Faculty of Education
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

URSE 2026

PROCEEDINGS

Emerging Voices in Education:
Innovating for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future

10th November 2026



1st Undergraduate Research Symposium – 2026

Emerging Voices in Education: Innovating for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future

Symposium Proceedings



Faculty of Education, University of Colombo

Sri Lanka

10th November 2026

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Emerging Voices in Education: Innovating for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future

Symposium Proceedings

1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Education
Faculty of Education, University of Colombo.

November 2026

eISSN: *2841-2613*

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Cover page design: *P.G. Geethma Chamodi* (B.Ed 2026/ 2027)

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VISION

To be a center of excellence in scholarship, teaching and research in education, committed to serve humanity.

MISSION

To facilitate the development of a committed professional educator with relevant knowledge, favorable attitudes and useful skills for teaching, research and service to the nation.

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Message from the Vice Chancellor



It is with great pleasure that I present this message on the occasion of the First Undergraduate Research Symposium on Education (URCE) 2026, organized by the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo. This inaugural symposium reflects the University's steadfast commitment to advancing knowledge, fostering innovation, and nurturing the next generation of scholars.

The theme of this year's symposium, "Emerging Voices in Education: Innovating for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future," highlights the importance of empowering emerging researchers to contribute new perspectives and innovative solutions to the complex challenges confronting education in a rapidly evolving world.

The University of Colombo has long maintained a distinguished tradition of academic excellence and research innovation. Within this context, the Faculty of Education, with its established record of leadership in educational research and practice, continues to make significant contributions at both national and international levels. By providing undergraduates with a dedicated platform to disseminate their research, this symposium represents an important milestone. It enables emerging researchers to present their work, engage in scholarly dialogue, exchange ideas, and establish academic networks that will support their continued development as scholars and educators.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the keynote speaker, Professor Manjula Ranagalage of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, for graciously accepting our invitation to deliver the keynote address. I also express my gratitude to the organizing committee, distinguished speakers, academic staff who guided the student researchers, and all participants for their commitment and valuable contributions towards the success of this event.

I wish all participants a productive, intellectually stimulating, and inspiring symposium.

Professor Indika Mahesh Karunathilake
Vice Chancellor
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Massage from the Dean



The 1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Education (URSE) 2026 marks a significant milestone as the inaugural undergraduate research symposium organised by the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo. This proceedings volume brings together abstracts of the research studies accepted for presentation, highlighting the scholarly contributions and research endeavours of undergraduate students.

The symposium provides a valuable platform for undergraduate researchers to develop their research competencies, critically engage with contemporary educational issues, and disseminate their findings within an academic community. The theme, **"Emerging Voices in Education: Innovating for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future,"** reflects the importance of innovative, inclusive, and evidence-informed approaches to addressing emerging challenges in education. Its diverse sub-themes encompass key areas of educational research, including inclusive education, curriculum development, educational assessment, psychological counselling, STEAM education, and artificial intelligence in education.

I thank all participating undergraduate researchers for their academic commitment and acknowledge the invaluable guidance provided by their supervisors. I extend my sincere gratitude to our distinguished keynote speaker, Professor Manjula Ranagalage of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, for accepting our invitation and contributing to this important academic occasion.

I also express my appreciation to the Symposium Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary, Editorial Board, Organising Committee, and all academic and non-academic staff members whose dedication and contributions have made this initiative possible.I sincerely hope that URSE will become an enduring academic tradition of the Faculty of Education, nurturing emerging researchers and promoting scholarly inquiry, innovation, and the advancement of educational knowledge and practice towards a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Prof. Samudra Senarath
Dean
Faculty of Education
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Message from the Symposium Chair



The 1st Undergraduate Research Symposium on Education (URSE) 2026 represents a significant milestone in the academic development of the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, as the Faculty's inaugural symposium dedicated to undergraduate research. Held on 10 November 2026 under the theme **"Emerging Voices in Education: Innovating for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future,"** the symposium provided an academic forum for undergraduate researchers This proceedings volume brings together the research contributions presented at this landmark academic event.

The abstracts included in this volume demonstrate undergraduate students' engagement with a diverse range of contemporary educational issues. They also underscore the importance of developing research competencies, critical thinking, analytical skills, and a spirit of scholarly inquiry among undergraduates. Furthermore, the symposium reflects the Faculty's commitment to fostering a sustainable research culture and promoting evidence-informed approaches to educational development and practice.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Dean, Professor Samudra Senarath, for her guidance, encouragement, and continued support in making this symposium a success. I am grateful to our distinguished keynote speaker, Professor Manjula Ranagalage of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, for graciously accepting our invitation and sharing his valuable scholarly insights with the undergraduate research community. My sincere appreciation is also extended to the Co-Chair, Symposium Secretary, Editorial Board, Organising Committee and academic supervisors whose dedication and contributions were instrumental in the successful organisation of this event.As Chief Editor of these proceedings, I trust that this publication will serve as a valuable academic resource, encourage further engagement in undergraduate research, and contribute to establishing URSE as a regular academic forum for scholarly exchange, innovation, and the advancement of educational knowledge and practice.

R.A.B.U.I. Perera
Symposium Chair and Chief Editor
Undergraduate Research Symposium on Education (URSE) 2026
Faculty of Education
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Message from the Symposium Co-Chair



The Undergraduate Research Symposium on Education (URSC) 2026 marks a significant milestone for the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, as its inaugural symposium dedicated to undergraduate research. This proceedings volume reflects the Faculty's commitment to fostering a research-oriented academic culture and providing undergraduates with a platform to present their work, exchange ideas, and engage with the wider scholarly

Under the theme "Emerging Voices in Education: Innovating for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future," the symposium highlights emerging researchers' contributions to contemporary educational discourse. The diverse sub-themes represented in this volume demonstrate the multidisciplinary nature of educational inquiry and the potential of undergraduate research to advance inclusive, equitable, and sustainable educational practices.

The successful organization of this symposium was made possible through the commitment and collaboration of many individuals. I extend my sincere appreciation to the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Professor Samudra Senarath, for her leadership and guidance, and to the Symposium Chair, Symposium Secretary, Editorial Board, academic supervisors, staff members, and all others who contributed to this initiative.

I hope this proceedings volume documents the research presented at URSC 2026 and inspires future undergraduate scholars. May the symposium continue to promote intellectual inquiry, scholarly exchange, and innovative responses to contemporary educational challenges.

A.C. Imesha Kinkini
Co-Chair
Undergraduate Research Symposium on Education (URSE) 2026
Faculty of Education
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Introduction to the Keynote Speaker

Professor Manjula Ranagalage



Professor Manjula Ranagalage is a distinguished academic and researcher attached to the Department of Environmental Management, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. His research expertise encompasses geography, environmental management, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, geospatial analysis, urban geography, land-use and land-cover change, and urban sustainability. Through his interdisciplinary research, he has contributed to the understanding of complex environmental and spatial processes and their implications for sustainable development.

Professor Ranagalage obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree with First-Class Honours in Geography from the University of Colombo in 2006. He subsequently earned a Master of Science degree in Geo-Informatics from the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, in 2010, followed by a Master of Arts degree in Geography from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in 2013. In 2019, he completed his PhD in Geo-Environmental Sciences at the Graduate School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Japan. Following the completion of his doctoral studies, he received a postdoctoral research fellowship from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), undertaking further research at the University of Tsukuba from 2019 to 2020.

Professor Ranagalage has developed an extensive research portfolio, comprising more than 60 journal articles, over 50 conference publications, and several scholarly books. His research applies geospatial technologies and analytical approaches to investigate contemporary environmental and societal challenges, including urban expansion, land-use and land-cover dynamics, urban heat islands, disaster management, and sustainable urban development. His work encompasses research conducted in Sri Lanka and other countries, contributing to international scholarly discourse on environmental change, spatial development, and sustainability.

His research achievements have received national and international recognition. Notable distinctions include the award for Sri Lanka's Most Outstanding Young Researcher in Humanities, Aesthetics and Social Sciences in 2018 and the Research Excellence Award of the University of Tsukuba in 2019. He has also received research awards from Rajarata University of Sri Lanka in recognition of his scholarly contributions and research productivity.

Beyond his research activities, Professor Ranagalage has made valuable contributions to postgraduate education, academic supervision, research evaluation, and scholarly publishing. His professional engagement includes supervising postgraduate researchers, reviewing manuscripts for international peer-reviewed journals, and undertaking editorial responsibilities. He has also contributed to the development of the national research landscape through professional engagement with institutions such as the National Research Council of Sri Lanka and the National Science Foundation.

Through his sustained commitment to research excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the application of scientific knowledge to real-world challenges, Professor Ranagalage continues to contribute to the advancement of geographical and environmental sciences in Sri Lanka and internationally. His academic achievements, research leadership, and dedication to scholarly inquiry exemplify the importance of rigorous research in addressing contemporary challenges and advancing knowledge. His participation as the keynote speaker at the Undergraduate Research Symposium in Education (URSE) 2026 provides a valuable opportunity to inspire undergraduate researchers to cultivate intellectual curiosity, strengthen their research competencies, and pursue innovative approaches to knowledge creation across disciplinary boundaries.

