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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Department of Applied Communication and Media Studies of Nagananda International Institute for Buddhist Studies (NIIBS) was established in 2020 with a clear and progressive vision—to pioneer professional-oriented higher education in the field of communication and media within Sri Lanka’s private higher education sector. As one of the first private sector institutions to introduce an Honours Degree program in Applied Communication and Media Technology, the Department has continuously strived to maintain academic innovation, relevance, and excellence.

In this context, the launch of the *NIIBS International Journal of Applied Communication (NIJAC) marked a significant and ambitious milestone. Initiating an international academic journal amidst numerous institutional, academic, and logistical challenges was no easy undertaking. However, through collective commitment and perseverance, we successfully transformed this vision into reality. This achievement stands as a testament to the resilience and dedication of the Department and the Institute as a whole.

As one of the pioneering journals in the field of communication and media studies within the private university sector in Sri Lanka, NIJAC represents a meaningful step toward strengthening scholarly engagement and academic discourse. We extend our sincere gratitude to our distinguished panel of reviewers, contributing authors, and all stakeholders whose invaluable support enabled us to streamline processes and achieve this important institutional milestone. Their contributions have been instrumental in advancing our journey toward academic recognition and institutional ranking.

This journal is expected to serve as another landmark in the evolution of journalism and media education in Sri Lanka, particularly in its electronic format, which enhances accessibility and global reach. It is especially encouraging to note that a significant number of scholars from state universities across the country have extended their scholarly support, further strengthening the credibility and academic rigor of this publication.

We look forward to continuing this journey of academic excellence, fostering critical dialogue, and contributing meaningfully to the field of applied communication.

Senaka Senaviratne

Editor-in-Chief

NIIBS International Journal of Applied Communication

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Study of necessity of initiate a degree program in Screen Media and preparation of its content.

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Abstract

In many universities around the world, the study of screen media can be considered as a subject of special demand among undergraduate students in the field of social sciences. The study of film, television and digital media design is conducted under the framework of Screen Media Studies. Accordingly, the aim is to gain a inclusive understanding of the need, value and content of the initial study of screen media as a degree program in accordance with the subject areas of mass communication and media in Sri Lanka. Considering Perceptions on the Importance of Staying Updated, Exploring Preferences for Program Importance, Evaluating the Applicability of Screen Media Studies Knowledge, Understanding the Importance of Practical Skills Integration were the objectives of this research. Accordingly, the primary data for this study were obtained through interviews and online questionnaires', while secondary data were used from research articles and university prospectus around the world. The obtained data were analyzed using a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Non-probability sampling method and snowball sampling method were used to represent data within the framework of Content Analysis. The development of creativity, critical analysis, technical skills and professionalism must be determined for course initiation and undergraduate subject area development.

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Key Words – Screen Media Studies, Film ,Television, Digital Media, Content Analysis

Introduction

In the current communication and media landscape, the role of screen media has evolved into a powerful potency that shapes narratives, influences perspectives, and initiates cultural discourse. As we stand at the connection of technological innovation and creative expression, the importance of a screen media degree becomes gradually evident. This research paper explores into the multifaceted significance of pursuing a degree in screen media studies, exploring the dynamic interplay between creativity, technology, and cultural understanding. Beyond elucidating the broader importance, the paper also examines the intricate design of degree syllabi, emphasizing its critical role in preparing students for the ever-evolving demands of the industry. The fragmentation of traditional audiences through the competition offered by new media forms such as broadband internet, media rich mobile devices and video games seems to be increasingly impacting on industry business models and financial structures (Looms 2002). By examining the content and structure of screen media degree programs, this research aims to unravel the foundational elements that contribute to the holistic development of individuals poised to navigate and excel in the dynamic world of screen media. From raising media literacy to nurturing creative prowess and technological proficiency, this study seeks to reveal the comprehensive educational landscape that propels graduates toward successful careers in filmmaking, television production, digital media, and beyond.

Research Methodology

The study used a mixed method approach. A questionnaire-based data collection tool was used as a quantitative survey method. As a qualitative survey method, data collected from the interviews as well. The sample size is 100, and they were selected from non-probability sampling method and snowball sampling method. Conducted an online survey (Using google form) and committee discussion to determine the importance of a screen media degree in Sri Lanka. Statistical analytical methods were used to analyze the data, which were used to determine the ideas among the undergraduates, Industrial Liaison Committee Members, Industry Professionals, Academics, Heads/Officers from State/Private Institutions, and graduates of Sri Lanka.

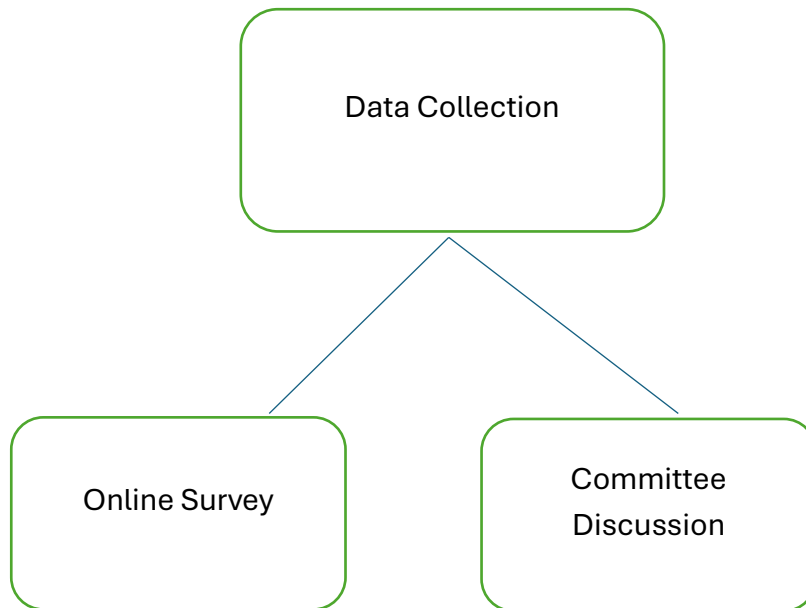
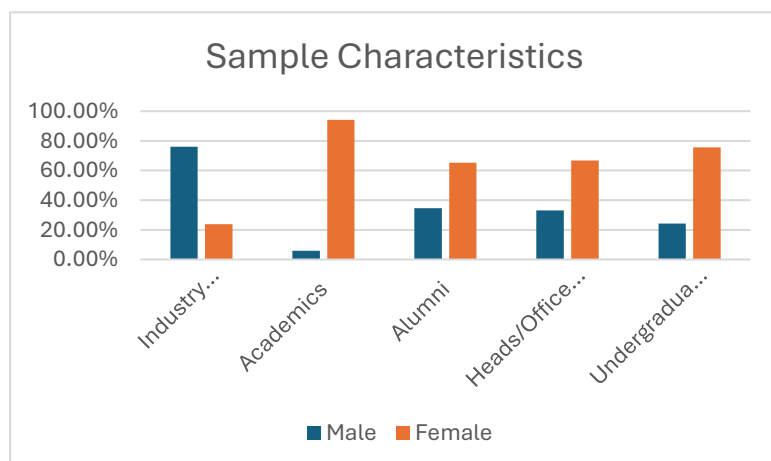


Figure 1 – Data collection method

Quantitative data was analyzed using Excel. As secondary data, books, academic research articles related to the research problem, and links on the Internet are used to determine the results of the study, and were also used to formulate the theoretical and practical basis of this study.

The comprehensive data collection for this research project involved a multifaceted approach, strategically designed to capture insights from various stakeholders in the field of screen media. The combination of both primary and secondary sources aimed to provide a general understanding of the perspectives and experiences related to the new degree program.



1. Industrial Liaison Committee Members: *Figure 2 - Sample characteristics Below is an extended discussion of the data collection methods and the diverse groups involved:*

Engaging with members of the Industrial Liaison Committee brought a unique and invaluable aspect to the research. These individuals, addressing from diverse backgrounds within the media industry, provided direct insights into the expectations, industry trends, and skill requirements from the perspective of professionals actively involved in the field. Their opinions, gathered through interviews, form a critical part of the primary data, offering a real-world perspective on the relevance and potential impact of the new degree program.

2. Undergraduates:

Surveying current undergraduates enrolled in the screen media program provided a student-centric view. Through the Google form, students shared their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the program. This data is contributory in understanding the student perspective, determining the effectiveness of the curriculum, and identifying areas for improvement to improve the overall student experience.

3. Industry Professionals:

The presence of professionals currently working in the media industry was pivotal for gaining insights into the alignment between the degree program and industry expectations. Professionals provided feedback on the preparation of graduates, the relevance of the skills learned, and suggestions for potential enhancements. This feedback serves as a bridge between academic preparation and industry needs, contributing to the program's practical applicability.

4. Academics:

Input from academic experts in the field of screen media offered a scholarly perspective. Academics provided insights into curriculum design, theoretical frameworks, and educational objectives. Their opinions are vital in evaluating the program's alignment with academic standards and its contribution to theoretical knowledge in the field.

5. Alumni:

Engaging with alumni who have completed the media and communication related program provided longitudinal insights into the program's long-term impact. Alumni shared their career routes, the applicability of the program in their professional lives, and any recommendations for improvements. This reflective view adds depth to the evaluation by considering the program's influence beyond the academic sphere.

6. Heads/Officers from State/Private Institutions:

Perspectives from institutional leaders and officers offered a broader context by considering the program's impact at an institutional level. Their feedback on collaboration opportunities, potential areas for program growth, and the overall reception of graduates in the industry provided a comprehensive understanding of the program's influence beyond individual experiences.

The consumption of a Google form for data collection facilitated a systematic and accessible approach, ensuring that responses were efficiently gathered and organized. The triangulation of data from these diverse sources not only enhances the reliability and validity of the findings but also provides a nuanced understanding of the screen media program's multifaceted impact on students, professionals, academia, and the broader institutional landscape. This multifaceted approach aligns with best practices in educational research, contributing to the strength and richness of the study's findings.

Data Analysis

In exploring into the analysis of our research data, we aim to unravel key insights and trends consequent from the responses of our participants. The data paints a vivid picture of attitudes and perspectives within the context of Screen Media Studies, flaking light on preferences, agreements, and areas of uncertainty among those surveyed. By analyzing the patterns that emerge, we gain a deeper understanding of the collective sentiments regarding the combination of practical skills, the applicability of a Screen Media Studies degree in creative industries, and preferences for a balanced emphasis on film, television, and digital media. This analysis seeks to distill the essence of participant opinions, providing valuable insights into the nuanced landscape of perceptions within the realm of Screen Media Studies.

The data suggests a high level of agreement among the respondents regarding the importance of integrating practical skills, such as film, television, and digital media productions, in a Screen Media Studies program. Specifically, 95.1% of the sample agreed with the statement, indicating strong support for the inclusion of practical skills in the program.

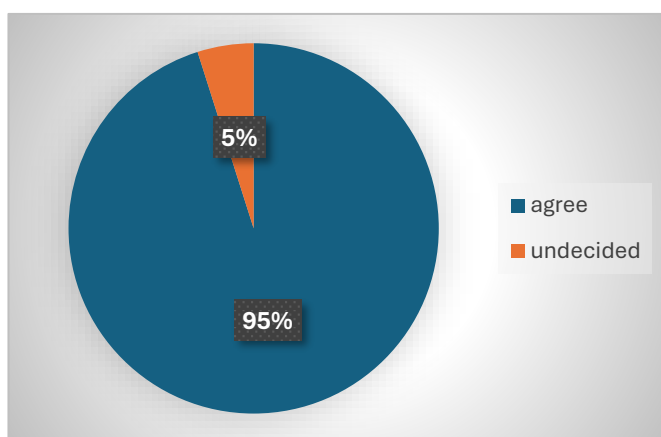


Figure 3 - importance of integrating practical skills in a Screen Media Studies program

The small percentage (4.9%) who are undecided might suggest that there is a minority who may not have a clear opinion or might need more information to form a stance on the importance of practical skills in the program.

Overall, the overwhelming agreement from the majority of the respondents underscores the perceived significance of incorporating hands-on, practical skills in Screen Media Studies. This

alignment of opinions indicates a consensus among the sampled group on the value of integrating real-world skills into the academic curriculum for this field of study.

The data reveals a clear consensus among participants regarding the practicality of applying knowledge acquired from a Screen Media Studies degree within creative industries. A substantial 97.5% of respondents expressed agreement, signaling a robust confidence in the degree's relevance to creative sectors. The 2.5% who indicated uncertainty may comprise individuals who are yet to solidify their stance or require additional information for a definitive opinion. In summary, the widespread concurrence from the majority of participants suggests a shared belief in the tangible benefits of a Screen Media Studies degree within creative industries. This alignment of viewpoints underscores the perception that individuals with a foundation in Screen Media Studies possess valuable knowledge and skills pertinent to creative fields.

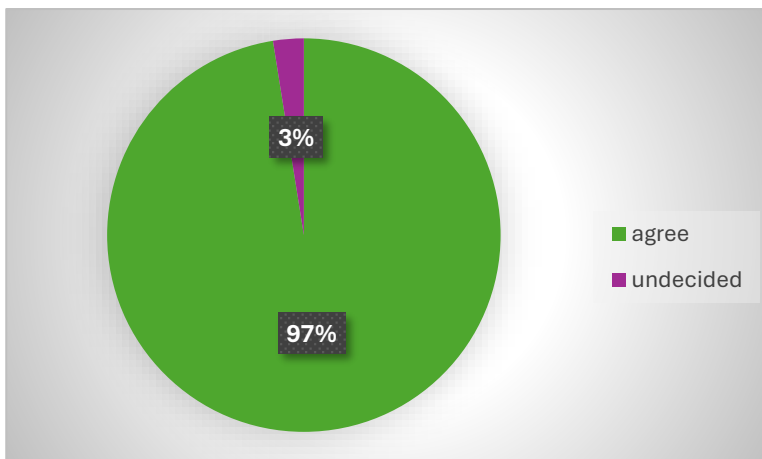


Figure 4 - practicality of applying knowledge acquired from a Screen Media Studies degree within creative industries

The data indicates a strong inclination, with 87.8% of respondents expressing a preference for a Screen Media Studies program that equally emphasizes film, television, and digital media within its broader scope. This majority agreement suggests a clear desire among participants for a well-rounded curriculum covering various aspects of screen media.

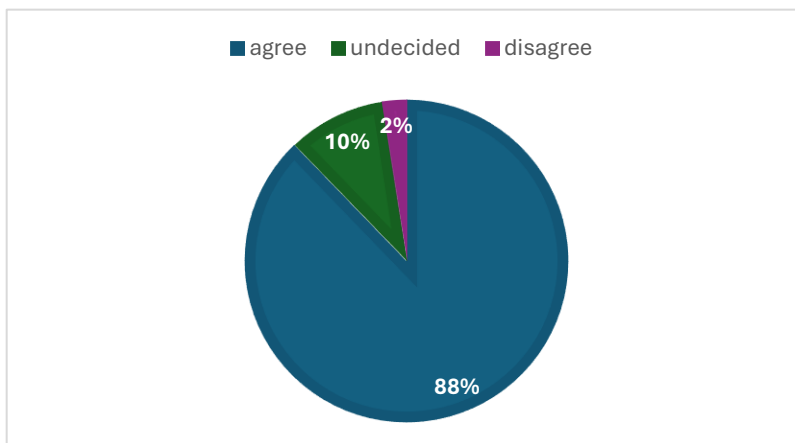


Figure 5 - Expressing a preference for a Screen Media Studies program that equally emphasizes film, television, and digital media within its broader scope

The 2.4% who disagreed may represent a small minority with a preference for a more specialized focus or a different balance among the mentioned components. Additionally, the 9.8% who are undecided could suggest a segment of respondents who may need more information or have not firmly established their stance on the ideal emphasis within a Screen Media Studies program. In summary, the data implies a general agreement favoring an inclusive approach that addresses film, television, and digital media equally in Screen Media Studies. The perspectives of the minority who disagreed or remain undecided highlight the diversity of opinions within the surveyed group.

The analysis of participant responses unveils a prevailing consensus regarding the perceived importance of staying updated on current trends in the entertainment industry for success in Screen Media Studies.

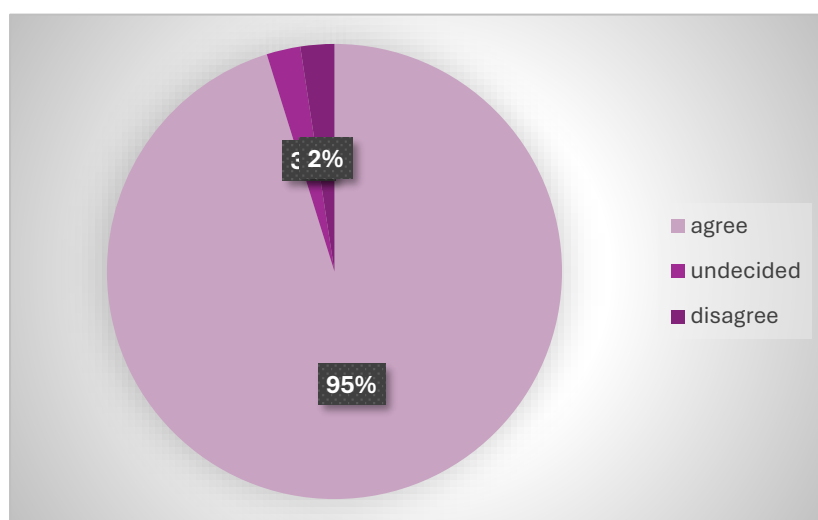


Figure 7 - emphasizing a widespread belief in the significance of remaining abreast of contemporary developments within the entertainment sector

An overwhelming 95% of respondents expressed agreement with this opinion, emphasizing a widespread belief in the significance of remaining abreast of contemporary developments within the entertainment sector. The 2.4% who disagreed may signify a small minority holding contrasting views on the relevance of staying current with industry trends. Additionally, the 2.4% who are undecided could reflect individuals who may require more information or have not firmly established their stance on the criticality of staying informed. This data highlights the perceived correlation between staying informed on industry trends and achieving success within the field of Screen Media Studies, with a majority of participants recognizing the importance of this aspect in their academic and professional journeys.

