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Dedication

Celebrating the Life and Work of Professor J. A. S. K. Jayakody, Leader Extraordinaire

Dinuka Wijetunga^a, Mayuri Atapattu^b✉

^{a,b}*Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

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✉ mayuri@hrm.cmb.ac.lk

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1468-7408>

Introduction

This special issue of the Colombo Business Journal (CBJ), on Organisational Leadership, is dedicated to the late Professor JASK Jayakody (1968–2020) – a scholar, administrator and teacher who exemplified in his actions the leadership qualities he taught and researched.

Jayakody played a pivotal role in raising the academic standards of the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo, and several other leading management education institutes in Sri Lanka through his extraordinary contributions to research, teaching postgraduate and undergraduate students, and initiatives in developing and streamlining academic and administrative functions. A reputed scholar in leadership, his work was published in several top ranked journals, and he also served on the editorial boards of several journals, including the prestigious ‘Leadership’.

This dedication is somewhat unorthodox; going beyond his contribution to leadership research, we reminisce about Jayakody's academic life, as a researcher, an academic administrator, and a teacher and mentor. He was a leader who walked the talk. A visionary outlook and a curiosity for learning, coupled with administrative excellence, generosity in sharing knowledge and expertise, and exemplary behaviour were characteristic of his involvement with any activity or person. These qualities contributed to his success as a scholar, administrator, and teacher, and made him a leader extraordinaire; his conduct resembled a case study in leadership. Therefore, recounting his life in the academia is an apt opening for this special issue on organisational leadership.

Beginning with a brief description of his early life and career, we attempt (as best as we can!) to capture the essence of his contributions as a leader in the spheres of research and academic administration, and in inspiring others to become excellent academics and administrators.

Early Life and Career in the Academia

Jayakody was born on 2nd November 1968, in Nikapotha Watte, Wellawa, Kurunegala, Sri Lanka. He received his secondary education in the Wellawa Central College, where he displayed early signs of his academic orientation and leadership – being an avid reader, a multi-talented student, and serving as the Deputy Head Prefect, and captain and a student coach of the school volleyball team. In tertiary education, he received his bachelor's degree in public administration (1993) from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, and an MBA (1999) and PhD (2011) from the Postgraduate Institute of Management of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.



He started his academic career as an instructor at Dudley Senanayake Technical College, after which he served as a temporary lecturer in the Open University of Sri Lanka and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Jayakody joined the permanent cadre of the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo in 1997, where he ascended the career ladder to become a professor in 2017, and served until his untimely demise, at the age of 52, in 2020.

A True Leader in Leadership: Practicing what he Excelled in Research

Chronicling the 23 years of service of this extraordinary person in a dedication of a few pages was a difficult task, but one that was an honour to undertake. We thought

the best way to approach this task would be to ‘give voice’ to some academics and academic administrators who had the privilege of learning from him or working with him in research and/or administration. When we invited his former colleagues and students to share their reflections, the response was overwhelming, to say the least – some ran into several pages. The most difficult task was selecting the best quotes to capture the essence of the leadership influence Jayakody has had, which was wide ranging, in terms of the nature of influence, the people and institutions influenced by him, and the geographic spread of these people and institutions. In the following sections we attempt to summarise not only the ideas, but also the affection, gratitude and admiration expressed by those who contributed their reflections to this dedication.

Leadership in Research

Jayakody was a true visionary and pioneer in Sri Lanka in the field of management research: With a thirst for new knowledge, insightful thinking, and innovative approaches, in his short life he changed the landscape of management research in the country and inspired several generations of scholars and practitioners. His work was published in some prestigious journals, such as *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *The International Journal of Bank Marketing*, *The Journal of Knowledge Management*, *The Journal of Management Development*, *The Economic and Labour Relation Review*, and *Management Decision*. Further, he also served as a member of the editorial boards of several journals, such as *Contemporary Management Research and Leadership*.

