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LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION, MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS:
INTEGRATED POLITICS OF RESEARCH



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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Association of Economists
and Managers of the Balkans
UdEkoM Balkan

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PREFACE

Organizing is an evolutionary phenomenon, distinctive because of laws of existence and maintaining all structures in all processes of their functioning. As such, it is a civilizational phenomenon also that occurs as a component of human, individual and social activities and as a factor in the overall development of man and society. On the other hand, as a deliberate human activity, organizing involves seeking solutions to problems that occur on the way to achieving specific goals. No goal can be achieved without appropriate or necessary, or at least minimal organization of conditions, factors, and processes needed for goal achievement. However, the new era requires new types of leaders and managers, and new forms of organization; demands those who are willing and able to lead the company/corporation/state, in a distinct competitive environment, with all the good and bad sides brought by the globalization of world economy.

Association of Economists and Managers of the Balkans headquartered in Belgrade – Serbia along with the partner institutions, namely the Faculty of Engineering Management - Belgrade, Serbia; Modern Business School - Belgrade, Serbia; the University of Novo Mesto, Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, Slovenia; the University of Novo Mesto, Faculty of Economics and Informatics, Slovenia; Business Academy Smilevski - BAS, Skopje, North Macedonia; and BAS Institute of Management, Bitola, North Macedonia organized 6th International Scientific-Business Conference titled: Leadership, Innovation, Management and Economics: Integrated Politics of Research – LIMEN 2020 on November 26, 2020. The conference was held online/virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bearing in mind the challenges of a dynamic engagement in contemporary organizations, it is clear that within the analysis of these important subjects should be applied interdisciplinary approach. For this reason, the main theme of the conference LIMEN 2020 was processed through the following key topics:

- Leaders and Leadership
- Entrepreneurship
- Innovation
- Creativity
- Management of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- Contemporary Strategic Management
- Financial Management and Banking
- Marketing Management
- Project Management
- GREEN Management
- Natural Resource Management
- Quality Management
- Management of New Technologies
- Management Information Systems
- Education Management
- Intercultural Management
- Public Sector Management
- Human Resources Management
- Organizational Behavior
- Business Ethics
- Macroeconomics
- Microeconomics
- Finance
- Marketing
- Labour Law
- Business Law

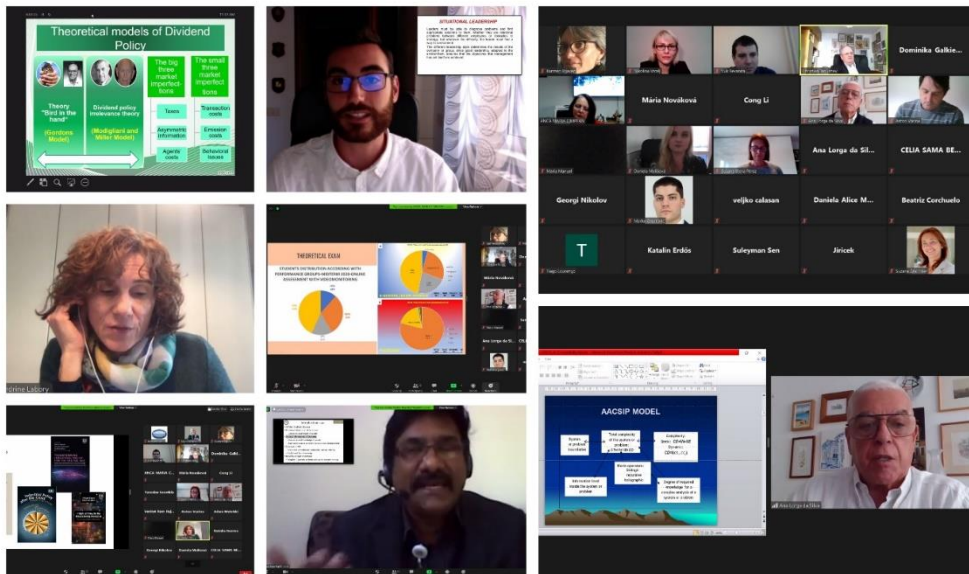
The aim of this year's conference is also achieved – bring together the academic community of the Balkans region and other countries and publication of their papers with the purpose of popularization of science and their personal and collective affirmation. The unique program combined presentation of the latest scientific developments in these areas, interactive discussions and other forms of interpersonal exchange of experiences.

Within publications from **LIMEN 2020** conference:

- 13 double peer-reviewed papers have been published in the **Selected Papers** - International Scientific-Business Conference LIMEN 2020,
- 47 double peer-reviewed papers have been published in the **Conference Proceedings** - International Scientific-Business Conference LIMEN 2020,
- 91 abstracts have been published in the **Book of Abstracts** - International Scientific-Business Conference LIMEN 2020.

LIMEN 2020 publications have nearly **700 pages**. All full papers have been scanned with the Crosscheck (powered by Turnitin) and have Orcid iD integration.

Participation in the conference took **159 researchers** with the paper representing **26 different countries** (Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine and United Arab Emirates), different universities, eminent faculties, scientific institutes, colleges, etc



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PANDEMICS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD ECONOMY: A HYPOTHESIS OF CORRELATION

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Abstract: *Coronavirus disease 2019-nCoV is a novel and highly transmissible infectious disease. However, in the history of human development, there have already been many infectious disease pandemics. Through a review of pandemics of the centuries on reflection, the author tried to understand whether there was any correlation between the pandemics and the development of the world economy of the associated period. Although 2019-nCoV pandemic is deeply affected to every country varying degrees, and the response measures taken by countries against the pandemic are also various, however, the pandemic has spread globally without exception; therefore, this study developed is aiming to call on to adopt a prevention strategy to face the new challenges ahead with a healthy rhythm of progressive globalization.*

Keywords: *Pandemic, Development, Environment, Correlation, Prevention.*

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**PANDEMIC IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMIES AND SET OF
MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO SUSTAIN THEIR FUNCTIONALITY IN
TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY.**

Yuriy Nemish¹

Abstract: *Modern world has recently experienced unprecedented challenges for the global economy of the XXI century. Pandemic has caused profound and drastic changes in functioning for some industries and in some cases even for the whole branches. Therefore, right now the world governments try to engage all possible mechanisms and resources to manage economic losses caused by measures taken to combat the uncontrollable spread of the virus. Desynchronized and disorganized attitudes to crisis phenomena management were observed among governments that had an additional administrative influence on the globalized economy. The article aims to present a set of tools and measures for better decision making which suite both: fighting the pandemic threat and keeping the economies well-functioning. The importance of a strategic thinking attitude is emphasized in order to secure a quick and fundamental recovery in the post-pandemic period.*

Keywords: *Real economy, Financial markets, Pandemic, Decision making, Management tools, Contra-measures, Crisis, GFC.*

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TESTING THE WEAK FORM OF EFFICIENT MARKET HYPOTHESIS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Paulo Alexandre³ 

Rita Silva⁴ 

Abstract: *The COVID-19 outbreak caused several concerns all over the world. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a global health emergency. This outbreak leads to a drastic change in people's lifestyles, causing lots of job losses all over the world and threaten the livelihood of millions of people since the firms closed to avoid virus propagation. In general, all economic activities were interrupted, and the stock markets had significant breaks. Due to these events, this essay pretends to analyse the efficiency, in its weak form, in the stock market indexes of France (CAC40), China (SSEC), South Korea (KOSPI), Germany (DAX 30), Italy (FTSE MID), Portugal (PSI 20), and Spain (IBEX 35), in the period of December 31, 2019, to August 10, 2020. To accomplish this research, different approaches were taken to analyse whether: (i) the countries affected by the global pandemic (COVID-19) caused (in) efficiency in their stock markets? The results suggest that the hypothesis of random walk in all the markets under study was rejected. Variance ratios' values are, in all cases, lower than the unity, which implies that the returns are auto correlated over time, and there is a reversion to the mean, in all indexes. The exponents Detrended Fluctuation Analysis (DFA), indicate significant long memories, i.e. they validate the results of the non-parametric test of Wright (2000), which comprises two types of tests, the Position test (Rankings) for homoscedastic series, and the Signal test for heteroscedastic series. These findings show that prices do not fully reflect the information available and that changes in prices are not independent and identically distributed. This situation has implications for investors since some returns can be expectable, creating opportunities for arbitrage and abnormal earnings. These conclusions also open space for market regulators to take measures to ensure better information in these regional markets.*

Keywords: *Global pandemic, Efficiency, Arbitrage.*

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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EXCHANGE RATE VOLATILITY: AN ECONOPHYSICS APPROACH

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Hortense Santos² 

Abstract: *This paper aims to analyze the efficiency, in its weak form, between exchange rates, US-RMB, US-EUR, US-JPY, US-MYR, US-PHP, US-SGD, US-THB, US-CHF, US-GBP, in the period from July 1, 2019 to October 27, 2020. To perform this analysis, different approaches were undertaken to assess whether: (i) the impact of the global pandemic created long memories in international foreign exchange markets? The results of the exponents Detrended Fluctuation Analysis (DFA) show that the exchange rates US-THB (0.60), US-MYR (0.59), US-SGD (0.59), present long memories, to a lesser extent the exchange pairs US-GBP (0.56), US-EUR (0.53). On the other side, exchange rates US-RMB (0.47), US-JPY (0.43), US-CHF (0.46), US-PHP (0.38) show anti persistence, while the Detrended cross-correlation coefficient (pDCCA) results show 19 average correlation coefficients ($\cong 0.333 \rightarrow \cong 0.666$), 10 weak correlation coefficient ($\cong 0.000 \rightarrow \cong 0.333$), 7 strong non-trend cross correlation coefficients ($0.666 \rightarrow \cong 1.000$). In conclusion, we show that the exchange pairs analyzed show some predictability, that is, there are levels of arbitrage that can be explored by investors; we also found that the exchange rates analyzed have characteristics of diversification, due to the low autocorrelation between markets. The objective of this study was not to analyze abnormal profitability by investors without incurring additional risk.*

Keywords: *Covid-19, Exchange rates, Efficiency, Arbitration, Portfolio diversification.*

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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EUROPEAN FINANCIAL MARKETS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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Paulo Alexandre⁴ 

Abstract: *The fast spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) had negative impacts on financial markets worldwide. It created uncertainty and a lack of confidence, causing unprecedented levels of risk, causing sharp losses to investors in a very short period. In view of these events, this essay aims to investigate the relationship between Covid-19 (confirmed cases and deaths), and the stock market indexes of Greece (ATG), France (CAC40), Germany (DAX 30), United Kingdom (FTSE 100), Italy (FTSE MID), Spain (IBEX 35), Ireland (ISEQ), and Portugal (PSI 20), from December 31st, 2019 to July 23rd, 2020. In order to achieve such an analysis, we want to validate if: the increase in cases and deaths resulting from Covid-19 have any connection with the financial markets under analysis? If so, do these connections cause shocks in European financial markets? The results suggest structure breaks, mostly, in March 2020. Covid-19 data (confirmed cases) integrate with the Covid-19 data series (deaths), with the Spanish market (IBEX 35), Greece (ATG), and Italy (FTSE MID). However, the Covid-19 data series (deaths), is synchronized with the Covid-19 data (confirmed cases), with the markets of Germany (DAX 30), France (CAC 40), Ireland (ISEQ), Italy (FTSE MID), United Kingdom (FTSE 100) and Portugal (PSI 20), just does not synchronize with the Greek market (ATG). We can easily see that the Covid-19 data series (deaths) has a major impact on Europe's financial markets. The results of the VAR Granger Causality / Block Exogeneity Wald Tests model suggest 2 bidirectional causal relationships between confirmed cases and deaths from the Covid-19 virus. However, there were no shocks between Covid-19 data (confirmed cases and deaths) and the financial markets under analysis. As a final discussion, we consider that investors should avoid investments in the stock exchange, at least while this pandemic lasts, and rebalance their portfolios in hedging and/or sovereign debt assets, to mitigate risk and improve the efficiency of their portfolios.*

Keywords: *Covid-19 Coronavirus, Stock markets, Epidemic.*

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RISK DIVERSIFICATION IN ASEAN-5 FINANCIAL MARKETS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC (COVID-19)

