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Preface

The Book of Abstracts of the 10th International Scientific Conference on Knowledge-Based Sustainable Development (ERAZ 2024) offers an overview of the diverse and dynamic research contributions presented at this year's event. As an essential companion to the selected papers and conference proceedings, it offers readers concise insights into the diverse range of topics that address the multifaceted challenges of building sustainable societies in a knowledge-based global economy.

The abstracts reflect the conference's truly interdisciplinary character. Scholars explore pressing economic issues such as the long-term relationship between growth, carbon emissions, and energy consumption in the European Union, the role of foreign direct investment in Albania, and the financial resilience of European and Balkan economies in the post-COVID-19 context. Contributions also address sustainability in business and industry, from manufacturing efficiency and mineral resource evaluation to green finance, social entrepreneurship, and responsible corporate practices.

Technology and innovation emerge as central themes throughout this collection. Authors examine the transformative potential of artificial intelligence, big data, and digitalization across finance, healthcare, public services, and education. Research into e-learning, organizational culture, and leadership highlights how human and technological factors interact in shaping sustainable development.

The social and legal dimensions of sustainability are equally represented. Papers address topics such as labor law, human rights, equality standards, GDPR implementation, and the regulatory frameworks that underpin sustainable consumption and financial reporting. Tourism, agriculture, and food systems, sectors deeply connected to sustainability, also feature prominently, with studies on wine tourism, agri-food SMEs, consumer behavior, and the Mediterranean diet.

By bringing together these varied perspectives, the Book of Abstracts captures the richness of discussions at ERAZ 2024. It serves not only as a guide for participants but also as a reference point for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to identify emerging issues and innovative approaches in knowledge-based sustainable development.

This volume underscores the mission of the ERAZ conference: to provide a platform where diverse disciplines converge, ideas are exchanged, and collaborative solutions are fostered for a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future.



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Sustainable Development Through Economic Goals on a Scientific Basis

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Abstract: *The model of sustainable development is ensured by balancing economic, social and environmental goals. By achieving these goals, we strive to provide multiple benefits for the economy and society, especially taking into account the interests of future generations.*

The topicality of the concept of sustainable development attracts a great deal of attention from both the professional and especially the scientific public. As a realization of the concept of sustainable development, management is of particular interest, and that at all levels.

Since there is no single definition and universal approach to sustainable development due to different societies, program developments, problems in development, and institutional infrastructures, this problem is spread all over the world.

The scientific component is included because of the future implementation of a large number of ideas and new directions of development, especially since these are strategies in all countries of the world, in Agenda 2030.

The paper will give an overview of the past, as well as the expected research on the impact of sustainable development in Montenegro.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Global trends, Agenda 2030, Montenegro

The Long-Run Impact of Economic Growth and Carbon Dioxide Emission on Energy Consumption in the European Union

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Abstract: *As the European Union (EU) strives for a reduction in energy consumption without compromising the quality of life—a critical objective in contributing to carbon neutrality by 2050—understanding the determinants of this reduction holds significant policy importance. This paper focuses on estimating the long-term impact of economic growth and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions on energy consumption in the EU over the past three decades. Cointegration tests suggest the presence of a long-term cointegrating relationship among the variables under investigation. Additionally, the main findings, derived from the panel pooled mean group and augmented mean group estimators, indicate that economic growth and CO₂ emissions exert a statistically significant and positive influence on energy consumption in the EU. These results underscore the necessity for the formulation and implementation of enduring energy and economic policies to effectively confront sustainable challenges, thereby hastening the EU's transition towards a low-carbon growth trajectory.*

Keywords: Carbon neutrality, Energy consumption, Economic growth, Low-carbon economy

Increasing Regional Competitiveness Through Project Funding

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Abstract: *The idea that regional competitiveness can be fostered and managed to enhance national competitiveness has gained increasing acceptance in the scientific community in recent years. Based on this, several initiatives have been developed and implemented to enhance the company's competitiveness in specific target regions of Europe and Bulgaria through targeted project financing.*

Many authors develop and improve methods for assessing a company's competitiveness by concentrating on specific components such as marketing and market management, innovation and entrepreneurship, leadership in human capital management, and more. Based on this, various nations create and carry out financial initiatives to enhance business competitiveness; unfortunately, the impacts of these initiatives have not been the focus of economic or social research. Accordingly, the primary goal of this paper is to investigate and evaluate the concept of the "white field" in competitiveness research, as well as to examine the impact of project funding on regional competitiveness.

Keywords: *Regional competitiveness, Competitiveness funding, Regional competitive advantages*

Sustainable Rebound: Analysing Post-COVID-19 Recovery in Non-Euro Area Countries

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Abstract: *The COVID-19 pandemic constituted an external shock that had adverse impacts on the world economy as a whole, with a particular emphasis on emerging economies. Despite the resolution of the crucial moments, the journey towards a sustainable recovery remains uncertain and long, hence placing pressure on countries to discover effective approaches for achieving long-lasting economic growth.*

The objective of this study is to analyze the path of economic recovery in non-euro areas following the COVID-19 epidemic. The goal is to assess whether the implemented measures have successfully facilitated a swift and enduring recovery. In light of the exceptional difficulties presented by the pandemic, policymakers must comprehend the complex nature of the recovery process.

We provide a thorough examination to determine the efficacy of policy measures, structural reforms, and international cooperation in promoting sustainable pathways for recovery. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of integrating sustainability concepts into recovery plans to build economies that are both resilient and inclusive.

The ARIMA model is used in our empirical analysis to examine research questions related to future economic growth and identify potential chances for sustainable development. Furthermore, we will analyze the impact of global trade patterns and geopolitical developments on the economic recovery of countries outside the euro region. Through a holistic approach to our analysis, we aim to offer significant insights to policymakers seeking to properly manage the economic landscape following the pandemic.

The research centers on the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, all of which are members of the European Union but do not participate in the Economic and Monetary Union.

Our primary objective is to offer practical suggestions that can assist decision-makers in formulating policies and tactics that foster enduring economic well-being and ecological sustainability.

Keywords: *Post COVID-19, Non-Euro area, Sustainability, Economic development*

Exploring Economic Growth and FDI Dynamics in Albania: Empirical Insights from a Var Analysis

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Abstract: *This study presents an analysis of the relationship between Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and economic growth in Albania through Vector Autoregression (VAR) analysis and Granger-causality tests. We examine annual data spanning from 1992 to 2022, and we uncover evidence of a robust relationship between economic growth and FDI while observing bidirectional causality. Specifically, we find that economic growth stimulates FDI inflows, underscoring its crucial role in attracting foreign investment to Albania. Our analysis identifies lag 3 as the optimal lag for capturing the interaction between these variables, and the VAR model demonstrates consistent and reliable predictions over time. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and investors aiming to develop the economy in Albania. Moreover, our study contributes to the existing literature on the FDI-growth, providing meaningful implications for future research and policy-making in similar economies.*

Keywords: Albania, FDI, Economic growth, VAR Model

Does IT Impact Saving on Economic Growth? Albania Case

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Abstract: *The relationship between investment and savings has received considerable attention in economic literature, translated into several applied studies, including many developed and developing countries. Saving has always been an important element of economic growth. Traditional economic growth models such as Lewis's (1955) and Harrod-Domar growth models specified domestic saving as the key factor in promoting economic growth. It is known that investment is one of the major factors influencing economic growth, one of the main ways to increase it is by expanding the size of savings/deposits in the commercial banks of developing countries.*

The purpose of this study is to examine empirically the impact of saving on economic growth in Albania. This study analyzed the annual data of 11 commercial banks in Albania from 2010 to 2023. The methods used for the analysis were the Dickey-Fuller (DF), augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) and Ganger causality tests. It is used as a regression model where GDP is the dependent variable and deposits, remittances, and loans are independent variables. The analyses conducted highlight that the high rates of savings increase the amount of capital and lead to higher economic growth in the country.

Keywords: *Albania, Economic growth, Developing countries, Investments, Savings*

Efficiency and Determinants of Efficiency in Selected Croatian Manufacturing Sub-Sectors

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Abstract: *The main aim of this paper was to estimate the efficiency level of the large and medium-sized firms that operated in the four most prominent manufacturing sub-sectors in Croatia in 2022 using DEA analysis. To evaluate firms' efficiency, and in line with microeconomic theory, several inputs (fixed assets, salaries and wages as well as material costs) and outputs (sales and profit) were used. Obtained efficiency scores were then used as dependent variables in a truncated regression model in which different firm-specific independent variables were applied. The research revealed the wood industry as the most efficient one, with an average score of 72.12%, while at the same time indicating the food industry as the least efficient one, with an average score of 50.33%. The study also showed that the firm's size, leverage and location statistically significantly influence the firm's efficiency, while the age of the firm was found to be a significant determinant only in the Food industry.*

Keywords: *Efficiency, Manufacturing Sub-sectors, DEA, Truncated regression*

The Financial Failure of Local Authorities in Italy and the Repercussions on Their Autonomy

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Abstract: *The object of the work is the analysis of the financial distress procedure to which Local Authorities in Italy are subjected when they are no longer able to provide indispensable services and functions or are in a state of relative insolvency. Once the lack of budget balance has been ascertained, the Council of the local authority is obliged to decide on the declaration of the state of failure, followed by measures limiting the autonomy of the local bodies. Impositions bind the administration's action towards a recovery objective, imposing choices independent of the political direction determined by democratically elected bodies.*

The effects of the collapse fall not only on the bodies of the Local Authority but also on the working relationships with its employees and on the Treasury's coffers. Finally, the highest price is paid by citizens who see an increase in taxes and fees accompanied by a reduction in the functions and services provided, to the point of limiting the right to stand for election, preventing the electorate from expressing their opinion. Support for the Director declared by the Court of Auditors responsible for having contributed to the causes of bankruptcy.

The effects of the financial crisis involve the local authority which has not been able to manage its autonomy in compliance with the constitutional limits, also recently introduced into our Constitution such as the balanced budget.

Since the municipality is a constitutionally necessary local body, our legal system cannot do without it; therefore, the Municipality cannot cease to exist even following an unsustainable financial or economic situation. However, the need for a balance between institutional continuity and the needs for budget balance, the satisfaction of debts, provision of indispensable functions and services, guarantee of par condicio creditorum and achievement of the objectives of good performance of the public administration is evident. If it is true that in an unsustainable financial situation, the organization must continue to exist, it is equally true that ordinary legislator interventions are required, up to and including the provision of the financial bankruptcy procedure. The Legislator considered the bankruptcy procedure not suitable to guarantee a correct balance between these principles, given that its primary objective is the satisfaction of creditor reasons, while in our case it is the protection of the public interest that must emerge unscathed. The Municipality is responsible for public functions, and if the State undertakes to guarantee these resources, the evaluation of the need for their permanence is evident. However, we cannot limit ourselves to stating that as they are public they cannot cease to be provided, but we must also underline how necessary it is for them to be carried out by that specific body.

It emerges that the primary objective to be achieved is not only the satisfaction of the entire passive mass, but the provision of the conditions so that the institution can restart its management in rebalanced economic conditions.

This work aims to highlight a system in which the precarious situations of administrative management are prefigured, in a gradual articulation, and in parallel the remedies to deal with them.

Keywords: Financial crises, Local Government, Bankruptcy procedure

Modern Market Economy and Some Related Problems

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Abstract: *There is a general view that the current modern market economy is not an ideal system but there is nothing better than what exists now. But it is also true that it does not mean that the modern market economy could not be better and cleaner from some existing deformation that are usually against the interests of ordinary people or SMEs and just for the benefits of national governments, multinational corporations and last but not least for various international organizations. Among those existing problems of the contemporary market economy are such shortcomings like the following ones:*

- GDP is one of the most widely indicators for comparison of the achieved development. But the typical example of its shortcomings is the following one. Constructing a building contributes to the GDP growth but when they immediately demolish that new building the GDP grows again. In reality, nothing relevant was created but a lot of funds, money, and salaries were paid but there was no real contribution to the market.

