Sri Lanka.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study adopted survey methodology, and a quantitative approach was employed, while data were collected through a structured questionnaire containing a fraud scenario and the EI construct to collect data from 250 participants. The study employed the Structural Equation Model (SEM) to test the significance. It employed Pearson correlation and SEM path coefficients analysis to test its hypotheses.

Findings:

The results of the study highlighted that young accountants in Sri Lanka were emotionally intelligent and had a low occupational fraud tendency, which means that there was a significant negative relationship between EI and the occupational fraud tendency of young accountants in Sri Lanka.

Practical implications:

The study findings assist businesses in developing appropriate plans to prevent and reduce occupational fraud by designing training programs focusing on managing the EI of their current employees. Further, aids in the recruitment process to find the right candidates for employment. Moreover, support in curriculum development for educational institutions to improve the ethical decision-making of students studying accounting and finance.

Originality/ value:

This is a pioneer study that fills the existing gap by examining the impact of EI on the occupational fraud tendency of young accountants in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the findings provide original empirical evidence of a significant negative relationship between EI and the occupational fraud tendency of young accountants in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Fraud, Occupational Fraud Tendency, Young Accountants

The impact of time pressure on audit quality with professional commitment as a moderator: An empirical study in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

This study aims to explore the impact of time pressure on audit quality and investigates whether professional commitment moderates this relationship among external auditors in Sri Lanka. While limited empirical evidence exists in the Sri Lankan context, this study is conducted to address the gap.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

A quantitative research approach supported by the positivist paradigm was adopted for this study. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed among 273 external auditors from Big 3 audit firms in Sri Lanka using convenience sampling. Premature sign-off behaviour was used for the measurement of audit quality. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis incorporating an interaction term to test the moderating effect were used as the data analysis techniques.

Findings:

The findings demonstrated a significant positive relationship between time pressure and premature sign-off, implying that increased time pressure adversely affected audit quality. Professional commitment evidenced a significant negative relationship with premature sign-off, suggesting that higher professional commitment was associated with improved audit quality. Furthermore, professional commitment moderated the relationship between time pressure and audit quality, weakening the negative impact of time pressure on auditors' behaviour.

Practical implications:

The findings suggest the role of professional commitment as a way to mitigate the negative effects of time pressure among auditors. Audit firms may enhance audit quality by strengthening professional values through training, ethical reinforcement, and favorable work conditions, particularly in high-pressure audit engagements.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes to the auditing literature by providing evidence from a developing country context on the moderating role of professional commitment in the relationship between time pressure and audit quality. It advances existing research by highlighting behavioral aspects of audit quality and provides insight for the audit firms and regulators in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Audit Quality, Premature Sign-off, Professional Commitment, Time Pressure

Navigating the nexus: Related party transactions through corporate governance lenses

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Purpose:

This study aims to investigate the corporate governance involvement to mitigate the negative impact of RPT in an organization and explore the perceptions of management on the relationship between corporate governance and disclosure of related party transactions in one of the largest business groups in Sri Lanka.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study was conducted using a qualitative case study approach by selecting one of the group firms in Sri Lanka. Data was gathered for documentary analyses and semi- structured interviews. The data were analyzed thematically based on the agency theory, efficient transaction hypothesis, and contingency theory.

Findings:

This study shows that one of the most influential corporate governance mechanisms to mitigate the negative implications of related party transactions is real independence of the board members and board balance. It also emphasizes the importance of bonding mechanisms, such as independent external auditors, to have an effective governance role to mitigate the agency problems. Further, different organizational, national, and environmental factors should be considered when determining the control mechanisms for related party transactions.

Practical implications:

The findings of this study can assist shareholders, top managers, and directors to have a better understanding of approaches to improve the corporate monitoring system, especially regarding various RPTs. This study provides useful implications of RPTs for accounting regulation setters who are striving to improve CG and transparency. Additionally, this research goes in-depth into these transactions to reveal practices that may not be immediately apparent from standard financial reports.

Originality/ value:

According to prior researchers, the correlation between related party transactions and corporate governance has been measured quantitatively. Therefore, this study focused on identifying the perspectives of the senior and middle management of a larger entity regarding the relationship between corporate governance and disclosure of related party transactions qualitatively.

Keywords: Agency Theory, Corporate Governance Mechanisms, Related Party Transactions, Sri Lanka

**TECHNICAL SESSION 3 – SUSTAINABILITY AND MANAGEMENT
ACCOUNTING**

From nature to numbers: Integrating benefit-based tree valuation into accounting practices for non-plantation companies

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Purpose:

This study evaluates the applicability of a benefit-based valuation approach for measuring and recognizing trees in non-plantation organizations, where conventional accounting standards inadequately capture economic, environmental, and social benefits. It seeks to bridge traditional accounting practices and natural capital valuation by developing a more decision-useful measurement framework that integrates both market and non-market benefits into financial reporting and organizational decision-making.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study employs a qualitative, exploratory research design. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with professionals in accounting, valuation, and forestry. The interview data were thematically analyzed and complemented by a review of relevant accounting standards, including IAS 41-Agriculture, as well as sustainability and natural capital reporting frameworks. The findings from this analysis were used to develop a benefit-based valuation framework applicable to non-plantation organizations.

Findings:

The findings show that conventional accounting practices inadequately reflect the value of trees in non-plantation contexts due to measurement constraints and the exclusion of non-market benefits. Trees were found to generate significant economic, environmental, and social benefits that are largely unrecognized in financial reporting. A benefit-based valuation approach was identified as more relevant and decision-useful, particularly for sustainability-oriented reporting.

Practical implications:

The findings support the recognition and measurement of trees as value-generating assets within non-plantation organizations, strengthen natural capital accounting practices, and enhance sustainability and integrated reporting. They provide practical insights for organizational management in incorporating tree-related economic, environmental, and social benefits into financial reporting and long-term decision-making.

Originality/ value:

The study contributes original insight by empirically developing a benefit-based tree valuation framework for non-plantation organizations, extending accounting literature beyond plantation-focused valuation methods.

