



YGC
GRADUATE CAMPUS
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12TH MARCH 2026

NATIONAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

HUMAN-CENTERED DIGITAL DIALOGUES: THROUGH
MULTIDISCIPLINARY BRIDGES

2026

York Graduate Campus

National Research Symposium on Human Centered Digital Dialogues: Through Multidisciplinary Bridges

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Human Centered Digital Dialogues: Through Multidisciplinary Bridges

First National Research Symposium

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Preface

Human Centered Digital Dialogues: Through Multidisciplinary Bridges is the first National Research Symposium organized by the York Graduate Campus (YGC) which took place on 12th March 2026 at YGC premise. YGC expected several objectives in organizing this Research Symposium: (1) To strengthen the research culture within the campus (2) To provide quality feedback for young scholars' research (3) To enhance the research capacity of YGC Academics (4) To develop young scholars' skills in research communication, and (5) To provide opportunities for young scholars to disseminate their research findings. The expected outcomes of the Research Symposium were; (1) strengthened analytical and research skills of young scholars (2) improved research presentation skills among young scholars (3) increased interaction among students from diverse disciplines, and (4) strengthened research culture within the campus. YGC requested quality abstracts based on four diverse themes – Psychology, Management, Information Technology and Language and Literature, and received a satisfactory number of quality papers. One of the critical challenges were to identify the best quality papers and the Editorial Board has worked tirelessly to review each submission to explore the conference theme. YGC was excited to present these findings which emphasize innovative research, cutting-edge methodologies and diverse perspectives of each theme from both emerging young scholars and established scholars. The paper presenters were from diverse academic disciplines from around the country.

Research Symposium commenced with traditional customs and rituals like lighting of the traditional oil lamp which symbolizes the dispelling of ignorance through knowledge and wisdom, followed by the National Anthem. Dr. N.W. Chanaka Lasantha, Chief Security Architect (GRC and AI Research) Kerner Norland Ltd, Sri Lanka was the Chief Guest of the National Research Symposium 2026 who also delivered an enlightening speech. Welcome Speech and Opening Remarks were given by Mr. Deshan Perera, Director of York Graduate Campus. Prof. Ruvan Abeysekara, Chair of National Research Symposium 2026 delivered the keynote speech. Mr. Roshane Perera, Director of York Graduate Campus highlighted the footsteps of YGC – the development of YGC as a private academic institute. Dr. Harshani Pinnawala, Co-Chair of Research Symposium 2026 shared the challenges and outcomes in organizing the National Research Symposium 2026. A total of 12 research paper writers were able to present their findings and each received a participation certificate for their contribution to the first National Research Symposium. The best paper presenter received a gold medal for the contribution to the innovative research. Ms. Heshani Vithange, Secretary of National Research Symposium 2026 delivered the vote of thanks. Overall presider of the Research Symposium was Ms. Navoda Siriwardana.

The final outcome of the first National Research Symposium 2026 is this publication. YGC intends to host Research Symposiums annually, creating a platform for more young scholars around the country in the future.

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Message from the Chairman



It gives me immense pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all distinguished guests, respected faculty members, participants, and students to this Symposium.

A symposium is not merely an academic gathering; it is a platform where ideas converge, innovation is encouraged, and knowledge is shared beyond boundaries. Such events play a vital role in nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative learning among young minds.

In today's rapidly evolving world, it is essential that we move beyond textbooks and engage in meaningful discussions that challenge perspectives and inspire solutions. I am confident that this symposium will provide an excellent opportunity for participants to showcase their talents, exchange insights, and gain valuable experiences that will contribute to their academic and professional growth. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the organizing committee, faculty coordinators, and student volunteers whose dedication and hard work have made this event possible. Your commitment reflects the spirit of excellence that our institution stands for.

I encourage all participants to make the most of this opportunity learn enthusiastically, participate actively, and network positively. May this symposium be a grand success and a memorable milestone in our journey toward academic distinction.

Wishing everyone a productive and enriching experience.

With best wishes,

Mr. Rohan Perera

Chairman

York Graduate Campus

Message from the Chair



It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of academic responsibility that I welcome you to the *National Research Symposium 2026* at York Graduate Campus. This year's theme, "*Human-Centered Digital Dialogues through Multidisciplinary Bridges*," reflects both the urgency and the opportunity of our time.

In an era shaped profoundly by rapid digital transformation, it is essential that innovation remains anchored in human values, ethical responsibility, and societal relevance. Technology must not only advance efficiency and intelligence; it must also amplify empathy, inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability. Our Symposium theme invites scholars, practitioners, and emerging researchers to explore how digital ecosystems can be designed and governed with humanity at their core.

The strength of this conference lies in its multidisciplinary foundation. By building bridges between disciplines, whether in computing, business or education we create spaces for meaningful dialogue. It is within these intersections that groundbreaking insights emerge, innovative solutions are shaped, and impactful collaborations are formed.

This symposium also celebrates the spirit of research excellence. The papers presented and published herein represent rigorous inquiry, critical reflection, and forward-thinking scholarship. I commend all authors for their commitment to knowledge creation and dissemination. Your contributions demonstrate that research is not merely an academic exercise, but a transformative force capable of shaping communities and national development.

As Chair, I extend my sincere appreciation to the organizing committee, reviewers, keynote speakers, and all contributors who have worked diligently to make this National Research Symposium a reality. Your dedication ensures that York Graduate Campus continues to serve as a platform for intellectual exchange and scholarly advancement.

May this publication inspire further dialogue, collaboration, and innovation? Let us continue to build multidisciplinary bridges that keep humanity at the heart of digital progress.

Professor Ruvan Abeysekara

Chair – National Research Symposium 2026
York Graduate Campus

Message from the Director



It is with great pride and optimism that I welcome you to this Symposium at York Graduate Campus.

At our institution, we believe education extends far beyond the classroom. True learning happens when curiosity meets opportunity, when students question, explore, research, and collaborate. This symposium represents that spirit of inquiry and intellectual engagement that defines our campus culture.

As graduates and future professionals, you are preparing to step into a world that demands adaptability, innovation, and ethical leadership. Platforms such as this enable you to refine those qualities by exchanging ideas, presenting research, and engaging with diverse perspectives. Each discussion held today has the potential to spark new thinking and meaningful impact.

I commend the dedication of our academic team, organizers, and student leaders who have worked diligently to bring this event to life. Your efforts reflect the commitment of York Graduate Campus to academic excellence and professional development.

I encourage every participant to approach this symposium with confidence and an open mind. May it inspire new ambitions, strengthen networks, and contribute to your continued growth.

Wishing you all a successful and rewarding symposium.

With warm regards,

Mr. Deshan Perera
Director
York Graduate Campus

Message from the Director



It is with great pleasure that I extend my warm greetings and best wishes on the occasion of the 1st National Research Symposium titled “Human-centered Digital Dialogues: Through Multidisciplinary Bridges,” which will be held on the 12th of March 2026 at the York Graduate Campus premises.

This symposium represents an important milestone for York Graduate Campus as we continue to strengthen our commitment to academic excellence, research development, and intellectual collaboration. In today’s rapidly evolving digital world, it is essential that scholars, researchers, and professionals come together to exchange knowledge, ideas, and innovations that contribute to the advancement of society. A multidisciplinary approach, such as the one highlighted in this symposium, plays a vital role in bridging diverse fields of knowledge and fostering meaningful dialogue.

I would like to sincerely commend the organizing committee for their dedication and effort in bringing together distinguished researchers, panel members, and participants from various disciplines. Your contributions are invaluable in creating a platform that encourages critical thinking, innovative research, and constructive academic discussions.

I am also pleased to note that the research articles presented at this symposium will be published and shared with all paper presenters, panel members, and invited guests. This initiative will not only recognize the valuable work of our researchers but will also serve as a lasting resource that supports further academic engagement and knowledge dissemination.

I am confident that this symposium will inspire new perspectives, encourage collaborative research opportunities, and strengthen the culture of research within our academic community. I wish the symposium every success and look forward to the insightful discussions and outcomes that will emerge from this important gathering.

Mr. Roshane Perera
Director
York Graduate Campus

Message from the Chief Guest



It is a pleasure to extend my best wishes to the organizers and participants of the 1st National Research Symposium on “*Human-centered Digital Dialogues: Through Multidisciplinary Bridges.*”

As digital technologies continue to transform every aspect of modern society, the importance of **Cybersecurity** in safeguarding digital ecosystems has become more critical than ever. A human-centered approach to digital innovation ensures that security, privacy, and trust remain at the core of technological advancement.

Multidisciplinary collaboration among researchers, academics, and industry professionals is essential to address emerging cyber threats, strengthen digital resilience, and build secure and trustworthy digital infrastructures.

Platforms such as this symposium play a vital role in fostering dialogue, sharing research insights, and promoting innovative solutions to the evolving cyber security challenges of our digital world.

I commend York Graduate Campus for organizing this important academic initiative and wish the symposium great success.

Dr. N.W. Chanaka Lasantha (Ph.D)

Chief Guest

National Research Symposium 2026

Message from the Co-Chair



It is with great pleasure that I congratulate York Graduate Campus (YGC)'s First National Research Symposium, 'Human Centered Digital Dialogues: Through Multidisciplinary Bridges 2026'. This is a testament to the Academic Department of YGC of their unwavering dedication and commitment to the quality higher education as they have taken a step forward to instigate its progress.

The scope of this National Research Symposium is to build a unique platform for YGC young scholars and to establish fruitful collaborations with national level scholars and practitioners providing them to exchange their innovative knowledge and transformative experiences. This will also lessen their hardships and challenges experience when presenting and publishing their research work, and widen their future opportunities, while fostering a vibrant research culture. Knowledge on research enhances young scholars to be more responsible and independent in their learning processes and to reach productive learning outcomes, thus, YGC as a leading private Academic Institute in *Gampaha* district encourages rigorous research, encouraging its young scholars to have academic, professional and personal developments.

I take this opportunity to offer my immense gratitude to the Chief Guest, Dr. N.W. Chanaka Lasantha for accepting the invitation to grace the Research Symposium. I would like to extend my earnest gratitude to the Chair and the Keynote Speaker of the National Research Symposium, Prof. Ruvan Abeyssekara for his precious and insightful contribution to the Research Symposium and enlightening the audience. I deeply appreciate Mr. Rohan Perera, Chairman of York Graduate Campus for his inspirational leadership and insightful guidance during challenging times. My sincere gratitude goes to the Directors, Mr. Deshan Perera and Mr. Roshane Perera for their immense contribution to the enhancement of the quality of academics. I should deeply acknowledge the Review Panel and Panel Members of the National Research Symposium Board for their domain expertise shared with the paper authors submitted for the National Research Symposium 2026. I sincerely appreciate all the authors and presenters for their efforts, commitments and intellectual contribution, and may find this publication both insightful and inspiring. My solemn appreciation goes to the YGC Academic Department for extending their unconditional support to make this National Research Symposium a reality in the YGC Year Calendar. A special appreciation goes to the Media Unit, Sales and Marketing Department, Finance Department and HR Department.

Wish you a pleasant and rewarding research experience.

Dr, Harshani Pinnawala (Ph.D)

Co-Chair – National Research Symposium 2026

York Graduate Campus

Message from the Secretary



It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I welcome you to the First National Research Symposium of York Graduate Campus. This inaugural symposium represents a landmark in our academic journey, reflecting our commitment to nurturing research excellence, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and translating knowledge into meaningful impact for society.

The theme, “*Human-Centered Digital Dialogues: Through Multidisciplinary Bridges,*” captures the transformative potential at the intersection of human behavior and digital innovation. In a world where technology shapes how we communicate, learn, make decisions and organize, it is imperative that we place the human experience at the center of progress. This symposium provides a dynamic platform to explore how insights from psychology, innovations in business and advances in information technology can together create ethical, inclusive and sustainable digital futures.

Research is the cornerstone of both academic growth and societal advancement. It fuels critical thinking, drives innovation and bridges the gap between theory and practice. Beyond shaping knowledge within universities, research empowers us to address real-world challenges informing policy, improving organizational strategies and enhancing community well-being. By engaging in rigorous inquiry, scholars and practitioners alike contribute to a cycle of learning that transforms ideas into tangible solutions for contemporary issues.

As Conference Secretary and an academic of Psychological Counselling and Psycho-Social Support, I am particularly inspired by the enthusiasm and interdisciplinary engagement this symposium has generated. Bringing together scholars from diverse fields encourages dialogue that is both intellectually stimulating and practically relevant, fostering new perspectives that will shape the future of research in our country.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Institutional leadership, Symposium Chair, organizing committee, reviewers, keynote speakers and all contributors whose dedication made this inaugural event possible. Most importantly, I commend the presenters and participants whose curiosity, commitment and creativity form the foundation for the success of this symposium and future research initiatives.

May this symposium ignite new ideas, inspire collaboration and reaffirm the power of human-centered research in shaping a brighter, digitally empowered future.

Ms. Heshani Vithanage

Conference Secretary

1st National Research Symposium 2026

York Graduate Campus

Perceived Effectiveness of Employee Grievance - Handling Procedures on Job Performance of Employees

J.A.S. Sihara, W.G.S. Mahalekamge, H.S. Basnagoda

ABSTRACT

Applying recognized channels through which employees can convey their unhappiness to management's attention is an innovative practice to guarantee that firms direct their human resource assets appropriately. One of the aims organizations embrace in attaining their goals, including excellent performance, is good employee relations. The grievances are incredibly destructive and must be addressed properly and quickly. Otherwise, it tends to create issues in the industry. An adequate method is required for the proper management of grievances. This study investigates the impact of the perceived effectiveness of grievance handling on employee job performance. A cross-sectional field study among a sample of 141 staff in a selected salt manufacturing company. Due to the awareness of sampling framework; simple random sampling technique was used to determine the sample. Thus, every participant had equal opportunity to select for the sample. The standard questionnaire used to collect data and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It was found that there is a significant impact of the perceived effectiveness of grievance-handling procedures on employee job performance of the staff in a selected salt manufacturing company in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, theoretically and practically implications provide for researchers, managers, unions, and relevant for the food manufacturing industry. The present study provide contributions to fill contextual and knowledge gaps for the extant literature. Cross-validation of the conclusions of this study in different sectors, compared among a larger sample recommend for the future studies.

Keywords: *Grievance-handling procedure, Job performance, Timeliness, Justice, Participation*

Introduction

The effectiveness, productivity, and overall contribution of an individual in their role within an organization is known as 'Employee Job Performance' (Rich et al., 2010). A grievance is a feeling of displeasure that can be voiced or not, written or unwritten, justified or unjustified. The most effective component in grievance processes is human resource management (Juneja, 2018). When employees have grievances that are not addressed or resolved, it can lead to decrease morale, job satisfaction, and productivity. This, in turn, can harm individuals and eventually cause to decrease the entire performance of the company. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to effectively handle employee grievances to minimize dissatisfaction and enhance their performance (Maduwanthi & Fahim, 2020). Providing fast and effective grievance resolution is critical to attracting new bright employees and keeping existing ones. Every organization needs grievance-handling procedures to manage employee dissatisfaction or complaints (Mupukwa, 2009).

Many researchers have studied this issue for decades, primarily to identify key factors contributing to employee dissatisfaction among diverse people from a Western perspective (Olson, 1996; Daley, 2007; Obiekwe and Eke, 2019). Even though there are criteria that will show whether or not the employees' concerns are appropriately addressed and resolved. Awareness of the problem, awareness of the employees to whom to report it, availability of the concerned person, discussion of problems, causes and effects, methods to avoid similar problems in the future, directions and instructions on how to deal with a problem, awareness programs to avoid them for new employees, and so on are among the factors considered (Maduwanthi & Fahim,

2020). With the consideration of the above data, the research has selected a leading salt manufacturing company in Sri Lanka which is encountering the addressed research problem. According to the data gathered by the organization, a higher level of grievance will result in a lower degree of job performance (Internal company records, 2020).

Table 1: Average numbers of grievances of the selected company

Year	Number of employees per year	Number of employees who report grievances per year	Percentage of grievances (%) Per Year
2017	243	25	10.3
2018	272	40	14.7
2019	287	36	12.5
2020	223	42	18.8

Source: Internal Company records, 2020

The high grievance percentage in the selected salt manufacturing company presents an important research opportunity, especially within the Sri Lankan context. Although prior studies have examined grievance handling and job performance separately, limited research has explored their direct relationship, particularly in Sri Lanka. A clear gap exists in the literature regarding the impact of grievance handling procedures on employee performance. Given the increasing occurrence and significance of this issue, immediate investigation and resolution are necessary, and this study aims to address that gap.

“What is the impact of perceived effectiveness of employee grievance handling procedure on employee job performance of employees in the selected salt manufacturing company in Sri Lanka?”

Research Questions

- i. What is the impact of perceived effectiveness of grievance handling procedure on employee job performance?
- ii. What is the impact of timeliness on employee job performance?
- iii. What is the impact of the structure of the grievance handling procedure on employee job performance?
- iv. What is the impact of justice on employee job performance?
- v. What is the impact of participation on employee job performance?

Literature Review

Job Performance

An organization’s performance is defined by its degree of profitability, market share in the industry, and returns on assets and investments” (Emenike, 2012). The actual output or outcomes that an organization has accomplished might be viewed as organizational performance. When comparing an organization’s objectives, aims, or proposals to those of its competitors, it is the extent to which it was able to perform (Obiekwe & Eke, 2019). Thus, organizational performance results from individual and group performance inside the company. Individual performance leads to group (unit/department) implementation, leading to the company’s overall performance

(Obiekwe & Eke, 2019). “Organizational performance may be operationalized in various ways,” according to Scholam, Rose, and Krupp (2005), including “profitability, market share, return on assets or investment, changes in market share or profitability, and new product success”. According to Opatha (2012), performance may be classified into three types: traits, behaviors, and results.

Traits: Traits relate to certain features or attributes of the hiring process. It is possible to evaluate an employee's personality traits. Job knowledge, company, trust, honesty, initiative, and loyalty are just a few examples. Traits must be understood to succeed and be suitable actions (Opatha H. , 2012).

Behaviors: Behaviors are how an employee acts about their work. In general, behaviors refer to employees' actions while executing their work. Examples include punctuality, attendance, work planning, organization, subordinate development, and control. (Opatha H. , 2012).

Results: The employee's outputs are referred to as results. Employee outcomes or outputs might be evaluated to undertake a performance evaluation. The number of units manufactured, the number of units sold, and so on are examples. The number of goods and the quality of the products demonstrate the employee's performance and productivity (Opatha H. , 2012).

Measures of Job Performance of Employees

Performance refers to an employee's or company's ability to effectively and efficiently use a company's resources to meet organizational goals (Gibson & Cassar, 2005). Employees' performance is measured by the number of units created, processed, or exchanged, which is an excellent objective indicator of performance (Ngetich, 2016). It is important to remember that putting too much emphasis on quantity might lead to bad quality. The percentage of labor output that must be repeated or overruled is one of several ways to assess job quality. The number of enquiries converted to sales in a sales situation is a good indicator of salesmanship skill. Another performance of quality is the speed with which work is completed. In the service industry, the average customer's wasted time is a good indicator of punctuality. In manufacturing, the number of units produced per hour is a valuable indication (Saundry, et al., 2014).

Employee Grievances

Employee grievances include issues such as the job contract, work rules and regulations, working environment, organizational culture, organizational behavior, policy and procedures, interpersonal relations, employer-employee relations, past practice, unilaterally changing cultural norms, victimization, and wages, among others (Kalyani, 2006). A grievance is any unhappiness or discontent, whether voiced or not, justified or not, originating from anything related to the firm that an employee believes, believes, or even feels is unfair, unjust, or inequitable (John, 1999). According to Rose (2004), a grievance is any discontent with one's job or workplace that is formally reported to one's immediate supervisor. A grievance generally has a more official tone than a complaint. It must arise from anything related to corporate operations or policy which might be reasonable or absurd. It must include interpreting or implementing the work contract's terms (Fillipo, 1980).

Grievance-handling Procedures (GHP)

The purpose of using grievance procedures is to meet the demands of both employers and employees (Gamage & Hewagama, 2007). According to Nurse (2006), employers must use effective GHP to address employee concerns to ensure justice is served and that disputes are avoided. GHP is meant to give "peaceful" techniques for resolving issues and developing

effective organizational labor-management interactions (Gamage & Hewagama, 2007). Dessler (2008) also claims that a GHP is a step-by-step process that an employee should follow to have resolve his or her complaint appropriately varies from one organization to the next and from one industry to the next.

Informal Grievance-handling Practices

Informal methods are most efficient when there is a good relationship and when there are personal issues between two persons in locations where unofficial resolution is commonly used (Randolph & Edjeta, 2011). Organizations use some techniques in dealing with grievances, according to CAO (2008), but they are frequently not well-defined, and there is no formal approach. The most frequent methods are blind trust, in which organizations make a blanket suggestion that employees can unofficially stop by the manager's office at any time to voice their grievances, or an ad hoc approach, in which managers utilize their judgment on a case-by-case basis. According to Adikaram and Rupasiri (2008), the blind trust may be incredibly successful since it identifies and resolves problems before they become significant problems.

Formal grievance-handling practices

According to Balamurugan and Shenbagapandian (2016), if a line manager does not resolve a grievance satisfactorily, the disgruntled employee has the right to file a written complaint and see it through completion. The formal procedure entails investigating, reaching a choice, and publicizing a strategy, as well as multi-step methods with precise timetables that must be adhered to. Dissatisfactions are sanctioned by examining them through suitable channels to verify their reliability or determine whether the complaint is genuine or invalid (Hunter & Kleiner, 2004).

Effective Grievance-handling Practices

Because the benefits of correctly handling grievances are always gratifying to both workers and the firm as a whole, reputable organizations have reasonable policies that ensure that employees' grievances and complaints are thoroughly examined and resolved (Kelly, 2006). According to Randolph and Edjeta (2011), employees' dissatisfactions, problems, or complaints about concerns at work, such as the nature of the job, workload, and conflicts with coworkers, are known as grievances. Although these grievances are best addressed informally at this level, the company and HR department must always be able to resolve employee grievances through established and formal Employee Grievance Practices recorded for the business (Kelly, 2006).

Accordingly, building on the empirical and theoretical explanations discussed above, the following hypotheses were developed in the present study.

H₁: There is a significant impact of the perceived effectiveness of employee grievance-handling procedures on employee job performance.

Grievance filing rates are inversely connected with workplace productivity, product quality, or job performance of employees in a unionized manufacturing plant, according to prior research studies (Ichniowski, 2006; and Ichniowski and Levin, 2009). Strikes have also been linked to feelings of irritation and unfair treatment, which will result in lower employee performance (Northam & Bluen, 1994). When a worker has a grievance, his or her attention to work decreases, and his or her motivation for work decreases, resulting in lower worker productivity (Opatha H.

H., 2012). For a quick resolution of a grievance, (White, 1989; Tripathi, 1992 as cited in Opatha, 2009) a time limit should be specified and strictly adhered to at each level. Time restrictions are one of the features that a successful grievances handling method must have, according to Opatha (2009). The sheer existence of a grievance settlement method does not guarantee the successful management of employee grievances, and it is suggested that rapid resolution be a feature of such a procedure (Opatha, 1994). One of the four established features of an efficient grievance-handling method has been determined to be promptness (Adikaram & Rupasiri, 2008).

H_{1a}: There is a significant impact of timelines of grievance-handling procedures on employee job performance.

According to Polster (2011) as cited by Tharuka & Sajeevani (2020), to reduce liability and ensure employee productivity, non-union firms have progressively embraced official grievance procedures during the last fifty years. These formal procedures allow employees to challenge a company's decision or policy. The structure of grievance procedures and grievance rates were found to be positively related by Lewin and Peterson (1988).

H_{1b}: There is a significant impact of the structure of the grievance-handling procedures on employee job performance.

The majority of the literature on the outcome of a grievance-handling system focuses on justice. The possibility of appeal is another part of the outcome in such a system (Tharuka & Sajeevani, 2020). Employees are more likely to use and see as effective a grievance system that they believe is procedurally equitable or fair (Peterson & Lewin, 2000). According to Nurse and Devonish (2007), this shows that if employees feel the system's procedures are fair and just, they are more likely to believe the results are fair, even if the results are not in their favor.

H_{1c}: There is a significant impact of justice of the grievance-handling procedures on employee job performance.

Non-grievant had a substantially more positive view of their superiors' competency than grievants (Allen & Keaveny, 1985). Bemmels et al. (1991) and Bemmels (1994) found that greater perceived supervisor competence was connected to fewer employee complaints and lower grievance rates in their study on steward views of supervision. According to Chaykowski and Slotsve (1992); Tan (1994) the ability of managers and supervisors to perceive, diagnose, and rectify the sources of prospective employee unhappiness before they become official grievances is critical to constructive grievance handling. The early and informal resolution of disputes was one of the key benefits of strong working cooperation between unions and companies (Oxenbridge & Brown, 2004).

H_{1d}: There is a significant impact of participation in the grievance-handling procedures on employee job performance.

The hypothesized relationship are shown in figure 1; conceptual framework of the study.

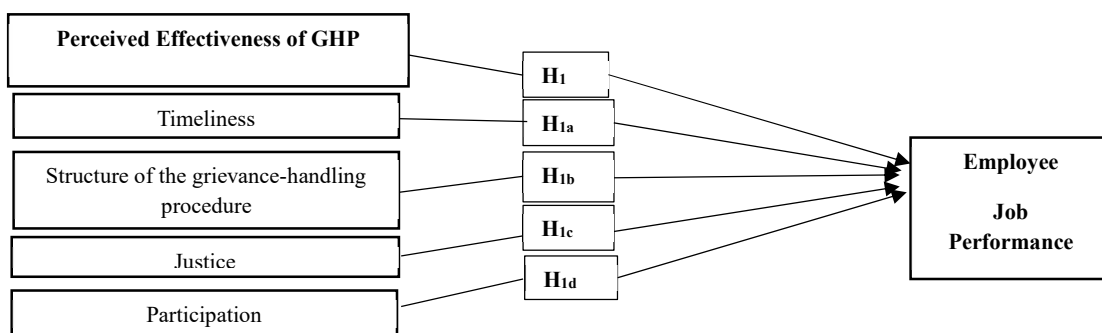


Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework

Source: Author, 2022

Methodology

The study examines the impact of the perceived effectiveness of grievance-handling procedures on employee job performance in a selected Sri Lankan salt manufacturing company. It follows a descriptive, explanatory, and correlational research design, with the individual as the unit of analysis. Conducted in a natural work setting with minimal researcher interference, the study targeted 223 head office employees, selecting a sample of 141 through simple random sampling based on Morgan's table.

Research Instruments

The study collected primary data via an online questionnaire comprising 43 English-language questions, each measured on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to agree strongly). The first section included 6 demographic questions covering age, gender, civil status, education, and length of service. The second and third sections measured job performance (9 items) and grievance-handling procedures (28 items). A total of 138 valid responses were analyzed. The sample was selected based on demographic factors, with 58.7% male and 41.3% female operational employees.

Data Analysis and Results

Reliability Statistics

The Cronbach Alpha values were examined to determine the data's reliability, and the findings are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Construct/s	Dimension/s	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Performance (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.897)	Traits	04	0.812
	Behaviours	03	0.627
	Results	02	0.908
Perceived Effectiveness of Grievance-handling Procedure (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.897)	Timeliness	03	0.582
	Structure of the grievance-handling Procedure	11	0.899
	Justice	06	0.932
	Participation	09	0.932

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

Table 3: Validity Statistics

Construct	Dimension	No. of Items	Factor Loading Value		ESSL Cum %
			Lowest FL	Highest FL	
Job Performance	Traits	04	.521	.922	67.303
	Behaviors	03	.712	.804	57.348
	Results	02	.957	.957	91.633
Perceived Effectiveness of GHP	Timeliness	04	.389	.895	58.104
	Structure of the GHP	11	.451	.841	52.601
	Justice Participation	08	.630	.882	68.277
		07	.760	.944	71.443

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Construct	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Performance	138	3.2963	0.83390	-0.083	-0.580
Perceived Effectiveness of	138	2.4588	0.65733	0.332	-0.320

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Correlation Analysis for Perceived Effectiveness of Grievance-handling Procedures and Job Performance

		Job	Perceived Effectiveness of
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.386**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Perceived Effectiveness of GHP	Pearson Correlation	.386**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

As indicated in Table 5, there is a moderate positive correlation between the perceived effectiveness of grievance-handling procedures and employee job performance ($r=0.386$), which is statistically significant because the level of significance (Sig.2-tailed) is smaller than the level of significance (0.000). (0.01). As a result, H1 is accepted, indicating that the perceived effectiveness of grievance handling is highly linked to employee job performance.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis for Timeliness and Job Performance

		Job Performance	Timeliness
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.342**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Timeliness	Pearson Correlation	.342**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

As indicated in Table 6, there is a moderate positive connection between timeliness and employee job performance ($r=0.342$), which is statistically significant because the level of significance (Sig.2-tailed) is smaller than the threshold of significance (0.000). (0.01). As a result, H_{1a} is accepted, indicating that timeliness is highly linked to employee job performance.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis for Structure of the Grievance Handling Procedure and Job Performance

		Job Performance	Structure of the
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.342**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Structure of the GHP	Pearson Correlation	.342**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

As indicated in Table 7, there is a moderate positive correlation between structure of the grievance handling procedure and employee job performance ($r=0.342$), which is statistically significant because the level of significance (Sig.2-tailed) is smaller than the threshold of significance (0.000). (0.01). As a result, H_{1b} is accepted, indicating that structure of the grievance handling procedure is strongly linked to employee job performance.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis for Justice and Job Performance

		Job	Justice
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.379**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Justice	Pearson Correlation	.379**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

According to Table 8, there is a moderate positive correlation between employee job performance and justice ($r=0.379$), which is statistically significant because Sig.2-tailed (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.01). As a result, H1c is considered as evidence that justice is strongly linked to employee work performance.

Table 9: Correlation Analysis for Participation and Job Performance

		Job	Participation
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Participation	Pearson Correlation	.323**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

As indicated in Table 9, there is a moderate positive correlation ($r=0.323$) between employee participation and job performance, which is statistically significant because the level of significance (Sig.2-tailed (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.000). (0.01). As a result, H1d is considered as evidence that employee job performance is highly connected with participation.

