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Editorial Team

Dr. Padmini Sirimanne
Dr. Suriya Arachchige Kularathne
Ms. Hana M. Haniffa

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American College of Higher Education
No 23, Hospital Road, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka

Contact

Email: research@americancollege.lk
Phone: +94112715195

Editorial

This research symposium was hosted on the concept of Education and Psychology for a Modern Digital Era. The primary theme was regarding rethinking education that prepares learners for the modern digital era by assessing the development, teaching, learning, evaluation, and inclusion methods used in education today. It also focused on exploring how people's overall mental health (psychological, social, and emotional) wellbeing can empower them towards living a healthy and sustainable life, with the inclusion of the digitalization.

This edition of our journal in education and psychology features research addressing diverse and pressing issues. Dissanayake B. Y. explores how professional development and institutional support can enhance teacher preparedness for equitable online instruction. Kumutha Srikanthan examines the profound impact of childhood sexual abuse on married women's feelings of connection and intimacy with their partners. Ayomi Udeshika Magedara Vithanage provides insights into the perceptions, trends, and challenges of STEM education in preschools in Galle, Sri Lanka. Lastly, Priyamantha M. D. G. K. investigates the role of digital identity in shaping self-esteem. Each study offers valuable contributions to their respective fields, promising to inspire further research and practice.

Dr. Padmini Sirimanne

**Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Married Women's Feelings of Connection And
Intimacy in their Relationships with their Partners**

by Kumutha Srikanthan,

Masters and B Sc in Clinical and Counselling Psychology,

Innovates Campus (Pvt) Ltd/ IIC University of Technology, Cambodia

Abstract

This study examines how married women's marital dynamics are affected by childhood sexual abuse, identifying risk and protective factors. It offers understanding of the intricate relationship between trauma and intimacy for use in clinical practice and policy development. This study looks into the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) in married women, how it affects marriages, and how it affects women psychologically. In order to improve well-being and marital satisfaction, it looks for efficient interventions and support networks. Over 200 participants from various social support groups and forums participated in the study, which used stratified random sampling to examine the prevalence, symptoms, and associations of childhood sexual abuse and attachments among married females. Participants in the CSA screening process had to report any childhood sexual experiences they had, excluding nonphysical ones like exhibitionism. Informed consent had to be obtained, and confidentiality and privacy laws had to be properly followed. The study examines how married women's marital dynamics are affected by childhood sexual abuse (CSA), despite obstacles brought on by social stigma. Thirty-two participants or sixteen percent of the total, provided data. The majority of the subjects, aged 41, reported having CSA between the ages of 21 and 53. Eighteen percent of the individuals were married for various periods of time. Following research, 31.3% of respondents acknowledged CSA's impact on their relationships and adult lives. Symptoms included discomfort (37.5%) and occasionally worrisome thoughts (58.1%). While some individuals struggled with trust and communication, others shown resilience by practicing self-care (41.9%) and open communication (40.6%). A complex and wide-ranging influence on marital relationships is suggested by the statistical analysis that found no significant correlation between CSA experiences and marital dynamics. Despite obstacles, the results imply that partners and survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) use useful coping mechanisms and communication techniques, which help to foster intimate and sustaining marriages. These

revelations emphasize how crucial it is to provide specialized care and networks of support to meet the particular requirements of CSA survivors in married environments. First and foremost, it is imperative to step up prevention and education efforts. To reduce the likelihood of CSA cases, parents, caregivers, and educators should be trained to spot abuse signs and know how to handle them. The research suggests intensifying prevention efforts through education programs for parents, caregivers, and educators to recognize and respond to signs of abuse, and requiring further research to explore additional factors influencing CSA's impact on marital relationships.