- VAT is just an artificial tax that has nothing to do with any "added value." It is just an instrument how national governments can collect some tax money and thus help their national budgets.*
- prices of gas and petrol for cars is another example of how national governments are making another profit by increasing their prices through other taxes like consumption tax, buying this commodity on long-term contracts with relatively fixed prices but in general they derive the consuming prices on the basis of higher prices on the so-called spot market in various commodity exchanges where the prices are always much higher than on long term contracts.*
- banking is one of the most fraudulent sectors of the modern economy, they are not charging all kinds of various fees but not giving any or very small interests while they are making huge profits with their banking operations in loans, etc.*
- public health services are in many countries guaranteed by national constitutions as free but in reality, new and new services and medications have to be paid for by patients.*
- airlines are an another fraudulent sector of the modern market. Especially so-called low costs airlines are offering initial airfare with very low prices but then it is necessary to pay extra even for a sitting place, luggage, and various other fees so the final price is finally several times higher than the original offer.*
- marketing is open fraud as it is just trying to mislead consumers to buy whatever they even do not need at all. It is no surprise that the EU is not at all supporting any projects that are related to marketing and its fraudulent techniques and methods.*

And so we could continue with many more examples of the fraudulent character of the modern market economy.

Keywords: VAT, GDP, Marketing, Banking, Market economy

The Effects of Covid-19 on Private Equity Investments: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis

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Abstract: *This research study investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the private equity (PE) investment landscape. By utilizing multi-dimensional analysis incorporating a Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition approach, the study explores shifts in geographical distribution, sectoral focus, and life-cycle-stage preferences of PE investments. This method allows for a detailed examination of the underlying factors contributing to changes in investment patterns by distinguishing between variations explained by observable characteristics and those due to unobserved factors. In our research, these parts refer to the distribution and the investment size effects which contribute to the change in the average difference. Contrary to established trends in crisis behavior and existing literature on venture capital investment shifts, we find that PE investors exhibited nuanced and agile responses to disruption caused by the pandemic. Specifically, investments in Asian markets decreased in terms of both volume and size, thereby reflecting heightened regional risks. While investments in sectors such as travel, food services, and healthcare followed anticipated patterns, surprising resilience and growth were observed in the arts, entertainment, and home recreation sectors. Most notably, there was an unexpected shift toward more, albeit smaller, early-stage investments, contradicting the prevailing theory that investors might tend to flock to safer, later-stage companies during uncertain times. This study adds depth to crisis management literature, offers strategic insights for practitioners, and opens avenues for future research into the complexities of investment behavior experienced during crises.*

Keywords: COVID-19, Private equity, Investment, Pandemic, Crisis

Multivariate GARCH Modelling to Analyse Volatility Spillovers

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Abstract: *This study investigates volatility spillovers between the digital currencies Bitcoin (BTC), Ethereum (ETH), Litecoin (LTC) and the precious metals, Gold Bullion LBM and Silver Handy & Harman, from 3 January 2022 to 23 November 2023. Multivariate GARCH models were used to analyse the dynamic volatility relationships between these assets. The results show significant volatility spillovers between digital currencies and precious metals. Specifically, BTC is identified as a net transmitter of volatility, while ETH and LTC act as net receivers. Furthermore, gold and silver remain safe haven assets, with little association with digital currencies during the period studied. This study emphasizes the importance of investors considering the implications of short-term volatility in digital currencies and the superior hedging efficiency observed in long-term patterns. The findings have significant implications for risk management and the diversification of investment portfolios, providing a solid basis for future research in this dynamic and constantly evolving field. This analysis contributes to understanding global financial markets, providing valuable insights for investors, regulators and academics interested in the intersection between digital currencies and precious metals.*

Keywords: *Volatility spillovers, Connections, Cryptocurrencies, Precious metals*

Deep Dive Into Analysing Price Persistence in the Financial Markets

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Abstract: *This study analyses whether the shares of major technology companies such as Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet and Facebook (Meta) show persistence in their returns. The sample covers the years from January 2018 to November 2023 and has been divided into four sub-periods: Tranquil, which covers the period from 3 January 2018 to 31 December 2019; Covid-19 Vacancy, which begins in January 2020 and ends on 31 January 2020; Pre-Conflict, which covers the period from January 2021 to 23 February 2022; Conflict, which begins on 24 February 2022 and ends on 23 November 2023. This study's results highlight the persistence in the returns of the main technology companies, namely Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet and Facebook (Meta). This persistence suggests that the return patterns observed in a given period tend to repeat themselves over time, regardless of market conditions. This finding has significant implications for investors, asset managers and decision-makers in the financial market. Recognising the persistence of these companies' returns can influence investors' behaviour and investment strategies, leading them to consider past performance and the possibility that this performance will persist in the future.*

Keywords: *Technology companies, Long memories, Arbitration*

Towards an EU Capital Market: Gaps Between Financial Corporations as Obstacles to Integration

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Abstract: After the 2015 “Action Plan on Building a Capital Markets Union” the creation of an EU capital market still represents one of the major priorities that the European institutions are pursuing in order to support the economic growth of the euro area. Significant macroeconomic, corporate and legislative disparities make the homogenization process particularly complex. This study aims to identify some inter-country divergences that, when significant, may hinder the structural changes required by the financial integration. From a methodological point of view, the study analyzed the 22 countries of the European Union that are members of the OECD, considering the trend of six indicators relating to financial corporations (FCs) in the period 2014-2023: Net Financial Transactions (NFTs); Gross Debt (GD); Net Financial Worth (NFW); Financial Intermediation Ratio (FIR); Credit Intermediation Ratio (CIR); Debt to Equity Ratio (DER). The observation of these indicators over ten years was aimed at identifying the transformations that the financial markets have shown over a sufficiently long time to intercept the medium-term trends. The results of the study highlighted how the differences between the FCs of the countries considered are particularly marked for all indicators. Among these differences, the NFTs index, while showing that in 82% of the countries considered the FCs are on average net lenders (positive index) and in the remaining 18% they are net borrowers (negative index), also highlights that within the two groups there are significant gaps that have not diminished over time. Italy is at the top of net lenders with an average index of 2.90 compared to the lowest average index of 0.06 in France. The gap between first and last place is even wider if we consider the average GD, with respect to which Luxembourg is at the top, with an index of 8,601.83, and Poland at the bottom with 125.21. The NFW index (financial assets minus liabilities) shows Italy in first place, with 28.19, and Czechoslovakia in last place with an average index of -12.29. Furthermore, in order to appreciate the importance of FCs within the economy of each country, the study used the FIR index, calculated as total financial assets of FCs to total financial assets of the total economy. The country with the highest index is Luxembourg, where the relative weight of FCs is almost equal to the entire economy (0.96), while the lowest value is recorded by Spain (0.37). This indicator, together with the other measures considered by the study, allowed Luxembourg to be identified as the country where the impact of integration could be greatest. The research is therefore particularly useful for policy makers and law makers in order to evaluate the structural differences between countries and the impact on individual economies of the actions that the European Union will adopt to achieve financial integration.

Keywords: Capital markets, Financial integration, European Union, Financial corporations, Financial gaps

Emerging Stock Markets' Reaction During Uncertainty

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Abstract: *This study investigates the short- and long-term effects of various sources of uncertainty on the share prices of the main stock exchanges in emerging countries. The sample includes daily time series data from January 2017 to December 2021 for China, India, Russia and Brazil. The study contains a version of Autoregressive-Distributive-Lag (ARDL) with error correction and other relevant time series approaches. Economic policy, climate policy, and pandemics may cause a long-term decline in the SSE Composite Index (Shanghai Stock Exchange) and the BSE Sensex Index (Bombay Stock Exchange). In China, geopolitical, climate and pandemic uncertainty are sources of short-term uncertainty, and in India, economic policy, geopolitical and pandemic uncertainty. Furthermore, no source of uncertainty long-term impacts Russia's Moscow Exchange Index (MOEX). All sources except climate uncertainty are contributors to the short-term MOEX index. Pandemics and Twitter-based uncertainty are long-term sources, while economic policy and Twitter-based uncertainty are short-term sources for the Brazilian Stock Exchange Index (BOVESPA). This research contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between different sources of uncertainty and an emerging market stock price index. It shows the behaviour of the main stock price indices in the presence of uncertainty. The study's conclusions apply only to emerging economies. Future research could consider a panel data set composed of many emerging countries to examine the same set of variables.*

Keywords: *Economic policy uncertainty, Geopolitical uncertainty, Climate uncertainty, Pandemic uncertainty, Share price index*

ESG Pricing In Europe Between 2009 and 2022

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Extended abstract: *The paper examines the market pricing for ESG-rated European listed companies over the period 2009-2022. The author follows the model framework of the Fama-French 1993 approach, in which the three traditional factors (MRP, HML, SMB) are complemented by an ESG factor. The author analyzes a four-factor Fama-French model framework, in which the three traditional factors (MRP, HML, SMB) are complemented by an ESG factor. The calculation methodology of this factor is similar to the CMA and RMW factors of the Fama-French five-factor model.*

According to the Fama-French first stage regressions, the study finds the portfolios with the highest Bloomberg ESG Disclosure scores have a positive ESG factor beta, while the lowest have a negative ESG factor beta. For ESG-based portfolios, it is also observed that the highest average annual return over the period 2009-2022 is achieved on a portfolio of companies with the lowest ESG score. The same portfolio also achieves the highest positive significant Jensen alpha. Larger firms have a better ESG rating, so the ESG factor also carries the role of the size factor.

The GRS tests did not confirm that there is a positive Jensen alpha, although the GRS tests show that the ESG factor has additional information content. The author found similar results as in previous studies, with the ESG risk premium being negative, but varying over time. The present study confirms Maiti's (2018) paper that a model augmented with an ESG factor has more information content than a traditional three-factor model.

According to the second stage of the Fama-French method, the average monthly risk premium of the ESG factor is -0.15 percent and it shows a high variability in time. More findings are that the average monthly premium of the ESG factor slightly increased from the period July 2009 – December 2015 to January 2016 – May 2022. The ESG risk premium is bigger in Continental Europe than in UK-Ireland, but the distribution of the monthly risk premia is very similar. The ESG risk premia are different among sectors, but the distribution is also very similar. More findings that the average monthly risk premia varies geographically and among sectors but with a similar distribution.

The relevance of the present study is that the database includes 968 companies in developed European and EU countries with a Bloomberg ESG Disclosure Score between 2008 and 2020, and at least three years of stock price data in the period between June 30 of 2009 and May 31 of 2022. This long period allows for deeper analysis and conclusions to be drawn. The main contribution of the author is to incorporate an ESG factor into the traditional Fama-French (FF) three-factor model framework and to estimate the size of the ESG risk premium for the decade 2010 on such a large sample. The paper contributes to the relevant literature that the author makes an ESG factor around those European firms that have Bloomberg Disclosure Score.

Keywords: ESG risk premium, Fama-French model, European listed companies

Challenges of 'Green' Transition Supports and the European Union Industry

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Abstract: *A Green Transition, focused on new and comprehensive approaches to the use of resources and different policies that reduce negative impacts on the environment, should also create new opportunities for growth, employment and development in the European Union. This transition, however, poses inevitable questions and emphasizes challenges to the European economy, and especially industries that need serious reforms and investment to remain productive, competitive and innovative, but also sustainable (primarily in its ecological, as well as its financial aspect). As specific industries and countries lack knowledge and financial support for these efforts, it is crucial to determine most effective ways how to allow Green Transition to succeed. Therefore, this research investigates what Green Transition actually represents and enables, which are its priorities and relevant supporting national and supranational policies and measures, as well as impacts of current and potential initiatives stimulating a 'green' and sustainable industry in the European Union.*

Keywords: *Green transition, European Union, Industry, Support*

Sustainable Solutions for Reducing the Carbon Footprint During IT Operations in Albania Banking Sector

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Abstract: *In the current time of surroundings in which environmental scares and the fast development of climate change react with pressing, banks, as well as other business enterprises, are meant to not only find an answer to the matter of polluting the atmosphere by lowering their industrial gas emissions but also use it as a hindrance. This article aims to introduce some of the most effective tactics for minimizing the carbon footprint of IT operations in Albania's banking sector. Synthesizing on a solid base that includes a critical evaluation of existing literature and influential case studies, the analysis scans different levels by re-engineering the current processes and considering more effective approaches. The main strategies presented cover the range of hardware optimization as well as virtualization and cloud computing, including the option of purchasing renewable energy sources, with the possibility of introducing carbon offsetting initiatives as well. Through providing real-world-based directives that are end-oriented to individual retail banks, the article aspires to equip these organizations with tools to be carbon-free while being in line with their environmental stewardship commitments and business priorities.*

Keywords: Carbon footprint, IT operations, Sustainability, Server virtualization, Cloud computing, Green data center practices

Economic Evaluation of Mineral Reserves as a Function of the Quaternary Structural Basis of Sustainable Development