Table 10: Regression Analysis

	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error	Sig.
Perceived Effectiveness of GHP and Job Performance	0.149 (14.9%)	0.143	0.77202	.000 ^b
Timeliness and Job Performance	0.117 (11.7%)	0.110	0.78655	.000 ^b
Structure of Grievance Handling Procedure and Job Performance	0.117 (11.7%)	.110	.78657	.000 ^b
Justice and Job Performance	0.114 (11.4%)	0.138	0.77442	.000 ^b
Participation and Job Performance	0.105 (10.5%)	0.098	0.79197	.000 ^b

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

According to the regression analysis results, the variation of employee job performance could be significantly (Sig. = 0.000 which is less than 0.05) explained by the independent construct in the research model. Further, the marginal contribution of independent variable and its dimensions in determining the effect on employee job performance is to be considered statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000) in the regression equation.

Table 11: Coefficient Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
		B	Std.			
H₁	(Constant)	2.091	.255		8.186	.000
	Perceived Effectiveness of GHP	.490	.100	.386	.292	.000
H_{1a}	(Constant)	2.290	.247		9.286	.000
	Timeliness	.396	.093	.342	4.242	.000
H_{1b}	(Constant)	2.271	.251		9.047	.000
	Structure of GHP	.414	.098	.342	4.241	.000
H_{1c}	(Constant)	2.260	.227		9.972	.000
	Justice	.428	.090	.379	4.780	.000
H_{1d}	(Constant)	2.466	.219		11.2599	.000
	Participation	.341	.086	.323	3.986	.000

Source: Analyzed Data, 2022

Thus, according to the coefficient results;

H₁ is accepted statistically claiming that, there is a significant impact of perceived grievance handling procedure on employee job performance.

H_{1a} is accepted statistically claiming that, there is a significant impact of timeliness on employee job performance.

H_{1b} is accepted statistically claiming that, there is a significant impact of structure of grievance handling procedure on employee job performance.

H_{1c} is accepted statistically claiming that, there is a significant impact of justice on employee job performance.

H_{1d} is accepted statistically claiming that there is a significant impact of participation on employee job performance.

Discussion and Findings

Given the fact that firms incur enormous losses as a result of poor grievance-handling procedures, it is undeniable that grievance handling is a crucial business component for today's enterprises. The present study explored the perceived effectiveness of employee grievance handling procedures on the job performance of employees. In addition to that it focused on studying the possible impact of each sub-dimensions of the perceived effectiveness of the grievance handling procedure (timeliness, structure of the grievance handling procedure, justice and participation) on employee job performance.

The first hypothesis was examined ‘There is a significant impact of perceived effectiveness of grievance handling procedures on employee job performance’. By considering the researcher’s findings of correlation analysis and simple regression analysis, this study found a significant positive correlation between the Perceived Effectiveness of the Grievance Handling Procedure and employee Job Performance. It was shown that the perceived effectiveness of the grievance handling procedure of employees was directly impacted on their job performance. According to the study of Rahim, Manager, & Shapiro (2000) has shown the positive impact of effectiveness

of grievance handling procedures on employee job performance. Further, researcher has found that a discussed dimension of perceived effectiveness of grievance handling procedure in the study have significant effect on employee job performance. Hence, H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1c}, and H_{1d} hypotheses accepted while proving that moderate positive correlation obtained through Pearson's Correlation analysis and Simple Regression analysis. Prior literature separately pointed out the positive and negative impact of timeliness (Opatha, 2009), structure of grievance handling procedure (Lewin and Peterson, 1988), justice (Nurse and Devonish, 2007), and participation on job performance of labourers (Chaykowski and Slotsve, 1992); Tan, 1994).

Conclusion, limitations, and research implications

This study examined the impact of the perceived effectiveness of grievance-handling procedures on employee job performance in a leading salt manufacturing company in Sri Lanka. Findings revealed a moderate positive relationship between grievance-handling effectiveness and job performance. Regression analysis showed that grievance-handling structure had an 11.7% impact, while overall perceived effectiveness had a 14.9% impact on employee performance. These results confirm that effective grievance-handling procedures significantly influence job performance. The study identified four key dimensions of grievance-handling procedures, each affecting performance differently. The findings provide practical guidance for managers to improve HRM decisions and enhance employee performance. The research also offers theoretical and practical value for students and professionals. However, the study focused only on grievance management (using five dimensions) within one salt manufacturing company, and results were based on self-reported data. Therefore, findings may not fully represent the entire industry.

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Influence of Art Therapy on Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing of Young People in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Art Therapy is a non-invasive psychotherapeutic approach that promotes emotional expression and psychological healing. Previous research has demonstrated its positive impact on individuals experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, Generalized Anxiety and Stress-related conditions. The present study aimed to examine the influence of art therapy on the emotional and psychological well-being of young adults in Sri Lanka. The study adopted a qualitative research design using volunteer sampling. Eight male and female participants aged 18-30 were involved in the study over a period of nine months. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and an 8-item standardized questionnaire developed by the British Association of Art Therapists to assess emotional and psychological well-being. The findings indicated noticeable improvements in emotional regulation, self-expression, stress reduction and overall psychological resilience among participants following sustained engagement in art therapy. The study highlights the potential benefits of implementing structured art therapy interventions in Sri Lanka, particularly among young individuals.

Keywords: *Art Therapy, Emotional Well-being, Psychological Well-being, Implementation, Thematic Analysis*

Introduction

This research, “The Influence of Art Therapy on Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing of Young People in Sri Lanka,” examines how art therapy supports mental health among young individuals. This qualitative study aims to explore the influence of art therapy on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of young people. It seeks to understand the challenges individuals experience in their lives and the role art therapy plays in helping them overcome these difficulties. The study also aims to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the psychological and emotional benefits of art therapy across different settings such as schools, hospitals, and prisons. The research question guiding this study is: How does the implementation of art therapy influence the emotional and psychological wellbeing of young people in Sri Lanka? Art serves as a form of emotional expression that fosters psychological balance, self-awareness, and resilience. While prior studies have focused on clinical conditions such as depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, and neurodevelopmental disorders, few have explored its broader impact on emotional and psychological wellbeing in Sri Lanka. This study addresses that gap, highlighting participants’ experiences and the limited availability of certified art therapists. Focusing on young people aged 18 to 30, this research investigates how engagement in art therapy influences emotional and psychological wellbeing. Understanding participants’ perspectives provides insight into its potential for fostering self-understanding, resilience, and emotional stability, supporting the case for its broader implementation in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

Art therapy is a psychotherapeutic approach that uses creative processes such as drawing, painting, and collage making to support emotional and psychological wellbeing. It allows individuals to express emotions non-verbally and process difficult experiences (Malchiodi, 2011).

Research shows that art therapy promotes self-expression, emotional regulation, stress reduction, and improved self-esteem (Hinz, 2019; Wilkinson & Chilton, 2013). It has been used globally among adolescents, trauma survivors, and prison populations, demonstrating improvements in coping skills and resilience (Monti et al., 2006; Tucker & Luetz, 2023). Despite these benefits, limited research has examined the long-term impact of art therapy on young adults in Sri Lanka, highlighting the need for the present study.

Methodology

Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study were young people of both genders, age ranging from 18 to 30 years. These participants are either working or studying in the undergraduate level. The participants were recruited via social media platform (WhatsApp). Volunteer sampling was used, where participants self-selected to take part in the study. The inclusion criteria of the participants were: being above the age of 18, has gone through Art therapy or has done art in school and still does as a hobby, should have at least 2 years of experience. Exclusion criteria of the participants being diagnosed with a mental health condition and the participant being below 18 years of age. Being above 18, the participant would be able to give their own consent and understanding of the research. Proficiency in English was a criteria as the participants were interviewed in the English language. Participants were thus selected from the study, and informed consent obtained during the interview. During the collection of consent, participants were briefed about their rights at a participant- For example: to withdraw.

Data Collection

The present study is a qualitative study, which uses standardized open-ended questioning in interviews. The interview questions were asked using English language. 8 questions were totally used. These questions were taken from British art therapy association website. These questions dealt with the personal experiences of art therapy and ending with what do the individual really think of Art Therapy. The participants were given the freedom to answer the way they feel comfortable. The interview was conducted via the zoom platform. The interview went on for 45 minutes. The interview was recorded with the permission of the participants.

Once the interview was completed the researcher labelled the recorded audio clips with one letter and three numbers for example: A001

Table 1: Participant Characteristics

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Employment status	Age starting Art Therapy
Shelly	20	female	Single	Teacher	16
Molly	29	male	Married	Coach	20
Kelly	22	female	Single	Student	19
Pelly	25	male	Single	Social worker	19

Refly	23	male	Single	First aider	19
Denly	21	female	Single	Nurse	13
Sharly	27	female	consecrated	religious	7
Dendy	24	male	divorce	Emergency doctor	12

Procedure

The interviews were conducted in the private study room at the researcher’s home. The participants were assured that only the researcher would be present in the room and no one else would be listening. The participants were given the opportunity to say “NO” to any question they felt distressing. During the interview, the rapport was built by the researcher and the participant ensuring that the participant feels comfortable in answering the interview questions. All interviews were recorded, with the consent of the participant. Following the interview, the participant was presented with a debriefing form and more information could be gained by emailing the researcher or the supervisor.

Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed in English by the researcher using an “orthographic” format (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Transcripts were stored using participant code names, and the same codes were used for the audio recordings to ensure confidentiality and privacy (BPS, 2018). The data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which is suitable for experiential qualitative research (Smith, 2015). The researcher repeatedly reviewed transcripts alongside audio recordings, generated and refined initial codes, and grouped them into themes. These themes were reviewed, clearly defined, and used to interpret the findings in the discussion.

Ethics

Participants were provided with an information sheet explaining the study’s objectives and potential risks, including possible discomfort from probing questions. Those who agreed to participate signed a consent form, confirming voluntary involvement and the right to withdraw at any time by contacting the researcher, with their interview recording deleted upon request. Participants were informed that the study offered no personal benefit but aimed to provide insights into how art therapy affects emotional and psychological wellbeing in young people in Sri Lanka. All recorded interviews were stored confidentially, accessible only to the researcher. Audio files and transcripts will be retained for one month after dissertation submission to the University of West London, then deleted. Interviews were conducted anonymously, with no personal identifiers collected, and recording consent was obtained beforehand. After interviews, participants received a debrief form clarifying the study, addressing concerns, and providing local mental health referrals, including helplines, support groups, and therapists. Contact details for the researcher and supervisor were included for any additional questions. The information sheet and debrief form ensured transparency and minimized deception throughout the study.

Results

Interpretation of the Results

This study aimed to explore the influence of art therapy on the emotional and psychological well-being of young people in Sri Lanka. The findings suggest that art therapy positively impacts self-esteem, emotional expression, mindfulness and psychological healing.

Gaining Self-esteem and Self-awareness

Several participants (Shelly, Molly, Kelly, Refly and Denly) reported increased self-esteem and self-awareness through engagement in art therapy. Shelly described using art to cope with negative body image concerns, explaining that creative expression helped her develop acceptance and confidence. Refly, who experienced a serious illness (details withheld for confidentiality), reported that art therapy provided hope during recovery. The participant described regaining confidence and maintaining a positive outlook through guided creative activities. Denly reported academic concentration difficulties prior to practicing Mandela drawings as a part of a daily routine. After 3 months of consistent engagement the participant observed improved focus and academic performance, attributing these changes to enhanced self-awareness and confidence developed through art-based meditation. Overall, participants described art therapy as a tool that strengthened resilience, personal insight, and self-worth.

Emotional Expression

Participants highlighted art as a safe medium for expressing emotions. Molly used drawing to convey love when verbal communication was difficult. Kelly, who had experienced depression and suicidal ideation, reported that watercolor painting helped externalize loneliness and fostered positively overtime. These findings show that art therapy supports emotional release and non-verbal healing.

Art as Meditation and Mindfulness

Art engagement was described as meditative. Pelly found calmness and emotional regulation through viewing paintings, while Refly improved focus and present moment awareness by incorporating creative practices, such as Rangoli patterns, into daily routines. Art therapy appears to enhance mindfulness and emotional regulation.

Comfort and Psychological Healing

Dendly reported that art therapy provided comfort and facilitated personal growth, including career development. Denly found that emotional support through painting religious imagery. These narratives indicate that art therapy can promote long-term psychological healing and resilience.

Need for Art Therapists in Sri Lanka

Participants noted the limited availability of professional art therapists and often relied on self-directed or informal guidance. They emphasized the importance of trained therapists, particularly for trauma recovery following events like 2004 tsunami and the 2019 Easter attacks, advocating for formal structures to enhance mental health support.

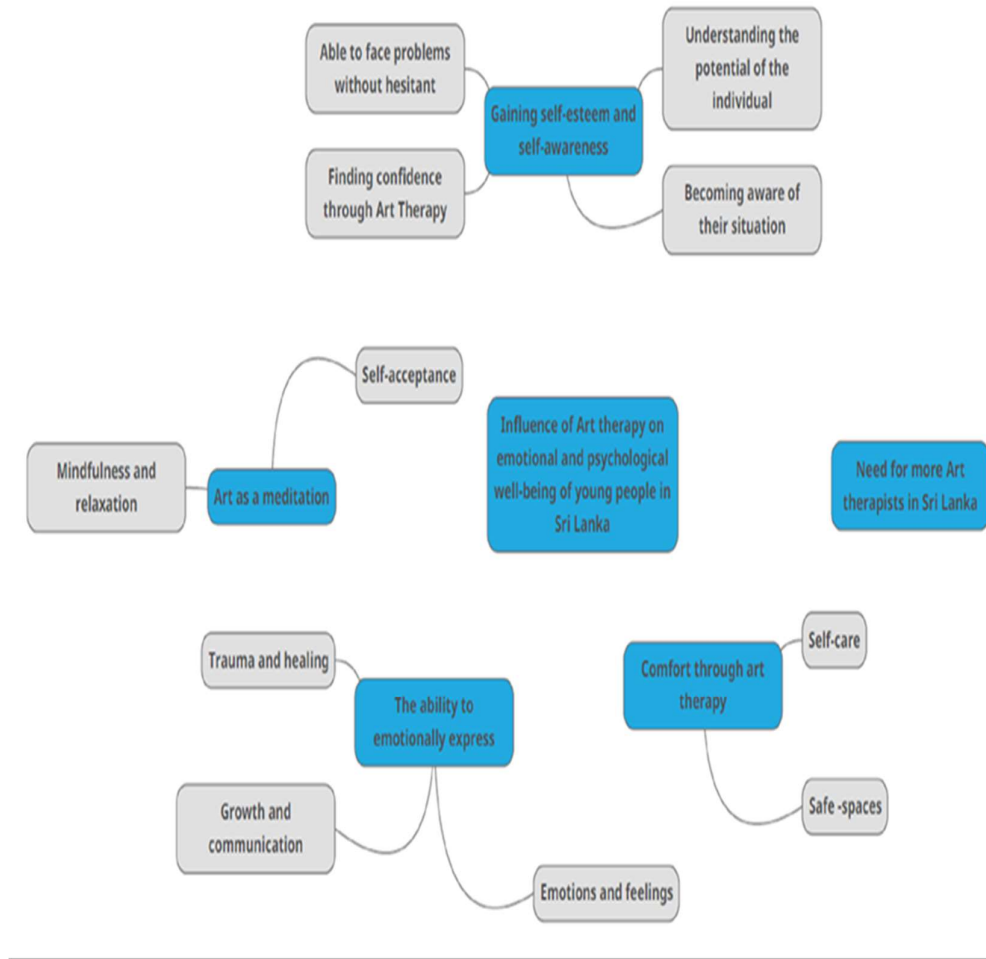


Figure 1: Thematic map

Discussion

Art provides individuals with a meaningful way to express themselves and explore their abilities. Creative activities such as drawing, painting, music and dance allow individuals to communicate thoughts and emotions that may be difficult to express verbally. The findings of this study, together with the evidence from previous research, suggest that art therapy positively influences the emotional and psychological well-being of young people in Sri Lanka. The thematic analysis of the interviews identified five key themes: Gaining self-esteem and self-awareness, the ability to emotionally express, art as a mediation, comfort through art therapy, and the need for more art therapists in Sri Lanka. These themes provide insight into how creative expression can support emotional resilience and psychological well-being.

Gaining self-esteem and Self-awareness

Art therapy enhances self-esteem and self-awareness among young individuals. Participants reported that engaging in creative activities helped them recognize their potential, face challenges confidently, and understand their personal experiences. Artistic expression allows exploration of body image and identity in a non-judgmental space, fostering self-acceptance and reducing the pressure to meet societal standards (Glashouwer et al., 2019). It also supports coping with stressors such as peer pressure, family expectations, or trauma, including harassment (Fernández-

Cao et al., 2020). For students struggling academically, art therapy builds confidence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of accomplishment (Blessy et al., 2024; Gray, 2019).

The Ability to Emotionally Express

Art provides a safe way to explore and communicate emotions. Creative activities help individuals externalize thoughts, making them easier to process (Cheng et al., 2021). Children with selective mutism, for instance, can express feelings through drawings and symbols, offering an alternative to verbal communication (Kristensen, 2000; 2002).

Using Art as a Meditation

Art can promote mindfulness and calm. Participants reported using activities such as mandala drawing to focus and relax, improving emotional balance (Corey, 2015; Tart, 1969). Group art therapy can benefit children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, supporting concentration, communication, and social skills in a structured environment (Review Editor, 2007).

Comfort through Art Therapy

Art therapy provides emotional relief and stability. Creative engagement reduces distress, improves mood, and offers a sense of accomplishment (De Petrillo & Winner, 2005; Genuth & Drake, 2019). Artistic environments can also foster feelings of safety, belonging, and emotional balance.

Need for More Art Therapists in Sri Lanka

Despite interest in creative activities, art therapy is limited in Sri Lanka. Few trained therapists are available, and most participants learned about art therapy through personal research or international experiences. Expanding access to trained art therapists in schools and communities could provide essential psychological support for young people.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This study included a balanced sample of eight participants (four males and four females), allowing gender representation. The qualitative design enabled in-depth exploration of participants lived experiences and perceptions of art therapy. Interviews were conducted via zoom using a structured protocol adopted from the British Association of Art Therapists, enhancing content validity. Data was analyzed through thematic analysis, providing a systematic approach to identifying key patterns and themes. The integration of relevant literature further strengthened the credibility and reliability of the findings. Although the study included both male and female participants, its findings lack cross-cultural generalizability as all participants were Sinhalese and based in Sri Lanka. Data collection via zoom may have reduced ecological validity compared to face-to-face interviews. The study relied solely on qualitative data and did not include quantitative measures to assess broader awareness or prevalence of art therapy in Sri Lanka. Additionally, some participants experienced difficulty articulating their emotions, and the focus on young adults aged 18-30 limits generalizability to other age groups.

Further Recommendations for the Study

Further research should include participants from diverse ethnic and regional backgrounds to enhance cultural representations. Using mixed methods, such as combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys would provide broader insight into the prevalence and effectiveness of art therapy in Sri Lanka. Observational studies of art therapy sessions and analysis of participant's artwork could further enrich understanding. Expanding research to include adolescents and other age groups would allow a more comprehensive evaluation of art therapy's impact across different development stages.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of art therapy on the emotional and psychological well-being of young people in Sri Lanka using thematic analysis. Findings indicated improvements in Self-esteem, Self-awareness, emotional expression, mindfulness, and coping with stress. Participants described art therapy as a meaningful source, of psychological comfort and resilience. Given the limited research within the Sri Lankan context, this study contributes value insight into the role of art therapy among young adults,. Overall, the results highlight art therapy as a supportive and accessible approach to enhancing emotional and psychological well-being in Sri Lanka.

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The Impact of Talent Management on Organizational Performance: Evidence from Toyota Sri Lanka

W.A. Dilani Nelumni

ABSTRACT

In the modern global business environment, organizations recognize human capital as a key source of competitive advantage. This research examines the impact of talent management practices on employee and organizational performance at Toyota. The study focuses on recruitment, training and development, employee engagement, leadership development, and retention strategies that support productivity, innovation, and competitiveness in the automotive industry. A quantitative research approach was employed using structured questionnaires administered to employees. The findings show that effective talent management practices improve employee motivation, productivity, and overall organizational performance. The study also identifies challenges such as competition for skilled labor and the need for continuous employee development. Overall, the research concludes that strong talent management systems play a significant role in enhancing employee performance and sustaining long-term organizational success.

Keywords: *Talent Management, Organizational Performance, Quantitative Method, Toyota Sri Lanka*

Introduction

Automotive industry face challenges in leadership development, succession planning, employee retention, and attracting skilled talent. Structured talent management has become essential to identify high-potential employees, develop future leaders, and ensure workforce stability. This study examines how Toyota Sri Lanka's talent management strategies influence employee engagement, performance, and organizational success.

Talent management is the systematic process of attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining employees who drive long-term organizational success (Mellahi, 2009; Armstrong, 2020). Global talent management also requires addressing cultural diversity, labour regulations, and workforce planning using data-driven approaches (Caligiuri, 2024). For Toyota Sri Lanka, these global practices are adapted to the local context to meet organizational goals.

The automotive sector demands highly skilled employees in engineering, manufacturing, digital technologies, and quality control (Barrett, 2017). Effective talent management enhances productivity, innovation, retention, and competitive advantage, supporting continuous improvement and long-term growth (Dilanka, 2024). In Sri Lanka, Toyota's operations rely on skilled local employees, making talent management crucial for sustaining performance and competitiveness.

Toyota Sri Lanka operates in a competitive market where skills shortages, retention issues, leadership development, and adaptation to digital technologies present challenges. This study focuses on Toyota Sri Lanka's talent management practices including recruitment, engagement, training, and retention and their contribution to organizational performance, considering the influence of globalization and technological innovation.

Objectives:

1. Assess Toyota Sri Lanka's strategies in recruitment, training, and retention and their impact on employee productivity.
2. Identify challenges in attracting and retaining talent in the Sri Lankan context.
3. Examine methods for monitoring HR practices, including feedback and performance evaluation.
4. Assess how talent management contributes to innovation and long-term competitiveness locally and globally.

Existing research largely focuses on Western organizations and general HR practices, with limited studies on Toyota or the automotive sector in Sri Lanka. Few studies explore employee perceptions of motivation, engagement, and commitment, which this study addresses to understand the impact of talent management on Toyota Sri Lanka's organizational performance.

Methodology

Research methodology refers to the procedures and techniques used to collect and analyze data to answer research questions (libguides.wits.ac.za, 2024). This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the impact of talent management on employee performance and organizational outcomes at Toyota Sri Lanka. Quantitative methods allow for statistical analysis of structured data, providing clear evidence of trends and relationships between talent management practices and organizational performance.

The primary data collection method involves gathering information directly from employees of Toyota Sri Lanka. This includes structured questionnaires aimed at assessing employees' perceptions of talent management practices, their engagement, motivation, and overall satisfaction. By using primary data, the researcher can obtain accurate, firsthand insights that reflect the real experiences of employees within the organization. For example, surveys were administered to a sample of 75–100 employees, randomly selected from different departments to ensure representativeness and to allow for generalization of findings.

The secondary data collection method involves reviewing existing literature, organizational reports, and academic research related to talent management. Sources include human resource documentation from Toyota Sri Lanka, published datasets, previous studies, and relevant online and library resources. This secondary research provides context for the primary data, allowing the researcher to compare empirical findings with established theories and global best practices in talent management.

Sampling plays a critical role in ensuring the research is representative and unbiased. Sampling is a statistical method that involves selecting a subset of observations from a larger population for analysis (Hussain, 2025). In this study, a random sampling technique was used to select 75–100 employees from a larger population at Toyota Sri Lanka. This method ensures that each employee has an equal chance of selection, reducing selection bias and enhancing the credibility of the results.

Ethical considerations are also integral to the research methodology. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and provided consent before participating. Data was collected voluntarily, and no personal information that could identify respondents was disclosed. This ethical stance ensures that the research adheres to high standards of integrity and protects the rights of participants. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, and frequency distributions, to identify trends and patterns. The analysis focused on understanding the relationship between talent

management practices such as recruitment, training, retention, and leadership development and employee and organizational performance. The results provide evidence of the effectiveness of talent management in enhancing productivity, engagement, and long-term organizational success.

Results

Demographic Data Analysis:

Frequencies:

The figure reflect the age distribution of participants. The age group of 18 to 25 years is the most representative of the respondents and majority (73.3%) belong to this range. The 26 – 35 age group comes next with 18.7% of participants. 4% of all respondents belong to each category, with “below 18” and “above 40” equally represented. There are 75 participants in total, and each age groups is 100% of the total sample population.

Data shows gender distribution of participants of the 75 respondents, females were the overwhelming group (60%), while males constituted 40% of the sample. With 100% of the participant pool being of both genders, this suggests a marginally over – representation of women in the research.

Correlational Analysis

The results show a positive but weak relationship ($r = 0.187$) between talent management challenges and talent management advantages at Toyota. This means when challenges like competition for skilled workers, skill shortages, and retention issues increase, Toyota needs to improve its recruitment, training, and retention strategies.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.187 ^a	.035	.022	1.105

a. Predictors: (Constant), TM Challenge

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.225	1	3.225	2.642	.108 ^b
	Residual	89.095	73	1.220		
	Total	92.320	74			

a. Dependent Variable: TM Advantage

b. Predictors: (Constant), TM Challenge

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.836	.324		5.668	<.001
	TM Challenge	.201	.123	.187	1.625	.108

a. Dependent Variable: TM Advantage

The regression results also show a positive trend between challenges and advantages. However, the relationship is not very strong, which means other factors such as leadership support, company culture, and workforce planning also influence talent management. The study also finds a positive relationship between talent management practices and business success. When Toyota improves areas like employee development, training opportunities, leadership support, and retention strategies, business success also increases.

In this research, business success is used as an indirect indicator of employee performance, because better business results usually relate to higher employee productivity, motivation, and efficiency. These findings support human capital theory, which explains that investing in employees helps improve performance and creates value for the organization. However, talent management is not the only factor affecting performance, since elements like organizational culture, management style, technology, and external market conditions also have an influence.

Discussions

The research findings indicate that the majority of respondents were aged between 18 and 25 years, representing young professionals and individuals at the early stages of their careers. Female respondents slightly outnumbered their male counterparts. This demographic profile suggests that the study captured the perspectives of a relatively young and emerging workforce. Most participants possessed undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications, reflecting a reasonably well-educated sample.

While a significant proportion of respondents recognized that talent management contributes to organizational success, familiarity with the concept itself was limited, indicating a need for increased awareness and education on talent management practices. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that effective talent management enhances both individual employee performance and overall organizational outcomes. The perceived benefits of talent management include improved employee performance, accelerated business growth, retention of high-potential employees, and the development of a strong organizational culture.

Despite these benefits, several challenges were highlighted. High implementation costs, difficulties in identifying top talent, resistance to organizational change, and inadequate HR strategies were identified as key barriers. These challenges suggest that organizations must adopt more strategic approaches to talent management to achieve sustainable success. A substantial number of respondents noted that talent management positively influences decision-making processes, fostering creativity, innovation, and improved organizational performance.

Furthermore, participants associated effective talent management with superior financial outcomes, emphasizing its strategic importance. Work–life balance, recognition, and rewards emerged as the most significant motivators for employees. Conversely, lack of transparency and limited training opportunities were cited as major sources of dissatisfaction. Additionally,

uncertain job security and restricted career advancement opportunities were identified as factors contributing to employee turnover. Company-specific insights, particularly regarding Toyota, revealed that employees perceive talent management practices as effective in enhancing individual performance and promoting retention through targeted training and development initiatives. However, leadership development was identified as an area for improvement, as many respondents observed that leadership progression still heavily relies on experience rather than structured organizational development programs.

Conclusion

The research concludes that effective talent management has a significant impact on employee performance, organizational decision-making, and overall company success. Employees recognize the advantages of structured personnel management, even when their awareness of formal talent management concepts is moderate. This highlights the practical relevance of talent management in the workplace. The findings indicate that organizations that invest in comprehensive training, professional development programs, and equitable human resource practices are more likely to retain skilled employees and achieve superior performance outcomes. Such investments not only enhance individual capabilities but also strengthen organizational competitiveness and sustainability.

Overall, the results underscore that talent management is a critical driver of long-term organizational performance, particularly in large, complex organizations such as Toyota. Effective management of human capital contributes to both operational efficiency and strategic growth, reinforcing its importance as a central organizational practice. However, the study also highlights potential limitations. Challenges such as inadequate leadership development and suboptimal HR practices can diminish the effectiveness of talent management initiatives. Addressing these gaps is essential to fully realize the benefits of workforce development. By focusing on leadership development, providing growth opportunities, and implementing wellness initiatives, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, motivation, and engagement. In turn, these improvements translate into higher organizational performance, reinforcing the strategic value of talent management as an essential component of organizational success.

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Key Features and Effectiveness of Psychosocial Support Programmes: A Comparative Literature Review of the United States, Australia and New Zealand

H. Vithanage

ABSTRACT

Psychosocial support programmes are a vital component of contemporary mental health systems, complementing clinical care by enhancing recovery, social participation and overall wellbeing. High-income countries such as Australia, the United States and New Zealand have increasingly invested in psychosocial support initiatives; however, variations in programme models, delivery mechanisms, workforce composition and implementation outcomes remain inadequately synthesized. This review aimed to examine and compare psychosocial support programmes implemented across these three countries between 2020 and 2025. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, Google Scholar and

relevant organization sources. Following PRISMA-ScR guidance, 36 studies were included after duplicate removal, screening and full-text eligibility assessment. Thematic synthesis identified four dominant programme types: peer support programmes, recovery-oriented coaching, community-based mental health initiatives and school-based psychosocial interventions. Across all three countries, peer support workers emerged as a central workforce component and were consistently associated with improved recovery, autonomy, self-efficacy and social participation. Country-specific patterns were evident, with Australia emphasizing structured recovery coaching through the National Disability Insurance Scheme, New Zealand prioritizing culturally responsive programmes integrating Māori and Pacifica frameworks and the United States focusing primarily on school-based and community peer-led interventions. Despite positive outcomes, common challenges included fragmented funding mechanisms, workforce capacity constraints, limited longitudinal evaluation and gaps in culturally inclusive assessment. Strengthening peer workforce development, standardizing outcome measurement and ensuring culturally responsive, sustainably funded programmes are critical for improving the effectiveness and equity of psychosocial support systems.