KEYNOTE ABSTRACT

From Challenges to Opportunities: Empowering the Next Generation of Social Science Researchers

Prof. Manjula Ranagallage
Department of Environmental Management, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Fast social, economic, environmental, and technological transformations are generating new challenges and opportunities for social sciences researchers worldwide. Problems such as poverty, social inequality, educational inequalities, climate change, public health, migration, unemployment, and digital transformation increasingly require innovative, evidence-based, and socially relevant research. In this context, social scientists must move beyond understanding societal problems to develop practical solutions, inform public policy, and contribute to sustainable development. Young researchers, especially from developing countries like Sri Lanka, have a great opportunity to help solve these problems by linking academic knowledge with real community needs.

However, young social science researchers still face challenges such as limited research funding, limited mentorship, methodological constraints, limited access to research resources, and limited international exposure. At the same time, emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, open-access resources, digital research platforms, and interdisciplinary collaboration are opening up new possibilities for overcoming these constraints. These developments provide opportunities to tackle complex societal problems with new approaches, and to produce research that is locally relevant and internationally significant.

In particular, this keynote emphasises the need to move away from research driven primarily by academic requirements toward problem-oriented, solution-driven, and socially impactful research. Young researchers need motivation to identify real problems in their communities, develop meaningful research questions, use rigorous methods, and produce evidence that can inform practical interventions and policy decisions. Research that focuses on real societal challenges can help improve education, build community resilience, reduce inequalities, advance environmental sustainability, and support inclusive national development.

Beyond its social relevance, building a strong academic research profile at the undergraduate level is increasingly important. Publishing original, high-quality research in reputable journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science can increase academic visibility, showcase research competencies, and enhance competitiveness for international postgraduate scholarships, research fellowships, and collaborative opportunities. However, publication should communicate valuable knowledge, not be the ultimate goal of research. Academic

excellence should continue to prioritize research quality, ethical integrity, originality, and contribution to society.

The keynote draws on experience in interdisciplinary research, international collaboration, and research capacity development to reflect on practical pathways for young social science researchers to turn current challenges into future opportunities. It highlights the need for critical thinking, technological skills, strong mentorship, international networking, and institutional support to develop independent, impactful researchers.

The keynote closes by arguing that the future of social sciences research depends on cultivating a generation of scholars who can identify emerging societal challenges, generate internationally recognised scientific knowledge, and translate research findings into meaningful action. The true worth of research lies not only in where it is published but also in how much it helps us understand and improve the world we live in.

Keywords: *Social Science Research; Young Researchers; Societal Challenges and Opportunities; Research Impact; Research Excellence*

Panel sessions

Panel 01 - Humanities and Language Education

Venue: MLH 02
Session Chair: Dr. E.S. Neranjani
Session Co-chair: Ms. S.N. Rajendram
Technical Support: B.G.Y. Hasara Bandarigodadge/ M.D.L.D. Wijerathna

Presentations

No	Title	Authors	Presentation time
URSE 06	Developing Inferencing Skills in Reading, Using Anchor Charts: A Study Based on Grade Nine ESL Students	K.W.M.D. Fernando Ms. Shiranthi Rajendram	11.15 am-11.30 am
URSE 09	The Role of Student Political Engagement in the Personal and Academic Development of University Students	R.M. Mahesh Dhammika Rathnayaka R.A.B.U.I. Perera	11.30 am - 11.45 am
URSE 18	The Contribution of Extracurricular Activities to the Balanced Education of University Students	G.K.M.Sandeepani H.M.L.Kumari	11.45 am - 12.00 pm
URSE 26	The Effectiveness of Gamification-Based Formative Assessment in Enhancing English Language Learning Outcomes among Students in a Private Higher Education Institute in Colombo: An Action Research Study	G.H.S.D. Chandrasekara H.M.C.J. Herath	12.00 pm - 12.15 pm
URSE 27	An Investigation into the Factors Contributing to the Students' Under performance in Buddhism Subject at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination	K. Himani H.M.L. Kumari	12.15 pm - 12.30 pm

Panel 02 - Science, Technology and Mathematics Education

Venue: MLH 01
Session Chair: Dr. P.K.J.E. Nonis
Session Co-chair: Ms. Dulani Priyadarshani
Technical Support:G.J.B.M. Perera/ M.A.M.P. Mallawaarachchi

Presentations

No	Title	Authors	Presentation time
URSE 08	Usefulness of Teacher-Created Video Tutorials as a Supplementary Learning Material for Grade 12 Economics Students	B.K.T.R.Rasangana L. Wedikkarage	11.15 am-11.30 am
URSE 11	Success of Using Smart Classrooms in Teaching Advanced Level Economics	J. M. D.A. Wickramasooriya S.A.N.Dhanushka	11.15 am-11.30 am
URSE 13	Teachers' Feedback and Students' Motivation Towards Learning: A Descriptive-Correlational Study of Grade 6 Mathematics Students in the Panduwasnuwara Education Division, Sri Lanka	W.P.S.K. Perera R.D.C.Niroshinie	11.45 am - 12.00 pm
URSE 14	Using the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Model to Organize the Teaching Process of ICT Subject Teachers in Sri Lankan Schools	H. Nethmi Madhusha A.C.Imesha Kinkini	12.00 pm - 12.15pm
URSE 19	Impact of Artificial Intelligence Tools on the Self-Directed Learning Skills of Advanced Level Information and Communication Technology Students	W. V. C. Sewmini H.M.R.C. Hathlahawatta	12.15 pm - 12.30 pm

Panel 03 -Social Science Education

Venue: ETR 04
Session Chair: Dr. Lanka Wedikandage
Session Co-Chair: Ms. Tiromi Indigahawela
Technical Support: R.A. Tharushi Sandamini Kumari/ A.G. Ayesha Tharangi

Presentations

No	Title	Authors	Presentation time
URSE 01	The Use of Learning Aids in Teaching Geography	W. M. P. Fernando S.A.N.Dhanushka	11.30 am - 11.45 am
URSE 15	A Study on How Students Have Perceived the Concepts of Natural Disaster Risk Management Through the Subject of Geography	H.U.C.N.Amarasena S.S.Dahanayake	11.45 am - 12.00 pm
URSE 16	Contribution of the G.C.E. Advanced Level Geography Syllabus to Environmental Conservation	R. A. L. Perera L.Wedikkarage	12.00 pm - 12.15 pm
URSE 20	Contribution of the teaching-learning process of economics to the development of student entrepreneurial skills	K.A.Tharushika Sewwandi Chethana Malepathirana	12.15 pm - 12.30 pm
URSE 25	Equipping for Life Beyond School: The adequacy of the Sri Lankan O/L Civic Education Syllabus	Sugandi Rathnayaka L.Wedikkarage	12.30 pm - 12.45 pm
URSE 03	The Contribution of the Political Science Subject to Developing the Political Literacy of G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Students	Hashini Dharmarathna H.M.C.Jeewani Herath	12.45 am - 01.00 pm

Panel 4 - Educational Psychology

Venue: ELH 02
Session Chair: Ms. Enoka Randeniya
Session Co- Chair: Ms.P.K.S.S.Thilakarathna
Technical Support: G.P. Dinithi Anjalika Jayamanna / T.D.C.Jayamanna

Presentations

No.	Title	Author	Presentation time
URSE 02	The Practical Nature of the Educational Process Implemented for Children with Special Educational Needs in Regular School Special Education Units (SEUs)	Sanduni Thennakoon U.G. Chandrajith	11.15 am - 11.30 am
URSE 04	The influence of external parties on the self-esteem of middle school students in difficult schools	N.M.C. Sasikala Kalhari Enoka Randeniya	11.30 am - 11.45 pm
URSE 10	The Impact of Continuous Assessment Used in School Education on Students' Subject Achievement	T.A.D.O.K. Thalangama S.A.N. Dhanushka	11.45 pm - 12.00 pm
URSE 21	A Study on the Educational Activities of University Students Engaged in Self-Employment	Nethmini Rathnayake R.A.B.U.I. Perera	12.00 pm - 12.15 pm
URSE 22	The Contribution of Dance to the Psychosocial Well-being of University Students: A Study Based on the Dance Circle of the University of Colombo	Samudi Nupahewa L.N.P. Wedikandage	12.15 pm - 12.30 pm
URSE 23	A study of counselling strategies to reduce aggressive behaviors among early adolescents	Janithya Savindi C.Niroshini	12.30pm- 12.45pm

Panel 5 - Multidisciplinary Research

Venue: ETR 02
Session Chair: Dr.L.M.K.Bandara
Session Co-Chair: Dr.S.A.N.Dhanushka
Technical Support: P.G.Sandali Imasha/ Sahara Vinodani

Presentations

No	Title	Authors	Presentation time
URSE 05	The Role and Challenges of the Student Leader in the Senior Secondary Stage: A Mixed-Methods Study of Government Secondary Schools in Sri Lanka	Hiruni Angela S.S. Dahanayake	11.30 am - 11.45 am
URSE 07	Stakeholder Perception on Government Measures to Improve Menstrual Hygiene in Rural Schools in Sri Lanka	S.K.R. Waduarachchi C.P.W. Malepathirana	11.45 am - 12.00 pm
URSE 17	The Interest of Probationary Adolescent Female Students in the Teaching-Learning Process: A Multiple Case Study	P.K.K.S.Karunarathne E. Randeniya	12.00 pm - 12.15 pm
URSE 24	Challenges Faced by Students in Adapting to the School Hostel Environment: A Study Based on the Kuliyapitiya Education Zone	P. Madhunethmi A.C.I. Kinkini	12.15 pm - 12.30 pm
URSE 12	Effectiveness of Integrating Road Safety Education into the Primary Curriculum: Evidence from Primary Schools in Sri Lanka	A. Mekhala L.N.P. Wedikandage	12.30 pm - 12.45 pm