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Paulo Alexandre⁴ 

Abstract: *The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the new coronavirus infection as a global pandemic, based on the risk of contagion, and the number of confirmed cases in more than 195 countries. COVID-19 has an intense impact on the global economy, resulting from uncertainty and pessimism, with adverse effects on financial markets. Due to these events, this essay aims to estimate if the portfolio's diversification is feasible in the financial markets of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (ASEAN-5), in the context of the global pandemic (Covid-19), regarding the period of July 1, 2019, to July 22, 2020. To achieve such an analysis, is intended to provide answers for two questions, namely: i) the global pandemic (Covid-19) has accentuated financial integration between the ASEAN-5 markets? ii) If so, can the persistence of returns affect the risk diversification of portfolios? The results obtained suggest that those regional markets present accentuated levels of integration. However, the Singapore's stock market index does not show any level of integration, indicating that the implementation of portfolio's diversification strategies can be considered; however, the same can no longer be evident for the other ASEAN-5 markets. Additionally, we verified that the ASEAN-5 markets indicate persistence in returns, that is, the presence of accentuated long memories, except for the Singapore market (SGX). These findings show that prices do not fully reflect the information available and that changes in prices are not independent and identically distributed. This situation is found for investors, since some returns can be expected, creating opportunities for arbitrage and abnormal earnings. Corroborating the trendless cross-correlation coefficients (λ_{DCCA}), proven evidence coefficients, mostly, suggest the existence of risk transmission between markets. In conclusion, the authors seek that the implementation of an efficient diversification strategy for portfolios requires agreement with the controversial application. These conclusions also open space for the regulators of these regional markets to take measures to ensure better information between these markets and international markets.*

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Keywords: *ASEAN 5, Covid-19, Financial integration, Portfolio risk diversification.*

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE SECURITIES AND EQUITY MARKETS OF PORTUGAL AND EDP: AN ECONOPHYSICS APPROACH

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Abstract: *The Efficient Market Hypothesis (EMH), is one of the most important hypotheses in the financial economy, which argues that yields have no memory (correlation), which implies that agents cannot have abnormal returns in the financial markets, base arbitration operations. This essay intends to investigate the efficiency, in its weak form, in the stock and bond markets of Portugal and EDP, in the period from December 31, 2019, to August 10, 2020. With the purpose of achieving such an analysis, whether: (i) with the evolution of the global pandemic (Covid-19) the Portuguese and EDP stock and bond markets show signs of (in) efficiency? (ii) Does the increased integration between the Portuguese and EDP stock and bond markets result in risk transmission? The model DFA shows the existence of long memories in these markets, suggesting that they are not efficient, which validates the first research question. This situation has implications for investors, since some returns can be expected, creating opportunities for arbitrage and abnormal earnings. However, to confirm the inefficiency of these markets, based on our results, we must prove the existence of anomalous returns. In order to answer the second investigation question, we carried out the integration test that shows that these markets are mostly integrated. To validate whether financial integration results in risk transmission between the analyzed markets, we estimate the trendless cross-correlation coefficients (λ_{DCCA}), which shows 4 pairs of markets showing risk transmission (4 out of 10 possible). In conclusion, the authors suggest that these results are of interest, among others, to international investors interested in expanding the geographical scope, regarding the implementation of portfolio diversification strategies.*

Keywords: *Covid-19, Long memories, Financial integration, Portfolio diversification.*

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STATE AID TO EMPLOYERS DURING THE PANDEMIC CRISIS IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Abstract: *The negative development of the epidemiological situation in the Slovak Republic has an adverse impact on the labour market. During the declared state of emergency, employers were forced to suspend or reduce their activities but made every effort to maintain jobs and eliminate redundancies as much as possible. Despite their enormous efforts, their inability to finance the cost of labour was demonstrated, which had existential consequences for themselves, but also for employees and, ultimately, for the entire economy of the state. Our ambition is to analyse alternatives to state aid to employers in times of pandemic crisis caused by the deadly COVID-19 virus.*

Keywords: *State measures, Employers, State of emergency.*

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WORKPLACE SAFETY CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 PANDEMICS: CASE OF SLOVAKIA

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Abstract: *Public health laws designed to protect the life and health of people have an impact on working conditions as a significant social determinant of health. Laws designed to reduce the spreading of COVID-19 also had an impact on the organization of work. Legal research methods were used to analyse the regulatory framework for occupational health in Slovakia since the COVID-19 pandemics outbreak on March 6th, 2020, and to analyse how the obligations and rights of employers and employees have changed. This paper also examines emerging issues, such as employees' privacy and it explores the role of the external environment in safety management and leadership. New regulations passed to control spreading at workplaces strengthened the position of employers in surveillance of anti-pandemic measures. Pandemics mainstreamed the role of law as a public health tool. Sharing experiences across sectors of the economy and countries can be helpful to define good practices and their implementation into legislation.*

Keywords: *Safety leadership, Labour law, Health law.*

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ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ROMANIAN ORGANIZATIONS UNDER THE SARS-COV-2 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *In the current difficult economic and social situation in Romania and worldwide characterized by the health crisis caused by the evolutions of the SARS CoV-2 pandemic, the present study aims to highlight the amplitude to which the risk of occupational health and safety influences the continuity and sustainability of business in Romania. The research methodology adopted by the authors was based on the research highlighted in the specialized literature and by considering firstly the analysis of the results of the survey realized by applying a questionnaire to the employees from different fields of activity during the period February 29 - March 15, 2020. Secondly, the authors considered the analysis of the determinants of the risk of occupational health and safety at the level of the employers with an impact on the continuity and sustainability of the Romanian organizations, especially the businesses. The results of this research reveal how the working hypotheses in the second level of the analysis were confirmed or not regarding the impact of occupational and healthy risks on the sustainability of Romanian organizations under the SARS-COV-2 pandemic.*

Keywords: *Occupational health and safety risks, Business sustainability, SARS CoV-2 pandemic, Working remotely.*

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THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT ON BIHOR COUNTY EXPORT ORIENTED COMPANIES

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Abstract: *In order to protect the health of their citizens, many governments decided to take a huge risk in implementing lockdowns all over the world, knowing how much it could affect the economy. The thought that choosing the most direct measure to cope with the pandemic in order to save their populations was one of the hardest and the governments cannot be blamed for it. The paper moves forward to correlate the links between mass shut downs affecting the economy with the effects registered by the export-oriented companies in Bihor County, Romania, and the measures that the Romanian Government took. Based on the data provided by AJOFM, the Bihor county employment agency, for the following months – March, April, May, several factors like the number of companies in export-oriented industries, the number of employees, the amount of money that the Government paid, will be analyzed.*

Keywords: *Coronavirus, Enterprises, Foreign trade.*

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ENTREPRENEURS' STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 LIMITATIONS: UKRAINIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: *COVID-19 quarantine limitations and their effects on business lead to unpredictable environmental changes, which require appropriate entrepreneurs' strategic response. Scientists argue that diversification strategies were most popular and profitable during the 1970-1990 years. Beginning from 1990th in terms of globalization specialized firms began to grow rapidly, huge diversified companies cut off their non-core business units. COVID-19 quarantine limitations affected dramatically specialized businesses, which had to adapt to the new environmental requirements. Especially COVID-19 influenced small and medium-size entrepreneurs, which are specialized in one industry. Considering the peculiarities of integration and diversification as priority strategies for business development in the new reality, the article proves that specialization in goods or services in one industry for small and medium enterprises is risky and can lead to the bankruptcy of such businesses. Based on official statistics, the changes in Ukrainian small and medium companies' performance during years 2019-2020 by industries were studied. Data evidence, that companies, which specialized in one industry/business activities, suffered from the crisis most of all. According to the forecasts, COVID-19 will affect the economy for few years. That is why business has to adopt for the new reality. It is recommended to use diversification strategies for small and medium-size businesses in order to survive and grow.*

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Business strategies, COVID-19.*

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THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SUPPLY CHAINS IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *Health crises have an impact on supply chains, mainly by disrupting their regular activities. In this research, the authors have analyzed the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has made on business relationships between supply chain partners in the automotive industry and their suppliers, which are mostly from territories where the initial outbreak of the SARS COV 2 virus occurred. The analysis shows that in some cases, there is a strong dependency between the pandemic and production levels. Being dependent prevents supply chains from maintaining stability and causes system vulnerabilities. The authors conclude their work with a thesis on the pronounced impact of the current pandemic on automotive supply chain activities. For the analysis to be complete, it is necessary to monitor changes in production levels further, since data for the current year still does not provide a realistic insight into all the consequences at the supply chain level.*

Keywords: *Supply chains, Covid-19, Automotive industry, Production levels.*

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IMPACT OF COVID-19 CRISIS ON KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SULTANATE OF OMAN

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Abstract: *This research was conducted to identify the changes made to knowledge management practices in various organizations in Oman after the COVID-19 crisis and measures that were undertaken to mitigate the perceived negative impact of those changes on various aspects of HRM. The purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data from 110 line managers. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi-square and ANOVA along with post-hoc tests. Findings indicated that after the COVID-19 crisis, organizations started using the inside-out approach in knowledge management. The number of sessions increased with a lowered cost along with the benefit of measurability which was missing in the conventional methods. Online managers perceived increased employee engagement and motivation due to increased learning which proved that knowledge itself can be a motivator. Important measures taken to mitigate the negative impact include constant communication with employees and prioritizing the key knowledge aspects that are directly related to the work.*

Keywords: *COVID-19, Crisis, Positive impact, Employee learning, Knowledge management.*

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SHARED LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT: KERALA FLOOD 2018 AND COVID -19 LOCKDOWN IN ARANMULA CONSTITUENCY, KERALA INDIA

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Abstract: *Leadership in crisis focuses to respond to the emergency situation and leads to action ensuring protection to individuals, communities and organizations. It also requires systematic decision making and implementation (Tuz, 1996; Fener & Kevic, 2015). The present COVID-19 context and repeated disasters like floods, cyclones and increasing communal violence directly affect the economy of the country and social life.*

This envisages better skilled and systematic communication strategies to address the prolonged crisis and its follow-ups (McKinsey, 2020). Considering such a persistent scenario, crisis communication and leadership cannot be viewed as isolated activities. Instead, there is a need to perceive it as part of social interaction and as a process of building communities and organizations. In this context, the role of media, communicators, government and organizations need to be further explored and defined in line with the new reality, accumulating and integrating new ideas, methods, and practices.

This paper examines the shared leadership in crisis management of two different crisis by the same Public administration namely the elected woman Legislative Assembly Member (MLA) of Aranmula Constituency in the State of Kerala, India.

The strategies followed in Kerala flood 2018 and COVID- 19 Lockdown March to June 2020, explores in the framework of ten strategical frames which includes 'distributive leadership', 'interdependence', 'collective solutions' and 'compassionate approach'. The study exposes the success and the challenges while implementing multiple strategies and the required context to implement the process. The study also expects to identify effective strategies for future reference.