Keywords: Benefit-based Valuation, Natural Capital Accounting, Non-plantation Organizations, Sustainability Reporting, Tree Valuation

Perceptions and awareness of sustainable development among accounting undergraduates

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Purpose:

This study aims to address the limited research on accounting undergraduates' awareness and perceptions of sustainable development within the Sri Lankan and broader Asian context, particularly in relation to the growing importance of global initiatives such as the SDGs, IFRS S1 and S2 standards. By adopting a mixed-methods approach that combines questionnaires and interviews, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how accounting undergraduates perceive and understand sustainable development, overcoming the limitations of prior research that relied predominantly on questionnaire-based methods.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study employs a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, with quantitative data collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, followed by qualitative interviews analyzed through thematic analysis. The analysis is guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior, incorporating attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and personal norms.

Findings:

The findings of this study indicate that higher education in the Sri Lankan accounting stream has made a meaningful contribution toward integrating sustainability into its curriculum. Perceived effectiveness of sustainability initiatives, empathy and compassion for nature, and sustainability-related education emerged as the key factors influencing accounting undergraduates' awareness, highlighting the role of both educational exposure and personal environmental concern.

Practical implications:

This study provides practical guidance for universities, educators, and policymakers to enhance the integration of sustainable development and sustainability reporting within the accounting curriculum, thereby improving graduates' readiness for sustainability-focused professional roles.

Originality/ value:

This study offers originality by addressing the significant lack of research on university students' perceptions of sustainable development, particularly in Sri Lanka. Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed method, combining questionnaires and interviews, which makes the findings more reliable and detailed than studies relying only on questionnaires.

Keywords: Accounting Education, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The intention to adopt environmental accounting practices of tea smallholders: Evidence from Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of belief-based factors (Attitudes, Subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) on the intention to adopt environmental accounting practices of tea smallholders in Sri Lanka.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study was conceptualized based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour. It adopted a quantitative approach, and 100 smallholder tea farmers registered with a tea factory in the Kegalle District were selected as the sample. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were used as analytical techniques.

Findings:

The findings indicate that only perceived behavioural control has a statistically significant positive relationship with tea smallholders' intention to adopt environmental accounting practices. In contrast, attitudes and subjective norms do not have a statistically significant influence on this intention.

Practical implications:

The findings of this study elicit the importance of identifying the impact of belief-based factors on the intention to adopt environmental accounting practices of tea small holders, which guide the practitioners of the tea industry, such as tea advisors, government institutions of the tea industry, government institutions of environmental protection, government policy makers and corporate sector tea producers to do tea cultivations in more environmental friendly methods.

Originality/ value:

This study offers a novel perspective to enhancing the body of knowledge of the impact of belief-based factors (attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control) on the intention to adopt environmental accounting practices of tea smallholders in the Sri Lankan context.

Keywords: Belief-based Factors, Environmental Accounting Practices, Tea Smallholders, Theory of Planned Behaviour

Barriers to implementing sustainable procurement in urban councils of North Western province, Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

Although sustainable procurement is an established global practice, its implementation within the Sri Lankan urban councils remains limited. This study investigates barriers preventing the adoption of sustainable procurement within urban councils in the North-Western Province. By analyzing these barriers, this study aims to address the gap between conventional procurement guidelines and the integration of sustainability into the procurement process.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study was conducted using a qualitative case study approach by interviewing presidents, secretaries, and procurement officers of urban councils in North Western Province. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed by using thematic analysis.

Findings:

This study reveals that the adoption of sustainable procurement in urban councils is challenged by institutional barriers rather than individual resistance to change. The absence of formal government guidelines remains the primary barrier that forces the prioritization of cost over environmental and social impacts. While cost remains a concern, existing budget flexibility suggests that financial barriers are not an absolute impediment to sustainable practices. Additionally, a lack of training and expert knowledge prevents the integration of environmental and social criteria into supplier assessments. Furthermore, the study highlights a deficiency in peer-driven initiatives, which limits opportunities for knowledge sharing.

Practical implications:

This study identifies priority areas for policymakers to facilitate the transition toward sustainable procurement. It highlights regulatory gaps and institutional limitations that necessitate a national framework to help urban councils balance resource optimization with environmental and social criteria. Ultimately, these findings promote transparency and accountability, aligning local sourcing practices with Sri Lanka's long-term sustainable development goals.

Originality/ value:

This study addresses a critical empirical void by investigating sustainable procurement barriers in the Sri Lankan urban councils, where prior research remains limited.

Keywords: Barriers, Sustainable Procurement, Urban Councils

The impact of factors affecting the readiness for the adaptation of decentralized financing among listed companies in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

This study investigates the impact of key readiness factors on the adaptation of decentralized financing (De-Fi) among listed companies in Sri Lanka. While De-Fi continues to redefine global financial paradigms, its adoption within emerging economies such as Sri Lanka remains comparatively underexplored in both academic discourse and practical implementation. Addressing this research gap, the study explores how technological, organizational, and regulatory factors shape the readiness of firms to adopt De-Fi solutions.

Design/methodology/approach:

The study targeted the top 100 companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) as of March 31, 2024, selected based on market capitalization. A positivist quantitative research approach was employed. The data was gathered through a structured questionnaire, and responses were analyzed using Smart PLS software. Six readiness factors were assessed: trialability, security, complexity, cost, innovativeness, and regulatory support.

Findings:

The analysis reveals that five of the six proposed readiness factors significantly impact De-Fi adoption among listed companies in Sri Lanka, with complexity proving non-significant due to respondents' limited exposure. Regulatory support, security, and innovativeness emerged as strong enablers, reflecting the vital role of legal clarity, technological assurance, and a forward-thinking organizational culture. In contrast, cost and trialability acted as barriers, underscoring the challenges posed by high implementation expenses and limited access to safe testing environments. These findings highlighted a critical need for regulatory reform and infrastructural support to unlock the full potential of De-Fi adoption in a recovering economy.

Practical implications:

The study offers strategic implications for regulators, policymakers, and corporate leaders by highlighting the need for a robust regulatory framework, strengthened cybersecurity infrastructure, and a culture of innovation to facilitate De-Fi adoption. Mitigating cost constraints and promoting structured pilot initiatives can further build institutional trust. Collectively, these insights can advance Sri Lanka's broader digital finance and economic modernization agenda.

Originality/value:

This research is among the first to empirically assess De-Fi adaptation readiness in the Sri Lankan context. By integrating established technology adoption models with context-specific insights, the study contributes to the academic discourse on De-Fi in developing markets. It offers theoretical enrichment and practical strategies for digital financial inclusion and competitiveness.