Panel 6 - Multidisciplinary Research

Venue: ETR 07
Session Chair: Dr. N. M.M. Safeek
Session Co-chair: Mr.R.Vijayatheepan
Technical Support:N.F.Risla / Jauffer Samla

Presentations

No	Title	Authors	Presentation time
URSE 28	Awareness of Senior Secondary Students Regarding Protection from Sexual Abuse (A study of Tamil-Medium Schools in the Kurunegala Education Zone)	M.M.F. Amana S. Athirathan	11.30 am - 11.45 am
URSE 29	The Influence of Parental Perceptions of Schooling on Children's Learning (A Study of Senior Secondary Students in the Kekirawa Education Zone)	A.H. Fatima Amanee S. Athirathan	11.45 am - 12.00 pm
URSE 30	The impact of parents' education-related expectations on children's learning (A study of Grade 9 Tamil-Medium Students in the Kiriyulla Education Zone)	M. Israth Banu S. Athirathan	12.00 pm - 12.15 pm

Agenda

08.30 am - 9.00 am	Registration
9.00 am - 9.05am	Opening remarks and Lighting of the Traditional Oil Lamp
09:05 am - 9.10am	University Anthem
09:10 am - 9.20 am	Pooja Dance
09:20 am - 9.30 am	Welcome Address by the Dean of the Faculty of Education - *Prof. Samudra Senarath*
9.30 am - 09.35 am	Introduction to 1st Undergraduate Research symposium - Chair *Ms. Udeshini Perera*
09.35 am - 09.40 am	Introduction to 1st Doctoral Colloquium - Chair *Dr. Chethana Malepathirana*
09.40 am - 09.50 am	Address by the Chief guest, Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo *Professor Indika Mahesh Karunathilaka*
09.50 am - 09.55 am	Launch of Adyapana Prathiba Journal and Undergraduate Symposium Proceedings , Doctoral Colloquium Proceedings
09.55 am - 10.15 am	Refreshments and Networking
10.15 am - 10.45 am	Keynote address: 1st Undergraduate Research Symposium *Professor Manjula Ranagalage* *Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*
10.45 am - 11.15 am	Keynote address 1st Doctoral Collaquium *Senior Professor H.H.D.N.P. Opatha* *University of Sri Jayawardanapura*
11.15 am - 01.00 pm	Panel sessions
1.00 pm - 1.45 pm	Lunch brake
1.45 pm - 3.45 pm	Work shops
3.45 pm - 4.00 pm	Closing Ceremony and Awarding of Certificates
04.05 pm onwards	Refreshment and Networking

The Use of Learning Aids in Teaching Geography

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Geography is a subject that requires learners to understand spatial relationships, physical and human processes, environmental phenomena, and practical geographical skills. The effective use of learning aids can facilitate the presentation of such concepts and provide learners with meaningful and engaging learning experiences. This study investigated the use of learning aids in teaching Geography in Grades 10 and 11, focusing on the types of learning aids used, teachers' and students' attitudes towards their use, the challenges encountered by teachers, and the relationship between students' attitudes towards learning aids and their academic achievement in Geography. A mixed-methods approach was employed using a descriptive cross-sectional research design. The study was conducted in the Negombo Education Division, and the student sample consisted of 60 students representing 1AB, 1C, and Type 2 schools, with 20 students selected from each school category. Data were collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and students' Geography term-test marks. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings showed that conventional learning aids, particularly textbooks, blackboards, and maps, were used more frequently than technology-based resources. Students demonstrated positive attitudes towards learning aids, with a mean attitude score of 46.53 (SD = 8.754). The mean Geography term-test score was 68.68 (SD = 16.588). A strong positive relationship was found between students' attitudes towards learning aids and their Geography achievement ($r = 0.854$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis showed that students' attitudes towards learning aids explained 73.0% of the variance in Geography achievement ($R^2 = 0.730$, $p < 0.001$). The study concluded that the effective and systematic integration of learning aids can support meaningful Geography learning and academic achievement.

Keywords: *Learning Aids, Geography Education, Student Attitudes, Academic Achievement, Secondary Education*

The Practical Nature of the Educational Process Implemented for Children with Special Educational Needs in Regular School Special Education Units (SEUs)

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Although Sri Lanka's inclusive education policies recognise the rights of children with special educational needs, challenges remain in implementing these policies effectively in schools. The primary objective of this study was to systematically examine educational practices within Special Education Units (SEUs) in government schools in the Mahawa Education Zone, with a focus on the implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and the key challenges faced by principals and teachers. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory served as the theoretical framework for the study. The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, specifically a concurrent triangulation design. Data were collected from 20 participants, including four principals (04), seven special education teachers (07), eight parents (08), and one Special Education Coordinator (01) from the Zonal Education Office. Structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection instruments. Quantitative data were analysed using percentages, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings revealed that the physical infrastructure, specialized sanitary facilities, and teaching-learning aids in special education units are severely inadequate. Although the preparation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Individualized Lesson Plans (ILPs) is required by policy, their effective implementation within Special Education Units remains limited due to the lack of classroom assistants, insufficient time, and inadequate practical training at the zonal level. Furthermore, the physical and functional separation of these units from regular classrooms restricts opportunities for children with special educational needs to interact and integrate with their peers in mainstream classes. The study also revealed that teachers experience considerable levels of psychological stress in carrying out their responsibilities. The study concludes that a significant gap exists between national-level inclusive education policies and the realities of their implementation at the school level. In particular, a considerable disparity was identified between policy expectations and actual practices. Accordingly, the study recommends improving the quality of Special Education Units by providing appropriate physical facilities, recruiting classroom assistants, offering continuous practical training for teachers, introducing vocational education and computer literacy programmes for children with special educational needs, and ensuring the systematic and standardised preparation and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Keywords: *Special Education Units (SEUs), Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Special Educational Needs (SEN)*

The Contribution of the Political Science Subject to Developing the Political Literacy of G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Students

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Producing responsible and intelligent citizens is essential for the sustainable existence of a democratic society. The main objective of this study was to examine the contribution of the Political Science subject to the development of political literacy among G.C.E. (Advanced Level) students. To achieve this aim, the study focused on three specific objectives: (1) to assess students' awareness of the practical application of fundamental political concepts in contemporary contexts; (2) to examine the relevance of the Political Science syllabus to the development of students' political literacy; and (3) to evaluate the contribution of the teaching and learning methods employed in the Political Science subject to enhancing students' political literacy. The central problem addressed by this study is the significant gap between students' theoretical knowledge of Political Science and their practical political literacy in real-life contexts, largely resulting from the examination-oriented nature of the education system in Sri Lanka. The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach and involved 100 participants, including 94 students from five Sinhala-medium schools offering Political Science in the Puttalam North Education Division of the Puttalam Education Zone, and the Political Science Teacher Advisor of the zone. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and the analysis of secondary sources. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in analysing the data, with statistical measures such as the mean and correlation used in the quantitative analysis. Overall, the findings reveal that the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Political Science subject makes a significant contribution to the development of students' political literacy. However, the study also highlights the need to update the existing syllabus, strengthen the use of active teaching and learning methods, incorporate digital political literacy, and promote the critical analysis of contemporary political events.

Keywords: *Political Literacy, Political Science, G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Political Science students, Curriculum Contribution*

The Influence of External Parties on the Self-Esteem of Middle School Students in Difficult Schools

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Middle adolescence is a unique phase of child development that falls within what the World Health Organization (WHO) characterizes as the second decade of life. The positive and negative experiences encountered during this period significantly shape an individual's development, with teachers, parents, and peers exerting a major influence. Accordingly, this study examines how external stakeholders affect the self-esteem of middle adolescents. Employing a mixed-methods research design, the study collected data using questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The study gathered quantitative data through a questionnaire based on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, while qualitative data came from semi-structured interviews and observations. The study took place in four remote schools in the Puttalam South Division. From a total population of 182 middle adolescents, the Krejcie and Morgan table identified an initial sample of 124; to ensure feasibility while maintaining subgroup adequacy, the researchers selected a final sample of 64 students using proportional stratified sampling. Furthermore, the researchers selected 19 teachers (from a total of 36) and 17 parents (from a total of 160) using purposive sampling. The researchers analysed qualitative data using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes related to participants' perceptions and strategies for enhancing self-esteem. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software to obtain descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis), and to establish validity and reliability. The study concluded that multiple external factors significantly influence adolescent self-esteem, with teacher influence emerging as the paramount factor. Additionally, supportive family relationships and emotional support were identified as vital components in fostering positive self-esteem.

