

Editorial

This is the Volume 14, Number 1 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 Agriculture, Education, Management, Languages and Health Sciences.

Drought stress is one of the most adverse limitations of local black pepper production in the Dry and Intermediate zones of Sri Lanka. Application of Super Absorbent Polymers (SAPs) is hypothesized to result in the optimized use of water resources in these regions. The paper titled “Influence of Super Absorbent Polymers (Saps) on Irrigation Interval and Growth of Black Pepper (*Piper Nigrum* L.) in Nursery Management” explains a study conducted at the Intercropping and Betel research station to evaluate the effect of Super Absorbent Polymers on irrigation interval and growth of Black pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.). Higher level of Zeba is important to extend the irrigation interval. Plant parameters such as number of leaves, plant height, shoot fresh weight, shoot dry weight, root volume etc, were decreased with decreased Zeba amount and increased irrigation interval. However, considering cost effectiveness, 2g of Zeba with 8-day irrigation interval is considered as the best treatment. The study revealed that the Super Absorbent Polymers are important to overcome the water deficit when irrigation water is limited for Black Pepper in nursery management.

Action Research is considered as a viable mean for improving professional practices of teachers. Teachers can implement on-the-spot solutions to their day-to-day problems in the teaching-learning process through action research studies. The collaborative and participatory nature of the action research open avenues for both knowledge sharing and constructive feedback. Having realized the importance of action research for teachers the Ministry of Education has launched a project to promote action research studies among teachers. The study “An Analysis of Action Research Studies Conducted by Teachers in Sri Lankan Schools” is based on the research reports submitted by teachers who had engaged in the action



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research studies in their own schools and evaluations done at different points of time on the progress of the research studies. This paper analyses the nature of problems considered by teachers for their action research studies, the innovative strategies adopted for the intervention process and the observations and reflections made during the intervention process on the changes experienced by participants. As the data analysis reveals, teachers are confident and capable of applying innovative strategies as solutions to the problems in their teaching-learning process. The students who had problems in relation to specific subject areas and overall behavior could overcome them in a step-wise manner. The culture developed among teachers through the conduct of action research studies led to develop the quality of teaching- learning process as well as excellence in the teacher's behavior.

There is a growing concern about the pervasive nature of counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) in many organizations across the globe. A review of the literature reveals that CWB usually goes unnoticed or unreported in the workplace due to perhaps its illegal nature and resultant consequences. The study on "Counterproductive Work Behaviour among Local Government Employees in Edo State, Nigeria" examined the forms and level of prevalence of CWB among local government employees in Nigeria. It also ascertained the relationship between psychological contract breach and CWB. The study employed a cross-sectional research design, and a structured questionnaire was used to elicit response from respondents. The data obtained were analysed using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation and ANOVA analysis. The findings of the study revealed that CWB was exhibited at a moderate level in the studied local governments; and that there is a significant relationship between psychological contract breach and CWB. The study recommends that local governments in Nigeria should endeavour to fulfil their parts of the psychological contract. It is suggested that future studies should examine CWB across the various local governments in the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. In addition to the use of the questionnaire, future studies should combine the use of peer rating and supervisor's rating/report in assessing CWB among employees. In summary, this study provides an empirical validation

of CWB in the Nigeria context and revealed that psychological contract breach is a determinant of CWB in local governments in Nigeria.

Based on a narrative case study conducted in two in-service teacher preparation programs for English language teachers in Sri Lanka, the paper titled “The Complexity and Fear of Teaching the “other”: the Role of Teachers in a Larger Process of Social Cohesion and Peace” explores the role of English language teachers in promoting social cohesion and peace. Set against Sri Lanka’s National Policy on Social Cohesion and Peace (2008), which recognizes teacher agency and teacher education in actively working towards bridging the estranged Sri Lankan communities, the study critically analyzes what it takes for teacher education to prepare prospective teachers to be cultural brokers who are willing and able take an active role in promoting social cohesion and peace. The national and program level policies and curricula changes are insufficient if micro level and more personal efforts are not made to assist new teachers to develop more inclusive mindsets. Conceptually findings are grounded on transformative approaches to pedagogy that highlight the agency of teachers and the need for teacher preparation programs to support new teachers to shape and craft their emergent transformative practices. Such approaches to teacher education identify teachers as transformative intellectuals whose role is recognized as being in tune with their social, political and historical realities. This perspective aligns with an approach in which the teacher’s role extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and skills in the classroom to a broader, more inclusive vision of the whole socio-educational process.

Cather-associated urinary tract infection (UTI) is one of the most common hospital-acquired infections around the world. Urinary catheter insertion is an invasive procedure to bypass the usual mechanism of voiding performed under aseptic technique by qualified nursing staff. In order to reduce infections due to urinary catheter associated infections, nurses need to adhere to the recommended guidelines and practices regarding indwelling urinary catheter insertion and catheter care. Knowledge and practices among nurses regarding the insertion and care of urinary catheter in female patients are highly essential to minimise complications related to indwelling urinary

catheter among female patients. According to the available scientific data, most of the catheter-related problems reported could be prevented or minimised with more attention to catheter management. However, there is a paucity of data available on this phenomenon in Sri Lanka. The research study on “Knowledge and Practices among Female Nurses on Insertion and Care of Indwelling Urinary Catheter to Female Patients in a Selected Teaching Hospital in Sri Lanka” is to determine knowledge and practices among female nurses regarding the insertion and care of indwelling urinary catheter to female patients at a selected teaching hospital. Findings revealed that only 36% of participants had a satisfactory level of knowledge on indwelling urinary catheter insertion. Most of the participants (79.5%) had a satisfactory level of practices regarding indwelling urinary catheter insertion. Eighty-two participants had an unsatisfactory level of knowledge regarding indwelling urinary catheter care. Seventy-eight participants had a satisfactory level of practices regarding indwelling urinary catheter care. In conclusion, the majority of the participants had an unsatisfactory level of knowledge regarding indwelling urinary catheter insertion and care. There is a need for training on indwelling urinary catheterization and care for nurses in Sri Lanka.

In the areas of child language development and language socialization, directives are an important topic. It shows the child’s ability to make others do what they want, i.e. to ‘direct’ others’ behavior. Research also shows that languages have different ways of forming directives, but most of this research is done on English and other Western languages. For example, there is little research on Sinhala directives and none on that we know of children’s use of directives. The study on “Directives in Sinhala: Children’s Speech and Adult Child-Directed Speech” uses recorded interaction of children and their caregivers as well observation to observe this phenomenon. The main aim of this study was to locate Sinhala directives as they are used by children and their adult caretakers. A secondary purpose is to contribute to the knowledge of Sinhala pragmatics by recording the linguistic features used to express directives in Sinhala. Through this discussion, the researchers also comment on (im)politeness in Sinhala directives.

In addition, this issue includes the 32nd OUSL General Convocation Address – 2019 delivered by Professor Saroj Jayasinghe titled “Compassion and the Professional: Two Sides of the Same Coin?” This speech highlights the importance of ‘compassion’ and describes its relevance to professionals. As an individual engaged in a professional career, he or she runs the risk of losing the ethical notions of compassion. However, there are steps to prevent such happenings and the speech offers preventive steps an individual could take to enhance compassion in their respective professional life. There is a way to enhance compassion through the arts, narratives and mindfulness, which may be useful for those developing curricula in The Open University of Sri Lanka.

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

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