Key Words: marital relationships, childhood sexual abuse

**Perceptions On Stem Education In Preschools In Galle, Sri Lanka: Trends And
Challenges**

Ayomi Udeshika Magedara Vithanage

Faculty Of Social Science, Arts and Humanities

Lincoln University College

Malaysia

Abstract

This research investigates the perceptions of preschool teachers regarding integrated STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in Galle, Sri Lanka, aiming to address the deficiency of STEM-based curriculum in preschools and its impact on holistic development. Through a mixed-methods approach, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected via online questionnaires to explore teachers' perspectives comprehensively. The study's primary objectives were threefold: to assess the influence of STEM education on the holistic development of preschool students in Sri Lanka, to identify the supportive factors and resources necessary for the effective implementation of STEM-based curriculum, and to uncover the challenges hindering the integration of STEM learning in preschools. Findings indicate that while preschool teachers in Galle incorporate STEM strategies to some extent, there is a recognized need for further professional development to effectively integrate STEM education into their classrooms. Many teachers perceive STEM instruction as time consuming and express a lack of confidence in implementing STEM projects, suggesting a gap in their preparedness for such pedagogical approaches. However, despite these challenges, the study identifies that some teachers are utilizing STEM methods and activities with the aid of available resources. Traditional teaching methods are gradually giving way to more student-driven, individualized approaches, indicating a shift towards embracing innovative pedagogies. In light of these findings, recommendations are proposed to address the identified gaps. One crucial recommendation is the implementation of Teaching Practice programs in preschools and colleges, allowing aspiring educators to gain practical experience under the supervision of experienced mentors. Such initiatives would provide invaluable support and guidance, fostering the development of competent STEM educators equipped to navigate the complexities of integrated STEM instruction. In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of understanding and addressing preschool teachers' perceptions and challenges

regarding integrated STEM education in Galle, Sri Lanka. By promoting awareness and providing targeted support, stakeholders can work towards enhancing the quality and effectiveness of STEM education in early childhood settings, ultimately contributing to the holistic development of preschool students.

Keywords: STEM, proficient improvement, project-based learning, preschoolers

The Role of Digital Identity on Self-Esteem: Exploring the Connection

Priyamantha M. D. G. K

Department of Philosophy and Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Abstract

Digital technology has profoundly transformed the way individuals construct and perceive their identities in the digital world. This abstract presents findings from a research study that investigates the connection between digital identity and self-esteem, drawing upon major psychological theories to illuminate underlying mechanisms and implications. Examining through Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Self-Presentation Theory (Goffman, 1959), this study explores how individuals shape their digital identities through online interactions and selective self presentation. Additionally, it explores the impact of these digital identities on individuals' self-esteem and psychological well-being. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, this research reveals insights into the role of digital identity formation and its influence on self-esteem. Qualitative analysis clarifies the motivations behind online self-presentation strategies, such as emotional intelligence, identity experimentation, and seeking validation from peers. Furthermore, the quantitative data analysis highlights correlations between specific aspects of digital identity, such as the authenticity of online self presentation and the degree of social comparison, and individuals' self-esteem levels. The findings depicts the complex connection between digital identity construction and self-esteem, suggesting that positive digital experiences can enhance self-esteem, while negative experiences may lead to reduced self-worth and psychological distress. This study also discusses practical implications for promoting positive digital identities and enabling healthy self-esteem in the digital age. Strategies for cultivating authenticity, supporting digital literacy, and enabling supportive online communities are explored, drawing upon insights from Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and Resilience Theory (Masten, 2001). Hence, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological processes based on the role of digital identity on self-esteem. By exploring the connection between digital experiences and

self-esteem, this study supports future research on interventions aimed at promoting digital well-being and psychological resilience in an increasingly digitized society.

Keywords: Digital identity, self-esteem, social identity theory, self-presentation theory, positive

psychology, resilience theory

**ENHANCING TEACHER PREPAREDNESS FOR EQUITABLE ONLINE
INSTRUCTION: A FOCUS ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

Dissanayake B. Y.

Department of English and Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Abstract

The rapid transition to online instruction prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for teachers to be adequately prepared to deliver equitable learning experiences in virtual settings. This research examines the role of professional development and support structures in enhancing teacher preparedness for equitable online instruction. Through a comprehensive review of literature and data gathered from interviews with 15 teachers, this study investigates the multifaceted dimensions of teacher preparedness in the digital era. In this study, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model has been used for the analysis as the theoretical background, offering insights into the factors influencing the integration of online instructional practices by teachers. Key findings of the study highlight the significance of tailored professional development initiatives that address the specific needs and challenges faced by teachers in moving in to online instruction. These initiatives encompass training in effective pedagogical strategies for online learning, technical skills development and support in addressing issues related to digital equity and accessibility. Moreover, the study clarifies the importance of ongoing mentorship and peer collaboration as essential components of teacher growth and preparedness in the online teaching environment. The research also identifies factors that facilitate or hinder teacher preparedness, including institutional support structures and resource allocation for professional development. By increasing these aspects, educational institutions can design and implement targeted interventions to support teachers in their journey towards equitable online instruction. Hence, this study reveals a holistic approach to enhancing teacher preparedness for online instruction which recognizes the connection between individual capacity-building efforts and institutional support systems. By investing in professional development and enabling a culture of support and collaboration, educational

stakeholders can facilitate teachers to deliver high-quality, equitable online learning experiences for all students.

Keywords: Teacher preparedness, online instruction, professional development, equity, support system, TPACK model.