

Editorial

This is the Volume 20, Number 2 issue of the OUSL Journal, the Journal of the Open University of Sri Lanka which is published biannually. The articles published in this volume include research based on the disciplines of Education, Language Studies, Health Sciences, Legal Studies and Industrial Mathematics.

The paper titled *Satisfaction Level of B.Ed Students of Bangladesh Open University: An Analysis*, investigates how satisfied B.Ed learners are with the academic, administrative, and infrastructural components of their distance education programme. Drawing on a mixed-method design and responses from 228 students in 6 study centres, the study finds that tutor performance and student–tutor interaction are the most positively rated aspects, while course evaluation practices and institutional facilities receive notably lower satisfaction scores. A key strength of the paper lies in its well-developed conceptual framework and the use of previously validated scales, which enhance the credibility of the data collection tools. The qualitative insights further enrich the study by revealing ongoing concerns such as long delays in exam processes, limited tutorial sessions, and inadequate physical and technological resources at the study centres—issues that are especially significant within the context of distance learning in Bangladesh.

Despite these strengths, the manuscript has few weaknesses. The analysis section focuses mainly on descriptive statistics and would benefit from more advanced analytical techniques to explore deeper relationships among variables. The conclusion summarises the results but does not fully engage with the broader institutional or structural factors within BOU that contribute to student dissatisfaction.

Overall, the paper addresses a meaningful research gap in Bangladesh’s distance teacher education field and provides useful practical recommendations. However, it would be strengthened by methodological improvements, the inclusion of more contemporary literature, and a more critical exploration of systemic challenges within the distance learning framework.

The paper, “*Meh google and give*”: *Selected Sinhala Discourse Markers in Sri Lankan English*, takes a corpus-based approach to analysing the pragmatic functions of the Sinhala discourse markers *aney*, *meh*, and *ithin* in Sri Lankan English (SLE) speech transcripts. All examples of discourse marker used in this study are taken from the private conversations in the spoken section of the Sri Lankan component of

the International Corpus of English (ICE-SL). The study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, and the data are examined and analysed both manually and by using AntConc, a corpus analysis toolkit. The analysis finds that the selected discourse markers are multifunctional in SLE speech. Further, the presence of Sinhala discourse markers in SLE demonstrates the influence of bilingualism, and the frequency and ease with which the markers have been able to transfer pragmatic norms between codes. Even though discourse markers have long been a central concern in pragmatics, it is an under-researched area in Sinhala and SLE. By attempting to address this gap, this study makes a theoretical contribution to existing scholarship on discourse markers and pragmatics.

The descriptive cross-sectional study on *Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Towards First Aid for Common Injuries in the University Setting among Non-Academic Staff Members of a Selected State University in Sri Lanka*, examined knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to first aid for common injuries among non-academic staff members of a selected state university in Sri Lanka. Using a self-administered, pre-tested questionnaire, data were collected from 170 participants, although the calculated sample size was substantially larger. The findings indicate that just over half of the participants demonstrated good knowledge (51.8%), positive attitudes (50.6%), and good practices (50.6%) regarding first aid, despite a low proportion (12.4%) having received formal first aid training. Education level, job category, and prior training were significantly associated with higher knowledge and more positive attitudes, while education alone showed a significant association with practice.

A key strength of the study lies in its focus on an under-researched population in the Sri Lankan context and the use of a contextually adapted and expert-validated instrument. However, the reliance on convenience sampling, a reduced sample size, and self-reported practices limit generalizability and introduce potential response bias. Overall, the study highlights important gaps between willingness and actual competence in first aid, underscoring the need for structured, institution-based first aid training programmes for non-academic university staff.

The study, *Biodiversity Literacy of Undergraduate Students at the Open University of Sri Lanka: Understanding the “Knowing-Doing Gap”*, provides a quantitative assessment of biodiversity literacy among 380 undergraduate students at the Open University of Sri

Lanka (OUSL). Against the backdrop of unprecedented biodiversity loss, this study investigates not only the students' knowledge levels but also the critical disconnection between their environmental awareness and actual behavioural engagement. A cross-sectional survey design was employed across five faculties in this study. A paradox exists where 92.1% of respondents are aware of anthropogenic biodiversity loss and 93.9% feel a personal duty to preserve it; yet, only 39.7% participate in biodiversity-related activities, and the tendency to recycle material remains low at 36.6%. Academic discipline is a strong predictor of biodiversity literacy. Science students, having higher exposure to formal biodiversity-related curriculum, demonstrated significantly higher awareness compared to peers in other faculties. While social media is the most consumed information source (31.3%), reliance on it correlates with lower awareness of specific threats. Conversely, students engaging with formal sources, such as lectures or research papers, exhibit significantly higher awareness about threats to biodiversity. Female students demonstrated a statistically significantly higher likelihood of acknowledging the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity compared to males. The findings suggest that current educational approaches successfully foster emotional connection and ethical responsibility but fail to equip students with the willingness to act. The shared sense of responsibility between the self and government suggests students are waiting for institutional direction. The gap suggests a lack of structured opportunities provided by the university system for students to convert their willingness into practice. It concludes that without integrative strategies such as interdisciplinary education and hands-on experiential learning, the biodiversity literacy of future decision-makers will remain theoretical rather than practical. This study serves as a call to action for higher education curricula to pivot from purely knowledge-disseminating models to action-oriented frameworks.