Keywords: *Middle Adolescence, Self-Esteem, Teacher Influence, Parental Support, Peer Groups*

The Role and Challenges of the Student Leader in the Senior Secondary Stage: A Mixed-Methods Study of Government Secondary Schools in Sri Lanka

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This research investigated the role, selection criteria, acquired skills, and challenges of student leaders at the senior secondary level. Student leadership bridges students and school administration, guiding and influencing others toward common goals. This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The sample consisted of principals, teachers, and student leaders from senior secondary schools in the Nattandiya Educational Division. The study collected data through structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observations, supplemented by a literature review. The researchers analyzed quantitative data in SPSS using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses, while they analyzed qualitative data using thematic analysis. According to the findings, student leaders contribute significantly to maintaining school discipline and organizing events, and academic performance and behavioral standards are the main criteria for their selection. Through their leadership roles, students developed communication, time-management, and decision-making skills, as well as self-confidence. However, balancing academic work with leadership responsibilities, peer pressure, ambiguous roles, and limited organizational support were identified as major challenges. The study concludes that, while student leadership positively impacts students' overall development, formal support at the school level is essential for its effectiveness. Therefore, the study recommends conducting formal leadership training programs, defining clear roles, and strengthening counselling services.

Keywords: *Student Leadership, Senior Secondary Stage, Leadership Challenges*

Developing Inferencing Skills in Reading Using Anchor Charts: A Study Based on Grade Nine ESL Students

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Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in second language learning; however, many English as a Second Language (ESL) learners face difficulties such as limited vocabulary and trouble understanding texts, identifying main ideas, and making inferences. This study investigated the use of interactive graphic organizers, specifically Anchor Charts, to improve the inferencing skills of Grade 9 students in a Sri Lankan classroom context. The study involved 40 students who struggled with various aspects of reading comprehension, including limited vocabulary, inferencing, identifying main ideas, and understanding lengthy texts. The study used a mixed-methods approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The researchers gathered quantitative data through pre-tests, post-tests, and worksheet assessments administered throughout the intervention period. The study collected qualitative data through student interviews conducted before and after the intervention and teacher interviews conducted before the intervention. The intervention involved the systematic use of Anchor Charts during reading lessons to support students in organizing information, identifying relationships among ideas, and constructing meaning from texts. The findings showed that although a comparison of pre-test and post-test scores did not indicate a statistically significant improvement in overall reading comprehension, an analysis of students' worksheet scores showed significant improvement during the intervention. Furthermore, the qualitative findings indicated positive changes in students' engagement, confidence, and ability to comprehend texts. Students reported that Anchor Charts helped them understand reading materials more effectively and made it easier to make inferences. The study concludes that Anchor Charts, as interactive graphic organizers, are valuable instructional tools that can support the development of reading comprehension skills, particularly inferencing, in ESL classrooms. The findings suggest that the continued, long-term implementation of visual learning strategies may contribute to greater improvements in reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, Inferencing Skills, Interactive Graphic Organizers, Anchor Charts, ESL Learners*

Stakeholder Perceptions of Government Measures to Improve Menstrual Hygiene in Rural Schools in Sri Lanka

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Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) is vital to the health, dignity, and educational equity of adolescent schoolgirls. Drawing on Stakeholder Theory, this study explored stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness and implementation challenges of the landmark 2025 free sanitary towel distribution program in rural schools in the Rathnapura District, Sri Lanka. A qualitative-dominant mixed-methods design was used. Quantitative data were collected through a survey of 70 purposively selected schoolgirls to determine program awareness, accessibility, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. Qualitative data were collected through focus groups and semi-structured interviews with five teachers, three school administrators, and two distributor representatives, and were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed a stark contrast between material relief and physical infrastructure. Quantitatively, 47.1% of schoolgirls said the program had reduced structural absenteeism. However, rural WASH deficits severely hampered its hygienic effectiveness: 55.7% had no regular access to water and soap, 44.3% reported inadequate toilets, and 40% had no safe disposal bins, which drove unhygienic practices. Qualitatively, teachers, although not formally trained, managed menstrual taboos through discreet distribution. School administrators faced a heavy administrative and inventory compliance burden without operational budgets or sufficient storage. Distributors also cited threats to economic viability from volatile fuel prices, thin margins, and poor rural roads. The study concludes that distributing materials alone cannot ensure proper MHH without adequate infrastructure. Recommendations include transitioning to an integrated funding approach that combines product provision with mandatory WASH infrastructure development, developing unified operational handbooks for teachers, and introducing a mandatory co-educational reproductive health curriculum.

Keywords: *Menstrual Hygiene, Stakeholder Theory, Wash Infrastructure, Rural Schools, Sri Lanka*

Usefulness of Teacher-Created Video Tutorials as Supplementary Learning Material for Grade 12 Economics Students

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This study investigated the usefulness of teacher-created video tutorials as supplementary learning material for Grade 12 Economics students, focusing on market equilibrium. Economics is traditionally taught in Sri Lankan classrooms through lecture-based instruction, which offers students limited opportunities to revisit abstract, graphically demanding concepts. The study adopted a mixed-methods action research design with 40 Grade 12 Economics students (English medium) from a Type 1AB national school in the Borella Education Division, selected through total population (intact group) sampling. The students were first taught the lesson through conventional teaching, after which they took a pre-test. The same lesson was then reinforced with a teacher-created video tutorial, after which the researchers administered a post-test and a structured questionnaire. A paired-samples t-test showed a statistically significant improvement in scores, from a mean of 14.68 (SD = 2.74) to 20.95 (SD = 1.93) out of 25, $t(39) = 11.925$, $p < .001$, with a very large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.885$). Gains were evident across multiple-choice, short-answer, and extended-response items, and the proportion of students achieving excellent scores rose from 0% to 42.5%. The questionnaire results (overall mean = 40.40/50) indicated strongly positive student perceptions, particularly regarding the clarity of the video diagrams and the value of being able to replay difficult sections. A thematic analysis of open-ended responses showed that students used the video for targeted revision and confidence-building, and to fill gaps left by classroom instruction. These findings suggest that teacher-created video tutorials are an effective, low-cost supplementary strategy for teaching cognitively demanding Economics topics in Sri Lankan secondary schools, and they provide locally grounded evidence to support their wider use in classroom practice and curriculum guidance.

Keywords: *Video Tutorials, Supplementary Learning Material, Grade 12 Economics, Market Equilibrium, Academic Achievement*

Student Political Engagement and Its Contribution to the Academic, Attitudinal, and Social Development of University Students

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University education is expected not only to provide academic knowledge but also to develop socially responsible, confident, and competent individuals. Student politics is an important extracurricular activity within the university environment and offers opportunities for students to develop leadership, communication, collective action, and social engagement. However, student politics has also been associated with interruptions to academic activities and declining academic performance. Against this background, this study examined the contribution of student political engagement to university students' academic performance, attitudinal development, and social personality development. A mixed-methods research approach was employed. The study collected quantitative data from 58 student union representatives from four faculties at the University of Colombo, and qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with four student union presidents and four academic staff members. A structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items collected the quantitative data, and semi-structured interviews collected the qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, Pearson correlation, and one-way ANOVA, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed a strong negative correlation between the time spent on student political activities and GPA ($r = -0.632$, $p < 0.01$). The study also found significant differences in GPA among the four faculties ($F(3, 54) = 6.894$, $p = 0.001$). At the same time, student politics contributed positively to communication skills, self-confidence, leadership abilities, social responsibility, cooperation, altruism, and social networking. Conversely, the study identified ideological rigidity, intolerance of opposing views, academic disruption, and aggressive approaches to conflict resolution as negative outcomes. The study concludes that student politics has both positive and negative consequences and that its constructive dimensions should be strengthened, while its adverse effects are minimized, through a responsible and democratic student political culture.

Keywords: *Student Politics, University Students, Academic Performance, Attitudinal Development, Social Personality*

The Impact of Continuous Assessment Used in School Education on Students' Subject Achievement

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In the modern education system, continuous assessment, which goes beyond exam-centric rankings, plays a critical role in fostering students' conceptual understanding, active participation, and personal learning growth in the classroom. However, empirical research on the direct impact of continuous assessment, beyond the traditional term examination pattern, on students' academic performance in Sri Lankan secondary classrooms remains limited. To address this gap, this study aimed to determine the impact of continuous assessment methods used in Grades 10 and 11 of 1AB schools in Sri Lanka on students' year-end academic performance. Questionnaires, interviews, and secondary sources were used for data collection, and the qualitative and quantitative data gathered were analyzed within a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data were analyzed in SPSS using paired-samples t-tests, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression, while qualitative data from teacher interviews and selected questionnaire items were analyzed using thematic and narrative analysis. The quantitative analysis revealed a direct, positive relationship between implementing continuous assessment methods and improved students' academic performance. However, the qualitative analysis indicated that, owing to heavy workloads, lack of time, and inadequate training, most teachers still prioritize traditional methods, such as short written questions and structured assignments, in their continuous assessment practices. Based on these findings, establishing a continuous assessment framework integrated with modern evaluation techniques and promoting related teacher professional development programs are essential to enhancing the effectiveness of Sri Lanka's secondary education system.