Having specialists from the screen media industry participate in appropriate content during studies is incredibly valuable. These experts bring real-world experience and expertise to the

classroom, offering insights into the latest industry trends, techniques, and best practices not always available through traditional academic resources.

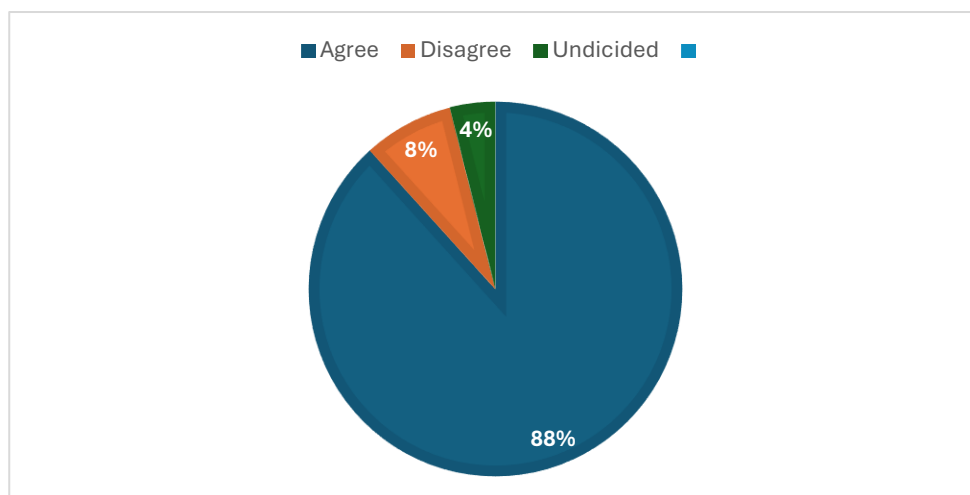


Figure 8 - expect specialist from screen media industry to participate in appropriate content

during the studies

Moreover, students benefit from networking opportunities with professionals, leading to internships, job prospects, and valuable connections. Working with industry specialists allows students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-life scenarios, developing crucial practical skills and understanding how concepts translate to the professional world. Additionally, specialists provide unique perspectives on industry challenges, opportunities, and emerging technologies, keeping students updated and prepared for future roles. Interacting with successful professionals also inspires and motivates students, providing role models and examples of what can be achieved in the industry. Overall, involving screen media industry specialists enriches the learning experience, improves student engagement, and better prepares them for successful careers in the field.

Data providers believe that technology will play a crucial role in shaping the teaching and learning of screen media.

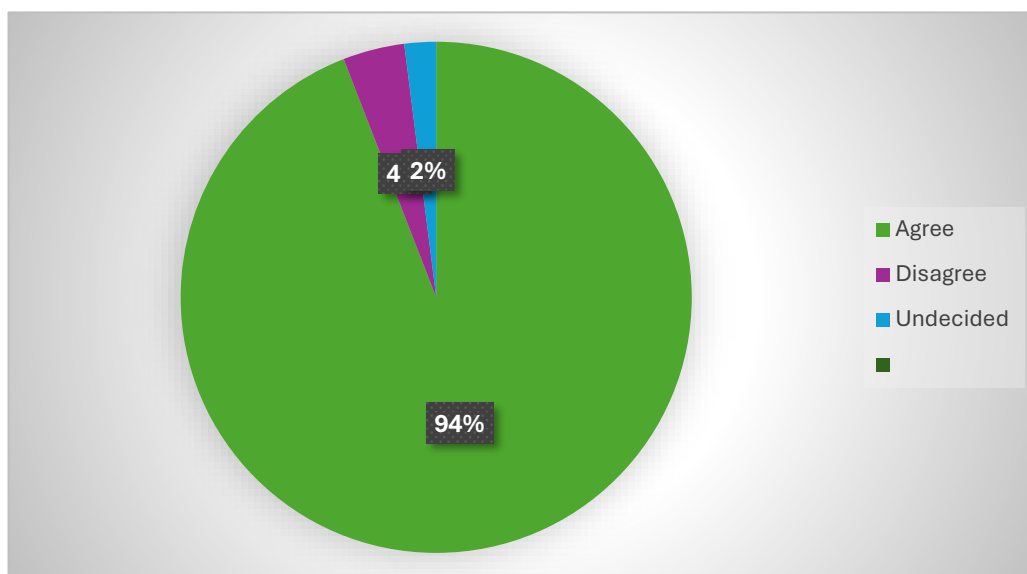


Figure 9 - Technology will play a crucial role in shaping the teaching and learning of screen media.

They argued that integrating cutting-edge technology into educational practices could enhance the overall learning experience for students. For instance, the use of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can provide immersive learning environments, allowing students to relate with digital content in a more engaging and meaningful way. Additionally, online platforms and digital tools can facilitate collaboration, feedback, and personalized learning experiences tailored to individual student needs. By leveraging technology effectively, educators can create dynamic and interactive lessons that promote creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills development in the field of screen media.

Data providers strongly advocate for the integration of AV content development, animation, and digital storytelling into screen media studies. They believe that these elements enhance the learning experience by providing hands-on opportunities for students to create and engage with multimedia content. While the concept of a 'digital content' industry is starting to be recognised as one that can encompass the shifting terrain of this new mediascape, where existing and new media forms seem to be simultaneously fragmenting and converging, it is still unclear whether this

emerging area is in fact an industry and, if so, what the shape, scale and impact of that industry is (Berkeley, 2009).

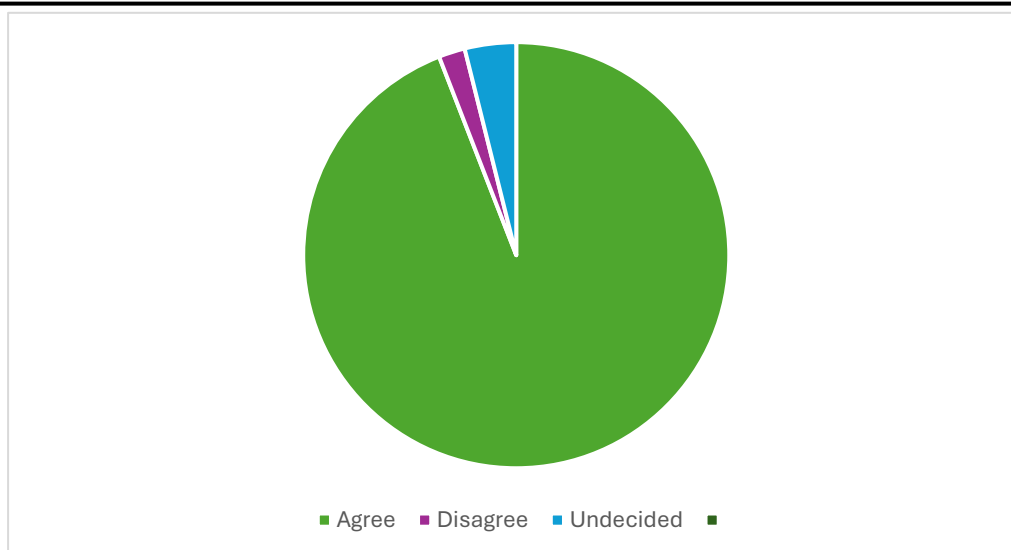


Figure 10 - integration of AV content development, animation, and digital storytelling into screen media studies

Incorporating AV content development allows students to explore various aspects of audiovisual production, including video editing, sound design, and storytelling techniques. Animation adds a dynamic and visual dimension to the learning process, encouraging creativity and artistic expression. Digital storytelling, on the other hand, enables students to craft compelling narratives using digital tools and techniques, fostering communication skills and narrative structure understanding.

Butt (2002) considers the needs of students and employers in the ‘new media age’, and the relative significance of both applied knowledge and a more traditional liberal education in this environment. He argues for ‘a new undergraduate education model which integrates critical, creative and technical skills ‘ and a focus on craft, the social context of that craft, as well as collaborative and interdisciplinary project work. By incorporating these elements into screen media studies, educators can offer a comprehensive and engaging curriculum that prepares students for the evolving landscape of media production and storytelling.

Results and Discussion

In the expansive realm of filmmaking, the harmonious blend of theoretical insight and hands-on application stands as the essential of a nuanced and deeply inspiring educational expedition. At its core, the study of film is a dynamic voyage that seamlessly intertwines the theoretical foundations of cinematic language with the tactile, practical dimensions involved in translating narratives onto the screen. This dual emphasis is not merely a pedagogical strategy; it is an immersive experience that transcends the boundaries of conventional learning. By weaving theoretical underpinnings into the fabric of practical application, aspiring filmmakers embark on a transformative journey—one that not only imparts a profound appreciation for the artistry and historical evolution of cinema but also endows them with the indispensable skills and insights requisite to navigate the intricate and ever-evolving landscape of contemporary filmmaking.

As students delve into the theoretical intricacies of film studies, they are invited to unravel the layers of cinematic language, aesthetics, and cultural impact. Analyzing seminal works, immersing themselves in the annals of film history, and exploring critical theories serve as the intellectual compass guiding them through the vast and diverse terrain of storytelling. This theoretical foundation becomes the scaffold upon which their creative aspirations are built, fostering a discerning eye and a critical mindset. It is a journey of understanding the power of visual narratives, comprehending the socio-cultural nuances embedded in film and appreciating the profound influence that cinema exerts on society.

A common reason for poor academic performance during the early years of college is a lack of prior education in the technical field. A four-year study was conducted in an electrical engineering program at a university in Durango, Mexico, which shows that 50 percent of the students who dropped out did not receive any prior technical training from an appropriate middle school (Wenzl and Miladinovic, 2024)

Complementing this theoretical odyssey is the hands-on engagement with the practical aspects of filmmaking—an indispensable facet that elevates theoretical knowledge from the conceptual to the tangible. Here, students are not passive observers; they are active participants in the creative process. Scriptwriting, directing, cinematography, and editing cease to be theoretical constructs and become dynamic tools wielded by the aspiring filmmaker. Through practical exercises, students experiment, innovate, and learn by doing, translating theory into practice with each frame and cut. This experiential phase of their education allows for a deeper internalization of concepts, fostering a holistic understanding of the craft. The symbiotic relationship between theory and practice, rather than existing as a mere pedagogical strategy, becomes the crucible in which creativity is forged and refined. It is in the practical application of theoretical knowledge that students truly find their voice, honing their skills and navigating the challenges of the filmmaking process. The theoretical becomes practical, and the practical validates and enriches the theoretical, creating a dynamic cycle of learning that mirrors the cyclical nature of cinematic storytelling. In this holistic educational approach, graduates emerge as not only technicians well versed in the technical aspects of filmmaking but as storytellers with a profound grasp of the cultural, artistic, and societal dimensions of their craft. They carry with them not just a degree but also a comprehensive cinematic education one that empowers them to navigate the multifaceted landscape of the film industry with acumen and creativity. The ability to marry theoretical understanding with practical proficiency transforms them into auteurs, capable of shaping narratives that resonate intellectually, and visually.

In essence, this comprehensive educational journey—where theory and practice are not disparate entities but interconnected strands of a rich tapestry—creates filmmakers who are not confined by tradition but poised at the vanguard of innovation. It is an approach that not only imparts knowledge but instills a passion for storytelling, a reverence for the cinematic legacy, and a readiness to contribute meaningfully to the ever-evolving narrative of the seventh art.

The Theoretical Lens: Unveiling the Language of Cinema

Engaging with film theory serves as a gateway to developing a nuanced and critical perspective, empowering students to delve deep into the intricate layers of cinematic masterpieces. Beyond mere entertainment, films become a canvas for societal introspection as students navigate the socio-political implications embedded within narratives. By dissecting the underlying themes and symbolism, they uncover a rich tapestry of commentary on culture, ideology, and human experience.

Moreover, the exploration of film theory extends beyond content alone, delving into the very essence of visual storytelling. Students learn to decipher the carefully crafted visual language employed by directors, understanding how framing, cinematography, and editing contribute to the overall narrative impact. This comprehensive understanding not only enhances their appreciation for the artistry inherent in filmmaking but also equips them with a toolkit for expressing complex ideas through visual mediums.

Film theory, therefore, becomes a catalyst for intellectual growth, fostering a profound appreciation for the amalgamation of creativity and intellect in cinematic endeavors. Armed with theoretical knowledge, students are encouraged to approach their own creative choices with a discerning eye, understanding the potential impact of their work on diverse audiences. This critical mindset not only enriches their cinematic endeavors but also prompts reflection on the broader implications of storytelling in shaping perspectives and influencing societal discourse.

In essence, the study of film theory transcends the boundaries of a traditional classroom, opening up a realm where students become adept interpreters of the nuanced language of cinema. It instills in them a lifelong ability to think critically about the narratives that surround us, both on and off the screen, and fosters a creative consciousness that goes beyond the realm of filmmaking, permeating various facets of their intellectual and artistic pursuits.

The Practical Canvas: Bridging Theory with Hands-On Expertise

Frank and Silver (2018) emphasise that this movement emphasises the significance of interdisciplinary competencies and the necessity for academics and planners to adjust to constantly shifting educational requirements. While the theoretical foundation in film studies provides essential insights into the intricacies of cinematic language, it is through the practical aspect that students truly immerse themselves in the art and craft of filmmaking. This hands-on dimension acts as a dynamic canvas, inviting students to not only apply but also refine their theoretical understanding in a tangible, real-world context. The synthesis of theory and practice becomes the crucible where aspiring filmmakers forge their skills and shape their creative identities. It is both challenging accepted conceptions about professional life in these areas, as well as opening up potential opportunities for new and exciting forms of creative practice. Established roles and career pathways are threatened, and the previously clear boundaries between forms of media are blurring (Anderson, 2005).

In the realm of scriptwriting, directing, cinematography, and editing, practical experience becomes an invaluable companion to theoretical knowledge. As students venture into the actual

process of crafting a film, they encounter the complexities and nuances that theory alone cannot capture. Scriptwriting ceases to be a theoretical exercise and transforms into the practical challenge of weaving compelling narratives, dialogues, and character arcs that resonate with an audience. Similarly, directing involves translating theoretical insights into concrete decisions on set, dealing with actors, and orchestrating the visual elements that bring a script to life.

Cinematography and editing, vital components of the filmmaking process, come alive in the practical arena. Students not only learn the technical intricacies of handling cameras, lighting, and post-production tools but also grapple with the aesthetic choices that define a visual narrative. Through hands-on experience, they gain a profound understanding of how framing, lighting, and editing contribute to the overall mood, tone, and storytelling impact of a film.

Practical knowledge serves as a bridge between theoretical classroom discussions and the professional demands of the filmmaking industry. It goes beyond theoretical comprehension to immerse students in the collaborative nature of filmmaking, where teamwork, communication, and adaptability are paramount. Working on actual projects, students navigate the challenges of coordination, time management, and problem-solving, preparing them for the unpredictable nature of the filmmaking process.

Engaging in practical exercises not only refines technical skills but also becomes a playground for creative exploration. Students experiment with diverse storytelling techniques, camera movements, and editing styles, discovering their unique voices within the expansive realm of cinematic expression. This exploration of creativity is nurtured in an environment that encourages risk-taking and innovation, fostering a generation of filmmakers who are not only technically proficient but also unafraid to push the boundaries of conventional storytelling.

The review process has also raised significant issues about the dislocation between theory and practice in screen production education that the curriculum changes have attempted to address (Macdonald, 2006).

Furthermore, exposure to industry-standard equipment and workflows ensures that students are not just academically equipped but are also familiar with the tools and processes prevalent in the professional landscape. This preparation becomes a crucial asset as students transition from the academic setting to the dynamic, fast-paced world of filmmaking, where proficiency in industry practices is a prerequisite for success.

In summary, the practical aspect of film studies is a transformative journey for students, allowing them to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The concept of 'third mission' activities in higher education, explored by Woollard, Zhang and Jones (2007), highlights the importance of employer-led curriculum development. This approach supports regional economic growth and aligns academic offerings with industry needs. It is within the hands-on experiences of scriptwriting, directing, cinematography, and editing that theoretical concepts come to life, shaping students into adept and well-rounded filmmakers ready to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the cinematic landscape.

The Symbiotic Relationship: Enhancing Creativity and Professional Preparedness

The harmonious interplay between theoretical comprehension and hands-on application within the realm of film studies is the crucible in which true mastery of the craft is forged. Theoretical knowledge acts as a guiding force, enriching creative endeavors with a vast repository of references, inspirations, and conceptual frameworks. It serves as a wellspring of ideas that fuels the imaginative process, providing filmmakers with a nuanced understanding of the historical, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions that underpin their work. As students immerse themselves in theoretical explorations, they become architects of narratives informed not only by their creative impulses but also by a deep appreciation for the rich tapestry of cinematic traditions.

Simultaneously, practical experience plays a pivotal role in the mastery of filmmaking. It serves as the litmus test that validates and refines theoretical concepts, grounding them in the tangible realities of the filmmaking process. The transition from theory to practice involves more than just the application of knowledge; it is a transformative journey where students grapple with the challenges of translating abstract ideas into concrete, visual narratives. In the crucible of practical application, theories are stress-tested, and students gain insights that extend beyond the confines of classroom discussions. They learn the art of adaptation, honing their skills in problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication – essential attributes for navigating the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the film industry.