Keywords: *Leadership, Crisis, Management, Strategy, Social interaction.*

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RISK MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *Even before the current pandemic, humanity was faced with numerous situations that had serious global consequences. In addition to wars, nuclear radiation, cataclysmic earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, epidemics of SARS, swine flu, MERS, HIV, Ebola, Zika virus, they led to the cognition that humanity is powerless in the face of such disasters. Regardless of the achievements and development of science and technology, extensive and long-lasting medical research, "invisible" enemies have taken millions of human lives. People have always been faced with a risk, which comes from nature, human activities, or the mistakes of the man himself. Risk is a multidimensional, multifaceted and complex phenomenon, present on a daily basis in human life. Risk management in a state of the pandemic is primarily aimed at preserving the health and lives of the entire population, and measures applied to prevent a pandemic from taking countless human lives have no alternative.*

Keywords: *Automotive industry, Aviation, Supply chain, Tourism, E-business.*

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EMPLOYEES' COMMUNICATION DURING COVID-19

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Abstract: *The context of the COVID-19 pandemic presents communication challenges for companies as they adjust to a new operating, business and public policy environment. This unprecedented public health crisis affects all stakeholders. The COVID-19 pandemic underlined the importance of strategic internal communication, as many companies had to introduce new working practices and hire or fire staff extremely quickly. An explorative qualitative and qualitative research approach was applied to determine the use of digital communication channels and communication channels during the COVID-19 pandemic by Slovenian employees. The opportunities and challenges that arose during COVID-19 the outbreak of the pandemic are presented. Finally, proposals for organizational communication strategies in times of the pandemic are provided.*

Keywords: *Internal communication, COVID-19 pandemic, Digital media.*

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ONLINE IDENTITY IN A PANDEMIC – FROM INNOVATION PRACTICE TO COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH THE LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract: *The current chapter presents the transformation of perception about the online identity of a business in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Online identity and related marketing activities, perceived until only recently as innovative actions, today are a prerequisite for a competitive advantage. The chapter comments on the general knowledge and understanding of this topic, the different types of innovations, the elements of online identity and the marketing actions related to them. The competitive advantage and the evolved view of its nature are outlined as a positive transformation – a creation of new knowledge as a result of the learning processes application.*

Keywords: *Online identity, Competitive advantage, Innovation, Learning, Pandemic.*

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INFLUENCE OF COVID-19 VIRUS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF YOUNG VISITORS OF TOURIST DESTINATION

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Abstract: *The COVID-19 virus strongly influences travel decisions. More than usual, the security of the destination stands out as the most significant advantage when choosing a destination. Potential travelers choose to travel within their own country or to neighboring countries if the epidemiological situation is favorable. In this way, cars become the most common mode of transport for travel because it is the best way to avoid contacts with other visitors of the destination. In addition, upon arrival at the destination, it is assumed that the preferred activities change. It is no longer pleasant to visit catering facilities with a larger capacity for guests, but also events despite the fact that the organizers try to adhere to epidemiological measures and all recommendations in accordance with them. Shopping is also usual activity during travel, but it is assumed that this is not the case now, ie visitors choose to shop in stores outside major shopping centers. These and other activities depend on the motives of the trip, company on the trip, the chosen destination and more. The research aims to identify changes in habits during the travel of younger travelers. This will be achieved through an online survey of students and the results will be analyzed by various qualitative and quantitative methods. The paper will be financially supported by the University of Rijeka, for the project ZIP-UNIRI-116-1-20.*

Keywords: *Tourism, Impact of pandemic, Travel activities.*

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THE DENTAL MEDICINE SECTOR IN THE AGE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC – RECOVERY BETWEEN RISKS AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract: *In this paper we will show how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected one of the sectors that have undergone a booming development in recent years, namely the sector of dental medicine. This is an industry that includes numerous and diversified activities: treatments and surgical interventions in dental practices and clinics, dental aesthetics interventions in luxury clinics, the organization of specialization courses, conferences and congresses, the development of extremely innovative procedures and materials. Dental tourism has also had a spectacular trend, especially in Eastern European countries. Within a very short period of time, this highly profitable field, but which presents a huge risk of transmitting potential viruses, has recorded significant financial losses. In March 2020, in some European countries a lockdown was imposed by governmental decree or ordinance, all private practices having ceased their activity, whereas in other countries a significant number of clinics closed on their own initiative, and those remaining open recorded a staggering decrease in the number of patients. Courses, conferences, and congresses have been cancelled one after another throughout Europe. As a result of the cancellation of many flights, the activity in the branch of dental tourism has ceased almost entirely. For two months, an extremely small number of medical units, especially hospitals, were reorganized to provide care in dental emergencies, according to a very strict protocol to limit the risk of contamination. In view of resuming their activity as of May, professionals in the sector had to meet several severe protection conditions, regulated by institutional documents by the National Orders/Colleges of Dentists. In October, in the face of the second wave of the pandemic, the governments of European countries took less restrictive measures in an attempt to avoid a new lockdown and the decrease in the supply of goods and services to the population to such a great extent, so this time, governments have not closed private practices, despite the fact that in some countries the beginning of November has brought about a new isolation – albeit a partial one – and a renewed closedown of some businesses. We will analyze, in the context of the ongoing pandemic, the situation of this sector in several European countries. Given that the demand for dental services has only decreased very little, professionals in the sector have tried in various ways to continue their work so as not to sacrifice the dental*

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health of the population. The risk/benefit ratio is very hard to manage in this field, so precautions, prevention, and protection measures in dental practices remain of the utmost importance. If the branch of organization of courses, conferences, congresses can compensate to a certain extent the sharp decline in revenues during the lockdown period by moving the activity on online platforms, the branch of dental tourism is still suffering massively, and the possibilities of recovery are greatly reduced. Dentists remain the most exposed to risks. They are facing medical and financial concerns and have to make final treatment decisions amidst an uncertain and dangerous situation.

Keywords: *Dental medicine, COVID-19 pandemic, Crisis management, Risk, Dental tourism.*

PREPARING FOR THE DISRUPTION: FOCUS ON THE STRATEGIC ASSETS OF THE NEW ERA – BIG DATA

Sandrine Labory¹ 

Abstract: *Industry 4.0 is changing the competitive context, determinants of market power, and key strategies and assets. In fact, what is happening is a reconfiguration of markets and competition. While in the past competition happened between rivals in clearly defined market boundaries, today industry boundaries are unstable and competition is no longer a zero-sum game (firms can be both competitors and collaborators). Markets extend, reduce, or converge, reconfigure with new segments or transformed products. New intermediaries also appear in value chains, while others disappear.*

In this context, some companies are gaining very large market power not in one but in many industries. These are the firms controlling the final interface with consumers, and collecting and analysing big data on their characteristics, preferences and behaviour. Big data is indeed becoming a strategic asset in the new era: players with the largest market power are those both holding big data about the market and able to analyse these data, especially in the development of machine learning or other artificial intelligence programmes.

This paper argues that big data is also a key strategic asset for regional economies. It is essential for them to both access big data research infrastructure and develop data analysis capacity. Regional firms of all sizes can use them to complete product redefinition and production organisation alongside the mass customisation process; services and administrations of all kinds can also be improved by the use of big data analytics. The paper analyses these aspects in detail, providing examples and cases, and also discusses the policy implications. The case of the Big Data hub set up in the Emilia Romagna region in Italy is discussed.

Keywords: *Industry 4.0, Mass customization, Big data, Regional industrial policy.*

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GREEN BONDS REPRESENTING GREEN FINANCE IN EUROPE – BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

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Abstract: *This study examines whether there is a negative green bond premium for investors in the secondary European market. To answer this question, the matched pairs method is applied, where the daily i-spreads of green bonds and the interpolated daily i-spreads of similar non-green bonds are compared. The bond sample contains 37 bond couples issued by corporations, financial institutions and governments between November 2019 and April 2020. The findings suggest that there is an average statistically significant negative very small green bond premium. The negative premium could be explained by investors' preferences for green financial instruments leading to excess demand. The negative green bond premium may also be a compensation for the issuer's external costs or reflect the internalization of environmental externalities. Further evidence shows that the negative green bond premium varies across industries and is not higher for lower rated investment grade bonds.*

Keywords: *Green, Bond, Green finance, Premium, Europe.*

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STOCK MARKET EFFICIENCY IN AFRICA: EVIDENCE FROM RANDOM WALK HYPOTHESIS

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Abstract: *This paper aims to test the efficient market hypothesis, in its weak form, in the stock markets of BOTSWANA, EGYPT, KENYA, MOROCCO, NIGERIA and SOUTH AFRICA, in the period from September 2, 2019 to September 2, 2020. In order to achieve this analysis, we intend to find out if: the global pandemic (Covid-19) has decreased the efficiency, in its weak form, of African stock markets? The results therefore support the evidence that the random walk hypothesis is not supported by the financial markets analyzed in this period of global pandemic. The values of variance ratios are lower than the unit, which implies that the yields are autocorrelated in time and, there is reversal to the mean, and no differences were identified between the stock markets analyzed. The authors consider that the results achieved are of interest to investors looking for opportunities for portfolio diversification in these regional stock markets.*

Keywords: *Random walk, Africa stock markets, Portfolio diversification.*

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DIVIDEND POLICY: EMPIRICAL DATA FROM BULGARIAN STOCK MARKET

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of specific factors on the dividend payout policy of Bulgarian public companies.*

Methodology. Logit and tobit regression models are used to answer the questions will the company pay dividends to its shareholders and what will be the dividend payout ratio. The eight factors considered are return on assets, assets turnover, taxation, debt ratio, size of the company, the influence of bank credit, cash to assets ratio, and life cycle of the company.

Findings. Data from the financial statements of 137 companies listed on the Bulgarian Stock Exchange – Sofia for the period 2003 – 2014 are compiled. Out of the eight cited factors for determining the probability of paying dividends, only three have a statistically significant value at a significance level of 0.05. These are taxation, cash to assets ratio, and the company's size. The same three factors plus debt ratio have statistically significant values at the same level on the dividend payout ratio.

Value. The research will support Board members to understand the determinants of dividend policy on the Bulgarian stock market. Investors will also be able to create their decisions based on market evidence.

Keywords: *Dividends, Payout policy, Financial ratios, Forecasting.*

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DEVELOPMENT OF CEFTA 2006 – MINI SCHENGEN -ECONOMICS VERSUS POLITICS

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Abstract: *The effectiveness and efficiency of CEFTA 2006, even after almost a decade and a half, are far from utilising the potential. Member States act more as competitors than as partners, manifested by a significant number of formal and informal non-tariff barriers. There is no true will to fully exploit the potential offered by the free trade zone. This is also reflected in the low utilisation of financial resources envisaged for joint cross-border cooperation projects of IPA I and IPA II funds. All countries focus their international exchanges through trade with the EU, and intra-CEFTA trade is focused only on exports. The EU is making efforts to connect more tightly countries by supporting mini-Schengen project for Western Balkans. The paper will try to answer the questions: what economic benefits can the mentioned model bring and is politics a significant obstruction? The comparative regression analysis of the impact of the exchange of goods and services on the economic development of the member states for CEFTA 1992 and CEFTA 2006 will be presented in the paper. The analysis will be done by using the SPSS statistical program.*

Keywords: *CEFTA 2006, Mini Schengen, Countries of Western Balkan, External trade, Economics, Politics.*

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INNOVATION CLUSTERS AS AN ASSOCIATION MODEL OF THE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES: THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *Numerous empirical studies have long been indicated the importance of business infrastructure for economic and regional development. Ensuring long-term economic growth, as well as the creation and development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as key drivers of the development of modern economies, requires a high level of efficiency and flexibility of business infrastructure. In the Western Balkans, the absence of a coherent business infrastructure network is the biggest obstacle to the rapid growth of their economies. For this reason, the activities of the Western Balkan governments in the future should be aimed at developing a network of business infrastructure in order to increase the share of the knowledge and services sector with high added value in the economic structure. This paper aims to point out the role of innovative clusters as a model of associating SMEs in the context of regional development.*

Keywords: *Clusters, SMEs, Innovations, Regional development, Business infrastructure.*

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SMART REGIONAL SPECIALIZATION - OPPORTUNITY OR OXYMORON OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

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Abstract: *The need to understand and characterize management approaches, especially in their modern context, is becoming particularly important, mostly to test small and medium-sized businesses' ability to adapt to modernization's high demands. According to the research team, several challenges generated by various constraints, external and internal to organizations of this type, are why they fail to reach their growth and development potential. However, such a statement must be subjected to a severe analysis based on the methodology of a new, modern system of indicators to illustrate SMEs' real readiness and ability to be in line with development trends. The regional sector analysis successfully identifies the prerequisites for these enterprises' development and determines their specific regional potentials. The study analyzes the small and medium-sized enterprise sector in the Balkan countries and within the European Union. The research team identifies the predisposition for small and medium enterprises to regional specialization, application of innovations, technologies, entrepreneurial discoveries, digitalization and strategy, planning, and programming of a new generation.*

Keywords: *Regional specialization, Smart specialization, SMEs, Innovation, Regional competitiveness.*

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CAUSES OF DIFFERENTIATED DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL STRUCTURES IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Katarína Kráľová¹ 

Jana Sochuľáková² 

Dagmar Petrušová³ 

Abstract: *Our paper aims to identify and evaluate the factors determining the differentiated development of the regional structure of the Slovak Republic through analysis; directly or indirectly to show the reasons for the lag of some regions of the Slovak Republic. We will analyze the socio-economic lag of the regions in Slovakia through relevant social and economic indicators (e.g. unemployment rate, economic performance, the sectoral structure of the economy, state of infrastructure, average wages, selected demographic structures, level of innovation and others). We calculate and evaluate regional disparities using selected methods, which should point us to the fact that the differences between developed and lagging regions have already reached such proportions that regional polarization and regional disparities are entirely appropriate for this situation.*