Jayakody’s conceptual knowledge was vast, and his research wide ranging – from human resource management, knowledge management, and management controls to consumer behaviour and consumerism, to name a few (see, for example, Atapattu & Jayakody, 2014; Chandrasekara et al., 2023; Damayanthi et al., 2021; Jayawardana et al., 2013). Several years after his passing, some of his work is still being published by his coauthors. Here we present only a fraction of his work, related to his primary area of research interest, namely, leadership.

One of Jayakody’s prominent attempts in leadership research was to conceptualise charisma as a multidimensional, cognitive–affective phenomenon rather than an observable extraordinary behaviour of the leader. His publication drawing on the concept of charisma from diverse disciplines to enumerate the broader dimensions of charisma from a follower–centric perspective (Jayakody, 2008a), can be considered as a pioneering attempt at conceptualising charisma as a multidimensional, cognitive–affective phenomenon. His suggested scale of charisma

followed an integrative approach to constructing charisma as a constellation of meanings consisting of leader prototypes, leader archetypes, leader extraordinariness and leader group prototypes that develop concurrently through multiple cognitive processes. At the same time, in an effort to broaden the comprehension of charismatic leadership, he empirically studied charismatic leadership in Sri Lanka using the Conger and Kanungo (C–K) model, while taking into account the distinctive characteristics of the South Asian region, in terms of development levels, religion, and cultural values (Jayakody, 2008b).

Jayakody further pursued his interest in charismatic leadership in his doctoral work, in which he explored why change initiatives in Sri Lankan business organisations decline with the departure of the leaders who initiate them. He addressed this as an issue of routinisation of charisma and argued that as long as the charisma of the leader induces self-discrepancies in a follower and thereby creates follower personal identification, the follower would make self-sacrifices, extend extra-effort and tend to be dependent on the leader; thus, the leader's endeavour continues to be dynamic. Consequently, when charisma dilutes as a result of the leader's departure and the self-discrepancies created thereby diminishes, in turn, follower personal identification weakens, the follower withdraws his or her self-sacrifice, extra-effort and dependency, and thus the dynamism of the leader's endeavour weakens (Jayakody, 2011).

Transformational leadership is another area that attracted Jayakody's research interest. For example, Jayakody and Sanjeevani (2006), illustrate how transformational leadership provides an appropriate approach for understanding relationship marketing dynamics at the level of salesperson–individual customer interactions. Exploring this idea further, Abeysekera and Jayakody (2011) examined the impact of transformational leadership behaviour of salespersons on corporate customers' relationship commitment behaviour in the corporate banking sector in Sri Lanka.

In one of his final studies, Jayakody, together with several others (Selvarajah et al., 2020) explored the cultural embeddedness of leadership practices examining leadership perceptions of Sri Lanka, asserting that the phenomenon of excellent leadership rises to the occasion if the values of organisational dynamics are known.

Although, through an incomprehensible twist of fate, Jayakody never had the opportunity to receive research training from a globally renowned university in the

West, the high-quality collaborative research he undertook with overseas academics bear evidence for his commitment to excellence in scholarship:

Professor JASK Jayakody was recognised internationally as a leading scholar of leadership and management in South Asia. I had the privilege to publish several journal articles with JASK. ... JASK demonstrated his superior statistical skills and his knowledge of organisational behaviour theory during the drafting of both papers, which were published in the International Journal of Human Resource management and Economic and Labour Relations Review.... I am continually impressed by the quality of the conceptual analysis that underpinned these research projects and the excellence of the training in statistical methods and research methods that JASK provided to his students, many of whom went on to complete successful PhD theses in Sri Lanka and Australia.

*Michael O'Donnell (Research collaborator)
Professor, University of New South Wales, Australia*

As noted by Michael above, Jayakody's contribution to management research in Sri Lanka was not only through his own research, but also through the numerous research training programmes he designed and contributed to. His insistence on instilling critical and conceptual thinking in his students and providing rigorous training in research methods laid the foundation for a stream of young researchers. His approach to his own research work and the work of his students is best summarised by his colleague (who had also previously been one of his lecturers when he was reading for the MBA) during Jayakody's term as the Head of the Research Centre at the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM), University of Sri Jayewardenepura:

He always wanted the best out of his doctoral students. He would go through a PhD Thesis even a hundred times until he was satisfied with the contribution to new knowledge. He would not hesitate to challenge an existing theory and demand his followers to do so. At every possible turn, he would motivate and inspire the doctoral students to contribute significantly to knowledge, which positively changed the attitudes of the students and the entire student group.