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Abstract: *In the modern conditions of the functioning of mineral production in all stages of treatment of mineral raw materials, the application of the binding concept of sustainable development is very important. It is reflected in all aspects of geological exploration, exploitation, preparation and processing of metallic, non-metallic and energetic mineral raw materials. The limiting elements of sustainability are particularly characteristic in the part with the specificities of individual mineral raw materials, their mineral reserves, quality indicators, application possibilities and the range of usable mineral components and mineral products. The direct definition of the profitability of their mineral reserves and their working, functional and economic evaluation is done through the appropriate economic evaluation of mineral reserves, with an accompanying set of nine factors and three sets of evaluation indicators. The final expression of profitability is given by: (a) economic evaluation without taking the time factor into account; or (b) an economic evaluation taking the time factor into account, using the NPV and IRR methods. The obtained elements of the presentation of the economic evaluation have their functional role and position within the consideration of the sustainable development of the mineral economy and the sustainability of mineral production in the country's mineral sector. The specificity of the mineral economy is also reflected in the specific position and structure of the spheres of sustainable development, which are manifested through the quaternary structure of the basis of sustainable development, which includes four key spheres, namely: (a) the sphere of economy; (b) the sphere of society; (v) the sphere of the environment and (g) the sphere of management. The specified specific approach differs from the classical one with the three first-mentioned spheres in other activities outside the mineral sector.*

The economic evaluation of mineral reserves directly expresses the amount of net profit that an investor in geological exploration and exploitation of mineral raw materials can realize and thus provides key elements for the sphere of economy. Priority important information is obtained through the analysis of market factors of the economic evaluation, and individual expression is done through a set of values and a set of synthetic indicators of the subject evaluation. The functional role of economic evaluation is also related to the sphere of society, especially through the analysis of complex social-political-economic-strategic and regional factors of economic evaluation. In that part, the analytical contribution of mineral production to the overall social development of the area with mineral reserves is particularly important, then the employment of a certain number of people and the provision of better social, living and existential conditions, with concrete expression through a set of appropriate value indicators. The current sphere of environmental protection, which is directly related to sustainable development, is fully covered by the analysis of geoecological factors of economic evaluation, with the analytical structure of pollution prevention, direct reduction of the impact on all environmental media, maximum reduction of tailings and mining waste, with quantitative expression through set of value recipients. At the same time, economic indicators are especially important from the point of view of ecological costs and especially the costs of possible damage to the environment, along with the mandatory costs of recultivation after the exploitation of mineral raw materials. The contribution of the economic evaluation to the sphere of management is particularly specific, which has a special importance in the mineral economy, because the process of sustainability can only be realized through the management or management of mineral resources. This includes balancing the managerial share in geological exploration, exploitation, preparation and processing of mineral raw materials, in order to carry out the necessary jobs with appropriate managerial activities in each segment and provide the necessary mineral raw materials to the economy and numerous economic branches. In this way, the geological-economic analytical aspect is completely rounded off, which fits into the modern market valuation of metallic, non-metallic and energy mineral raw materials, which, in accordance with the concept of sustainable development, are adequately valued according to the appropriate economic, market, social and ecological criteria of the economy and markets, which is especially important in the upcoming period of economic development of the country.

Keywords: *Economic evaluation, Mineral reserves, Mineral economy, Sustainable development, Ecological aspect*

Economic Sustainability of Production, Business Processes and Risk Assessment

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Abstract: *The modern concept of economic sustainability in the domain of material production of various products includes one of three key forms of sustainability, which in addition to the above include social and environmental sustainability. Economic sustainability is related to the economic profitability of the production in question, which is based on the generation of higher income in relation to the expenditure of the production in question and the production process in question. In doing so, we should especially take into account: (a) the connection with the other two forms of sustainability; (b) specific relation with the business process; and (c) a special relationship with the risk assessment of the production in question, i.e. business.*

Economic sustainability must be considered inseparably in a triple relation with social and environmental sustainability. Social development and economic needs are directly related to the economic survival and development of the society and the economy. Certain financial allocations of the state for general and social needs are possible with previously ensured functioning of the economy, i.e. certain forms of material production, which will generate the necessary income. Environmental sustainability prerequisite is very important, both due to the ecologically secure environment of the production process in the part with the working environment, as well as the environmental security of the wider environment, which refers to environmental media (air, water and soil). The obligation to pay certain environmental fees, as well as the accompanying costs of prevention and environmental protection, additionally burden the cost side of the environmental dimension and cause an increase in the financially negative side of economic sustainability. In the case of the appearance of high environmental costs in certain forms of environmentally harmful industrial production, their impact must be seriously analyzed not only on the level or degree of economic profitability, but also on the general impact on economic sustainability that may be questioned.

Economic sustainability is especially analyzed in relation to the company as a social, organizational and business system, within which there is the realization of the production and business process. The production process includes certain elements of production, with means of work, objects of work and labor force, with the interaction and functional relationship of which the production of material products in question is realized. The business process is a wider part of the activities in the company as a business system, which enables the production process to take place, thereby creating the basis for ensuring the operation of the company as an economic entity through additional activities. From an economic and financial point of view, it is especially important that, in addition to the direct costs of the immediate production process, additional indirect non-production costs appear in the company. In the case of inadequate operations, it may happen that the total costs of operations are significantly higher in relation to production costs, which can significantly affect the level and issue of the entire economic sustainability.

Economic sustainability has a significant relation with risk assessment, especially when it comes to particularly risky production processes with a high degree of technical-technological equipment of production capacities. Risk assessment is done as a part of comprehensive risk management, as part of which risk calculation and quantification is performed operationally, through the functions of influence and probability. The main managerial goal is to minimize the negative flow of the production and business process in the company, in order to prevent negative consequences in the form of various types of disasters. The eventual occurrence of technical-technological disasters, apart from the material consequences, consequences for the company and the production process and endangering people in production and the environment, is especially accompanied by very high costs of catastrophic consequences, which significantly threatens the level and issue of economic sustainability, which must be analyzed, studied and monitored in a complex business and managerial way.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Economic sustainability, Business process, Risk assessment, Risk management

the EU's Energy Economy: Empirical Evidence of Moving Toward the Sustainable Energy Transition

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Abstract: *The European Union's (EU) energy policy from a theoretical, historical, and legal perspective widely aims to achieve environmental sustainability, hence energy transition has gradually become central to the EU's energy strategy since the 2000s. This was most notably reflected in the 2016 Clean Energy for All Europeans Energy Package, the 2019 Green Deal, and the related 2021 "Towards 55%!" energy strategy objectives, which are also the focus of the 2022 REPowerEU, alongside energy security priorities. The main object of this study is to examine the extent to which energy policy directives and regulations have been translated into practice, i.e. how far the energy transition has been reflected in the EU energy market trends over the last 20 years. For this purpose, various time series statistical analyses were conducted under the framework of the World Energy Trilemma Indexation compiled by the World Energy Council. This framework assesses the security of supply, the energy equity, and the environmental sustainability concerns via several indicators such as the energy mix in electricity generation, the degree of import dependence, the amount of generation capacity built, the carbon neutrality of electricity generation, the final energy intensity and the availability and energy price developments. After conducting our analyses, we can conclude that overall market trends follow the changes in the EU's energy policy and strategy. However, the impact of the recent multi crises is visible in the figures, which has put the issue of the security of energy supply back on the agenda, while the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 has not been taken off the agenda. The solution, as policymakers see it, is to invest more in clean and renewable technologies, which will contribute to the development of renewable capacity, notably solar and wind, which is constantly being built, and to the spread of green economics (green finance, subsidies, and tax incentives). In conclusion, the EU is committed to increasing clean and renewable energy sources, while taking into account the security of supply, the energy balance, and the wider environmental sustainability in its strategy.*

Keywords: *Energy trilemma, EU's energy strategy, Statistical analyses, Sustainable energy transition, Energy Trilemma Index*

Changes in Sustainability Reporting Dynamics Observed from ESG Measures Provided by Real Estate Companies in 2020 and 2021: Evidence from Germany, Austria and Switzerland

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Abstract: *The European Union's (EU) regulations related to Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG), such as the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) and the upcoming Taxonomy Regulation, are having a lasting impact on the real estate industry and other market participants. This study compares the current European regulation with common sustainability reporting practices in the real estate industry in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The aim is to investigate what type of information related to employees, social issues, and governance, besides environmental issues, is regularly provided by the 55 largest real estate firms in 2020 and 2021. More sustainability measures are more often reported in 2021 than in 2020. However, there is still room for improving reporting quality, as small reporting frequencies are identifiable for various "ESG" measures. The evidence highlights the need for individuals, organizations, and politicians to understand that overly complex rules may not be fully complied with, and to keep uniform EU taxonomy reporting requirements besides CSRD easy to apply in the future.*

Keywords: Sustainability, Report, ESG, Directive, Real Estate, Taxonomy

The CSRD Impact on Non-financial Reporting of Large Transportation Companies in Central and Central Eastern Europe

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Abstract: *The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) is effective from the 2023 business year for a defined group of large companies. The new directive aims to track the achievement of climate neutrality goals through nonfinancial reports. Companies involved in transportation leave a significant environmental footprint.*

This paper uses content analysis to answer the following questions: To what extent do the sustainability reports of ten corporate groups operating in Central and Central Eastern Europe published before the entry into force meet the new requirements, and in which areas can the report users expect additional information?

As a result of the research, we found the most publication deficiencies in the nonfinancial report in the resilience of the business model and the financial and investment plans of the measures. With the directive's entry into force, we expect the publications to develop in aligning sustainability goals with deadlines, the competencies of leaders, incentive systems, and the main risks affecting the company.

Keywords: CSRD, Transportation, Nonfinancial reporting

Socially Responsible Behavior of SMEs in Bulgarian Context

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Abstract: *As the theory and practice of social responsibility have evolved over many years in line with the needs and specifics of large sized enterprises, it is a very popular view that CSR is socially responsible behaviour carried out by large enterprises (LEs), most commonly large corporations and multinational companies. Nowadays, the notion that CSR is a concept suitable only for LEs is not trustworthy. If CSR is properly implemented, it can be practically applied by all enterprises, not just large firms. At the same time, the social responsibility of SMEs remains neglected and not fully understood as a necessity, importance and meaning. It is even less examined within developing countries where the SME sector is less developed and competitive. In this context, the main objective of the paper is to explore, analyse and evaluate the nature and content of socially responsible behaviour of SMEs in Bulgarian context.*

In this regard, the paper presents a brief overview of the development of the concept of social responsibility, the specific characteristics and the essence of the contemporary understanding of CSR. Next, the paper reveals the specific characteristics and manifestations of CSR within SMEs that result from the specific nature of small enterprises and their comparative differences with large enterprises. The results of targeted empirical studies on the socially responsible behaviour of Bulgarian SMEs are analysed and discussed. The main research questions of interest are related to the specific characteristics and manifestations of SMEs' social responsibility, the opportunities and challenges for CSR implementation within SMEs, CSR cooperation with stakeholders and the integration of CSR in the activities, strategy and management of SMEs. The conclusion presents a summary of socially responsible practices of SMEs in the Bulgarian context and recommendations for improving CSR management in Bulgarian SMEs.

The main contribution of the paper consists of a systematic study of the application of the CSR concept in the context of SMEs and its manifestation in Bulgarian reality. The main thesis that is defended is that the concept of CSR is applicable within SMEs based on the use of specific approaches that are tailored to the main characteristics, comparative advantages and disadvantages of SMEs, the stakeholders' interests and expectations and the opportunities of the external environment.