This dual approach, combining theoretical understanding with practical application, not only fosters enhanced creativity but also contributes significantly to professional preparedness. Graduates who emerge from film studies programs equipped with both theoretical insights and practical skills possess a multifaceted toolkit that prepares them for the diverse demands of the ever-evolving film landscape. Whether navigating the intricacies of film production, collaborating with diverse and interdisciplinary teams, or pushing the boundaries of cinematic storytelling, these individuals are well-positioned to thrive in an industry that demands adaptability and innovation.

Moreover, the symbiotic relationship between theory and practice instills in graduates a holistic perspective on filmmaking. They understand that theoretical knowledge informs their creative choices, providing a foundation for experimentation and innovation. Conversely, practical experience ensures that their creative vision is not divorced from the pragmatic considerations of production. Maruna, Rodic, and Colic (2018) stress that these models serve the education of various stakeholders and underline the importance of cooperative networks in this expanding educational realm. This holistic education cultivates filmmakers who are not only proficient in their craft but also cognizant of the broader implications of their work on audiences and the industry at large. In conclusion, the synergy between theoretical understanding and practical application in film studies is the nexus where true mastery blossoms. A dynamic equilibrium empowers filmmakers with the wisdom of the past, the tools of the present, and the foresight to navigate the future. A comprehensive education that embraces both theory and practice not only enriches creativity but also lays the groundwork for a successful and enduring career in the multifaceted world of filmmaking.

Crafting Visionaries for the Cinematic Future

The exploration of film, a multifaceted discipline that intertwines theoretical knowledge with practical expertise, serves as a crucible for nurturing visionaries destined to shape the cinematic landscape of the future. This holistic approach, blending the intellectual rigor of theory with the hands-on experience of practice, not only raises the bar for the quality of filmmaking but also cultivates a generation of storytellers endowed with a profound understanding of the cultural, artistic, and technological nuances inherent in their craft.

The symbiotic relationship between theory and practice acts as a dynamic force, propelling filmmaking beyond mere technical proficiency and transforming it into a sophisticated art form. The study of film theory provides aspiring filmmakers with a conceptual toolkit, an arsenal of ideas, references, and frameworks that serve as guiding lights in the creative process. It allows them to delve into the historical and philosophical underpinnings of cinema, fostering an appreciation for the diverse cultural influences that shape narratives and visual languages. This theoretical foundation acts as the bedrock upon which innovative and intellectually resonant storytelling can flourish.

Complementing theory, practical expertise bridges the gap between abstract concepts and tangible, visual narratives. Through hands-on experiences in scriptwriting, directing, cinematography, and editing, students confront the challenges and complexities that theory alone cannot encapsulate. They learn not only to apply theoretical insights but also to navigate the real-world intricacies of film production, mastering the collaborative nature of the filmmaking process. This practical dimension is the crucible in which theoretical ideas are tested, refined, and ultimately transformed into compelling cinematic expressions.

Aspiring filmmakers equipped with a comprehensive education in both theory and practice transcend the role of mere technicians; they emerge as auteurs, individuals with a unique artistic vision capable of weaving narratives that resonate on intellectual, emotional, and visual levels. This fusion of theoretical understanding and practical application empowers them to craft films that transcend the boundaries of conventional storytelling, pushing the limits of creativity and cultural relevance.

Moreover, embracing the holistic approach of marrying theory with practice is not merely a pedagogical choice; it is a cinematic imperative that propels the art of filmmaking into new realms of innovation and cultural significance. In a rapidly evolving landscape where technological advancements continually redefine the possibilities of storytelling, filmmakers who understand the theoretical foundations of their craft and can harness the latest tools and techniques are poised to lead the way in shaping the future of cinema.

Conclusion

In conclusion, delving into the multifaceted realm of film presents a profound and transformative journey for aspiring filmmakers. When approached with a harmonious integration of theoretical knowledge and practical expertise, the study of film becomes a crucible in which creative minds are forged into visionary storytellers. This transformative

process is not merely about acquiring technical skills; rather, it is a holistic education that cultivates a deep understanding of the intricate intersections between culture, art, and technology.

By immersing themselves in the theoretical foundations of film, aspiring filmmakers gain insights into the historical, cultural, and philosophical dimensions that shape the medium. This scholarly engagement provides them with a nuanced perspective, enabling them to draw inspiration from diverse sources and appreciate the rich tapestry of cinematic traditions. Moreover, a theoretical foundation equips filmmakers with the intellectual tools to critically analyze and deconstruct the narratives they encounter, fostering a heightened sense of storytelling acumen.

Practical expertise, on the other hand, empowers filmmakers to translate their creative visions into tangible cinematic experiences. Through hands-on experience with equipment, pre-production planning, on-set dynamics, and post-production processes, aspiring filmmakers develop a fluency in the language of film. This practical knowledge is indispensable, serving as the bridge between theoretical concepts and the actual realization of artistic ideas.

Practical experiences are essential in education, as highlighted by Wijaya et al. (2021), who explored socio-economic factors affecting labor and economic growth, underscoring education's role in workforce skill development.

It fosters adaptability and problem-solving skills, ensuring that filmmakers can navigate the dynamic challenges inherent in the creation of compelling visual narratives. This comprehensive education not only elevates the individual artist but also contributes significantly to the evolution of the cinematic medium itself. Visionaries molded by this integrated approach become adept at navigating the ever-changing landscape of film, adeptly weaving together elements of tradition and innovation. Their work resonates with audiences on a profound level, transcending the constraints of time and cultural barriers.

In essence, the study of film as a transformative journey ensures that the art of filmmaking remains a dynamic force. It is a force that not only reflects the contemporary cultural milieu but also contributes to its evolution. As aspiring filmmakers undergo this comprehensive education, they emerge not only as skilled practitioners but as cultural stewards, enriching the cinematic landscape and leaving an indelible mark on the ever-evolving narrative of human expression. Through this symbiosis of theory and practice, the art of filmmaking continues to captivate audiences, standing resilient against the test of time.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Intra-Personal Communication In Buddhism: Insights From
Anupassana Bhāvana**

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Abstract

This paper examines intra-personal communication from a Buddhist perspective, with a particular focus on Anupassana Bhāvana (contemplative meditation). Intra-personal communication, which incorporates the internal dialogue and self-awareness that shape one's understanding of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, plays a central role in personal development. From a Buddhist viewpoint, Anupassana Bhāvana cultivates mindfulness and self-reflection while fostering an awareness of impermanence, helping individuals achieve balanced and insightful internal communication. By exploring core Buddhist concepts such as suffering (dukkha), non-self (anatta), and impermanence (anicca), this paper demonstrates how Anupassana Bhāvana supports the resolution of internal conflicts, enhances mental clarity, and encourages emotional regulation. Additionally, the practical applications of these teachings for personal well-being and communication are also examined. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of Buddhist meditation practices as effective tools for intra-personal growth and self-realization in contemporary life.

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INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly complex and fast-paced world, individuals often find themselves grappling with various internal conflicts, emotional disturbances, and mental distractions. One of the most critical skills in managing these challenges is effective intra-personal communication, the ability to engage in reflective, meaningful dialogue within oneself. Intra-personal communication is a dynamic process that involves self-awareness, the understanding of one's thoughts and feelings, and the ability to regulate them in response to external and internal stimuli. It is this internal dialogue that forms the foundation for emotional regulation, self-acceptance, and decision-making. A lack of awareness and clarity in this internal communication often leads to stress, anxiety, and confusion, which further impedes an individual's capacity to succeed.

Buddhism, with its profound insights into the nature of the mind, emotions, and suffering, offers a powerful framework for transforming intra-personal communication. Central to Buddhist practice is the cultivation of mindfulness, which involves the conscious, non-judgmental awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. Anupassana Bhāvana, a core meditation practice in Theravāda Buddhism, specifically emphasizes this mindfulness in relation to the impermanent nature of phenomena, the self, and suffering. Through this practice, individuals are encouraged to observe their internal states with clarity and detachment, without attachment to the habitual thought patterns that often dictate one's emotional responses.

Anupassana Bhāvana, or the "contemplative meditation," invites practitioners to engage deeply with their thoughts and emotions. It involves not only the awareness of the present moment but also a cultivation of wisdom (*paññā*) about the nature of suffering (*dukkha*), the illusory nature of self (*anatta*), and the impermanence (*anicca*) of all things. By developing this insight, practitioners are better able to disengage from reactive patterns of thought and emotion, fostering a healthier, more balanced internal dialogue.

The relationship between Buddhist meditation practices, particularly Anupassana Bhāvana, and intra-personal communication is profound. This paper aims to explore how meditation can transform internal communication by enhancing mindfulness and emotional regulation. Through the process of observing and reflecting on the fleeting nature of thoughts and feelings, individuals can achieve greater clarity, mental peace, and a compassionate engagement with their internal states. Such a transformation enables practitioners to shift from a habitual, reactive mode of communication to a more thoughtful, intentional dialogue with themselves.

By focusing on mindfulness meditation as a tool for refining intra-personal communication, this study not only contributes to Buddhist scholarship but also offers valuable insights for modern psychological practices. In a time where mental health challenges are on the rise, the application of Buddhist meditation techniques like Anupassana Bhāvana can provide practical tools for cultivating emotional resilience, clarity of mind, and well-being. This paper, therefore,

investigates the theoretical and practical applications of Anupassana Bhāvana in the context of improving intra-personal communication and promoting personal growth.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study investigates the influence of Buddhist meditation, specifically Anupassanā Bhāvanā, on intra-personal communication. While mindfulness-based practices have gained considerable attention for their psychological benefits, there remains a notable gap in research exploring how traditional Buddhist meditation techniques directly impact internal dialogue and self-reflection. Existing studies primarily focus on secular mindfulness-based interventions, often overlooking the deeper philosophical dimensions of Buddhist contemplative practices.

By examining Anupassanā Bhāvanā in relation to intra-personal communication, this study aims to bridge this gap, highlighting its potential in fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, and cognitive clarity. The research seeks to understand how insight meditation transforms internal dialogue, enabling individuals to engage with their thoughts more objectively and constructively. Through this exploration, the study contributes to both Buddhist scholarship and contemporary psychological discourse, offering insights into the practical applications of Anupassanā Bhāvanā in enhancing emotional well-being and mental resilience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the relationship between Anupassanā Bhāvanā and intra-personal communication. A literature-based analysis is conducted to examine existing scholarly discussions on Buddhist meditation, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. Textual analysis of primary Buddhist sources, including the Pali Tipitaka and classical commentaries, provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the doctrinal significance of Anupassanā Bhāvanā. Secondary sources, such as contemporary academic research on mindfulness and meditation, contribute to a broader contextualization of the subject.

This research relies on a critical and interpretative methodology, synthesizing doctrinal analysis with psychological perspectives. By drawing connections between Buddhist philosophy and modern psychological frameworks, this study aims to highlight the practical implications of Anupassanā Bhāvanā for self-awareness and emotional well-being. Findings from this study contribute to both Buddhist scholarship and contemporary discussions on mindfulness, emphasizing the need for further empirical research in this area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Buddhist meditation practices have been extensively studied for their profound impact on psychological well-being, particularly in fostering emotional regulation, cognitive clarity, and self-awareness. Within this broader discourse, mindfulness-based practices have received

significant scholarly attention for their role in refining intra-personal communication, one's internal dialogue and self-reflection.

Mindfulness, a core aspect of Buddhist meditation, plays a crucial role in emotional regulation and self-awareness. Kabat-Zinn (2003) defines mindfulness as the ability to maintain a moment-to-moment awareness of thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations without attachment or judgment. This practice fosters emotional balance by allowing individuals to observe their mental states with detachment, thereby reducing impulsivity and emotional reactivity. Similarly, Hanh (1991) argues that mindfulness prevents negative thought patterns from escalating into distress by cultivating non-reactive awareness. This process is essential in intra-personal communication, as unregulated internal dialogue often contributes to heightened stress and self-doubt. Through the structured practice of Anupassanā Bhāvanā, practitioners develop the ability to witness their thoughts and emotions without becoming entangled in them, fostering greater cognitive clarity and emotional resilience.

The Buddhist doctrine of anatta (non-self) further enriches the discourse on intra-personal communication by challenging the notion of a fixed identity. Gethin (1998) explains that anatta emphasizes the transient nature of thoughts, emotions, and mental states, encouraging individuals to detach from rigid self-concepts and ingrained cognitive patterns. This perspective directly impacts internal dialogue, as it allows practitioners to recognize their thoughts as impermanent rather than intrinsic to their identity. In the practice of Anupassanā Bhāvanā, contemplation of non-self enables individuals to disengage from destructive mental narratives, promoting inner harmony and reducing self-imposed psychological suffering. This shift in perception not only enhances self-awareness but also fosters a more compassionate and flexible self-view, which is fundamental to healthy intra-personal communication.

Buddhist meditation, particularly Anupassanā Bhāvanā, offers a transformative approach to internal dialogue by fostering a structured method of self-reflection. It is highlighted that traditional Buddhist meditation practices serve as tools for mental refinement, allowing individuals to engage with their thoughts more consciously. Instead of being dominated by negative emotions and habitual thinking, practitioners of insight meditation cultivate a heightened awareness that facilitates cognitive restructuring. This process is further supported by empirical studies on mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), which demonstrate that structured meditation programs rooted in Buddhist principles significantly improve self-awareness and emotional well-being (Baer, 2003). While modern secular mindfulness programs, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), have adapted these principles (Kabat-Zinn, 2003), they often lack the deeper philosophical insights found in Anupassanā Bhāvanā, such as the contemplation of impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anatta).

Despite the extensive research on mindfulness and its psychological benefits, there remains a noticeable gap in literature specifically addressing the impact of Anupassanā Bhāvanā on intra-personal communication. Most existing studies have examined general mindfulness practices or secular adaptations that do not fully incorporate the traditional Buddhist contemplative

framework. Future research should aim to explore how Anupassanā Bhāvanā contributes uniquely to self-reflection, emotional regulation, and cognitive restructuring. Empirical investigations into the effects of insight meditation on internal dialogue could provide valuable contributions to both Buddhist studies and contemporary psychology. Understanding the role of this meditative practice in shaping self-awareness and emotional intelligence would not only enrich Buddhist scholarship but also offer practical applications for mental well-being in modern contexts.

DISCUSSION

The role of Anupassanā Bhāvanā in enhancing intra-personal communication can be examined from two perspectives: the nature of Anupassanā Bhāvanā as a contemplative practice and its impact on internal dialogue, which is central to self-awareness and emotional regulation. This discussion elaborates on how Anupassanā Bhāvanā fosters mindfulness, emotional balance, and cognitive clarity while also explaining its transformative role in intra-personal communication.

Anupassanā Bhāvanā: A Path to Self-Awareness and Emotional Balance

The Pali word “*Anupassati*” comes from the verb “*passati*” (to see) together with the prefix “*anu.*” It means “to repeatedly look at,” “to contemplate,” or “to closely observe” (Anālayo, 2003, 48). In the Visuddhimagga, the term “*Anupassanā*” is defined as “seeing in different modes repeatedly” (*Anupassati ti anu anu passati, anekehi ākārehi punappunam passati ti attho*, Visuddhimagga XXI:14). This repeated observation, or contemplation, is mainly directed toward four objects: the body, feelings, states of consciousness, and Dhammās (Dīgha Nikāya II: 290).

Consequently, Anupassanā Bhāvanā, or contemplation-based meditation, is a core practice in Theravāda Buddhism, emphasizing the continuous observation of bodily sensations, feelings, thoughts, and mental formations. This practice is primarily derived from the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MN 10; DN 22), which outlines four domains of mindfulness: Kāyānupassanā (contemplation of the body), Vedānānupassanā (contemplation of feelings), Cittānupassanā (contemplation of the mind), and Dhammānupassanā (contemplation of Dhammās) (Anālayo, 2003). These four foundations collectively cultivate heightened self-awareness, cognitive clarity, and emotional balance by training the mind to observe experiences without attachment or aversion.

A fundamental aspect of Anupassanā Bhāvanā is mindfulness (*sati*), which allows practitioners to observe their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations with equanimity. Mindfulness serves as a cognitive buffer between stimulus and response (Kabat-Zinn, 2003), enabling individuals to detach from reactive emotional states and fostering inner psychological stability. Unlike everyday thinking, where individuals tend to be entangled in their emotions, mindfulness cultivates a non-judgmental awareness, allowing practitioners to see emotions as transient phenomena rather than fixed realities (Gethin, 1998).

Another essential principle of Anupassanā Bhāvanā is the recognition of impermanence (anicca). This understanding is crucial for intra-personal transformation because it helps practitioners see mental states as fluid and ever-changing rather than rigid and absolute. When individuals become aware of the impermanence of emotions, they develop a greater capacity for emotional regulation and are less likely to identify with distressing thoughts. Empirical research supports this, showing that mindfulness meditation reduces emotional reactivity and enhances psychological flexibility.

Additionally, the doctrine of non-self (anattā) is a cornerstone of Buddhist psychology that directly influences intra-personal communication. In contemporary psychology, personal identity is often seen as a stable construct; however, Buddhist teachings suggest that the self is a dynamic and ever-changing process. Anupassanā Bhāvanā encourages individuals to detach from fixed self-perceptions, reducing the cognitive distortions that contribute to self-criticism and internal conflict. This detachment from rigid self-concepts fosters psychological flexibility and self-acceptance, which are essential for constructive self-dialogue.

Intra-Personal Communication: Refining Internal Dialogue Through Mindfulness

Intra-personal communication refers to the internal discourse individuals engage in, which influences self-awareness, emotional processing, and decision-making. This internal dialogue plays a significant role in shaping cognitive patterns, emotional states, and behavioral responses. However, unregulated self-talk can often lead to negative cognitive loops, reinforcing stress and self-doubt. Anupassanā Bhāvanā offers a structured method to refine internal discourse, promoting clarity, self-compassion, and resilience.