Open and distance learning (ODL) has entered a new era in which artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping every facet of the learning experience. The paper titled, *Transforming Open and Distance Learning Through AI* examines how AI is transforming ODL through personalization, adaptive systems, and immersive technologies. Personalised and adaptive learning systems use AI algorithms to tailor content to individual students' needs and pace, substantially improving engagement and outcomes. For educators, AI tools automate administrative tasks (e.g., grading, analytics) and enable real-time progress tracking, freeing instructors to focus on meaningful student interactions. Generative AI (e.g., large language models) is rapidly streamlining content creation by producing quizzes, essays, multimedia, and localized materials on demand. Immersive technologies such as augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), powered by AI, are providing realistic simulation-based training—bridging geographic divides and allowing virtual hands-on practice in fields like medicine. The ethical challenges and equity issues were also considered: ensuring privacy, minimizing algorithmic bias, and extending AI access to underserved and disabled learners. Evidence from India and globally shows real-world impact: universities deploying AI tutors report higher retention, and government programmes are funding AI literacy. Despite significant promise, challenges remain, including digital infrastructure gaps and the need for robust AI pedagogy. In conclusion, AI is a catalyst for democratising quality education at scale, and recommend coordinated investments in educator training, connectivity, and inclusive policy.

The successful integration of skill development intervention into the undergraduate Law curriculum is one of the main issues faced by legal educators today. The review, *"Skilled as Lawyers": A Review of Legal Skill Development through Moot Court Competition* reiterates the efficacy of mooting as a legal skill development tool by critically reviewing the existing empirical studies. Doctrinal legal research methodology has been employed to systematically evaluate the scholarly work published in four main databases: HeinOnline, PubMed, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, which have employed the mooting as a skill development tool in the legal curricula. The review critically analyses 19 scholarly works, including original research articles, case studies, and expert opinions and has identified problem-solving, teamwork and collaboration, legal writing, advocacy, and legal awareness as the main skill domains that would be

developed by engaging in mootng. The review further highlights the scarcity of existing research and emphasises the need for more action research to fully capture the applicability of mootng as a skill development intervention. However, despite these limitations, the present review informs an education policy by formally integrating mootng into undergraduate legal studies. It is proposed that mootng will be effective when formative assessment, which focuses on skill development, is incorporated. Moreover, institutions are required to provide the necessary physical and human resources for mootng, along with quality assurance mechanisms for its sustainability. The review encourages educators to comprehend the importance of developing an educational policy that integrates moot court into legal pedagogy.

To survive in the globalised industrial environment, the efficiency of supply chain is crucial. To improve this efficiency, the operational level problems in an innovative logistic strategy known as 'cross-docking' are considered together. In the study, *An Integrated Vehicle Routing and Vehicle Sequencing Problem at the Cross-Docking Centre: A Genetic Algorithm Approach*, the vehicle routing problem with moving shipments and vehicle sequencing problem at the cross-docking centre which has only single-receiving and single-shipping door are integrated. The integrated problem differs from the literature by considering internal operations such as unloading, moving and reloading shipments not only at suppliers/customers but also at the centre. On the other hand, the novelty of the integrated problem in sequencing vehicles by minimising the waiting-time of vehicles based on the 'arrival-time' of inbound vehicles to the centre and based on the 'route-quantity' of outbound vehicles. The aim of this problem is to optimise the total transportation cost, which is incurred by routing vehicles, moving shipments and sequencing vehicles. A mixed integer quadratic programming model is developed to solve the integrated problem. The accuracy of the proposed genetic algorithm is tested using benchmark problems in literature. Since the numerical experiments reveal the accuracy of the proposed algorithm as superior against the exact-optimal solution obtained by branch and bound algorithm, it is recommended to employ the proposed algorithm to solve the integrated problem. Therefore, the industries which apply cross-docking strategy may benefit by utilising this proposed algorithm to schedule the vehicles to the routes and to the doors of the logistic centre.

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

Professor Shyama R. Weerakoon

Editor in Chief/OUSL Journal

Email: ouslj@ou.ac.lk



<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0975-2738>