

Editorial

This is the Volume 19, Number 1 issue of OUSL Journal, the Journal of The Open University of Sri Lanka which is published biannually. The articles published in this Volume include research based on the disciplines of Chemistry, Social Science, Language Studies, and Teaching Learning Process.

Caryota urens (Kithul/fish-tail/toddy palm) is an economically and medicinally important tree native to tropical Asia. Polyphenols, flavonoids, amino acids, and sugars are the major phytochemical constituents present in the Kithul tree. Kithul is a flowering plant in palm family which is seen in tropical Asian countries. The nuts (or fruits) of this plant can cause skin irritation. “Kithul tapping” in Sri Lanka has a unique cultural value as it combines with indigenous knowledge, which passes from one generation to another. The phloem sap of Kithul tree, collected from the tapped inflorescence, is known as sweet toddy, and main products of this sap are toddy (an alcoholic beverage), treacle and jaggary. Kithul toddy and treacle are the foremost liquid products obtained from the phloem sap of the plant (which runs out from the tapped inflorescence. Kithul jaggary (“Hakuru” in Sinhalese) is a solid product prepared from Kithul treacle. Kithul flour is an alternative to commonly used wheat or rice flour. Phytochemicals present in Kithul leaves, bark, seeds, and sap exhibit medicinal properties such as antidiabetic, anticancer, antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and libido-enhancing ability, *etc.* Sri Lankan researchers should pay attention to promoting Kithul treacle as an alternative to Maple syrup, consumed by Europeans and Aussies with pancakes, waffles, French toast, and porridge, *etc.* The main scope of this overview of the article, *Phytochemical constituents in Kithul (Caryota urens) and its medical significance: A Mini Review* is to present major phytochemical constituents in Kithul and their medicinal value.

Scholars have acknowledged human personality traits as significant in human behaviour as well as in other cognitive and non-cognitive areas of concern like; learning, emotions, decision making, achievement, among others. The researchers assumed that as individuals progress through primary and secondary education stages

and become more matured, the prevalence of some negative social behaviours ought to have been minimized or gone into extinction. However, classroom experiences in tertiary environments do not seem to align with this assumption as undergraduates also exhibit truancy capacities just as it exists in early life education. The researcher therefore attempted in this study titled *Predictive Influence of Personality Types on Truancy Behaviours among Undergraduates in Osun State, Nigeria* a curious descriptive and inferential investigation on two hundred (200) undergraduates from three universities to confirm the existence of truancy behaviours in tertiary institutions in Osun State, Nigeria, find out which personality trait could influence truancy behaviours most among undergraduates, as well as consider if gender has any moderating influence on truancy behaviour in tertiary institutions in Osun State, Nigeria

In the article, *Teacher Perceptions and Teaching Practices of Instructing students with Limited Eye sight in Selected Regular Public Schools of Nepal: A Narrative Inquiry* the authors look at inclusive education in Nepali public schools, with a focus on how teachers may help their limited eyesight students succeed. Instructors play a pivotal role in establishing a welcoming learning atmosphere for all students. Teachers must modify their teaching strategies to accommodate students' varied learning styles and create a welcoming classroom climate for inclusive education to be successful. The study aimed to find out how teachers in Nepal's public schools understand and use inclusive education for kids who are limited eyesight. The study utilizes the Salamanca Framework for Action and Vygotsky's Social Constructivism theory, highlighting the need of collaboration and active engagement in the learning process. The study employs narrative inquiry as a research method, gathering data through comprehensive interviews and observations conducted within the classroom setting. The findings are categorized into three primary areas: teaching tactics used by teachers, promoting equality of opportunity and a learner-friendly learning environment, and removing obstacles faced by pupils. To include students who are limited eyesight in classroom activities, teachers utilize a variety of student-centered techniques such as class discussions, audiovisual aides, peer readers, and multimedia projectors. To effectively engage all students, it is important to use a diversity of teaching methods, as

inclusion of cooperative learning and peer tutoring. It is imperative that all children are offered equal opportunity, and instructors exert considerable effort to create inclusive and engaging learning environments in their classrooms. In inclusive classrooms teachers confront numerous challenges, but they strive to overcome them by capturing the attention and motivation of limited eyesight students. Overall, the article shows the problems and ways to work around them in Nepalese inclusive education for limited eyesight children. It is clear from this study how important teachers are and how much better training, resources, and support are required to make inclusion work.