Keywords: *Region, Regional structure, Regional disparities, Regular polarization.*

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INFORMATION AND CONSULTANCY CENTRES IN SLOVAKIA – PROMOTING PARTNERSHIP IN COHESION POLICY

Igor Jašurek¹

Abstract: *Implementation of cohesion policy, as the major EU budgetary chapter, is subject to vast scholarship. Therefore, surprisingly enough, the principal-agent (P-A) framework has received little recognition in this academic field so far. The present paper contributes to the expansion of this increasingly popular approach also into cohesion scholarship by examining the operation of Information and Consultancy Centres (ICC) in Slovakia. The major finding shows limits of the P-A framework by suggesting that instead of a mutual conflict, it is a cooperative mode dominantly shaping dynamics of P-A relations due to the shared goals and interests. ICC operations and relations with the Government are interpreted via observational equivalence and ceremonialism as the recognized P-A framework tools.*

Keywords: *ICC, Principal, Agent, Uncertainty costs, Observational equivalence, Ceremonialism.*

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A REVIEW OF PLATFORM CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY AGE

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Cong Li² 

Abstract: *The development of the digital economy has given rise to a new industry structure. Many platform corporates (such as Facebook, Amazon, Uber and Alibaba) have emerged around the world with rapid development, strong momentum and service innovation. With the help of Internet digital technology, platform corporates promote the commonality and integration of resources and value co-creation among the subjects connected by the platform. At the same time, the operation of the platform has also caused hot issues such as "data disputes among platforms", "the responsibility boundary of platform corporates is difficult to determine" and "the platform mode challenges the traditional anti-monopoly restrictions". Therefore, it is very important to promote the research on platform corporate governance. This paper systematically reviews the important literature on platform governance in the Web of Science database. Firstly, it states the connotation of platform corporate and platform governance. Then, it expounds on the main viewpoints of platform enterprise governance from three aspects: governance body, governance system and governance mechanism. Finally, it analyzes and summarizes the characteristics of platform corporate governance, which are multiple subjectivities, the openness of boundary, dynamic relationship and ambiguity of rights and responsibilities, points out the existing problems of platform corporate governance, and provides guidance for the practice of platform corporate governance in the future.*

Keywords: *Digital economy, Platform corporate, Platform governance, Decentralization governance.*

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A CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF THE BIDIRECTIONAL CAUSALITY BETWEEN COUNTRY-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

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Abstract: *Given the lack of attention paid to the relationship between country-level governance and unemployment rate as a plain indicator of labour market performance, the main goal of the paper is to explore the causality between good country-level governance and unemployment by using Granger non-causality tests. Even if there are some previous findings in the literature review that have investigated the causal relation between country-level governance and various economic development outcomes, still few papers have investigated the relation between country-level governance and unemployment. We have extracted data for the period 2006-2015, with a sample consisting of 136 countries, based on the availability of the data. Our findings resulting from Granger non-causality tests show that country-level governance contributes to the improvement of unemployment as % of total labour force but vice versa is also available.*

Keywords: *Country-level governance, Unemployment as % of total labour force, Granger non-causality test, Vector error correction model, Cross-country analysis, Economic sustainable development.*

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ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF QR CODE IN TAX INVOICES IN PORTUGAL

Anabela Marques¹ 

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Abstract: *The systematization of the information underlying the electronic invoice, published in the Decree-Law no. 28/2019 of 15 February in Portugal, brought legislative changes leading to the introduction of a QR-Code on the invoice creating the conditions for the document's dematerialization. This article's purpose is to present the results of a set of surveys applied to the various stakeholders in the process, in order to validate the advantages and constraints of an aggregating Approach, designed to systematize such stakeholders in a process of this nature. The methodology adopted was Design Science Research and proved to be adequate for the design of the artefact. The elaborated approach and the results of the surveys are also presented. In 2021, invoices and other tax documents must contain a two-dimensional bar code, containing all information related to the invoice, allowing the consumer to digitally send this information to his electronic invoice without his Fiscal ID introduction.*

Keywords: *QR-code, Invoice, Innovation, Approach.*

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SUPPORT OF BUSINESS INNOVATION IN THE FORM OF TAX BENEFITS FOR R&D OF ENTREPRENEURS IN SLOVAKIA

Lea Jančíčková¹
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Abstract: *Since 2015, the tax advantage of the R&D of entrepreneurs in Slovakia has been in the form of indirect support of innovation and creativity in companies. It could be a competitive advantage for the entrepreneurs who apply them. They are important on the revenue level, e.g. in the creation of a new product and on the cost level, in streamlining the conduct of business. This article aims to analyze the application of super-deduction in tax due to R&D carried out by entrepreneurs in Slovakia from the first year. The performed quantitative analysis shows a weak use of the provided income tax relief in the form of super-deduction of costs in connection with the implementation of R&D by companies in Slovakia, despite the year-on-year growing trend. Due to the proportional representation of individual legal forms of entities in Slovakia, limited liability companies must apply for tax relief related to R&D.*

Keywords: *Research, Development, Income tax, Tax super deduction, Creativity.*

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EXPANSION OF E-PAYMENT

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Milica Krulj-Mladenović²
Danilo Obradović³

Abstract: *As a result of the difficulties caused by Covid-19 all over the world, there is an expansion of contactless and online payment. People are turning more and more toward E-commerce, and if this is not possible, they tend to choose contactless payment, in order to comply with all the current health and safety regulations. This paper is about the current variety of offers for contactless payment in Serbia, which is expanding daily. Cash is used less and less in Serbia, this being the consequence of mass usage of internet cards offered by the banks operating in our country, as well as Apple pay, one of the most advanced and secure ways of payment in the world.*

Keywords: *Internet, Card, Bank, Apple.*

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MULTIDISCIPLINARY SUSTAINABILITY - THE MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES OF A SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Leonilde Reis¹ 
Clara Silveira² 

Abstract: *Information and Communication Technologies in the context of social organizations, enhance the definition of strategies to optimize the use of Information Systems in order to provide better support services to their users. The paper presents a real case of optimizing the current information system of a social organization in which it proposes to develop an integrative and multidisciplinary prototype incorporating sustainability concerns in the context of sustainable development objectives to improve cooperation between the Institution and its users. The methodology adopted was based on the literature review of the thematic and the case study. The main results point to the added value that a multidisciplinary and aggregator prototype can constitute in order to incorporate sustainability concerns in the technical, environmental, social, economic and individual fields.*

Keywords: *Sustainability, Information systems, Software development, Information and communication technologies.*

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SOCIAL ENGINEERING AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

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Leonilde Reis² 

Abstract: *Social Engineering, in view of the current dependence of information systems and information and communication technologies organizations, is of great interest in creating conditions, in order to reduce the threats and vulnerabilities, to which organizations are exposed. Thus, Social Engineering is considered to have emerged as a serious threat in virtual communities and is an effective way of attacking information systems, by creating conditions in order to jeopardize business continuity. The article presents the problem in the field of Information Security, emphasizing concerns in the field of Social Engineering in view of the vulnerabilities to which the generality of organizations is exposed. The research methodology adopted is Design Science Research, given the specificity of the problem. The main results are the literature review in the field of Social Engineering, with special emphasis on attack models and a reflection of the real-world professional experience.*

Keywords: *Social engineering, Information security, Information systems, Information and communication technologies.*

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INNOVATIONS AND BUSINESS ACTIVITIES OF SLOVAK START-UP ENTERPRISES

Ladislav Mura¹ 

Abstract: *An essential part of the corporate sector is formed by small and highly innovative enterprises, the start-ups. They introduce highly innovative activities, new solutions, integrate research results into their activities, as well as apply new technologies in their everyday practice. Start-ups are increasingly popular in different sectors of the national economy since they are a vital part of the entrepreneurial environment. The entrepreneurial activity of start-ups focuses on highly innovative products or services with high added value for the target customer. The main goal of the current paper is to target the innovative activity of Slovak start-ups. The paper presents partial results of the research conducted by targeting Slovak start-ups. The research results conclude that innovative start-ups are the driving force of the entrepreneurial sector. The innovative activities of these businesses rank them among the highly competitive and successful players on the market, even in a challenging business environment.*

Keywords: *Enterprises, Business activities, Innovations, Start-up.*

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GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPANY AS A FACTOR IN IMPROVING BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

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Abstract: *In modern business conditions, companies must be ready to respond at any time to the challenges, requirements and limitations that come from the environment. The development of a company is often described as a set of changes, i.e. metamorphoses, which it experiences during the adaptation to the challenges and threats that come from the environment, which are constantly present in the business process of the company. Broadly speaking, the development of a company represents the totality of the changes that it experiences in its life cycle, during its existence and business. The growth of a company is a change in its size, which is reflected in the number of employees, profit size, size and strength of installed capacities, market opportunities, market share. The paper aims to analyze the role and importance of growth and development in the business of modern companies, as well as their impact on improving business efficiency.*

Keywords: *Growth, Development, Company, Business, Market, Factors.*

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THE INTEGRATED REPORTING AS A TOOL TO CREATE VALUE WITHIN THE ENTERPRISE

Ubaldo Comite¹

Abstract: *In today's organizations, effective sustainability reporting represents an important element of institutional legitimacy towards stakeholders and is relevant for their ability to operate continuously. Over time, traditional corporate reporting has proved insufficient to meet the information needs of a variety of stakeholders. However, many companies have tried to improve the information available for stakeholder decisions by integrating their traditional financial report with non-financial information reports. Today, a diverse body of documentation is available that examines sustainability reports, including disclosure of environmental, social and governance (ESG) information. The so-called integrated reporting illustrates how an organization's strategy, governance, performance and prospects allow it to create value in the short, medium and long term. Integrated reporting makes the organization responsible for its performance towards stakeholders in achieving its vision through the use of multidimensional resources (financial, non-financial, social and environmental). At the same time, integrated reports can help address information asymmetry and the need for transparent stakeholder involvement. In Italy, today, the reporting on economic, environmental and social aspects is not configured only as a voluntary operation of transparency. According to Legislative Decree no. 254 of 30 December 2016, which transposed Directive 2014/95 / EU starting from 1 January 2017, all public interest entities with over 500 employees are required by law to draft the declaration not financial. In this regard, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) has made available a document with the aim of highlighting how to fulfill the disclosure obligations of the Directive, 2014/95 / EU, on non-financial reporting using the GRI Standards. The purpose of the new GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards also aims change and a positive impact on social well-being, among other aspects, by encouraging organizations to adopt and implement a measurable and objective-structured diversity policy. In this way, they can understand the terms and scope of their commitment to diversity practices and optimize performance both at the board level and as a whole. The purpose of this work is to analyze the sustainability reports of the companies considered through the company prospectuses, using both a qualitative and qualitative methodology, in order to understand the objectives envisaged by the integrated communication and the benefits achieved.*

Keywords: *Enterprise, Value, Integrated reporting, Stakeholders, Organization.*

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT ON THE REALIZATION OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL IDEAS IN THE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN MACEDONIA

Toni Soklevski¹
Vesna Stojanovska²

Abstract: *This scientific paper has been worked for the last three years in forty organizations of production and service activity in the Republic of Northern Macedonia.*

All types of projects that have been implemented in these organizations have been analyzed and how much they have influenced the complete implementation of entrepreneurial and intra-entrepreneurial ideas.

The paper analyzes the projects for the introduction of new products, the necessary redesign of the processes and the realization of all types of entrepreneurial ideas.

The paper contains recommendations for the proper use of various project tools in the process of realization of the idea to the final product.

The results of the research can be used by all types of organizations in order to use the tools of project management by entrepreneurs who need the skills for the operational execution of the entrepreneurial idea.

Keywords: *Project management, Entrepreneurial idea, Organization.*

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CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS THAT FAMILY BUSINESSES FACE

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Abstract: *It is a fact that the family business is becoming increasingly interesting for researchers in the field of management. From here the initial basis for their special treatment is drawn, since their holistic treatment with other MSMEs still does not emphasize their uniqueness in many aspects. If the importance of these family businesses is supported by the fact that they participate with 70% in the GDP of Europe as well as the fact that they employ up to 60% of the labor force in Europe, then it is more than clear that the scientific community should pay much more attention to these businesses.*

The paper aims to cover the biggest challenges and problems faced by family businesses, especially in terms of their management, inheritance, organizational communication and vision for their development, as segments where the biggest problems are observed.