Keywords: Decentralized Financing, Listed Companies, Technology Adoption, Readiness Factors, Regulatory Support, Sri Lanka

How internal stakeholders contribute to sustainable development goals achievement in plantation sector companies: a case study of Kelani Valley Plantation PLC

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Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine how internal stakeholders engage in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the plantation sector. The study focuses on identifying key internal stakeholders, the relevant SDGs, strategies used to engage them in sustainability initiatives, contributing to academic knowledge by extending stakeholder theory, and to practice by providing actionable insights for sustainability initiatives in the plantation sector.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

A qualitative case study approach was adopted, and primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with internal stakeholders from the case company and supplemented with secondary data from the organization's integrated annual reports and sustainability-related publications. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, and documentary analysis was performed as a supplementary data analysis to triangulate the interview findings. The data analysis was done under the theoretical framework of stakeholder theory.

Findings:

The study identifies employees, management, shareholders, internal communities, and customers as key internal stakeholders. The findings reveal that plantation sector companies actively address 14 of the 17 United Nations SDGs, while SDGs 11, 14, and 16 receive limited attention. Internal stakeholder engagement is facilitated through four main strategic areas: Communication and Awareness, Capacity Building and Development, Integration into Organizational Processes, and Collaboration and Incentives.

Practical implications:

The findings highlight practical implications for the plantation sector by showing how structured initiatives strengthen stakeholder engagement in achieving SDGs. They also provide insights for policymakers and stakeholders, despite plantation-specific challenges such as resistance to change and limited workforce capacity.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes to the limited empirical evidence on internal stakeholder engagement in SDG achievement within the plantation sector of a developing country. By providing context-specific insights from Sri Lanka, the study extends stakeholder theory and offers practical guidance for plantation sector organizations achieving sustainable development.

Keywords: Case Study, Internal Stakeholders, Plantation Sector, Stakeholder Engagement, Sustainability Strategies, Sustainable Development Goals

**TECHNICAL SESSION 4 - TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN
ACCOUNTING**

Exploration of computerized accounting systems in the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

This study examines the level of adoption of Computerized Accounting Systems (CAS) in the hospitality industry in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and analyzes how management commitment, user competence, perceived usefulness, and ease of use influence CAS adoption and effective utilization. It also identifies the key motivations and challenges associated with implementing CAS. The study addresses a research gap by focusing on the Sri Lankan hospitality sector, which has received limited attention in prior CAS adoption research that mainly concentrates on SMEs and manufacturing industries.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study adopts a positivist research paradigm with a quantitative research approach. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale from 125 hospitality industry entities in Colombo, and data analysis was carried out using SPSS.

Findings:

The findings reveal that the adoption of CAS among hospitality entities in Colombo is relatively high, particularly for cloud-based systems. Management commitment and user competence were found to have a strong and statistically significant influence on CAS adoption. Perceived usefulness and ease of use also positively influence adoption, though to a moderate extent.

Practical implications:

The findings show that strengthening top management support and investing in user training can significantly enhance CAS adoption and effective utilization. Policymakers may use these insights to encourage digital transformation within the hospitality sector.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes original value by focusing specifically on the hospitality industry in Colombo, Sri Lanka, an area with limited empirical research on computerized accounting system adoption.

Keywords: Computerized Accounting System, Ease of Use, Hospitality Industry, Management Commitment, Perceived Usefulness, User Competency

Exploring the impact of accounting benefits on ERP user satisfaction: A study of Sri Lankan organizations across accounting and finance roles

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Purpose:

This study investigates the impact of accounting-related benefits from Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems on user satisfaction among accounting and finance professionals in Sri Lankan organisations. It fills a clear research gap in the local context by focusing on Sri Lanka (specifically the Colombo District) and looking at how hierarchy level affects this relationship, an area with limited prior empirical evidence.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

Adopting a positivist, quantitative design, the study surveyed 150 accounting and finance professionals employed in ERP-implemented organisations in the Colombo District. Using validated multi-item scales, the analysis combined descriptive statistics, reliability and validity checks (Cronbach's alpha; KMO and Bartlett's tests), principal components analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression; an independent-samples t-test assessed differences across hierarchy levels. Control variables included ERP module types and the number of modules.

Findings:

Organisational, managerial, operational (time), and IT accounting benefits were generally rated highly, while cost-related operational benefits showed mixed acceptance. Regression results indicated that IT accounting benefits, operational (time) benefits, managerial benefits, and operational (cost) benefits significantly and positively predict ERP user satisfaction, whereas organisational accounting benefits and module-related controls were not significant. Additionally, mid-level professionals reported significantly higher satisfaction than lower-level staff, underscoring a hierarchy effect. Overall model fit was strong ($R^2 \approx 0.69$ after removing insignificant predictors).

Practical implications:

Organisations should focus on ERP features that deliver strong IT capabilities, time efficiency, and managerial support, as these significantly enhance user satisfaction. Cost-saving measures, while important, must be implemented carefully to avoid employee resistance. Training and support should be tailored to different hierarchy levels, providing advanced tools for managers and simplifying processes for lower-level staff. ERP vendors can also use these insights to design systems that better meet accounting needs and improve overall user experience.

Originality/ value:

This study fills a critical research gap by examining ERP accounting benefits and user satisfaction in the Sri Lankan context, an area with limited prior evidence. It introduces a hierarchy-level perspective, revealing significant differences in satisfaction between mid-level and lower-level professionals. Importantly, the findings demonstrate a positive link between cost-related operational benefits and user satisfaction, contradicting several previous studies. These insights offer fresh contributions to ERP literature and provide practical guidance for ERP vendors and organisations in emerging economies to optimise system design and implementation strategies.