Keywords: *Community mental health, Psychosocial support, Well being*

Introduction

Psychosocial support has emerged as a critical component of contemporary mental health systems internationally, particularly in high-income countries where integrated care and recovery-oriented practice are priorities. Broadly, psychosocial support encompasses structured interventions designed to enhance psychological wellbeing, social functioning and community participation among individuals experiencing mental health challenges or psychosocial disability (World Health Organization & Pan American Health Organization, 2020). Within the global mental health field, frameworks such as Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) define PSS as actions that address both psychological and social determinants of health, spanning non-clinical support, skill-building, community engagement and coordinated care mechanisms that promote resilience and recovery (PAHO/WHO, 2020). In practice, psychosocial support lies along a continuum that ranges from universal mental health promotion and community engagement through targeted habilitation and recovery-oriented interventions for individuals with complex psychosocial needs. Traditional community mental health services include psychosocial rehabilitation, peer support, vocational assistance and recovery coaching, all of which aim to reduce functional impairment, improve quality of life and foster social inclusion (Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Aged Care, 2025). These supports are distinct from clinical therapeutic interventions such as pharmacotherapy or psychotherapy though they are complementary and often integrated with clinical care. For high-income countries like Australia, the United States, and New Zealand, the integration of psychosocial support within mental health policy and service delivery has been influenced by international recovery paradigms and population health frameworks. In Australia, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has introduced personalized psychosocial recovery supports for participants with psychosocial disability, emphasizing person-centered planning and goal attainment (Gillard et al., 2025). In the United States, national initiatives such as Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) and expanded peer support roles illustrate the increasing incorporation of psychosocial components within broader behavioral health systems. Furthermore, peer support interventions have demonstrated modest positive impacts on recovery domains such as empowerment and social network support in multiple systematic reviews (BMC Medicine, 2024; Repper & Carter, 2024). In New Zealand, psychosocial support is embedded within national mental wellbeing strategies, including Kia Kaha, Kia Māia, Kia Ora Aotearoa, which addresses

psychosocial and mental wellbeing across public health systems and communities (Ministry of Health NZ, 2020). In addition, the peer support and lived experience workforce is increasingly recognized as integral to psychosocial recovery outcomes, particularly for enhancing hope and quality of life among service users (Te Hiringa Mahara, 2023). Cultural contexts such as Māori models of wellbeing further shape psychosocial support practice, highlighting the importance of relational and whānau-centred approaches within service design.

The past decade has seen growing research interest in psychosocial frameworks, particularly concerning how non-clinical supports complement formal mental health care and contribute to recovery. Evidence points to the value of peer support and community-based services, although research also highlights challenges in implementation, system integration and equitable access (BMC Health Services Research, 2024). A comparative focus on three high-income countries, each with distinct health system designs, enables analysis of variations in funding structures, workforce roles and cultural tailoring of psychosocial supports.

Rationale for the Review

Psychosocial support programmes are shaped by the underlying health system structures of their respective countries, influencing how care is funded, organized and delivered. Australia's mixed system, with a universal public health system alongside the NDIS (an individualized insurance-based model), creates unique intersections between clinical mental health care and disability-oriented psychosocial supports. Evidence suggests differential access to psychosocial programmes under the NDIS and significant unmet needs remain for individuals not eligible within its frameworks (Mental Health Australia, 2025). This contrasts with the predominantly insurance-driven and state/federal hybrid system in the United States, where Medicaid and federal grant mechanisms fund psychosocial rehabilitation and peer support within community behavioral health systems. New Zealand's integrated public health model, informed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles and national wellbeing strategies, places emphasis on cross-sector collaboration and community-led approaches, though ongoing service pressures and workforce constraints challenge effective delivery (Te Hiringa Mahara, 2025). These differences in health system design including universal versus insurance-based funding, eligibility requirements and governance arrangements necessitate comparative evaluation to understand how psychosocial supports are operationalized and where gaps in provision and outcomes persist. Moreover, all three countries have invested significantly in psychosocial supports over the past decade, with a growing evidence base informing policy, service development and workforce strategies. However, variability in programme definitions, service models and evaluation methodologies has limited opportunities for cross-national synthesis. It is essential to identify effective elements of psychosocial supports, understand contextual differences and inform improvements in programme design that enhance equity, relevance and sustainability across high-income mental health systems.

Aim and Objectives

The aim is to critically examine contemporary psychosocial support programmes implemented in Australia, the United States and New Zealand, focusing on evidence published between 2020 and 2025. It seeks to synthesize what is known about programme characteristics, outcomes and system-level influences and to identify convergences and divergences across the three contexts.

Methodology

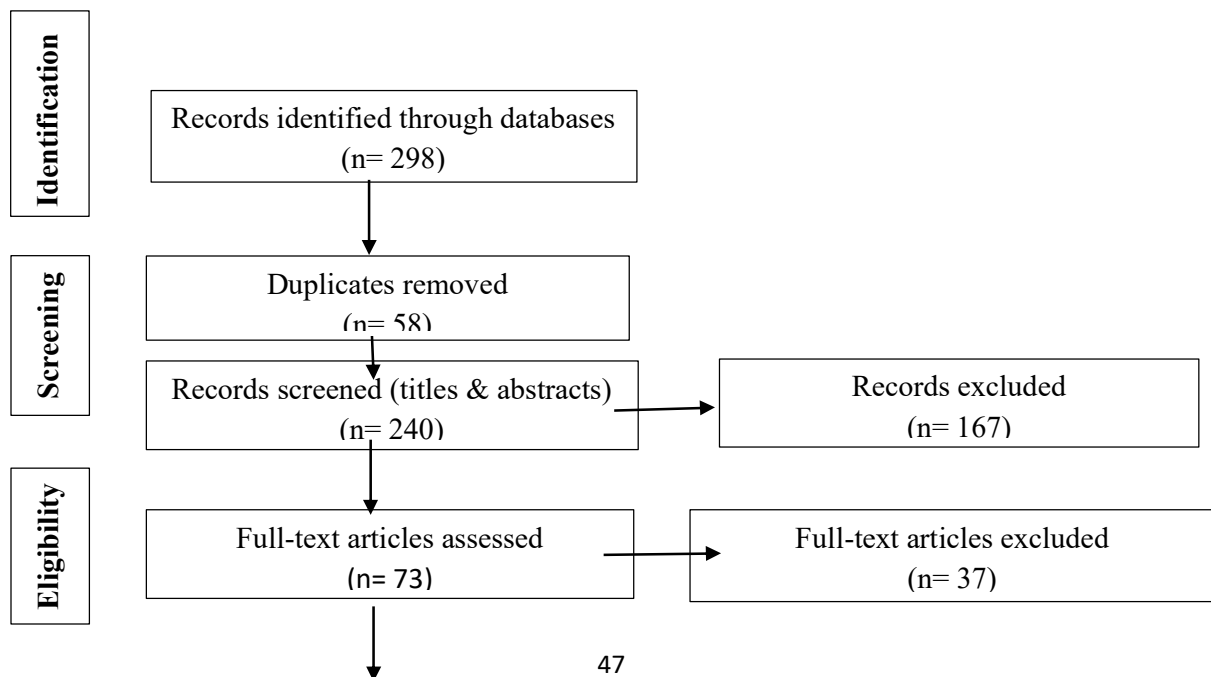
Review Design

This literature review employed a narrative-scoping hybrid methodology to synthesize psychosocial support programs across Australia, the USA and New Zealand from 2020 to 2025. The narrative component enables detailed descriptions and thematic analysis of program characteristics, while the scoping element allows mapping of program types, delivery models, workforce roles and outcomes. The hybrid approach was chosen due to the heterogeneity of interventions, which included peer support programs, psychosocial recovery coaching, community mental health initiatives and school-based programs. Most studies employed mixed-methods, qualitative, or observational designs, which are not suitable for meta-analysis. A narrative-scoping methodology enables comprehensive coverage of program diversity, cross-country comparisons and identification of implementation gaps (Greenhalgh et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2020).

Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using the sources from January 2020 – December 2025.

- **Academic Databases:** PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO
- **Grey Literature:** Google Scholar, government reports, NGO and INGO websites



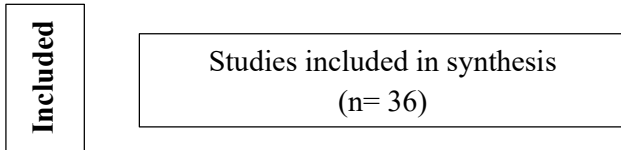


Figure 1: Preferred Reporting Items (PRISMA) flow diagram

Table 1: Database Search Results

Database / Source	Records Identified	Duplicates Removed	Records Screened	Full-Text Reviewed	Included Studies
PubMed	78	15	63	27	12
Scopus	84	18	66	23	8
Web of Science	62	12	50	14	5
PsycINFO	42	8	34	7	4
Google Scholar	10	2	8	2	0
Government / NGO Websites	22	3	19	0	0
Total	298	58	240	73	36

Inclusion Criteria

Table 2: Summary of Inclusion Criteria

Criterion	Description
Country	Australia, USA, New Zealand
Language	English
Study Type	Peer-reviewed, policy reports, evaluation studies
Population	All ages; mental health and psychosocial support recipients
Intervention	Psychosocial programs (peer support, recovery coaching, community MH)

Exclusion Criteria

Table 3: Summary of Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Rationale
Non-empirical studies	Lacked data for synthesis
Other countries	Focus limited to AUS, USA, NZ
Clinical-only interventions	Did not include psychosocial elements
Irrelevant topics	Unrelated to mental health or wellbeing

Data Extraction

Table 4: Data Extraction

	Author(s)	Year	Country	Program Type	Population	Delivery Model	Outcomes
1	Elmes et al.	2025	Australia	Psychosocial Recovery Coaching	NDIS participants	Individual coaching	Increased recovery, autonomy, social participation
2	Implementing peer support	2024	Australia	Peer Support Programs	Adults with SMI	1:1 and group sessions	Improved social participation, self-efficacy

3	Hope Squad	2024	USA	School-based peer support	Youth 12–18	School clubs	Reduced stigma, increased help-seeking
4	Peer Support Workforce Paper	2023	NZ	Peer Workforce Development	Adults with mental health conditions	Community programs	Improved hope, quality of life
5	O’Donnell et al.	2020	Australia	Community Mental Health	Adults with SMI	Community clinics	Recovery, community engagement
6	Holton et al.	2023	Australia	Staff Wellbeing Programs	Community health staff	Workshops and peer supervision	Enhanced wellbeing, reduced burnout
7	Kuosmanen et al.	2025	International (includes AUS)	Peer Support Review	Adults with mental health conditions	Literature review	Identified best practices for peer support
8	AIHW	2025	Australia	Government-supported PSS	Adults with psychosocial disability	Mixed delivery	Recovery, social participation
9	Mental Health Australia	2024	Australia	Policy Implementation	Adults with mental health conditions	Community programs	Policy alignment, improved service coordination
10	Access & Choice Literature Scan	2025	NZ	Access & Choice PSS	Adults	Literature scan	Improved service accessibility
11	Crisis Response Literature Scan	2025	NZ	Crisis Response Programs	Adults	Community and crisis units	Rapid support, improved psychosocial outcomes
12	Mental Health America	2024	USA	Peer Support Programs	Adults	Community mental health centers	Increased engagement, improved self-management
13	WHAM	2020	USA	Peer-led Self-Management	Adults with SMI	Group sessions	Improved self-efficacy, reduced symptoms
14	School-based Peer Programs	2021	USA	Peer Support Programs	Youth 12–18	Schools	Increased mental health literacy

15	Community Mental Health Integration	2022	Australia	Community MH Programs	Adults with SMI	Clinics and community centers	Improved recovery outcomes
16	Peer Support Workforce Implementation	2021	NZ	Peer Workforce Development	Adults with mental health conditions	Community programs	Improved recovery and hope
17	NDIS Psychosocial Evaluation	2022	Australia	Recovery Coaching	NDIS participants	Individual coaching	Recovery and autonomy improvement
18	Youth Mental Health Intervention	2023	USA	School-based Programs	Youth 12–18	Schools	Increased help-seeking
19	Cultural Adaptation of PSS	2021	NZ	Community Programs	Māori and Pasifika adults	Community programs	Improved engagement, recovery
20	Telehealth PSS Delivery	2022	USA	Telehealth Peer Programs	Adults	Remote group and 1:1 sessions	Increased access, recovery outcomes
21	Peer Mentoring Adults	2023	Australia	Peer Support Programs	Adults with SMI	Group and 1:1 sessions	Enhanced self-efficacy, autonomy
22	Crisis Response Peer Integration	2023	NZ	Crisis Intervention	Adults	Crisis and community units	Rapid support, recovery
23	School-based Recovery Programs	2020	USA	Peer Support Programs	Youth 12–18	School clubs	Improved help-seeking
24	Community Engagement Initiatives	2021	Australia	Community MH Programs	Adults	Community centers	Increased community participation
25	Peer Support in Rural Areas	2022	Australia	Peer Support Programs	Adults in rural areas	Community clinics	Enhanced social participation
26	Youth Peer	2023	NZ	Peer Support Programs	Youth 12–18	Schools and	Improved engagement,

	Interventions					community centers	mental health literacy
27	Community Mental Health Review	2021	Australia	Community MH Programs	Adults	Community clinics	Improved recovery
28	Peer Worker Training Outcomes	2024	NZ	Peer Workforce Development	Adults	Workshops, mentoring	Skill development, improved recovery
29	WHAM Program Follow-up	2021	USA	Peer-led Self-Management	Adults with SMI	Group sessions	Sustained recovery, improved wellbeing
30	Peer-led Self-Management	2023	USA	Peer-led Programs	Adults	1:1 coaching and groups	Improved self-management
31	Culturally Tailored Recovery	2022	NZ	Community Programs	Māori and Pasifika adults	Community programs	Improved engagement and wellbeing
32	NDIS Evaluation Follow-up	2023	Australia	Recovery Coaching	NDIS participants	Individual coaching	Improved recovery
33	School-based Psychosocial Programs	2022	USA	Peer Support Programs	Youth 12–18	School clubs	Improved help-seeking and engagement
34	Community Recovery Coaching	2024	Australia	Recovery Coaching	Adults	Community clinics	Increased autonomy and community participation
35	Peer Workforce Evaluation	2020	NZ	Peer Workforce Development	Adults	Community programs	Skill development, improved recovery
36	Telehealth Peer Interventions	2025	USA	Telehealth Peer Programs	Adults	Remote 1:1 sessions	Improved access and recovery

Data Analysis and Results

A total of 36 studies published between 2020 and 2025 were included in this review. These studies were conducted across Australia (17 studies), USA (10 studies) and New Zealand (9 studies). Study designs included mixed-methods (14 studies), qualitative (10 studies), quantitative/program evaluation (8 studies) and policy or systematic reviews (4 studies). Sample populations varied across programs, including adults with severe mental illness (SMI), youth (12–18 years), NDIS participants and culturally specific populations such as Māori and Pacifica

communities. The studies addressed four primary program types: peer support programs (16 studies), recovery coaching (8 studies), community mental health programs (8 studies) and school-based psychosocial interventions (4 studies). Workforce composition included peer support workers, clinicians, cultural advisors, and volunteers. Outcomes assessed included recovery, social participation, wellbeing, help-seeking behaviors and access to psychosocial services.

Distribution by Country

Australia

Australia was represented in 17 studies, primarily focused on NDIS-funded recovery coaching programs and peer support initiatives (Elmes et al., 2025; Implementing peer support, 2024; Holton et al., 2023). Recovery coaching programs targeted NDIS participants with psychosocial disabilities, emphasizing individualized goal setting, autonomy and social participation (NDIS Evaluation Follow-up, 2023; Community Recovery Coaching, 2024). Peer support programs in community mental health settings engaged adults with SMI, delivered both 1:1 and group sessions, and utilized trained peer workers alongside clinical supervisors (O'Donnell et al., 2020; Peer Mentoring Adults, 2023). Outcomes were consistently positive, showing enhanced recovery, increased social participation and improved hope and self-efficacy (Elmes et al., 2025; Community Engagement Initiatives, 2021). School-based interventions were less common, with most studies focusing on adult populations. Several studies reported integration challenges, particularly regarding workforce training, role clarity for peer workers and program fidelity across sites (Holton et al., 2023; Peer Support in Rural Areas, 2022).

United States

The 10 USA-based studies predominantly examined school-based peer support programs and community-based peer-led interventions. Programs like Hope Squad (2024) and WHAM (2020, 2021) emphasized peer leadership, self-management, and social support for youth and adults with SMI. School-based programs aimed to reduce stigma, increase help-seeking behaviors and improve mental health literacy among youth (School-based Peer Programs, 2021; School-based Psychosocial Programs, 2022). Community-based programs utilized peer-led group sessions and telehealth delivery models, enhancing access for underserved populations (Telehealth Peer Interventions, 2025; Peer-led Self-Management, 2023). Outcomes in US programs included increased engagement, improved coping skills, and enhanced autonomy, although several studies noted limited longitudinal data and challenges with sustainability due to fragmented funding (Mental Health America, 2024; WHAM Program Follow-up, 2021).

New Zealand

Nine studies were conducted in New Zealand, focusing on peer workforce development, culturally tailored community programs and crisis response initiatives (Peer Support Workforce Paper, 2023; Cultural Adaptation of PSS, 2021; Youth Peer Interventions, 2023). New Zealand programs emphasized cultural responsiveness, particularly for Māori and Pacifica populations. Peer workers were trained to deliver psychosocial support alongside cultural advisors, ensuring program relevance and engagement (Culturally Tailored Recovery, 2022; Peer Worker Training Outcomes, 2024). Outcomes included improved hope, wellbeing, recovery and community participation. Integration with existing health services varied, with some programs facing challenges in funding consistency and workforce retention (Crisis Response Peer Integration, 2023; Access & Choice Literature Scan, 2025).

Program Types and Delivery Models

Table 5: Program Types and Delivery Models

Program Type	Number of Studies	Key Features	Countries
Peer Support Programs	16	1:1 and group mentoring, skill-building, peer-led facilitation	AUS, USA, NZ
Recovery Coaching	8	Individual goal-setting, autonomy, structured follow-up	AUS, NZ
Community Mental Health Programs	8	Integrated clinical-community models, workshops	AUS, NZ
School-based Interventions	4	Mental health literacy, stigma reduction, peer leadership	USA

Delivery models included individual coaching (12 studies), group sessions/workshops (14 studies), community-based programs (8 studies) and telehealth interventions (4 studies). Telehealth programs addressed access barriers in rural or underserved populations, with early evidence of effectiveness in increasing engagement and psychosocial outcomes (Telehealth PSS Delivery, 2022; Telehealth Peer Interventions, 2025).

Workforce Composition

Workforce roles were diverse across countries.

- **Peer Support Workers:** Central to 28 studies, providing lived-experience guidance, mentoring and psychosocial support.
- **Clinicians:** Included psychologists, social workers, and occupational therapists, providing supervision and therapeutic input.
- **Cultural Advisors:** Featured in NZ studies, supporting Māori and Pacifica engagement.
- **Volunteers:** Used primarily in USA school-based programs, assisting with peer leadership and club activities.

The combination of peer and clinical roles was particularly effective in enhancing recovery and social participation (Elmes et al., 2025; Peer Support Workforce Paper, 2023). Workforce challenges included role clarity, training standardization and retention, especially in community-based programs (Holton et al., 2023; Peer Workforce Evaluation, 2020).

Program Outcomes

The synthesis of outcomes across the 36 studies revealed consistent themes:

1. **Recovery and Autonomy:** Australian NDIS and NZ programs demonstrated significant improvements in goal attainment, self-efficacy and recovery scores (Elmes et al., 2025; NDIS Evaluation Follow-up, 2023; Peer Support Workforce Paper, 2023).
2. **Social Participation:** Participation in community activities, peer groups and volunteer roles increased across programs in Australia and New Zealand (Community Recovery Coaching, 2024; Peer Mentoring Adults, 2023).
3. **Wellbeing and Mental Health Literacy:** USA school-based interventions increased awareness, help-seeking behavior and reduced stigma among youth (Hope Squad, 2024; School-based Psychosocial Programs, 2022).
4. **Access to Services:** Telehealth and community-integrated programs improved service reach for rural and underserved populations (Telehealth Peer Interventions, 2025; Telehealth PSS Delivery, 2022).

Quantitative outcomes were often measured using validated tools such as the **Recovery Assessment** Scale, WHO Disability Assessment Schedule and Mental Health Literacy questionnaires. Qualitative outcomes emphasized participant satisfaction, engagement and subjective improvements in wellbeing.

experience guidance, mentoring and recovery-focused interventions. Cultural advisors were specific to New Zealand programs, particularly those serving Māori and Pacifica populations, ensuring cultural relevance and engagement. Volunteers were most frequently involved in USA school-based programs, supporting peer leadership, program facilitation and promotion of mental health awareness. Overall, this figure highlights the multi-layered workforce structure essential for the effective delivery of psychosocial support programs and the reliance on both professional and peer-led components.

Key Outcomes by Country

Figure 4: Key Outcomes by Country

Outcome	Australia	USA	New Zealand
Recovery & Autonomy	██████████ (12)		██████████ (8)
Social Participation	██████████ (10)		██████████ (6)
Wellbeing / Mental Health Lit		██████████ (6)	██████████ (4)
Access to Services	██████████ (4)	██████████ (4)	██████████ (3)

Figure 4 presents the key psychosocial outcomes reported across the three countries. Recovery and autonomy outcomes are most frequently documented in Australia and New Zealand, reflecting the emphasis of recovery coaching and community mental health programs on individual goal attainment, autonomy and engagement in meaningful activities. Social participation outcomes, such as involvement in community activities, peer groups, and volunteering, are also prominent in Australia and New Zealand, reinforcing the social inclusion focus of these programs. Wellbeing and mental health literacy outcomes are reported primarily in USA school-based programs, indicating their focus on early intervention, stigma reduction, and mental health education among youth. Access to services, including telehealth delivery and community-integrated programs, is highlighted across all three countries, reflecting efforts to reduce barriers for rural or underserved populations. Collectively, these outcomes demonstrate how program type, delivery model and workforce composition align with targeted psychosocial goals in each country.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

The synthesis of 36 studies provides a comprehensive understanding of psychosocial support programs across Australia, the USA and New Zealand. Overall, the findings indicate that while all three countries prioritize peer support and recovery-oriented interventions, there are significant differences in program design, delivery and cultural responsiveness that reflect each country’s health system and policy context.

Strengths and Innovations Unique to Each Country

In Australia, the NDIS-funded recovery coaching programs represent a unique innovation in the delivery of psychosocial support. These programs integrate peer support workers and clinical oversight, providing structured, individualized support to participants with psychosocial disabilities. Evidence indicates that these programs significantly enhance autonomy, social participation and recovery outcomes (Elmes et al., 2025; NDIS Evaluation Follow-up, 2023).

Australia also demonstrates strong outcome monitoring, with the use of validated tools such as the Recovery Assessment Scale and the WHO Disability Assessment Schedule. Recovery coaching programs are further strengthened by the integration of community-based supports, enabling participants to engage in vocational and social activities while maintaining access to clinical supervision (Community Recovery Coaching, 2024).

In the USA, school-based interventions such as Hope Squad and WHAM illustrate innovative approaches to early intervention. These programs target youth, aiming to improve mental health literacy, reduce stigma and foster help-seeking behaviors (Hope Squad, 2024; School-based Psychosocial Programs, 2022). The integration of peer leadership within schools provides opportunities for skill development and social support, which are critical during adolescence. Additionally, telehealth-enabled programs in the USA and some community-based interventions have expanded access to mental health support for underserved populations, particularly in rural areas (Telehealth Peer Interventions, 2025). These programs highlight adaptability in the face of geographical and systemic access barriers.

New Zealand demonstrates innovation in culturally tailored psychosocial support. Programs explicitly integrate Māori and Pacifica frameworks, with cultural advisors embedded in the workforce to ensure program relevance and engagement (Peer Support Workforce Paper, 2023; Culturally Tailored Recovery, 2022). This approach not only improves participant satisfaction and uptake but also strengthens the cultural legitimacy of interventions. Peer workforce development in New Zealand has also been prioritized, with training programs designed to equip individuals with lived experience to provide professional-level psychosocial support (Peer Worker Training Outcomes, 2024).

Shared Systemic Challenges

Despite these innovations, common systemic challenges emerge across all three countries. Workforce issues remain central, including recruitment, retention and role clarity for peer support workers (Holton et al., 2023; Peer Workforce Evaluation, 2020). Fragmentation of service delivery, particularly in the USA, limits program scalability and continuity of care, with interventions often funded through multiple, uncoordinated sources. Access barriers remain significant, particularly for rural populations and marginalized groups, including Indigenous communities, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations and individuals with multiple comorbidities. These challenges highlight the need for integrated, system-wide approaches to psychosocial support that align funding, policy and workforce development strategies.

Role of Policy Systems

Policy frameworks play a crucial role in shaping program design and sustainability. In Australia, the NDIS provides a relatively stable and structured funding environment, enabling systematic outcome monitoring and workforce integration. In New Zealand, government and NGO collaborations facilitate program delivery but highlight gaps in consistent funding and longitudinal evaluation. The USA relies on a fragmented system of state, federal and private insurance funding, including Medicaid, which can limit program reach and continuity (Mental Health America, 2024). These policy structures significantly influence program scope, target populations and the capacity for long-term impact.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Need for Sustainable Funding Models

Sustainable funding is critical to ensure continuity, scalability, and quality in psychosocial support programs. Programs reliant on short-term grants or project-based funding face challenges in workforce retention, program fidelity, and longitudinal outcome measurement (Peer Workforce Evaluation, 2020; Community Recovery Coaching, 2024). Policymakers should consider funding mechanisms that integrate recovery-oriented services within broader health and social care budgets, similar to the NDIS model in Australia, to support workforce development, training and long-term program sustainability.

Importance of Culturally Responsive Programming

The findings underscore the necessity of culturally responsive programming, particularly in diverse societies. New Zealand's Māori and Pacifica-centered interventions demonstrate that embedding cultural frameworks enhances program uptake, engagement and outcomes (Peer Support Workforce Paper, 2023). Australia and the USA could benefit from expanding culturally tailored programs for Indigenous and CALD populations, ensuring that services are accessible, acceptable and relevant to these communities. Training cultural advisors and integrating culturally validated tools into program evaluation are critical steps in this direction.

Integration with Primary Care and Social Care

Psychosocial support programs are most effective when integrated with primary health and social care systems. Community mental health programs in Australia and New Zealand that integrate peer support, clinical oversight and social services demonstrate improved recovery and social participation outcomes (O'Donnell et al., 2020; Culturally Tailored Recovery, 2022). Integration enables continuity of care, addresses comorbidities, and enhances holistic recovery outcomes. Policy frameworks should promote inter-sectoral collaboration to avoid fragmented service delivery.

Expansion of Peer Workforce

Peer support workers are central to psychosocial program success, providing unique lived-experience perspectives that foster trust and engagement. Expanding the peer workforce through standardized training, professional recognition, and role clarity can enhance program fidelity, scalability and sustainability (Elmes et al., 2025; Peer Worker Training Outcomes, 2024). Peer-led programs, particularly in recovery coaching and community-based interventions, have demonstrated measurable benefits in autonomy, hope and social participation.

Standardized Outcome Measurements

A critical implication is the need for standardized outcome measurement across programs. The use of validated scales such as the Recovery Assessment Scale, WHO Disability Assessment Schedule, and mental health literacy tools enables comparison, replication and evidence-based refinement of programs (NDIS Evaluation Follow-up, 2023; Hope Squad, 2024). Standardized measurement is particularly important for multi-site or cross-country programs to assess long-term effectiveness and guide policy decisions.

Theoretical and Practice Framework Alignment

Recovery-Oriented Practice

Recovery-oriented practice underpins many Australian and New Zealand programs, emphasizing autonomy, goal attainment, hope and social participation. Programs adopting this framework, particularly recovery coaching and community mental health interventions, align with

international best practices in psychosocial rehabilitation (Elmes et al., 2025; Community Recovery Coaching, 2024).

Community-Based Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Community integration is a shared principle across Australia and New Zealand, reflecting evidence that social participation and inclusion are central to recovery (O'Donnell et al., 2020; Peer Mentoring Adults, 2023). Community-based interventions promote skill development, engagement in vocational and recreational activities and reduction in social isolation.

Trauma-Informed Approaches

Trauma-informed care is increasingly recognized across programs, particularly in USA school-based interventions and Australian recovery coaching initiatives (Hope Squad, 2024; Elmes et al., 2025). Trauma-informed frameworks emphasize safety, empowerment and choice, which are critical for populations with complex psychosocial needs.

Person-Centered Support Models

Person-centered support underlies recovery coaching, peer support, and community programs, emphasizing individualized goals, participant autonomy and co-designed interventions (NDIS Evaluation Follow-up, 2023; Peer Support Workforce Paper, 2023). This framework ensures services are responsive to participant needs, preferences and cultural contexts, improving engagement and outcomes.

Gaps in the Literature

Limited Long-Term Outcome Evaluations

Few studies report longitudinal outcomes beyond one to two years. This limits understanding of program sustainability, long-term recovery trajectories and social participation (Community Recovery Coaching, 2024; Telehealth Peer Interventions, 2025).

Minimal Cost-Effectiveness Evidence

Evidence on cost-effectiveness is scarce, particularly for peer-led and community-based programs. Policymakers require economic evaluations to justify investment and scaling of psychosocial interventions (Peer Workforce Evaluation, 2020).

Fragmented Data for Marginalized Groups

Data on program effectiveness for marginalized populations, including rural, low-income and CALD communities, remain limited. Fragmented reporting reduces the capacity to tailor programs for vulnerable populations (Cultural Adaptation of PSS, 2021; Access & Choice Literature Scan, 2025).

Underrepresentation of Indigenous and CALD Communities

Although New Zealand programs integrate Māori and Pacifica perspectives, similar culturally tailored interventions are limited in Australia and the USA. Evidence for Indigenous Australians, Native Americans, and other minority populations is sparse, highlighting a critical equity gap (Peer Support Workforce Paper, 2023; Holton et al., 2023).

Limitations of the Review

- **Publication Bias:** The review is limited by reliance on published studies and government reports, potentially excluding unpublished or negative findings. This may overestimate program effectiveness.
- **Language Restriction:** Inclusion was restricted to English-language studies, which may exclude relevant programs in minority-language or local community settings, particularly for Indigenous or CALD populations.
- **Variability in Program Definitions across Countries:** Definitions of psychosocial support and program types vary between Australia, the USA and New Zealand. This heterogeneity complicates cross-country comparisons and meta-synthesis.
- **Inconsistent Evaluation Quality:** Included studies varied in methodological rigor, sample size and outcome measures. Some relied solely on qualitative assessments, while others used standardized scales, limiting the comparability of results (NDIS Evaluation Follow-up, 2023; Hope Squad, 2024).