Keywords: *Social responsibility, SMEs, Socially responsible behaviour of SMEs*

The Role of Social Entrepreneurship in the Sector of Agriculture – The Case of Croatia

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Abstract: *As one of the key elements in overcoming the current social and economic challenges, social entrepreneurship is gaining increasing importance in Croatia. In the field of agriculture, social entrepreneurship is primarily represented through the activities of civil society organisations and cooperatives. Such a bottom-up approach plays a compensatory role in relation to often inadequate conventional state incentive measures aimed at local and regional development. The focus of this paper is on actors who, besides being profit-oriented, are primarily focused on increasing the quality of life for poorly employable groups and creating a positive and sustainable social and environmental impact. Based on selected good practice examples, several prominent social enterprises contributing to sustainability, social cohesion, increased employment, and social innovations will be analyzed. The results of the conducted research point to the important role of social entrepreneurship in the sector of agriculture and rural development, as well as its impact on the socio-economic development in Croatia.*

Keywords: *Social entrepreneurship, Agriculture, Croatia*

Agri-Food Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise: An Analysis of Sustainability Information Disclosure

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Abstract: *The agri-food sector faces significant challenges due to consumers' growing concern about social and environmental aspects, being key to the agri-food sector decoupling the economy from the use of natural resources and pollution. In this context, sustainability reports (Non-Financial Reports - NFRs), stemming from the growing concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), become a vital tool for companies to disclose not only social, environmental, but also governance aspects. However, the disclosure of sustainability information through NFRs in agri-food companies is still in its early stages, despite the publication of Directive 2014/95/EU on non-financial information disclosure and its Spanish transposition by Law/2018, which extends the obligation to submit NFRs to large companies. Furthermore, Directive 2022/2464/EU makes it mandatory for listed small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to submit NFRs from January 2026, which is expected to be extended to the rest of the companies. Given that SMEs constitute 96% of the Spanish agri-food sector, the aim of this research is to analyze the disclosure context through NFRs, studying the reporting framework and the level of information disclosed in the three information categories named by Directive 2022/2464/EU as Governance, Social and Environmental. To achieve this, secondary information was collected, and a content analysis was conducted. A sample of 86 SME companies with NFRs in Spain (from a population of 3,158 companies according to the SABI database) was identified. The results reveal that the most used framework is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is not a reporting framework covered by Directive 2014/95/EU and Directive 2022/2464/EU. The agri-food SMEs share a common low level of disclosure on average and in all the three information categories abovementioned. This suggests that there is ample room for improving the disclosure of sustainability information in the agri-food sector. Therefore, it is necessary to promote informative campaigns on disclosure to improve decision-making and begin to partially alleviate a situation that is unfavorable for this type of company.*

Keywords: Directive 2014/95/EU, Directive 2022/2464/EU, Sustainability reports, Non-Financial Information, Agri-food companies

Marina and Local Community in Social Responsibility, Case Study Punat

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Abstract: *Croatian islands have many small communities where marinas are located and have the role of local leaders. The paper analyses the socially responsible behaviour of a small local community to gain insight into the level of understanding of social responsibility as well as the forms of operational activity. Research was conducted in the municipality of Punat on the island of Krk and in Marina Punat. Structured in-depth interviews were used to identify the factors of socially responsible behaviour in the community. It was found that the concept of socially responsible behaviour is fully understood, which confirms the relatively high level of activity of the marina and the local community in terms of social responsibility. At the same time, the state laws still do not promote a higher level of socially responsible behaviour, but rather restrict it as far as the unity of the local community and the marina is concerned.*

Keywords: *Marina, Local community, Social responsibility*

The Impact of Electric Delivery Vehicles and the Associated Infrastructure on the Sustainability of the Logistics System

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Abstract: *Internet commerce is growing year by year. The effect of this growth has a direct impact on the delivery sector. The number of delivery vehicles in cities is growing. The primary role of these vehicles falls into the background since delivery vehicles are one of the main causes of increased traffic jams, noise levels and emissions of harmful gases.*

A large number of logistics companies are turning to the strategy of sustainable development. One of the ways to implement this strategy is the introduction of electric delivery vehicles. The environmental effect of these vehicles is clear, but their use has a major drawback in terms of delivery. Electric delivery vehicles are still at the beginning of development. Despite the great advantage that is reflected in the protection of the environment and low fuel costs per kilometer driven, their major disadvantage is the ratio of kilometers traveled per charge. The route that the delivery vehicle should cover depends on the location and the number of users to be served. The limiting factor when defining the delivery route is the capacity of the cargo area and the radius of movement. The role of charger infrastructure therefore plays a big role in order to increase the autonomy of vehicle movement, increasing the efficiency of delivery and reducing the total costs of transport. The paper describes various aspects that the infrastructure of chargers and logistics facilities have on the sustainability of the logistics process.

Keywords: *Sustainability, Electric vehicles, Logistics, Deliver*

The Implementation of Sustainability into Business Strategies for E-Book-Publishers in Europe

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Abstract: *As sustainable concerns grow globally, the publishing industry faces increased pressure to adopt sustainable practices. Especially E-Book publishers have the potential to reduce the environmental impact associated with traditional book publishing. The primary objective of this research is to explore how E-Book publishers in Europe incorporate sustainability into their business models.*

For that, 50 European E-Book publishers are examined in terms of their strategies, infrastructure, marketing communications and consumer engagement. Findings indicate that E-Book publishers in Europe are adopting a variety of sustainability practices. These include promoting the use of eco-friendly e-readers and implementing digital-first policies to minimize physical resource usage. The integration of sustainability into the business strategies of E-Book publishers in Europe is multifaceted and evolving. While significant progress has been made, challenges remain in terms of industry-wide standardization and consumer education.

This study highlights best practices and provides recommendations for enhancing the sustainability of E-Book publishing.

Keywords: *Sustainability, E-Books, Europe, Business strategy, Publishing*

Implementation of RIA in Albania, an Institutional Necessity for the Improvement of the Decision-Making System

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Abstract: *RIA is an important instrument in the framework of sustainable development of a country. In cases where a new policy or a change to an existing policy emerges as a necessity, RIA should be used so that decision-makers can decide on the most appropriate decision in an informed manner. RIA is an assessment of the impact of the policy or regulation options as a whole in terms of cost, benefit and risk of the proposed policy or regulation.*

Many studies have defined the concept and implementation of RIA. Different studies define almost the same concept for RIA. In "Regulatory Impact Analysis: Best Practice in OECD Countries" RIA is defined as "A tool to analyze and communicate the results of Regulation". In the study "Background Document on Regulatory Reform in OECD Countries" RIA is defined as a tool, which ensures that the chosen regulatory option is the most effective and efficient.

RIA is classified under empirical decision-making methods. Its influence is determined not only by the official role in empirical methods but also by the role of RIA in other decision-making methods in the regulatory process,

The Impact Assessment Reports in Albania have been approved by VKM No. 584 dated 28.08.2003 "On the approval of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers", amended. Regardless of this, until 2018, it was not possible to create a genuine report on the regulatory impact.

In 2018, the Impact Assessment Methodology was approved, which marked the beginning of the regulatory impact assessment process.

In 2015, I conducted a study related to the knowledge possessed by the employees of the central institutions for RIA, but at that time the assessment of the regulatory impact had not yet begun. The purpose of this paper is to conduct a new study to see the change in the implementation of the RIA in Albania, focusing on the challenges that the Albanian institutions will face in its implementation. A "before and after" analysis of the results obtained from the interview conducted in 2015 and the results of the same questionnaire applied to the same institutions in 2024 will confirm how much the government's effort has influenced the implementation of RIA in Albania and in the institutionalist. Another question that will require an answer in this study will be; Is the preparation process chosen by Albania the right one?

The conclusions and recommendations drawn from this work will support the Institutions giving the pros and cons in the preparation of the RIA or the procedure followed for its preparation within the motto for "Better Regulation".

Keywords: *RIA Regulatory Impact, Central government, Policy impact, Impact assessment methods*

Economic and Supply Chain Resilience in a New Era of International Regulations

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Abstract: *The paper presents how recent technological developments significantly impact how online infrastructure is built. Furthermore, the paper explains how small changes impacted the economy and resulted in extensive new legislation. The European Union's Digital Operational Resilience Act, more commonly known as DORA, aims to provide a regulatory framework to support economic growth and promote resilience once applicable and in power. The paper also presents other carefully selected regulatory acts that importantly outline the future of digital resilience within an economy, explicitly focusing on their effect on international trade.*

While digital economy is a more comprehensive term, this paper analyses how its broadness creates opportunities to increase resilient approaches that will help navigate future business decisions. The paper provides context and examples of the importance of increasing economic resilience through statistical research. It emphasizes fiscal policy, digital security, supply chain and trade while presenting how general education can improve economic resilience and security.

The paper concludes with the main findings from the research and regulatory review spanning from the European Union's framework to the United Nations recommendations, as well as insight into what can be expected once new sector-specific legislation is passed and what can be done to increase resilience in the digital era that has become our everyday reality."

Keywords: *Economic growth, Finance, European Union, United Nations, Regulatory framework, International trade, Supply chain*

Economic Factors Limiting the Use of Soil Bacterial Products

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Abstract: *One of the pillars of the Green Deal package adopted by the European Commission in July 2023 is to achieve healthy soils across the EU by 2050. In order to achieve healthy soil conditions, agrotechnological changes are needed, which are also justified by extreme climatic anomalies. One excellent option is to stimulate soil life by using soil bacteria products. However, the use of these kinds of products is not naturally integrated into farmers' agrotechnological systems in Hungary. This research aims to find out what motivates farmers to use these products. Firstly, a mixed method data collection was carried out among farmers in Tolna County, Hungary as a pilot case. The research was carried out using the Q-method. The formulation of the statements was preceded by personal interviews. There were 23 statements and we included 14 farmers in the data collection. The responses were evaluated using STATA software. Three factors could be clearly distinguished. Based on the responses, farmers who fall into the first factor agree with the statements of those who are aware of the possibilities. Those who are skeptical do not agree at all and know that without good-quality soil there can be no economic, sustainable production. They are an environmentally conscious group. Farmers belonging to the first-factor work on medium-sized farms. Farmers in the second factor have an advantage in the use of products and see some potential in the regulatory environment. They are increasingly open to new opportunities. This group is open-minded. Interestingly, this group includes farmers of all area sizes. The third factor includes those farmers who are most in agreement in terms of compliance with the rules, trying to farm according to the rules. They are the group of rule followers. This group includes those who work in larger areas, which is understandable from their point of view because compliance is one of the foundations of successful and sanction-free farming. It is clear from the survey that the three groups are very different from each other, and key factors influencing their choices can be identified. This has shown that companies producing and distributing soil bacterial products need to develop different marketing strategies to reach each group effectively.*

Keywords: *Green deal, Healthy soil, Soil bacterial product, Q-method, Motivation factor, Marketing strategy*

Advancement of Sorghum Bicolor and Proso Millet as Sustainable Food Products for Human Consumption

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Abstract: *Sorghum bicolor* and Proso Millet, commonly known as prominent crops, support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and provide a wide range of sustainable food production targets. Their growing acknowledgment in recent times, primarily attributed to their nutritional advantages and exceptional capability to withstand unfavourable weather, inspires optimization. The recent analysis delves into their nutritional composition, farming techniques, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic ramifications. It also explores ongoing research and future possibilities, aiming to optimize these crops as primary food sources and develop and optimize them to address global food security issues.

The investigation was performed at the Institute of Study Farm, Nyíregyháza, University of Debrecen. Sandy soil characteristics distinguished the production location. The study aimed to evaluate the total protein and the associated minerals that operate as co-factors in conjunction with total protein, including Mg, Fe, Zn, Cu, Mn, and S. The purpose of the study investigation was to assess the nutritional value of the selected grain varieties and their implications on human health across the food cycle. Therefore, we evaluated the fluctuation in nutritional content between the whole grains treated using a hammer mill and processed grains utilizing a unique husking procedure known as the Husking Fraction Time Unit (HFTU). The validity of our hypothesis was confirmed with a significance value of $P < 0.05$, indicating that the differences in nutrient concentrations between the two processing processes are statistically significant.

The findings indicated that the husking procedure significantly impacted nutritional concentrations and redistribution in the cereal grains. This can be supported by the consistent variations observed, notably in tested nutrient levels, when were observed by the Rumenka variety (Proso millet) has the greatest average levels of total protein (N), iron (Fe), zinc (Zn), copper (Cu), and magnesium (Mg) at 18.5 g/kg, 107.9 mg/kg, 39.0 mg/kg, 8.8 mg/kg, and 2390.9 mg/kg, respectively, compared to other sorghum and proso millet varieties.

The research offers valuable insights into the vital nutritional compositions that influence human diets and promote a healthy daily dietary routine via various product choices, including whole grains or processed grains derived from distinct, sustainable sources. The study's results have important consequences for the overall stability of the world's food supply. They indicate that growing and consuming sorghum and proso millet facilitates the establishment of a food system that is both environmentally friendly and provides essential nutrients.