*AKL Jayawardana, PhD (Colleague and former teacher)
Senior Lecturer, PIM, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka*

Leadership in Administration

Jayakody's leadership in the field of management education was not limited to research. His commitment to translating theoretical understanding and sense making into practical applications made a tangible impact on organisations, communities, and society at large. The contributions he made in leadership positions in various institutions of management education are too many to enumerate here. Therefore, we

include reflections on his contributions to three institutions where his impact was most prominent. First, an MBA alumnus reflects on Jayakody's role as the Unit Coordinator of the Postgraduate and Mid-career Development Unit of the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo:

We are grateful for the countless contributions he made to the Postgraduate and Mid-career Development Unit, for his dedication, innovative spirit, and unparalleled administrative expertise.... His unwavering commitment to improving the lives of students, faculty, and staff alike was a testament to his boundless compassion and tireless work ethic. Thanks to his visionary leadership and tireless efforts, our MBA programme became one of the most sought-after programmes in the country. His dedication to excellence and commitment to providing the students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today's fast-paced business world set a new standard of academic rigour and achievement.

*Dinuka Patikiriarachchi (Student)
MBA alumnus, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Second, Jayawardana, his colleague at PIM (see above) elaborates how Jayakody's leadership led to the success of the Research Centre:

Professor Jayakody had the unique ability to inspire confidence, motivation, and a sense of purpose in his followers, mainly the doctoral students and colleagues. He articulated a clear vision for the future, communicated expectations and demonstrated a commitment to the goals that have been laid out. Most importantly, he practised individualised consideration, understood the value of prioritising individuals' time, and built a personal connection with each individual, regardless of their title, tenure or job. These leadership attributes led to PIM Research Centre's success, where he assumed duties as Head of the Research Centre in 2013, ... [and where he was able] to produce over 10 PhDs and 17 PhD student placements in International Universities in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. ... Research students led by him could publish research papers in ranked journals, setting a new benchmark for research outputs. Further, these publications are well-cited in research studies.

*AKL Jayawardana, PhD (Colleague and former teacher)
Senior Lecturer, PIM, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka*

Third, a quote from a former Vice-chancellor of the University of Colombo, on Jayakody's work as the Director of the Institute of Human Resource Advancement, University of Colombo, demonstrates his ability to turn organisations around as a leader:

I found him to be the epitome of professionalism required by an academic administrator. In his quiet and committed style, he effectively transformed the learning environment dedicated for Worker's Education, established five decades

previously, to be the vibrant Institute of Human Resource Advancement today, so well suited for the 21st century. I remember the former Director's visionary leadership, which helped to shape the institution into a place of innovation, excellence, and impact. His ability to see beyond the status quo, to challenge convention, and to inspire others to reach for greatness was truly inspiring.

Chandrika N Wijeyaratne (Colleague)

Senior Professor (Former Vice Chancellor), University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Jayakody's success as an administrator was due, in no small measure, to his uncanny ability of identifying talented colleagues, supporting them, and utilising them to achieve organisational goals:

He was such an influential leader in my career growth with whom I worked on many different academic and administrative assignments. He was the main person who unlocked and guided me to unleash my hidden capabilities in relation to academic and administrative work. Not only did he identify my potentials, but he also had a natural instinct for using them for institutional development.

Sampath Kehelwalatenna (Colleague and student)

Professor, University of Colombo

He identified people who had certain capabilities and potentials and tried to support their growth. I was one of the beneficiaries From him, I got my first opportunity to supervise a doctoral student. In addition, he included me as a co-teacher in doctoral courses. One time he asked me to teach a topic for PhD students, which I was not too confident I could do well. But he insisted I could do it. Afterwards, during a 'postmortem' of the lecture with him, he told me "Pavithra, even though you didn't have confidence in yourself, I had the confidence in you. I knew you can teach that topic well".