Keywords: *Management, Specifics.*

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SOME FACTORS OF CONTEMPORARY FINANCIAL BUSINESS OPERATIONS

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Abstract: *Contemporary forms of funding business entities are developed. Financial instruments of the capital market are built. Optimal financial strategies and tactical-operational activities are a necessity. Financial managerial management and decision-making structures are of special significance. Financial capital is dominant in contemporary conditions. A credit-monetary policy is an important economic policy system.*

Keywords: *Finance, Market, Mechanisms, Capital, Policy, Strategies, Managers.*

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APPLICATION OF INNOVATION IN COMPANY MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: *The use of innovations in contemporary organization and management of the company is an essential condition in order for the company to survive in the modern economic environment. Innovations include a wide range of changes, primarily organizational and technological activities. In this paper in the first chapter, innovations and the inevitability of their introduction into the modern business of the company are going to be explained, then, the second chapter is focused on innovation processes, and how much is innovation important for company procedures. As management of innovation is very demanding, in this paper it is going to be researched how a change in structure implies changes in relations with the authorities, coordination mechanisms, empowerment of employees, changes in job descriptions or similar structural changes in size. Finally, in the end, authors will show how innovations in management structure have an impact on innovations and competitive advantage.*

Keywords: *Innovation, Management, Organization, Company, Market.*

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DETERMINING FACTORS OF INNOVATIVE PERFORMANCE: MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *The agri-food industry plays an important role in the manufacturing industry in the Autonomous Community of Extremadura (Spain). The objective of this research is to identify which factors influence the success of the innovative performance in this regional industry. For this, a case study methodology was designed to analyze, from an organizational point of view, which elements contribute to the ability of various companies to develop an innovative strategy. This study validates the proposed model in which Management, Strategy, Structure, Culture, Climate and Market Orientation are factors that determine innovative Performance.*

Keywords: *Agri-food industry, Innovative performance, Extremadura.*

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THE JAPANESE GOVERNANCE MODEL: ORIGINS, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

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Abstract: *This essay aims to analyze the main element of Japanese enterprise management, which distinguishes itself for its efficiency and for having made Japan one of the richest and more advanced countries in the world. The peculiarities of the Japanese governance model will be analyzed and explained, starting from the beginning and demonstrating how, at its basis, there is a strict correlation between traditional social and cultural values and the effort of the employees to cooperate for a common interest.*

Two main theories on Japanese enterprise management will be shown. The first one is the one proposed by economist Kono Toyohiro that studies the various phases of rapid industrialization and human resources policies. The second one is that of enterprise historian Odaka Kunio, that states that the foundation of the economy model lies in a group of social constructs such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Bushido and, last but not least, in the absolute respect of laws that are not written but that are deemed to be almost sacred.

Odaka's analysis was studied, elaborated and summarized by James Christian Abegglen, a former American Marine that was a researcher at Ford Foundation. Abegglen's results were explained in the 1958 work "The Japanese Factory" in which the researcher considers three pillars of the Japanese financial development: lifetime employment, that is, the participation of the worker to the circumstances of the company for the whole of his life, seniority (promotion and salary increases determined based on the years spent working for the company), and enterprise union (workers associations based on the belonging to the same company).

The three aspects found, were then analyzed and confirmed by several economists and historians and, to date, are still considered the main elements of management. These "three sacred treasures" are inherited and transmitted by the Emperors from generation to generation, being considered as fundamental values of the economy in the Japanese way of thinking. Indeed, they mould the enterprise management and have been strengthened during the decades, making Japan financially and technologically advanced.

This work aims to evaluate and think about the validity and durability of this extraordinary management model and whether or not are there any elements that would be possible to import into the western economy, which is gripped by a profound crisis that threatens to make the entire entrepreneurial system collapse.

Keywords: *Governance, Lifetime employment, Seniority, Enterprise union.*

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SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: *In the organizations and their management, an important fundamental role is played by the "leadership style", since administrating the working relationships in complex organizations, influences their final results.*

The decision-making process, in fact, within the organization is influenced by managerial leadership.

Before going into the analysis of the various models through which we can propose to read the phenomenal complexity of leadership within business management, this research aims to identify what is leadership and also the roles and dimensions within an organization.

The goal of the analysis is to explore the study of leadership styles, from the more formal and authoritarian to the more participative, and to demonstrate the situational leadership approach, which does not presume a unique approach to every situation in order to be successful.

Keywords: *Leadership, Organizational behaviour, Management.*

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THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF LEADERS IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

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Abstract: *In the modern world, today, due to rapid changes, development of technology, market demands, we can conclude that more than ever there is a danger of various types of crises. In this regard, more than ever before, it is necessary to understand what resources companies need to be more resilient to crises. This paper provides an overview of the theoretical framework, as well as research conducted in the field of emotional intelligence and crisis management. Many studies show that the importance of emotional intelligence of leaders in a crisis is great. Leaders who have a higher level of emotional intelligence possess certain skills that can be crucial to the organization in crisis situations. This paper aims to present the correlation that exists between emotionally intelligent leaders and crisis situations, taking into account several studies conducted in this area. All studies conducted have shown that there is a positive relationship between the emotional intelligence of leaders and crisis management. The conclusion is that examining the impact of the relationship between the emotional intelligence of leaders and the crisis is an exceptional framework that provides an opportunity for human resources to operate within organizations, as management of organizations themselves, seeking and shaping leaders with emotional intelligence skills.*

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Leader, Crisis management.*

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INNOVATIVE DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR QUALITY HPO ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract: *The business of organizations, in the conditions of globalization, radically changes the market, conditions, and strength of competition, requiring managers to change the way they react and solve problems using quality. The most successful business entities become those who continuously encourage creativity and create new knowledge. In order to be competitive in an uncertain and unpredictable market, high-performance organizations must be innovative, generating new knowledge and new technologies. These are organizations that, by managing quality, have the ability and skills of continuous recognition of challenges and changes.*

The paper is based on showing how an organization needs to manage change and apply concepts, methods, and techniques that can pave the way for us to design OVP. The concept of a synergistic approach to the design of OVP organizations is necessary for an unpredictable and uncertain global environment.

Keywords: *(HPO) organization, Market, Quality, Competition, Globalization.*

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A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW: SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS FOR TIME-MANAGEMENT IN REMOTE WORK SETTINGS

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Abstract: *Ever since the onset of the Internet and the rapid development in communications, a paradigm shift has been occurring between the human resources and the management systems in place. That shift has already rendered plenty of legacy management systems obsolete and ineffective. Evidently, the acceleration of data transfer speeds has produced a side effect in decreasing the location dependency of the average worker in certain industries, which in turn created a new challenge for the contemporary manager especially when dealing with remote teams and time-management of the same. This work-location decoupling meant that new systems had to be created, new studies to be introduced and plenty of modernization to the legacy control systems had to be implemented. And fast!*

This paper contains a systematic review of available software solutions for time management, location independency, virtual work and work teams and will provide analytic insight.

Keywords: *Time-management, Software solution, Remote work.*

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MODEL FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPETENCE OF PRODUCTION MANAGERS

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Abstract: *This publication presents an experimental model for assessing the competence of production managers, which is based on classical management and modern mathematical tools. The research was done in response to a real practical need set as a research task by the business. As a result, a model for selection of specialists and experts for solving complex management problems related to production management in industrial enterprises and an algorithm for application of this model is proposed. Key indicators for assessing the competence of production managers have been identified. To create the model, surveys conducted among functional experts in the field of production management were used. The model can be successfully applied in other functional areas of management, modifying the key indicators so that they are applicable in these areas.*

Keywords: *Competency assessment, Competency assessment model, System of indicators, Main indicators, Secondary indicators, Delphi method.*

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REGIONAL HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT – ASPECTS OF INTERACTION WITH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY

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Veselina Lyubomirova³ 

Abstract: *The development and modernization of societies define new approaches in managing human resources and, in particular, their characteristic - human capital. There is a growing need for its study and characterization and analysis of the extent to which it is crucial for the economic development of European regions, particularly Bulgaria. Human capital is a specific public resource phenomenon that creates added value based on education, knowledge, skills, intelligence, acquired professional experience, and many other components. The object of study is the targeted promotion of these components through public policies, programs, and initiatives, which creates prerequisites for improving the regions' overall economic performance. The authors set the task to analyze the stated public policies presented in the integrated territorial strategies to develop the planning regions, emphasizing the specific dimensions of human capital management in the different territories.*

Keywords: *Human capital, Planning regions, Integrated territorial strategy.*

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IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGERIAL INNOVATIONS IN RUSSIA: DECISIONS' BACKGROUND, MAJOR AREAS AND FREQUENCY

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Yaroslav Sovetkin² 

Abstract: *Unpredictable, complex and ambiguous business environments compel local and multinational companies to be more flexible and innovative in managerial practices. Nowadays managerial innovations (MI) are becoming a prevailing research area in management worldwide. This study investigates the key aspects of MI implementation in Russia from theoretical and empirical perspectives. The empirical study involved 1 025 employees from 791 companies operating in Moscow and the Moscow region as the major business centers of Russia. The results showed that companies operating in the Russian market base their decision to implement MI mostly on “proprietary investigation” (29% respondents). It was revealed that the major areas of MI implementation for such companies are “motivation” and “effective communication”, which are part of the “soft managerial practices”. Finally, the results of the study showed that in the majority of companies operating in the Russian market, the implementations of MI are made occasionally, without a systematic approach (39% respondents).*

Keywords: *Implementation of managerial innovations, Key aspects of managerial innovations Implementation process, Management innovations, Managerial innovations process, Russian companies, Multinational companies.*

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE PROCESS OF SHAPING WORKING CONDITIONS

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Abstract: *The article explores the influence and importance of social dialogue and collective bargaining on the formation of working conditions. Social dialogue and collective bargaining are among the basic ways to influence the conditions of work through employees' representatives and how to represent the weaker party from the point of view of labour law (the interests of the employee). The article points out the fundamental importance of social dialogue in creating an environment of decent work, both in the international environment (especially the competence of the International Labour Organization or the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights) and wages or addressing the impacts of COVID-19 pandemics in national environment of the Czech Republic.*

Keywords: *Trade union, International labour law organization, European pillar of social rights, Minimum wage, Right to information and consultations, Labour law.*

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PSYCHOGRAPHIC TYPOLOGY OF THE DIGITAL GENERATION'S ENTRANTS TO THE LABOUR MARKET - WORKPLACE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR

Regina Górová¹ 

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Abstract: *The study is based on curiosity about the entrants' resilience, the notion of an ideal workplace and the motive behind their behaviour connected to work. Research questions are related to how much is the digital generation psychologically and ingeniously adequate for conducting everyday tasks, facing and solving difficulties, and how is the market prepared for the digital generation's entrance. Information was gathered by a mixed method. The Big Five personality traits and the level of self-esteem are measured by two questionnaires, analysed based on eighteen deciding statements preponing the attributes to the traits. The other part of the analysis measures mental resilience, problem solving skills, where the variable is the resilience itself. Interviews from the entrant's and the HR's side are conducted to measure the level of interference and the consonance. The segmentation is focused on finding the correlation between self-esteem, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism levels and workplace attitude, problem solving, interpersonal skills and mental stamina of young entrants.*


Keywords: *Pshichographic typology, Digital generation, Labour Market.*

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(AB)USE OF GOLDEN PARACHUTES IN STATE-OWNED COMPANIES IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

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Abstract: *Golden parachutes represent one of the preventive defence antitakeover measures based on which contracts are concluded with the engagement of team of managers of the target company, promising them the payment of profitable compensation in case of occurrence of transactions related to takeover of control (purchase of a certain percentage of shares or direct offer to shareholders for a certain percentage of company shares). Contract rights called the golden parachutes are activated by the creation of one or more alternative events, or "triggers."*