A primary benefit of Anupassanā Bhāvanā in intra-personal communication is its ability to enhance mindfulness in thought processes. Mindfulness practice increases meta-awareness, allowing individuals to observe their thought patterns rather than being consumed by them. This ability to recognize and regulate thoughts creates a cognitive gap between stimulus and reaction, reducing impulsive emotional responses and fostering a more deliberate and reflective internal dialogue. Kabat-Zinn (2003) argues that mindfulness strengthens cognitive flexibility, enabling individuals to approach problems with a balanced and clear mindset.

Additionally, emotional regulation is a key component of effective intra-personal communication. Individuals often struggle with self-criticism and ruminative thinking, which exacerbate emotional distress. Anupassanā Bhāvanā, through cittānupassanā, enables practitioners to observe emotions objectively, thereby reducing emotional reactivity and fostering equanimity (Hanh, 1991). Research indicates that mindfulness-based interventions significantly lower stress and anxiety by encouraging non-reactive awareness of emotions.

Furthermore, the practice of Dhammānupassanā (contemplation of Dhamma) facilitates self-awareness by revealing underlying cognitive biases and habitual thought patterns. Many individuals unconsciously reinforce self-defeating beliefs that shape their emotional and behavioral responses. By mindfully observing these cognitive tendencies, practitioners gain

insights into their mental conditioning and develop more skillful ways of responding to thoughts.

Another significant contribution of Anupassanā Bhāvanā to intra-personal communication is its role in fostering self-acceptance and inner harmony. Psychological distress often arises from inner conflicts between one's expectations and reality. By cultivating an attitude of acceptance and non-attachment to thoughts and emotions, individuals develop a more compassionate and balanced self-dialogue. This transformation enhances self-reflection, decision-making, and overall emotional well-being.

The Transformative Potential of Anupassanā Bhāvanā in Intra-Personal Communication

The findings of this study suggest that Anupassanā Bhāvanā serves as a powerful tool for enhancing intra-personal communication by fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility. Through mindful observation of thoughts and emotions, practitioners refine their internal dialogue, leading to greater clarity, resilience, and emotional stability.

By reducing attachment to negative thought patterns, enhancing emotional intelligence, and refining self-dialogue, Anupassanā Bhāvanā helps individuals develop a more constructive and compassionate relationship with themselves. This transformation has far-reaching implications for mental health, personal development, and decision-making.

While existing research has explored the psychological benefits of mindfulness-based practices, there remains a significant gap in studies focusing specifically on Anupassanā Bhāvanā and its impact on intra-personal communication. Future research should examine the long-term effects of this practice on self-dialogue, cognitive restructuring, and emotional intelligence, providing deeper insights into its applications in both Buddhist and contemporary psychological contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of Anupassanā Bhāvanā in shaping intra-personal communication by cultivating mindfulness, emotional regulation, and self-awareness. Through continuous contemplation of thoughts and emotions as impermanent phenomena, practitioners develop the ability to observe their mental processes without attachment or aversion. This non-reactive awareness plays a crucial role in reducing internal conflicts, preventing emotional turbulence, and fostering a more balanced state of mind.

By engaging in Anupassanā Bhāvanā, individuals refine their internal dialogue, shifting from habitual, often negative self-talk to a more insightful and objective engagement with their thoughts. The contemplation of anicca (impermanence), dukkha (suffering), and anatta (non-self) helps practitioners detach from rigid self-identities and destructive cognitive patterns, promoting greater psychological flexibility. As a result, emotional resilience is strengthened,

and individuals gain a deeper understanding of their own mental processes, leading to more conscious and constructive self-reflection.

While existing research highlights the psychological benefits of mindfulness and Buddhist meditation, there remains a need for further empirical studies specifically focused on Anupassanā Bhāvanā and its impact on intra-personal communication. Investigating how this practice influences self-perception, cognitive restructuring, and emotional intelligence could provide valuable insights for both Buddhist scholarship and contemporary mental health applications. Given its potential to enhance emotional well-being and cognitive clarity, integrating Anupassanā Bhāvanā into modern therapeutic and psychological frameworks may offer a holistic approach to fostering self-awareness, reducing stress, and cultivating inner harmony.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Impact of Digital Technology on Education during the Covid 19 pandemic time; a study on Secondary school students in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in late 2019 inflicted substantial disruptions upon the education system of Sri Lanka, persisting for an approximate duration of two years. The impact was particularly severe for secondary education students preparing for the Ordinary Level (O/L) and Advanced Level (A/L) exams. Initially, efforts focused on continuing education through traditional means, but with prolonged closures, the government, in consultation with experts, turned to digital platforms for emergency remote learning. This research paper explores the positive and negative effects of digital technology on education during this period. Using a qualitative approach, a survey was conducted with two sets of participants: ten school students preparing for GCE O/L and GCE A/L exams, and ten parents of these students. The rationale behind including both students and parents was to comprehensively understand the dual perspectives on how digital technology was utilized for educational purposes. The study aims to assess the impact of this shift to digital platforms on the education of students, considering the challenges and benefits experienced by both students and their parents in adapting to this new mode of learning. The qualitative analysis of data from interviews in a rural school in Colombo district, despite its urban development, revealed an unequal distribution of digital facilities. Some students exhibited disciplined use of digital platforms for educational purposes, while others leaned towards entertainment. The research recommends that students exercise control over technology for education, emphasizing parental supervision and guidance to ensure responsible digital use, urging parents to actively monitor and guide their children in utilizing digital platforms for educational purposes.

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Introduction:

Sri Lanka was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic at year's end of 2019, and things have been quiet for about two years. The education system in Sri Lanka and around the world has been destroyed by this pandemic, which has also temporarily prevailed. It has been documented that schools closed in conjunction with the pandemic, affecting 1.6 million pupils across 109 nations on a global scale. According to United Nations 2020, 99% of all students worldwide have temporarily stopped their educational pursuits as a result of the pandemic scenario. As the initial step of social gathering has been completely restricted by the government itself it has impacted hugely on the educational activities of the children. According to the United Nation, 1.2 billion of children have been affected by the covid-19 virus in 186 Nations globally and is the unfortunate fact is that these restrictions has huge impact on the educational activities of the children and this category includes both children who are having enough resources and access for new and modern methods of education and also the students for children who do not have. In that manner it is fair to mention that the education system nobody has been negatively affected and the education system has taken several steps back with in past 2 years (Gopal et al, 2021). According to reports, this terrible event occurred in Sri Lanka as pupils were concentrating on their academic work and exams. Since secondary education in Sri Lanka is only available to students preparing for the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level and Advance Level examinations (G.C.E O/L and A/L), their position has become extremely severe. In the first half of the pandemic period, educational institutions and the Sri Lankan government concentrated on keeping students in school. However, as the situation has persisted, the relevant authorities have turned their attention to finding new ways to manage the conduct of educational activities for students, at least those who are preparing for exams. The government, in consultation with education experts, decided to move toward the use of digital platforms and technology for conducting dedication activities because some schools do not yet have the privilege of assembling students and teachers for educational activities and because there is currently no way for them to respond to required examinations. The use of digital technology has grown significantly in this process, where the government has taken action to keep schoolchildren's education going by providing emergency remote learning facilities. This research report focuses on identifying the positive and bad effects that digital technology has had on children's schooling (Jena et al 2020).

The intention of the governments all over the world including Sri Lanka was to protect children at any cost and save their life all the Nations in particular and as many of the countries a grease to shut down schools and other academic Institutions including universities they have shutdown them without active of reducing the interaction of the students and protecting their lives. However, it allowed features two country not there in order to protect the economy of the country and during the crisis situation it offers some dilemma policymakers to concern about this and develop policies that suits for pandemic duration and a country led by a pandemic situation. Consequently, the shutdown of the Universities and other academic Institutions specially schools have created at radical transfer station which turns the face to face mode of teaching to online teaching and distance education methods. It is a fact that even within Sri Lanka distance learning or distance education method was not a new concept yet it has been

practicing very limitedly and it was not very popular as a method of teaching. The covid-19 pandemic has lived not choice where minister of education of Sri Lanka had to focus on continuing education in in schools through that is does learning method and online platforms by incorporating Digital platforms for education system and they have identified that by not doing so it could lead to a very unfortunate situation relating to the future of the students and the education system in Sri Lanka. Another reason why this could be seeing that the only alternative Sri Lanka had is that after few months of covid-19 pandemic many of the Western countries and South Asian countries have altered their education system into on my learning process.

Aim of the Research

The aim of the research paper is to understand how Digital Technology has been impacted on education of secondary school children in Sri Lanka in both positive and negative manner by focusing the covid-19 pandemic era.

Literature Review:

School Education and the effects of School Closures

Sri Lanka established education system in 1943 and it was saved as a part for students who are economically deprived and families which are completely deprived and initiative is to provide students to give an opportunity to ensure their right to education. The intention of providing free education within Sri Lanka is to increase the skills and help to mitigate the in balance that exist within the social classes and cultural status of people. There was this question with the education system in Sri Lanka could addressed this issue for 80 years but with the strike of the covid-19 pandemic it has made this intention accomplished harder as it compromised with covid-19 pandemic. Williamson (2020) specifically mentioned in his research that the online learning platform and the digital platform does not have the capacity of bringing to life the classroom dynamic and it can be never replaced by online forum. A physical classroom is not only a place where students get an opportunity to learn but also a place where are they can connect with each other and taken connect with each other a pose into barriers like social and cultural barriers to develop a lifelong relationship and correction with Unity. As the students has to adapt to online learning platforms their start learning behind screen and this concept of connectivity and sharing physical environment which helps to nourish their thoughts and increase the interaction has not been identified it in this digital platform. Therefore, this step of conducting School activities through online platform has been usually affected for children from their personal development aspect as well.

According to the UNESCO, closing of who has been hugely affected two children and parents as well as for teachers in numerous ways. The perspective teachers are having is that they still have to teach the students after the covid-19 period and the huge delay that happens can highly impacted on students who are getting ready for examinations. On the other hand, according to the research conducted by Gopal et al (2021) mention that shutting down of schools of developing countries has been highly infected negatively to the economy of the country. Apart from that specially when it comes to developing countries eating adaptor with

new technologies and different digital platforms and increasing the pressure of teaching students through online platforms has become a huge burden to both students and teachers we are students face it very much difficult to learn through online platforms or behind the screen and due to the lack of technical knowledge by teachers, it was very much challengeable for them to teach (Solidjonov, 2021).

Concept of Online Education

With the use of technological tools and platforms, online education is a notion that is used worldwide for both studying and teaching. Online learning was first acknowledged in South-Saharan Africa by the National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna, in 1976, according to Ramasamy & Sundarraj (2020). The Nigerian Federal Government backed this project. Following then, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period, this strategy gained popularity across a wide range of nations. It enables a flexible teaching strategy that encourages students to engage in learning at home. It includes continual teaching and learning experiences, exchanging lectures, giving assignments, getting feedback, and keeping a constant working relationship between students and teachers. A useful strategy for pupils throughout an outbreak is online learning. Through visual presentations, they can continue their instructional activities without having to make any physical in high-income countries, 80–85 percent of students use distant learning; in low-income countries, the percentage drops to fewer than 50 percent (Khashunika et al, 2021).

Methodology:

Research methodology that has been adopted for the research study is the qualitative approach as the researcher is trying to understand what are the negative and positive impacts of digital platform towards educational activities of the students. When it comes to the sampling technique the researcher has to worst non-probability Sampling and random sampling and technique that can be used to select the sample size of 20 participants. The 20 participants are comprised with both students who are engaged in Secondary Education and the parents of the students. The rationale behind selecting participants who are belonging to two different categories is to balance the perspective of one sector from the other. The logic of enquiry is the qualitative research approach where the researcher in Indian team to understand how the perspective of the students who are belonging to the secondary education and their parents have identified the impact of digital media towards the education of the children. As the sample size has been divided to 20 participants Where are 10 participants are the secondary students and parents of them, the data collection tool researcher has used is open ended questionnaire that comprises with questions related to how digital platforms impact towards education. The data Collection tool is the questionnaire and through the questionnaire the research has conducted one to one interview with the participants. The data analytical method that has been implemented within the research study is through descriptive analysis where are all the facts and information including the perspectives of the participants have been gathered by the researcher and descriptively analyze each of these perception in order to prepare a comprehensive analysis in order to identify how digital technology can impact towards the education of the children in both negative and positive way.

The ethical consideration is another very important factor that the researcher has concern the researcher will not reveal the identity of the participants to another third party without the prior approval of the participants and the data extracted will only be used for the academic purposes strictly. Apart from that when it comes to the data collection process, the researcher has made sure that all the participants have been briefly explain about intention of the research study and get their voluntary consent to participate for the data gathering process (Mohd Satar et al, 2020).

Analysis and Discussion:

The analysis was generated with the use of a structured open-ended question where the researcher this questionnaire to conduct interview. The first three equations have been focusing on the demographic information to get an idea about the demographic understanding about the participants. The first question was asked about the gender of each participant where out of 20 participants including both parents and students 12 female participants and 08 were male participle. The question asked about separate questions from students and parents. The second question asked about whether these can students have participated continuously for online classroom sessions during the covid-19 pandemic and everyone mention that they have been participating for online classes and their parents ensure their answer. However, when it comes to the parents answer they have mentioned that sometimes they have to push their children to participate for the sessions and sometimes participate with them in order to make sure that their children are actually participating for online classes.

As the third question the research ask about the different digital platform students have been using to attend their online classes and they have mentioned that all the school classes were conducted using soon technology and in order to share notes and let them know about class schedule and different time period including sharing, documents sharing class homework and different special notes which they need to study has been shared using the WhatsApp groups. Based on this question, the research asked from parents whether they have been monitoring their children how their children are using these two platforms and majority of the parents mention that as they are also staying at home they continuously check on their WhatsApp group and how their children are using zone platform and sometimes there and had to help children about how to handle the zoom platform. This gives the idea to the research that at the beginning students did not have very much exposure and understanding to the same platform even though they were familiar with WhatsApp. However, some parents mentioned that they have to get the assistance of other as they are not very much familiar with the new technological devices and online platforms, we are sometimes children figure out it by them self-get in this help of other students in the classroom and sometimes from the teacher. It also writes the question that whether teachers were very much familiar with the new technological platforms from the beginning and what is question some students a yes and some students get no. As an overall percentage more than 60% of teachers did not have that technical knowledge at the beginning.

The next set of questions were completely focused on how this digital platform were affected to the children/ students for the education activities and whether they have completely used these platforms for their educational purposes strictly. When it was asked from the students

they have said that they get a huge exposure and they were allowed to use laptops and mobile phones very much freely at home compared to earlier times and at the beginning all of the students were more into explorative actions like they are trying to search and learn more about different platforms and Google. When it asks from the parents whether they were aware of what the students are saying parents were mentioning that they look upon what the children are doing but they could not control it as students who are giving excuses and reasons mentioning that they are doing everything for their studies. Parents did not have a tool to measure whether all these activities students are doing using technological devices for their education activities or not but with the time parents understood about what their children were doing and sometime parents said they have to come true all and sometimes take the smart devices from the children to make sure that they are not wasting time and watching unnecessary videos which are not related to educational activities. Major complaint that gets from the parents is that their children watching YouTube different videos available they are rather than focusing on studies and yet they are very much knowledgeable about how to use the smart devices sometimes children try to mislead and mis guide parents mentioning that they are studying but to be honest they were watching videos.

When a same question was asked from the students that they use these technological equipment and smart devices for strictly related to the educational activities, only Three Students mentioned that they use Google to browse new knowledge and use WhatsApp groups and Microsoft Teams and zone flatworms to attend classes. They were the mention that their parents were always with them when they are in classes or if periods are not there someone who is an adult was with them and when it is not there control himself to focus on their studies because they are getting ready for GCE A/L examinations and they were targeting so much about exams because there will be the ambition of getting enter into the universities. The parents of the children for the current year that every time they were randomly checking up on their children they were studying and focusing on the future exams. However, when it comes to other 17 students, they could honestly agree with this fact that they were completely focusing on their studies because it was a great opportunity for them to use their smart devices and get enter into new platforms where it was not available for them. They mention that they've attend in two classes but sometimes their mind is not completed focusing on studies or most of time they use internet for watching videos and spending time leisurely.

Some parents of these children who were using these technological devices and internet platforms for leisurely activities get caught of trying to use unnecessary websites which a prohibited for children. The parents for the mentioned that they were very much worried about their children and sometimes they have to take this issue for their respective class teachers as well and ask them to to advise that children. It was also mentioned by the spare and that after that incidents there were always staying with their children when they are using is smart devices and parents to great control over the technological equipment and digital platforms and keep a continue close monitor about what the children between.

Conclusion:

The conclusion of the research paper comprise the understanding of the analysis conducted for research study where it gives the prima facie understanding that paint education system in Sri Lanka has been incorporated with digital platform and turn into an online education system it has both positive and negative outcomes of choosing it. The analysis of the research explains it and when it comes to both positive and negative impacts they generate with user the person who is handling the digital media platforms for the educational activities. This has been proven by the data analysis of the research study. As the final conclusion it can mention that effect of the digital platforms and digital media on the education of children during the covid-19 pandemic and how the secondary students have used the available digital platform is completely based on their behavior and their internet. Elaborating this further, the data analysis creator mention that some students have been able to continue academic activities in a perfect manner even though they face several technical barriers and appearance have been proven that there are no specific issues relating to the marks and then progress of the children even though the platform there has been changed. Based on these facts the researcher concluded that the impact of the digital platforms on the education progress of the secondary students have been completely based on how they have been using it throughout the period.

Recommendations:

Based on the conclusion, the researcher has been generated certain recommendations that can be suggested relating to the research topic.

The parents of the students should be given parental advised by the class teachers about how parents should monitor the educational activities of the children and how they should monitor the electronic devices students are using.

Another recommendation is that parents should have given necessary knowledge about the electronic devices and the necessary apps that should be allowed for students specially relating to their educational activities and parents should be always keep the eye on what the children are doing with their smart devices.