Keywords: Accounting Benefits, Colombo District, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Hierarchy Level, Quantitative Research, Sri Lanka, User Satisfaction

The impact of ERP systems on financial performance and supply chain efficiency in Sri Lankan companies

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Purpose:

Analyze the effect of implementing ERP systems on the financial performance and SCM efficiency of organizations in the Sri Lankan context. In past research, there were very few research works that explored both financial and SCM performance simultaneously, and this research bridges the gap by examining both areas concurrently. The study categorizes ERP benefits into three key constructs: operational benefits, tactical benefits, and strategic benefits, and evaluates their influence on critical performance metrics such as revenue growth, net profit margin, and inventory turnover.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The target population for this study includes Sri Lankan organizations and ERP consultants who work on the implementation and usage of the ERP system. The sampling method used is a purposive sampling technique, targeting Sri Lankan companies who adopted ERP systems and ERP consultants who can provide information for financial and supply chain performance measurements made due to ERP adoption.

Findings:

The findings reveal that ERP implementation positively influences financial performance through operational, tactical, and strategic benefits. Net profit margin and revenue increase can be achieved through operational benefits like automation, process efficiency, and real-time access to data, though the effect of these is comparatively limited. Such tactical benefits as improved coordination, efficient resource utilization, and responsiveness to market changes demonstrate a more significant impact on the financial results, which is why the alignment of the ERP systems to the tactical decisions is so crucial. The strongest impact is strategic benefits, where they underline the importance of the ERP systems in facilitating long-term planning, data-driven decisions, and sustainable competitive advantage. In general, the findings demonstrate that companies that incorporate ERP systems into their strategic procedures obtain better and more sustainable financial performance outcomes.

Practical implications:

The results indicate that organizations must perceive ERP systems as a strategic long-term investment, as opposed to a one-time implementation of the technology. Employee training, change management, and continuous system evaluation should also be given more attention to maximize the benefits of ERP. The researchers also offer insights that are beneficial to managers, ERP consultants, and policymakers to enable them make informed decisions on the adoption and optimization of ERP, which ultimately leads to increased competitiveness in a dynamic business environment.

Originality/ value:

This research paper is relevant to the body of literature in that it presents empirical findings in a developing economy setting, where such research is limited. The research fills an identified gap in the literature by collectively observing the impact of ERP systems on financial performance and supply chain efficiency. The results provide substantial theoretical and practical implications to organizations and policymakers in Sri Lanka and other similar emerging economies.

Keywords: Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Financial Performance, Supply Chain Efficiency (SCM)

The impact of enterprise resource planning systems implementation on management accounting decisions in Sri Lankan manufacturing organizations

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Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors influencing the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and to evaluate their impact on the effectiveness of management accounting decisions in Sri Lankan manufacturing organizations. This study contributes to academic literature by filling gaps in current literature regarding ERP systems' specific influence on management accounting practices and decision-making.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study adopts a quantitative and deductive research approach. Data were collected from management accounting decision-makers of 50 listed manufacturing organizations in Sri Lanka that have implemented ERP systems, using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SmartPLS, applying descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling to examine the relationship between ERP implementation factors and management accounting decision effectiveness.

Findings:

The research concludes that ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system implementation is a major driver of the effectiveness of management accounting decisions in those manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka. Among others, the ERP system itself has specific features like system flexibility, integration ability, and ease of use that together account for the strong impact on the quality of management accounting decision-making to a greater extent. Likewise, the different functions of an ERP system, such as finance, inventory, and supply chain modules, positively contribute through the provision of real-time and integrated information for the purpose of making management accounting decisions. Top management support also plays a critical role since the commitment and allocation of resources by the leadership significantly increase the effective use of ERP systems for management accounting purposes. On the other hand, training and user adoption were not found to have any significant statistical effect on the effective making of management accounting decisions for the decision makers. Overall, ERP implementation explains a substantial proportion of the variance in management accounting decision effectiveness, highlighting the strategic role of ERP systems in enhancing management accounting-related decision-making.

Practical implications:

The research underlines the significance of choosing the right ERP system attributes and having strong top management support to facilitate the decision-making process in management accounting, thus offering practical guidance to the manufacturing sector in Sri Lanka. The results can be a basis for organizations to not only justify but also increase ERP investments, while at the same time, making the right decisions and boosting the effectiveness of their operations. Moreover, the insights are of great importance for ERP consultants and policymakers involved in digital transformation initiatives.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes original empirical evidence by focusing on the Sri Lankan manufacturing sector, a context that has received limited research attention. By specifically linking ERP system implementation factors to management accounting decision effectiveness, the study adds value to both ERP and management accounting literature in a developing economy setting.

Keywords: Enterprise Resource Planning Systems, Management Accounting Decisions, Manufacturing Organizations

Factors affecting the adoption of cloud-based ERP systems for accounting reporting in companies listed on the CSE

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Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors affecting the adoption of cloud-based ERP systems for accounting reporting. The study specifically focuses on how technological, organizational, and environmental factors guided by the Technology-Organization-Environment framework (TOE) and Diffusion of Innovation theory, affect the cloud ERP adoption decisions in a developing economic context.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

For this study use a quantitative research approach under the positivist research paradigm. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to finance and IT professionals who work under CSE-listed companies. A total of 80 valid responses were analyzed using SmartPLS.

Findings:

The findings emphasize that ease of use, technological infrastructure of the company, customization capabilities of ERP systems, and data security are the factors that affect the adoption of cloud-based ERP systems for accounting and reporting. In contrast, findings revealed that ERP user skills and IT department support indicated no significant impact on adoption within the context, because cloud-based ERP systems provide user friendly interface, and the maintenance burden of cloud ERP systems is held by the vendor rather than the internal IT department. The results highlight the critical role of system usability, security, ability for customization, and technological readiness in driving cloud ERP adoption among Sri Lankan listed companies in CSE.

Practical implications:

These findings help listed companies and other organizations of Sri Lanka to make informed decisions on cloud ERP adoption for accounting reporting by identifying key enabling factors. It also provides useful insights for cloud ERP vendors and policymakers to improve system designs, security standards, and supportive regulatory frameworks.

Originality/ value:

This study is a pioneering effort to examine cloud ERP adoption for accounting reporting in a developing economy, extending technology adoption research beyond conventional ERP usage to a critical financial reporting context.

Keywords: Accounting reporting, Adoption, Cloud ERP, Diffusion of Innovation, Technology-Organization-Environment

The impact of the level of digital transformation on labour productivity in publicly listed companies in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

This study aims to examine the impact of the level of digital transformation on labor productivity in publicly listed companies in Sri Lanka.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The sample of this study is the top 100 publicly listed companies in terms of the highest market capitalization in Sri Lanka. It has collected data by using the annual reports. The relationship between the level of digital transformation and labor productivity has been examined through multiple regression analysis. As the control variables, research and development, and average wages have been used.