(Un)intentional incorrect application of the golden parachutes may have not only significant negative consequences on the future performance of companies, but it can also deter potential investors from the decision to invest their capital in companies that have entered into such agreements with the engaged team of managers. Numerous cases of incorrect application of the golden parachutes can be found in the former socialist countries, as well as in the countries that emerged from the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Keywords: *Antitakeover defences, Preventive measures, Golden parachutes, (Ab)use.*

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WORK-LIFE-BALANCE BENEFITS AS BRAIN DRAIN PREVENTION

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Abstract: *The contribution of highly qualified employees, not only for multinational companies, is unquestionable. Their eventual departure often has negative economic consequences, and their replacement is usually difficult and expensive. Therefore, it is important to pay increased attention to their stabilization. This article aims to find out which of the work-life balance area benefits are more important for the stabilization of IT employees in an international automotive company (n=154). With the use of the Friedman test, it was found out that the most important benefit is flexible working hours. Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, the evaluation of the importance of individual benefits was further verified according to basic socio-economic factors (age, gender, length of employment). The right setting of benefits will give a competitive advantage in the search for new talent and at the same time serve as an effective tool against brain drain.*

Keywords: *Work-life-balance benefits, Retention of employees, IT employees, Brain drain, Brain gain.*

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FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IMPACT ON DEVELOPING MARKETING MANAGER COMPETENCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract: *Digital marketing enables companies to be virtual, in relation to customers. Modern working conditions require skillful and knowledgeable digital managers, developed competence, as well as great motivation for lifelong learning. Digital marketing managers collect potential customers' data, conduct online research and direct development, implementation and management of online campaigns that promote a particular company and its products or services. This paper will give a deep insight into the competence of digital managers as a result of an acquired degree in this field or as a result of additional courses, training and online activities of a determined person. The combination of both alternatives is a third option that contributes to the goal of the scientific proof in the paper.*

Keywords: *Competence, Digital marketing, Manager.*

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SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MARKETING IN THE "NEW NORMAL"

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Abstract: *Given the fact that we are in a time of uncertainty, when we cannot predict how a coronavirus-induced pandemic will affect community life, socially responsible behaviour as well as the impact of socially responsible marketing come to the fore in particular. The goal of socially responsible marketing is to educate and take actions that will positively affect the change of behaviour, and all participants from business entities to individuals must be aware of their responsible behaviour towards themselves and others in order to improve well-being and benefit the society we live in.*

The paper presents models of socially responsible marketing communication in the "new normal" as well as their impact on raising awareness of responsible behaviour and the adoption of new habits among consumers.

Keywords: *Responsible behaviour, Social responsibility, Marketing communication, "New normal".*

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IMPACT OF METAPROGRAMS ON THE PURCHASE DECISION- MAKING PROCESS

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Biljana Galovska² 

Abstract: *Each of us processes our own experience in a special way. There is no right or wrong way to handle it. Different people have different thinking structures and often do not understand each other. But, on the other hand, exactly that complexity of the human being is one of the biggest challenges in communication as a universal process. Discovering and adapting the identity of individuals becomes the number one priority.*

Consumers are exposed to many stimulants that motivate them to behave positively or negatively, react and decide.

As processes in our mind that clarify the decision-making structure, as well as how individuals are motivated to take action, are metaprograms that are unconscious schemes for ordering information. They act as filters and allow only what is important to the individual to be taken into account.

The main goal of this paper is to emphasize the knowledge about the existence of metaprograms, their understanding, application in terms of motivation to achieve a result by recognizing them allows us to become more influential and more able to touch in a way that is appropriate for people around us.

Keywords: *Meta-programs, Consumer behavior, Buying.*

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CONSUMERS AND DISPOSABLE PLASTICS

Malči Grivec¹

Abstract: *Plastic is one of the most widely used materials in the world today, and we could say that its properties (light, flexible, resistant and relatively cheap) make it the most perfect material. Unfortunately, this is not the truth, because the products made of it decompose very slowly, and so today there are more and more concerns about its safety. Nowadays, we can say with certainty that plastic is not only a visual problem, but the consequences of using plastic for all living organisms, including humans. It is well known that plastic enters the food chain, at the end of which is human. But this is not the only problem, plastic also poses a direct threat to life, as animals get caught in plastic waste (bags, fishing nets...) and smaller pieces are often mistaken for food, which is disastrous for them in both cases. We should also not ignore the damage that plastic does to the economy, especially in tourism and fishing.*

All this is due to a consumption-oriented lifestyle, where "use and throw away" is still too often the case. For this reason, we often resort to disposable plastic products that are thrown away after only one use. Since we recycle only a small proportion of plastic waste, it ends up in landfills and, what is worse, in the environment, especially in the oceans. That is why all governments are working to reduce waste and increase recycling rates. Above all, it is important to raise public awareness of the need for proper waste management and waste reduction.

In this article, we present the consumption habits of Slovenians, with a special focus on the attitude towards the use of disposable plastics. Thus, we examine how often they use such products and the factors that in their opinion contribute to the use of plastic products.

Keywords: *Consumer habits, Disposable plastics, Environment, Economy, Slovenia.*

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS CULTURE FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

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Abstract: *In modern, global economic relations, interstate borders are minorized by the strong influence of economic interest. National business is becoming almost negligible because modern economic activities are, in most areas, within the framework of international business. Knowledge of the elements of culture in international business has become increasingly important, and it's reflected in the fact that it is necessary to know and respect the rules of the manner of business entities in certain cultures, which is both theoretically and practically confirmed as the only path that permanently provides long-term stability and successful business development in an international framework. For successful business cooperation with foreign partners, it is necessary to know their culture and how to adapt to it. Empirical researches in this area emphasize that depending on the culture business entities belong to, there are different business goals, relationships, different ways of business negotiation, business culture itself, and the values that come from it. Knowing and respecting diversity affects understanding and attitudes to (potential) business partners, which is the first step of business cooperation, and therefore has a significant impact on achieving positive results in negotiations in international business.*

Keywords: *Global economic relations, International business, Importance of different business cultures and values.*

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THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE ON ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OF FIRMS: EVIDENCE FROM CEE REGION



Paula Ramona Răchișan¹ 

Abstract: *This paper aims to investigate the impact of government performance on the ethical behaviour of firms in Central and Eastern Europe. To measure government performance, we use proxies such as the burden of government regulation, the wastefulness of government spending, government effectiveness and transparency of government policymaking. In regards to the ethical behaviour of firms, we use the variable defined by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in its Global Competitiveness Reports as ethical behaviour of business managers of private companies in their relation with public officials, politicians, and other stakeholders. We employed a regression analysis using a data panel regarding 16 Central and Eastern European Countries between the years 2006-2015. Our results show that the impact of burden of government regulation, wastefulness of government spending, and transparency of government policymaking on ethical behaviour of firms, while government effectiveness seems to have no explanatory power in this model.*

Keywords: *Ethical behaviour of firms, Government performance, Burden of government regulation, Wastefulness of government spending, Transparency of government policymaking, Central and Eastern European countries.*

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THE PARADIGM OF COMPLEXITY: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL GROUND FOR THE ANALYSIS OF SYSTEMS AND PROBLEMS

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Abstract: *The paper proposes the complexity paradigm as innovative reasoning for analyzing systems and problems in behavioral sciences, explaining a model of analysis and assessment of complex systems and problems (AACSIP Model) based on Gödel, Prigogine and Morin. The Model is explained emphasizing the principal hypothesis of it. The second part of the paper presents an application of the Model to the analysis of SDG 9 from the UN 2030 agenda. It shows the path of analysis and assessment of a complex problem, guided by the complex reasoning paradigm. The results of the empirical research confirm the hypothesis that the use of the information required to resolve a problem is inversely proportional to the use of power (authority, emotional impact). The authors conclude that the complex reasoning paradigm is most adequate to promote synergic results in the scientific analysis of social problems.*

Keywords: *AACSIP model, Cognitive complexity, Socioeconomic inequality.*

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J. A. SCHUMPETER, A THEORIST OF INNOVATION AND A HISTORIAN OF ECONOMIC SCIENCE

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Zdeňka Dostálová² 

Abstract: *The paper commemorates the 70th anniversary of the death of Joseph Alois Schumpeter, the world-renowned economist of Czech-Austrian origin and creator of innovation theory. It analyses Schumpeter's work from the perspective of two aspects, complementing each other in his work: historical economic analysis and entrepreneurial innovation theory. The introduction reveals the genesis of his relation to enterprise, innovation, and the historical economics concept. The historical approach to economics appears in his scientific works at the time of his work at the European universities in Chernivtsi, Graz and Bonn, as well as in his later work at Harvard University. The paper also studies the rise of his innovation theory, first appearing during his work in Graz, Styria, and its gradual reflection in his professional work. The paper shows how these approaches merge in his economic teaching, which is very specific and includes both purely economic and technological and social aspects.*

Keywords: *J. A. Schumpeter, Innovation theory, Historical approach.*

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IMPLEMENTING INFORMATION LITERACY EDUCATION AT THE VOCATIONAL COLLEGES IN SOCIAL MEDIA ENVIRONMENT: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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Jianlan Zhang

Abstract: *To leverage college students' information literacy knowledge and skills in the social media environment have been drawing the attention of academics and practitioners. The authors first investigate the practice of information literacy education at the vocational colleges in China by choosing 200 libraries of Quality Vocational Colleges(QVC) listed by the Ministry of Education as the objects of study; and then analyzes the status quo through the forms, modes, and follow-ups of information literacy education in the libraries with a focus on the application of social media for in-depth discussions. The data and cases were collected through surveys on Internet from 2019 to 2020. Based on the framework of media and information literacy (MIL) and the discussion of survey results and specific examination of the practice of information literacy education through social media, this paper proposes an integrated approach to improve information literacy education by engaging the students in the learning processes.*

Keywords: *Information literacy, Media and information literacy framework, College students, Social media, Integrated approach.*

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ONLINE LEARNING PERFORMANCE: THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Jasmina Starc¹

Abstract: *The paper's contribution is to present the opinion of students of the University of Novo mesto about the implementation of online studies. The quantitative research method and a structured questionnaire were used for collecting research data. The research sample comprised 387 students. The results showed that only 36% of students were trained to use various forms of online study before conducting online studies. Among the advantages of online learning, they recognized the fact that they did not waste time driving to faculty/university (4.2), which resulted in lower costs (4.1), making it easier to coordinate study and family obligations (4.0), had the possibility of time flexibility (4.0) and "learned" self-discipline (4.0). Among the shortcomings was the lack of personal contact with teachers (3.8), the lack of personal contact with study colleagues (3.7), being left with one's ingenuity (3.3) and one's own self-initiative and self-discipline (3.1).*

Keywords: *Full and part-time students, University of Novo mesto, Online learning.*

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ONLINE CLASSES' EFFECTS DURING COVID 19 LOCKDOWN - TEACHERS' VS. STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE, CASE OF THE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT

Tatjana Ilić-Kosanović¹ 

Damir Ilić² 

Abstract: *In the second decade of the 21st century, there is an ongoing discussion on the value of online classes in higher education as the implementation of new technologies in the higher education processes is on the rise. The main questions that are emerging are the level of interactions, quality of knowledge transfer, and development of critical thinking. Several previously conducted research concluded that online models of higher education teaching add more value than traditional methods, and some of the research has shown the shortcomings of online higher education programs. The pandemic of Covid-19 disease caused by a Corona Virus (SARS-CoV-2) has forced most of the higher education institutions in Europe to transfer almost the entire educational process to online platforms.*



In this paper, the satisfaction of the teachers and the students with the online classes' effectiveness regarding the teacher-student communication, knowledge transfer, and development of critical thinking in the case of the School of Engineering Management in Belgrade, Serbia, is researched through a short survey and interviews. Statistical analysis has shown that there is a statistically significant difference between students' and teachers' satisfaction. Furthermore, in short interviews, it is shown that the students are more receptive to knowledge transfer, teacher-student communication, and the development of critical thinking through online classes than the professors. As the sample is small, further empirical research on the wider sample is needed in order to get more compelling conclusions.