Keywords: *Sorghum bicolor, Proso millet, Sustainable food, Human consumption, Nutritional composition, Processed grains, Total protein*

Sustainability, Mediterranean Diet and Social Representations. A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract: *For years, the Mediterranean diet has consolidated itself in people's imagination as a sustainable food and nutritional model, capable of promoting a general condition of well-being that permeates the entire existential and phenomenal dimension of people. For these reasons, UNESCO has recognized the Mediterranean Diet as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity and, in particular, because it represents a true "Mediterranean lifestyle". However, as emerges from the most recent scientific evidence, levels of adherence to the Mediterranean Diet are progressively decreasing, especially in Italy. For this reason, between July and August 2023, a cross-sectional study was conducted using online surveys to investigate symbolic universes and social representations. Two fundamental elements of reflection emerged from the research, namely the existence of scientifically founded representations, but also of scientifically unfounded representations. This negatively affects the actual adherence to that dietary model, compromising its underlying ideals and principles, both on a cultural and sustainability level.*

Keywords: *Mediterranean diet, Sustainability, Social representations, UNESCO intangible heritage, Tradition, Culture*

Analysis of Agro-Ecological Olive Groves Business Models

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Abstract: *The agri-food sector is currently facing environmental challenges such as climate change, which is causing worrying phenomena such as droughts while having to guarantee safe food for a growing population. The European Union (EU) is trying to transform the agri-food sector into a more sustainable sector by means of public policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Green Deal or the Farm to Fork strategy. To facilitate this transformation, new business models need to be adopted, with agro-ecology approach being a possible alternative because of the integration of ecological concepts and principles to design and manage ecosystems in a more productive and sustainable way. However, in order to do so, deepening the knowledge of the agri-food sector's current situation in relation to agroecological principles is needed. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the business models of farms, and key actors in the agri-food sector. To this end, the Ecocanvas model was applied, since it is a model that not only integrates the elements of the traditional Canvas model but also takes into account social and environmental aspects. For the case study, olive groves were chosen given the economic and environmental relevance in Southern Spain. To gather the information, eight structured surveys, each lasting one and a half hours, were conducted with olive orchard owners and a content analysis was applied to delimits the farms analysed according to the key elements of the above-mentioned model. The main findings showed that olive farms were affected by drought and the slope of the cultivated lands, as well as having little diversity and needing to increase the added value of their products and the integration of both women and young people in the sector. Other deficiencies identified included the basic educational level of the owners, lack of quality certifications, an oligopsony among cooperative clients and the instability of market prices of products and inputs. Despite this, it was observed that the companies were solid, as well as being well communicated and receiving aid such as those from the CAP.*

Keywords: *Business model Ecocanvas, Agroecology, Axarquía, Olive groves*

The Analysis of Market Potential and Market Share

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Abstract: *The analysis of market potential and market share is an important process and for any company or organization that wants to understand how sustainable the market in which it operates is how much of it, it can capture. Market potential analysis focuses on the possible value of the market in terms of sales volumes, market growth, and opportunities to gain new customers. This analysis helps identify market segments with high potential and determine strategies to succeed in them.*

On the other hand, market share analysis focuses on the portion of the market that the company has gained compared to its competitors. This analysis helps assess the company's performance in the market and identify opportunities to increase its market share. To conduct a good analysis of market potential and market share, it is important to gather and analyze various data, such as demographic data, market trends, and consumer spending. This information helps make informed strategic decisions and determine business objectives.

The analysis of market potential and market share is an important tool for understanding the market dynamics and making informed business decisions.

Keywords: *Market size, Market growth, Target market segments, Competitor analysis, Customer behavior, Market trends, SWOT analysis*

The Digitalization of the Public Services: The Case of Albania

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Abstract: *The evolution of technology and the widespread adoption of technological tools have had a profound impact on both the public service and justice systems. The Covid-19 pandemic underscored the urgent need for digitized public services due to the limitations on physical access. Public administration, alongside the justice system and legislative bodies, are striving to keep pace with the rapid advancements in technology, often encountering challenges arising from ambiguities and uncertainties.*

The Albanian government, in its Government Program 2021-2025, has made digitalization a central theme, emphasizing its importance in enhancing citizen access to public services and justice. This commitment has led to a significant shift towards the digital provision of services, exemplified by the comprehensive platform e-albania.al. Through this platform, citizens can access a wide range of services online, reducing the need for physical presence in government offices.

Today, the Albanian system is recognized as one of the most advanced in the region. In 2013, only 14 services were available online, whereas, by 2021, approximately 1,207 online services were offered through the e-albania portal, covering 95% of all public services. The remaining 5% necessitate physical presence. The portal has witnessed a remarkable increase in registrations, with 1,855,387 regular users (36 times higher than 2023) indicating its effectiveness.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice, in alignment with initiatives such as "Albania of Law," aims to enhance citizen access through the digitalization of the justice system. Initiatives such as the "Drejtësia ime", a digital dedicated platform against corruption and other online platforms such as "Juristi Online", provided through the Ministry of Justice and the Directorate of Free Legal Aid, offer primary legal assistance free of charge.

These efforts reflect the Albanian state's commitment to adapting to technological advancements and meeting the evolving needs of its population for streamlined access to justice and public services. However, challenges persist, as technological development outpaces the adaptation of public administration and justice systems, making it difficult for the general population to adjust to these innovations. Nevertheless, an analysis of figures and comparisons suggests a positive trend in the outcome thus far, with the potential for continued improvement in the future.

Keywords: *Public administration, Public services, Justice system, Online services, Digitalization*

The Potential of Applying Crowdsourcing Principles in Mail Delivery

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Abstract: *The work organization of postal/logistical services changes as the way buyers/consumers approach goods and services changes, too. The development of e-commerce and e-commerce platforms, along with an array of positives, have also faced postal service operators with new consumer demands that are increasingly difficult to fulfill.*

To minimize expenses in the realization of the delivery as a phase of the technological process, more attention is paid to the potential of applying the crowdsourcing principles. Although crowdsourcing encompasses using a network of non-professional couriers, the authors of this paper will attempt to correlate that term with consolidation and point out that an adjusted division of workforce is also possible in order to fulfill the same type of task.

In addition to defining the advantages and disadvantages of this business model, the paper will present a proposal of a new frame that brings together the separate aspects of the problem of consolidation and crowdsourcing in a way that would allow a positive trend in the expense, time, and performance triangle.

Keywords: *Crowdsourcing, Postal operators, Consolidation, Last mile delivery*

The Application of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Sectors: A Business-Managerial Approach

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Abstract: *AI is changing our modern understanding of healthcare. AI in health represents a set of multiple technologies that enable machines to perceive, understand, act and learn, so that they can perform administrative and clinical healthcare functions. Unlike legacy technologies that are just algorithms/tools that complement a human, healthcare AI today can truly augment human activity, taking on tasks ranging from medical imaging to risk analysis to diagnosing health conditions, with immense power that allows you to improve costs, quality and access. The exponential growth of this phenomenon is no surprise, as AI provides what many healthcare organizations need today, especially as companies face, among other challenges, financial and operational turbulence due to the rising cost of work, consumers' digital expectations and the growing demand for interoperability. Healthcare organizations must understand the full taxonomy of AI applications and the potential value each provides financially, but also organizationally and in workflow improvements. AI represents a significant opportunity for industry players to manage profits in a new payment landscape, while capitalizing on new growth potential. The top three applications that represent the most near-term value are robot-assisted surgery, virtual nursing assistants, and administrative workflow assistance. As these and other AI applications gain more experience in the field, their ability to learn and act will lead to continuous improvements in accuracy, efficiency and results.*

According to the analysis carried out, there are four areas to focus on: a) workforce: the nature of work and employment is changing rapidly and will continue to evolve to make the most of both human and artificial intelligence talent; b) institutional readiness: to achieve greater added value from AI, healthcare providers can embed AI expertise into the structure and governance of their organization; c) scope of care: consumers want artificial intelligence. In fact, they are six times more likely to view AI as having a positive impact on society. AI can expand the reach of care by integrating health data across different platforms. However, with the introduction of new technologies, various data sources need to be connected to enable patients to have a seamless experience; d) Security: Parties of the ecosystem will need to work together ethically and be secure in how they handle critical patient information.

The work aims to examine the economic and business implications of the application of artificial intelligence in the medical healthcare sector.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Healthcare, Health, Public administration, Management

ERM Approach to Companies' Digital Transformation Risks

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Abstract: *Contemporary companies are faced with the need to digitally transform their business process in order to achieve market demands and increase their sustainability. The process of digital transformation, when analyzed in the context of new risk emergence, is dualistic. On one hand, it may be a chance for companies to upgrade their business performance and improve business success, but on the other hand, it carries an increased risk of extra financial costs, risk of project failure, and risk of un-adapted organizational culture. In this paper, we apply the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) approach to the process of digital transformation. We present a conceptual overview of how ERM components may be beneficial for the outcome of the digital transformation process.*

Keywords: *Enterprise risk management, Digital transformation*

Big Data as an Emerging Paradigm in the Organizations Management: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract: *We live in the Age of Big Data, and the globalization of business makes it pressing to derive valuable insights from data so that organizations can make sustained decisions. There is no consensus in the literature on how organizations should guide the vast volume of data in value creation or galvanize performance gains. This paper aimed to address these gaps by reviewing the literature searching WoS using R. Bibliometrix. The paper identified 4,019 documents, between 2008 and early February 2022, through a current mapping on Big Data in management. The results indicate a strong collaboration network among authors and a notable trend of Big Data, Big Data analytics, Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence. These keywords reveal a concern for the predictive analysis of data and the emergence of new research trends, namely management, performance, decision-making, business and value creation, supporting the thesis that Big Data is an emerging paradigm in organizational management.*

Keywords: *Big data, R. Bibliometrix software, Management, Organizations*

Organizational Resources – Discussions on Value Aspects and Communication Modalities in the Areas of Service Delivery

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Abstract: *Structural changes in the area of service provision are the result of major changes that are reflected in the area of other activities. Designing business models with a clearly defined development orientation based on knowledge values presupposes designing a business model, which will be based on moving business goals from internal process-driven goals to goals that bring greater business value. As companies begin to move out of limited business activities, they move faster in their transformations, while digital transformation only becomes more critical to the business success of organizations. This paper seeks to understand the value aspects of human capital - from the time of the decision to invest in education through training for the acquisition of information skills compatible with the organization's business policy or the realization of priority goals following the development strategy.*

Keywords: *Innovations, Information and communication technology, Human capital, Digital literacy, Digital skills, Internet, Digital technology*

The Influence of the Existence of the CSR Concept on Selected Social Aspects of Human Resource Management

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Abstract: *The research is focused on the contribution of the concept of CSR, and sustainability, and the theory of social capital is also addressed marginally. The theoretical basis is previous research on CSR, sustainability, ISO standards and social capital. Above all, it is research focused on social aspects and employee turnover. This is currently considered one of the aspects that can disrupt the efficiency of the organization and increase its costs.*

The aim of the research is therefore to find out whether there are differences between organizations with a concept and organizations without a concept in relation to social aspects (loyalty, teamwork, knowledge sharing, etc.).

A questionnaire survey was carried out in order to find out the relationship of managers to the influence of several different factors, such as corporate vision, process planning, continuous education, employee turnover, etc.

In order to fulfill the objective, we seek answers to the following research questions:

- RQ1: Are there statistically significant relationships between the involvement of the CSR concept and the observed factors?*
- RQ2: Is there an interaction effect of the variables Existence of CSR or ISO standards and the existence of a strategic plan in relation to the observed factors?*
- RQ3: There is a relationship between manager type and employee motivation.*
- RQ4: There is a relationship between manager type and strategic planning.*

As statistical tools, we use correlation analysis (RQ1), factorial variance analysis (RQ2), factor and cluster analysis for the construction of classes of manager types, goodness-of-fit test for determining dependencies between variables (RQ3 and RQ4). All statistical tests were performed at the 5% significance level. IBM SPSS was used as statistical software.

From the correlations between the analyzed factors, it follows that managers who strive to build good relations between the management and their employees simultaneously try to make the employees support each other and understand and trust each other. These factors are an important basis for building an organizational climate, contributing to satisfaction, loyalty and turnover. However, they play an important role in building teams and social networks.

The results show that organizations with CSR concepts achieve lower employee turnover on average than organizations without concepts. The absolute lowest average turnover is for organizations that are involved in the concept of CSR or ISO standards and at the same time plan strategically and have a written strategic plan.

It was found that individual managers are fundamentally different from each other also within individual groups. 3 subtypes of managers were created. The first group is strongly oriented towards social aspects. This means that it develops more teamwork and a good workplace environment. The second group cares about their employees but is not so focused on team development. Management is set up more procedurally and follows clear rules. The last group is significantly less focused on social aspects.