Findings:

By extending prior research, the results have confirmed that there is a statistically significant positive impact of the level of digital transformation on labor productivity in public listed companies in Sri Lanka. Further, it has been found that there is a statistically significant positive impact of the average wages on labor productivity. However, while differing from prior studies, it has found that there is a positive impact from research and development on labor productivity, which is not statistically significant.

Practical implications:

Rapid changes in the external environment have accelerated the digital transformation in organizations while making advanced technologies essential for competitiveness and survival. Public listed companies in Sri Lanka with stronger financial capabilities have adopted digital technologies more extensively than SMEs, highlighting the importance of examining how digital transformation affects labor productivity. Understanding this relationship supports better strategic and HRM decisions and provides a foundation for future research across other business sectors.

Originality/ value:

This study adds value to existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the impact of the level of digital transformation on labor productivity in the Sri Lankan public listed company context, which has been largely unexplored in prior research. Further, by incorporating research and development and average wages as control variables, the study offers a more comprehensive understanding of productivity drivers in an emerging economy.

Keywords: Labor Productivity, Level of Digital Transformation, Public Listed Companies

Impact of business analytics on organizational financial performance of S&P SL20 indexed CSE listed companies in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

Business Analytics (BA) is globally recognized as a critical enabler of competitive advantage. However, the specific nexus between BA and financial performance remains underexplored within the Sri Lankan context. This research addresses this empirical dearth in understanding how Business Analytics Techniques, Operational software systems, and People capability collectively influence the financial performance of leading entities in the Sri Lankan context.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

Primary data was collected through eight (08) preliminary interviews with industry experts and a structured survey administered to 60 employees across 20 S&P SL20 firms. The quantitative analysis utilized Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and descriptive statistics to test hypotheses, while qualitative insights from blue-chip organizations contextualized BA's practical impact.

Findings:

The study revealed that through integrating business analytics techniques into company workflows, financial performance could be improved as the new insights cater to better decision-making. The study proved that companies using descriptive, predictive, and prescriptive analytics demonstrated a superior competitive edge compared to peers. Further, the study proved that the BA capability and skill of people directly influenced the financial outcome, hence proving the two hypotheses. Notably, the study found the relationship between software systems and financial performance not statistically significant due to the fact that the use of proprietary software remains accessible only to top-tier organizations in Sri Lanka.

Practical implications:

In Sri Lanka's competitive business landscape, many organizations struggle to translate data into improved financial performance. This research depicts a direct link between Business Analytics Techniques, People Capability, and financial performance. Therefore, Sri Lankan organizations should prioritize investments in technology, workforce training, and a data-driven culture to drive better decision-making.

Originality/ value:

This study provides some of the first empirical evidence from Sri Lanka regarding the direct impact of BA on financial performance. By integrating the Resource-Based View (RBV) with modern data science applications, it offers a framework for high-performing firms.

Keywords: Business Analytics, Financial Performance, People Capability, Resource-Based View

Leveraging data analytics and visualization to optimize risk management practices: Perspectives from the consumer food and beverage sector

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Purpose:

Conventional business models are less capable of addressing dynamism and emerging risks in the business environment. Hence, the organizations seek enablers of proactive measures to adopt fluidity and maintain resilience. Technological innovations have immensely revolutionized organizational risk management. This study aims to interconnect technology and organizational conduct by exploring the degree of utilization, the drivers and hindrances of leveraging data analytics and visualization for risk management in the consumer food and beverage sector.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

A qualitative case study approach was employed in this study, while conducting multiple semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis to gather comprehensive insights. Thematic analysis was adopted to unveil the themes of the data collected. To provide a sense of theories to practice, this study used sensemaking, institutional logics, and resource-based theories. Also, the COSO framework was adopted to assess data analytics and utilization in risk management.

Findings:

Data analytics and visualization are extensively used for risk identification and assessment, with a greater contribution for supplier collaboration, sales, and marketing. Yet, optimum use is disrupted due to dependency on human judgment and intuition. The results further elicit that risk-aware culture, flexible leadership, and staff, quality expectations, compliance requirements, and responding to data accumulation mainly drive technological integration, whereas economic and political instabilities, funding constraints, and acquiring resources and competencies challenge the implementation.

Practical implications:

The findings of this study encourage industry leaders, business practitioners, and IT professionals to exploit technological innovations to achieve strategic vision while gaining a competitive advantage through better risk management and informed decision-making. Organizational cultures emerge as risk takers, emphasizing the benefits of having a unified system for responding and minimizing errors. From policymakers' perspective, it is vital to promote ethical use of data and digitalization. Further, technological education needs to be gradually promoted by revisiting the curriculum.

Originality/ value:

This is one of the first studies that integrates both data analytics and visualization to address multiple risks of organizations in the consumer food and beverage sector.

Keywords: Consumer Food and Beverage Sector, Data Analytics, Data Visualization, Institutional Logic Theory, Resource-based Theory, Risk Management, Sensemaking Theory

Leveraging data analytics and visualization to optimize risk management practices: perspectives from the health sector

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Purpose:

Risk management and organizational resilience remain focal points in the VUCA environment and are regarded as strategic imperatives in any organization. Management strives for technological integration to enhance organizational capabilities with both multi-risk and macro risk perspectives. In this context, this study examines the extent of utilization of data analytics and visualization in enterprise risk management, and the factors that drive and inhibit their implementation, with particular emphasis on the health sector.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

This study adopted a qualitative approach and collected data mainly through multiple semi-structured interviews with professionals in a leading healthcare provider in the country. Documentary analysis supplemented the interview data. Collected data was analysed thematically using sensemaking, institutional logics, and resource-based theories. Further, the COSO framework guided the assessment of the extent of technological integration into the risk management practices.

Findings:

Data analytics and visualization are leveraged in varied extents in different stages of the risk management framework. Technological transformation is driven by visionary leadership and organizational culture to secure regulatory compliance, better quality, customer satisfaction, data privacy, operational transparency, and competitive advantage. Nevertheless, lack of digital literacy, affordability, infrastructure, workforce readiness, and competencies inhibit the adoption of data analytics and visualization in enterprise risk management.