Keywords: *Online classes, Covid-19 pandemic, Teachers, Students, Knowledge transfer, Higher education.*

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HOW ONLINE PROCTORING METHODS CAN HELP TO INCREASE THE QUALITY OF DISTANCE ONLINE STUDENTS ASSESSMENT

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Abstract: *The transition from strictly supervised on-site assessment to online assessment using heterogeneous examination platforms without well-established proctoring systems has led to an increased percentage of students who easily passed the evaluations, but not all of them based on strong learning of the subject. Thus, eliminating the students cheating methods during online examination represents the big challenge of current times. The purpose of the present study was to compare students' performance amongst three types of assessment: on-site versus online assessment with or without applying proctoring methods. Students' performance unusually increased for online assessment without proctoring versus onsite assessment. Students' ID card-based admission associated with continuous student video monitoring seems to reduce cheating students' attempts, HPG students being significantly decreased compared to online examination without proctoring. In conclusion, objective online assessment of students requires the use of platforms with high-performance proctoring systems or at least minimal proctoring methods.*

Keywords: *Online proctoring, Online assessment, Higher education.*

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DOES EDUCATION MODERATE THE NEXUS BETWEEN DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND EASE OF DOING BUSINESS? EVIDENCE FROM CEE REGION

Cristina Boța-Avram¹ 

Abstract: *In this paper, we aim at shedding new light on the relationship between diversion of public funds (as a proxy for corruption) and ease of doing business in Central and Eastern Europe, while the moderator role of education factors on this linkage has been also investigated.*

Various forms of measuring corruption and ease of doing business have been widely analysed independently in the previous academic literature, still, there is a research gap about the relation between corruption (measured through various proxies) and ease of doing business as a measurement of the quality of the business environment. Our findings argue that the impact of the perceived levels of diversion public funds on the ease of doing business score increased when a country is characterized by a higher level of quality of education systems and business schools, a better collaboration of university-industry in the field of development and research, and a stronger quality of scientific research institutions.

Keywords: *Diversion of public funds, Corruption, Ease of doing business, Quality of education systems, Quality of scientific research institutions, Central and Eastern Europe.*

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UNIVERSITIES' CONTRIBUTION TO SMART SPECIALISATION IN LAGGING REGIONS – THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS

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Abstract: *The regional policy framework of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) aims to enhance innovation driven growth (OECD, 2012) by supporting prioritisation of innovation policy aims (McCann–Ortega-Argilés, 2013). S3 embraces a broad view of innovation, supporting technological as well as practice-based and social innovation. It became a central element of the cohesion policy in the EU (McCann–Ortega-Argilés, 2015) “[...] despite a frail theoretical background and implementation difficulties” that are even more striking in case of less developed regions (Krammer, 2017; p. 95). The role of universities in the process is usually recommended to be analysed through the concept of the quadruple helix model that is an enhancement of the triple helix’s academia-business-government helices with the civil society (Foray et al., 2012).*

Universities key role in the regional transformation process through contributing to S3 (Edwards and Marinelli, 2018), being especially important actors in the smart transformation of lagging regions, where in general the resources are limited, the level of internationalization is low, entrepreneurial skills are insufficient, and the application of the quadruple helix is not self-evident. Some Central and Eastern European regions are in short of good cooperation practices of the three helices and the involvement of the civil society in a manner suggested by the quadruple helix is even less evident.

Our research aims to reveal the role of universities in S3 in lagging regions through the case of the University of Pécs, which is the oldest and one of the largest universities in Hungary and is located in South-Transdanubia, one of the least developed regions of the European Union. Our research questions are the following: (1) How can the University contribute to the Entrepreneurial Process of Discovery (EDP) within the region/country? (2) How do curricula and academic specialisation interact with priority set at the regional level? (3) How can the University combine sources of funding at the EU and national level more strategically to bring about transformational change within a region? (4) What are the main instruments used to capitalise the potential of key stakeholders in the context of RIS3? In the frame of action research, we wish to make a focus group with key stakeholders based on EDP methodology defined by the RIS3 Platform, carry out in-depth interviews with university managers and academics and focus groups with key stakeholders in the region. Desk research on policy environment and university system supports the contextualizing of the research and the results.

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Source: The abstract was used at the 27th APDR Congress and the Change, Redirection and Development Conference as well.

Keywords: *Smart specialisation strategies, University, Entrepreneurial discovery process, Innovation, Regional development.*

EVALUATION OF EFFICIENCY IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Abstract: *The state of Slovak education is influenced by several negative factors. In terms of human capital, we have seen the decline of pupils for demographic reasons and lack of interest in the work of teachers. This paper aims to evaluate the efficiency of secondary education on the example of selected secondary schools. The main method of the paper is multicriteria analysis. The subject of research is the efficiency of selected secondary schools. The 10 Business Academies attended by pupils aged 15-19 years and established in the Banská Bystrica and Žilina self-governing regions will be the subject of research. For the analysis we use panel data collected for the school years 2013/2014 - 2017/2018. The contribution of the paper is to create an evaluation of the efficiency of the surveyed schools and to propose solutions for schools that achieved below-average results. The findings may serve as a basis for assessing the efficiency of the Business Academies for comparison with competitors, as well as for the founders of these secondary schools.*

Keywords: *Efficiency, Education, Business academy, Self-governing region.*

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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENTS SPECIFIC TO INVESTMENTS APPLICABLE IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

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Daniela Tufeanu³ 

Daniela Ionela Juganaru⁴ 

Bianca Cezarina Ene⁵ 

Abstract. *Our starting point is the definition and classification of investments, both financial and accounting. Thus, in a financial sense, an investment represents the change of an existing and available amount of money, with the hope of obtaining a higher but probable income in the future. In the accounting sense, an investment is the allocation of an amount available for the purchase of an asset, which will determine the future financial flows of income and expenses. Investments can be classified into two categories: domestic investments - consist of the allocation of capital for the purchase of machines, equipment, constructions, licenses, patents, etc. Their purpose can be to reduce costs, increase production, improve quality, increase market share, etc.; foreign investments - consist of capital investments in shares in other companies. They are also called financial investments and aim to increase the value of the company and diversify sources of income. We also analyze in this article the investment decision. The investment decision is the most important financial decision which a manager has to make. An investment usually involves allocating large sums of money in the long run, with a relatively high degree of risk. We also present and analyze both the stages of establishing an investment decision and the methods of evaluating an investment project. The article also presents management elements regarding the investment recovery term; discounted net value method, investment risk assessment.*

Keywords: *Financial management, Investments, Educational systems.*

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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENTS SPECIFIC TO THE EVALUATION OF RESEARCH-DEVELOPMENT-INNOVATION (RDI) ACTIVITIES

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Daniela Tufeanu³ 

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Abstract: *This article presents the main elements specific to the evaluation of research and development and innovation activities: evaluation of scientific research activity; evaluation of the staff involved; valuation of tangible assets; valuation of intangible assets. Also, we present in the article the two ways of approaching the evaluation of research, development, innovation: macroeconomic approach; microeconomic approach. The comparative analysis is based on the management by results and the management by objectives in the field of research activities, development, and innovation. In this context, we present the economic-financial indicators used in the evaluation of the research, development, innovation: the rate of new sales; cost savings rate; revenues from research development innovation.*

Keywords: *Financial management, Research, Development, Innovation.*

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LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: HOW TO AUTOMATE AND PUT A SMALL LIBRARY ONLINE

Tiago Lourenço¹ 
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Abstract: *Even with the amount of information that is diffused nowadays over the internet it is undeniable that the books in paper format are still a valuable source of knowledge either because they are often a reliable source or because the paper gives us a sensation that a screen does not give. Having said that, it is essential that a library not only publishes on the internet all the available books but also ensures good management for all that knowledge source. That is how this research and project comes up, a compilation of library standards for its management from the cataloguing of the books to its physical display in the library, as well as the automatization of all that standards. This study and the application of its results were done in a small library, Centro de Camões that complements the Department of Humanities of Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. It used the Agile software engineering methodology, a light, efficient and low risk way of development. User stories were used as an approach that promotes essentially the user's point of view in the solution, i.e lead the team to think, question and perceive what they are developing. The main features of the automatization and management system are the cataloging with a book online search script by ISBN that returns the vital intel of a book, a website that shares with the users all the bibliography available and a books manager, also includes a requisitions manager that allows warnings to the library and users. The framework used was Django, a high-level Python Web framework. On it, we apply technologies like channels, Web sockets and all the fundamental guidelines of Web development. Therefore, this article is a jump start for those who want either implement a similar solution in a library or want to apply some technologies used on this project on their own projects, the source code of this project can be found at <https://github.com/tfcl/camoes>.*

Keywords: *Library management; Web programming; Agile; User story.*

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QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS IN SERBIA AT THE END OF 2019 ON THE TOPIC ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract: *The Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the period from 2020 to 2025 has been adopted in Serbia and the strategy proposal states that one of the goals is the development of science and innovation in the field of AI. Some of the indicators being measured are the number of patents as well as the number of published papers in this field. The initial state is currently unknown. The aim of this paper is to establish how many dissertations at which University and faculty have been defended on this topic, who are the most common mentors and members of the commissions. The paper deals with publicly available data of doctoral dissertations in Serbia and makes a quantitative analysis of doctoral dissertations on the topic of AI.*

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence, Doctoral dissertations, Universities in Serbia, Strategy for the development of artificial intelligence.*

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THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF FOOTBALL CLUBS BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Adam Metelski ¹ 

Abstract: *Digital transformation has significant growth potential for countries and organizations. This also applies to football. One of the examples of digital transformation is the use of social media by football clubs. Their goal is to arouse interest and attract and maintain relationships with as many fans as possible. Nowadays, the number of social media followers is a key indicator of a club's popularity, fan base size and commercial appeal, all of which are directly related to the finances of a club. The article presents which football clubs are the most popular on social media today, and the example of FC Barcelona and Ajax Amsterdam show how the number of followers changed from 2017 to 2019. In the analyzed clubs, the highest increase in followers was recorded among Instagram users.*

Keywords: *Digital transformation, Social media, Football clubs, Football fans.*

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CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPMENT OF SMART CITIES IN WESTERN BALKANS

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Abstract: *Western Balkans have several definitions depending on the lens through which this concept is observed. The definitions can be economic, political or economic. The analysis is further complicated by the partial presence of the European Union, various economic treaties and unresolved conflicts as well as the fact that the largest urban populations are scattered without definitive trends. Cities continue to attract new arrivals as a result of the direct centralization tendencies throughout the region and result in an unsustainable growth of cities that in turn result in economic and social complications. This article uses a matrix classification model to classify the existing literature on cities in Western Balkans, identify specific conditions for particular groups and proposes different approaches for groups of cities in order to maximise the effects of smart cities projects so that doubling and significant overlapping in financing are avoided.*

Keywords: *Western Balkans, Smart cities, Challenges, Urban development, Infrastructure.*

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ROMANIA: THE EFFICIENCY AND PERSPECTIVE FOR TRANSPORT OF PASSENGERS ON RAILWAYS

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Abstract: *As main premises related to transport generally indicate, all the more so in Europe, where the prosperity of continent will depend on the capacities of all European regions to maintain full integration in the world economy, competitively; and efficient transport systems are cornerstones to achieve this. In this perspective, this paper is an analysis of the main performance parameters which are necessary to sustain an efficient railway transport system at the national level. The study is based on data and information centralized by The Authority for Railway Reform (Autoritatea pentru Reforma Feroviara – ARF) during three years, when there were in force contracts of public transport services related to people transport on railways (January 2016 –September 2019).*

Keywords: *Railway transport, Land transport, Sustainable future.*

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DATA PRIVACY AND OPEN DATA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract: *The public sector is one of the most prominent collectors of data, and in recent years, there was pressure on the governments to publish the data in the form of open data. On the other hand, there are growing concerns about data privacy and possible threats connected to the publishing of personal data. Moreover, because a lot of the data the public sector is collecting and publishing can be considered personal, those two trends go at least partially against each other. For the usability of open data in research and the private sector, the data quality and granularity are essential, but with the rising level of detail, the risk of revealing some confidential information rises too. The objective of this article is to analyse the current situation of data privacy in the context of open data in the EU and to discuss the challenges and problems that the implementation of data privacy measures brings in the field of open data.*

Keywords: *Data privacy, Open data, GDPR, European Union.*

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THE IMPACT OF THE ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION AND PERFORMANCE OF THE COMPANY