Apart from the educational session's teachers are giving for the students, they also should give advice about the use and the impact of unethical use of digital platforms and how much activity can negatively impact towards children to increase the Awareness of the children.

The allocated smart devices of the digital devices by the parents for their children should be continuously controlled and parents should be able to check about the electronic device history after students are being used those devices.

The relationship between parents and children also very important where parents should be advising and guiding their children about how to use digital applications and smart devices for educational activities.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Communication, Reconciliation, and National Unity: A Study of Cross-Cultural Engagement in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Cross-cultural communication plays a pivotal role in advancing social integration, particularly within multicultural societies marked by ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. Sri Lanka exemplifies such complexity, with its multi-ethnic population comprising Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamils, Indian Tamils, Moors, Burghers, Malays, and Veddas, and a multireligious landscape shaped by Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. This article examines how cross-cultural communication contributes to social cohesion in post-conflict Sri Lanka, drawing on qualitative research, empirical findings, and established theoretical frameworks in intercultural communication. Five core determinants—empathy, cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, intercultural education, and inclusive policies—are identified as essential for enhancing interethnic understanding and strengthening national unity. Findings indicate that cross-cultural communication is indispensable in reducing ethnic tensions, supporting peacebuilding initiatives, and promoting sustainable development. The article concludes with practical recommendations for embedding cross-cultural communication strategies in education, policy, and community-level initiatives as part of broader efforts toward achieving long-term social integration.

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Introduction

Sri Lanka is recognized as a culturally diverse South Asian nation with a long history of ethnic plurality. Its demographic composition includes Sinhalese (74.9%), Sri Lankan Tamils (11.2%), Indian Tamils (4.2%), Moors (9.3%), and several smaller minority groups (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012). This ethnic mosaic is further enriched by linguistic diversity—Sinhala, Tamil, and English—and multiple religious traditions. While this diversity has enriched Sri Lankan society, it has also created challenges for social integration, particularly following the 30-year civil conflict that deeply polarized ethnic relations.

In such a context, cross-cultural communication functions as a crucial mechanism for rebuilding fractured relationships, countering prejudice, and promoting respect among groups. It fosters meaningful dialogue, enhances mutual trust, and helps individuals navigate cultural differences. This article seeks to analyze the role of cross-cultural communication in promoting social integration in Sri Lanka, with a focus on contemporary challenges and opportunities. It draws upon theoretical foundations, qualitative data, and practical case studies to propose evidence-based recommendations for strengthening intercultural relations.

Problem Statement

Despite the recognition of cultural diversity as a national asset, Sri Lanka continues to face persistent challenges in achieving meaningful and sustainable social integration. Although the country is characterized by rich ethnic, linguistic, and religious plurality, historical grievances, particularly those stemming from the three-decade civil conflict, have left deep-rooted mistrust, segregation, and fragmented interethnic relationships. While policy reforms and reconciliation initiatives have been introduced in the post-conflict era, structural and communicative barriers continue to limit effective interaction among communities.

A central problem addressed in this article is the inadequacy of systematic and institutionalized cross-cultural communication mechanisms within Sri Lanka's social, educational, and political frameworks. Language disparities—especially the inconsistent implementation of trilingual education—restrict equitable access to public services and meaningful dialogue between Sinhala- and Tamil-speaking communities. Furthermore, limited intercultural content in school curricula, insufficient representation of minority narratives in mainstream media, and weak policy enforcement contribute to the persistence of stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings.

Another significant concern is the politicization of ethnic identities, which often reinforces divisions rather than promoting national cohesion. Socioeconomic inequalities in rural, plantation, and post-conflict regions further restrict opportunities for intercultural engagement, thereby perpetuating social distance. Although community-based initiatives such as interfaith dialogues and youth exchange programs demonstrate potential, these efforts remain fragmented and lack comprehensive national coordination.

Moreover, existing scholarly literature on social integration in Sri Lanka has often emphasized political, economic, or constitutional dimensions, while comparatively underexploring the communicative processes that underpin reconciliation and long-term cohesion. There is therefore a clear gap in understanding how structured cross-cultural communication practices can function as a foundational tool for rebuilding trust and fostering inclusive national identity in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, this article addresses the problem of how insufficient cross-cultural communication practices hinder sustainable social integration in Sri Lanka. It seeks to examine the determinants, challenges, and practical applications of intercultural communication in order to propose evidence-based strategies for strengthening empathy, cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, intercultural education, and inclusive policy implementation. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive framework for reconciliation and national unity in Sri Lanka's multicultural society.

Theoritle framework

Foundational anthropological scholarship describes culture as a comprehensive system of shared values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors that shapes how individuals perceive and interpret the world (Tylor, 1871). Building on this understanding, Avruch and Black (1991) argue that culture influences cognitive processes and provides the interpretive frameworks through which human interactions occur, making communication inherently cultural because message transmission and interpretation depend on cultural norms and expectations. Cross-cultural communication, therefore, entails recognizing, understanding, and bridging differences in communication styles, encompassing language, paralinguistic features, non-verbal behaviors, contextual cues, and power dynamics, all of which require cultural competence—knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable effective interaction across cultural boundaries (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Social integration, meanwhile, refers to the process through which individuals and groups participate equally in society, fostering mutual

respect, cooperation, and a sense of belonging, and depends on inclusive institutions, equitable policies, and sustained intercultural dialogue (Council of Europe, 2008; UNDP, 2014). In post-conflict societies, integration also demands reconciliation, trust-building, and healing, with research highlighting the need for platforms that promote dialogue, acknowledge historical grievances, and support shared national narratives (De Silva, 1981; Uyangoda, 2011; Herath, 2015). Within the Sri Lankan context, ethnic tensions rooted in colonial legacies, resource inequalities, and linguistic nationalism were deepened by decades of civil war, reinforcing mistrust and segregation. Cross-cultural communication has therefore become crucial for rebuilding interethnic relationships, although gaps persist due to limited trilingual education, inadequate incorporation of intercultural content in curricula, and insufficiently inclusive media narratives (UNDP, 2014; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). This article extends the existing literature by offering an updated analysis of cross-cultural communication practices and challenges in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Methodology and Data Collection

This study adopts a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods approach designed to generate an in-depth and contextually grounded understanding of cross-cultural communication in Sri Lanka's multicultural and post-conflict setting. The research integrates a systematic literature review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and case study analysis to ensure methodological triangulation and analytical rigor. The literature review examined key theoretical contributions, empirical studies, policy documents, and institutional reports related to intercultural communication, reconciliation, language policy, and social integration in Sri Lanka, thereby establishing conceptual clarity and identifying gaps in existing scholarship. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with educators, civil society actors, religious leaders, university students, and community members from multiethnic districts, selected through purposive sampling to ensure diversity in ethnicity, religion, profession, and geographic location, including urban, rural, plantation, and post-conflict regions. Focus group discussions were conducted to capture collective perceptions, dialogic interaction patterns, and shared challenges in intercultural engagement, while selected community-based initiatives—such as interfaith collaborations, youth exchange programs, multilingual media projects, and intercultural educational reforms—were examined through case study analysis to evaluate practical applications of structured cross-cultural communication. All qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using a multi-stage thematic analysis involving open coding, axial coding, and thematic synthesis, which enabled the

identification of five core determinants: empathy, cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, intercultural education, and inclusive policies. Ethical standards were strictly maintained throughout the research process, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for cultural norms, thereby ensuring the credibility, integrity, and contextual sensitivity of the study's findings.

Sri Lanka's cultural diversity plays a central role in shaping its social landscape, with the 2012 census showing a multi-ethnic population consisting of Sinhalese (74.9%), Sri Lankan Tamils (11.2%), Indian Tamils (4.2%), Moors (9.3%), and smaller communities such as Burghers, Malays, and Veddas, all of whom contribute to the country's sociopolitical and cultural identity (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012). This diversity is further reflected in the nation's linguistic and religious composition, as Sinhala and Tamil function as official languages while English serves as a link language, and Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity are practiced widely, each enriching national life through unique rituals, festivals, and value systems. The influence of this multicultural fabric is evident in the collective celebration of festivals like Vesak, Deepavali, Ramadan, and Christmas, which foster shared values and strengthen intercommunity bonds. At the same time, significant challenges—including ethnic segregation in schools and residential areas, persistent language barriers, political polarization, and uneven socioeconomic development—continue to disturb meaningful social integration and equitable participation across communities.

Factors Influencing Cross-Cultural Communication

Five key factors were identified as central to effective cross-cultural communication: empathy, cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, intercultural education, and inclusive policies. Empathy enables individuals to understand and appreciate others' perspectives, reducing prejudice and fostering trust, particularly in post-conflict settings where reconciliation is vital. Cultural sensitivity, which involves recognizing and respecting cultural norms, values, and practices without judgment, supports respectful interaction and minimizes misunderstandings. Language proficiency also plays an essential role, as Sri Lanka's inconsistent bilingual education policies have contributed to social division; therefore, trilingual competencies in Sinhala, Tamil, and English are crucial for equitable access to services and meaningful interethnic communication. Intercultural education further strengthens cross-cultural communication by promoting historical awareness, critical thinking, and an appreciation of diversity through curricula that integrate intercultural content. Finally, inclusive policies—such

as equitable resource distribution, minority rights protections, and fair representation—enhance trust in institutions and support sustained social cohesion across political, educational, and economic domains.

Challenges to Cross-Cultural Communication in Sri Lanka

Cross-cultural communication in Sri Lanka faces multiple challenges that hinder social cohesion and integration. Language gaps remain a significant barrier, as unequal access to bilingual education limits effective communication between ethnic groups and constrains social mobility. Cultural misunderstandings are also common, as differences in communication styles, gestures, and rituals can be misinterpreted, often leading to conflict or tension. Furthermore, stereotyping and prejudice continue to influence public discourse and social behavior, undermining efforts at integration. Socioeconomic inequalities, especially in rural, plantation, and post-conflict areas, restrict opportunities for multicultural interaction and exacerbate social divisions. Finally, the political instrumentalization of ethnicity frequently reinforces mistrust, as ethnic identities are mobilized for political gain, further complicating efforts to foster inclusive communication across communities.

Case Studies of Cross-Cultural Communication Initiatives

Several initiatives in Sri Lanka demonstrate the potential of cross-cultural communication to foster social cohesion and understanding. Interfaith dialogues have brought religious leaders together through joint programs, including discussion sessions and humanitarian projects, promoting peace and mutual respect. Youth exchange programs at the school level, including sports and cultural activities, encourage early intergroup contact and help reduce stereotypes. Media initiatives, such as multilingual broadcasting and multicultural content, function as powerful tools for promoting inclusion and awareness of diverse communities. Additionally, educational reforms in some schools incorporate intercultural modules, enabling students to engage with other communities through collaborative projects and cultural events. Collectively, these initiatives highlight how structured and institutionalized efforts can transform social relations and support long-term reconciliation.

Discussion

Integrating cross-cultural communication into national frameworks is essential for building cohesive and resilient societies. In Sri Lanka, such communication contributes to reconciliation, the formation of a shared national identity, and enhanced democratic participation. Key factors such as empathy and cultural sensitivity strengthen interpersonal relationships, while language proficiency and intercultural education help bridge structural divides. Inclusive policies further reinforce trust in state institutions, enabling equitable

participation across diverse communities. In an increasingly globalized environment, cross-cultural competencies also expand economic opportunities, facilitate international cooperation, and enhance educational mobility. The evidence from this study demonstrates that cross-cultural communication plays a pivotal role in fostering social integration by promoting dialogue, mutual respect, and understanding across cultural boundaries, thereby supporting reconciliation and long-term peacebuilding. These findings underscore the importance of embedding cross-cultural communication within educational systems, community practices, and national policy frameworks to strengthen sustainable social harmony in Sri Lanka's multicultural society. To achieve this, several strategic measures are recommended: strengthening trilingual education across all provinces and integrating intercultural communication modules into school and university curricula to build foundational understanding from an early age; developing national media guidelines to promote inclusive narratives and counter stereotypes; implementing interethnic community projects in both urban and rural areas to foster practical interaction; increasing the representation of minority groups in governance and public institutions; providing cultural sensitivity training for public officials and educators; expanding interfaith and youth dialogue programs to bridge generational divides; supporting targeted economic development in marginalized regions to reduce structural inequalities; and establishing national platforms for community-led intercultural initiatives while promoting collaborative research on intercultural communication and peacebuilding. Collectively, these measures present a comprehensive approach to consolidating cross-cultural understanding, reinforcing social cohesion, and ensuring sustainable peace and development in Sri Lanka

Summary

This article examines the importance of cross-cultural communication in promoting social integration within Sri Lanka's culturally diverse society. Drawing on qualitative data, theoretical perspectives, and case studies, the study identifies five central components of effective cross-cultural communication: empathy, cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, intercultural education, and inclusive policies. Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic and multireligious composition makes cross-cultural engagement crucial for national unity, especially in the post-conflict context where ethnic mistrust persists. The findings highlight the challenges that hinder effective cross-cultural communication, including language gaps, stereotyping, socioeconomic disparities, and the politicization of ethnicity. Case studies demonstrate how youth programs,

interfaith dialogues, media initiatives, and educational reforms can strengthen intercultural understanding. The study concludes that cross-cultural communication is essential for building trust, fostering reconciliation, and creating sustainable pathways to national integration. Recommendations emphasize the need for trilingual education, inclusive governance, intercultural curricula, and community-driven initiatives to strengthen social cohesion across Sri Lanka.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on Communication, Reconciliation, and National Unity: A Study of Cross-Cultural Engagement in Sri Lanka, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen cross-cultural communication and promote sustainable social integration:

1. Strengthen and Institutionalize Trilingual Education

The consistent implementation of trilingual education (Sinhala, Tamil, and English) should be prioritized across all provinces. Language proficiency is fundamental to meaningful intercultural dialogue, equitable access to public services, and social mobility. Teacher training programs and curriculum reforms should ensure that bilingual and trilingual competencies are practically achieved rather than remaining policy aspirations.

2. Integrate Intercultural Communication into Educational Curricula

Intercultural communication modules should be formally incorporated into school and university curricula. These modules should promote empathy, historical awareness, conflict sensitivity, and critical thinking. Experiential learning methods—such as collaborative interethnic projects, exchange programs, and multicultural events—should be encouraged to provide students with practical cross-cultural engagement.

3. Develop Inclusive Media Policies and Ethical Guidelines

National media institutions should adopt clear guidelines promoting inclusive narratives and balanced representation of ethnic and religious communities. Multilingual broadcasting and culturally sensitive reporting can counter stereotypes, reduce misinformation, and foster a shared national discourse. Media literacy education should also be expanded to help citizens critically engage with ethnically sensitive content.

4. Expand Interfaith and Community Dialogue Platforms

Structured interfaith and interethnic dialogue platforms should be institutionalized at local and national levels. Religious leaders, youth representatives, educators, and civil society actors should be engaged in sustained dialogue initiatives that address historical grievances, promote mutual understanding, and encourage collaborative community service projects.

5. Provide Cultural Sensitivity Training for Public Officials

Public servants, law enforcement officers, educators, and local administrators should receive systematic training in cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication. Such training can improve public service delivery, reduce discrimination, and enhance trust in state institutions among minority communities.

6. Promote Inclusive Governance and Minority Representation

Inclusive policies must ensure fair representation of minority communities in political, administrative, and decision-making structures. Transparent policy enforcement and equitable resource distribution will reinforce institutional trust and reduce perceptions of marginalization.

7. Address Socioeconomic Disparities through Targeted Development

Targeted economic development initiatives in rural, plantation, and post-conflict regions should be strengthened. Economic inclusion creates opportunities for intercultural interaction and reduces structural inequalities that contribute to social division.

8. Establish a National Framework for Cross-Cultural Engagement

A coordinated national framework should be developed to integrate educational, media, policy, and community-level initiatives under a unified strategy for reconciliation and national unity. Collaborative research and monitoring mechanisms should assess the long-term impact of cross-cultural communication programs.

Collectively, these recommendations emphasize that cross-cultural communication must move beyond isolated initiatives and become an institutionalized national priority. Embedding empathy, cultural sensitivity, language proficiency, and inclusive governance within Sri Lanka's social systems is essential for strengthening reconciliation, fostering trust, and ensuring sustainable national unity in a multicultural society.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Determinants of Online Purchase Intention Among Young Consumers in Post-COVID Sri Lanka: An Empirical Study at the University of Kelaniya

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Abstract

The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies, coupled with increased Internet accessibility, has spurred a significant transformation in the daily activities of consumers. A notable shift from offline to online activities has become a prevailing trend. This shift is particularly evident in the proclivity of customers to transition from traditional offline activities to online alternatives. As a result, the landscape of e-commerce in Sri Lanka is poised for substantial growth in the foreseeable future. While the influence of traditional Internet technologies on customer purchase intentions has garnered considerable research attention, the same cannot be said for the impact of new social commerce-related activities. This study aims to address this research gap by investigating the determinants of online purchase intention among young consumers in Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on undergraduates at the University of Kelaniya. The research delves into how a spectrum of factors, including product, price, trust, convenience, payment methods, security, return policies, after-sale services, firm reputation, and health considerations, shape the online purchase intentions of young consumers. Employing a quantitative research approach, the study collected data from 342 young consumers within the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Kelaniya through a questionnaire survey. The study further applies regression analysis to unravel the intricate relationships between these factors and online purchase intention. Intriguingly, price and product quality, while important, do not dominate the decision-making process for these young consumers. The study emphasizes the significance of establishing trust between e-commerce providers and consumers and suggests strategies for enhancing consumer trust in online transactions. In a contemporary world where e-commerce is becoming increasingly integral to the consumer experience, this research provides valuable insights for businesses and policymakers seeking to understand and cater to the evolving demands of young consumers. By bridging the gap between theoretical constructs and real-world behavior, this study contributes to a deeper comprehension of the factors that propel young Sri Lankan undergraduates toward online shopping.