Keywords: *Continuous Assessment, Academic Performance, Secondary Education, 1AB Schools*

Success of Using Smart Classrooms in Teaching Advanced Level Economics

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Integrating technology into school education has become increasingly important for creating effective and engaging learning environments. This study investigated the success of using smart classrooms in teaching Advanced Level Economics in selected schools in Sri Lanka. The study aimed to identify the nature and current use of smart classrooms in teaching Advanced Level Economics and to examine how smart classroom technology can be used successfully and effectively to enhance the teaching and learning process. The study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study collected data from 60 Advanced Level Economics students and eight Economics teachers in selected 1AB and 1C schools. The study administered structured questionnaires to students and teachers and gathered qualitative data through interviews and observations. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including regression analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that smart classrooms facilitate the use of digital learning resources, visual presentations, graphs, tables, and multimedia materials, thereby supporting students' understanding of complex economic concepts and enhancing the teaching-learning process. The regression analysis revealed that the overall model was statistically significant, $F(2, 57) = 14.656$, $p < 0.001$, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.316, indicating that the selected independent variables explained 31.6% of the variance in the dependent variable. However, the study identified technological limitations, resource constraints, connectivity issues, and the need for adequate teacher competencies as challenges to effective implementation. The study concludes that smart classrooms have considerable potential to strengthen Advanced Level Economics education when supported by appropriate infrastructure, technological resources, and continuous professional development for teachers.

Keywords: *Advanced Level, Smart Classrooms, Technology Integration, Digital Learning, Teaching Economics*

Effectiveness of Integrating Road Safety Education into the Primary Curriculum: Evidence from Primary Schools in Sri Lanka

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Road traffic accidents remain a major public safety and developmental concern, particularly for children, who are vulnerable road users. Road safety education is therefore an important component of primary education, as it can develop children's knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviours related to safe road use. In Sri Lanka, road safety education has been integrated into the primary curriculum through subjects and lessons related to safety, transportation, and environmental studies. However, the continuing occurrence of road traffic accidents raises questions about the effectiveness of this curriculum integration and the extent to which students can transfer classroom knowledge into real-life behaviour. This study examined the effectiveness of integrating road safety education into the Sri Lankan primary curriculum, with particular attention to curriculum integration, students' awareness, teaching methods and learning materials, and the challenges teachers face. A mixed-methods research design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 150 students, comprising 50 students each from Grades 3, 4, and 5, selected from six schools in the Homagama Education Division of the Colombo District. The study obtained qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers and examined curriculum documents, textbooks, and teacher guides through document analysis. The study analysed quantitative data using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, and analysed qualitative data thematically. The findings revealed that road safety education is progressively integrated into the curriculum from Grade 3 to Grade 5. Overall road safety awareness increased across the grades, with mean scores of 53%, 65%, and 69% for Grades 3, 4, and 5, respectively. Pedestrian safety awareness was particularly strong, reaching 89% among Grade 5 students. However, awareness of driver ethics and responsibilities remained comparatively moderate. Students strongly preferred participatory and practical learning, particularly group activities, role-play, models, videos, and pictures. Although teachers recognized the effectiveness of student-centred approaches, lectures and discussions remained dominant owing to examination pressures, limited instructional time, inadequate resources, and other implementation constraints. The study concludes that curriculum integration has a positive educational effect, but that knowledge acquisition alone is insufficient to ensure safe road behaviour. To maximize the effectiveness of road safety education in Sri Lankan primary schools, schools must strengthen experiential learning, teacher professional development, learning resources, school-community collaboration, and parental involvement.

Keywords: *Road Safety Education, Curriculum Integration, Road Safety Awareness, Road Safety Behaviour*

Teachers' Feedback and Students' Motivation Towards Learning: A Descriptive-Correlational Study of Grade 6 Mathematics Students in the Panduwasnuwara Education Division, Sri Lanka

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The transition to junior secondary education (Grade 6 Mathematics) in Sri Lanka often triggers a "motivation dip." Grounded in Self-Determination and Social Cognitive Theories, this study investigated the relationship between teacher feedback modalities and student motivation. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were collected via validated questionnaires from a stratified random sample of 100 Grade 6 students across six government schools in the Panduwasnuwara Education Division.Results revealed a corrective-centric culture (M = 4.08). Overall motivation was moderately positive (M = 3.54), yet 65% exhibited moderate-to-low motivation, highlighting a critical vulnerability. Pearson correlations demonstrated that corrective ($r = .615$, $p < .001$) and formative ($r = .542$, $p < .001$) feedback had strong positive relationships with motivation. Summative feedback showed no significant correlation ($r = .184$, $p = .067$). Item-level analysis revealed a "dual effect": although students ranked corrective feedback highly, excessive correction of minor errors threatened mathematical self-efficacy. T-tests confirmed no significant gender differences.The study concludes that process-oriented, actionable feedback sustains motivation, whereas standalone summative grading offers little value. Educators should refine corrective feedback to foster independent revision, integrate descriptive commentary into summative assessments, and prioritize real-time formative interactions to satisfy students' psychological needs for competence and autonomy.

Keywords: *Teacher Feedback, Student Motivation, Grade 6 Transition, Mathematics Education, Self-Determination Theory, Formative Assessment, Sri Lanka*

Using the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Model to Organize the Teaching Process of ICT Subject Teachers in Sri Lankan Schools

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT) requires teachers to effectively integrate technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. This study examined how Sri Lankan ICT teachers use the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model to organize teaching, focusing on their existing knowledge, practical application, and implementation challenges. Utilizing an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, data were collected from 21 ICT teachers and 42 Grade 11 students across 16 government schools in the Walallawita Education Division via questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically for triangulation. Findings revealed that 85.8% of teachers possessed moderate-to-high TPACK awareness, with notable strengths in pedagogical and content knowledge. Teachers actively combined technological tools (computers, projectors, internet) with student-centered strategies like group work and problem-solving. However, significant challenges persist: insufficient training (47.6%), limited curriculum time (42.9%), varying student digital literacy (42.9%), and inadequate infrastructure (38.1%). Consequently, 95.2% requested further TPACK training. The study concludes that while ICT teachers actively apply TPACK principles, institutional, infrastructural, and professional constraints limit full implementation. Recommendations include strengthening teacher training, upgrading infrastructure, and embedding TPACK principles into educational policy to enhance ICT education quality.

Keywords: *TPACK Model, ICT Education, Technology Integration, 21st-Century Education*

A Study on How Students Have Perceived the Concepts of Natural Disaster Risk Management Through the Subject of Geography

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Integrating disaster risk management (DRM) education into school curricula has become essential amid global climate change and recurring environmental crises. This study investigated the extent to which Advanced Level Geography students have internalized key DRM concepts, namely disaster preparedness, disaster response, and post-disaster recovery, as taught through the geography syllabus. The study adopted a mixed-methods design, combining a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews administered to students and teachers in national (1AB) and provincial (1C) schools in the Mawanella Educational Zone, an area highly prone to floods and landslides. Data were collected from 74 Advanced Level Geography students and six Geography teachers, selected through stratified random sampling. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, and chi-square tests, while interview data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that students possess a high level of awareness (74.3%) of basic and locally relevant DRM concepts, particularly concerning the floods and landslides specific to their region. However, practical response competencies, such as recognising early warning signs, identifying safe locations, and applying preparedness actions during an actual emergency, remained at a moderate-to-low level (86.5% combined), and disaster experience showed no statistically significant effect on response skills ($t = 1.332$, $p = 0.187$). Awareness of contemporary and international DRM frameworks and tools, including the Sendai Framework, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and bio-engineering techniques, was notably limited. Teacher-centred, syllabus-bound instruction remains dominant, with real disaster examples and school-based drills used only occasionally, while mass and social media, rather than the Geography subject itself, were students' primary source of disaster-response knowledge. The study concludes that, while Geography education has been effective in building conceptual awareness, a clear gap persists between theoretical knowledge and practical preparedness. The recommendations include integrating more field-based, experiential, and technology-enabled learning approaches, strengthening teacher training, and updating the curriculum with contemporary DRM content.

Keywords: *Geography Education, Disaster Risk Management, Disaster Preparedness, Student Perception, Geography Teachers*

Contribution of the G.C.E. Advanced Level Geography Syllabus to Environmental Conservation

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Global environmental degradation, climate change, and the rapid depletion of natural resources are placing mounting pressure on ecosystems and human well-being, giving education a central role in shaping environmentally responsible citizens. This study examined the G.C.E. Advanced Level Geography syllabus's contribution to environmental conservation in Sri Lanka, focusing on syllabus content, students' environmental awareness and attitudes, and teachers' contributions. The study used a mixed-methods design in the Homagama Education Zone, Colombo District. Five schools, comprising two national (1AB) schools and three Type 1C schools, were selected through simple random sampling, yielding a sample of 60 Grade 12 and 13 Arts stream students and 10 Geography teachers. Data were gathered through content analysis of the syllabus, a student questionnaire incorporating an attitude scale, classroom observations, and teacher interviews, and were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics together with thematic analysis. The content analysis showed that 314 of 656 lesson periods (47.86%) across Grades 12 and 13 addressed environmental conservation, with Grade 13 (58.33%) containing proportionally more such content than Grade 12 (38.37%). Students showed a fairly high level of environmental awareness (mean = 7.47 out of 10) and held positive attitudes toward conservation. However, an independent-samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference in awareness between students who had studied Ordinary Level Geography and those who had not ($t = -0.953$, $p = 0.345$), suggesting that awareness is shaped by factors beyond the syllabus alone. Teachers reported actively promoting conservation practices but identified time constraints, limited resources, and an examination-oriented curriculum as key barriers. The findings confirm that the Geography syllabus contributes meaningfully to environmental knowledge, attitudes, and responsible behaviour, and the study recommends strengthening practical environmental education activities, teacher training, and school-level conservation initiatives.