Practical implications:

This study underscores the competitive advantages the business organizations gain through informed decision-making and improved cognitive mechanisms by employing data analytics and visualization in risk management. It directs both IT and risk professionals' concentration toward system integration and operational standardization, while promoting digital literacy. Policymakers are encouraged to embrace global regulations on data privacy while emphasizing the importance of incorporating technology for higher education.

Originality/ value:

This is one of the first studies that combines both data analytics and visualization with enterprise risk management in a singular study beyond addressing micro risks, particularly in the health sector.

Keywords: Data Analytics, Data Visualization, Health Sector, Institutional Logic Theory, Resource-Based Theory, Risk Management, Sensemaking Theory

Analysing the behavioral intention of accounting students towards the use of artificial intelligence in the future accounting profession

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Purpose:

Although the general effect of artificial intelligence (AI) in the accounting field has been discussed broadly in previous literature, a research gap exists in identifying factors affecting the future use of AI adoption. The main purpose of the study is to investigate the factors affecting and hindering the behavioural intentions of accounting students towards the adoption of AI in their future careers.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

Mixed method research approach was used, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Accounting students with at least six months of working experience who are currently following professional courses related to the field of accounting and finance in the western province of Sri Lanka were selected as the population of the study, and 129 responses were collected from quantitative data collection, and 12 responses were collected from qualitative data collection. The quantitative data collected through a structured questionnaire were analysed using Smart PLS while utilizing the Technology Acceptance Model, integrating two major external factors, AI literacy and institutional support. Thematic analysis was used in analysing qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews.

Findings:

This study finds that both AI literacy and institutional support affect perceived ease of use of AI. But there is no relationship between Institutional support and perceived ease of use. Further, it was observed that perceived ease of use affects perceived usefulness, and both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use affect behavioural intention. Moreover, qualitative findings identified challenges faced by students categorized under technological, commercial, organizational, social, and personal challenges, such as lack of technical expertise, fear of job displacement, Language barriers, and data privacy concerns.

Practical implication:

This study highlights the need for AI-related practical training, curriculum development, professional bodies' engagement in investing in IT infrastructures, and policy development for data privacy, to foster AI adoption among accounting students.

Originality/ value:

The study offers actionable insight for educators to enable them to foster future AI adoption among students and ensure students are adequately prepared for the job market.

Keywords: AI literacy, Artificial intelligence, Institutional Support and Resources, Technology Acceptance Model

**TECHNICAL SESSION 5 – ACCOUNTING EDUCATION AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPME**

Skills and attitudes acquisition disparities of accounting internships: Implications of duration of internships and sector

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Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to provide greater insight into the disparities in attitude and soft skills acquired from internship programs between different types of employers: audit firms and non-audit firms. This study also examines whether there is any relationship between the duration of the internship and the extent of skills and attitudes acquisition.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study adopted a quantitative research approach using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among 239 recently graduated accounting students from Sri Lankan government universities.

Findings:

In order to analyze the differences in skills and attitudes acquired by accounting interns based on the sectors (Audit and non-audit sectors), an independent sample T-test was performed. The mean differences in the results showed that graduates who were in the audit sector have acquired more skills and attitudes compared to the non-audit sector, except for the entrepreneurial and strategic competencies category. In order to analyze whether there are any differences in skills and attitudes acquisition of accounting interns based on the duration, a One-way ANOVA test was performed, and the results indicated that, except for personal and professional attributes and entrepreneurial, strategic competencies categories, for other skills it indicated that there is a significant difference of skills and attitudes acquisition of accounting interns based on the duration

Practical implications:

This study provides great insights for accounting internship coordinators at different universities, especially in Sri Lanka. These insights can help them to enhance the quality of existing internship programs by understanding what works well and what areas need improvement. Moreover, the results of this study will mostly help accounting students who are about to begin their internship experience.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes to the limited empirical literature on accounting internships by comparing audit and non-audit training environments and linking internship duration.

Keywords: Accounting Internship, Attitudes, Duration of Internship, Skills

Factors discouraging accounting undergraduates from enrolling in and continuing professional accounting courses: Evidence from Sri Lankan Accounting undergraduates

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Purpose:

This study examines the factors that discourage accounting undergraduates in Sri Lanka from enrolling in and continuing professional accounting courses, addressing the limited research on such deterrents in this context. Specifically, it examines the influence of key discouraging factors, including financial constraints, workload and time commitment, academic and personal motivation, availability of exemptions, and awareness and understanding, on students' enrollment and continuation decisions.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

Data were collected via a structured questionnaire from 304 accounting undergraduates from state and non-state universities using convenience sampling. It measured perceptions of key discouraging factors, such as financial constraints, workload and time commitment, academic and personal motivation, exemptions, and awareness of professional accounting qualifications. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression in IBM SPSS were used to examine the influence of these **discouraging factors** on students' enrollment and continuation decisions.

Findings:

Among the discouraging factors, financial constraints and workload, though often viewed as barriers, positively influenced students' enrollment and continuation, indicating these challenges are manageable. In contrast, exemptions and students' awareness and understanding of professional accounting qualifications had a minor or negative effect, representing true discouraging factors. Academic and personal motivation, while not a discouraging factor, had a strong positive impact, highlighting its role in overcoming barriers to pursuing professional accounting courses.

Practical implications:

The findings provide guidance for universities, professional accounting bodies, and policymakers to enhance students' resilience and motivation through flexible learning arrangements, targeted financial support, and initiatives that promote informed decision-making regarding professional accounting qualifications.

Originality/ value:

This study is among the first in Sri Lanka to examine multiple discouraging factors affecting enrollment and continuation in professional accounting courses, addressing an empirical gap and providing evidence for educational planning and policy.

Keywords: Accounting Undergraduates, Awareness and Understanding, Exemption, Financial Constraints, Motivation, Professional Qualifications, Workload and Time Commitment

The influence of ethical ideology and emotional intelligence on the ethical judgment of future accountants in Sri Lanka

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Purpose:

Sustained global ethical concerns in the accounting profession illustrate the necessity of understanding the personal aspects that influence ethical judgment. Whilst the empirical studies have examined the ethical ideology and emotional intelligence individually, limited studies explore their combined effect on ethical development in countries. This study aims to examine the influence of ethical ideology (Idealism and Relativism) and emotional intelligence on the ethical judgment of future accountants in Sri Lanka.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study employs a quantitative approach design with a survey method. Data collected from 180 undergraduate accounting students undergoing internship programs at the University of Sri Jayawardenepura. A structured questionnaire was employed, incorporating Forsyth's Ethical Position Questionnaire emotional intelligence scale, and a scenario-based ethical judgement measure. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Regression analysis, and Mediation analysis with IBM SPSS.