Pavithra Kailasapathy (Colleague),

Professor, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Last but not least, a hallmark of Jayakody's administration was the genuine concern he had for his colleagues and subordinates, and the wish to support their growth. As seen in almost every quote in this section, this character trait not only led to the growth of his colleagues and subordinates, but also contributed immensely to the success of the academic programmes and institutions he led as an administrator.

However, this care, support and influence extended well beyond the boundaries of his formal role and responsibilities and is perhaps the most significant aspect of his legacy. We therefore devote the third and last section to reflecting on how he helped

others to reach their potential and how, in so doing, he embodied many aspects of the transformational and charismatic leadership he so passionately studied.

Influencing Others to Reach Their Potential

If we are to identify one characteristic that permeated the entire leadership style of Jayakody, this would be it. As succinctly expressed by Jayawardana:

For him, the simple act of putting your people first starts with you.

*AKL Jayawardana, PhD (Colleague and former teacher)
Senior Lecturer, PIM, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka*

The majority of those who benefitted from this influence were his students. With them, Jayakody had a (seemingly paradoxical) combination of a strict, paternalistic style of influence, characteristic of a traditional Sri Lankan father, and a more empathetic style including a willingness to listen, share ideas and provide feedback. In combination, these characteristics made his students feel empowered and encouraged (and sometimes persuaded!) to take ownership of their learning journey. The former style is expressed by one student as follows:

He, of course, used all forms of power he had to push us beyond our (self-imposed) limits, be it the reward power of opening many new opportunities for young academics or the coercive power of shouting at us when we did not utilise opportunities that came our way for career development. I often got scolded by Professor Jayakody for not living up to my potential, which he realised more than I.

*Prabhashini Wijewantha, PhD (Student)
Senior Lecturer, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

It is noteworthy that Prabhashini, above, is appreciative of Jayakody's use of coercive power with the knowledge that it was one way of driving them towards reaching their potential.

What is overwhelmingly present in all the reflections we received is this trait of striving to support others (both students and colleagues) to reach their potential. The following ideas expressed by a few of his former students, and a PhD candidate in the UK whom he had helped during a short period of commonwealth fellowship at the University of Exeter, are simply echoes of the voices of many of his former students scattered across the globe.

I was fortunate to become his student when undertaking my Master's dissertation at the University of Colombo.... He can be classified as a transformational leader, embodying the qualities of Individualised Consideration, Inspirational Motivation,

Idealised Influence, and Intellectual Stimulation. These are the very traits he taught me as a lecturer in leadership.

Nalin Abeysekera (Student)
Professor, Open University, Sri Lanka

As a leader, he deeply cared about the people under him, he gave us space to develop, sought our opinions, inspired us, defended us in front of the bureaucracy, and provided solutions to problems we were grappling with. I miss his presence, his visionary leadership and his humanity.

Seuwandhi B Ranasinghe, PhD (Colleague and student)
Senior Lecturer, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

He served as an exceptional mentor to junior academics. The profound wisdom and insights of Professor Jayakody can be observed in every aspect of our academic careers, regardless of our geographical location or area of expertise. His guidance and the thoughtfulness with which he treated us will be forever ingrained.

Kanchana Wijayawardena, PhD (Colleague and student)
Lecturer, University of Wollongong, Australia

Professor Jayakody was a remarkable teacher to hundreds of thousands in his short lifetime. One who generously imparted his knowledge and wisdom without conditions, without expectations. I consider it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have been blessed with his guidance and teaching.

Ruwangi Chandrasekara, PhD (Colleague and student)
Senior Lecturer, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

During his visit to Exeter, he was always so generous, wise and kind to us – answering millions of questions from our fellow doctoral students. I still remember how he swiftly and wisely helped me with a fresh perspective to analysing qualitative data. I will always be grateful.