Radoslav Tusan¹ 

Abstract: *This paper deals with the evaluation of the impact of the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) on the financial situation and performance of the company. The Slovak Accounting Act allows accounting and reporting under IFRS for two types of entities - explicitly specified by law (e.g. banks, insurance companies, stock exchange); and those that meet specified size criteria. The analyzed company met the size criteria and IFRS has been applying since 2018. The transition from Slovak accounting procedures to IFRS has an impact on the classification of individual items of assets and liabilities, their structure, and the classification of related costs and revenues. The transition to IFRS thus has an impact on the company's financial position and performance. The paper set out two objectives of the research: 1) the transition to IFRS caused an insignificant change in the company's financial indicators; 2) the transition to IFRS caused a significant change in the company's financial indicators. The results of the analysis show changes in the structure of the company's assets and liabilities, the amount of income and expenses, and the less significant impact of the adoption of IFRS on financial indicators.*

Keywords: *Accounting, Reporting, Financial statements, Financial ratios.*

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A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON VAIC IN BANKING SECTOR

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Abstract: *There has been a transition from a physical-based economy to a knowledge-based economy in the last 3 decades. Nowadays this shift is happening even faster with the information technologies and intellectual capabilities. The banking sector is one of the most popular knowledge-intensive sectors which might be affected by intellectual capital. This literature review aims to determine how banks affect intellectual capital investments. Is it profitable for the banks to invest in human capital, physical capital, structural capital, relational capital or innovation capital? Do results differ between Islamic and conventional banks or between countries? As a result of our literature study, it was concluded that the effect of intellectual capital on financial performance and efficiency is the most investigated topic. To measure this effect it has been seen that; panel data regression method and data envelopment analysis method are used. Our research showed that intellectual capital investments have become increasingly important for banks in recent years. VAIC components have a positive effect rather than a negative effect on banks' profitability, productivity and efficiency depending on the sample. In addition, it is determined that human capital efficiency is the driving component of the VAIC in the majority of the studies.*

Keywords: *Intellectual capital, VAIC, Financial performance, Literature review.*

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DANGEROUS LIAISONS: CORRUPTION AND MONEY LAUNDERING IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Georgi Petrunov¹ 

Abstract: *The article analyzes the dangerous links between two criminal activities that are widespread in contemporary societies, corruption and money laundering. The spread of both crimes has a serious negative impact on our economies and societies. Moreover, the links between corruption and money laundering contribute to the criminalization of the state itself. The article describes the main characteristics of each criminal activity, focusing on the specific connections between them, and argues for the need of effective integrated counteraction policies.*

Keywords: *Corruption, Money laundering, Politically exposed persons.*

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**CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE IMPROPER TRANSPOSITION
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
DIRECTIVE 2005/60/EC IN THE ROMANIAN LEGAL SYSTEM IN
RELATION TO MONEY LAUNDERING CRIMES**

Bogdan Bodea¹

Abstract: *The article debates the improper implementation of the European Parliament and the Council Directive 2005/60/EC on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing in the Romanian legal system. It argues that in relation to money laundering crimes prescribed by the European Directive the transposition is unconstitutional due to the lack of foreseeability and accessibility of the incriminating text. The article relates to a decision of the Romanian Constitutional Court and analyses the effect of the ruling in respect to the need of preventing money laundering crimes.*

Keywords: *Transposition, Directive, Money laundering, Foreseeability, Accessibility.*

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IMPACTS OF FINANCIAL POLICIES FOR INTEGRATION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN ALBANIA

Suela Hana¹

Abstract: *Although all democratic countries which are members of the Organization of the United Nations have as part of their legislation the Protocol on Trafficking which sets out clearly and definitely how trafficked people are treated as "victims"; many of them have not changed or adapted procedures or social and economic policies, important for their protection and reintegration into society. Even in countries where laws in a certain way exist, they do not complement by the right laws or they lack enforcement mechanisms necessary for the protection of victims of trafficking. Unlike these countries, Albania has made and is making continuous efforts to establish a European public sphere in order to increase the level of financial and integration support of victims of trafficking through the democratization of its policies within the European Union integration.*

This article is focused on Albania's efforts to establish a European public sphere in order to increase the financial support for victims of trafficking through the democratization of its policies, which achieve optimal interaction between public service and international actors who develop their activity in this field.

The paper is based on the theoretical and practical context making an analysis of the main features of social policies in Albania which brought to the attention not only the new issues but also alternative scheme of social support to this marginalized group of Albanian society. Analysis in the paper consists of a combination of qualitative and quantitative research study of social policy from 2003 to 2008.

Keywords: *Financial policies, Victims of trafficking, Financial support, Strategy, Residential centre.*

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THE FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATION ON THE EXAMPLE OF SUBOTICA LOCAL SELF- GOVERNMENT

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Abstract: *Organizations, as well as individuals, realized that they possess their core, the core which consists of the necessary activities and necessary people, the core which is surrounded by an open and flexible space that can be complemented with flexible workers and flexible delivery contracts. The attempts to save money, by downsizing the management layers or by hiring temporary workers, change the form of the organization and the style of coordination within the organization itself. This paper will firstly explain the notion of organization and organizing. Since the example which will be presented is the Local Self-Government Subotica organization, the author will state the specific characteristics of a public organization first.*

Keywords: *Organization, Public sector, Local self-government Subotica.*

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ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY: REALITY OR JUST-SO-STORY?

Janka Pásztorová¹

Abstract: *Fashion Industry is a talking point worldwide because of its negative impact on the environment. The traditional fast fashion linear approach is not sustainable and environmental sustainability is becoming an integral part of fashion. Fashion companies declare environmentally sustainable measures and strategies to counteract the negative environmental impacts of the fast-growing Fashion Industry, but the results are not sufficient. This paper analyses Fashion Industry selected indicators of circular economy as one of the concepts of sustainable development and subsequently uses the case study of Inditex to critically evaluate the application of the circular economy model and the possibilities of future development.*

Keywords: *Circular economy, CSR, Ecology, Fashion.*

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MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATION FOR PRO- ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract: *The level of social responsibility of the waste management industry is becoming the priority issue in the democratic modern world. In a modern democracy, citizens should be educated and included in the political process and decisions about public issues. To realize all the steps of the democratic political process, education and awareness of citizens have to be considered. The awareness about environmental issues is high on the agenda of modern global and national political processes. Public perception should be taken into account early in the decision-making process. Informed local debate is an essential first step to building or changing any infrastructure or administrative steps in the field of environment. Gaining public support for any environmental issues requires a consistent message and neutral credible voice that can explain evidence about the challenges. Without engaging the public in such an interactive way aiming for people to understand and appreciate the need for new steps there is a risk that we will not take any steps further. The purpose of this paper is to identify the effectiveness of communication strategies and factors that impact communication for waste separation.*

Our paper will discuss the case of waste separation in Slovenia and possible steps towards gaining public support for the new environmental demands. Waste management and waste separation are related to the way of life in different societies. However, the possible environmental treatment of domestic waste has been one of the major environmental problems in any society. Waste management activities are based on EU environmental directives and in general, they follow the principle of the waste management pyramid and its priorities: reduce, reuse, recycle, energy recovery, disposal. Despite the legal framework, the success in municipal waste management is heavily dependent on the voluntary agreement of the households to do the separation and success of it is considered to depend on promotion and public information.

The purpose of the paper is to explore various communication tools that can help overcome specific barriers to public participation in waste separation. We focus on the activities of waste management company Surovina that started various communication activities to help overcome specific barriers to public participation. The study oriented towards promotional and educational activities of the company that addressed the young generation. We will try to find out what was the level of awareness through the promotional activities and if it contributed towards pro-environmental behaviour. Moreover, we will try to find what is a need for continuous and well-planned public education and motivation for waste separation and what practices could be relevant and applied to any other society.

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Keywords: *Management of communication, Waste management, Environment, Public communication.*

INVESTIGATION OF PLATE WASTE IN UNIVERSITY REFECTORY

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Abstract: *Food waste is a crucial global problem in the world. It is also a crucial issue for food services, consumers etc. Food is wasted throughout the entire food chain. At the consumer level, 35 percent of wasted food occurs. One of the main causes of food waste at consumer level is determined as “plate waste”. Although, the issue needs sustainable solutions to decrease food waste, there is no permanent solutions in mass consumption places about food waste such as refectories, cafeterias. The aim of the study is to analyse the amount of plate waste in Yaşar University (YU) refectories in İzmir by observation method and to find ways of minimizing food waste in YU, providing sustainability and contributing to the development of circular economy and raising awareness about food waste problem. For this research, the food waste at the YU refectories in İzmir was analysed by observation method. For 1-week observation study, a total of 3883 trays were examined throughout the Main campus and T blocks. It is determined that the biggest percentage is the main course and more than 50 percent of trays consist of waste in YU refectories.*

Keywords: *Food waste, Mass consumption, Observation.*

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POTENTIAL OF ECOTOURISM: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SLOVAKIA AND SERBIA

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Larisa Jovanović³

Abstract: *The demand for nature and ecotourism has been constantly rising last forty years and it will continue to grow. Due to the coronavirus, domestic tourism will increase exponentially, which would enhance ecotourism development. Foreigners and local tourists have become more aware to leave a positive impact on the environment where they travel and where they live. Serbia and Slovakia have a great potential to become attractive ecotourism destinations. Both countries are countries with a similar population number, no access to the sea, but with preserved nature, great gastronomic offer, and the main potential next to the capitals of Bratislava and Belgrade lies in ecotourism. At the same time, domestic ecotourism is a perfect economic activity that promotes sustainability and development. In the less developed regions, ecotourism can bring new employment opportunities and increase demand for local products. Agrotourism and rural tourism are inevitable part of sustainable development in Slovakia and Serbia. Despite of small territories of Slovakia and Serbia, both countries can offer a wide range of sceneries and natural beauties to be explored.*

This article aims to analyze the potential of ecotourism in the Slovak Republic and Serbia. To achieve the objective results, we've surveyed the foreign and local respondents. Our study also analyzes whether marketing strategies and promotion of domestic ecotourism is effective to attract tourists. The obtained results will be evaluated and compared. In the last part, the paper focuses on eco labels that currently exist in Serbia and Slovakia.




Keywords: *Ecotourism, Agrotourism, Natural resources, Local products, Protected areas, Marketing, Eco label.*

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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE IN SERBIA – ATTITUDES OF FARMERS

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Abstract: *In modern agriculture, farmers face certain problems in obtaining necessary information and improving agricultural production. This paper aimed to reveal the standpoints of farmers related to the role of agricultural extension services (AES) as a source of information and farmers' opinion on the quality of work of extension officers. In order to examine this goal, two municipalities were selected, Alibunar and Kruševac. A total of 65 farmers were included in the research and a survey of their attitudes was conducted.*

The analysis of farmers' attitudes indicates that some of them are still not sufficiently familiar with the work of extension service. In the municipality of Alibunar, the most important source of information is other farmers, although half of them regularly use services of AES. Farmers in Kruševac are more focused on using the services of extension officers, which they value as the most important source of information related to agricultural production. Farmers from both municipalities think that the work of extension officers, both in terms of transparency and quality of information, can be improved.

Keywords: *Standpoints, Farmers, Extension service, Improving the quality of work.*

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SUSTAINABLE VILLAGES

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Abstract: *Despite the fact that we live in a country where the farmers' associations are created among the first on the Old Continent, and where one of the first Institute for Nature Protection is created, statistics warn us that the demise of several hundred Serbian villages and thus the emptying of strategically important areas of the state of Serbia today, is a serious development problem. In this paper an analysis of the rural, age and educational structure of the population, in rural areas of the Republic of Serbia, has been performed. The authors believe that the situation is not hopeless and point out that the sustainable development of the village is possible only if favorable local preconditions for it are met. Therefore, it is necessary to revive and institutionally expand the competencies of rural local communities as a form of local rural self-government in the Serbian folk tradition. Accordingly, decentralization and polycentric development are the main conditions for the renewal of the population and devastated parts of Serbia. Moreover, native networks and integrated rural development are models applicable through LAP in accordance with the characteristics of the area. Nowadays, it is necessary to raise people's awareness of the importance of rural survival and sustainable management of resources in agriculture, i.e. to breathe new life into rural areas, which would also be a motive for staying in the countryside.*

Keywords: *Sustainable village, Status, Development policy, Local communities, Local self-government.*

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