Findings:

The findings show that ethical ideology and emotional intelligence significantly influence the ethical judgment of accounting undergraduates. Idealism correlates positively with ethical judgement whilst relativism shows a negative association. Emotional intelligence components such as emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy make a positive impact on the ethical ideology. Further, this study shows that emotional intelligence exerts a mediating effect in the relationship between ethical ideology and ethical judgment.

Practical implications:

The study highlights the necessity of integrating ethical ideology and emotional intelligence into accounting education. Educators and professional bodies can design targeted ethical training and emotional intelligence development programs to enhance ethical decision-making among future accountants. Further study supports accounting firms and regulators in strengthening ethical standards within the profession.

Originality/ value:

This research contributes to the limited literature on accounting ethics in emerging economies by empirically examining the combined effects of ethical ideology and emotional intelligence on ethical judgment among future accountants in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Ethical Ideology, Ethical Judgment, Idealism, Relativism, Undergraduate Accounting Students

Perceptions of accounting undergraduates on the auditing profession: An empirical study of state universities in the Western province of Sri Lanka

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University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

This study aims to examine how accounting undergraduates of state universities in the Western Province of Sri Lanka perceive the auditing profession and determine the relationship between the proximity, knowledge, and sources of knowledge of auditors' stereotypes. While prior research has predominantly focused on the auditing career, this study extends its scope to encompass three critical dimensions of the auditing profession, which are auditors' work, career perceptions, and the professional image of auditors.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

Quantitative research approach was employed using a structured questionnaire survey. Data were collected from 216 third- and fourth-year accounting undergraduates from three universities in the Western Province - University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Colombo, and University of Kelaniya.

Findings:

The results indicate that proximity to auditors, higher levels of knowledge, media exposure, and satisfaction with auditing courses significantly influence the positive perceptions of accounting undergraduates on the auditing profession. Accounting undergraduates perceive the auditing career as difficult, but contribute to professional development and view auditors' work as an interesting, rigorous activity, which requires high responsibility and contributes significantly to society. In terms of auditors' image, undergraduates consider auditors to be competent and ethical.

Practical implications:

The findings highlight the need for universities, professional bodies, and audit firms to enhance auditing education, strengthen practical exposure, and address negative stereotypes to attract and retain competent graduates in the auditing profession.

Originality/ value:

This study contributes original empirical evidence to the limited Sri Lankan literature on perceptions of the auditing profession by integrating three dimensions, which are auditors' career, work, and image, within a single framework. It extends current research by incorporating proximity, knowledge, and sources of knowledge as key determinants of accounting undergraduates' perceptions.

Keywords: Competent, Difficulty, Knowledge, Proximity, Professional Development, Rigorous, Stereotypes

Case of a national university in Sri Lanka disseminating academic knowledge to make a difference in professional life in public practice

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University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

This study investigates the role of university accounting education in Sri Lanka in disseminating academic knowledge to make a difference in professional life in public practice.

Design/methodology/approach:

Based on the qualitative methodological approach, this explanatory case study was carried out to address: How does the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) make a difference in professional life in public practice, by disseminating academic knowledge? Either the dominance or the dependence of the university on the profession, in disseminating academic knowledge, was empirically elicited. Primary data was collected by conducting twenty (20) interviews. The interviews took the form of conversations on what was perceived by the graduates and undergraduates, on the role of the university and the role of the profession, in disseminating academic knowledge. Secondary data was collected by reading Sri Lankan history books on university education in a liberalized economy. Data was analyzed thematically, grounded in Abbott's (1988) writings in the sociological analysis of professions on 'professional knowledge in use'.

Findings:

Findings reveal that the USJ academic degree with a professional orientation attempted to make a difference in professional life in public practice by enabling students to: engage in research, understand theories and concepts with respect to accounting and other management disciplines, get assimilated into a learning to learn culture, and develop critical thinking. However, the majority of the undergraduates obtaining training as interns in audit firms were not receptive towards it as they envisaged that they were not required to obtain the professional accounting credentials to gain access to work. The graduates were of the firm belief that academic knowledge devoid of practical professional knowledge was of no use in practice. This underscores that practical professional knowledge, deep-rooted in academic knowledge, which is professional knowledge in use, is required when performing professional work in public practice.

Practical implications:

The university needs to strategically develop a niche by disseminating academic knowledge to make a difference in professional life and in public practice. Thereby, the dominance of the profession and dependence of the university can be decreased.

Originality/value:

The importance of professional knowledge in use has been disregarded by prior researchers, which has been empirically elicited in this study.

Keywords: Academic Knowledge, Profession, Professional Knowledge in Use, University

Accounting undergraduates' perceptions of the value of accreditation exemptions: A case study from a Sri Lankan university

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Purpose:

Accreditation exemptions granted by professional accounting bodies (PABs) play a significant role in accounting education. However, empirical evidence on Sri Lankan accounting undergraduates' perceptions of these exemptions remains limited. Addressing the gap, this study investigates accounting undergraduates' perceptions of the value of accreditation exemptions, with specific attention to the motivating factors behind undergraduates' decisions to pursue accreditation exemptions, the challenges they perceive in obtaining such exemptions, and how these exemptions shape their pathways into the accounting profession.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study used a qualitative single-case design, collecting semi-structured interview data from accounting undergraduates at a leading state university in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and analysing it thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework.

Findings:

Accounting undergraduates mainly pursue accreditation exemptions to save time and costs, avoid duplicated learning, and manage workload, with peers also influencing decisions. However, they report challenges such as high exemption fees, complex procedures, long waiting times, perceived stigma, and concerns about knowledge gaps due to curriculum–syllabi misalignment. Overall, exemptions offer a faster, more structured pathway into the profession, but raise mixed views about preparedness and long-term credibility.