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Introduction

Consumer behavior encompasses the decision-making process individuals go through when allocating resources for purchasing various products and services. This process includes what, why, when, where, how often, and how they use what they buy. It encompasses not only the actions taken during purchases but also the mental and social processes that precede and follow these actions. Leon G. Schiffman and Leslie Lazar Kanuk define consumer behavior as a complex array of actions that individuals undertake when searching for, acquiring, using, assessing, and disposing of products, services, and ideas to meet their specific needs. It's a dynamic process influenced by personal attributes and external factors.

Consumer behavior is a complex and multifaceted field, characterized by the intricate and context-dependent nature of human actions, making precise predictions challenging. Marketers aim to influence consumer behavior to achieve desired outcomes, which can profoundly impact the success of marketing initiatives and overall business performance. Recent research in consumer behavior enhances understanding and prediction, focusing not only on what people buy but also on why and how often. A prevalent foundational assumption in consumer behavior research is that individuals frequently make purchasing decisions based not solely on a product's primary functionality, but rather on their personal and subjective perception of its value. This implies that while the fundamental purpose of products remains significant, the role of today's products surpasses the boundaries of its service

In 1994, the advent of e-commerce via the Internet marked a transformative moment, turning the Internet into a dynamic platform for marketing and transactions. Cheaper Internet access and the growth of Internet Banking services have fueled the rapid expansion of e-commerce, aided by technological advancements and free applications for building e-commerce websites. Recognized brands have embraced online storefronts to reach consumers, catering to the preference for the convenience of online shopping over traditional methods with their associated challenges. A cross-cultural study by T. Sun highlights how e-commerce behavior varies across cultures, with differences most notable among those new to online shopping but diminishing as consumers gain experience. The study identifies trust and experience as key barriers to global e-commerce adoption, emphasizing the importance of trust-building features in digital business operations.

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, originating in China in December 2019 (Kumaravel et al. 2020), has been profound, affecting various aspects such as psychology, society, and economics (Bostan et al. 2020). Notably, a significant outcome of the pandemic has been the shift in consumer behavior towards online shopping. This change is driven by factors like the need for social distancing, safety precautions, and adjustments in customer-business interactions. Given the transformation in consumer behaviour accelerated by the pandemic, it's crucial to investigate how these changes influence the purchasing decisions of young consumers in Sri Lanka.

Problem Statement

In the contemporary digital landscape, the proliferation of online commerce has redefined the dynamics of consumer behaviour, transcending geographical boundaries. In recent years, the surge in online commerce has reshaped the global retail landscape, with Sri Lanka experiencing a notable shift in consumer behaviour towards online buying. While some studies have explored the determinants influencing consumers' online buying behaviour in Sri Lanka, a comprehensive examination of the specific factors influencing young consumers' purchasing decisions, especially within the context of a post-Covid-19 scenario, remains relatively scarce. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic triggered unprecedented disruptions across industries, forcing businesses to adapt rapidly to new consumer behaviours shaped by safety concerns and restrictions. E-commerce firms worldwide witnessed accelerated growth as consumers turned to online platforms to fulfil their needs, driven by factors such as limited access to physical stores. Against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, Sri Lanka's e-commerce sector has demonstrated rapid growth, notably in the realm of social commerce on platforms like Facebook. This phenomenon extends beyond urban centres, captivating buyers across the nation. The seamless interaction, information-sharing, and ordering convenience offered by platforms like Facebook Live have not only gained traction but also contributed to heightened buyer satisfaction. Amidst these transformations, it becomes pivotal to unravel the factors influencing consumers' online buying behaviour in Sri Lanka's evolving market.

E-commerce, encompassing various technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, and internet marketing, has become a dynamic channel for buying and selling products. As the pandemic reshapes consumer behaviour and accelerates the adoption of online shopping, it becomes imperative to ascertain how these shifts influence the purchasing decisions of young consumers in Sri Lanka. Exploring the factors driving online buying behaviour within this demographic post-pandemic will not only contribute to the academic understanding of consumer behaviour but also provide valuable insights for businesses aiming to cater effectively to this evolving market. Therefore, this research aims to bridge the knowledge gap by investigating the factors influencing young consumers' online buying behaviour in the Sri Lankan context after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to identify the factors affecting young consumers' online buying behavior in Sri Lanka, drawing insights from existing literature. This endeavor seeks to establish a comprehensive framework through which causal relationships can be hypothesized.

Significance of the Study

Bandara (2017) highlights that within Sri Lanka's 4,788,751 internet users, a significant 86% wield purchasing power. Furthermore, a study by Kayamu demonstrates that e-commerce transactions in Sri Lanka are anticipated to surge by over 72%, underlining the escalating trend (Khan, 2017), as cited in Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018). Despite these promising indicators, the Ministry of Telecommunication & Digital Infrastructure (2019) reports that merely 0.4% (equivalent to US \$10 billion) of the total annual retail sales in Sri Lanka stems from e-commerce. Additional insights from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (2019)

estimate domestic annual sales at approximately \$19 million, or Sri Lankan Rs. 3000 million, with a mere 1% attributed to e-commerce. Nevertheless, this landscape is projected to transform, as SL Ecommerce (2018) suggests a potential upswing to US \$400 million by 2022. This transition holds potential significance, especially given the burgeoning role of the retail sector in Sri Lanka's GDP (SL Ecommerce, 2018). As businesses pivot towards online ventures, driven by a multitude of factors (Liat & Wuhan, 2014), it becomes imperative to decipher the elements that shape consumers' intentions to make online purchases, a task not devoid of complexity (Yaras et al., 2017). While existing research extensively explores the factors influencing online purchase intentions across various contexts, a notable research gap exists in examining these dynamics, specifically among the young generation within government universities in Sri Lanka. To address this void, the current study gathered data from young generation respondents in Sri Lanka, aiming to provide insights into this unexplored area.

Methodology

A population may also be thought of as a collection of people who share numerous characteristics in common with one another. The population of the University of Kelaniya includes every single student who is currently enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Approximately 3103 undergraduate’s students were enrolled. With reference to Krejcie and Morgan, the sample size for a population of 3103 is 342 nos. There are certain reasons where we cannot expect 100% responses. Hence, the sample size is calculated with a 95% confidence level which is sufficient to represent the total population. A convenience sampling method was used to collect data through a questionnaire based on a conceptual framework built from comprehensive secondary research. The questionnaire included two sections: one for demographic data and the other, a Five-Likert scale questionnaire, to evaluate independent and dependent variables related to online purchase behavior. The study relies on quantitative methodology, and data analysis will involve SPSS, encompassing descriptive statistics, the Shapiro Wilk Test, Cronbach Test, regression analysis, and Pearson correlation methods. Feedback completeness will be ensured before analysis

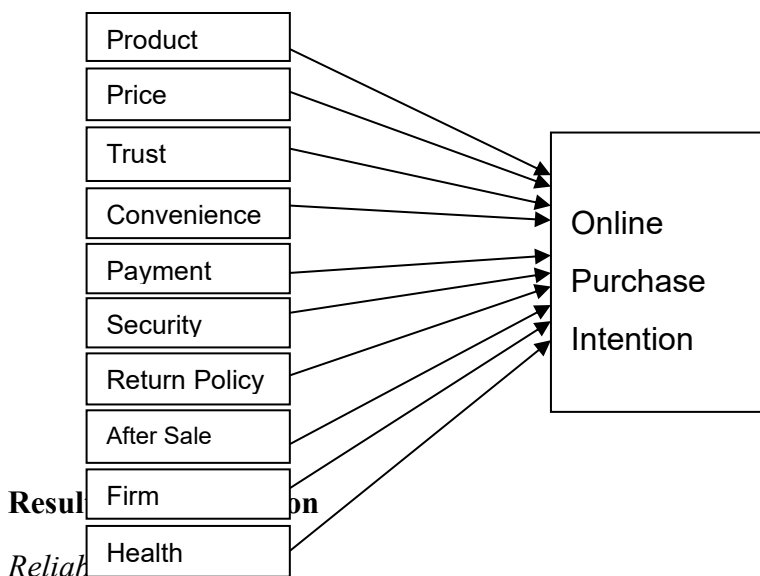


Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with a random sample of 20 learners. The feedback provided by the respondents was evaluated to determine the instrument's reliability, using Cronbach's alpha values. As suggested by Walsh (1995), Cronbach's alpha ranges from zero (0) to one (1), with a value of 0.6 or above indicating acceptable internal consistency reliability. The results of the reliability test (refer to Table I) indicated that each variable's Cronbach's alpha value exceeded 0.6, confirming a high level of reliability.

Table 1:- Reliability test results

| Variable | Cronbach's alpha value | Comment |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Product | 0.934 | Accepted |
| Price | 0.752 | Accepted |
| Trust | 0.842 | Accepted |
| Convenience | 0.742 | Accepted |
| Payment | 0.825 | Accepted |
| Security | 0.910 | Accepted |
| Return Policy | 0.799 | Accepted |
| After Sale service | 0.923 | Accepted |
| Firm Reputation | 0.857 | Accepted |
| Health | 0.740 | Accepted |

According to Table 1, all the variables acceptable to very high levels of internal consistency, as indicated by the Cronbach's alpha values. This is important in research and survey design to ensure that the data collected is consistent and trustworthy.

Validity assessment

Table 2:- KMO test results

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|---|--------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | | .838 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 3618.595 |
| | df | 45 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test is a statistical measure used in the field of multivariate statistics to assess the suitability of data for conducting a factor analysis. It helps researchers

determine whether their dataset is appropriate for factor analysis by examining the sampling adequacy and the extent of correlations between variables. The KMO test produces a value between 0 and 1, with higher values indicating better suitability for factor analysis.

The KMO measure of 0.838 indicates that the data is generally suitable for factor analysis, and the significant Bartlett's test suggests that the variables are correlated and factor analysis can be conducted. These results provide support for the use of factor analysis techniques to explore the underlying structure or dimensions within the dataset.

Correlation Test

A correlation coefficient is a statistical measure that quantifies the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. It provides a numerical value that indicates how closely the values of the variables are related to each other. The correlation coefficient is denoted by the symbol "r" and can range from -1 to +1.

Table 3:- Correlation Test

| Hypothesis | Pearson's Correlation | Sig. (2-tailed) | Results |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Product H1 | 0.639 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Price H2 | 0.623 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Trust H3 | 0.781 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Convenience H4 | 0.645 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Payment H5 | 0.554 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Security H6 | 0.734 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Return Policy H7 | 0.499 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| After Sale service H8 | 0.320 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Firm Reputation H9 | 0.220 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Health H10 | 0.606 | 0.000 | Accepted |

Table 3. describes the correlation values of the independent variables based on sample of 342 individuals. The correlation table reveals that all hypotheses (H1 to H10) exhibit positive relationships with young consumers' online buying behavior in Sri Lanka, as indicated by Pearson's correlation coefficients well above 0.2. The significance value (p) being less than 0.05 is widely accepted as a valid criterion for making decisions regarding hypotheses. Therefore, the statistical significance of these relationships, with all p-values below 0.01, reinforces the reliability of the findings. Therefore, it can be confidently concluded that the

variables under study, including product, price, trust, convenience, payment methods, security, return policy, after-sale service, firm reputation and health factor are influential factors in shaping the online buying behavior of young consumers in Sri Lanka.

Regression Analysis

Table 4:- Model Summary

| R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error of the Estimate |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| .942 ^a | .888 | .886 | .1870 |

This model summary presents the results of a regression analysis where the dependent variable is online purchase intention. As shown in Table 4, the adjusted R-value of 0.888 suggests that 89% of the variation observed in the online purchase intention can be attributed to the independent variables included in the model. The R2 value of 89% indicates that there may be numerous additional variables that could impact the online purchase intention, presenting opportunities for future research in this area.

Table 5:- Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 0.693 | .229 | | 3.025 | .003 |
| Product | 0.156 | .056 | .178 | 2.013 | .0001 |
| Price | 0.106 | .052 | .126 | 2.039 | .043 |
| Trust | 0.280 | .026 | .320 | 5.736 | .0001 |
| Convenience | 0.295 | .006 | 0.352 | 5.246 | .000 |
| Payment | 0.029 | .013 | .027 | 2.191 | .029 |
| Security | 0.693 | .011 | .352 | 5.246 | .0001 |
| Return Policy | 0.311 | .012 | .319 | 25.923 | .0001 |
| After Sale service | 0.167 | .019 | .147 | 8.683 | .0001 |
| Firm Reputation | 0.052 | .024 | .046 | 2.207 | .028 |
| Health | 0.185 | .064 | 0.211 | 3.535 | .001 |

According to the regression equation, if Online Purchase Intention increases by one unit with other factors unchanged, the increase in Product is approximately 0.156 units, Price contributes about 0.106 units, Trust adds roughly 0.280 units, Convenience is associated with an increase of approximately 0.295 units, Payment contributes about 0.029 units, Security adds approximately 0.693 units, Return Policy leads to an increase of about 0.311 units, After Sale Service is associated with an increase of roughly 0.167 units, Firm Reputation contributes approximately 0.052 units, and Health adds around 0.185 units. These coefficients represent the estimated changes in Online Purchase Intention for each one-unit change in the respective independent variables while keeping all other factors constant in the model.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In January 2023, Sri Lanka recorded a substantial online presence with approximately 14.58 million internet users. Notably, the country's internet penetration rate was 66.7 percent of the total population at the outset of 2023. Insightful findings from Kepios analysis reveal a notable upturn, indicating a rise of 43 thousand internet users, marking a 0.3 percent increase between 2022 and 2023. These figures underscore the growing importance of the internet as an integral and evolving component of Sri Lanka's information landscape, with broader implications for various sectors, including the burgeoning field of e-commerce. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the factors affecting young consumers' online buying behavior in Sri Lanka. The regression and correlation test was used for the data analysis methods. According to the findings, there is a positive relationship between product, price, trust, convenience, payment methods, security, return policy, after-sale service, firm reputation and health factor with the dependent variable online purchase intention. Our findings revealed that trust emerged as the most influential factor, exerting a substantial impact on online purchase intention, along with security considerations. Interestingly, in contrast to some prior research, price and product quality were not the dominant determinants of online purchases in our study. Instead, young consumers expressed reservations about product quality when prices were reduced. Establishing trust emerged as a pivotal element in enhancing the relationship between e-commerce providers and consumers, with a noteworthy influence on university students' inclination to engage in online transactions. Web retailers can employ various strategies to cultivate a positive trust perception in the minds of consumers, thereby attracting more customers to online stores.

These study results provide a valuable foundation for further research in the realm of online purchases, beyond traditional marketing tools. It's worth noting that regional disparities in internet penetration may affect consumers' online purchase intentions in Sri Lanka. Future studies should consider a diverse sample that encompasses various demographic factors and utilize both quantitative and qualitative data for a more comprehensive analysis. While the regression and correlation tests used in this study provided valuable quantitative data, incorporating qualitative research methods such as surveys, focus groups, and in-depth interviews can offer a deeper understanding of consumers' motivations and perceptions. Combining quantitative and qualitative data can yield richer insights into the factors driving online buying behavior. As technology continually evolves, future research can explore the influence of technological advancements on online shopping behavior. Investigating how

emerging technologies, such as augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and blockchain, influence online buying decisions can shed light on the changing dynamics of e-commerce in Sri Lanka. Considering the multicultural and diverse nature of Sri Lanka, research should explore how cultural factors, such as language, religion, and societal norms, impact online shopping behavior. Cross-cultural studies can provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities in the Sri Lankan e-commerce landscape. This study has some limitations, and we hope it inspires further investigation in this field.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Radio listening behavior in the face of modern lifestyles

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Abstract

Among the communication media, the voice-based medium is radio. The traditional form of radio, which was created with the aim of listening behavior, has now been built in accordance with modern techniques. Accordingly, modern radio listening behavior has also undergone technological changes, surpassing traditional radio characteristics. The purpose of this research is to examine the behavior of radio listeners who are updated with technology. The research problem here is to identify what changes have taken place in radio listening behavior due to modern lifestyles. Data were collected through a questionnaire submitted to 200 randomly selected recipients based on the variables of area of residence, age and gender dynamics. Only Sinhala media radio listeners are targeted and the data obtained from those receivers were analyzed separately with the above variables. It was possible to identify listener behavior showing interest in listening to the radio in the face of competitive media activity. It could be recognized that modern radio users listen to the radio in a busy social space and engage in daily activities, with the majority of these users more inclined to listen to radio news and musical programs. Based on the data provided by the listeners, the media sequences they most closely associate with are social media, television, radio and newspaper, confirming how social media has had a strong impact on modern subscriber behavior, surpassing radio as a whole. The lowest value was recorded for the use of radios for accessing radio, while the highest value was recorded for mobile phone applications and Internet-led social media. Likewise, the activity of a range of listeners aimed at information and enjoyment could also be identified in the modern radio medium.