Keywords: *Geography Syllabus, Environmental Conservation, Environmental Awareness, Pro-Environmental Attitudes, Environmental Education*

The Interest of Probationary Adolescent Female Students in the Teaching-Learning Process: A Multiple Case Study

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Although education is a fundamental factor in personal development, social integration, and the expansion of life opportunities, equal access to it remains problematic for probationary adolescent female students. Experiences such as family breakdown, economic hardship, abuse, neglect, psychological distress, and social stigma directly affect their interest in learning and their educational participation. Therefore, the primary objectives of this research were to study the interest shown by probationary adolescent female students in the teaching-learning process, to identify the personal, social, and institutional factors affecting this interest, and to propose suitable recommendations to foster their interest in learning. The study adopted a qualitative research approach guided by a narrative methodology, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify both expected and unexpected themes. A sample of 11 individuals was selected using purposive sampling, comprising five probationary adolescent female students, two probation officers, two probation teachers, and two school teachers. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interview data gathered from the probation officers and teachers were used for data triangulation. During the data analysis, themes relating to personal experiences, educational pathways, psychological states, and social relationships were identified. The findings identified mental well-being, self-confidence, future aspirations, teacher support, the educational environment within probation centers, and social acceptance as the primary factors influencing the students' interest in learning. Furthermore, perceiving education as a second chance in life, believing in personal transformation, and having a positive outlook on the future were revealed to strengthen interest in learning. Conversely, adverse past experiences, psychological distress, and social labeling were found to obstruct the learning process. This study provides novel insights into the educational needs of probationary adolescent female students and makes a significant contribution to the development of educational programs, counseling services, teacher training, and policies within probation centers. In particular, by highlighting the reciprocal relationship between mental well-being and educational participation, the study emphasizes that education serves as a fundamental tool for the social integration and successful rehabilitation of probationary adolescent female students.

Keywords: *Probationary adolescent female students, learning interest, qualitative research methodology*

The Contribution of Extracurricular Activities to the Balanced Education of University Students

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University education extends beyond acquiring subject knowledge to fostering a balanced education that encompasses students' intellectual, personal, social, psychological, and professional development. Although extracurricular activities are implemented within the Sri Lankan university system, evidence regarding their contribution to balanced education and the barriers to student participation remains limited. Therefore, this study examined how extracurricular activities contribute to university students' balanced education. A mixed-methods research approach was employed. The study collected quantitative data through questionnaires from 83 students across six faculties at the University of Colombo, and qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with two academic staff members and five student association representatives. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that extracurricular activities contributed to the development of leadership, communication, teamwork, self-confidence, social relationships, and employability-related skills. The highest mean score was recorded for building social relationships (4.96), while the mean score for the importance of extracurricular activities to balanced education was 4.46. Time-management difficulties (38.6%) were identified as the main barrier to participation, followed by economic difficulties (22.8%). The study also found a statistically significant association between residential status and participation in extracurricular activities ($\chi^2 = 7.780$, $p = .005$). The study concludes that extracurricular activities constitute an important educational space for promoting the balanced development of university students, rather than merely serving as supplementary activities. Therefore, strengthening institutional support and providing opportunities and facilities that enable students to balance extracurricular participation with their academic responsibilities are essential.

Keywords: *Extra-curricular Activities, University Students, Balanced Education*

Impact of Artificial Intelligence Tools on the Self-Directed Learning Skills of Advanced Level Information and Communication Technology Students

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Artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini have spread quickly through classrooms in recent years, raising genuine questions about how they shape students' ability to learn independently. This study examines how AI tool use relates to the self-directed learning (SDL) skills of Advanced Level (A/L) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) students in Sri Lanka. It set out to determine how aware students are of AI tools, how they actually use them day to day, and how far these tools help to build self-directed learning. The study used a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study gathered data from 100 A/L ICT students and five ICT teachers, randomly selected from 1AB schools in the Dehiwala Education Zone. Structured questionnaires provided quantitative data, which were analysed in SPSS using descriptive, reliability, and correlation tests, while semi-structured interviews provided qualitative data, which were examined thematically. The results showed statistically significant positive correlations between students' awareness of AI tools, their usage practices, the perceived effectiveness of the tools, and their self-directed learning skills ($p < 0.01$), with the strongest relationship found between the perceived effectiveness of AI tools and self-directed learning skills ($r = 0.735$). A multiple regression analysis further confirmed that these three variables together accounted for 59.4% of the variance in self-directed learning skills ($R^2 = 0.594$, $F(3, 96) = 46.848$, $p < 0.001$). The thematic analysis of the qualitative data identified three main themes: improved skills in organising information and taking technical notes; an improved ability to work through programming problems independently; and a growing risk of accepting inaccurate or outdated AI-generated information without questioning it, even though AI also supported self-assessment. Overall, the study finds that although AI tools genuinely contribute to students' self-directed learning, they are best treated as a "technological assistant" used alongside attentive teacher guidance rather than as a replacement for the teacher. Accordingly, the study recommends structured guidance and training programmes to build AI literacy, ethical usage habits, and information-verification skills among students, teachers, and policymakers.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Self-Directed Learning, Advanced Level ICT Students*

Contribution of the Teaching-Learning Process of Economics to the Development of Students' Entrepreneurial Skills

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Entrepreneurship is a fundamental life skill and a key driver of economic development, job creation, and innovation. In many economies, particularly those of developing nations, youth unemployment remains a major challenge. Economics education plays a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions and equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate the business landscape. This study examines how the Advanced Level Economics teaching-learning process contributes to developing secondary school students' entrepreneurial skills. Supported by theoretical frameworks such as Human Capital Theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and Entrepreneurial Learning Theory, the study explores how economic knowledge is linked to mindset development and broader life skills. Drawing on current literature and empirical studies, the paper highlights the importance of economics education in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, financial literacy, and risk-taking ability among Advanced Level Economics students. The study collected data through a mixed-methods approach, including a questionnaire completed by 110 Economics students, semi-structured interviews with eight Economics teachers, and a structural content analysis of official curriculum documents. The findings reveal that, while the Economics curriculum theoretically incorporates foundational business concepts, a significant gap exists between policy and classroom practice. The teaching-learning process remains predominantly teacher-centered and exam-oriented, prioritizing the rote memorization of theoretical models over the practical application of entrepreneurial competencies such as risk-taking, creative problem-solving, and business planning. The document analysis indicates that entrepreneurial concepts are dispersed throughout the syllabus but lack cohesive integration with practice. Students and teachers identified heavy syllabus density, lack of time, and institutional pressures as the main barriers to skill-based learning. The findings suggest that an effective curriculum should integrate practical training and policy support. The study concludes with recommendations for educational reforms and policies to strengthen entrepreneurial skills through economics education, such as incorporating project-based learning and reducing theoretical density in order to cultivate actionable life skills.

Keywords: *Teaching-Learning Process, Economics Subject, Entrepreneurial Skills, Advanced Level Economics Students*

A Study on the Educational Activities of University Students Engaged in Self-Employment

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Self-employment among university students has become increasingly important owing to rising educational expenses and the need for financial independence. This study examined the educational activities of university students engaged in self-employment, focusing on the nature of their self-employment, its economic contribution to their education, the educational problems they face, and the institutional support they require. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Researchers collected quantitative data from 70 self-employed university students using a structured questionnaire, and qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with four self-employed students and four student counsellors from the Career Guidance Unit. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores, standard deviations, and the Pearson chi-square test, while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that students were engaged in diverse self-employment activities, including flower decoration, handicraft production, graphic design, cake design, beauty product production, online tutoring, clothing design, software development, photography, painting, bag design, and wedding decoration. Notably, 96.2% had begun self-employment during their university education. Regarding economic contribution, 67.1% reported spending more than 10% of their self-employment income directly on educational needs. The highest mean score was recorded for reducing dependence on the Mahapola Scholarship and other financial assistance ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.01$). However, 55.7% reported educational problems, particularly difficulties in completing assignments and dissertations, preparing for examinations, participating in group activities, and attending lectures and practical training sessions. The study found a statistically significant relationship between weekly time spent on self-employment and educational problems ($\chi^2 = 14.203$, $df = 4$, $p = .006$). The study concludes that self-employment helps students meet educational expenses, but the time devoted to it is significantly associated with educational problems. Therefore, flexible academic arrangements and appropriate institutional support are important in helping students balance self-employment and educational activities.