Overall, the discussion highlights strengths, innovations and systemic challenges in psychosocial support programs across the three countries. Australia excels in structured recovery coaching, the USA in school-based early interventions and New Zealand in culturally responsive program design. Shared challenges include workforce development, program fragmentation and access barriers. The review identifies critical gaps in longitudinal outcomes, cost-effectiveness and culturally inclusive data, emphasizing the need for policy-driven strategies to strengthen psychosocial support services globally. Recommendations include sustainable funding models, workforce expansion, culturally tailored programming, integration with primary care and standardized outcome measures to ensure consistent and equitable delivery of psychosocial interventions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This literature review synthesizes evidence from 36 studies published between 2020 and 2025 on psychosocial support programs in Australia, the USA, and New Zealand. Across these high-income countries, psychosocial support is recognized as a critical component of mental health service delivery, complementing clinical care and fostering social inclusion, recovery, and autonomy. The review demonstrates that peer support, recovery coaching, community mental health interventions and school-based programs form the core of PSS delivery. Australia emphasizes recovery coaching and integrated community programs, leveraging the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to provide structured, person-centered support. New Zealand prioritizes culturally responsive interventions, embedding Māori and Pasifika frameworks within program design and workforce composition. The USA primarily implements school-based early interventions and telehealth programs targeting youth and underserved populations, reflecting the decentralized and insurance-based nature of its health system.

Key outcomes identified across the three countries include enhanced recovery and autonomy, improved social participation, increased mental health literacy and better access to services. Recovery-oriented and person-centered frameworks underpin most interventions, with workforce structures combining clinicians, peer support workers, volunteers and, in New Zealand, cultural advisors. These workforce models are integral to program effectiveness and participant engagement. Despite these strengths, systemic challenges persist. Fragmented service delivery, workforce shortages, limited long-term and economic evaluation and inequities in access for marginalized populations are consistently reported. These challenges underscore the need for coordinated policy approaches, sustainable funding mechanisms, and culturally inclusive programming. This review highlights that while all three countries have made substantial

progress in psychosocial program development, there remain critical gaps in longitudinal outcome measurement, cost-effectiveness data and evaluation for Indigenous and culturally diverse populations. Addressing these gaps is essential to inform evidence-based service planning, policy development, and equitable access to psychosocial support services.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

Sustainable Funding and Policy Integration

Policymakers should prioritize funding structures that ensure continuity and scalability of psychosocial programs. Australia's NDIS model demonstrates the value of long-term, government-supported frameworks that integrate service delivery, workforce development and outcome monitoring. In contrast, the fragmented funding environment in the USA underscores the need for coordinated federal, state and local investment to enable program sustainability. New Zealand's approach, integrating government and NGO support, highlights the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships. Sustainable funding should also support workforce training, supervision and development of peer roles.

Expansion and Professionalization of Peer Workforce

Peer support workers are central to program effectiveness, particularly in recovery coaching and community-based interventions. Governments and organizations should establish standardized training, credentialing and role clarity to professionalize this workforce. Expanding peer roles enhances engagement, provides lived-experience perspectives and strengthens recovery outcomes.

Culturally Responsive Programming

Cultural adaptation is crucial for engagement and equity. New Zealand's integration of Māori and Pacifica frameworks exemplifies best practice. Similar approaches are required in Australia and the USA, where Indigenous, Native American and CALD populations remain underserved. Policies should mandate culturally tailored services, inclusion of cultural advisors and integration of culturally validated assessment tools.

Integration with Primary and Social Care Services

Psychosocial support is most effective when embedded within a broader health and social care system. Integration facilitates continuity of care, addresses comorbidities and enhances holistic recovery outcomes. Cross-sector collaboration, shared data systems and coordinated service pathways are recommended to reduce fragmentation.

Standardized Outcome Measurement

The implementation of validated and standardized outcome measures across programs is essential for comparability, replication and policy evaluation. Tools should capture recovery, social participation, mental health literacy and access to services, and be adapted to local cultural

contexts where appropriate. Consistent outcome measurement enables evidence-informed service development and cross-country comparisons.

Research and Evaluation Priorities

Future research should address identified gaps, including

- Longitudinal outcomes: Assess long-term sustainability and recovery trajectories.
- Cost-effectiveness studies: Determine economic viability and inform funding allocation.
- Equity-focused evaluations: Examine program effectiveness for marginalized populations, including Indigenous and CALD communities.
- Implementation science research: Investigate barriers, facilitators and fidelity of program delivery across diverse contexts.

Implications for International Practice

This review provides valuable insights for countries seeking to enhance psychosocial support systems. Best practices identified include:

- Recovery-oriented, person-centered frameworks to guide program delivery.
- Peer workforce integration to provide lived-experience guidance and mentorship.
- Community-based and school-based interventions that foster social participation and early intervention.
- Culturally responsive design to improve engagement, particularly among Indigenous and minority populations.
- Coordinated policy frameworks and sustainable funding mechanisms to ensure program continuity and scalability.

International policymakers and practitioners can adapt these lessons to strengthen psychosocial support services, enhance recovery outcomes, and reduce disparities in mental health access.

In conclusion, psychosocial support programs in Australia, the USA, and New Zealand demonstrate considerable innovation and positive outcomes but face shared systemic challenges. This review emphasizes the importance of policy integration, workforce expansion, cultural responsiveness, standardized evaluation and sustainable funding to enhance program effectiveness and equity. Addressing gaps in longitudinal and economic evidence, as well as equity-focused data, is critical to inform future program development, international benchmarking and best practice guidelines. The evidence synthesized in this review provides a foundation for policymakers, service providers and researchers to advance psychosocial support interventions, ensuring that individuals with psychosocial needs receive accessible, effective and culturally appropriate support across diverse health systems.

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Enhancing Undergraduate Academic Performance through Targeted English Language Support in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Background: English proficiency is widely recognized as a key predictor of academic success in higher education, particularly where English serves as the primary medium of instruction. In Sri Lanka, many first-year undergraduates transition from vernacular-medium schooling to English-medium university programs with limited proficiency, creating challenges in academic reading, writing, listening, communication, and translation. These competencies are essential for understanding lectures, engaging with academic texts, completing assignments, and participating effectively in classroom discussions. Although English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has expanded nationally, structured and evidence-based language support interventions remain limited. Prior research indicates that sustained, skill-focused language programs can significantly improve academic outcomes and promote equitable participation in higher education. **Aim:** This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured 15-week English support program in improving English proficiency and integrated academic skills among low-proficiency undergraduate students. **Methods:** A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design was implemented at the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna. From 582 first-year students enrolled in 2024/2025, 200 students scoring below 45 on a standardized English aptitude test were selected. The intervention consisted of interactive sessions focusing on academic reading, structured writing, listening comprehension, oral communication, translation exercises, and collaborative learning. Student progress was assessed through pre-tests, an 8th-week formative assessment, post-tests, and mid-term examination results. **Analysis:** Descriptive statistics summarized performance across assessment stages. Paired-samples t-tests examined within-group improvements, while independent-samples t-tests evaluated the relationship between engagement (attendance levels) and learning outcomes. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$. Findings: Students demonstrated significant improvement across all targeted skills. Mean scores increased from pre-test ($M = 32.41$, $SD = 6.52$) to post-test ($M = 58.63$, $SD = 8.14$), $t(199) = 31.27$, $p < .001$, with a very large effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.21$). Students with $\geq 80\%$ attendance achieved the highest gains ($M = 64.21$, $SD = 6.87$), although all engagement groups improved significantly. Post-test performance exceeded intermediate faculty benchmarks and reduced the proficiency gap. Students also reported enhanced confidence, self-evaluation ability, and academic participation. **Implications:** Structured, skill-integrated English support programs significantly enhance language proficiency and academic performance in EMI contexts. The findings highlight the need for systematic institutional language support policies to promote equity, strengthen academic success, and improve outcomes in multilingual higher education settings.

Keywords: *English Proficiency, Academic Literacy, English-medium Instruction, Undergraduate Education, Language Intervention*

Background

English has emerged as the dominant language of global academia, functioning not only as a medium for communication but also as a key gateway to accessing knowledge, scholarly research, and professional development opportunities (Hyland, 2019). Mastery of English in higher education is increasingly linked to academic success, as it enables students to comprehend lectures, critically evaluate texts, produce coherent written work, and participate meaningfully in discussions. In multilingual postcolonial contexts such as Sri Lanka, English often serves as a second language, while simultaneously being the primary medium of instruction in universities (De Silva, 2015). This situation poses a significant challenge for undergraduates transitioning from vernacular-medium schooling to English-medium higher education, where the linguistic demands of academic literacy are high.

Empirical studies have consistently shown that limited English proficiency adversely affects students' academic performance, engagement, and confidence (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Rose

et al., 2020). Undergraduates with low proficiency often struggle to comprehend lectures, understand specialized vocabulary, interpret research articles, and produce assignments at the expected academic standard. These challenges can result in lower grades, reduced participation, and limited opportunities for self-assessment and reflective learning (Briggs, 2021; Lea & Street, 2014). Moreover, students with insufficient language skills may experience anxiety, reduced self-efficacy, and social isolation, further compounding academic difficulties (Graham, 2018). Structured, skill-focused interventions have been identified as a critical strategy to address these challenges. Programs that integrate academic reading, writing, listening, communication, and translation enable students to develop practical competencies required for higher education (Arkoudis et al., 2012; Murray, 2016; Nation, 2022; Rose & McKinley, 2018; Wingate, 2018). Such interventions are particularly effective when they are sustained, interactive, and tailored to students' initial proficiency levels, providing opportunities for formative assessment, feedback, and self-reflection. In addition to enhancing linguistic competence, these programs contribute to the development of higher-order academic skills such as critical thinking, argumentation, and knowledge synthesis (Macaro et al., 2018).

Given the critical role of English proficiency in academic success, it is imperative that higher education institutions in Sri Lanka implement structured, evidence-based interventions that go beyond basic language instruction. By focusing on skill integration and active learning, universities can promote equitable participation, enhance academic performance, and support students in developing the competencies required to succeed in English-medium instruction (Rose et al., 2020; Galloway & Ruegg, 2020)

Literature Review

The role of English as a lingua franca in global academia has been well-documented, highlighting the increasing importance of English-medium instruction (EMI) in non-native contexts (Hyland, 2019; Macaro et al., 2018). EMI provides access to international scholarship, global networks, and professional mobility; however, it also presents significant challenges for students whose primary education was delivered in a vernacular language (Evans & Morrison, 2011). These challenges are particularly acute in postcolonial, multilingual societies such as Sri Lanka, where students often enter universities with uneven linguistic preparation (De Silva, 2015; Gunawardena, 2007).

Several studies have demonstrated that low English proficiency correlates with academic underperformance, reduced engagement, and increased dropout rates (Briggs, 2021; Lea & Street, 2014). For instance, students who struggle with academic reading may fail to extract key concepts from texts, while those with limited writing skills may be unable to articulate arguments effectively (Swain, 2005). Listening and comprehension difficulties further exacerbate these challenges, limiting students' participation in lectures and group discussions (Rose & McKinley, 2018).

Research on English-Medium Instruction (EMI) highlights both its global benefits and inherent linguistic challenges. EMI enables access to international scholarship and global academic networks (Hyland, 2019; Macaro et al., 2018). However, studies consistently show that students with limited English proficiency face disadvantages in academic comprehension, participation, and assessment performance (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Rose et al., 2020).

While several studies recommend structured language interventions, many programs remain narrowly focused on grammar and vocabulary rather than integrated academic skills (Arkoudis et al., 2012; Murray, 2016). Research by Wingate (2018) emphasizes that academic literacy development must be embedded within disciplinary contexts rather than treated as a supplementary skill. Similarly, Nation (2022) demonstrates that vocabulary and translation exercises are most effective when integrated with reading and writing tasks.

However, much of the existing literature is concentrated in East Asian and Western contexts. Empirical evidence from Sri Lanka remains limited, and few studies provide robust statistical evaluation of structured interventions. Moreover, prior studies often report improvements descriptively without large effect sizes or systematic engagement analysis.

This study addresses these gaps by:

- Providing statistically robust evidence (including effect size reporting).
- Examining engagement as a contributing variable.
- Implementing an integrated skill-based model rather than isolated grammar instruction

Research Problem and Problem Statement

Despite meeting university admission criteria, many Sri Lankan undergraduates struggle academically due to limited English proficiency. Existing language programs often lack structured design, measurable outcomes, and sustained engagement.

The significance of this study lies in:

1. Reducing academic inequity in EMI contexts.
2. Enhancing student confidence and participation.
3. Supporting institutional policy reform in language support.
4. Contributing empirical data from a Sri Lankan higher education context

Existing programs often lack targeted, structured, skill-focused support. This study implements and evaluates a 15-week English support program addressing these gaps.

Research Questions

1. What is the initial English proficiency of first-year students?
2. Does the structured English support program improve proficiency and academic skills?
3. Does the intervention enhance overall academic performance?
4. How does engagement, including attendance, affect outcomes?

Research Objectives

General Objective: Evaluate the effectiveness of a 15-week English support program.

Specific Objectives:

1. Assess initial English proficiency.
2. Implement a 15-week program focusing on reading, writing, listening, communication, and translation.
3. Monitor progress through formative and post-tests.
4. Evaluate overall academic improvement using pre-test/post-test and mid-term exam results.

Hypotheses

H1: Post-test scores will significantly exceed pre-test scores.

H2: Engagement, including attendance, positively relates to improvement, though program structure is the primary driver.

Methods

Study Design: Quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design at the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna.

Participants: From 582 first-year students, 200 scoring <45 on an English aptitude test were selected.

- Age: Mean = 20.8 years, SD = 1.4
- Gender: 55% male, 45% female
- Inclusion: First-year enrolment, pre-test score <45
- Exclusion: Scores ≥ 45 or incomplete assessments

Intervention: 15-week interactive program emphasizing academic reading, writing, listening, communication, and translation. Activities included individual work, pair work, group projects, and peer feedback. Week-8 formative assessment guided instructional adjustments.

Data Collection and Analysis

- Pre-tests, week-8 formative, post-tests, and mid-term exams collected.
- SPSS 26 used for analysis: descriptive statistics, paired-samples t-tests, independent-samples t-tests. Significance set at $p < .05$

Results

Demographics

Characteristic Frequency Percentage

Male	110	55%
Female	90	45%
Mean Age	20.8	SD=1.4

Progress across Assessments

Table 1. Student Progress across Assessments

Assessment	Mean	SD	N	Description
Pre-Test	32.41	6.52	200	Baseline proficiency
Week 8	47.92	7.11	200	Mid-program progress
Post-Test	58.63	8.14	200	End-of-program improvement

Table 2. Paired-Samples T-Test

Comparison	Mean Diff	t	df	P	Cohen's d
Pre vs Post	26.22	31.27	199	<.001	2.21

Engagement Effects

Table 3. Performance by Participation Level

Engagement	Mean	SD	N	Description
≥80%	64.21	6.87	118	High engagement
50–79%	57.34	7.02	62	Moderate engagement
<50%	49.32	7.45	20	Low engagement

Comparison with Faculty Benchmarks

Table 4. Experimental Group vs Faculty Performance Bands

Category	Mean	Description
Experimental Post-Test	58.63	Reduced proficiency gap
Intermediate	55.00	Faculty benchmark
Upper	65.00	High-proficiency benchmark

Discussion

The 15-week program significantly improved English proficiency and academic skills. Gains observed across writing, reading, listening, communication, and translation are consistent with previous EMI studies (Macaro et al., 2018; Rose et al., 2020). Engagement enhanced outcomes, but structured skill-focused instruction was the primary driver. Students reported improved self-evaluation, confidence, and academic participation, supporting Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory and Swain's (2005) output hypothesis. Structured programs are essential in multilingual higher education to reduce gaps and equip students for success.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

Institutional Recommendations:

- Implement mandatory structured language support for low-proficiency entrants.
- Integrate academic literacy into first-year curricula.
- Monitor engagement and attendance as predictive indicators.

Policy Recommendations:

- Develop national EMI language support guidelines.
- Allocate funding for structured intervention programs.
- Establish institutional language proficiency benchmarks.

Recommendations for Future Research:

- Conduct longitudinal studies to measure long-term retention.
- Include control groups for stronger causal inference.
- Replicate the study across multiple faculties and universities.
- Investigate discipline-specific academic literacy interventions

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The Relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Turnover Intention: Evidence from the Tyre Manufacturing Industry Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Employee turnover intention remains a critical challenge for organizations, particularly within labour-intensive manufacturing industries. This study examines the relationship between selected Human Resource Management Practices; performance appraisal, rewards, and training and development and employee turnover intention in the tyre manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the study proposes that supportive HRM practices reduce employees' intention to leave the organization. A quantitative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 200 employees working in tyre production departments of four manufacturing companies. Data were analyzed using reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal that performance appraisal, rewards, and training and development are significantly and negatively associated with employee turnover intention. Among the three practices, rewards emerged as the strongest predictor. The regression model explained 75.4% of the variance in turnover intention, indicating strong explanatory power. The results highlight the importance of effective HRM practices in enhancing employee retention within the manufacturing sector. The study contributes to the limited empirical literature on HRM practices and turnover intention in the Sri Lankan industrial context and provides practical implications for managers seeking to reduce employee turnover.

Key Words: *Employee Turnover Intention, Performance Appraisal, Rewards, Training and Development, Quantitative.*

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized and competitive economic landscape, organizations rely heavily on human capital as a strategic resource to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). The intensification of global trade, technological advancement, and market liberalization has heightened pressure on organizations to enhance efficiency, productivity, and innovation. Within this environment, effective Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are widely recognized as critical mechanisms for improving employee attitudes and organizational performance (Delery & Doty, 1996; Huselid, 1995). However, employee turnover remains a persistent challenge across industries, particularly in labour-intensive manufacturing sectors where operational continuity depends on skilled and experienced employees.

Employee turnover intention defined as an employee's conscious and deliberate willingness to leave the organization is widely acknowledged in the literature as the most immediate precursor of actual turnover behavior (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Unlike actual turnover, which reflects an observable outcome, turnover intention captures employees' psychological withdrawal processes and therefore serves as an early warning indicator for organizations (Mobley, 1977).

High turnover rates impose substantial direct costs, such as recruitment, selection, and training expenses, as well as indirect costs, including productivity loss, diminished organizational knowledge, reduced morale, and disruptions to team dynamics (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010). These consequences are particularly critical in manufacturing industries where production efficiency and quality depend heavily on workforce stability.

The tyre manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka represents a significant component of the country's industrial sector, contributing to export earnings and employment generation. The nature of production work in this industry often involves physically demanding tasks, shift-based operations, and standardized processes that require technical competence and on-the-job experience. Such conditions may elevate employees' sensitivity to organizational practices, particularly those related to performance evaluation, compensation, and skill development. Despite the economic relevance of the manufacturing sector, empirical research examining the determinants of turnover intention within the Sri Lankan tyre manufacturing context remains limited. Most prior studies on turnover intention have been conducted in service sectors or Western contexts (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000), thereby highlighting the need for context-specific empirical investigation in developing economies and industrial settings.

HRM practices are organizational systems designed to attract, motivate, develop, and retain employees (Armstrong, 2014). Among the broad range of HRM practices discussed in the literature, performance appraisal, rewards, and training and development have consistently been identified as critical determinants of employee attitudes and behavioral intentions. Performance appraisal systems influence employees' perceptions of fairness, recognition, and career progression opportunities (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000). Reward systems; both financial and non-financial shape employees' motivation and job satisfaction (Milkovich, Newman, & Gerhart, 2014). Training and development initiatives enhance employees' competencies, employability, and perceived organizational support (Noe, 2017). When these practices are implemented effectively, they signal organizational commitment to employee well-being and growth.

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that employment relationships are based on reciprocal exchanges of resources and socio-emotional benefits. According to this perspective, when employees perceive that their organization invests in them through supportive HRM practices, they are more likely to reciprocate with positive attitudes, including organizational commitment and reduced intention to leave (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Conversely, inadequate or unfair HRM practices may weaken this reciprocal exchange relationship, thereby increasing turnover intention. By applying Social Exchange Theory to the manufacturing context in Sri Lanka, this study extends the theoretical application of exchange-based explanations of employee retention within an underexplored industrial setting.

Although a substantial body of literature links HRM practices to employee retention outcomes, empirical findings remain context-dependent, and the relative influence of specific HRM practices varies across industries and countries (Jiang, Lepak, Hu, & Baer, 2012). Furthermore, limited scholarly attention has been directed toward examining how selected HRM practices influence turnover intention within the Sri Lankan tyre manufacturing industry. Addressing this gap is important for both theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the HRM–turnover literature by providing empirical evidence from a developing-country manufacturing context. From a practical perspective, identifying the most

influential HRM practices can assist managers in designing targeted retention strategies to enhance workforce stability.

Accordingly, the General objective of this study is to examine the relationship between selected HRM practices and employee turnover intention in the tyre manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka. Specific Objectives are as below.

- i. To investigate the relationship between performance appraisal and employee turnover intention in tyre manufacturing industry.
- ii. To investigate the relationship between rewards and employee turnover intention in tyre manufacturing industry.
- iii. To investigate the relationship between training and development and employee turnover intention in tyre manufacturing industry.

Since employee turnover is costly to any organization, identifying well in advance the factors behind employees' intention to leave would help to adjust their HRM practices to reduce employee turnover rate. Further, this study would enable the industry to analyze the cost in terms of replacing employees, loss of productivity and deterioration of service quality. The study also add value to the researchers in the area of employee turnover. Scholars will find it important as it will increase the body of knowledge in this area.

Based on the literature reviewed, the researcher has developed conceptual framework for this study.

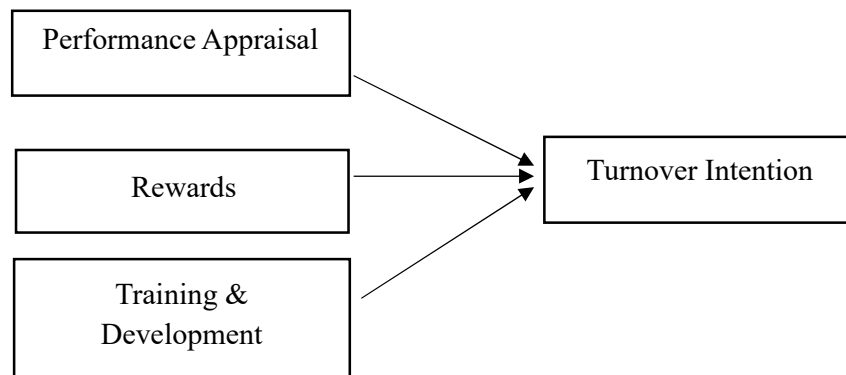


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Further, after observing the mix findings from prior studies the researcher proposed following hypotheses to test the relationships between independent and dependent variables.

H₁: There is a negative relationship between performance appraisal and turnover intention.

H₂: There is a negative relationship between rewards and turnover intention.

H₃: There is a negative relationship between training and development and turnover intention.

Methods

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between selected HRM practices and employee turnover intention in the tyre manufacturing

industry in Sri Lanka. A cross-sectional survey design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to test theoretically derived hypotheses and assess the associations among variables at a single point in time, which is consistent with prior HRM and turnover intention research (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Mobley, 1977).

The target population comprised approximately 1,000 employees working in tyre production departments across four major tyre manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka. Production employees were selected because they constitute the core operational workforce and are directly influenced by organizational HRM practices, such as performance appraisal, rewards, and training and development. The required sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, which recommends a minimum of 278 respondents for a population of 1,000 at a 95% confidence level. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation from each company. After excluding incomplete and unusable responses, 200 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis, yielding a response rate of 71.94%, which is considered adequate for multiple regression analysis and meets the recommended threshold for statistical power in social science research (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019).

Primary data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the respective company management. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to reduce social desirability bias and encourage honest responses. Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, books, and organizational documents to support the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

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The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section one collected demographic information, including age, gender, marital status, education level, work experience, and monthly salary. Section two measured the key study variables: performance appraisal, rewards, training and development, and turnover intention. Each construct was assessed using five-item scales adapted from established literature to ensure content validity (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000; Milkovich, Newman, & Gerhart, 2014; Noe, 2017). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Performance appraisal items assessed perceptions of fairness, transparency, and effectiveness of appraisal systems. Rewards measured perceptions of adequacy and fairness of financial and non-financial compensation, and training and development evaluated perceived opportunities for skill enhancement and career growth. Turnover intention assessed employees' likelihood of leaving the organization in the near future.

The reliability of all constructs was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, and all variables exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Construct validity was supported through careful adaptation of previously validated scales and assessment of the direction and strength of inter-variable correlations, which were consistent with theoretical expectations.

Quantitative data were coded numerically and analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the demographic characteristics and construct responses. Spearman correlation coefficients were computed to

examine the direction and strength of relationships between the independent HRM practices and the dependent variable, turnover intention. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesized relationships and determine the relative predictive power of each HRM practice on turnover intention. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. The use of Spearman correlation was appropriate given the ordinal nature of Likert-scale data and the potential non-normality of responses.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained, and no personal identifying information was collected. Data were used solely for academic research purposes.

Results

Demographic Data Analysis

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the majority (42.4%) were aged between 26 and 35 years, while only 7.2% were in the 46–55 years age group. Most respondents were male (79.5%), with females comprising 20.5% of the sample, suggesting a predominantly male workforce in the tyre manufacturing industry. Regarding marital status, 54.7% of respondents were unmarried, and 45.3% were married. In terms of educational attainment, 48.9% had completed G.C.E. Ordinary Level, and 21.2% had education below Grade 11. Work experience varied, with 20.9% of respondents having less than one year of experience, 41.7% between one and five years, and 13.3% more than ten years. Monthly salary analysis showed that most respondents (52.9%) earned between Rs. 30,000 and 40,000, while only 2.9% earned less than Rs. 20,000.

Reliability and Validity of the Study

The internal consistency reliability of the study constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Independent variables		
PA	.901	05
Rewards	.906	05
T & D	.893	05
Dependent variable		
TI	.877	05

Performance appraisal exhibited a high reliability ($\alpha = 0.901$), rewards ($\alpha = 0.906$), training and development ($\alpha = 0.893$), and turnover intention ($\alpha = 0.877$). All values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability for subsequent analyses

(Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Among the variables, rewards had the highest internal consistency, and turnover intention had the lowest, though still acceptable.

Correlational Analysis

Spearman's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the direction and strength of the relationships between HRM practices and employee turnover intention.

Table 2: Correlation test results

Correlations			TI
Spearman's rho	TI	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	
		N	200
	PA	Correlation Coefficient	-.691**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	200
	Rewards	Correlation Coefficient	-.811**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	200
	T&D	Correlation Coefficient	-.741**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	200
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The results indicate significant negative correlations between all independent variables and turnover intention. Performance appraisal correlated negatively with turnover intention ($\rho = -0.691$, $p < 0.05$), rewards ($\rho = -0.811$, $p < 0.05$), and training and development ($\rho = -0.741$, $p < 0.05$). These results suggest that higher levels of perceived performance appraisal effectiveness, adequate rewards, and training opportunities are associated with lower employee turnover intention. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive effects of performance appraisal, rewards, and training and development on employee turnover intention. The Model Summary is presented in Table 3. The model explained 75.4% of the variance in turnover intention ($R^2 = 0.754$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.754$), indicating a strong explanatory power.

Table 3: Model summary

Model Summary ^b				
Models	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
1	.870 ^a	.757	.754	.48285
a. Predictors: (Constant), Training & Development, Rewards, Performance Appraisal				
b. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention				

Table 4: ANOVA table

ANOVA ^a						
Models		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	198.622	3	66.207	283.980	.000 ^b
	Residual	63.881	274	.233		
	Total	262.502	277			
a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Training & Development, Rewards, Performance Appraisal						

The ANOVA table (Table 4) indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant ($F(3, 196) = 283.98, p < 0.05$), confirming that performance appraisal, rewards, and training and development collectively predict turnover intention.

Table 5: Regression Coefficient

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	B		
1	(Constant)	7.257	.149		48.804	.000
	PA	-.119	.115	-.121	-1.040	.003
	Rewards	-.849	.062	-.529	-13.754	.000
	T & D	-.555	.118	-.551	-4.711	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention						

According to the model 1 in the regression coefficients table the independent variables such as performance appraisal ($\beta = -0.119$, Sig. / P Value = $0.003 < 0.05$), rewards ($\beta = -0.849$, Sig. / P Value = $0.000 < 0.05$) and training & development ($\beta = -0.555$, Sig. / P Value = $0.000 < 0.05$).

0.000 < 05.00%) has a significant impact on employee turnover intention at tyre manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the estimated model for forecast the employee turnover intention can be shown as below.

$$Y_i = 7.257 - 0.119 X_1 - 0.849 X_2 - 0.555 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Figure 2: Estimated forecasted model

Discussions

The findings of this study indicate a significant negative relationship between performance appraisal and employee turnover intention. This suggests that employees who perceive their contributions are not fairly appraised or recognized are more likely to consider leaving the organization. Effective performance appraisal systems can enhance employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention. Previous studies have similarly reported that perceptions of fairness and transparency in performance evaluation significantly reduce turnover intention (Vignaswaran, 2008; Raihan, 2012). These results reinforce the importance of implementing objective, transparent, and feedback-oriented appraisal mechanisms to maintain workforce stability.

A significant negative relationship was also observed between rewards and employee turnover intention. Employees who perceive that they receive adequate and fair rewards, including monetary compensation, benefits, and recognition, tend to remain longer in the organization. Conversely, insufficient or inequitable rewards can lead to dissatisfaction, frustration, and reduced motivation, ultimately increasing the likelihood of voluntary turnover (Maicibi, 2003; Dessler, 2020). Therefore, organizations should regularly review and enhance reward systems to ensure alignment with employee expectations and industry standards.