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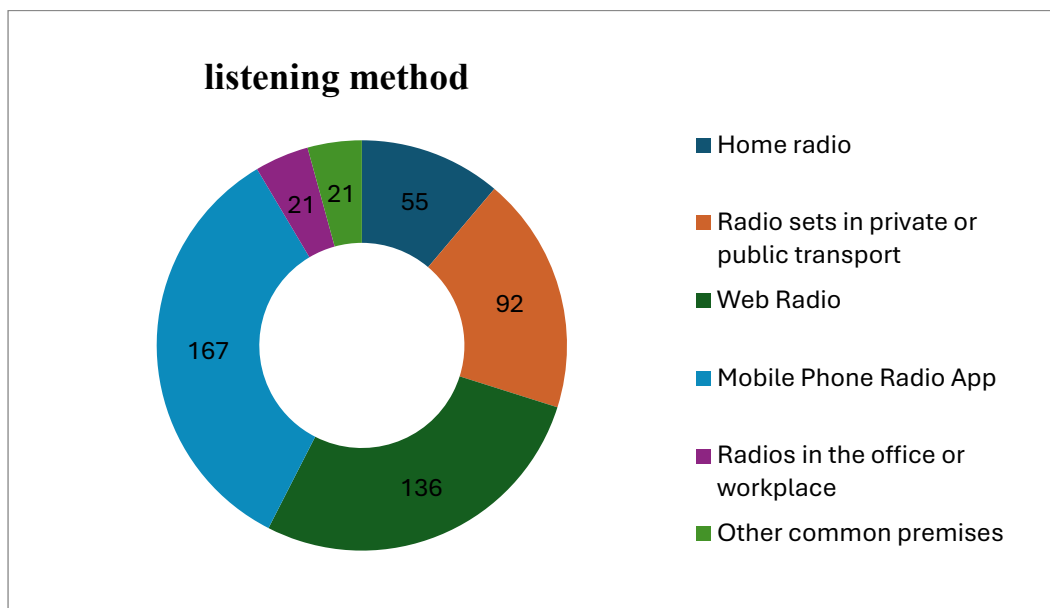
1. Introduction

Radio is the only medium that can detect an audience. While other media address a fandom or an audience, radio addresses its audience directly. To achieve this, radio employs dialogues, music, sound effects and pauses. From traditional radio art to modern web radio and mobile applications, the new radio has surpassed mere auditory engagement by incorporating a visual dimension for the listener. Radio, once seen as a medium solely for listening, now occupies spaces within social media, encouraging repeated engagement. Consequently, the transformation of this medium's traditional form, coupled with innovations in listenership, represents emerging trends within the radio industry. In light of contemporary lifestyles, this study examines the innovative dynamics of radio media and their impact on listener behavior.

2. Methodology

Data were collected by administering a structured questionnaire to 200 randomly selected respondents, considering variables such as area of residence, age, gender dynamics, to identify patterns of radio usage and interest, as well as respondents' relationships with radio and other media. The collected data were analyzed separately based on these variables to investigate individual radio behaviors in the context of modern lifestyles. This analysis allowed for the identification of the media platforms used by listeners to access radio content.

Figure 1



It can be recognized here that modern radio listening behavior has consistently relied on internet-based media. Instead of traditional radio sets, the majority of radio listeners are using digital technology tools as their access media. This enables us to identify the specific media being utilized to access radio content.

Figure 2

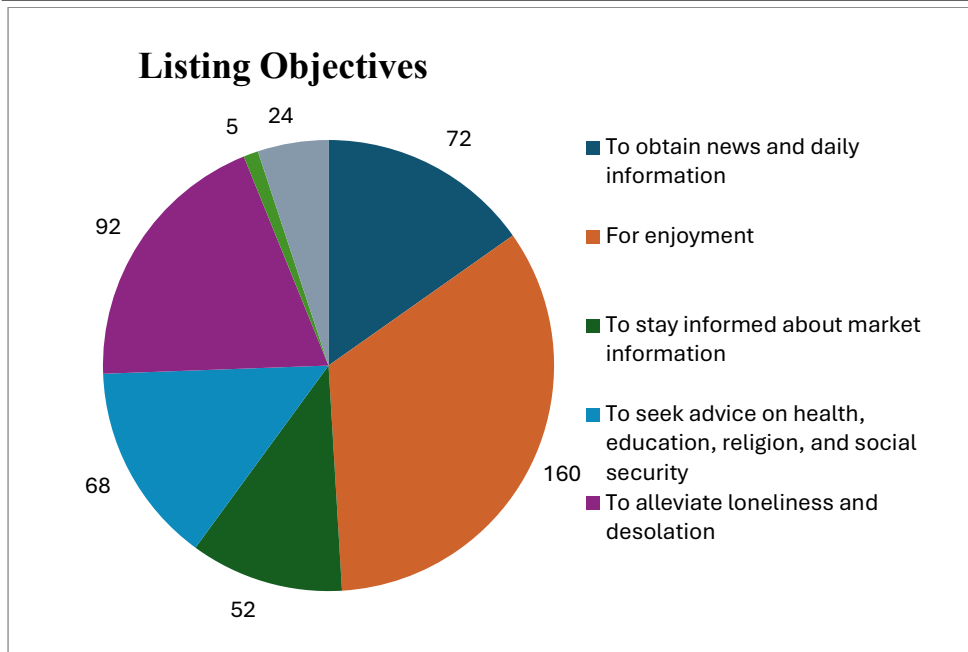
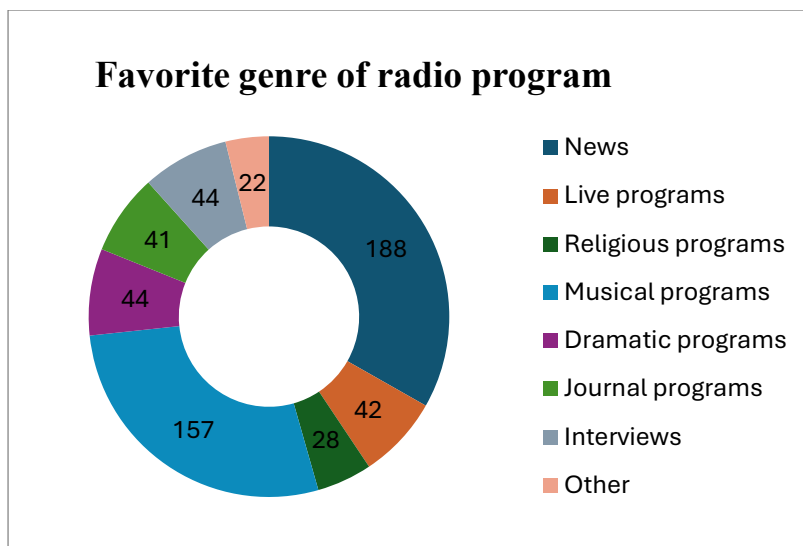


Figure 3



3. Results

Within this study, a group of listeners exhibiting interest in radio amidst competitive media activities can be identified. However, listeners who prioritize radio within their media consumption habits could not be distinguished. It was confirmed that the majority of listeners tune in to radio during their daily work routines, with limited engagement observed for foreign radio stations. Among listeners accessing local radio channels, there is interest in various programs including music, news, interviews, magazine features, dramas, live shows and religious content, respectively. When assessing respondents' media preferences, it was noted that the majority are active users of social media, alongside engagement with electronic media such as television, radio and newspapers. Additionally, the primary channels capturing the

interest of local radio listeners are Sirasa FM, Neth FM, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Siyatha FM, Hiru FM and Derana, respectively.

4. Discussion

It is crucial to analyze radio listening behavior within a multimedia context. Radio served as the primary electronic medium meeting both informational and entertainment needs before the rise of visual media. Consequently, the following excerpt highlights the expectations of the modern listener from radio.

"Today's listeners expect pure entertainment through audio-visual media. They are also inclined to use this entertainment as a means to escape from their problems, to relax their minds, to experience cultural or aesthetic pleasure, to manage impulses that arise, to pass time, or simply because they are not engaged in other activities, seeking some form of stimulation." (Welagedara, 2021, p.172)

Even amidst competitive media activities, the decisive factor affecting the survival of radio is the ease of media use. Thanks to this flexibility, which is unmatched by other media, radio has carved out a space for itself to thrive in challenging media landscapes.

"Listening to the radio does not require a time commitment, unlike television. It grants the listener the freedom and convenience to listen while engaged in other tasks. Therefore, since radio allows multitasking, it continues to accompany people in their daily lives, occupying a free public space and surpassing other forms of media." (Ranasinghe, 2019, p.214)

The radio media has been challenged by the advent of digital media. It can be observed how modern radio is struggling to survive in the face of these challenges.

"Today, the radio industry is facing a survival challenge. Despite experiencing a golden age in the 20th century, radio now has to contend with the rise of various physical and digital media, necessitating a fight for its survival." (Kumara, 2021, p.58)

"An audience that enjoys radio music is easily identifiable today. Radio music spans a wide range, catering to diverse tastes of listeners. Today's radio music programs include shows like Chart Show or reality music shows. However, radio music programs are not just about enhancing music knowledge; they also encompass programs aimed at cultivating musical taste. The most creative programs are those that impart knowledge and refine the listener's musical palate." (Gamage, 2020, p.145)

As a whole, it is possible to identify how the trajectory of modern radio is evolving as a challenging medium that survives within a competitive media landscape, thanks to its ability to provide listening opportunities during daily work and its flexibility as a medium.

Furthermore, by altering the traditional dimensions of radio, it has provided users with access to a diverse range of content across various media platforms. Web-based radio has evolved into a platform that caters to multiple tastes and takes on various forms.

Radio now offers online radio on apps and websites, on demand radiophonic content archives and content fragmentation features (splitting content into segments). In addition, radio consumers now have broader access to radio content than before through various mobile devices (Cordeiro, 2012; Ignatiew, 2017).

New media offers unprecedented content options to radio listeners, precipitating a profound change in the structure of traditional radio and listening habits. As digital trends continue to accelerate, the radio industry is forced to continually reinvent itself to maintain its relevance in a multimedia web-based world (Cordeiro, 2012; Farrell, 2016; Laor et al., 2019; Moshe et al., 2017; Starkey, 2017; Te et al., 2011).

Broadcasting via radio waves since its inception, radio is a dynamic medium that communicates through physical inputs and outputs rather than solely in the digital space.

Digital radio refers to an audio product that is delivered through digital platforms, such as smartphone applications, online radio stations, the so-called HD radio, audio podcasts and satellite radio (Punnett, 2016).

In the face of this digitalization, the systematic changes in the listener's behavior are driving the adaptation of media, as well as the simplification of content.

Digital radio also enhances the accessibility of radio hosts because listeners are more likely to encounter their personalities on its social media platforms. As a result, social network presence has become a crucial part of audience interaction strategies in radio stations (Mohammed and Thombre, 2017).

Online radio expands a station's interactions with its listeners, who can now respond to broadcast content across multiple platforms and hear listeners' feedback within minutes of delivery. Web 2.0 interactivity gives an immediate voice to an audience, one of the most important tasks of radio (Silva et al., 2018; Sinton, 2018).

Internet radio also adds a visual dimension to what has traditionally been a 'blind' medium for listeners who could only listen to the broadcasters. Digital technologies have transformed radio to a medium is both heard and seen, as social media visuals give audiences a real time glimpse into broadcast operations and talent (Ferguson and Greer, 2018).

All in all, the fact that Internet radio is able to enter into new dimensions compared to the traditional ones identified earlier, due to the accessibility of radio via the Internet, marks a triumphant step for radio, both in terms of media and technology.

Online radio has radically changed the definition and essence of the radio landscape (Ferguson and Greer, 2018; Silva et al., 2018; Sinton, 2018).

5. Conclusions

It can be observed how modern radio listening behavior has evolved into both a source of information and an entertainment medium. Specifically, it was found that the majority of respondents were not active live radio listeners, but rather passive ones. Additionally, it was

confirmed that these individuals primarily tune in to the radio for entertainment purposes, rather than utilizing it for tasks such as obtaining market information, health advice, education, religious guidance, or social security information. Consequently, it can be concluded that, overall, modern radio listeners primarily use radio for entertainment purposes, while also relying on it during daily activities to stay informed about current social, economic and political phenomena.

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**RESEARCH ARTICLE****A study of Creative Communication Approaches in the Galle Face Struggle**

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Abstract

In the wake of the economic crisis that gripped Sri Lanka in 2022, citizens exercised their democratic right to voice concerns and uphold societal values through widespread protests. The place known as Galle Face was a focal point for this struggle. This study investigates the creative communication approaches employed in this Galle Face struggle, distinguishing it as a distinctive episode within Sri Lanka's history of civil unrest. Employing purposive sampling, this research focuses on constructive communication within Facebook accounts and pages directly linked to the Galle Face struggle. Utilizing qualitative content analysis, the study draws upon social relations theory and mass society theory as its theoretical and conceptual framework. The findings reveal the use of participatory communication methods, visual activities, and artistic creations as creative expressions in the struggle area, fostering increased public engagement. As a result, the study unveils the role of cultural events organized during the Galle Face Struggle, shedding light on their contribution to societal participation. Moreover, it highlights the significant impact of social media in amplifying the Galle Face struggle, indicating its role in popularizing the movement among the masses. The research underscores the success of creative communication initiatives in shaping and advancing the goals of the Galle Face Struggle.

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Introduction

Sri Lanka's post-colonial history has been marked by a series of political and social upheavals, often manifested through violent armed revolutions resulting in significant loss of life and property. Notably, the nation witnessed a transformative event with the 1988/89 youth uprising, shaping the trajectory of political dissent for three decades. In a dramatic turn of events, the year 2022 bore witness to another pivotal moment in Sri Lanka's history – a popular uprising distinguished by its unique locus, the golf course turned protest site known as Gotagogama. This uprising, aptly named the Galle Face Struggle, stands out as the fourth youth uprising in the country's history, characterized by its peaceful and unarmed nature.

Unlike its predecessors, the Galle Face Struggle unfolded as an extended encampment around the Galle Face, where people creatively expressed their dissent, aiming to mobilize the entire nation against the prevailing crisis. This study embarks on an unprecedented exploration of the Galle face Struggle, focusing not only on its historical context but also on the novel aspect of employing creative methods beyond conventional slogans to exert pressure on the existing government.

For the first time in Sri Lanka's history, this research article delves into the unique communication approaches of the Galle Face Struggle, seeking to understand why these methods stand out and how they impact both the rulers and the public. The central question guiding this inquiry is: Why are the creative communication approaches used in the Galle Face Struggle so special, and how do they directly and indirectly communicate their impact to the public?

In light of the complex political and social landscape that forms the backdrop of this study, the research aims to unravel the intricacies of these creative communication methods and assess their effectiveness in conveying the struggle's message to both the ruling authorities and the broader public. Through this exploration, new insights and concepts related to the Galle Face Struggle's communication dynamics are anticipated to emerge, providing a nuanced understanding of the transformative power inherent in peaceful and creative dissent.

Literature Review:

The Galle Face Struggle in Sri Lanka, situated within the broader context of creative and peaceful resistance against oppressive political and social systems, finds resonance in a global landscape shaped by a multitude of transformative movements. Examining these global instances provides valuable insights into the unique nature of the Galle Face Struggle and the creative communication approaches employed by its participants.

‘Historically, movements like the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia (1989), which peacefully dismantled a communist regime, serve as a precursor to Galle Face's non-violent protest. This global trend of well-protected struggles includes the NO" movement against General Pinochet in Chile (1988), the Solidarity movement in Poland (1989), and the People's Power movement in the Philippines (2001), demonstrating the efficacy of non-violent collective action in challenging oppressive forces’ (Havel, 1985; Sharp, 1973).

‘The global impact of peaceful resistance is further exemplified by the 'Pink Revolution' in Georgia (2003), the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004), and the revolution in Serbia (2000), all of which utilized creative communication methods to bring about political change.’ Such instances underscore the interconnectedness of creative strategies across diverse sociopolitical contexts’ (Kaldor, 2003; Bunce, 2003; Ackerman & DuVall, 2000).

In examining the Galle Face Struggle, it is essential to draw parallels with other peaceful protests that utilized modern communication channels. ‘The protests in Turkey, for instance, emphasized the role of social media and visual images in effectively conveying messages and bringing people together’ (Revolutionary Creative Labor, 2017). ‘This aligns with the contemporary trend of utilizing technology for creative communication in the face of political challenges’ (Tufekci, 2017).

Narsaha's study on 'Ridakama Esadabraha Kruesada Khidara' in the Middle East sheds light on the creative implementation of revolutionary ideas by common people against oppressive regimes. This study serves as a valuable point of comparison, exploring the nuanced ways in which creative communication methods are employed to exert pressure in the politicization of subjects under dictatorship

In Sri Lanka's historical context, the study by Hininduma Sunil Senevi and Saman M. Kariyakarawana on 'The Influence of the Early Left Movement on Culture in Colombo Era by Red Poets' provides crucial insights into the early left-wing movement's role against imperialism and its subsequent impact on the political landscape (Senevi & Kariyakarawana, 2018).

Furthermore, the use of technological devices in the twenty-first century is highlighted in the context of the Arab Spring, where ideas and suggestions were disseminated through television news, newspapers, and new media, emphasizing the importance of multiple communication approaches (Howard & Hussain, 2013).

In conclusion, this literature review establishes a foundation for understanding the Galle Face Struggle in the broader global context of creative and peaceful resistance. The cited studies and movements provide a rich tapestry of insights, offering a comparative framework to analyze the Galle Face Struggle's distinctive creative communication approaches and their impact on political and social change.

Research Methodology:

The research study titled 'Creative Communication Approaches Used in Galle Face Struggle' employed a qualitative research methodology, adopting an exploratory approach to delve into the nuanced aspects of the Galle Face Struggle and the creative communication methods employed by its participants.

Qualitative research was deemed appropriate for this study due to its ability to provide in-depth insights and a comprehensive understanding of the Galle Face Struggle's unique dynamics. An exploratory approach was chosen to allow for a thorough exploration and analysis of the creative communication approaches utilized during this distinctive socio-political event.

The main research method utilized in this study was the subject-based method, which involved a focused examination of specific creative communication approaches employed during the Galle Face Struggle. The study centered around analyzing five distinct creative communication approaches posted on Facebook social media within a specified timeframe – from April 9th to May 29th, 2022. The selected creative communication approaches encompassed a range of activities that unfolded during the Galle Face Struggle.

Cultural Celebration - Sinhala Tamil New Year Festival: This approach delved into how the struggle was expressed through a cultural celebration, specifically the Sinhala Tamil New Year Festival. The examination aimed to uncover the ways in which cultural festivities served as a medium for conveying the protest message.