Keywords: *University Students, Self-Employment, Educational Activities*

The Contribution of Dance to the Psychosocial Well-being of University Students: A Study Based on the Dance Circle of the University of Colombo

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In the contemporary university context, students encounter various psychosocial challenges arising from academic pressure, competitiveness, social difficulties, economic concerns, and uncertainty about their future. In this context, the present study examined how dance contributes to university students' psychosocial well-being, focusing in particular on the impact of activities conducted by the Dance Circle of the University of Colombo. A mixed-methods research approach was employed. The study collected quantitative data using a structured questionnaire and qualitative data through semi-structured interviews. The sample included 60 student members of the Dance Circle at the University of Colombo. The collected data were analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques and qualitative thematic analysis. The findings showed that 86.7% of students identified reduced academic stress and pressure as their primary reason for joining the Dance Circle. The study also indicated that participation in dance activities reduced psychological stress, facilitated emotional expression, enhanced self-confidence, and fostered positive self-perceptions. Regarding social well-being, 91.7% of students agreed that participation in the Dance Circle provided opportunities to develop new friendships. The qualitative findings further demonstrated that dance activities promoted peer interaction, teamwork, social communication, and interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, the correlation analysis identified a weak positive relationship between the weekly time allocated to dance training and students' overall psychosocial well-being ($r = 0.260$). The regression analysis was statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.045$), indicating a significant association between the time allocated to dance training and psychosocial well-being. However, the findings also suggest that dance alone does not determine students' overall psychosocial well-being, highlighting the influence of multiple factors. The study concludes that dance can serve as a meaningful, practical activity to support the psychosocial well-being of university students. Therefore, integrating dance and other artistic and physical activities into university student welfare and well-being initiatives may provide an effective approach to addressing academic stress and strengthening students' psychological and social well-being.

Keywords: *Psychosocial Well-Being, University Students, Psychological Well-Being, Social Well-Being, Dance Circle*

A Study of Counselling Strategies to Reduce Aggressive Behaviours among Early Adolescents

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Aggressive behaviour among early adolescents has become a growing concern in schools worldwide because it affects not only the individual student but also classmates, teachers, and the overall school environment, with negative consequences for students' academic performance, social relationships, and emotional well-being. Behaviours such as verbal abuse, physical fighting, social exclusion, and reactive aggression are commonly observed during early adolescence, a developmental stage typically between the ages of 10 and 14, that is characterised by significant physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. School counselling is an important intervention that helps students manage these behaviours and develop positive coping skills. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the counselling strategies used by school counsellors to reduce aggressive behaviour among early adolescents and to identify the factors contributing to aggression among Grade 6 students. A mixed-methods research design was employed. The study collected quantitative data through questionnaires administered to 20 Grade 6 teachers and observations of 20 Grade 6 students. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 10 school counsellors selected from government schools in the Matara Education Division. Descriptive statistical analysis was used for the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data. The findings showed that aggressive behaviour was common among Grade 6 students and took four main forms: verbal, physical, social/relational, and reactive aggression. Verbal aggression, including teasing, name-calling, and insulting peers, emerged as the most frequently observed form. The family environment was identified as the primary factor contributing to aggressive behaviour, followed by peer pressure, media exposure, emotional and developmental challenges, and academic stress. Building rapport and trust emerged as an important counselling strategy for reducing aggressive behaviour among Grade 6 students. Most counsellors emphasised that establishing a positive relationship with students was necessary before discussing aggressive incidents, and they reported using casual conversations, drawing activities, games, and storytelling to help students feel comfortable and understood.

Keywords: *Counselling Strategies, Aggressive Behaviours, Early Adolescents*

Challenges Faced by Students in Adapting to the School Hostel Environment: A Study Based on the Kuliyapitiya Education Zone

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This study investigated the challenges students face in adapting to the school hostel environment in the Kuliyapitiya Education Zone, focusing on how they adjust to a new residential setting away from home and family. School hostel life represents a significant transitional period in a student's life, as it separates students from their familiar home environment and places them within a new social, cultural, and educational context. Although research on boarding hostels has been conducted internationally, systematic local studies examining students' adaptation challenges in semi-urban school hostels outside major urban centres in Sri Lanka remain limited. The study adopted a mixed-methods action research design, combining quantitative questionnaire data with qualitative interview and focus group data. The sample comprised 48 hostel students, 10 teachers, and 10 hostel staff members from two hostels in the Kuliyapitiya Education Zone, selected through purposive sampling. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that emotional and mental health issues (M = 3.95) and social issues (M = 3.89) were the most impactful adaptation challenges, followed by economic issues (M = 3.76), while cultural issues (M = 2.14) had the least impact. The main reasons for hostel admission were the distance between home and school (66.7%), an unfavourable study environment at home (56.3%), and caregivers' difficulty in providing care (45.8%). The thematic analysis identified five key factors contributing to adaptation challenges: separation from family and its emotional impact, difficulty adapting to a new social environment, the hostel's physical and administrative factors, educational and economic pressures, and the absence of adequate support systems. Students used both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies, with many relying on peer support, senior students, and hostel staff, while some resorted to negative coping mechanisms such as social isolation and aggressive behaviour. These findings suggest that successful adaptation to hostel life depends on a comprehensive support system encompassing emotional, social, educational, administrative, and policy dimensions. The study recommends establishing a national policy for student hostels, enforcing child protection laws, providing compulsory counselling services, and training staff in child psychology and crisis management, along with improving physical facilities, food quality, and social integration activities.

Keywords: *School Hostels, Boarding Students, Adaptation Challenges, Student Well-Being, Coping Strategies*

Equipping for Life Beyond School: The Adequacy of the Sri Lankan O/L Civic Education Syllabus

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Education plays a vital role in preparing young people for responsible citizenship and the practical demands of adult life. In Sri Lanka, Civic Education has been incorporated into the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (G.C.E. O/L) curriculum to develop civic competencies, social responsibility, and essential life skills among students. However, concerns remain regarding the extent to which the current syllabus adequately equips students to face contemporary social, economic, and civic challenges. This study therefore examined the effectiveness and relevance of the existing Civic Education syllabus in preparing students for life beyond school. The study was guided by four objectives: to identify the key practical life skills and civic competencies required of young adults in contemporary Sri Lankan society; to explore students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Civic Education syllabus in preparing them for real-life challenges; to explore teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the syllabus in preparing students for real-life challenges; and to analyse the current O/L Civic Education syllabus to determine the extent to which its learning outcomes align with the identified practical competencies. The study used a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods approach, and the sample was selected through stratified random sampling. The study was conducted in the Maho Educational Zone and involved students from five selected schools representing the convenient, difficult, and very difficult school categories. The study collected quantitative data from 100 Grade 12 students who had studied Civic Education and completed the G.C.E. O/L Examination in 2024, and qualitative data through interviews with five Civic Education teachers. After analysing the questionnaire and interview data, the study conducted a content analysis of the Grade 10 and 11 Civic Education textbooks. The findings identified financial literacy, career readiness, problem-solving, decision-making, and practical life skills as inadequately represented in the syllabus. Students generally appreciated the knowledge gained through the subject but expressed concerns about the limited opportunities for practical application and experiential learning. The study concludes that, although the Civic Education syllabus provides an important foundation for civic awareness and responsible citizenship, it needs further strengthening to better address the practical realities young people face in modern Sri Lankan society. The research recommends revising the curriculum content, incorporating more life-oriented competencies, promoting activity-based learning approaches, and enhancing opportunities for real-world engagement. These improvements would help to make Civic Education more relevant and effective in equipping students for life beyond school.

Keywords: *Civic Education, Life Skills, Civic Competencies, Adequacy, Ordinary Level (O/L)*

The Effectiveness of Gamification-Based Formative Assessment in Enhancing English Language Learning Outcomes among Students in a Private Higher Education Institute in Colombo: An Action Research Study

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The integration of digital technology into higher education has enabled traditional assessment procedures to be reconceptualized as interactive, student-centered learning experiences. Gamified formative assessment is generally considered an effective way to boost students' engagement, motivation, participation, and academic achievement. The present study investigates the effect of gamified formative assessment on English language teaching and learning outcomes at a private higher education institute in Colombo, Sri Lanka. A quasi-experimental mixed-methods action research design was applied to 50 students enrolled in a program comprising six sequential English language courses: Simple Present Tense, Simple Past Tense, Simple Future Tense, Direct and Indirect Speech, Be Verbs, and Essay Writing. Every session embedded interactive formative assessment, collaborative engagement, immediate feedback, and gamified learning using Mentimeter, Padlet, and Kahoot. Data were also collected through the educators' comments. Quantitative data were analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics using descriptive statistics, a paired-samples t-test, and Pearson correlation analysis to investigate changes in academic performance and the relationship between participation in gamified activities and individual learning gains. In the illustrative results, mean performance improved from 52.73% in the pre-assessment to 75.68% in the post-assessment, and a positive relationship was observed between participation and academic progress. These figures are illustrative only and are not based on actual participants. The findings point to the promising prospects of using gamification in formative assessment to create more engaging, feedback-oriented learning environments for English language education in private higher education.

Keywords: *Academic Progress, Formative Assessment, Gamification, Higher Education*

An Investigation into the Factors Contributing to Students' Underperformance in the Buddhism Subject at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination

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Buddhism is a compulsory subject in the Sri Lankan school curriculum and plays an important role in promoting religious knowledge, moral values, and cultural identity among students. However, despite its significance, many students continue to perform poorly in Buddhism in the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) Ordinary Level Examination. This study investigated the factors contributing to students' underperformance in Buddhism, with special reference to the Walallawita Educational Division. The study focused on three main areas: student-related, teacher-related, and curriculum-related factors. The study used a mixed-methods approach, collecting quantitative data through questionnaires administered to 60 Grade 11 students and six Buddhism teachers from selected schools in the division. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequencies and percentages. The findings suggest a gap between classroom teaching practices and the skills needed to answer higher-order examination questions effectively. The study concludes that students' underperformance in Buddhism is not caused by a single factor but results from the combined influence of student attitudes, teaching practices, and curriculum demand. Therefore, improving student motivation, adopting more student-centered teaching approaches, strengthening teacher professional development, and revising certain aspects of the curriculum could help to enhance student achievement in the subject. The findings of this study may help teachers, curriculum developers, educational administrators, and policymakers improve the quality of Buddhism education and examination outcomes.