Similarly, training and development were found to have a significant negative effect on turnover intention. Employees who perceive ample opportunities for skill enhancement, career advancement, and professional growth are less likely to leave their organization. This finding aligns with human capital theory, which posits that investment in employee development increases organizational commitment and reduces turnover (Connie et al., 2009; Noe, 2017). Organizations should therefore prioritize structured, continuous, and relevant training programs to foster employee engagement and retention.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the selected HRM practices performance appraisal, rewards, and training and development are critical determinants of employee turnover intention in the Sri Lankan tyre manufacturing industry. The results support social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), indicating that when organizations provide fair appraisal, adequate rewards, and development opportunities, employees reciprocate with increased loyalty and reduced turnover intention.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the impact of selected HRM practices on employee turnover intention in the tyre manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka. The findings demonstrate that performance appraisal, rewards, and training and development significantly influence employees' intention to leave, with rewards exerting the strongest effect. This highlights the crucial role of strategic HRM practices in retaining skilled employees and reducing the costs associated with turnover.

Based on the results, several practical recommendations are proposed. First, organizations should develop comprehensive employee retention strategies that integrate fair performance appraisal systems, competitive rewards, and continuous training and development programs. These strategies should address the specific expectations and needs of employees in the tyre manufacturing sector. Second, providing clear and realistic job information during recruitment and regularly updating employees about organizational policies and career opportunities can reduce frustration and demotivation, thereby minimizing turnover intention. Third, periodic evaluation and adjustment of HRM practices based on employee feedback can ensure continued effectiveness in enhancing retention.

This study has certain limitations. The sample was limited to production employees, and other departments such as inspection, quality assurance, and maintenance were not included. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings may be restricted. Additionally, the study focused on only three HRM practices, while other factors such as recruitment and selection, employee empowerment, participation, and employee relations may also influence turnover intention. Future research should consider these additional variables and include a more diverse employee population to provide a comprehensive understanding of turnover determinants in the industry.

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Exploration of Accounting Students' Attitudes towards Integrating Forensic Accounting in Accounting Education of Sri Lankan Universities

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: As the importance of forensic accounting in fighting financial crime is acknowledged worldwide, understanding students' perspectives is important yet, remains underexplored. **The study aims to explore the accounting students' attitudes** towards the integration of forensic accounting into the undergraduate curriculum in Sri Lanka. Specifically, it seeks to assess students' interest in further incorporation of forensic accounting, evaluate the current extent of its integration within their academic programs, and identify the key factors influencing their attitudes toward Forensic Accounting as a subject. **Study Design/Methodology/Approach:** Employing a quantitative methodology, a structured survey was distributed among the third- and fourth-year undergraduate accounting students across public and private Sri Lankan universities. A total of 384 students were initially selected based on Morgan's table, and after data cleaning, 335 responses were finalized for analysis. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, reliability testing, correlation, and regression analyses using SPSS to examine relationships between students' awareness, perceived relevance, career aspirations, curriculum exposure, and their attitudes toward forensic accounting integration. **Findings:** Results reveal generally positive student attitudes, strongly influenced by perceived relevance and career aspirations, with limited current curriculum exposure. Awareness alone does not significantly predict attitudes when other variables are considered. **Research Limitations/Implications:** The study's scope is limited to third- and fourth-year accounting undergraduates from selected universities in Sri Lanka; therefore, the findings may not apply to students in other years or at institutions other than those studied, and data collection through self-reported questionnaires may introduce response bias. Future longitudinal and qualitative research could provide deeper insights into evolving perceptions and implementation challenges. **Originality/Value:** This research contributes empirical evidence on student attitudes in a developing country context, emphasizing the critical role of perceived relevance and career motivation in curriculum development. It offers valuable guidance for policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders to align accounting education with emerging forensic demands.

Keywords: *Accounting Education Curriculum, Forensic Accounting, Students' Attitudes, Sri Lankan Universities, Undergraduates*

JEL Classification: H20, H21

Introduction

Financial fraud and complex white-collar crimes are major problems in today's business environment. Forensic accounting, which combines accounting, auditing, and investigative skills, has emerged as a crucial global tool for uncovering and preventing these crimes. (Rezaee & Burton, 1997). Many universities worldwide have incorporated forensic accounting into their curricula to prepare future professionals with these critical skills. (Bhavani & Mehta, 2018). In Sri Lanka, the growing demand for forensic accounting expertise is evident, especially in light of recent economic difficulties and prominent financial corruption cases. (Dharmasena & Seneviratne, 2023). Institutions like the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) have stressed the need for better prevention of fraud. This means there is a growing demand in Sri Lanka for accounting professionals who have forensic accounting skills to help create a more transparent and accountable financial environment. However, the accounting education system in Sri Lankan universities has not fully adopted this trend, resulting in a gap between industry skill requirements and what students learn. Although the significance of forensic accounting is acknowledged

worldwide, a minimal number of studies have explored how key stakeholders, particularly students, perceive it. (Ebaid I. , 2022); (Dharmasena & Seneviratne, 2023).

Understanding student attitudes is crucial for designing a curriculum that is relevant and useful. (Ebaid I. , 2022). Previous studies in Sri Lanka have focused only on the perceptions of students in state universities, overlooking a large and increasingly influential sector of private universities. (Ebaid I. , 2022) The Sri Lankan university system comprises both state and private universities, and understanding the perceptions of accounting students in private institutions regarding forensic accounting is important. This gap is especially critical because a substantial and growing number of Generation Z students now enroll in private universities, which often have limited formal exposure to forensic accounting. (Perera & Lecamwasam, 2024). Many private universities still do not offer the subject completely, which could place their graduates at a competitive and educational disadvantage. (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring how accounting students across the entire Sri Lankan university system, both public and private, perceive the inclusion of forensic accounting education in Accounting Education in Sri Lanka. Specifically, it seeks to identify the key factors that influence their attitudes toward integrating forensic accounting into undergraduate curricula. It adopts a learner-focused approach, primarily considering students as future professionals and the primary beneficiaries of accounting education. Geographically, the study is limited to universities within Sri Lanka that offer accounting programs.

The primary objective of the research is to identify the key factors influencing students' attitudes towards the integration of forensic accounting education.

Secondary Objectives are:

- i. To identify the impact of students' awareness on their attitudes toward integrating Forensic Accounting.
- ii. To examine the impact of the perceived relevance of Forensic Accounting on students' attitudes toward integrating Forensic Accounting.
- iii. To identify the impact of students' career aspirations on attitudes toward integrating Forensic Accounting.
- iv. To examine the impact of Forensic Accounting curriculum exposure on students' attitudes toward integrating Forensic Accounting.

Based on the objectives of the research study, following research questions were developed.

- i. What is the impact of students' awareness on students' attitudes toward integrating Forensic Accounting?
- ii. What is the impact of the perceived relevance of Forensic Accounting on students' attitudes toward integrating Forensic Accounting?
- iii. What is the impact of students' career aspirations on attitudes toward integrating Forensic Accounting?
- iv. What is the impact of Forensic Accounting curriculum exposure on students' attitudes toward integrating Forensic Accounting?

By clarifying student attitudes, this study enriches academic discussions and fosters a deeper understanding of the topic. It guides the development of improved teaching methods and policies, contributing to a more transparent and fraud-resistant financial environment in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

To construct the theoretical foundation, the research combines three related theoretical frameworks:

- 1) **Theory of Planned Behavior:** According to this theory, behavior is dependent upon changes in attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. (Ajzen, 1991). A student's intention is influenced by their attitude towards forensic accounting. If they perceive it as a valuable, engaging, and intellectually stimulating field that enhances their career prospects (Ebaid I. , 2022), they will have a positive attitude and a stronger intention to advocate for its inclusion. Social influences play a critical role. Suppose students believe that their peers, respected lecturers, and potential employers value forensic accounting skills (Dave & Patel, 2023). In that case, they will feel social pressure to conform to this norm, thereby strengthening their intention to do so. A student may have a positive attitude and perceive social support, but if they feel the subject is too complex, the curriculum is too overloaded, or they lack access to necessary resources (Al-Hadrami & Hidayat, 2014), their perceived control is low. Their intention to engage will be weakened and vice versa. Thus, the Theory of Planned Behavior explains how attitudes, social influence, and perceived control drive Sri Lankan students' intentions toward integrating Forensic Accounting in accounting education.
- 2) **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):** TAM is typically applied to IT systems; its principles are highly relevant to the "adoption" of a new field of study (Davis F. , 1989) Forensic accounting is inherently technology-dependent. Students are more likely to accept and support the integration of forensic accounting if they perceive it as applicable to their future careers. Perceived Usefulness refers to the degree to which students believe forensic accounting enhances career prospects, provides a competitive advantage, opens niche career paths, and improves job performance. (Agbor T. , 2023). If they view it as a valuable tool for career advancement, their acceptance will be high. Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) relates to how accessible and manageable students believe the subject to be. If forensic accounting is presented as an overly complex, jargon-heavy field requiring advanced technical skills from the outset, students may be intimidated (low PEOU). However, suppose it is introduced gradually, with supportive teaching, hands-on practice with user-friendly software, and explicit learning materials. In that case, students will perceive it as easier to learn (high PEOU), thereby increasing their acceptance and intention to engage with it. Thus, TAM highlights how students' perceptions of relevance and accessibility shape their willingness to embrace Forensic Accounting.
- 3) **Human Capital Theory:** This provides an economic rationale for students' attitudes towards curriculum choices. (Becker, 1964) Students often conduct a cost-benefit analysis unconsciously when evaluating new subjects. The costs include the extra time and effort required to master a complex new subject, potential tuition fees for specialized courses, and the opportunity cost of not focusing on other core subjects. The anticipated benefits include the acquisition of rare and valued skills, differentiation in the job market, higher starting salaries, faster career progression, and long-term job security in a high-demand niche. (Agbor E. E., 2023) If students perceive the benefits of acquiring forensic accounting skills to outweigh the costs, they will view it as a worthwhile investment in their human capital. Consequently, they will hold a positive attitude towards its integration into the curriculum, perceiving it as an opportunity to enhance the value of their degree and their future earning potential. Thus, Human Capital Theory explains why students value Forensic Accounting for career prospects and justify engagement as an investment in human capital.

At present, the accounting curriculum in Sri Lanka is designed to cover comprehensively the most important aspects of accounting, which include, but are not limited to, financial reporting, auditing, management accounting, taxation, and the associated legal framework. However, the accounting domain across the world is experiencing a rapid shift in the curriculum due to changes in technology

and the constant changes in demand in the world's job market. (Al-Hadrami & Hidayat, 2014). At the same time, the scope of work is deepening. This has created a trend where employers now seek individuals who defend the value of the organization, rather than individuals who merely defend the value of the organization. Globally, the university system has accepted this need and has built up the theoretical and practical integration of knowledge and skills in work-ready learning in 'work-integrated learning' internships, industry projects, and other simulations in their higher education platforms. (AAA, 1986) . However, this has made it challenging for Sri Lankan graduates to secure suitable employment, underscoring the need for universities to align their programs more closely with the real-world needs of the job market. The study by Perera & Undugoda (2020) demonstrated that modules in forensic accounting, advanced data analytics, and IT auditing are being delayed in their integration into the curriculum. Further, they confirmed this shortfall, arguing that faculties fail to systematically nurture vital 21st-century skills, namely critical thinking, detailed investigative reasoning, sustained skepticism, and ethical judgment.

Forensic accounting combines accounting, auditing, and investigative skills to analyze financial information for use in court proceedings. (Wells, 2017) In their 1997 study, Rezaee & Burton provide a clear definition that describes forensic accounting as the application of theories and techniques to resolve disputed facts central to lawsuits, thereby anchoring financial practice where funds and the law meet. The need for forensic finance specialists all over the world started growing in the 2000s.

It was primarily due to geopolitical events, including the Enron and Worldcom scandals, as well as the 2008 financial crisis. The economically advanced nations have responded to this growing need by extending their educational programmes. The United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, for example, have clearly articulated academic frameworks tailored to forensic accounting, which have been adopted in their universities. (Al-Hadrami & Hidayat, 2014) Students now have the option to complete undergraduate minors, master's degrees, and postgraduate certificates that focus on fraud investigation and prevention. In addition, the Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) qualification (ACFE, 2023) has emerged as a global benchmark qualification, enabling graduates to demonstrate proven competence to employers and bridging the gaps in theory and practice. Numerous studies that have been carried out in recent years affirm the existence of these developments. According to Bhavani and Mehta (2018), postgraduate programmes in the UAE have introduced innovations rapidly during the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of this innovation process, forensic accounting units were created in response to the emirate and the UAE's ambitions to be a major global and regional financial center. Similarly, in the context of improved employer demand for forensic accounting in the corporate governance field, Dave and Patel (2023) noted a surge in interest in forensic accounting among Indian undergraduates. Although Sri Lanka's corporate circle, particularly audit offices and financial institutions, continuously expresses an underlying need for forensic expertise, the universities' academic response remains in its early stages. According to Munasinghe (2022), state institutions still lack comprehensive forensic accounting modules; thus, they must incorporate forensic concepts into auditing curricula in an ad hoc manner. This gap has compelled firms and practitioners to find talent through boundary-crossing certifications or through site-driven instruction, both of which produce inconsistent results (Rathnasiri & Bandara, 2017)

Ebaid (2022), in a comprehensive study of Egyptian accounting students, found that a significant majority viewed forensic accounting not just as a necessary skill but as an intellectually challenging and prestigious field that promises greater career advancement and job satisfaction compared to traditional accounting roles. Similarly, Dave and Patel (2023) reported robust interest among Indian students, directly linking this enthusiasm to the rapidly expanding job market for fraud detection and compliance roles within the country's booming economy. Students perceived forensic accounting as a direct pathway to high-growth, well-rewarded careers in sectors, particularly banking, insurance, and consulting. In Sri Lanka, the research, though limited, echoes this positive trend but with critical caveats. Dharmasena and Seneviratne (2023) conducted a focused study on accounting

undergraduates in Sri Lanka and found that students generally hold a favorable attitude towards forensic accounting. They recognized its importance in combating corporate fraud and its potential to enhance their employability. The study further revealed that, although the attitude among Sri Lankan students appears favorable toward the forensic accounting field, this attitude remains passive and abstract.

One of the main differences between students in developed countries and those in developing countries is the significant challenge of limited access to resources. Students in Sri Lanka approach the subject not through sustained, hands-on experience, but through a vague and sometimes incidental awareness of its perceived significance. (Dharmasena & Seneviratne, 2023)

When considering awareness, it reflects students' knowledge and understanding of Forensic Accounting, including its objectives, scope, and applications. Global studies indicate awareness shapes attitudes toward engagement (Ebaid I. , 2022) but limited exposure in Sri Lanka results in passive understanding (Dharmasena & Seneviratne, 2023). On the other hand, perceived relevance refers to students' recognition of Forensic Accounting as applicable and valuable for future roles. Students perceive Forensic Accounting as essential for fraud detection, corporate governance, and ethical auditing (Ebaid I. , 2022) (Dave & Patel, 2023). High relevance increases positive attitudes toward learning. When considering career aspirations, it describes students' professional goals, including roles in auditing, banking, fraud investigation, and obtaining CFE certification. Ambitious students view Forensic Accounting as a pathway to high-growth careers, which positively influences curriculum acceptance. Curriculum exposure refers to the formal teaching of Forensic Accounting in degree programs. Internationally, universities in the U.S., U.K., and Australia integrate Forensic Accounting fully with practical exercises and internships (Bhavani & Mehta, 2018). In Sri Lanka, exposure is limited, often included as a few lectures in auditing courses (Munasinghe A. , 2022). Increased exposure is linked to stronger interest and engagement. Attitude is the evaluative disposition toward integrating Forensic Accounting into accounting education. Based on the theoretical foundations and empirical findings discussed above, the study conceptualizes that awareness, perceived relevance, career aspirations, and curriculum exposure influence students' attitudes toward integrating forensic accounting into accounting education.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach to objectively assess student attitudes. The research philosophy was positivist, emphasizing the collection of factual data for statistical analysis and interpretation. The target population comprised third- and fourth-year accounting students from public universities (15 out of the 17 public universities that offer dedicated degree programs in Accountancy. (Munasinghe A. T., 2022)) and private universities (UGC-approved private universities that offer degree programs in Accountancy) of Sri Lanka. A random sampling technique was used to select 384 students based on Morgan's table. After data cleaning and removal of incomplete responses, the final usable sample consisted of 335 respondents, ensuring the analysis was based on complete and reliable data. By focusing on final-year students, the study ensured that participants had sufficient exposure to the core accounting curriculum, allowing them to offer informed opinions. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), and with reference to the previous studies including Ebaid (2022) and Dharmasena and Seneviratne (2023), this study developed a conceptual framework as students' attitudes are influenced by four key independent variables: awareness, perceived relevance, career aspirations, and curriculum exposure (*Figure 1*).

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

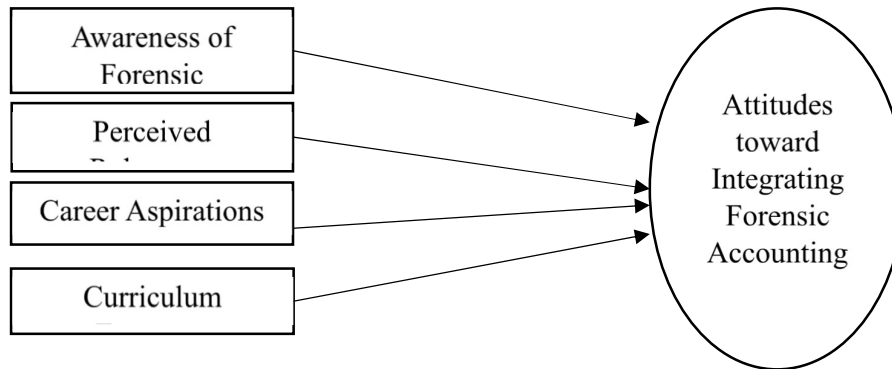


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author Constructed

The primary data was obtained using a structured online questionnaire developed through Google Forms. It consisted of two sections: the first collected demographic details (for example, university type and year of study), whereas the second assessed variables like awareness, perceived relevance, career goals, curriculum exposure, and overall attitude towards integration using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"). The conceptual framework, research models, and existing literature are used to construct the following hypotheses, which are consistent with the research objectives.

- i. H1: There is a significant impact of students' awareness on attitudes toward integrating Forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum.
- ii. H2: There is a significant impact of the perceived relevance of students on attitudes toward integrating Forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum.
- iii. H3: There is a significant impact of the students' career aspirations on attitudes toward integrating Forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum.
- iv. H4: There is a significant impact of the curriculum exposure of the students on attitudes toward integrating Forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum.

The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The analysis included descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic profile and general tendencies of the responses, reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha to check the consistency of the questionnaire, and inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation to examine relationships between variables, and multiple regression analysis to identify key factors influencing students' attitudes. (Ajzen, 1991)

Findings and Discussions

The study reveals a strong and positive attitude among Sri Lankan accounting students towards integrating forensic accounting into their curriculum.

Descriptive Statistics

A significant majority (82.1%) correctly identified the primary role of a forensic accountant as investigating fraud. The mean scores for perceived relevance ($M = 3.84$) and overall attitude towards integration ($M = 3.90$) were notably high, indicating strong support. However, 86.3% of students

reported that forensic accounting is only taught as a part of another subject, and 57.9% said topics related to fraud are never discussed in their curriculum.

Table 01: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Perceived Relevance	3.84	0.69
Career Aspirations	3.80	0.62
Awareness	3.72	0.72
Curriculum Exposure	3.38	0.87
Overall Attitude	3.90	0.63

Source: SPSS Statistical Output, 2025

This highlights a significant gap between student interest and actual curriculum coverage, but the overall positive attitude is a promising sign for the potential integration of forensic accounting.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability test confirmed that the questionnaire was consistent and reliable, with Cronbach's Alpha exceeding the 0.7 threshold for all variables. The high Cronbach's alpha values across all variables reduce the risk of measurement error and strengthen the validity of the findings.

Table 02: Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	
Awareness of Forensic Accounting	0.767
Perceived Relevance	0.722
Career Aspirations	0.72
Curriculum Exposure	0.835
Overall Attitudes Toward Integration	0.729

Source: SPSS Statistical Output, 2025

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis indicates that all variables are positively and significantly related.

	Overall Attitudes	Awareness	Perceived Relevance	Career Aspirations	Curriculum Exposure
Overall Attitudes	1	.411**	.658**	.670**	.329**
Awareness	.411**	1	.473**	.519**	.301**
Perceived Relevance	.658**	.473**	1	.673**	.307**
Career Aspirations	.670**	.519**	.673**	1	.307**
Curriculum Exposure	.329**	.301**	.307**	.307**	1

SPSS Statistical Output, 2025

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Overall Attitudes toward Integration and Career Aspirations was 0.670 ($p < 0.01$), indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that students who view forensic accounting as relevant to their career goals are more likely to hold favorable attitudes toward its integration in the curriculum. Similarly, a strong positive correlation was observed between Overall Attitudes and Perceived Relevance ($r = 0.658$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that when students perceive forensic accounting as essential and practical, they are more likely to support its inclusion in academic programs. A moderate positive correlation was also found between Overall Attitudes and Awareness ($r = 0.411$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that increased awareness of forensic accounting is associated with more favorable attitudes toward its integration. The correlation between Overall Attitudes and Curriculum Exposure ($r = 0.329$, $p < 0.01$), though weaker, is statistically significant, indicating that exposure to forensic accounting through coursework modestly enhances students' acceptance of its integration.

The relationship between Awareness and Career Aspirations was also statistically significant ($r = 0.519$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that students with a consistent interest in forensic accounting are more likely to consider it in their career paths. Awareness further showed a moderate positive correlation with Perceived Relevance ($r = 0.473$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that being informed about forensic accounting increases the likelihood of perceiving it as valuable and applicable.

Among all the relationships, the strongest correlation was between Perceived Relevance and Career Aspirations ($r = 0.673$, $p < 0.01$). This highlights that when students view forensic accounting as relevant, it directly influences their career intentions and long-term professional goals. Finally, Curriculum Exposure showed weaker correlations with other variables (ranging from 0.301 to 0.329, all significant at $p < 0.01$). This suggests that even though curriculum exposure plays a role, it is not as powerful a predictor of students' overall attitudes or aspirations compared to relevance and awareness.

Regression Analysis

Table 04: Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	Impact (β Coefficient)	P value	Finding
Awareness	0.007	0.870	Not Significant
Perceived Relevance	0.329	< 0.001	Strong Positive Impact
Career Aspirations	0.405	< 0.001	Strongest Positive Impact
Curriculum Exposure	0.069	0.019	Modest Positive Impact

Source: SPSS Statistical Output, 2025

The regression analysis provided clear outcomes for the research hypotheses. The regression results show that three factors, perceived relevance, career aspirations, and curriculum exposure, significantly influence students' attitudes toward integrating forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum. Among them, career aspirations had the strongest effect, followed by perceived relevance and curriculum exposure. However, students' awareness did not show any significant impact, indicating that simply knowing about forensic accounting does not shape their attitudes. Overall, attitudes are driven more by relevance, career goals, and actual exposure rather than general awareness.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 05: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Regression Analysis	Decision
H1	There is a significant impact of students' awareness on attitudes toward integrating Forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum.	$\beta = 0.007$ $p = 0.870$	Rejected
H2	There is a significant impact of the perceived relevance of students on attitudes toward integrating Forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum.	$\beta = 0.329$ $p < 0.001$	Accepted
H3	There is a significant impact of the students' career aspirations on attitudes toward integrating Forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum.	$\beta = 0.405$ $p < 0.001$	Accepted
H4	There is a significant impact of the curriculum exposure of the students on attitudes toward integrating Forensic accounting into the accounting curriculum.	$\beta = 0.069$ $p = 0.019$	Accepted

Source: SPSS Statistical Output, 2025 | Author Constructed

Even though awareness correlates positively with attitudes, it is not a significant predictor in the regression model ($\beta = 0.007$, $p = 0.870$). Thus, hypothesis 01 was rejected. Both correlation and regression results confirm that perceived relevance ($\beta = 0.329$, $p < 0.001$) strongly predicts positive attitudes toward integration, supporting hypothesis 02. The acceptance of hypothesis 03 is based on the confirmation from both analyses that career aspirations ($\beta = 0.405$, $p < 0.001$) indeed exert a significant influence on student attitudes, confirming the importance of this factor in forensic

accounting education. Finally, hypothesis 04 was accepted as it proved that the exposure $\beta = 0.069$, $p = 0.019$). Coursework contributes positively to student attitudes, even if the effect size is modest compared to relevance and career aspirations. The analysis reveals that student support for integrating forensic accounting is not driven by simple awareness, but by its relevance to their career goals.

The analysis reveals that Sri Lankan accounting students generally hold favorable attitudes toward incorporating forensic accounting into their studies. However, these attitudes are strongly mediated by the extent to which students perceive the subject as relevant to their career goals and future professional success. The present level of curricular integration remains insufficient, with the majority of universities providing forensic accounting only as a secondary element within comprehensive modules. This deficiency of exposure and their studying and being more focused does seem like something that may restrain active interest, even among a student population that recognizes something about the importance of the forensics of something like accounting.

The regression analysis suggests that relevance and career aspirations are the strongest predictors of pursuing a career in forensic accounting. This points to the importance of educational systems to anchor forensic accounting to delineated and organized professional avenues. Indeed, the mere presence of forensic accounting is a starting point, but it alone does not sustain the enthusiasm needed for the proposed changes to the curriculum.

Conclusion

This study investigated the attitudes of Sri Lankan accounting students towards integrating forensic accounting into their curriculum, concluding that Sri Lankan accounting students have a positive attitude ($M = 3.90$) towards incorporating forensic accounting into their education, primarily due to its perceived relevance to their careers, not by mere awareness. This is a crucial principle inferred from the regression analysis, which identified these two factors as the most significant predictors ($\beta = 0.329$ and $\beta = 0.405$, respectively), whereas awareness was not a significant predictor. These findings support the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posit that attitudes and behavioral intentions are shaped by perceived value and expected outcomes.

Compared with previous studies, the current research confirms patterns observed in Egypt (Ebaid I. E.-S., 2022) and India (Dave & Patel, 2023), where perceived career relevance strongly influences acceptance of Forensic Accounting, while expanding on Sri Lankan-specific findings from Dharmasena & Seneviratne (2023) and Munasinghe (2022) by quantifying the extent of curricular insufficiency and linking it directly to student attitudes. The main issue is the current curriculum's lack of comprehensive coverage (Munasinghe A. , 2022). Therefore, it is recommended that universities introduce forensic accounting as a dedicated subject, supported by practical methods like case studies and workshops with industry experts (Dharmasena & Seneviratne, 2023). This will better equip graduates to promote transparency and accountability in Sri Lanka's financial system. Forming an alliance with audit companies, investigative organizations, and regulatory authorities gives students a glimpse of the working world while aiding them in cultivating their career relationships. Based on the conclusions, several other recommendations are proposed through the study. Curriculum development should emphasize practical, hands-on learning through case studies and industry collaborations to strengthen the link between the subject and real-world career paths. In addition, advisors and course managers should take the lead in informing students about the gaps in the employment market with regard to forensic accounting through career pathway workshops and mentoring. Institutions should defend such focused professional development initiatives, and also invite the faculty to obtain the necessary continuing education units along with cooperative teaching with the right professionals. To ensure quality delivery of the module, through professional development initiatives, educate and train faculty members in forensic accounting. Finally,

professional accounting bodies in Sri Lanka, particularly the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (ICASL), should consider including forensic accounting as part of the primary focus of their accreditation criteria. The study has important practical implications, providing educators with empirical evidence that a market for forensic accounting education exists among students. The findings suggest that to be successful, integration must be framed around career enhancement and practical skill development. Theoretically, the findings strongly support the Theory of Planned Behavior and Human Capital Theory, demonstrating that attitudes and behavioral intentions are shaped by perceived outcomes and the value of educational investment. The integration of forensic accounting in Sri Lankan undergraduate university programmes is found to be relevant and necessary. Curriculum analysis indicates that students understand and appreciate the intrinsic value of this discipline and, therefore, are willing to engage in ethical, proactive, skillful resolutions of contemporary economic problems, which include financial fraud detection, investigation, and prevention. This positive attitude in favor of integration does, however, warrant significant structural changes. The successful integration of forensic accounting into the curricula relies not only on the willingness to be informed but also on the universities' marketing of the practice and professional relevance.

Future studies could address these limitations and expand on the current findings in several ways:

- A longitudinal study could track changes in student attitudes and career choices as they progress through their degrees and enter the profession.
- Qualitative research through interviews or focus groups would provide a deeper understanding of the motivations, fears, and expectations students associate with forensic accounting.
- Expanding the scope to include educators, industry employers, and curriculum designers would offer a more holistic view of the challenges and opportunities in integrating forensic accounting.
- Comparative studies across different countries or educational systems could identify best practices and contextual factors influencing successful curriculum integration.

By addressing these areas, future research can continue to inform evidence-based improvements in accounting education, ensuring it remains responsive to both student aspirations and societal needs

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Effectiveness of Classroom Activities in Promoting Healthy Habits among Primary Students

I.H. Hewavitharana

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of classroom activities in promoting healthy habits among primary school students at York International School. Early childhood is a critical period in which children begin to develop daily routines and make decisions related to hygiene, nutrition, and physical well-being. The study focuses on the role of the classroom environment in guiding young learners toward healthier lifestyles through structured and engaging learning approaches. The main objective of the research is to determine whether activity-based learning contributes to positive behavioural changes among students rather than merely improving their theoretical understanding of healthy living. It also explores whether participation in classroom activities enhances students' awareness, attitudes, and confidence in discussing and practising healthy behaviours within the school environment. The findings indicate that activity-based classroom strategies positively influence students' attitudes and behaviours related to health and well-being. Students who engage in interactive learning activities demonstrate greater awareness and improved practice of healthy habits. The study highlights the value of participatory teaching methods in supporting the development of positive routines among young learners. This research suggests that integrating structured and interactive classroom activities can effectively promote healthy behaviours among primary school students. The findings encourage educators to adopt more engaging and sustainable approaches when teaching health-related topics in order to support the long-term well-being of children.

Keywords: *Healthy Habits, Classroom Activities, Primary Education, Quantitative, Survey*

Introduction

Healthy habits play a vital role in the overall development of children, supporting their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Early childhood is a critical period during which children begin to form behavioral patterns through observation, imitation, and repeated practice. Schools therefore serve not only as centres for academic learning but also as environments that influence students' social and personal development. Promoting habits related to hygiene, nutrition, physical activity, and emotional wellness has become an essential component of modern health education (UNICEF, 2021).