Funeral Processions with Creative Cultural Rituals: The study explored the use of funeral processions as a unique form of protest, creatively integrating cultural rituals to express dissent. This approach sought to understand how the Galle Face Struggle utilized funeral processions as a symbolic means of communication.

Gotagogama Open Air Theater - Artistic Expression in the Struggle: The creation of the Gotagogama Open Air Theater emerged as a distinct creative communication approach. This segment of the research focused on the role of art in the struggle, exploring how an open-air theater was established on the contested land to convey the participants' message.

Street Drama: This creative communication approach involved street theater exhibitions as a form of public expression. The research aimed to uncover the impact and effectiveness of street theater in communicating the sentiments of the Galle Face Struggle to a broader audience.

Art Exhibition: The study examined how art exhibitions played a role in creative communication during the Galle Face Struggle. This approach focused on understanding the themes, messages, and impact of artistic expressions exhibited during the protest.

The qualitative analysis of these specific creative communication approaches provided a deeper understanding of how the Galle Face Struggle utilized diverse forms of expression to convey its message effectively. This methodology aimed to capture the richness and complexity of the participants' communication strategies, shedding light on the broader implications of creative dissent in a socio-political context.

Discussion & Findings:

This chapter presents a comprehensive qualitative study of the Galle Face Struggle, focusing on the creative communication forms and their content. The data collection involved analyzing photos and videos related to the events surrounding the Galle Face Struggle, emphasizing the inherent characteristics of the communicative forms employed during the protest. The Galle Face Struggle, as revealed through the sequence of events, evolved as a response to a systematic social media campaign initiated by activists. The struggle demonstrated a collective effort to

encourage people to raise their voices systematically through social media, indicating the transformative power of online activism in mobilizing public sentiment.

Analyzing the utilization of cultural celebration, specifically the Sinhala-Tamil New Year festival, in the Galle Face Struggle, it is evident that the struggle sought to counteract attempts by authorities to create racial divisions as a threat to individual freedom. The celebration of the New Year, even by the Muslim community in the struggle area, underscored a unity that transcended traditional divisions, emphasizing the role of moral sensibility in the communicative approach.

The funeral procession, as a creative communication approach, highlighted social injustice and oppression through non-verbal communication and the use of culturally rooted beliefs. This form of communication effectively conveyed the protestors' sentiments and added a layer of depth to the creative practices employed in the struggle.

The creation of the Gotagogama Open Air Theater demonstrated the power of communicating through artistic approaches, fostering a new kind of awareness. It was observed that this form of communication, transcending mass media, contributed to shaping public opinion through stimuli and artistic expression. The Gotagogama library, within the struggle grounds, emerged as a significant focal point, attracting substantial attention.

Street dramas within the Galle Face Struggle showcased social injustices and the oppression of people, effectively portraying these issues to a wider audience. The use of different communication media and colors further differentiated these street dramas, contributing to their popularity on social media and subsequent coverage in mainstream media newscasts.

The studio's contribution to the struggle was notable, depicting individual images, social pressures, and aspirations for Sri Lanka's future. The unique communicative approach in using colors and drawings to release impulses contributed to the distinctive nature of the Galle Face Struggle's creative expressions.

Through Dewolmadu Shanthikarma, traditional communication expectations were surpassed, illustrating a positive step in the struggle's participatory communication. This creative expression, deeply rooted in public consciousness, demonstrated the ability to go beyond conventional methods of communication.

Key findings of the study include the technical background of the communication methods used for political communication by citizens. Moreover, the research highlights the active engagement of young people in politics, showcasing their intellectual and cognitive abilities in creative ways. According to the social relations theory, the collective effort in the Galle Face Struggle suggests that a massive message is more impactful when presented collectively, emphasizing the importance of collective action over individual endeavors. The study also concludes that, according to social theory, including strong political reactions in creative communication is crucial for the success of civil activism in the political context. Creative communication, serving as a tool to release citizens' impulses and educate the public, plays a pivotal role in shaping political discourse and promoting societal change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Galle Face Struggle in Sri Lanka emerges as a poignant example of peaceful and creative resistance against oppressive political and social systems. Through a qualitative exploration of the creative communication approaches employed during this unique socio-political event, it is evident that the Galle Face participants strategically harnessed various forms of expression to convey their message effectively. The celebration of the Sinhala-Tamil New Year festival demonstrated a unity that transcended imposed divisions, countering attempts to sow racial discord. The funeral processions creatively utilized cultural rituals to underscore social injustices, highlighting the potency of non-verbal communication rooted in traditional beliefs. The creation of the Gotagogama Open Air Theater and library showcased the power of artistic communication in shaping public opinion beyond mass media channels. Street dramas effectively portrayed social issues and found resonance both on social media and in mainstream news coverage. Individual expressions through studio depictions and the innovative use of Dewolmadu Shanthikarma added depth to the Galle Face Struggle's communicative repertoire. Notably, this study unveils the technical background of citizen-led political communication, emphasizes the active role of young people in politics, and underscores the importance of collective efforts and strong political reactions in successful civil activism. The Galle Face Struggle, with its creative communication at its core, exemplifies the transformative potential of peaceful dissent in effecting social and political change.

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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

The synergy of SEO and Public Relations in the digital age (An analysis of best practices)

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Abstract

In the contemporary digital landscape, the synergy between Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Public Relations (PR) has become paramount for organizations aiming to establish and strengthen their online presence. This research embarks on an exploration of best practices in optimizing the collaborative efforts of SEO and PR in the context of the digital age. Amidst the ever-evolving technological and communicative advancements, this study sets out to address the growing need for a comprehensive understanding of how SEO and PR intertwine to achieve collective success. Recognizing the deficiency in the current body of literature regarding the practical implementation of these strategies, we employ a qualitative research approach to gather insights from ten seasoned PR professionals. Through in-depth interviews, the experiences, strategies, and challenges faced by these practitioners in their pursuit of SEO-PR integration are illuminated. The findings reveal that a multifaceted approach to SEO and PR collaboration is indispensable in the digital era. Content quality emerges as a central theme, emphasizing the need for informative, engaging, and relevant content that aligns with both SEO and PR goals. Furthermore, the significance of authentic storytelling, which resonates with the values and interests of the target audience, is underscored as a potent tool for effective communication. Additionally, ethical considerations are highlighted as an integral aspect of SEO-PR integration, addressing issues of transparency, accuracy, and trustworthiness in content creation and dissemination. In conclusion, this research offers a compendium of valuable insights for PR professionals and SEO experts seeking to navigate the dynamic landscape of the digital age.

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INTRODUCTION

In the fast-paced digital landscape of today, organizations worldwide are grappling with the intricate fusion of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Public Relations (PR). Establishing a potent online presence is now not merely an option but a critical necessity (Smith & Johnson, 2020). This quest for digital prominence has given rise to a dynamic interplay between SEO and PR, forming a pivotal strategy for collective success (Brown & White, 2019).

The synergy between SEO and PR is of paramount significance. Though they employ distinct methodologies and objectives, both aim to enhance an organization's visibility, credibility, and influence, albeit through different routes (Johnson, 2021). SEO concentrates on optimizing online visibility by aligning with search engine algorithms to secure higher search result rankings (Robinson et al., 2018). PR, conversely, is dedicated to cultivating and managing an organization's image and reputation through strategic communication and relationship-building endeavors (Smith & Davis, 2017).

In today's digital age, where most consumers turn to the internet for information and interaction, the lines between SEO and PR have blurred. These two domains are now inextricably linked, with their collaboration being essential for an organization's triumph in the fiercely competitive online arena (Johnson & Brown, 2021). However, despite the growing awareness of their interdependence, a conspicuous gap remains in the existing literature concerning practical strategies for optimizing this synergy (Davis et al., 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The dynamic landscape of the digital age has reshaped the way organizations establish and maintain their online presence. As the importance of online visibility and credibility continues to grow, the integration of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Public Relations (PR) has emerged as a pivotal strategy. A review of the existing literature reveals the evolving roles of SEO and PR and their interconnectedness in the digital realm.

The traditional view of SEO as a technical practice, focused solely on improving website rankings, has evolved. According to Cutroni (2018), modern SEO emphasizes a broader approach, emphasizing user experience, content quality, and brand visibility. This shift recognizes that search engine algorithms increasingly reward high-quality, relevant content (Sullivan, 2011).

Simultaneously, the field of PR has expanded its scope in response to the digital age. PR, once primarily associated with media relations, now encompasses broader responsibilities, including reputation management, stakeholder engagement, and strategic communication (Duhe, 2007). As organizations increasingly interact with their audiences through digital channels, PR professionals are adapting their strategies accordingly.

The intersection of SEO and PR has become more pronounced as their functions overlap. SEO now relies on PR to secure high-quality backlinks and leverage earned media, which contribute significantly to a website's authority (Hosking, 2019). PR, in turn, depends on SEO for optimizing online content to ensure it aligns with search engine algorithms, enhancing online visibility and reputation (Smith, 2017).

Despite the growing recognition of this interdependence, the existing body of literature falls short in offering comprehensive insights into practical strategies for optimizing the synergy between SEO and PR. Little research delves into how these two domains collaborate in practice, especially in the context of the digital age, highlighting a clear knowledge gap (Grunig, 2009).

A recurring theme in the limited existing literature is the significance of content quality. High-quality, informative, and engaging content is central to both SEO and PR success in the digital age (Pulizzi, 2015). Engaging content not only attracts search engine attention but also resonates with the target audience.

Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the importance of authentic storytelling. The ability to craft narratives that align with the values and interests of the audience is crucial for both PR and SEO, as it facilitates effective communication (Henneke, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a constructivist research philosophy, acknowledging that knowledge was constructed through the experiences and interactions of individuals. In this context, it recognized the dynamic and evolving nature of the digital age and the collaborative efforts of SEO and PR within it. The chosen research method was qualitative as it was well-suited for exploring the intricacies of human experiences, perceptions, and practices, which was crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of how PR professionals engaged in SEO-PR collaboration. The research employed a phenomenological approach, focusing on the lived experiences and perspectives of PR professionals who had actively participated in the synergy of SEO and PR in the digital age. The research strategy involved conducting in-depth interviews with PR professionals. These interviews provided a rich source of qualitative data that allowed for an in-depth exploration of their experiences, strategies, and challenges related to SEO-PR integration. The primary data collection method was in-depth interviews. Ten PR professionals, selected through purposive sampling, were interviewed. The selection criteria for the participants included extensive experience and expertise in PR, a track record of SEO-PR collaboration, and representation of a diverse range of industries and organizational sizes. Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach, identifying themes related to the collaborative efforts of SEO and PR in the digital age. The primary data collected was qualitative in nature and derived from the in-depth interviews. The data included participants' narratives, experiences, insights, and perceptions related to the integration of SEO and PR in their professional roles. The chosen methodology and data collection approach were well-suited for gaining deep insights into the best practices and challenges of SEO-PR collaboration in the digital age.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This research conducted in-depth interviews with ten seasoned PR professionals to explore best practices in optimizing the collaborative efforts of SEO and PR in the context of the digital age. The findings reveal key insights that illuminate the multifaceted nature of SEO-PR integration.

Content quality emerges as the cornerstone

One of the central themes that emerged from the interviews was the paramount importance of content quality. Participants uniformly emphasized the crucial role of high-quality, informative, engaging, and relevant content in both SEO and PR efforts. They viewed content as the bridge connecting these two disciplines, enabling them to achieve their respective goals.

The PR professionals stressed the need to align content strategies with the objectives of SEO and PR. Content should be crafted to serve a dual purpose: enhancing online visibility through SEO and engaging and informing the target audience through PR. The integration of content strategies was identified as a best practice, ensuring that content serves the interests of both disciplines seamlessly.

Authentic storytelling fosters connection

Authentic storytelling emerged as another fundamental concept. PR professionals recognized that effective communication in the digital age hinges on crafting narratives that resonate with the values and interests of the target audience. Authentic storytelling allows organizations to connect with their audiences on a deeper level, creating a meaningful and lasting relationship.

In addition to engaging the audience, authentic storytelling contributes to building brand trust and credibility. PR professionals highlighted that by conveying a brand's values and mission through storytelling, they could establish a stronger emotional connection with their audience. This emotional connection, in turn, supports the broader PR goals of reputation management and relationship-building.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations played a significant role in the integration of SEO and PR. The participants underscored the importance of transparency, accuracy, and trustworthiness in content creation and dissemination. Ensuring that the information presented is reliable and accurate was not only crucial for SEO, which relies on content for ranking, but also for PR, where credibility and reputation management are paramount.

Balancing commercial interests with ethical considerations was identified as a challenge. PR professionals expressed the need to strike a delicate balance between promoting a brand and ensuring that the information shared is honest and accurate. The findings suggested that ethical practices are integral to maintaining a sustainable synergy between SEO and PR.

Collaborative strategies for success

Effective communication and coordination between SEO and PR teams were identified as essential for successful integration. The PR professionals emphasized the need for regular meetings, open channels

of communication, and the sharing of insights and strategies. Collaboration and mutual understanding between these traditionally distinct disciplines were seen as key components of their success.

Furthermore, measuring the impact of their efforts was viewed as crucial. By using analytics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the outcomes of their work, PR professionals were able to adapt their strategies to ensure that both SEO and PR goals were met. This data-driven approach was deemed fundamental for optimizing their collaborative efforts.

Adaptability in the ever-evolving landscape

The digital age is characterized by its ever-evolving landscape. PR professionals recognized the need to stay updated with search engine algorithm changes, emerging online platforms, and digital trends. This adaptability and willingness to embrace change were seen as prerequisites for maintaining a successful SEO-PR synergy.

The participants viewed challenges not as setbacks but as opportunities for learning and growth. Whether related to algorithm updates, reputation management crises, or shifting audience preferences, they emphasized the importance of learning from setbacks. This resilient attitude was integral to their ability to adapt and succeed in the digital age.

Tailoring Strategies to industry dynamics

The findings indicated that the synergy between SEO and PR should be tailored to suit the unique dynamics of each industry. PR professionals recognized that strategies effective in one sector might not work in another. Understanding industry-specific nuances, target audience behaviors, and market trends was essential for optimizing their collaborative efforts effectively.

The findings from this research illuminate the intricate and dynamic nature of SEO and PR collaboration in the digital age. Content quality, authentic storytelling, and ethical considerations serve as the cornerstones for successful integration. Effective communication and coordination, combined with a data-driven approach, play a pivotal role in achieving synergy. A proactive and adaptive mindset is vital in an environment where change is constant. These insights offer valuable guidance for PR professionals and SEO experts navigating the complex and ever-evolving landscape of the digital age and optimizing the synergy between these two critical disciplines.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this study underscore several key themes that collectively serve as a roadmap for PR professionals and SEO experts navigating the complex and dynamic digital age. The first and most central theme is the importance of content quality. High-quality content, defined by its informativeness, engagement, and relevance, emerged as the linchpin of success for both SEO and PR. This content serves as a bridge, aligning the goals of both disciplines seamlessly. Content, it appears, is the common language spoken by SEO and PR professionals, forming the foundation of their collaboration.

Authentic storytelling emerged as another cornerstone of effective SEO-PR integration. PR professionals recognized that in the digital age, authenticity and relatability are prized by audiences. The ability to craft narratives that resonate with the values and interests of the target audience fosters a

deep and lasting connection. Authentic storytelling not only engages the audience but also contributes to building trust and credibility, key objectives for both SEO and PR.

Ethical considerations are another integral aspect of the SEO-PR synergy. Transparency, accuracy, and trustworthiness in content creation and dissemination are the cornerstones of a successful digital strategy. The data-driven era demands integrity in information presentation, which is fundamental for establishing and maintaining credibility.

The findings further highlight that effective communication and coordination between SEO and PR teams are essential for a successful integration. Collaboration and mutual understanding between these traditionally distinct disciplines are key to unlocking their combined potential. Additionally, measuring the impact of their efforts through analytics and KPIs was considered crucial for optimizing their collaborative strategies.

The digital age is characterized by its ever-evolving landscape, demanding adaptability, and a proactive mindset. Challenges were not seen as setbacks but rather as opportunities for growth and learning. PR professionals recognized the need to stay updated with search engine algorithm changes, emerging online platforms, and evolving digital trends, which is vital for maintaining a successful SEO-PR synergy.

Lastly, the research highlighted the importance of tailoring strategies to the unique dynamics of different industries. One size does not fit all in the realm of SEO-PR integration, and understanding industry-specific nuances and audience behaviors is essential for optimizing collaborative efforts effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONTRIBUTION FOR THE FUTURE RESEACHES

Based on the extensive analysis of best practices in the synergy of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Public Relations (PR) within the digital age, we offer the following strategic recommendations for organizations aiming to optimize this collaborative endeavor. Invest in the creation of high-quality, informative, engaging, and relevant content that aligns with the goals of both SEO and PR. Quality content is the foundation of effective collaboration, craft narratives that resonate with your target audience's values and interests, building meaningful connections and trust, ensure transparency, accuracy, and trustworthiness in content creation and dissemination to maintain credibility, encourage effective communication and coordination between your SEO and PR teams to align efforts seamlessly, stay connected with industry trends, algorithm changes, and digital innovations to adapt and thrive in the ever-evolving digital landscape and recognize that one size does not fit all; tailor your SEO-PR strategies to suit your specific industry dynamics and audience behaviors.

This research contributes valuable insights for PR professionals and SEO experts as they navigate the intricacies of the digital age. It is a testament to the dynamic nature of the SEO-PR synergy and the need for continual adaptation and innovation. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, these insights will serve as a compass, guiding organizations toward a brighter and more impactful digital future, where the collaboration of SEO and PR forms the cornerstone of their success. In a world where information and relationships are paramount, SEO and PR professionals can leverage these best practices to achieve collective excellence in the digital age.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PR – Public Relations / SEO – Search Engine Optimization



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