Keywords: *Underperformance, Buddhism Subject, Student Factors, Teacher Factors, Curriculum Factors*

Awareness of Senior Secondary Students Regarding Protection from Sexual Abuse (A study of Tamil-Medium Schools in the Kurunegala Education Zone)

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Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by rapid physical, psychological, emotional, and social changes. Misconceptions about sexual abuse, difficulty recognizing unsafe situations, reluctance to seek help, fear of social or family consequences, and limited knowledge of internet safety may all affect students' ability to protect themselves. This study investigated senior secondary students' awareness of sexual abuse and their knowledge of self-protection. A quantitative approach was adopted. The target population comprised 898 students from 13 Tamil-medium schools in the Kurunegala Education Zone. Researchers selected ten schools and used stratified random sampling to select 123 students: 56 boys and 67 girls. The study collected data from these students and 25 teachers who taught senior secondary classes in the selected schools. The researchers administered questionnaires to both students and teachers. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The key findings were as follows: Regarding "good touch" and "bad touch," 92% of students correctly identified touching private body parts as "bad touch," indicating a foundational understanding of personal safety. However, they showed less clarity about subtler scenarios, such as someone attempting to touch them after offering a gift or chocolate, or touching them under the guise of play. In addition, 81% of students believed that the correct response to inappropriate touching was to forgive the person and remain silent. Awareness of protective actions was also low, including seeking help from a teacher, parent, or guardian; telling a trusted person; or moving away from a dangerous environment. Sixty-two percent of students did not recognize that sharing personal images and information online could be dangerous. This suggests that their awareness of sexual abuse may be largely limited to situations involving direct physical contact. Approximately 80% of students reported that they did not know how to protect themselves in unsafe situations, and 69% said they could not identify such situations. The study also found no statistically significant differences by gender or grade level. Although female students had a slightly higher average score than male students, the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.217$). Similarly, Grade 11 students had a slightly higher average score than Grade 10 students, but this difference was also not statistically significant.

Keywords: *Sexual abuse, Awareness, Self-protection, Appropriate touch, Inappropriate touch, Senior secondary students*

The Influence of Parental Perceptions of Schooling on Children's Learning (A Study of Senior Secondary Students in the Kekirawa Education Zone)

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This study investigated how parental perceptions of schooling influence senior secondary students' learning in Tamil-medium schools in the Kekirawa Education Zone, Anuradhapura District. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and used a mixed-methods approach. The study population comprised 1,193 senior secondary students, of whom 119 (10%) were selected through convenience sampling. The study collected data from students, parents, and school principals using closed-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings indicate that parental perceptions of schooling are closely associated with students' learning experiences. Positive parental attitudes toward schooling, high expectations for children's educational success, and regular encouragement can strengthen students' motivation and interest in learning. Support at home, including attention to schoolwork and a conducive learning environment, also contributes to academic achievement, attendance, and active classroom engagement. In addition, constructive communication and collaboration between parents and schools help create a more supportive context for students' educational progress. Conversely, parental apathy, negative perceptions of school education, limited assistance with learning, and weak communication with schools may undermine students' interest, achievement, and progress. These findings highlight that children's learning is shaped not only by classroom instruction but also by the attitudes and support they encounter at home. Parental engagement can complement teachers' efforts, while a lack of encouragement or connection with the school may make it harder for students to stay motivated and fully participate in their education. The study underscores the importance of strengthening parent–school partnerships in the Kekirawa Education Zone. Schools can encourage regular communication with families and offer opportunities for parents to learn how to support learning at home. Educational planners and policymakers may also use these findings to develop initiatives that promote parental involvement and address barriers to effective collaboration. Such efforts could help create a more supportive learning environment and improve students' academic experiences and outcomes.

Keywords: *School education, Parental attitudes, Learning, Influence*

The impact of parents' education-related expectations on children's learning (A study of Grade 9 Tamil-Medium Students in the Kiriyulla Education Zone)

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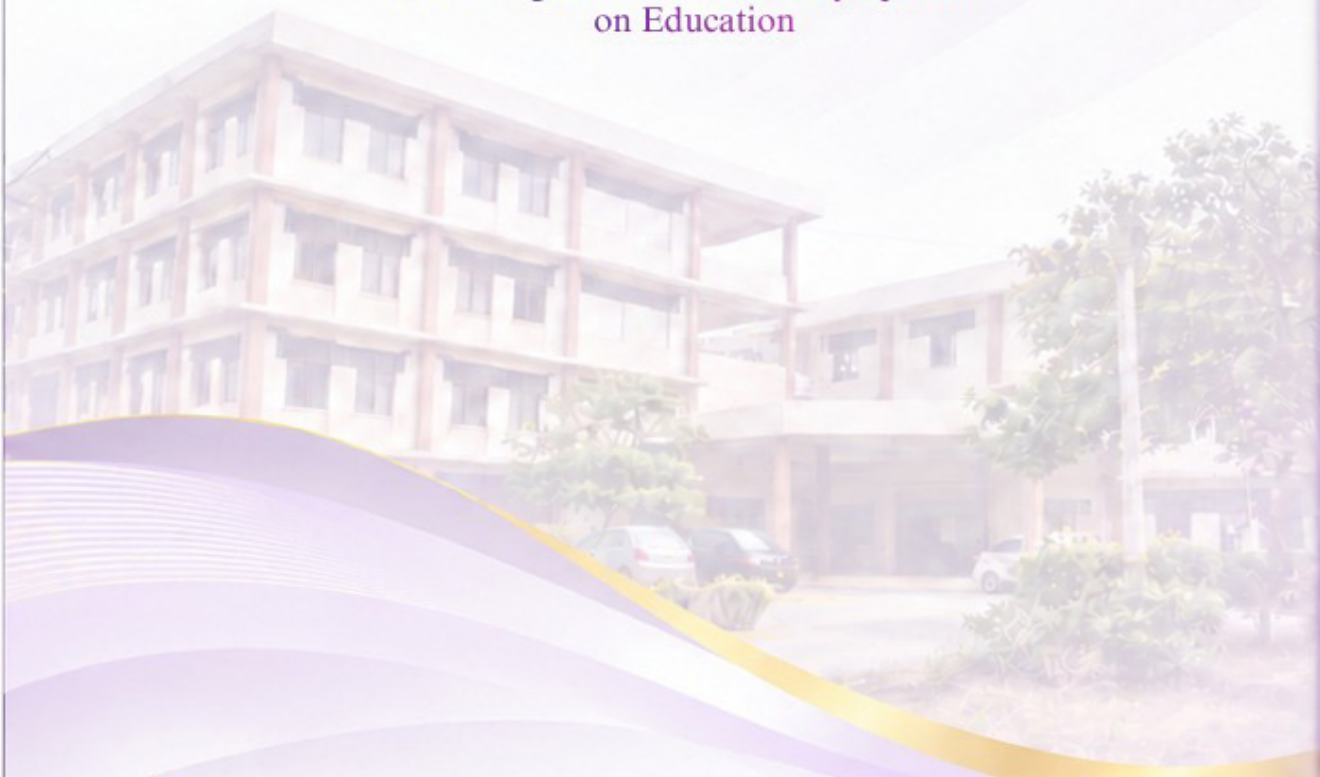
study aimed to identify the impact of parents' educational expectations on the learning of Grade 9 Tamil-medium students in the Kiriyulla Education Zone and to explore how these expectations affect students' learning motivation, academic achievement, and engagement. The study employed a descriptive survey design and a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The researchers collected data using a stratified sampling technique. The study selected ten of the 14 schools in the zone. From a total student population of 625, a sample of 119 students (19%), along with their parents and Grade 9 teachers, was selected. The researchers collected primary data through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using charts, tables, mean values, and correlation analysis, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The survey instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.76. A strong positive correlation was found between parents' academic expectations and students' learning outcomes ($r = 0.716$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that realistic expectations can support learning. The findings showed that most parents (85.7%) had moderate educational expectations, while 14.3% had high expectations. A two-way analysis of variance showed that parents' educational expectations and educational facilities jointly accounted for 81.2% of the variance in students' education. The remaining 18.8% was associated with factors not covered in this study. Realistic and supportive parental expectations were positively correlated with students' term examination scores ($r = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$). When parents set goals that reflect their children's learning pace and abilities, they can strengthen students' self-efficacy and foster intrinsic motivation to achieve learning objectives. Appropriate parental expectations can contribute to improved academic achievement. Conversely, excessive, unrealistic, or comparison-based expectations that exceed students' capabilities are associated with greater test anxiety ($r = 0.586$, $p < 0.001$) and stress, as well as lower intrinsic motivation to learn ($r = -0.294$, $p < 0.05$). The findings also suggest that moderate parental expectations may contribute to high achievement by allowing students to develop their abilities without undue academic pressure. However, excessive expectations or those that fail to take children's abilities into account may lead to exam anxiety, fear of failure, and stress, while reducing students' interest in learning and affecting their achievement. The study recommends that parents recognize their children's individual abilities and psychological needs and set realistic educational goals.

Keywords: *education, parental expectations, impact, learning, junior secondary education*

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