However, traditional teaching approaches often rely on lecture-based and theoretical methods that may not effectively influence students' real-life behaviors. Activity-based learning provides a more engaging approach by encouraging students to actively participate in the learning process. Through interactive classroom experiences, students are able to better understand the practical importance of healthy habits and develop behaviors that support their well-being (Hussain, 2020). Research also suggests that students who participate in hands-on and interactive learning activities are more likely to demonstrate positive health behaviors both in school and at home (Sharma & Kaur, 2019).

Despite the inclusion of health education in primary school curricula, many students still struggle to consistently apply healthy practices in their daily routines. This gap between knowledge and behavior highlights the limitations of traditional teacher-centred approaches that focus mainly on theory rather than behavioral change (Singh, 2018). Although several studies emphasize health awareness programs, limited research examines the effectiveness of classroom-based activities in promoting healthy habits among young learners.

Therefore, this study focuses on Grade 3 students at York International School and examines how activity-based learning within regular classroom settings contributes to promoting healthy habits such as hygiene, nutrition, and physical activity. The study aligns with the concept of health-

promoting schools, which emphasizes integrating well-being into everyday learning experiences (WHO, 2020). By using both qualitative and quantitative methods, including classroom observations, student worksheets, and teacher feedback, the research aims to provide insights into how interactive classroom strategies can support the development of healthy behaviours among primary school students.

Research Objectives

- To identify the types of classroom activities used to promote healthy habits among primary students.
- To examine how classroom activities influence students' knowledge and behaviour.
- To determine the extent to which classroom activities encourage consistent healthy habits.
- To reflect on teacher practices and suggest ways to improve classroom strategies that support health promotion.

Literature Review

The literature review examines previous studies and theoretical perspectives related to promoting healthy habits among primary school students through classroom activities. It provides the conceptual foundation for the study by discussing the concept of healthy habits, the role of school-based health education, activity-based learning, and the contribution of classroom activities to health promotion. The review also highlights key theoretical perspectives that explain how children develop behaviors and habits.

Healthy habits refer to regular behaviors that support children's physical, emotional, and mental well-being, including hygiene, balanced nutrition, and physical activity (Jakobovich et al., 2023). Early childhood is a crucial stage for developing such behaviors because children learn through observation and repetition (UNICEF, 2021). Research indicates that promoting health within schools improves students' well-being and supports academic performance. However, studies also show that awareness alone does not always result in behavioral change, highlighting the need for more practical teaching approaches (WHO, 2020; Karimi et al., 2019).

Schools provide an effective setting for health promotion as they allow students to learn and practice healthy behaviors in a structured environment. While traditional lecture-based methods may improve knowledge, participatory approaches such as demonstrations, games, and collaborative activities are more effective in encouraging behavioral change (Chaudhary et al., 2020; Perera & Fernando, 2020). Activity-based learning further supports this process by engaging students in hands-on experiences that enhance motivation and understanding (Hussain, 2020; Sharma & Kaur, 2019).

This study is supported by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952). Social Learning Theory explains that children learn behaviors by observing and imitating teachers and peers. Constructivist theory emphasizes that knowledge is developed through active engagement and experience. These perspectives support the use of classroom activities as effective strategies for developing healthy habits.

Despite the importance of health education and activity-based learning, limited research combines these areas, particularly within the Sri Lankan context. Many studies address health education or teaching methods separately, with fewer focusing on how classroom activities influence behavioral change among primary students. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining the effectiveness of classroom activities in promoting healthy habits among Grade 3 students at York International School.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the effectiveness of classroom activities in promoting healthy habits among primary students. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the research focuses on measuring students' behaviors and perceptions using numerical data collected through a structured questionnaire. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), quantitative research is suitable for identifying patterns, trends, and behaviors within a group using structured instruments and statistical analysis.

The study is conducted at York International School, which follows an activity-oriented curriculum in primary education. The school environment supports experiential learning and integrates interactive activities related to hygiene, nutrition, and physical well-being. This setting provides an appropriate context for examining how classroom activities influence students' daily health habits.

The target population consists of primary students from Grades 3 to 5. However, due to time and resource constraints, the study focuses on one Grade 3 class consisting of approximately 15–20 students. A convenience sampling technique is used because the participants are easily accessible within the researcher's internship setting (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Although this method limits generalization, it allows efficient data collection within the school environment.

Data are collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 simple, closed-ended questions designed for Grade 3 students. The questionnaire gathers information on four key areas: personal hygiene habits, eating habits, physical activity, and students' perceptions of classroom activities related to healthy living. Questions use clear response options such as "Yes/No" and "Always/Sometimes/Never" to ensure that students can respond easily. The questionnaire is administered during regular class time after explaining the purpose of the study in child-friendly language. The collected data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly frequencies and percentages. Responses are coded and organized into tables to identify patterns in students' habits and perceptions. The results are presented through tables and simple graphs, allowing clear interpretation of how classroom activities influence students' health-related behaviors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire is developed based on existing literature and reviewed by the supervising lecturer for clarity and suitability. Ethical standards are also carefully maintained throughout the research process. Permission is obtained from the school administration and class teacher, and students' participation is voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity are ensured in accordance with educational research guidelines (BERA, 2018).

Results

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative data collected from Grade 3 students through a structured questionnaire. The purpose of the study is to examine the effectiveness of classroom activities in promoting healthy habits among primary students. The questionnaire consisted of 20 closed-ended questions covering four areas: personal hygiene, eating habits, physical activity, and students' perceptions of classroom activities. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages.

The first section of the questionnaire examined students' hygiene practices, including hand washing, tooth brushing, bathing, and cleanliness. The results indicate that most students practice basic hygiene routines regularly. Hand washing before meals and daily bathing were the most consistently practiced habits, while brushing teeth twice a day showed slightly lower consistency. Overall, the findings suggest that a majority of students demonstrate positive hygiene behavior, although some habits still require reinforcement.

Table 4.1: Personal Hygiene Habits of Students

Habit	Always/Yes	Sometimes	Never/No
Washing hands before eating	70%	25%	5%
Brushing teeth twice a day	65%	35%	–
Bathing daily	80%	20%	–
Keeping nails clean	75%	25%	–
Wearing clean clothes to school	68%	22%	10%

The results show that hand washing is the most commonly practiced habit among students, with 70% reporting that they always wash their hands before eating. This suggests that health-related routines taught in school are being effectively reinforced. However, brushing teeth twice daily was less consistent, with only 65% doing so regularly. This indicates an area where more reinforcement may be needed. The majority of students (80%) reported bathing daily, showing a generally strong understanding of personal cleanliness.

The second section analyzed students' dietary habits, including fruit and vegetable consumption, water intake, and junk food consumption. The findings show that most students drink adequate amounts of water daily and are able to identify healthy foods. However, the regular consumption of fruits and vegetables is comparatively lower. Additionally, a considerable number of students reported consuming junk food occasionally. These results indicate that although awareness of healthy eating exists, consistent healthy dietary behavior still requires improvement.

Table 4.2: Eating Habits of Students

Habit	Always/Yes	Sometimes	Never/No
Eating fruits daily	60%	40%	–
Drinking enough water daily	85%	15%	–
Eating vegetables with meals	55%	30%	15%
Eating junk food often	45%	55%	–
Selecting healthy food	70%	30%	–

The findings indicate that while 85% of students drink enough water, fruit and vegetable consumption is relatively lower. Only 60% eat fruits daily, and 55% eat vegetables regularly. Additionally, 45% of students reported that they eat sweets, chips, or soft drinks frequently, suggesting that unhealthy food choices remain common. The fact that 70% of students can correctly identify healthy food indicates that classroom lessons have successfully increased awareness, even if behavior lags knowledge.

The third section of the questionnaire explored students' levels of physical activity and exercise. The results reveal that a majority of students engage in daily play or exercise. Activities such as running and sports were identified as the most popular forms of physical activity. Many students also reported spending time playing outdoors, which indicates that they maintain a generally active lifestyle.

Table 4.3: Physical Activity Patterns of Students

Activity	Always/Yes	Sometimes	Never/No
Daily play or exercise	72%	28%	–
Preferred activity – Running	40%	–	–
Preferred activity – Dancing	20%	–	–
Preferred activity – Sports	30%	–	–
Playing outside more than 30 minutes	50%	30%	20%

The results reveal that 72% of students engage in daily play or exercise, showing a positive level of physical activity. Running and sports were the most popular forms of exercise. Half of the students reported that they play outside for more than 30 minutes daily, indicating that many children are meeting recommended activity levels. This supports the idea that physical activities included in classroom lessons may be motivating students to stay active. The final section assessed students' experiences with classroom activities related to health education. The results show that students respond positively to interactive learning approaches such as storytelling, role play, games, and creative tasks. Many students also report enjoying these lessons and practicing healthy habits at home after participating in such activities.

Table 4.4: Students' Perceptions of Classroom Activities

Item	Always/Yes	Sometimes	Never/No
Storytelling, games or role play helped me learn	78%	15%	7%
I enjoyed learning about healthy habits	85%	10%	5%
Teacher demonstrated healthy habits	90%	10%	–
I practice healthy habits at home after lessons	68%	22%	10%
I share healthy information with others	60%	40%	–

The results show overwhelmingly positive perceptions of classroom activities. 78% of students believed that activities helped them learn, while 85% enjoyed the lessons. The high percentage of students reporting that the teacher demonstrated habits (90%) highlights the importance of modelling in health education. Importantly, 68% of students reported practicing healthy habits at home, indicating that classroom activities had meaningful behavioral influence beyond school.

Overall, the findings indicate that classroom activities contribute positively to students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to healthy living. Most students demonstrate good hygiene practices, moderate healthy eating patterns, and satisfactory levels of physical activity. Furthermore, students express strong engagement with activity-based lessons. In relation to the research objectives, the results show that students generally practice basic hygiene and physical activity, although improvements are needed in dietary habits. The findings also confirm that classroom activities significantly influence students' understanding and practice of healthy behaviors. Interactive strategies such as storytelling, games, and creative activities appear to be the most effective methods for promoting health education among primary students.

Discussions

This study examines the effectiveness of classroom activities in promoting healthy habits among Grade 3 students. The findings indicate that students generally demonstrate good personal hygiene, including hand washing, bathing, and nail care, although brushing teeth twice daily is less consistent.

This suggests that classroom activities and teacher demonstrations effectively reinforce hygiene behaviors, aligning with previous research that highlights the role of repeated reinforcement and home-school collaboration (Watson et al., 2017; Day et al., 2019). Regarding eating habits, most students drink adequate water and can identify healthy foods, but fruit and vegetable intake is relatively low, and many consume junk food occasionally. These findings highlight the gap between knowledge and behavior, emphasizing the need for consistent reinforcement at home, as suggested by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). Physical activity levels are generally high, with students engaging in daily exercise and outdoor play. Preferred activities include running and sports, indicating that movement-based classroom activities support children's natural inclination for physical activity. This aligns with international research demonstrating that active lessons enhance motivation and daily exercise among young learners (Vega-Ramírez et al., 2024).

Students' perceptions of classroom activities are highly positive. Most report that storytelling, role play, games, and poster-making help them learn and enjoy lessons, and many practice healthy habits at home. This supports Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes active participation in meaningful experiences to foster understanding and behavior change (Piaget, 1952). The study confirms the theoretical and practical value of activity-based learning in health education, highlighting that engaging, student-centred activities encourage long-term positive habits. It also underlines the importance of teacher modelling, consistent reinforcement, and integration of health education across classroom activities.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that classroom activities effectively promote healthy habits among primary students. Activity-based learning positively influences hygiene practices, dietary awareness, physical activity, and engagement with health education. Students not only enjoy the interactive lessons but also apply healthy behaviors at home, indicating meaningful behavioral impact. The findings emphasize the value of student-centred, participatory teaching strategies, such as storytelling, games, poster-making, and role play, in reinforcing knowledge and encouraging practical application. Activity-based health education fosters both understanding and habit formation, supporting the development of lifelong healthy behaviors. Overall, this research provides evidence for the effectiveness of interactive classroom strategies in primary education, offering guidance for teachers, schools, and policymakers to integrate health promotion effectively into curricula. It lays a foundation for future research and practical interventions aimed at sustaining healthy habits among young learners.

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Accessibility of English-Learning Facilities for Grade 5 Scholarship Students in Western Province Government Schools

K.G.C.D. Perera

ABSTRACT

Proficiency in English language is a central factor that dictates academic performance of students in Sri Lanka particularly among those who participate in Grade 5 Scholarship Examination which is very competitive. Despite the common understanding of the importance of English, many students in government schools still face the same challenge due to lack of access to effective English-learning materials. It is seen that these challenges are especially acute in the case of slower learners and those who have little exposure to the English language in their home settings. This paper, therefore, looks into the adequacy, accessibility, and availability of English-learning materials to Grade 5 pupils in a sample of government schools located in the Western Province, and more precisely, how to create inclusivity among learners who have various educational needs.

In order to gain a deeper insight into the investigated phenomenon, a mixed-methods research design was chosen. The quantitative data were collected on the basis of structured questionnaires, which were distributed to about fifty Grade-5 pupils, their parents and English teachers, who were selected among ten government schools which were purposely selected. The instruments were used to investigate the exposure of the students to activities in English learning, the presence of classroom and library resources, the accessibility of English textbooks as prescribed, and the level of support offered in school. To supplement these quantitative data, qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews on ten English teachers. The interviews involved the perception of teachers about the sufficiency of the available English-learning facilities, the difficulties of teaching mixed-ability classrooms, and how they suggest improvement of the primary-level English education. The quantitative data were analyzed through the elements of descriptive statistics, and the qualitative data were examined through the display of thematic analysis in order to identify recurring patterns and issues of relevance.

The results show that there are significant differences in terms of the availability and quality of English-learning resources in schools. Most schools do not have enough additional reading materials, illustrations, and online learning resources, thus limiting the ability of students to get quality language exposure. Moreover, student support mechanisms on students with different learning needs are considered to be poor. Teachers also suggest that the big number of students in classes, the teaching process based on exams and lack of time are additional barriers to the adoption of the learner-based and inclusive pedagogy. In sum, the research findings indicate that the key issues to improving English language acquisition in the primary level include equal access to English-learning materials, teacher training, and inclusive teaching. The results present evidence-based suggestions that can be used to encourage inclusivity, resource distribution, and instructional effectiveness in primary ESL classrooms in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *English-learning Facilities, Diverse Learning Needs, Mixed-methods Research, Questionnaires and Interviews, Primary ESL Education.*

Introduction

In Sri Lanka, English is an indispensable lingua franca, and it has been said to be a determinant of social mobility as well as academic success. In primary education, the formal introduction of the English language starts at Grade 3 and at the upper primary level it is anticipated that students will have reached some rudimentary level of communicative competency. However, poor infrastructure, large classrooms, and lack of education resources are widespread issues in government schools, especially those with low-income people and semi-urban population groups.

A high-stakes national test that has a big impact on student academic paths is the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination. Exam-oriented activities and rote learning are often prioritized in preparation for this test, which limits possibilities for meaningful language usage. These limitations disproportionately impact students with a variety of learning requirements.

In this situation, students with a variety of learning needs, such as slow learners, those from low-income households, and those who have little exposure to English at home, are more specifically at risk. Despite the fact that inclusive education and communicative language instruction are emphasized in national education policies, these strategies are still not consistently applied in all schools. As a result, even in comparatively resource-rich areas like the Western Province, differences in being able to obtain English-learning facilities continue to exacerbate educational inequality. Scarce empirical studies have been conducted on the availability of English-learning materials to Grade 5 scholarship learners in government schools despite the previous studies that have explored ESL pedagogic strategies and assessment anxiety in Sri Lanka.

Considering an emphasis on inclusion and support for varied learners, this study examines the accessibility and sufficiency of English-learning resources provided to Grade 5 Scholarship students in Western Province government schools and fills that gap by examining the support to the learners, accessibility to the facilities and the views of the stakeholders in the Western Province.

Research Problem, Questions and Objectives

Research Problem

Teaching methods in primary schools are frequently influenced by the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, which puts a lot of pressure on parents, teachers, and pupils. Grammar drills, memorization, and written practice papers are prioritized above conversational skills in Grade 5 English education in many government schools. Even though these methods could help students do better on short-term exams, they frequently fall short in developing functional language abilities, particularly for those who need more guidance.

The restricted and unequal access to English-learning resources, such as additional reading materials, digital and visual teaching tools, learner-friendly classroom settings, and focused support programs, is a significant issue. Large class sizes and the lack of specialized teaching materials can make it difficult for students with unique learning needs to benefit from standard education. Socioeconomic disparities are thus exacerbated as many families depend on private tuition to make up for school-based constraints.

Although students who have been exposed to English at the primary school level were exposed to English earlier, many Grade 5 students in Sri Lankan government schools have inequitable access to quality English-language learning tools, particularly those with varied learning needs. Pedagogical strategies that are based on examination, inadequate supplementary resources and limited inclusive support systems hinder substantive acquisition of the English language proficiency.

There is a dearth of empirical investigations specifically examining the accessibility of English-learning facilities for Grade 5 Scholarship students in government schools, particularly from an inclusive education perspective, despite the fact that prior studies have examined ESL teaching practices and examination pressure in Sri Lanka. By methodically examining facility availability, accessibility, and stakeholder views in the Western Province, this study fills this gap.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

- i. How accessible are English-learning resources currently for Grade 5 Scholarship students in Western Province government schools?
- ii. What challenges must students with a variety of learning needs overcome in order to use these resources?
- iii. How do teachers see the effectiveness of English-learning resources in fostering the development of communicative English?
- iv. What steps may be suggested to enhance inclusion and accessibility in elementary English education?
- v. How do school-based English-learning facilities influence students' motivation and participation in English learning at the Grade 5 level?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To examine the accessibility and availability of English-learning resources for Grade 5 Scholarship students in Western Province government schools.
- ii. To analyze the difficulties that students with different learning requirements have while making use of these resources
- iii. To find out how instructors feel about the efficacy and sufficiency of the current English-learning materials.
- iv. To provide suggestions for enhancing fair access to English-learning resources and promoting inclusive English teaching methods.
- v. To examine the influence of available English-learning facilities on Grade 5 Scholarship students' motivation and engagement in English learning.

Literature Review

The influence of the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, accessibility of educational facilities, various learning requirements, and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction in Sri Lankan primary schools are all examined in this review. It finds gaps that support the current investigation, assesses prior discoveries, and underlines important theoretical stances.

ESL Education in Primary Schools in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, English serves as a crucial connecting language that has a big impact on social mobility and academic achievement. Early exposure to English is essential for developing foundational language skills (Little, Aturupane, & Shojo, 2013).. Nonetheless, structural issues including packed classrooms, little instructional time, and a lack of teaching supplies still plague government primary schools.

Despite years of formal education, many pupils continue to fall short of projected competency levels, according to Samaranayake (2016). There is a developmental gap seen when learners exhibit linguistic skills typical of lower age groups. Limited possibilities for meaningful language usage and teacher-centered, grammar-focused teaching are blamed for this delay. The research emphasizes instructional concerns, but it pays little attention to how institutional infrastructure and learning settings affect language development.

A large portion of the research makes the assumption that language competency will increase just by improving teaching strategies. This viewpoint ignores the value of easily accessible educational resources and encouraging surroundings, especially for young students getting ready for competitive exams.

Resource Limitations and ESL Teaching Methods

Learner-centered, communicative methods backed by sufficient resources and small class sizes are necessary for effective ESL education. According to Halik (2021), two of the biggest obstacles to adopting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in government schools are packed classrooms and restricted access to instructional resources. In a similar vein, Little et al. (2013) stress that communicative ability is adversely affected by inadequate exposure to English in educational contexts.

These studies mostly concentrate on the views of teachers and policy-level concerns, although highlighting systemic challenges. Particularly at the Grade 5 level, little emphasis is placed on how learning outcomes are impacted by school inequities or students' access to resources.

Diverse Learning Needs in Primary ESL Classrooms

Students from a variety of socioeconomic origins, linguistic backgrounds, and cognitive capacities are taught at Sri Lankan primary schools. According to Dharmawardena (2020), overcrowded classrooms with little individual attention disadvantage slow learners and children who need more help. Low-income students are highly dependent on school-based resources since they frequently have little exposure to English outside of the classroom (Little et al., 2013). Although previous research recognizes these difficulties, it seldom ever looks at how well-prepared schools are to serve a diverse student body. There is currently little research on Grade 5 Scholarship students with different learning needs.

English-Learning Facilities and Accessibility

English-learning facilities comprise both non-physical resources, such as qualified teachers, instructional materials, and encouraging learning settings, as well as physical resources, like classrooms, libraries, ICT equipment, and language laboratories. Studies show that these resources are not distributed equally throughout government schools. While many semi-urban and rural schools lack basic teaching aids and supplemental reading materials, metropolitan schools typically have greater access to libraries and digital resources.

Additionally, overcrowding hinders individualized education and the efficient use of resources. Slow learners and students with little exposure to English at home are most impacted. However, there is a dearth of systematic empirical research on facility accessibility at the school level, and many studies depend on descriptive or policy-level data.

Grade 5 Scholarship Examination and Educational Equity

Approximately 360,000 pupils take the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination each year, which is a very difficult national test. According to research, the test puts a lot of pressure on students to perform well academically, which frequently results in exam-focused teaching methods (IPS, 2019). Opportunities for conversational language acquisition and comprehensive skill development may be diminished by this emphasis on exam preparation.

Reliance on private instruction to enhance English proficiency draws attention to deficiencies in classroom instruction from the standpoint of parents. Low-income students have less access to this kind of assistance, which exacerbates educational disparities. Few policy studies look at how school-based English-learning facilities either exacerbate or lessen these gaps.

Theoretical Framework and Research Gap

The concepts of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and inclusive education serve as the foundation for this investigation. While CLT encourages meaningful engagement and the use of language in everyday situations, inclusive education places an emphasis on providing all students with equal access to learning materials. Because of resource constraints, there is still a disconnect between theoretical objectives and classroom reality even when policies support these frameworks. There is no empirical data about the availability of English-learning resources for Grade 5 Scholarship students with a range of learning needs in Western Province government schools, despite the fact that there is a wealth of research on ESL instruction and test pressure in Sri Lanka. Prior research has often been general or concentrated on secondary schooling. This study addresses that gap by systematically examining facility accessibility from both student and teacher perspectives.

Methodology

Study Design

The study used a mixed-methods research methodology that included qualitative and quantitative techniques. To get quantifiable trends and comprehensive insights on the accessibility of English-learning facilities, a mixed-methods approach was used. While qualitative data recorded instructors' experiences and opinions on inclusive English teaching, quantitative data gave an overview of the availability and usage of resources.

Participants

Ten government schools in Sri Lanka's Western Province were specifically chosen to participate in the study. About 50 fifth-grade children, thirty parents, ten primary grade teachers, and ten English teachers made up the sample. The selection of participants was based on their active participation in studying English in Grade 5 and preparing for the Scholarship Exam. Students in grade 5 came from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and learning styles. Teachers included those in charge of fundamental English education. Parents took part to share their perspectives on school facilities and home-based assistance.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires were used to gather data. To collect quantitative data on access to textbooks, supplemental materials, classroom facilities, visual and digital aids, and learner support mechanisms, separate questionnaires were created for instructors, parents, and students. Simplified closed-ended questions appropriate for the students' age and linguistic skills made up the student surveys. Perceptions of school-based English education, family assistance, and reliance on private tuition were the main topics of parent surveys. Instructional problems, support for different learners, and facility availability were all assessed in teacher questionnaires. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with English teachers and primary educators were used to gather qualitative information about institutional limitations, test pressure, and inclusive practices.

	Mode of Interview	Total count
Schools	-	10
Primary Teachers	Discussion	10
English Teachers	Google form	10
Parents	Google form	30
Students	Printed Papers	50

Table 1

Analysis

To obtain a thorough grasp of the English-learning materials accessible to Grade 5 pupils in Western Province government schools, data gathered from surveys and interviews was examined using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze quantitative data from 50 children, their parents, and instructors in order to find patterns in the availability of English textbooks, classroom assistance,

library resources, and exposure to English-learning activities. The findings showed that a sizable percentage of students had restricted access to additional English resources both at home and at school, with slow learners having the most difficulties as a result of inadequate individualized help.

Table 2: Access to English-Learning Resources (n=50)

Resource Type	Adequate Access	Limited Access	No Access
English textbooks	35 (70%)	12 (24%)	3 (6%)
Library resources	15 (30%)	20 (40%)	15 (30%)
Classroom learning support	18 (36%)	22 (44%)	10 (20%)
Exposure to English activities	20 (40%)	18 (36%)	12 (24%)

In order to investigate perceptions of resource sufficiency and instructional problems, qualitative data from 10 English teacher semi-structured interviews were subjected to theme analysis. A number of recurring issues surfaced, including the need for more organized remedial programs for pupils who have little exposure to English at home, a lack of teaching materials, and inadequate library resources. Instructors stressed that these restrictions had a detrimental impact on students' understanding, writing, and reading abilities.

Overall, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data showed a glaring discrepancy between students' varied learning requirements and the resources available for learning English. To enhance English proficiency among Grade 5 students in government schools, the research emphasizes the need to strengthen both targeted assistance tactics and material resources.

Results

In accordance with the instructions given, the results of the study are presented in this part in a methodical and logical sequence. A review of participant data, important conclusions on the availability of English-learning materials, graphical depictions in tables and figures, and statistical analysis of the connections between resource availability and student achievement are all included in the results.

Demographics of Participants

Fifty Grade 5 kids from ten government schools in Sri Lanka's Western Province participated in the survey, which also included replies from ten English language teachers and parents. In order to illustrate variations in resource availability, participants were chosen to represent schools in both urban and rural settings.

Demographic Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Home English exposure	High	10	20%
	Moderate	20	40%
	Low	20	40%
Performance in English	Above average	12	24%
	Average	25	50%
	Below average	13	26%
School type	A grade	25	50%
	B and C grades	25	50%

Table 3

Most students had limited exposure to English at home, with 40% reporting low exposure and 40% moderate exposure. Significant home exposure was indicated by just 20% of students, which frequently correlates with better English proficiency. According to performance statistics, 26% of the students performed below average, 24% above average, and half of the pupils attained average levels. This demographic data provide context for comprehending the difficulties students have while trying to access resources for learning English.

Key findings

Access to English-Learning Resources:

Students were questioned on their access to important resources, such as textbooks, library materials, learning assistance in the classroom, and exposure to English-language activities. These factors were chosen because they have a direct impact on the growth and competency of the English language.

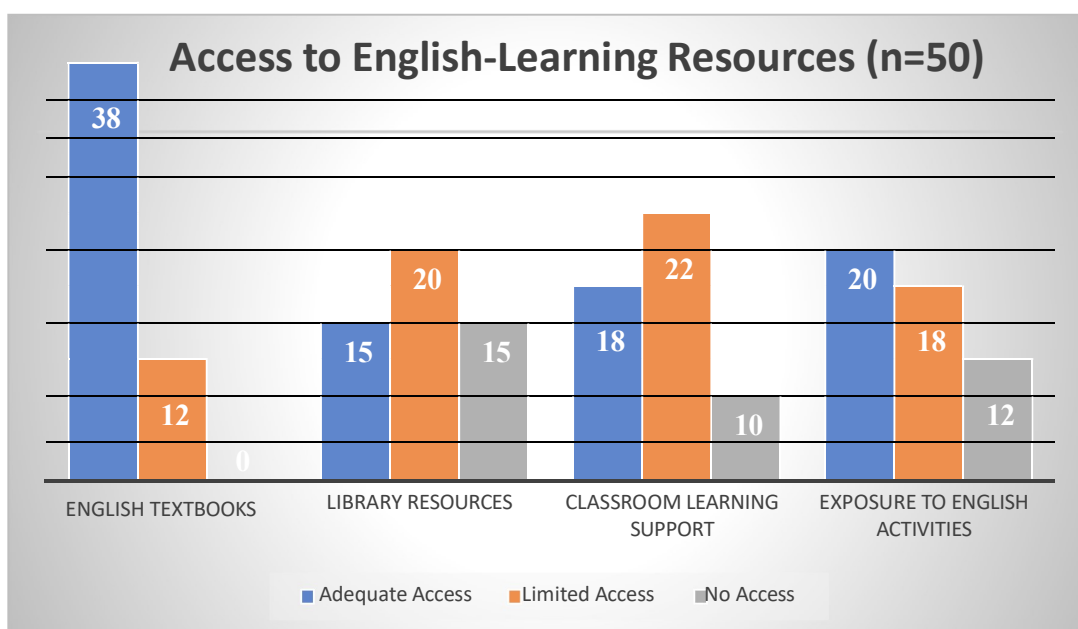


Figure 1

Textbook access was relatively high, with 38 students reporting adequate access. Twelve participants, however, reported having restricted access, and none reported having none at all. Inadequate textbook copies in homes or classrooms were frequently the cause of restricted access. According to teacher interviews, pupils who had sufficient access to textbooks were more likely to struggle with homework and fall behind in class.

Access to the library was not as reliable. Just 15 pupils had sufficient access to library materials, 20 had restricted access, and 15 had none at all. Instructors clarified that beginner-friendly English books suitable for pupils in Grade 5 were frequently absent from libraries. Students' vocabulary growth and reading comprehension were impacted by the absence of interesting reading material, especially for slow learners and those with little exposure to English at home.

Support in the classroom differed greatly. Adequate assistance was indicated by 18 students, limited support by 22 students, and no support by 10. Large class numbers made it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention, making it challenging to meet the requirements of

slow learners, according to observations. Students were more likely to receive extra advice and remedial help at schools with higher teacher-to-student ratios.

Only twenty students indicated that their exposure to organized English activities, such as writing practice, storytelling sessions, and reading exercises, was sufficient. Twelve indicated little participation, while eighteen reported little engagement. Teachers said that a lack of organized extracurricular activities in many schools led to unequal skill development among students.

Significant differences were found when schools in grades A, B, and C were compared. While B and C grade schools reported less resources, A grade schools often had more access to textbooks and libraries. Despite these variations, slow learners had difficulty with reading and writing in all A, B, and C grade schools, demonstrating that having access to resources does not ensure academic achievement. Home exposure and classroom assistance were important determinants of achievement.