In relation to social aspects, the individual groups of managers did not statistically significantly differ from each other. However, there are certain differences between the groups. Managers who are focused on social aspects and teamwork more often motivate their employees also non-financially in the form of educational courses (most common), sports activities, or team building. More often, they also choose a combination of financial and non-financial motivations.

Organizations that plan strategically are also more focused on aspects such as relations between management and employees, communication in the enterprise, or knowledge sharing. Strategic planning allows long-term goals and ways to achieve them to be established, regardless of the level of management.

Keywords: CSR, Motivation, Strategic planning, Manager

Leadership in the Albanian South Region Public Sector

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Abstract: *A new concept that is widely discussed today is the so-called leadership. Leadership gives the idea of the concrete need for human beings to have a leader. The object of leadership study is the analysis of the management of procedures for creating a goal, such as that of work in a company, which depends on individual initiatives, the creation of collective symbols, and the continuous search for group identity. In this aspect, in recent years, we have seen the progressive affirmation of a new leader figure, increasingly committed to creating economic values by defining the company's values. Therefore, a leader is not a concept related to the role of the person, but to what is done and above all how it is done. This is why we find this concept related not only to managers but to every other field of our lives. This study aims to reach local conclusions for the Albanian South Region regarding the leadership style in the public sector, attempting to discover what type of power and power source these organizations have. From the interpretation of the data, we can derive three important conclusions regarding leadership in the public sector in the southern region of Albania:*

- 1. An authoritarian leadership style predominates in the public sector.*
- 2. The source of power stems from the job position.*
- 3. The type of power is legitimate authority/power, which presupposes that the group sees in the leader the existence of norms and values that make it accept the leader's influence and guidance.*

Keywords: *Leadership power, Leadership style, Public sector, Management goals*

Eco-Leadership: Corporate Vision and Role in Sustainable Business Practices

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Abstract: *With increasing cases of flash floods, forest fires, rising sea levels and draught reports Environmental protection has assumed a prominence that requires consideration both at the policy level as well as from the ethical perspective. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals that cut across various arenas emphasize environmental protection. Countries agreed upon the 17-point goals to achieve a better and sustainable future for mankind and the environment is at the core of the sustainable development goals laid by the UN.*

Over the past few decades, corporations and their activities have grown manifolds and major contributors to environmental degradation and climate change. While corporate social responsibility has become a statutory mandate in some countries like India there is felt need for the regulation of corporate social responsibility and environmentally sustainable development. Environmental transgressions of corporations such as the Union Carbide gas leak (Bhopal gas tragedy) in India, oil spills in the ocean, and groundwater depletion by corporate misfeasance are some of the past environmental transgressions and human rights violations. There are various provisions available under the national laws of various countries to protect the environment. There are also International conventions for the protection of the environment.

This paper will address the various concerns in business practices and evaluate the possible solutions to augment the corporate role in protecting the environment and looking at ways for sustainable development. The first part of this paper will study the legal provisions in the national and International arena that address sustainable business practices for environmental protection. The second part will study the business practices of Indian and multinational companies and the third part will evaluate the role of corporations and corporate vision relating to environmental social responsibility to suggest sustainable business practices.

Keywords: *Environment, Sustainable, Corporate vision, Sustainable business practices*

The Importance of Purpose as a Motivational Factor in Nonprofit Organizations

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Abstract: *This article shows a possible solution for employee motivational issues in the nonprofit sector. The research was conducted in a Hungarian nonprofit organization, a social service institution for people with disabilities. The authors show how purpose can be transformed into a concrete performance-enhancement tool.*

The purpose-driven direction can be most compatible with a nonprofit organization's own goals to increase performance and employee satisfaction. Change in the attitude of managers is necessary. First, the social goals must be determined, and then the opportunity to identify with the goals must be created. Job crafting is a suitable process for this. The added value of purpose-driven work, which could also include economic value, is beginning to be recognized in the for-profit sector. For this reason, it may be essential to use the experience of the nonprofit sector, too.

Keywords: *Purpose, Nonprofit sector, Motivation, Job crafting*

The Role of Organizational Culture in Organization Management

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Abstract: *Organizational culture has become an increasingly frequently addressed topic in specialized literature and organization management. The strong personality of a company's founders and some of the top managers also leaves an important mark on the organizational culture. Organizational culture holds members together and influences the behavior of workers and managers due to its impact on production. In organizations where the culture is characterized by trust and mutual support, workers tend to show higher levels of job satisfaction. Such a positive organizational culture fosters a sense of belonging and appreciation, which are crucial to fostering a motivated and satisfied workforce.*

Strong organizations do not rely exclusively on rational management tools to achieve a certain productivity, a certain level of efficiency. They use organizational culture – deeply held beliefs, shared values, rituals and taboos – to formulate and support most of their strategies and policies. Starting from the way employees dress, even if there is no official uniform, to the way conflicts are managed, everything bears the imprint of a unitary strategy, which has the role of homogenizing certain behaviors and positive results and discouraging others.

The purpose of our research is to determine how culture is transmitted over the processes that must be carried out either in the short term or in the long term. The research is important because currently, organizational culture is not only under the pressure of the trend of changes dictated by the information society and knowledge, but also of international globalization or the exchange of values in society. For our research, organizational culture was treated as a variable with a linear relationship with other variables from a static and functional point of view.

Keywords: *Management, Organizational culture, Job satisfaction, Company performance*

Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management in Organizations in the Context of AI

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Abstract: *Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption may be used in effective interventions for conflict management strategies, in identifying and managing conflict. The present empirical study investigates the relationships between these important constructs for an organization. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate the nuanced realm of human interactions and prevent disputes from escalating. Research demonstrates that individuals who score high on emotional intelligence possess an acute ability to sense the emotional currents within a group or between individuals, often before these emotions manifest as external conflict. This subtle perception allows them to detect tension and address potential problems proactively. There are already studies affirming that the evolving landscape of conflict management in the workplace has been significantly influenced by the integration of artificial intelligence tools and systems.*

Methods: *The quantitative approach investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence, conflict management strategies, perceived employee performance (3 types), and AI adoption. This predictive ability helps managers develop strategies to avoid repetitive conflicts, fostering a more robust and adaptive organizational culture.*

Results: *The results provide valuable insights for managers committed to AI adoption and the development of their organizations by promoting emotional intelligence in collaborative conflict management. Research in the field suggests balancing human and artificial intelligence in conflict management requires an inclusive approach that leverages AI's analytical strengths to inform and enhance human skills in emotional intelligence. There are differences in approaching the proposed constructs in the case of GEN Z and Gen X, the 2 generations that are represented in the respondents' sample. The findings of the present study are that the members of Generation Z perceive themselves as more independent and innovative. Gen Z employees adopt more "non-coercive" techniques such as: integration, compliance, compromise and accommodation, while Gen X employees will often use more avoidance methods use coercive techniques such as dominating, to achieve their goals. Our findings indicate that Gen X employees' style is collaborative, and avoidant, while Gen Z employees are more collaborative and competitive.*

Discussion and conclusions: *High levels of emotional intelligence enable employees to experience collaborative conflict management and use AI adoption to serve this purpose. These are viewed as important resources that enable a person to manage conflict situations. By understanding what led to disagreements or disruptions in the past, these models can identify similar conditions in today's workplace ecosystem. This harmony between AI and EI in conflict management is not only transformative for today's dispute resolution, but also promising for evolving workplace dynamics in human resource management.*

Limitations: *This study was limited to young employees and Gen X respondents, representatives of generations reached via an online questionnaire, the majority are enrolled in Masters programs. Thus, a major limitation of the study is that data were collected from master's students of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, in their second year of the master's program. These respondents have a positive attitude towards learning and work.*

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Artificial intelligence, Conflict management strategies*

Emotional Labor: Prevalence and Analysis of its Contextual Factors

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Abstract: *The transition of the world economy from manufacturing to service has added further layers of complexity to present workplaces. In the post-modern world, emotion plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational behavior. Despite this fact, no sufficient attention has been offered both in the realm of empirical research and mainstream organization behavior theories. Understanding and bringing emotion as an explicit and conscious experience is not only a daunting task it does requires also transcending the conventional research tradition. In doing so, positivist and neo-Marxist paradigms were fused in this research to perform reflexive analysis. The research attempted to explore the prevalence of emotional behavior and its implications for the well-being of workers. Hospitality sector employees who work at international and local hotels operating in Ethiopia were the target of the investigation. Survey, phenomenology, and interview methods served as data collection instruments. Thirty-five key informants participated in in-depth interviews to conduct a thematic analysis. Whilst, survey data was collected from 411 questionnaire respondents. The finding indicated that front-office workers were burdened with the highest level of emotional pressure than those working in administrative positions. At the core of the result, female workers are associated with higher levels of emotional labor than their male counterparts. Strikingly enough, cultural norms have a strong bearing on emotional behavior. Consistent with this notion, Ethiopian culture promotes emotional adjustment through surface acting. In conclusion, service jobs involve a great deal of emotional labor which is not counted as effort worth of compensation.*

Keywords: Emotional labor, Performativity agenda, Well-being, Work alienation

Cause-Related Marketing Impact on Purchase Decision and Consumer Trust

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Abstract: *Cause-related marketing is a concept of marketing theory that defines a strategy of the company through which it allocates part of the selling prices of products to a social cause. The promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals at global and European level has led to an increasing interest among international, European and national companies to contribute positively to the well-being of the community. Companies can promote themselves associated with a social cause at the entire company level, promote a social cause at the product line level, or a brand level. The cause supported can be charitable, educational, social, ecological, religious, or medical or other types of social causes. The previous theory emphasizes that cause-related marketing belongs to the corporate social responsibility policy and aims to attract customer loyalty, increase and improve customer satisfaction and increase their trust in the company. Other studies include cause-related marketing as a component of the organization's promotion strategy through which it can retain customers. This study starts from the theory of marketing related to social causes and aims to identify consumers' perception regarding the association with social causes of companies in an emerging economy such as Romania.*

Research methodology includes quantitative methods. The study was conducted based on a questionnaire completed by 117 urban respondents. Data was collected online and analysed using Descriptive analyses and Correlations Analysis with the support of SPSS software. The results highlight social causes that are more appreciated by respondents, but also how consumers perceive the association of companies and brands with these social causes. This paper brings contributions to marketing theory related to social causes, highlighting links between different social causes and preferring purchases of products associated with social causes, increasing customer satisfaction with purchases, and increasing trust in brands associated with social causes. The practical implications of the paper highlight marketing policies of social causes have an impact on purchasing preference, satisfaction and consumer confidence.

Keywords: *Cause-related marketing, Brand trust, Customer satisfaction, Purchase intention, Social causes*

Modelling Customer Repurchase Behavior in E-commerce

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Abstract: *Understanding customer purchasing behavior is essential for developing effective business strategies and improving customer retention in the competitive e-commerce sector. This study focuses on modelling the interpurchase time and the number of orders in an online business operating in a developing country (Albania), using a dataset comprising 26 months of transactional data.*

The dataset, containing detailed records of individual transactions over a period exceeding two years, offers a comprehensive view of customer purchasing habits.

Interpurchase time, defined as the time difference between two consecutive purchases made by the same customer, and the number of orders are both critical metrics for understanding customer repurchase trends and loyalty.

Methodologically, exploratory data analysis (EDA) techniques are employed to summarize the data, identify outliers and understand the distribution of both interpurchase times and number of orders. In addition, by using logarithmic transformation and linear regression, this study reveals that the relationship between interpurchase times and order frequencies can be described by a power-law equation.

By leveraging this relationship, e-commerce companies can predict future purchasing behavior, which helps in demand forecasting and inventory management. In addition, they can make informed decisions about marketing strategies, resource allocation and revenue forecasting, ultimately driving business growth and enhancing customer satisfaction.

Keywords: *E-commerce, Customer repurchase behavior, Interpurchase time, Exploratory data analysis, Power-law equation*

Enhancing Customer Relationships and Financial Performance Through Social Media Integration in Romanian Banks

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Abstract: *The innovations and, as a result, the accelerated transformations in the field of digitization and information technology bring a substantial and, at the same time, distinctive impact on banking activity and the financial performance of the banks, leaving a defining mark on the relationship between the bank and its customers.*

The objective of the research carried out by the authors of this article is to follow the effects generated by the use of different social media channels by banks to develop and improve the image of the banking activity, the presentation of new banking products and services, the continuous improvement of the methods of customer loyalty, the formation and strengthening of the bank's brand identity and the efficiency of advertising campaigns with a final impact on the bank's financial performance.