The article titled *Parental Educational Level in Shaping Student Participation in Lesson Activities: A Multifaceted Study* investigates the relationship between parental educational background and student participation in lesson activities within secondary schools in Sri Lanka. A sample of 1,350 Grade 10 students was surveyed to evaluate their engagement in lessons and their parents' educational levels. The study's findings reveal that students whose mothers have tertiary education degrees exhibit higher participation levels, highlighting a significant maternal influence on student involvement. Interestingly, the father's educational level does not significantly impact student engagement, suggesting a unique maternal role in shaping academic participation. Additionally, the study found no significant interaction effect between the educational levels of fathers and mothers on student participation. The research underscores the importance of parental education, particularly maternal, in enhancing student engagement. To bridge the educational gap and boost student involvement, the study recommends increasing parental involvement through workshops, media, and educational resources, especially for parents with lower educational levels. These findings are crucial for educators, policymakers, and parents, emphasizing the need for inclusive educational policies and supportive learning environments.

The article titled *Development of Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence through English Language Textbooks: A Directed Qualitative Content Analysis* seeks to investigate the cultural content in English language textbooks and how it supports to foster intercultural understanding. The research problem addressed in the study is the extent to which the English language textbooks used in

the government school context contribute to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence in the learners. The article introduces a brief description of the importance of culture teaching in language learning programmes in the world and specially in Sri Lanka as well as the context of textbook development in Sri Lanka. The theoretical framework related to the study was introduced paying attention to Byram's ICC Model, types and categories of culture and culture in language textbooks. Through directed qualitative content analysis, this study investigates to what extent the content of the Grade 11 English Language textbook in the Sri Lankan government school context contributes to develop 'intercultural communicative competence' (ICC) in learners. The contents were analysed against Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence Model, types and categories of culture, and representation of ethnicities in the selected textbook. The findings revealed that the textbook represents different ethnicities through its characters although it does not reflect the actual ethnic make-up of Sri Lanka. Additionally, the contents represented universal cultural aspects and the source culture while briefly referring to target and international cultures. In addition, the cultural content was presented as factual knowledge with less opportunities for critical analysis and reflection. The suggestions made were to include opportunities for critical analysis in the textbooks.

Numerous learning platforms and teaching methods have emerged in recent years. Identifying effective approaches is crucial for enhancing the productivity of education. This study, *Identifying the Most Suitable Learning Techniques Based on Cognitive and Physiological Behavior* aimed to determine the most effective learning tactics for small face-to-face management classes in tertiary education, based on students' cognitive and physiological behavior. Management students with varying academic backgrounds were selected through purposive sampling for the experiment which consists of active and passive learning sessions. The lecture served as the passive learning session. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) activities were conducted both individually and in groups, with another group activity following the lecture, representing the active learning sessions. Brain activity was measured using electroencephalogram (EEG) to identify Beta (β) waves. Physiological data was collected using a Galvanic Skin


Response (GSR) sensor to measure sweat gland activity. Additionally, fluctuation in heart rate variation was captured through Electrocardiogram (ECG) signals. Exploratory data analysis was employed to analyze the bio-signal data. The group activity after the lecture resulted in the highest levels of cognitive and physiological engagement among participants. While students performed better in active learning sessions overall, individual activities were less effective compared to group-based activities. This study suggests that even though passive learning, like lectures, may have some value, a combination of passive and active learning strategies may yield the most productive learning environment for small group management courses in tertiary education.

We welcome your suggestions for further improvement of this Journal. We are looking forward to publishing your current research findings in our next issue.

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