Resource Access by School Type:

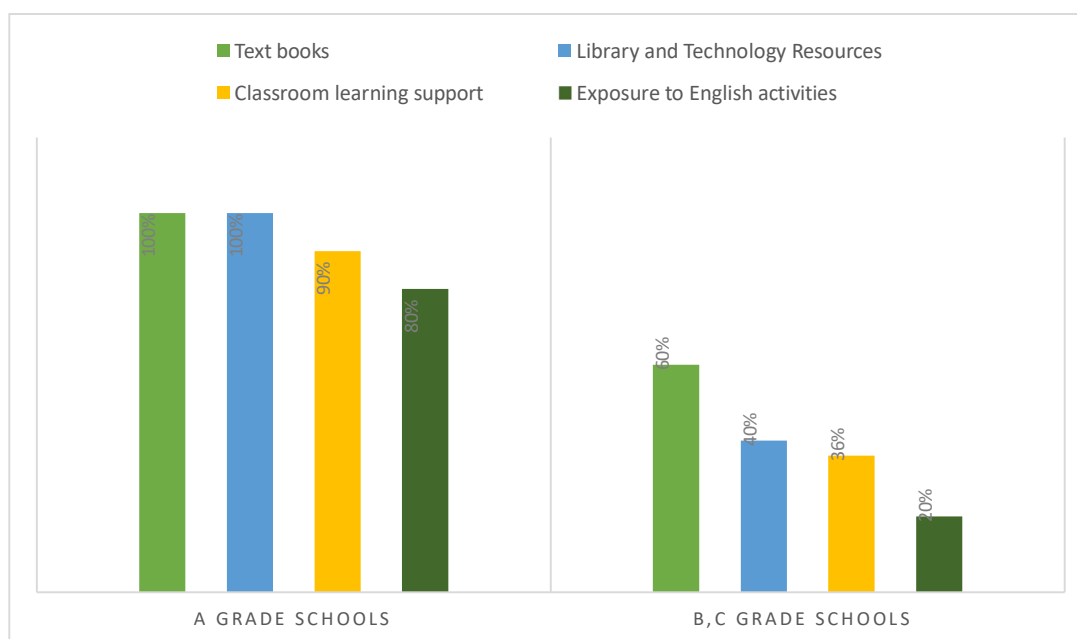


Figure 2

This comparison highlights the inequality of resource distribution and its potential impact on English learning outcomes. Rather than students, teachers recognize the importance of English-learning facilities for language development but express dissatisfaction with resource adequacy, citing outdated textbooks, limited audiovisual materials, small classroom sizes, and insufficient support for inclusive practices. Additionally, they stress the need for professional development in inclusive English instruction and effective resource utilization, indicating that training is essential to enhance English learning outcomes.

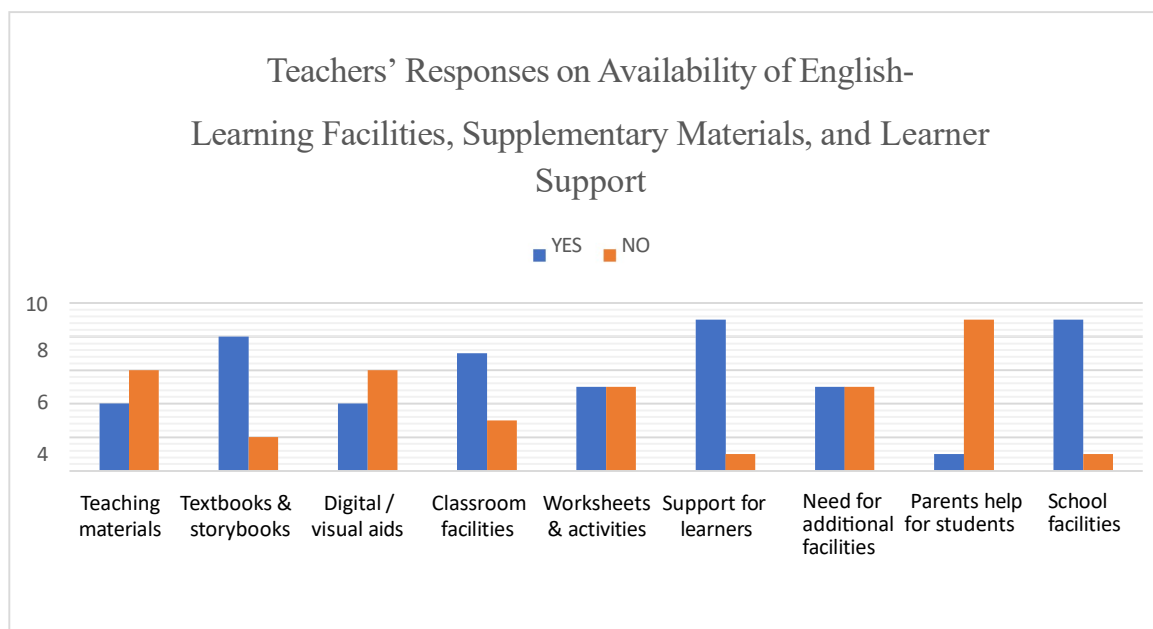


Figure 3

Teachers' responses on availability of English-learning facilities, supplementary materials, and learner support (n = 10)

The responses of English teachers regarding available resources for English-learning in government schools for Grade 5 Scholarship students reveal critical disparities. While a large percentage of teachers noted a lack of essential teaching materials, they acknowledged sufficient availability of English textbooks and storybooks. However, there was considerable dissatisfaction with the scarcity of digital and visual aids, alongside inadequate classroom facilities that hinder effective teaching. Many teachers felt that resources such as worksheets and language activities were unevenly distributed among schools. Additionally, the majority of educators identified a need for more support for students, especially those with learning challenges, and highlighted a lack of parental encouragement for English learning at home. Overall, teachers strongly advocated for increased facilities and better training for instructors to enhance English instruction quality. Although basic textbooks are present, the absence of professional development opportunities, support systems, and additional resources constrains students' learning experiences.

Both quantitative and qualitative findings reveal that the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination significantly influences English teaching practices. Teachers have reported an overwhelming focus on examination-related activities, such as grammar drills, vocabulary memorization, and practice papers, often at the expense of more interactive methods like communicative activities, group work, and oral practice. These shifts are attributed to time constraints and pressures related to syllabus completion. Students and parents have voiced concerns that this exam-centric approach limits opportunities for meaningful language use, particularly affecting learners who excel in interactive and supportive settings. Additionally, the pressure to succeed in examinations has increased reliance on private tuition, further widening the disparities among students from different socio-economic backgrounds.

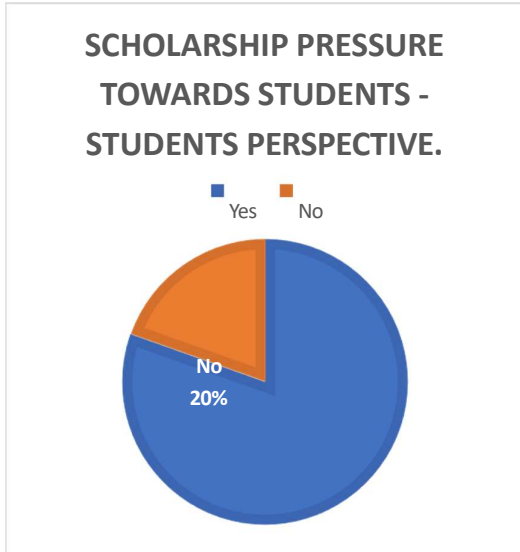


Figure 4.1

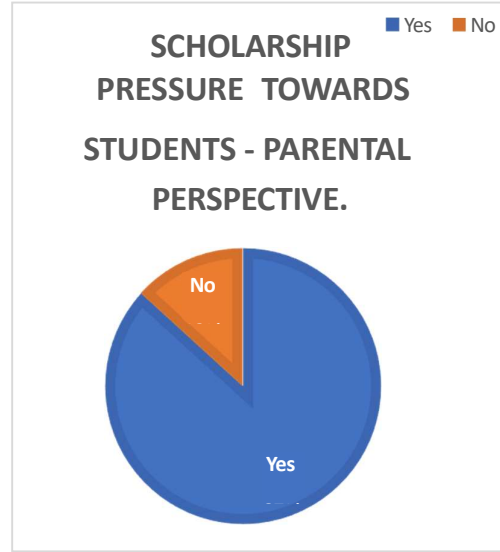


Figure 4.2

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the perceptions of academic pressure associated with scholarships among Grade 5 parents and children. The majority of students, 80%, feel significant pressure regarding the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, indicating their awareness of academic expectations. This pressure impacts their educational experiences and may affect their emotional health and engagement. From the parental perspective, 87% acknowledge that the scholarship exam puts undue stress on their children, with concerns about excessive academic burdens, dependence on private tutoring, and reduced time for enjoyable learning activities such as English language development. The alignment between student and parent responses highlights a shared understanding of the pressures faced, suggesting widespread exam-focused approaches in Grade 5 classrooms. This prevalence may hinder the development of practical language skills, indicating a critical need for more balanced educational strategies.

Furthermore, Parents expressed concern that school-based English education is inadequate for the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, prompting many to invest in private tuition to compensate for school deficiencies. However, low-income families faced financial barriers to such support, negatively impacting their children's English learning. These findings highlight issues of equality within the public education system and the influence of socioeconomic factors on access to English-learning resources.

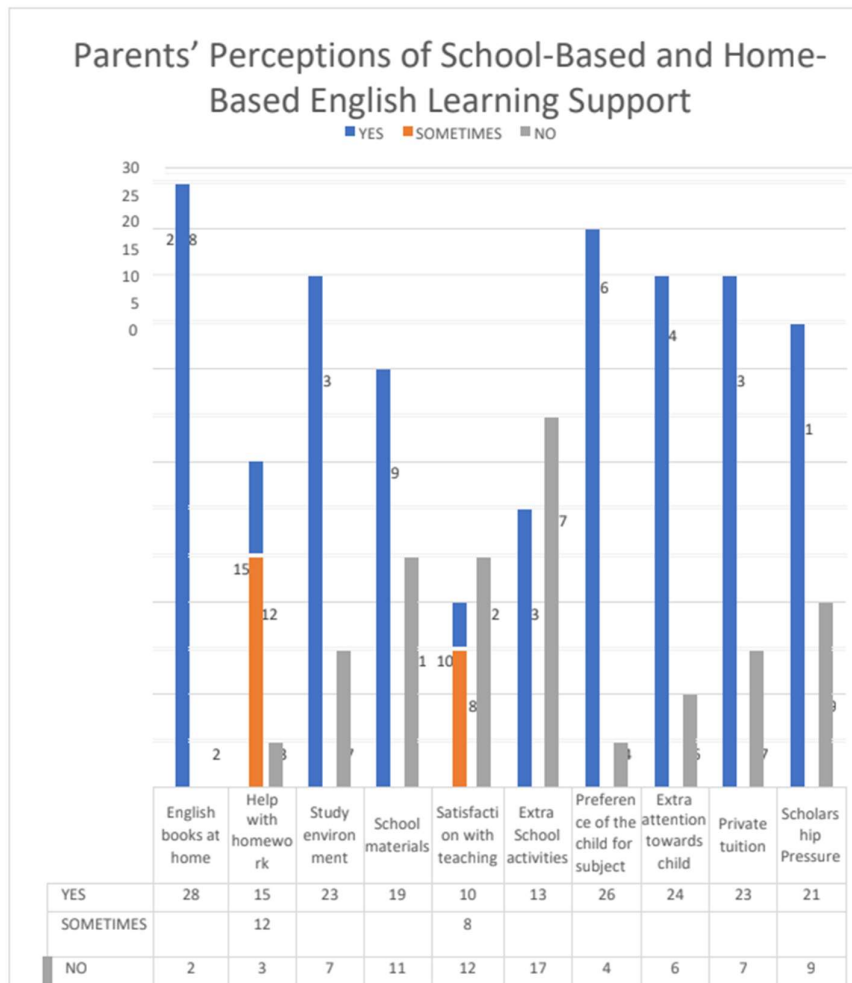


Figure 5

The graphic "Parents' Perceptions of School-Based and Home-Based English Learning Support" evaluates parents' views on English learning support at home and school, categorized into YES, SOMETIMES, and NO. Generally, parents have positive perceptions, especially regarding home support like extra tuition and English books, although inconsistencies are noted in areas such as homework assistance and school resources.

For home literature, 28 parents responded "Yes," indicating a strong home literacy culture. However, homework support is more varied, with 15 affirmatives but a significant 12 "Sometimes" and 3 "No," suggesting irregular engagement. The study environment received mixed responses, with 23 parents saying "Yes" but 7 reporting inadequate study spaces. School-based resources drew criticism, with only 19 parents indicating satisfaction and a notable 11 claiming inadequacy, highlighting potential issues with the school's offerings. Teaching satisfaction is notably low, with 10 parents saying "Yes," indicating urgent needs for improvement in instruction quality.

Extracurricular activities also received minimal positive responses, suggesting parents feel schools lack in providing additional learning opportunities. Conversely, 26 parents affirm that their children enjoy English, indicating motivation is strong despite support concerns. Parents perceive their children receive personalized attention and are willing to invest in private tuition, reflecting a commitment to their children's education amidst identified shortcomings in school support. Addressing issues in teaching quality and extracurricular options could enhance the English learning experience.

Summary of Key Findings

Overall, the results show that access to English-learning resources in Western Province government schools is inconsistent and frequently insufficient, especially for children with a range of learning needs. Supplementary materials, inclusive support systems, and efficient facility utilization are nevertheless limited despite the broad availability of basic resources. Socioeconomic inequality and exam-driven instruction further limit equal access to high-quality English education. These results serve as a basis for the discussion in the next chapter, which interprets the findings in regard to theoretical frameworks, current research, and implications for educational practice and policy.

Discussion

The findings reveal significant disparities in access to English-learning facilities among government schools. Although basic resources such as textbooks are widely available, supplementary materials and inclusive support systems remain limited. These results support previous research indicating that resource availability alone does not ensure effective language learning.

Students with diverse learning needs face the greatest challenges due to large class sizes, exam-oriented teaching, and limited individualized support. Examination pressure contributes to an overemphasis on rote learning, reducing opportunities for communicative language development.

Socioeconomic factors further influence access to English-learning opportunities. Families with financial resources compensate for school limitations through private tuition, widening educational inequalities.

Conclusion

This study highlights that while English is recognized as a vital subject for academic success and social mobility in Sri Lanka, significant disparities remain in the accessibility and adequacy of English-learning facilities for Grade 5 Scholarship students in government schools in the Western Province. Although basic resources such as textbooks are generally available, many schools lack supplementary reading materials, digital tools, and inclusive support systems necessary for effective language learning. Large class sizes, examination-oriented teaching practices, and limited instructional time further restrict opportunities for communicative language development, particularly for students with diverse learning needs and those from low-income backgrounds. The findings emphasize that improving English proficiency requires not only better teaching methods but also equitable access to learning facilities, enhanced teacher training in inclusive practices, and a balanced approach that integrates examination preparation with meaningful language use. Addressing these issues is essential for promoting educational equity and strengthening primary ESL education in Sri Lanka.

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Reinventing and Reawakening the Impact of Simulation on English Language Speaking Skills of Advanced-Level Students

S.K.L.J. Ramanayaka

ABSTRACT

English is taught as a second language to Advanced Level students at the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, where proficiency in spoken English is considered crucial for professional success in the hospitality industry. Despite formal classroom instruction, many students continue to face challenges in achieving oral fluency and communicative confidence, highlighting a persistent gap between academic learning and real-world language use. To address this issue, the present study investigated the effectiveness of simulation techniques as an instructional strategy aimed at enhancing students' English-speaking skills. The research particularly focuses on overcoming common limitations in traditional ESL classrooms, such as reliance on teacher-centered instruction, limited opportunities for interactive learning, and a scarcity of engaging, contextually relevant materials. A total of 80 Advanced Level students, comprising 40 males and 40 females, were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group participated in simulation-based activities, including role-plays, mock workplace interactions, guided scenarios, and context-based communication tasks designed to replicate authentic situations in the hospitality sector. These activities fostered active participation, creative language use, peer collaboration, and meaningful communicative engagement, while the control group continued with conventional lecture-based instruction. The study employed a quasi-experimental design, and both groups completed pre-tests and post-tests assessing fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactive communication. Data were analyzed using SPSS-14. Comparative analysis revealed statistically significant improvements in the experimental group relative to the control group. Students exposed to simulation demonstrated higher fluency, greater confidence, and improved ability to articulate ideas in English. Additionally, subtle gender-based differences were observed, with female students outperforming males, though both genders exhibited substantial progress. The findings underscore the pedagogical value of simulation-based instruction in developing English-speaking competence among advanced-level learners and suggest its potential for wider application in ESL education.

Keywords: *Communication, English-Speaking Skills, Simulation, Spoken English, Students*

Introduction

In the context of contemporary globalization, effective communication has become an indispensable competence for academic, professional, and social participation. As global interconnectedness intensifies, proficiency in English has assumed particular importance, given its role as a global lingua franca facilitating cross-cultural and interdisciplinary communication. Empirical evidence suggests that learners with strong communication skills demonstrate superior academic and professional performance (Gimpao, 2005). Accordingly, the development of spoken

English proficiency remains a central objective for learners of English as a second or foreign language. Nevertheless, traditional approaches to English language teaching have often emphasized rote memorization and repetitive drills, offering limited opportunities for authentic interaction and meaningful oral practice. Speaking proficiency is widely acknowledged as a primary indicator of language competence, as learners tend to evaluate their ability based on effective real-life communication (Richards, 1990).

To address these pedagogical limitations, simulation-based learning has emerged as an innovative instructional approach. Simulation is a dynamic and immersive strategy that promotes meaningful communication and active language use (Bambrough, 1994). By engaging learners in realistic scenarios, simulation encourages spontaneous responses, critical thinking, and problem-solving, thereby fostering linguistic competence and communicative confidence (Jones, 1982). Its effectiveness is further enhanced through structured stages—introduction, problem-solving interaction, and reflection—which ensure purposeful learning (Herbert & Sturbridge, 1979). Moreover, simulation replicates authentic social contexts, enabling learners to assume roles, make decisions, and engage in interactions reflective of real-world communication (Brown, 2001; Bygate, 1987). Through such experiential learning, students internalize transferable language skills applicable beyond the classroom (Harmer, 2001). Simulation also sustains learner motivation and engagement by promoting active participation, thereby strengthening speaking proficiency and broader communicative competence (Jones, 1985).

Purpose of the Research Study

The study aims to examine the effectiveness of simulation-based learning in improving advanced-level students' English-speaking proficiency, particularly fluency, pronunciation, coherence, and confidence. It also explores gender-based differences in learners' responses to simulation, offering pedagogical insights for integrating this approach into advanced-level language curricula.

Statement of the Problem

Despite advanced proficiency, many ESL learners remain unable to communicate effectively due to limited opportunities for authentic speaking practice within traditional pedagogy. Although simulation offers realistic communicative experiences, its impact on advanced-level learners—particularly regarding gender-based differences—remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by empirically examining the differential effects of simulation-based learning on male and female students' speaking performance.

Research Objectives

- I. To examine the effectiveness of simulation techniques in improving the English-speaking skills of Advanced-Level students.
- II. To compare the outcomes of simulation-based instruction with traditional teaching methods in ESL classrooms.
- III. To assess improvements in fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactive communication through simulation activities.

- IV. To identify gender-based differences in speaking skill development among learners exposed to simulation.

Research Questions

- I. How effective are simulation techniques in improving the English-speaking skills of Advanced-Level students?
- II. How do the speaking skill outcomes of students exposed to simulation-based instruction differ from those taught through traditional ESL teaching methods?
- III. To what extent do simulation activities enhance students' fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactive communication in English?
- IV. Are there any significant gender-based differences in the development of English-speaking skills among students participating in simulation-based learning?

Hypotheses

I. Hypothesis related to the effectiveness of simulation techniques

- H₀₁ (Null Hypothesis): Simulation techniques do not have a significant effect on improving the English-speaking skills of Advanced-Level students.
- H₁₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Simulation techniques have a significant effect on improving the English-speaking skills of Advanced-Level students.

II. Hypothesis related to comparison with traditional teaching methods

- H₀₂ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant difference in the English-speaking skill outcomes between students taught through simulation-based instruction and those taught through traditional ESL teaching methods.
- H₁₂ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant difference in the English-speaking skill outcomes between students taught through simulation-based instruction and those taught through traditional ESL teaching methods.

III. Hypothesis related to specific speaking skill components

- H₀₃ (Null Hypothesis): Simulation activities do not significantly improve students' fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactive communication.
- H₁₃ (Alternative Hypothesis): Simulation activities significantly improve students' fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactive communication.

IV. Hypothesis related to gender-based differences

- H₀₄ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant gender-based difference in the development of English-speaking skills among students exposed to simulation-based learning.
- H₁₄ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant gender-based difference in the development of English-speaking skills among students exposed to simulation-based learning.

Conceptual Framework and Variables

a. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in experiential learning and communicative language teaching, where simulation-based learning is used as an instructional strategy to enhance learners' speaking competence. Simulation creates authentic communicative situations that encourage learners to actively engage in meaningful interactions, thereby improving various dimensions of speaking proficiency.

In this framework, simulation-based instruction functions as the primary instructional intervention that influences students' English-speaking skills. These speaking skills are measured through several performance indicators such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactive communication. The framework also considers gender as a moderating factor, as the study aims to identify whether male and female learners demonstrate differences in speaking skill development when exposed to simulation-based learning. Additionally, several contextual factors such as students' proficiency level, instructional time, and learning environment are controlled to ensure the validity of the results.

Thus, the framework assumes that simulation-based learning leads to improved speaking competence, while controlling other variables that might influence language learning outcomes.

b. Variables of the Study

I. Independent Variable

Simulation-Based Instruction

This refers to the use of simulation techniques as a teaching strategy in ESL classrooms, including:

- Role-play activities
- Mock workplace interactions
- Guided simulation scenarios
- Context-based communication tasks

These activities replicate real-life communication situations, particularly in hospitality and tourism contexts.

II. Dependent Variable

English Language Speaking Skills

The dependent variable is measured through the following indicators:

- Fluency – the ability to speak smoothly and continuously
- Accuracy – correct use of grammar and vocabulary
- Pronunciation – clarity and correctness of spoken sounds
- Interactive Communication – ability to respond, negotiate meaning, and maintain conversation

These elements collectively represent students' overall speaking proficiency.

III. Moderating Variable

Gender

- Male students
- Female students

Gender is examined to determine whether it influences the effectiveness of simulation-based learning in improving speaking skills.

IV. Control Variables

To ensure reliability and minimize external influence, the following variables are controlled:

- Students' educational level (Advanced-Level students)
- Institutional context (Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management)
- Duration of instruction
- Course content and syllabus
- Pre-test speaking proficiency level
- Teacher/instructor involvement

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between simulation-based instruction (independent variable) and English-speaking skills (dependent variable) of Advanced-Level students. Gender acts as a moderating variable, while several contextual factors are controlled to ensure the validity of the study.

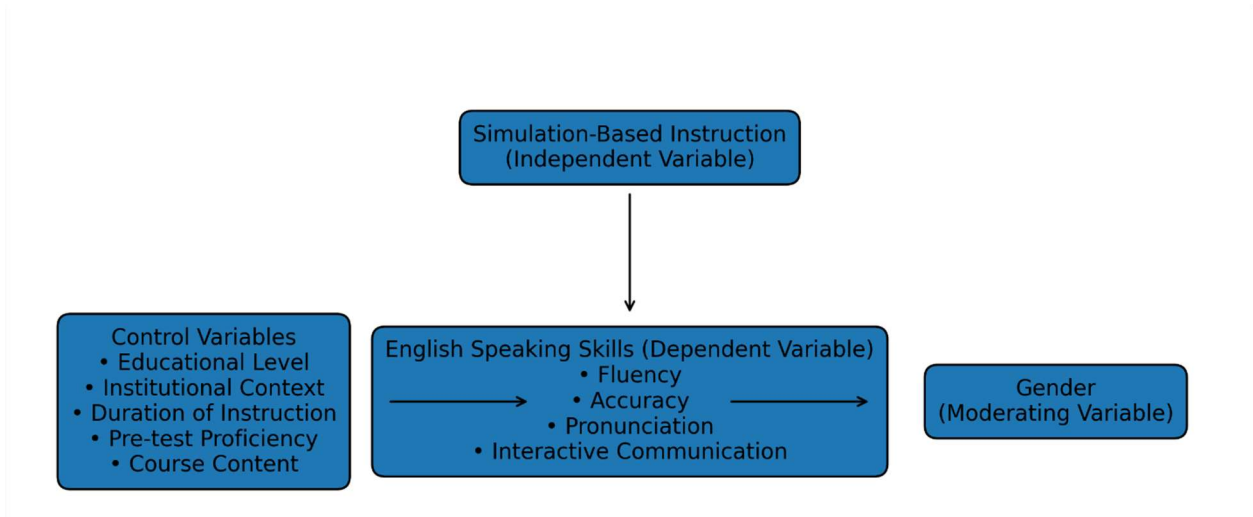


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Impact of Simulation-Based Instruction on English Speaking Skills.

Limitations

This study is limited to advanced-level students at the Colombo Campus of SLITHM, restricting the generalizability of the findings. The relatively small sample size and focus on gender exclude other influential variables such as proficiency background, motivation, and learning styles. Additionally, the controlled academic setting may limit transferability to real-world communication contexts.

Review of Literature

First, the literature establishes a theoretical foundation through Stephen Krashen's Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition, which differentiates between language acquisition (an unconscious process) and language learning (a conscious process). Krashen's assertion that learned knowledge cannot transform into acquired competence has been influential in second-language pedagogy. However, the literature review critically challenges this rigid separation by emphasizing that real-life communication inevitably involves both conscious and unconscious processes. In practical instructional settings—particularly simulation-based activities—learners must actively draw upon both acquired intuition and consciously learned language structures to communicate effectively. Therefore, the strict dichotomy proposed by Krashen appears somewhat limited when applied to communicative classroom practices.

Second, the review highlights simulation as an experiential and communicative pedagogical strategy. According to Ken Jones, simulation-based learning provides learners with opportunities to collaboratively construct realistic scenarios and resolve communicative problems. The findings suggest that such activities facilitate the development of practical communicative competence

rather than merely theoretical language knowledge. The experiential principle summarized as “I’ve done it, so I can do it” underscores the importance of repeated engagement in authentic contexts. Critically, this aligns with modern communicative language teaching approaches that prioritize active participation, problem-solving, and contextualized language use. Nevertheless, the literature also notes that simulation activities tend to be largely unguided, which could pose challenges for learners who require structured linguistic support or scaffolding.

Third, the empirical studies cited provide substantial evidence supporting the effectiveness of simulation techniques. Research conducted by Wahyuni demonstrates that simulation is more effective than role-play in improving English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners’ speaking proficiency. This finding is consistent with motivational frameworks proposed by Jeremy Harmer and Ken Hyland, which emphasize the role of engaging, learner-centered activities in sustaining language learning motivation. Similarly, Nuntida Ayudhya reports significant post-test improvements across different proficiency levels, supporting the Performance Pyramid Model, which posits that effective communication develops progressively through structured practice and performance tasks.

Furthermore, a range of empirical investigations—including those by Febrianti, Silvia, Castaneda, Mohammad Hashemi, Khazaei, Ardriyati, Nugrahani, and Suryati—collectively confirm that simulation-based learning significantly improves learner motivation, speaking fluency, and communicative competence compared with traditional teacher-centered instruction. The consistency of findings across multiple contexts strengthens the credibility of simulation as a pedagogical tool. Despite these positive findings, a critical perspective reveals certain limitations in the existing literature. Many studies primarily focus on short-term improvements in speaking performance without examining long-term language retention or transferability to real professional contexts. Additionally, the literature often emphasizes learner motivation and fluency while paying comparatively less attention to accuracy, pronunciation, and linguistic complexity, which are also essential components of speaking proficiency. Moreover, contextual variables such as cultural differences, classroom resources, and teacher expertise may influence the effectiveness of simulation, yet these factors are not always sufficiently addressed.

In conclusion, the reviewed literature strongly supports simulation as an effective and engaging instructional strategy for developing speaking skills in ESL contexts. However, a critical analysis suggests that further research is required to examine its long-term impact, its integration with explicit language instruction, and its applicability across diverse educational settings. Such investigations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how simulation can be systematically incorporated into language teaching practices.

Method

A quantitative approach has been used in this study, and the target population is divided into experimental and controlled groups using a quasi-experimental design.

Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental research design with a control and an experimental group. The control group received traditional instruction through reading, vocabulary explanation, and translation, while the experimental group engaged in role-playing activities accompanied by

relevant videos. The intervention spanned seven weeks, covering various topics, and included pre- and post-assessments to measure existing proficiency and learning outcomes. Quantitative data were collected to examine relationships among variables, with the pre-assessment evaluating baseline speaking skills and the post-assessment determining improvements in fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactive communication resulting from the simulation-based instructional approach.

Population

The population of this research is 80, comprising 40 male and 40 female students of advanced level classes from all the 03 disciplines (Culinary Operations, Restaurant and Bar and Accommodation Operations), in the Colombo Campus of SLITHM.

Sample

The data was collected from 80 students comprising two groups, i.e., experimental and control groups. An experimental group of male students consisted of 20 students and were distributed into two classes (10 each). Similarly, the 20 male students are further distributed into two classes (10 each). For female students, the same procedure is followed.

Scoring System for Assessment of Speaking Skills

In order to assess the student's performance in the oral examination, the investigator employed the evaluation procedure established by Vallette (1975) from the Foreign Service Institute. James (1985) elaborates on this method in his publication "Foreign Language Proficiency in the Classroom and beyond. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language". This assessment method is used to evaluate the student's ability to speak, particularly in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluidity, and understanding. The breakdown of this assessment system is as follows:

Proficiency Description	1	2	3	4	5	6
Grammar	7	14	21	28	35	23
Pronunciation	4	9	13	18	23	28
Fluency	4	9	13	18	23	28
Total	15	32	47	64	81	99

Table 1.1: Foreign Service Institute Numerical Rating Procedures

The Advanced level students are assessed based on the FSI criteria. Descriptive details are already discussed.