The methodology for examining the phenomenon in question was based on the qualitative and quantitative analysis made on several banks from the top 10 banks in Romania on how the use of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, X as the former Twitter or others, have an important influence on their banking performance.

From this methodological perspective, the number of likes, the number of social shares, and the number of followers on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook were taken into account in correlation with the level of financial performance of the respective banks, expressed by the value of assets and rates financial banking profitability.

The statistical data were collected from the social media pages of the existing banks on the platforms of Instagram, Facebook, and the central monetary authority represented by the National Bank of Romania for two consecutive years.

The results of the research undertaken by the authors revealed the significant influence of the use of social media platforms in the development of banking activity over time through the application of banking marketing strategies aimed at the integration of social media as an effective tool for real-time communication with banking customers, with especially in person individuals, carefully interested in banking services and products to which they can have access in terms of time and cost as low as possible associated with the highest possible benefits in terms of the relationship with the bank.

Keywords: *Social media integration, Customer retention, Banking products advertising, Brand identity, Financial performance, Banking industry*

Opportunities for Developing Consumer Awareness Among Generation Z

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Abstract: *In essence, conscious consumption is a pre-considered, planned purchase decision by consumers, based on prior information gathering, in which the values that the consumer considers important are expressed. These values may be individual interests (target values) of the consumer and may be values of social utility, i.e. values that benefit others.*

This study examines conscious consumer choices along the latter values among the Hungarian Generation Z. The study analyses the dimensions of young people's conscious consumer behaviour to outline the possibilities for developing and strengthening conscious lifestyles among young people.

In a snowball sampling procedure, a pre-tested standardised questionnaire survey was used in the quantitative research. The results confirmed that conscious consumption can greatly help to strengthen social responsibility, develop environmentally and health-conscious behaviour and increase ethical consumer behaviour. The results of the study show that the specific values and mindset of young people are suitable for promoting and reinforcing consumer behaviour that enhances and creates community value.

Keywords: *Conscious consumer, Social values, Generation Z*

The Role of Branding in the Work of Postal Operators

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Abstract: *A brand is a name, term, symbol, design, or combination intended to identify goods or services and distinguish them from competitors. A brand is both a tangible and intangible representation of a company that consumers associate with the company's products or services. The intangible aspects of a brand contain the emotion that consumers associate with the entity when purchasing products or services. Successful branding evokes positive thoughts and feelings when a consumer sees a company's name or logo. A strong corporate identity and positive brand perception attract and retain customers. Customer loyalty to a brand can lead to repeat use, influence the spread of positive customer experience, and foster resilience in an era where social media allows news, especially bad news, to travel quickly.*

Specific aspects of the postal service are a recognizable logo that is ubiquitous, uniforms and name, while important attributes of the corporate postal brand are trust, reliability, national coverage, convenience, tradition, and innovation.

The postal service could increase its focus on using its brand and increasing brand equity to generate revenue, develop and implement postal reforms, and develop new business models and services. The specificity of the branding concept in postal traffic encompasses the entire user experience in all technological phases and is key to building user trust and loyalty. A special visual identity, a strong commitment to sustainable business, the implementation of innovations, digitalization, and an important impact on the local community through interaction with employees are the postal operators' business elements that represent a significant competitive advantage in the developed liberalized postal market.

With the rapid development of e-commerce, the demand for smarter, more sustainable, and personalized packaging solutions continues to grow. Innovations in this area not only aim to protect and preserve content but also serve as a critical touchpoint for branding and marketing strategies. Good communication, shipment traceability and transparency in all phases of shipment transfer significantly increase customer satisfaction, while the delivery phase of postal operators bears the brunt of e-commerce expansion, and a positive delivery experience leads to long-term satisfaction that strengthens the brand's position, encourages loyalty and retains customers. Delivery quality can make or break a reputation, which is crucial for both postal operators and e-tailers.

Keywords: *Postal operators, Brand, E-commerce, Sustainability, Social value*

Testing Social Media Influence on Cryptocurrencies Prices

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Abstract: *In recent years, scrutiny of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies as legal and regulated components of financial systems has increased. Bitcoin is currently one of the largest cryptocurrencies in terms of capital market participation. Therefore, this study proposes that sentiment analysis can be used as a computational tool to predict the prices of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies for different time intervals. A key feature of the cryptocurrency market is that the fluctuation of currency prices depends on people's perceptions and opinions rather than institutional monetary regulation. Therefore, analysing the relationship between social media and web search is crucial for predicting the price of cryptocurrencies. This study uses Twitter and Google Trends to predict the short-term prices of major cryptocurrencies, as these social media platforms are used to influence purchasing decisions. The study adopts and interpolates a unique multi-model approach to analysing the impact of social media on cryptocurrency prices. The results prove that people's psychological and behavioural attitudes significantly impact the highly speculative prices of cryptocurrencies.*

Keywords: *Bitcoin, Price prediction, Cryptocurrency, Time series analysis*

Strategic Management and Financial Benefits: An Analysis of University Patent Litigation

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Abstract: *With the challenges that arise in the 21st century, the creation of new products, processes or brands has become even more of a priority for global economic growth. In several countries, universities are the “engine” of efforts to create and commercialize scientific discoveries and improve the social welfare and benefits of the population. An inherent challenge in licensing technology from universities is determining the final commercial value of a technology that is at an early stage of development. The aim of this paper is to review the latest approaches to strategic management, particularly in the area of patent litigation against universities and whether unintended signaling effects on the commercial value of their technologies result in increased revenues.*

Keywords: *Patent, Litigation, Benefits*

Building Sustainable Research-Based Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

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Abstract: *The article represents current practices of interdisciplinary teams for building a sustainable environment for scientific interdisciplinary research, innovation and creating conditions for commercialization of scientific research. The experience proves the possibility of developing bottom-up sustainable research and entrepreneurship networks. The well-established practices are mapped to current national and institutional level initiatives and EU policies and project funding.*

Keywords: *Research networks, Innovations, Commercialization of research*

Pandemic COVID-19 Changed Students Behavior

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Abstract: *According to the data provided by UNESCO, nearly 1.6 billion learners from 190 countries were affected by the pandemic caused by COVID-19. From the data, it turned out like the plague 94% of the student population was affected by the closure of universities and training centers. At present it is found the fact that 60% of learners from all over the world are still affected by this sudden transition. The same situation can be identified both in the context of formal education and in the case of education non-formal. Universities, youth clubs and adult education centers were closed. In some cases, when the infrastructure allowed their activity was transferred to the environment online. Digital education was more than a tool, turning into a necessity and a widespread solution to address bottlenecks in education and provide access to learning to as many learners as possible. This new reality underlined the need for a European approach to digital education. The European Union should collaborate with global institutions and actors, such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the Council of Europe to identify new adapted solutions hours challenges.*

Keywords: *Crisis, University, Students, Solution, Pandemic*

Comparative Analysis of Accounting Curricula in European Institutions: A Qualitative Investigation

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Abstract: *Accounting education across European institutions is a critical area of study, given the diverse cultural, economic, and institutional contexts within the continent.*

This qualitative investigation delves into the nuances of accounting curricula, aiming to uncover commonalities, variations, and pedagogical approaches employed by universities across Europe.

The research approach combines qualitative methods, including interviews, and document analysis. By engaging in face-to-face interactions with educators, the study explores how accounting concepts are taught, the role of case studies, practical applications, and the integration of technology. Additionally, it investigates the alignment of curricula with market requirements and the impact of cultural factors on teaching practices.

Findings from this study contribute to a deeper understanding of accounting education in Europe, shedding light on effective teaching strategies, challenges faced by educators, and opportunities for curriculum enhancement. The comparative analysis provides insights into best practices, potential areas for improvement, and the role of institutional context in shaping accounting education.

Keywords: *Accounting education, Students' engagement, Curricula*

Relationships Between Luarasi University Student Learning Results and Online Interactions Inside the Dedicated E-learning Platforms Luarasi Moodle/Teams Systems

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Abstract: *This study aims to evaluate the impact that online training has on the learning outcomes of students as well as their interactions with one another online. In this study, a structured questionnaire and a research design that can be described as quasi-experimental were utilized. Two groups of students were involved: one group was experimental, and the other group was compared. Based on the findings of the study, it was determined that there is a substantial positive link between online instruction and the learning outcomes of students. The results of this study indicate that the use of online instruction is making a significant and favorable contribution to the prediction of the learning outcomes of students. The results of this study indicate that there is a substantial positive link between online training and online interaction. According to the findings of the study, educational content delivered via the internet is providing a substantial and favorable contribution to the prediction of online interaction.*

Keywords: *Online guidance, Student instruction & learning outcome, Online training, Luarasi Moodle system, Luarasi Teams system*

A Lemmatization Algorithm for the Albanian Language

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Abstract: *Lemmatization is one of the most important processes in standardizing a language, as it helps us find the basic morphological form of the word. In comparison to just removing prefixes or suffixes from a word, lemmatization is more powerful than simply discovering the root of the word because it requires the application of vocabulary and morphological analysis on its own. We present a lemmatization procedure for the Albanian language in this material used in supervised algorithms within the scope of machine learning, by utilizing 5 different classifiers which are by on the grammatical features of the language. In the Albanian language, there aren't other works on lemmatization so we say that the first work presented in this material, in a list of words such as 4000, with the accuracy shown by the Extra Trees Classified with a value of 63.5% is acceptable.*

Keywords: *Lemmatization, Text preprocessing classification, Albanian language grammatical rule*

Integrating Innovation and Consumer Behavior: A Systematic Literature Review on Health Tourism Development Using Prisma Methodology

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Abstract: *This systematic literature review, utilizing the PRISMA methodology, analyzes quantitative research studies on health tourism development from 2010 to 2023, focusing on industry innovation and consumer behavior. The review reveals that industry innovation is driven by frameworks such as the Industry Sharing (IS) Model and the Adequacy Matrix Model, emphasizing collaborative resource utilization and continuous improvement. Conversely, consumer behavior studies employ models like the Health Belief Model (HBM) and the Stimuli-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory to explore psychological and social factors influencing health tourism decisions. A comparative analysis highlights the differences between industry-centered studies, which focus on infrastructural and policy support, and consumer-centered studies, which delve into perceptions and behaviors. The findings suggest integrating these perspectives using combined theoretical models, such as merging the IS Model with HBM, to enhance health tourism strategies. Future research should explore the impact of emerging technologies, long-term behavioral changes post-pandemic, regional disparities, and sustainable practices. By addressing these areas, the field of health tourism can continue to evolve, ensuring sustainable growth and improved consumer experiences.*

Keywords: *Health tourism, Systematic literature review, Innovation, Consumer behavior*

Integrating ESG Elements into the Sustainability Practices of Tourism: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: *This study investigated the incorporation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) into sustainability practices within the tourism business through a systematic literature review (SLR). The tourism industry, which has a significant impact on the environment, is facing mounting pressure to implement sustainable practices. This study aims to gather current information on ESG practices, uncover emerging trends, and highlight areas that require further exploration. The study results showed that ESG initiatives in the tourism sector affect financial performance, operational efficiency, and sustainability outcomes. The research uncovered a growing focus on ESG practices, particularly since 2020, driven by regulatory requirements and evolving consumer preferences. Additionally, the incorporation of ESG elements differs about various types of businesses, and if are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) encountering distinct challenges. The study concluded that, while ESG integration is crucial for aligning with global sustainability objectives, further efforts are necessary to address gaps, particularly in the context of SMEs and sector-specific ESG practices.*

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, ESG, SMEs

Role of DMOs in Implementation of Sustainable Development in Tourism in Serbia

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Abstract: *Tourism is considered a multi-stakeholder industry with various objectives and its growth has made the implementation of sustainable development in the tourism sector (SDT) increasingly significant for all stakeholders. SDT asks for coordinated and collective action where destination management organisations (DMOs) are considered as crucial steering stakeholders. The authors point out that DMOs play a key role in formulating a vision and integrating sustainability into the overall destination strategy.*

The Republic of Serbia has become a member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and now gets the opportunity to establish national sustainable tourism standards. Recognizing the Serbian unique historic, gastronomic, cultural and rural tourism offer, as interesting for potential international travellers looking for experiences aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals, this paper considers the possibility and provides strategic guidelines for implementing sustainable tourism principles, more effectively by using DMOs as the coordinators in the destination.