Wenjin Dai, PhD (PhD candidate at University of Exeter)
Lecturer, Open University, UK

The innovative techniques Jayakody used to bring out the best in his students and colleagues, his commitment, generosity, inclusivity and humanity in general, are all exemplified in a quote we extracted from a lengthy reflection, packed with appreciation, by a Guest Editor of this special issue:

Jayakody came to Exeter just as the English autumn began to set in. The cold, short, wet days must have come as a shock, but he never complained and enthusiastically committed himself to whatever opportunities emerged. At the time I was running a

second-year undergraduate module on Leadership and Teams and really enjoyed the opportunity of working in the classroom with Jayakody week after week. With his involvement I felt encouraged to experiment with different teaching techniques and remember one session, in particular, where we created a structure out of Lego and asked students to reconstruct it when only one person could see it at a time and could only communicate instructions to others rather than building it themselves. At that time, I was still honing my own craft as a lecturer and yet, despite his extensive skill and expertise I never felt judged or critiqued – Jayakody was, as always, humble, respectful and gently supportive.

*Richard Bolden (Colleague at University of Exeter)
Professor, University of the West of England, UK
(A Guest Editor of this Special Issue)*

The two authors of this dedication are among the fortunate people who benefited immensely from the generous support of Jayakody. Simply by being a colleague and friend, the inspirational and supportive influence Jayakody had on the academic career (especially research) of Dinuka Wijetunga is invaluable. He had a greater and more direct influence on Mayuri Atapattu who was a first a student and then a colleague. Therefore, we wish to end this section with two personal notes of reflection.

Mayuri wishes to present her thoughts in second person, as a tribute addressed to her teacher:

You are one of the few people who identified my potential, and your guidance as my thesis supervisor and teacher of research methods and organisational theories boosted my self-esteem and confidence, propelling me to strive for ever greater heights, to reach where I am today. My esteemed mentor, your dedication to inspiring change through vision and empowerment has left an indelible mark on my life and my academic journey. I am grateful for your visionary leadership, your unwavering support, and commitment to my growth and development. Thank you for being a true transformational leader who has made a lasting impact on my life.

*Mayuri Atapattu, PhD (Colleague and student)
Senior Lecturer, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

The personal recollections of Dinuka summarise much of what we elaborated in this dedication:

He was a curious mix of kindness and a firm hand; generous guidance and stimulation of independent thought; humility and supreme self-confidence; seriousness and a mischievous sense of humour. For almost a year, we worked together at the PIM Research Centre (on sabbatical from the University of Colombo). Occupying a cubicle next to him, I had a front row view of a master conceptualiser and research supervisor in action, clinically dissecting the work of his students and

guiding them towards new avenues of thinking. My best memories of Jayakody are the hours of discussion we had (through the glass partition open at the top), about research methods, about different concepts in whatever the massive tome he would be reading at the time, and about his vision for taking management scholarship of the country towards excellence. Though death got in the way of implementing many of his ideas, the contribution Jayakody made to management education in Sri Lanka is probably greater than even he realised.

*Dinuka Wijetunga, PhD (Colleague)
Senior Lecturer, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Some Concluding Remarks

Jayakody was never directly involved with the CBJ. However, his indirect influence, through suggestions for improvement, and even more, through the influence he had as a colleague or teacher, on many who are directly involved with the journal, is profound.

In direct contrast to the subject of his PhD thesis – dilution of a leader’s influence following his departure – the impact Professor JASK Jayakody had on the CBJ, the University of Colombo, the other institutions he served, and the numerous students and colleagues whose lives he touched, is characteristic of his understanding of what ‘leadership’ is:

Professor Jayakody once said to me “... leadership is about making others better due to the leader’s presence and making sure that the impact of people you groom lasts even in the leader’s absence...”

*Sampath Kehelwatenna (Colleague and student)
Professor, University of Colombo*

May this special issue on organisational leadership be a tribute to the legacy of this true leader in management research and education.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all the former students and colleagues of Professor JASK Jayakody who contributed their reflections on his life and work, and sincerely apologise to those whose thoughts could not be incorporated due to space constraints. A special acknowledgement goes to Dr. Sujeewa Damayanthi, former student and colleague, for compiling information about the early life and career of Professor Jayakody.

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