Criteria for Foreign Service Institute Rating Procedure

Component	Point	Criteria
Grammar	1	Grammar is nearly flawed except in stock phrases
	2	Constant errors displaying control of truly hardly major ways and regularly hindering communication
	3	Frequent errors show some major uncontrolled patterns and cause occasional irritation and comprehension
	4	Occasional errors show imprecise control of some patterns without any weaknesses that cause misunderstanding
	5	Few errors without any patterns
	6	Not more than a couple of errors
Pronunciation	1	Pronunciation frequently not understandable
	2	Recurrent gross errors and heavy accent make comprehension difficult
	3	“Native Accent” requires focus, and mispronunciation lead to random misunderstanding and tangible errors in grammar or vocabulary
	4	Marked native accent and randomly mispronunciation that does not interfere with understanding
	5	Not having evidence of mispronunciation but would not be considered for native speakers
	6	Native pronunciation without any sign of a foreign accent
Fluency	1	Stoppage in a speech and discussion is essentially impossible
	2	Speech is slow and not fluent in production even for little or daily usage utterances
	3	Speech is regularly jerky and wavering
	4	Speech is occasionally hesitant and uneven
	5	Speech is smooth but not like native speakers
	6	Speech is smooth like native speakers

Procedures for Collecting the Data

English teachers were requested to obtain the necessary data, such as 20 male students for the control group and 20 male students for the experimental group. An identical process was also carried out for female students. It was confirmed that both classes have a nearly equal amount of scores in the Matriculation Exam.

Pre-Test

The pre-Test was conducted based on the lesson titled “Role-Play” Three aspects of students were mainly assessed, i.e., grammar, fluency, and pronunciation. These students were evaluated as per Foreign Service Institute Assessment criteria. Students of each class are divided into 4 groups comprising 5 students each. They were given text of their respective roles and were briefed about the simulation technique. They were asked to play their respective roles. Every group of students was assessed for 5 to 10 minutes.

In one session of 40 minutes, the entire class of 20 students was assessed. The same procedure was followed in other classes as well. The same procedure was followed for the female students as well.

Data Analysis Procedure

The T-test formula was used to analyze the data; to determine significant differences between the means of the experimental and the control groups. The aim was to show the impact of simulation on students' speaking skills taught through simulation techniques. Details are as follows:

$$t = \frac{M1 - M2}{\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma X1^2 + \Sigma X2^2}{N(N-1)}}}$$

Where:-

M1 = The mean score of the experimental class

M2 = The mean score of the control class

$\Sigma X1^2$ = The total squared score of the experimental class

$\Sigma X2^2$ = sum of the squared score of the control class

N = total number of students

Results and Discussion

All the examinations consist of three sections: focusing, pronunciation, fluency, and grammar. The speaking abilities of the students were evaluated using the Foreign Service Institute numerical method. The total score for the examination was 99 for grammar, 43 for fluency, and 28 for pronunciation. The statistical analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS -14. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to compare the control and experimental groups. The analyzed data were used to determine the impact of the simulation technique on the speaking skills of the experimental group students. The two hypotheses that were tested are as follows:

- a. The simulation technique is more advantageous in developing the speaking abilities of students compared to the lecture method.
- b. There is a significant disparity in the speaking skills of male and female students after the examination.

The pre-test of both groups is statistically analyzed and compared.

Comparison of Male and Female Students in the Experimental Group for Speaking Test Scores on Pre-Test

Comparison groups	N	M	SD	T	P
Male Group	50	43.7	4.68	-3.20	0.02
Female Group	50	45.66	5.08		

The statistical analysis and comparison of the results of the experimental and control groups indicate that the participants in both groups possess a similar level of proficiency in speaking abilities. The subsequent phase involved implementing treatment for the experimental group utilizing a simulation approach, where students were grouped according to their designated roles, shown video clips, and given relevant instructions. This was followed by a simulated role-play activity, and the last session involved assessing the participants' speaking skills. In contrast, the control group received instruction through traditional lectures, which involved explaining the meanings of challenging words, correcting pronunciation errors, and concluding with exercises

The post-test of both groups is statistically analyzed and compared.

Comparison of Male Students in Experimental and Control Groups of Students for Speaking Test Scores on Post-Test

Comparison groups	N	M	SD	t	P
Experimental Group	50	62	4.42	16.94	0.000
Control Group	50	48.18	5.65		

Following are the findings of the study after the examination:

- a. Examination of the pre-test data shows that there is scarcely any distinction between male and female students. The average total score of the experimental group is 43.7, while the control group's average score is 44.56. In female students, the average total score is 45.66 for the experimental group. In contrast, the average of the control group is 41.98 also shows scarcely any difference in the proficiency of the population before the intervention.
- b. A significant difference is observed after the implementation of the simulation technique. The overall average score of male students improved from 43.7 to 63, while previously, the students who fall in the satisfactory level now upgraded to level "good" as per Vallette's (1975) FSI assessment system. In female students, the average score of students in assessment tests improved from 45.66 to 63.92. It proved that the simulation technique has a significant impact on improving the speaking skills of female students.

c. Data also reveals that there is scarcely any difference in students' ability to speak English after applying the traditional way of teaching. The average score of male students improved only from 44.56 to 48.18, while for female students, it improved from 41.48 to 45.44. Both the data reflect that the conventional way of teaching has scarcely shown any improvement in students' speaking skills.

d. Data collected after applying the simulation technique proves that the average score of the female group improved by 20 compared to 19 male students. It shows the great interest of both genders in learning. It further reflects the difference in the approaches of both genders. Females showed slightly more interest in education.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate a significant difference in the mean speaking scores between male and female students, thereby confirming that the simulation technique exerts a more positive influence on the development of speaking skills than the traditional Lecture and Grammar Translation Method. These results substantiate the hypothesis that simulation-based instruction is pedagogically more effective than conventional approaches. However, it must be acknowledged that the treatment was not randomly assigned, as the participants differed by gender, which may have influenced the outcomes. Nevertheless, students exposed to simulation-based learning demonstrated greater interest, active participation, and engagement than those in the control group, who remained comparatively passive. The findings further support the hypothesis that gender-based differences exist in learning responses, with female students achieving marginally higher performance than male students, potentially reflecting variations in learning preferences and engagement levels. As an experiential learning strategy, simulation proved effective in enhancing learner confidence, reducing anxiety, and encouraging active language use. Assuming roles enabled students to articulate personal ideas more freely, thereby improving fluency, while supplementary materials such as video clips contributed to better pronunciation. This study offers a meaningful contribution to research on simulation and speaking skills, particularly within the Pakistani context, where limited prior research exists. Despite positive outcomes, the small test scope warrants caution, and further studies across diverse contexts and proficiency levels are recommended before broader generalization.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study involving five (5) primary school teachers examines the effects of short mindfulness exercises on students' attention during classroom lessons. Maintaining students' attention is a significant challenge in primary education, as inattentive behavior can negatively affect academic performance, classroom management, and learning experiences. Although mindfulness practices have gained attention as a strategy to support students' focus and emotional regulation, limited research has explored the effectiveness of short mindfulness exercises in primary classrooms, particularly within the Sri Lankan context. A descriptive qualitative research design was adopted. Data were collected through semi structured interviews with five female primary school teachers aged between 21 and 45 years. Teachers shared their observations after implementing short mindfulness activities such as deep breathing, guided imagery, and brief silent moments during lessons. The data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes. The findings are perception-based and reflect teachers' observations rather than direct measurement of student attention. Teachers perceived improvements in students' focus, classroom calmness, and emotional regulation. Despite challenges such as limited instructional time and lack of formal training, the study suggests that short mindfulness exercises may be a practical strategy to support attention and engagement in primary classrooms.

Keywords: *Mindfulness exercises, students' attention, primary education, classroom management, teacher perceptions*

Background of the Study

Attention is a fundamental component of effective learning, particularly in primary education where students are still developing cognitive and self-regulatory skills. Primary school teachers frequently encounter challenges related to students' inability to sustain attention during lessons. Factors such as environmental distractions, emotional stress, and developmental characteristics often contribute to reduced focus among young learners. When students struggle to maintain attention, it can lead to poor academic performance, increased behavioural issues, and reduced engagement in classroom activities.

In recent years, mindfulness has gained recognition as a valuable approach to supporting students' attention and emotional well-being. Mindfulness is commonly defined as paying purposeful, non-judgmental attention to the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Within educational settings, mindfulness practices aim to help students become more aware of their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations, enabling them to respond to situations more calmly and thoughtfully.

Short mindfulness exercises, such as deep breathing or brief guided attention activities, are increasingly being introduced in primary classrooms. These exercises require minimal time and resources, making them practical for daily classroom use. Research suggests that even brief mindfulness practices can improve students' attention, emotional regulation, and classroom

behaviour. Given the growing emphasis on holistic education, mindfulness aligns well with the goals of primary education by supporting both academic and socio-emotional development. Mindfulness is defined as ‘the awareness that emerges through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment’ (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145).

Mindfulness involves two components: one pertains to a mental state characterized by full attention to internal and external experiences and the other describes a unique approach characterized by openness to the current experience, allowing individuals to develop the capacity to stay with the experience and observe it objectively, subsequently alleviating suffering and cultivating qualities such as awareness, self-understanding, self-acceptance, compassion, and equanimity (Greco et al., 2008).

During mindfulness practice, individuals are encouraged to focus on an anchor to stay present. This deliberate process involves shifting attention from external stimuli to internal sensations, thoughts, and emotions, all approached with self-compassion and curiosity (Ergas, 2015; Gouda et al., 2016). Various studies have found that mindfulness practices can lead to improvements in cognitive domains, including executive functioning (Flook et al., 2010), discursive thinking, working memory (Malinowski & Shalamanova, 2017; Patrawadee, 2022), and attentional functions such as sustained attention, selective attention, and attentional control (Baena-Extremera et al., 2021; Davidson et al., 2012; Tarrasch, 2017).

Curriculum-based interventions incorporating mindfulness introduce students to a new meta-pedagogical approach that reshapes the learning process by fostering self-awareness, present-moment focus, and emotional regulation. This approach helps students engage more deeply with their learning experiences, improving attention, resilience, and overall well-being. Prioritizing time in the curriculum for activities that focus students’ attention on their breath, thoughts, and feelings may have an impact on their understanding of the subject matter (Ergas, 2019).

In Kabat-Zinn’s (2003) definition, two fundamental aspects of mindfulness in education are expressed and applied in various forms. The cognitive aspect is related to attention, concentration, emotional regulation, and self-reflection, while the affective aspect is related to cultivating positive and prosocial mental states, such as compassion, generosity, openness, and friendliness. Accordingly, mindfulness provides a foundation for academic learning while also supporting the development of socio-emotional skills, making it highly significant within the education system.

Research Problem

Mindfulness programs are increasingly recognized as a valuable approach to enhancing student well-being and supporting emotional regulation. However, research on the effectiveness of mindfulness programs at the primary school level remains limited (Amundsen et al., 2020). Schools are an ideal setting for implementing mindfulness-based programs as they align with key educational goals such as emotional self-regulation, stress reduction, prosocial behaviour, and attention control (Sciutto et al., 2021). Mindfulness-based practices are gaining attention for their potential to improve various health, academic, and social outcomes. According to Sciutto et al. (2021), a growing body of research demonstrates positive effects on executive functioning, mental health, academic performance, self-regulation, and stress reduction. Although existing studies

have explored the impact of mindfulness practices among both students and teachers, further research is needed to understand their specific effects within primary school contexts and how they influence attention and engagement in the classroom.

Despite the increasing popularity of mindfulness practices in educational contexts, there is limited research focusing on the effectiveness of short mindfulness exercises in primary school classrooms, particularly within the Sri Lankan context. Teachers continue to face difficulties in managing inattentive behaviour, which disrupts lesson flow and affects learning outcomes. The effectiveness of short mindfulness exercises in improving students' attention during lessons remains underexplored.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do teachers observe students' attention and focus before and after implementing short mindfulness exercises?
2. Which types of short mindfulness activities are perceived as most effective in improving students' attention?
3. How do students respond to mindfulness exercises in terms of behaviour and emotional regulation?
4. What challenges do teachers face when implementing short mindfulness practices in the classroom?
5. What strategies do teachers suggest for successfully integrating mindfulness exercises into primary school lessons?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To examine teachers' observations of students' attention before and after short mindfulness exercises.
- To identify effective mindfulness activities that enhance students' attention.
- To explore students' behavioural and emotional responses to mindfulness exercises.
- To investigate challenges faced by teachers during implementation.
- To gather practical strategies for integrating mindfulness into primary classrooms.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on primary school classrooms and explores teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding short mindfulness exercises. The research is limited to a small qualitative sample and does not aim to generalize findings to all primary schools.

Literature Review

Mindfulness is a process in which an individual strives to maintain awareness of various physical and mental experiences in the present moment while maintaining a non-judgmental attitude toward these experiences (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). In this context, awareness refers to an individual's recognition of changes in both internal and external experiences (Hao, 2021). A large number of studies have shown that mindfulness has positive effects on both physical and psychological well-being. For example, mindfulness interventions have been found to help reduce chronic pain, depression, and stress while promoting emotional stability (Creswell, 2017). In educational settings, mindfulness practices are increasingly recognised as strategies that may enhance students' attention and behavioural regulation. Research suggests that mindfulness activities can improve students' ability to concentrate, regulate emotions, and participate actively in classroom learning (Flook et al., 2010). These findings highlight the potential role of mindfulness practices in supporting both cognitive and emotional aspects of learning.

Several studies have explored the impact of mindfulness practices on attention and executive functioning among students. For instance, Flook et al. (2010) found that mindfulness training improved executive functioning skills, including working memory and self-regulation in elementary school children. Similarly, Davidson et al. (2012) reported improvements in sustained attention and emotional balance following mindfulness training. These studies suggest that mindfulness may contribute positively to students' cognitive development and classroom engagement.

However, many of these studies were conducted in Western educational contexts, which may limit their direct applicability to other cultural and educational settings. Short mindfulness exercises are particularly suitable for school environments because they require minimal time and resources. Activities such as breathing exercises, guided imagery, and short silent moments can help students calm their minds and prepare for learning. According to Tarrasch (2017), even brief mindfulness activities may support students' ability to concentrate during lessons and reduce off-task behaviour. Teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of mindfulness practices in classrooms. Ergas (2019) notes that teachers' attitudes, understanding, and consistency significantly influence the effectiveness of mindfulness activities. However, teachers may face practical challenges such as limited instructional time, lack of professional training, and curriculum pressures. These factors can affect how regularly mindfulness activities are implemented in classroom routines.

In addition, students' social and emotional backgrounds may influence their ability to maintain attention in class. Factors such as family stress, socio-economic difficulties, and emotional challenges may contribute to inattentive behaviour and reduced academic engagement (Malow & Austin, 2016; Steiner et al., 2012). Mindfulness practices may help students develop emotional regulation skills that allow them to manage stress and respond more calmly to classroom situations. Although existing literature highlights the potential benefits of mindfulness in education, there is still limited qualitative research exploring teachers' lived experiences of implementing short mindfulness exercises in primary school classrooms. Furthermore, research focusing on the Sri

Lankan educational context remains scarce. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring teachers' perceptions of the effects of short mindfulness exercises on students' attention during lessons.

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter describes the research design and methodology adopted for the study titled "Effects of Short Mindfulness Exercises on Students' Attention during Lessons." It explains the research approach, research design, population and sample, data collection methods, research instruments, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study. The purpose of this chapter is to clearly outline how the study was conducted and to justify the suitability of the chosen methods in addressing the research questions.

Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions, experiences, and observations regarding the effects of short mindfulness exercises on students' attention during classroom lessons. Since the focus of the study was on understanding meanings, experiences, and behavioural changes observed in real classroom settings, qualitative methods were more appropriate than quantitative methods. Unlike numerical data, qualitative data allow for in-depth insights into how and why mindfulness practices influence students' attention and classroom behaviour. One of the strengths of a qualitative approach is its ability to capture rich, detailed descriptions of classroom practices and teacher experiences. However, a limitation of this approach is that findings are based on a small sample and may not be generalised to all primary school contexts. Despite this limitation, the qualitative approach was suitable for achieving the objectives of the present study.

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive qualitative research design. This design was chosen to describe and interpret teachers' experiences of implementing short mindfulness exercises in their classrooms and the perceived changes in students' attention, engagement, and behaviour. The design allowed the researcher to explore natural classroom practices without manipulating variables, making it appropriate for an inquiry-based project in primary education.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in a selected primary school that was easily accessible to the researcher. The school was chosen due to familiarity, ease of obtaining permission, and cooperation from the teaching staff. Conducting the research in a familiar environment helped ensure smooth data collection and encouraged participants to share their experiences openly and honestly.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of primary school teachers. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who were directly relevant to the research topic. The sample included five female primary school teachers aged between 21 and 45 years. All participants were teaching in the primary section and had experience using or attempting short mindfulness activities such as deep breathing, guided imagery, or short moments of silence during lessons.

The selected teachers held academic qualifications in primary education, such as a Diploma in Education or Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), which ensured that they had adequate knowledge of child development, teaching strategies, and classroom management. Teachers from the secondary section were excluded to maintain the focus on primary-level classrooms, which was the core area of the study.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. This method was chosen because it allows flexibility while ensuring that key topics related to the research questions are covered. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to express their views freely while allowing the researcher to probe further when necessary. The interviews focused on teachers' observations of students' attention before and after mindfulness exercises, types of mindfulness activities used, students' behavioural and emotional responses, challenges faced during implementation, and suggestions for effective integration of mindfulness practices. Each interview was conducted in a comfortable setting and lasted approximately 20–30 minutes.

Research Instruments

A self-developed semi-structured interview guide was used as the main research instrument. The interview questions were designed based on the research objectives and literature related to mindfulness and student attention. The instrument was reviewed by subject experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and content validity. Minor adjustments were made following expert feedback to improve the quality of the questions.

Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analysed using **thematic analysis**. First, interview responses were carefully reviewed and transcribed. The researcher then read the transcripts multiple times to become familiar with the data. Similar ideas, phrases, and experiences were coded and grouped into themes. These themes reflected key patterns such as improvements in attention, emotional

regulation, classroom calmness, and challenges in implementation. Thematic analysis was selected because it is suitable for identifying common patterns within qualitative data and linking findings directly to the research questions. Descriptive explanations were used to present the findings clearly and meaningfully

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, and their rights through a Participant Information Sheet. Written consent was obtained before conducting interviews. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymising participants' identities, and no personal details were disclosed in the findings. All data were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher. These measures ensured compliance with ethical standards set by York Graduate Campus.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the small sample size and the use of teacher perceptions rather than direct measurement of students' attention. Additionally, findings may not be generalisable to all primary school settings. However, the study provides valuable insights into practical classroom experiences and contributes meaningfully to understanding mindfulness practices in primary education.

Results and Analysis

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the study titled Effects of Short Mindfulness Exercises on Students' Attention During Lessons. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with five female primary school teachers aged between 21 and 45 years. The interview questions were based on the semi-structured questionnaire and aligned with the research objectives. The data were analysed thematically, and the findings are organised under key themes derived from the research questions.

Participant Demographic Overview

All five participants were qualified primary school teachers teaching in the primary section. Their teaching experience ranged from newly appointed teachers to those with several years of classroom experience. While most participants had not received formal training in mindfulness, they had experimented with short mindfulness activities through self-learning, peer suggestions, or personal experience. This variation influenced their confidence levels and methods of implementation.

Participant Demographics

	Age (years)	Gender (M/F/Other)	Grade/ class	Teaching section	Years of schooling	Highest educational qualification	Received any training in mindfulness or similar methods
I.	35	F	3	Upper primary section	5	B.Ed.(Hon)	Yes
II.	25	F	2	Lower primary section	3	HND in Primary Education	Yes
III.	42	F	1	Lower primary section	12	BBA and MBA in HR	Yes
IV.	30	F	4	Upper primary section	4	HND in Primary Education	Yes
V.	22	F	1	Lower primary section	2	Dip. In Primary Education	Yes

Students' Attention and Behaviour before Mindfulness Exercises

Teachers described students' attention during lessons prior to mindfulness activities as often inconsistent and easily disrupted. According to participants, several common behaviours were observed in the classroom, including talking with peers, restlessness, difficulty maintaining sustained focus, and challenges in transitioning into learning activities after intervals or breaks. These behaviours were frequently mentioned by teachers when reflecting on the typical classroom atmosphere before implementing mindfulness exercises.

One teacher explained: "Most students find it very hard to settle down after interval. Even when the lesson starts, they are still mentally outside the classroom." This observation suggests that students may require a short adjustment period to mentally shift from informal social interactions to structured learning activities. Another teacher shared a similar experience: "Some children keep moving, touching others, or asking unrelated questions. It affects the flow of the lesson." Teachers indicated that such behaviours could interrupt the continuity of teaching and make it more challenging to maintain students' engagement throughout the lesson. Several participants also noted that these patterns sometimes resulted in incomplete tasks, slower lesson progression, and

reduced opportunities for meaningful participation.

From the teachers' perspectives, these classroom experiences highlight the challenges associated with maintaining students' attention, particularly during the initial stages of a lesson. The findings therefore suggest that strategies which help students calm down and mentally prepare for learning may be beneficial in supporting classroom engagement. These observations provided an important context for teachers' decisions to introduce short mindfulness exercises as part of their classroom routine.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study support previous research indicating that mindfulness practices positively influence students' attention and emotional regulation. Teachers' observations revealed that short mindfulness exercises can create a calm and focused learning environment, which is essential for effective teaching and learning in primary classrooms. The practical implications of this study highlight mindfulness as a feasible and low-cost strategy that can be integrated into daily classroom routines. By dedicating a few minutes to mindfulness activities, teachers can enhance students' readiness to learn and reduce behavioural issues.

However, the study has several limitations. The small sample size and reliance on teacher perceptions limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could include student perspectives, quantitative measures, and longitudinal designs to further explore the impact of mindfulness practices. In conclusion, short mindfulness exercises offer a valuable tool for primary school teachers to improve students' attention, emotional well-being, and classroom engagement. The findings contribute to primary education by providing practical insights into mindfulness implementation and supporting holistic approaches to learning.

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Biographies of the Paper Presenters

Ms. Hirushi Shalini Basnagoda is pursuing her MBA at the Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, and is a graduate of the Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya. She currently serves as a Business Management Lecturer at York Graduate Campus. Her research spans both quantitative academic studies and qualitative case studies, with interests in Human Resource Management, Psychology, and Organisational Studies. She is presenting her paper, “Perceived Effectiveness of Employee Grievance-Handling Procedures on Job Performance of Employees” at the YGC National Research Symposium 2026.

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Ms. Nethanya Ravindu Wellappuliarachchi is an Edexcel Psychology teacher currently teaching AS and A Level students. Her work is driven by a deep interest in understanding the relationship between the brain, behavior, and emotional wellbeing. Her research interests include neurological disorders, particularly stroke and Parkinson’s disease, Congenital Insensitivity to Pain with Anhidrosis, Pain Management in patients with Osteoarthritis and as well as art therapy for young people . She has contributed to research exploring how creative expression can enhance emotional wellbeing among young people in Sri Lanka. She is currently pursuing an MSc in Pain Management through the University of South Wales, United Kingdom, further strengthening her interest in neurological and psychological conditions and holistic approaches to patient care. She is presenting her paper, ““The influence of Art Therapy on emotional and psychological wellbeing of young people in Sri Lanka”” at the YGC National Research Symposium 2026.

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Ms. W.A. Dilani Nelumni has completed her Foundation at Lincoln University College and holds a Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals qualification in Business, where she was the batch topper. She is currently pursuing a top-up degree at Alphacriss University College, Australia, further developing her expertise in business. Her research interests focus on accounting and finance, with a keen interest in practical applications within the Sri Lankan business context. She is presenting her paper, “*The impact of talent management on organizational performance: evidence from Toyota Sri Lanka*” at the YGC National Research Symposium 2026.

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Ms. Heshani Vithanage is an Education & Counseling lecturer at York Graduate Campus with over four years of experience in lecturing and Psychological Counseling. She holds an MSc in Counseling & Psycho-social Support from the University of Colombo, an MSc in Environmental Management from the University of Kelaniya, a BSc in Natural Sciences from the Open University of Sri Lanka. She has extensive experience serving as a psychological counselor, providing disaster and psychosocial support, designing and implementing therapeutic interventions, conducting applied and academic research. She is passionate about integrating environmental science and counseling, combining knowledge from both fields to enhance well-being, personal growth and sustainable living. At the first national symposium 2026, she is presenting the insights from her comparative review on “Key Features and

Effectiveness of Psychosocial Support Programmes in the United States, Australia and New Zealand” which is currently exploring how they can be effectively applied in the Sri Lankan context.

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Ms. Nethmini Kumari Wilbagedara is a former Lecturer in English at the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna. She holds a BA in English Language and Literature from CINEC Campus and a final-level diploma from Aquinas College. She has completed a Postgraduate Diploma in TESOL from the University of Birmingham, UK, and a Basic Information Technology Certificate from the University of Peradeniya. She is currently pursuing an MA in English Language and Literature at the University of Sabaragamuwa and an MA in Education at Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, China. Her research interests include English language teaching, TESOL, and applied linguistics. She is presenting her paper, “Enhancing Undergraduate Academic Performance through Targeted English Language Support in Sri Lanka” at the YGC National Research Symposium 2026.

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Mrs. Hiranya Jayangee Hewavitharana is a Management lecturer at York Graduate Campus with over three years of experience as a lecturer and HR professional. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Wayamba University of Sri Lanka and an MBA from the University of Kelaniya. She has extensive experience in business and management education, including curriculum development and serving as a research supervisor and examiner. Her specialized teaching areas include human resource management, business statistics, and strategic management. Her research interests focus on organizational development, talent management, and organizational behavior. She is presenting her paper, “The Relationship Between Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Turnover Intention” at the YGC National Research Symposium 2026.

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Ms. Navini D.K. Mallikarachchi is a graduate of the University of Wayamba, Sri Lanka, where she completed her Bachelor’s degree in Accountancy and Finance (Honours) with First Class. She currently works as a Finance Executive at Asia Capital PLC and is pursuing the Corporate Level of the Chartered Accountancy qualification. Her research interests focus on improvements in accounting education and forensic accounting. She was awarded **Best Presenter at SACFIRE 2025** in recognition of her research presentation, and her research article is scheduled to be published in the SACFIRE Journal. She is presenting her paper, “Exploration of Accounting Students' Attitudes towards Integrating Forensic Accounting in Accounting Education of Sri Lankan Universities” at the YGC National Research Symposium 2026.

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Ms. Imashi Hiruni Hewavithara is a Diploma holder in Primary Education from York Graduate Campus and currently works as a primary school teacher at York International School, Kadawatha. With a strong passion for child development and education, she has gained hands-on experience in classroom management, curriculum implementation, and innovative teaching

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Ms. K.G. Chathurya D. Perera is an undergraduate specializing in English Language and Linguistics and currently works as a primary school teacher. She holds a Diploma in Primary Teaching, which has further strengthened her passion for primary education and language learning. Her academic interests focus on English as a Second Language (ESL), language education, and accessibility in learning. Her current research examines the accessibility of English-learning facilities for Grade 5 Scholarship students in government schools in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. She is particularly interested in improving language learning opportunities for young learners and promoting inclusive and effective educational environments.

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Ms. S.K. Lathisha J. Ramanayaka is a Ph.D. scholar in English and Assistant Lecturer in English, currently serving as Head of the Language Unit at the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management. A prolific, multidisciplinary researcher, she has published 60 research papers and leads 11 ongoing projects while reviewing scholarly articles. She is also a poet, novelist, and academic writer. A Distinguished Toastmaster, she is an active member of four U.S. and one Canadian Toastmasters clubs. Her professional roles include motivational speaker, panelist, moderator, compere, Visiting English Lecturer, and committed servant leader. She is presenting her paper, “Reinventing and Reawakening the Impact of Simulation on English Language Speaking Skills of Advanced-Level Students” at the YGC National Research Symposium 2026.

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Ms. Hendala Liyanage Kinolee Sasanya Perera currently works as a Teacher and Administrative Officer at Easy English Academy (EEA). She completed the Diploma in Primary Education at York Graduate Campus (YGC), Batch 14, and also holds a Diploma in Child Psychology. She achieved the distinction of Batch Top in the Diploma in Primary Education program at YGC, demonstrating outstanding academic performance. Her academic interests focus on child psychology, student attention, and classroom behaviour. These interests have inspired her research on the effects of short mindfulness exercises on students’ attention in primary classrooms. She is particularly interested in exploring strategies that support students’ focus, well-being, and effective learning in primary education.

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1st National Research Symposium 2026
Human-Centered Digital Dialogues: Through Multidisciplinary Bridges
Agenda

Time	Activity / Speaker
8:30am – 9:29am	Conference Registration
9:30am – 9:39am	Lighting of the Traditional Oil Lamp
9:40am – 9:44am	National Anthem
9:45am – 9:54am	Welcome Address – Mr. Deshan Perera, Director, York Graduate Campus
9:55am – 10:04am	Keynote Speech – Prof. Ruvan Abeyssekara, Chair, National Research Symposium 2026
10:05am – 10:09am	Launch of Symposium Publication – Prof. Ruvan Abeyssekara & Mr. Rohan Perera
10:10am – 10:19am	Guest Speech – Dr. Chanaka Lasantha, Chief Guest
10.20am – 11.09am – Session 1	
10:20am – 10:29am	1st Presentation – Ms. Hirushi Basnagoda
10:30am – 10:39am	2nd Presentation – Ms. Nethanya Wellappuliarachchi
10:40am – 10:49am	3rd Presentation – Ms. Dilani Nelumni
10:50am – 10:59am	4th Presentation – Ms. Heshani Vithanage
11:00am – 11:09am	5th Presentation – Ms. Nethmini Kumari Wilbagedara
11:10am – 11:19am	Footsteps of YGC – Mr. Roshane Perera, Director, York Graduate Campus
11.20am – 12.09pm – Session 2	
11:20am – 11:29am	6th Presentation – Mrs. Hiranya Hewavitharana
11:30am – 11:39am	7th Presentation – Ms. Navini Mallikarachchi
11:40am – 11:49am	8th Presentation – Ms. Imashi Hiruni
11:50pm – 11:59pm	9th Presentation – Ms. Chathurya Perera
12:00pm – 12.09pm	10th Presentation – Ms. S.K. Lathisha J. Ramanayaka
12:10pm – 12:19pm	Challenges & Outcomes – Dr. Harshani Pinnawala, Co-Chair, National Research Symposium 2026
12:20pm – 12:29pm	Award Ceremony
12:30pm – 12:39pm	Token of Appreciation
12:40pm – 12:49pm	Vote of Thanks – Ms. Heshani Vithanage, Secretary, National Research Symposium 2026
12.50pm onwards	Refreshments & Leave

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