Practical implications:

The findings offer several practical implications. Universities and PABs should improve the clarity and transparency of exemption procedures, as undergraduates reported confusion about application processes and timelines. Early awareness programmes can help students make more informed academic and professional decisions. Closer university–PAB collaboration is also needed to align curricula with professional requirements and reduce perceived knowledge gaps. Undergraduates should proactively seek accurate information and complement exemptions with internships or additional training to strengthen practical competencies.

Originality/ value:

This study is novel in providing a Sri Lanka-specific, student-centered qualitative account of how PAB accreditation exemptions influence accounting undergraduates' perceptions of the value of accreditation exemptions, an area with limited prior empirical evidence.

Keywords: Accreditation Exemptions, Accounting Undergraduates, Challenges, Motivations, Perceptions, Professional Accounting Bodies, Sri Lanka

Role of university accounting education in developing professionals in the sphere of public practice in Sri Lanka

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University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

This study examines how and why university accounting education makes a difference in professional life within the sphere of public practice in Sri Lanka. It specifically focuses on the role played by universities in developing professionals through the integration of academic knowledge and practical professional knowledge, in a context where there is separateness between the university system and professional accounting bodies.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study adopts a qualitative explanatory case study approach grounded in Abbott's (1988) sociological analysis of professions, particularly the concept of professional knowledge in use and jurisdiction. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with accounting graduates from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura employed in public practice, along with a focus group discussion. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, guided by a theoretically informed framework linking university education and professional practice.

Findings:

The findings reveal that university accounting education plays a critical role in developing professionals by providing a strong theoretical foundation that supports practical professional work. Academic knowledge offered by the university forms the base upon which professional knowledge is applied in practice. However, delivering academic knowledge in isolation limits its relevance. The study highlights the importance of integrating practical exposure through internships, research engagement, technological competence, and soft skills development. Maintaining a balance between academic knowledge and practical professional knowledge enhances professional competence and long-term employability in public practice.

Practical implications:

The findings suggest the need for universities to strengthen curricula by embedding practical exposure, research-oriented learning, technological tools, and soft skills development. Policymakers, universities, and professional accounting bodies can use these insights to foster stronger collaboration, thereby enhancing the relevance of university accounting education and improving graduate preparedness for public practice.

Originality/ value:

This study extends Abbott's (1988) framework by empirically demonstrating how university accounting education contributes to professional development in a context of institutional separateness between universities and professional bodies. It highlights how the effective combination of academic knowledge and practical professional knowledge creates professional knowledge in use, thereby bridging the gap between academia and accounting practice in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Academic Knowledge, Practical Professional Knowledge, Professional Accounting Bodies, Professional Knowledge in Use, University

Exploring students' selection of taxation as a career through the lens of social cognitive career theory: A case study of a Sri Lankan university

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University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

The purpose of this research is to understand the driving factors and restraining factors affecting accounting students' choice to pursue a tax career from the perspective of social cognitive career theory. Further, this study aims to explore the methods and techniques that students employ to exercise their self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations in pursuing a tax career in the future.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

The study employs the qualitative case study approach. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with the third-year and fourth-year accounting students in University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Social cognitive career theory was utilized to explore the factors influencing career choices.

Findings:

The study investigated five driving factors, including self-assurance in taxation competencies, high earning potential, career growth opportunities, contributing to national prosperity, and the pursuit of taxation expertise and specialization. It also identified three restraining factors, including perceived lack of competence and skill confidence, Limited career scope and flexibility, and taxation stereotype. The study showed that the intrinsic factor driven by self-efficacy is dominant in choosing a career. Also, findings revealed that the students who would choose taxation as a career are using several methods and techniques to achieve their future career goals.

Practical implications:

The findings highlight the importance of accounting students integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience and pursuing professional certifications to enhance competence in taxation. The study promotes collaborative engagement among educational institutions and professional bodies to develop curricula and training frameworks that address skill deficiencies and align with industry requirements.

Originality/ value:

The study is unique in its qualitative approach, providing a comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing accounting students' choice of tax careers, particularly in the Sri Lankan context. It extends prior research by examining both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing students' pursuit of taxation careers, exploring the methods they employ, and addressing inconsistencies identified in previous studies.

Keywords: Career, Driving, Methods and Techniques, Restraining, Social Cognitive Career Theory, Taxation

Case of a national university in Sri Lanka disseminating practical professional knowledge to make a difference in professional life in public practice

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University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Purpose:

This study investigates the role of university accounting education in Sri Lanka in disseminating practical professional knowledge to make a difference in professional life in public practice.

Design/ methodology/ approach:

Based on the qualitative methodological approach, this explanatory case study was carried out to address: How does the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) make a difference in professional life in public practice, by disseminating practical professional knowledge? Either the dominance or the dependence of the university on the profession, in disseminating practical professional knowledge, was empirically elicited. Primary data was collected by conducting twenty (20) interviews. The interviews took the form of conversations on what was perceived by the graduates and undergraduates, on the role of the university and the role of the profession, in disseminating practical professional knowledge. Secondary data was collected by reading Sri Lankan history books on university education in a liberalized economy. Data was analyzed thematically, grounded in Abbott's (1988) writings in the sociological analysis of professions on 'professional knowledge in use'.

Findings:

Findings reveal that, in some instances, the profession has outsmarted the university and thereby gained dominance in disseminating practical professional knowledge. The profession frames its training as the definitive standard for what is practically required to do the job. Emphasis is more on practical application. The profession holds the ultimate access to work, while a university is portrayed as an initial step towards it. However, the university continues to have a role in disseminating practical professional knowledge by embedding this knowledge in the degree programme through case studies and business simulations, guest lectures by practicing accountants, and exposure to real-world workplace dynamics and professional expectations. Thereby, following an approach that introduces multiple perspectives on accounting issues, strengthening analytical readiness for audit and assurance tasks. However, there were no explicit collaborations between the university and the profession in the dissemination of practical professional knowledge.

Practical implications:

The university needs to strategically collaborate with the profession in the dissemination of practical professional knowledge to decrease the dominance of the profession and the dependence of the university.

Originality/ value:

The importance of professional knowledge in use has been disregarded by prior researchers, which has been empirically elicited in this study.

Keywords:

University, Profession, Practical Professional Knowledge, Professional Knowledge in Use



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