Keywords: *Sustainable tourism, Destination management organization, Global sustainable tourism, Council, Stakeholders, Strategic goals*

Wine Tourism an Alternative to Rural Tourism

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Abstract: *Wine has always been considered the liquor of the gods. The Romans called it "vinum", and Alexander the Great considered it "the blood of the vine, the strength of the earth and the eternity of the sun". To cross the path traveled by the vine on the current territory of Romania means, in fact, to reconstruct the past of this country starting from the earliest times.*

Romania has remained a wine country and has been a member of the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV) since 1927. Our country ranks 12th worldwide in the ranking of wine producers and sixth in Europe, after France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Portugal. Vineyards currently occupy approximately 1.4% of the country's entire agricultural area - 180,000 hectares.

Wine regions are full of beauty and fascination because they offer an unlimited number of experiences. Wine tourism is the type of tourism aimed at knowing and appreciating the universe of wine. The routes and tours are focused on one goal: getting to know the regions dedicated to wine production and tasting their wines.

Wine tourism, along with rural tourism and adventure tourism have a real chance to assert themselves, especially if they meet those who want to with attractive offers, interesting tourist packages and original itineraries."

Keywords: *Grape, Tourism, Wine, Plantation, Route*

Organ Transplant and Health Tourism: A Growing Concern for the Developing Countries

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Abstract: *Countries such as India, Pakistan, Phillipines China, Turkey etc have become a major destination for organ trafficking. This is also known as transplant tourism. In spite of health risks to those who travel to foreign destinations for organ transplant and to the donor, health tourism has been on the rise. Transplant tourism is a form of organ trafficking, and donors are many a times induced, coerced, deceived into consenting to donate organs such as kidneys, heart, skin etc. It has been observed that organ donors many a times are impoverished and most of the time vulnerable. Poor management of the hospitals where the procedure is carried out, inadequate facilities in the hospitals, post-operation infections and lack of care, and anti-biotic-resistant bacterial infections are some of the complications that are seen among the donors and the recipients. The exploitation that happens in the veil of activities that precedes a transplant is accepted as a moral wrong, yet this is one of the flourishing businesses amongst the economically vulnerable class in countries such as India and China.*

This paper studies the evils of organ transplants and the health tourism for the purpose of transplants. The author proposes to study the national and international ethical issues surrounding travel for health tourism and the concerns in applying international ethical principles in this sphere. The article will evaluate the rights of the donors, laws regulating organ transplant in select countries and the concerns in organ trafficking and efficacy of the existing law to prevent the evils. The paper will also evaluate the dilemma of the health professionals and doctors. Organ transplants have global insinuations and repercussions including violation of human rights. The article will evaluate the impact of organ transplant and health tourism on various groups of people involved in organ transplant, health tourism and its impact on medical professionals.

Keywords: *Organ transplant, Health tourism, Medical tourism, Donors*

The Staycation Phenomenon in Singapore: Sensory Discourse Analysis of Hotel Websites

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Abstract: *The staycation phenomenon started several decades ago in tourism and the trend has come and gone over the years, intensified during the financial crisis between 2006-2008 and also during the COVID pandemic. It can be classified as proximity tourism since no long-distance travel is involved, and it can also be related to sustainable tourism. This research investigates staycation in Singapore and analyzes 20 prestigious hotels that offer staycation packages on their websites. The aim is to find out what kind of target markets the hotels aim at and analyse the linguistic tools they use to attract their potential market.*

The study uses document analyses to explore the concept and the demand side of staycation in Singapore and opts for qualitative methods such as multimodal discourse analysis and corpus analysis to study the websites of the individual hotels to find out the specific markers for different target markets. It concentrates on the sensory language used to develop connections with the reader, so the analysis looks for visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory references in the texts.

The findings reveal that there is a significant difference between the promotions aimed at couples and families in terms of programs but there is not much difference when it comes to the quality of the accommodation. In both cases, locals are offered hotels of the highest quality and unique experiences, highlighting the fact that even within the small country a wide range of experiences can be enjoyed. The results also prove that creative writing can evoke all the senses through carefully selected vocabulary.

The novelty of this research lies in the fact that the supply side is rarely investigated in the staycation context, especially from the linguistic angle. Nowadays websites are overlooked in favour of other channels such as YouTube or Instagram, however, websites can still act as good departure points and they are more versatile by offering booking and payment facilities as well. The imitation of the research is that it deals only with one country which makes the generalisation more difficult. However, the research was worthwhile because it was possible to cover an important period between 2018 and 2024, before, during and after the pandemic. It also proves that staycation has not been a fad but a trend that will stay in the coming years since it has sizeable demand and various target markets to cater to. Future research can go into the direction of analysing other promotional channels or comparing the needs of staycations and foreign tourists.

Keywords: *Staycation, Proximity tourism, Singapore tourism, Tourism marketing, Tourism trends*

Understanding the Impacts of Cultural Heritage Through Stakeholder Lenses*

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Abstract: *The underutilised potential of immovable cultural heritage (ICH) for owners, communities and countries is frequently overlooked. Despite the general awareness of this potential, disagreements often arise over plans for the preservation, maintenance or adaptive reuse of buildings, architectural complexes, historic sites, industrial sites and other objects of historical, artistic, scientific or cultural importance due to the different interests of stakeholders. Recently, the adaptive reuse of ICH, which is based on the principles of preserving and enhancing the value of cultural heritage sustainably, has been highlighted as a solution.*

Decision-makers are often faced with the challenge of balancing different interests in the search for solutions. Evaluation models, developed as a tool for decision-makers, allow the evaluation of alternative solutions for the optimal and sustainable use of each ICH facility or site. Most of these models consider that projects affect different groups of stakeholders with different time dynamics. A key question remains how these impacts can be effectively weighted and aggregated at the project level. Most authors focus on the technical aspect and place less emphasis on a comprehensive understanding of the values that stakeholders attribute to ICH.

This article presents the results of a qualitative study of stakeholder values in relation to immovable cultural heritage. First, a value matrix was created for stakeholder groups with common interests based on four pillars of sustainability: cultural, social, economic, and environmental. The key conceptual components of each pillar were examined, and methods for measuring changes in their value were proposed. A series of workshops with a focus group of heritage stakeholders took place to empirically verify whether the theoretical findings apply in the Slovenian context. This process facilitated the identification of the areas of greatest conflict between stakeholder groups and revealed unexpected values for some of them. The findings of our study indicate that in order to facilitate effective collaboration between the different stakeholder groups at the micro and macro levels, it is necessary to allocate significant resources to raise awareness of the multidimensional value and impact of cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Immovable cultural heritage, Adaptive reuse, Stakeholder interests, Cultural heritage value, Stakeholder value matrix*

* This research has been supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (#J7-4641).

Challenging COVID-19 in Museums Through Innovation and Digitization: Insights from the Museo Egizio of Turin

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Abstract: *The search for new strategies to interface with an ever-changing ecosystem has always been a central theme for museum management (Latham & Simmons, 2014; Sandell & Janes, 2007). A central aspect of museum strategies is covered by the consideration of the audience (Cerquetti, 2016): any museum institution has the task of educating its audience, but also of involvement, in the form, if possible, of promoting participation (Coghlan, 2017; Simon, 2010). In the museum context, it is helpful to observe the presence of a managerial style oriented towards innovation or instead conservation (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002). Existing literature has shown how innovation can guide museum management toward more courageous and proactive choices (Eid, 2019; Witcomb, 2003). However, several scholars have observed that in the arts and cultural sector, conservative managerial approaches frequently prevail, reducing the growth opportunities of such organizations (Della Corte et al., 2016; Vicente et al., 2012). The COVID-19 pandemic, which appeared suddenly and unexpectedly while causing numerous critical issues for the management of museums and cultural institutions in general, mainly due to the long periods of forced closure to which they were moved, also represented a source of opportunities (Agostino et al., 2020; Kist, 2020). These opportunities mainly concerned the use of digital technologies to undertake new systems of offering to the audience, to enhance the museum heritage, to produce new services, also to new segments of visitors, which can be defined as "virtual" (Agostino et al., 2021; Giannini & Bowen, 2022). This work starts from the assumption that COVID-19 may have acted as an accelerator of digitization strategies within museums and seeks to study the elements that can favor the effective use of these strategies in such a context. From a methodological point of view, the work uses the research method of the case study (Yin, 2018) to investigate which elements can contribute to effectively using digitization in a perturbed context, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.*

The selected case study is the Museo Egizio of Turin (Italy), which represents one of the most important museums in Italy regarding the number of visitors and the institution hosting the most important collection of Egyptian art in Europe. Moreover, it has emerged in recent years, even before the pandemic, as a very dynamic reality, able to obtain valid results both from a cultural and social perspective and from an economic and managerial point of view. The case shows how an optimal approach to using the opportunities offered by digitization in times of COVID-19, but also in general, requests the presence of a constant approach to innovation within the museum. This approach emerges from various areas, such as governance choices, the role of management, the relationship with visitors, the exhibition methods, the research activities, and the cataloging and archiving techniques. Therefore, this work intends to show how digitization strategies are particularly effective in overcoming the difficulties connected with COVID-19 when the environment of application of managerial choices is oriented by its nature to innovation."

Keywords: Museums, Digitization, Innovation, COVID-19, Museo Egizio

Assessing the Web Accessibility Compliance of Municipality Websites in Albania with WCAG 2.2 Standards

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Abstract: *Web accessibility refers to the equal use of web platforms among persons with and without disability. Accessibility is considered a human right, and the European Union, along with many other countries, has implemented mandatory regulations to guarantee that government websites and applications meet accessibility standards. This paper examines the accessibility of municipality's websites in Albania. The authors have used AccessibilityChecker as an evaluation tool to explore whether the websites comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2. The results reveal that none of the municipality's websites is compliant with WCAG 2.2 guidelines. All the websites have prevalent critical issues that make them less accessible, difficult to use, and create barriers for people with visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive impairments. This study is significant to public officials, advocacy groups, policymakers, website developers, and other stakeholders in understanding the current state of accessibility across local government websites and creating solutions that ensure equitable access to information and services and promote inclusive design.*

Keywords: *Web accessibility, Disability, Municipalities, Albania, WCAG 2.2, Inclusivity*

Analysis of APT NoName057 and the Attacks Carried on Albanian ICT Infrastructure

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Abstract: *The cyber landscape has witnessed a surge in attacks in recent times, influenced by geopolitical tensions and conflicts. This paper delves into the analysis of the Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) group NoName057 and its attacks on the Albanian ICT infrastructure. Through the lens of the MITRE ATT&CK framework, the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) employed by NoName057 were dissected to understand their modus operandi. The group primarily utilized Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks, leveraging botnets like Bobik and a bespoke toolkit named DDoSia. The attacks, notably on September 22, 2023, targeted critical Albanian websites, disrupting governmental, financial, and logistical operations. Through collaboration between authorities, ISPs, and affected entities, proactive defense measures, including anti-DDoS filters, thwarted 95% of malicious requests. This collaborative effort underscored the efficacy of strategic partnerships in mitigating cyber threats. The paper concludes with recommendations for enhanced DDoS protection and proactive cybersecurity measures, emphasizing the importance of vigilance and cooperation in safeguarding digital infrastructures against evolving threats.*

Keywords: *Cybersecurity, Threats, APT analysis, NoName057, DDoS attacks, MITRE framework, Proactive defense, Geopolitical influences, Cyber landscape, Collaboration*

The Androids as Human Companions – The Foreseeable Possibility or Utopia?

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Abstract: *In this paper, we will explore the future of AI in the contemporary world, namely whether humanoid robots might serve as human companions or if it is just a utopian idea. Namely, technological advancement so far has provided certain indications of such a possibility, while numerous scientists have explored the following topics: the relationship between human beings and humanoid robots, the metamorphoses of non-human entities (androids), the consideration of AI as “the (threatening) other”, the humanization of non-human entities (especially in their relation to the human agent), the ethics of artificial intelligence, etc. In the paper, we will discuss the following topic through the lens of literature. The corpus for our research will consist of the following novels: Machines like me by Ian McEwan, Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro, and Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep by Philip K. Dick. Through the analysis of the following corpus, we will endeavor to determine whether the androids are benevolent, friendly creatures, or whether they might pose a possible threat to the human agent, as well as the role of emotions in a human-humanoid relationship (concerning both parties).*

Keywords: AI, Androids, Humans, Companion, Humanization, Technology, Emotion

Constructive Dismissal in European and Albanian Employment Law: A Comparative Analysis of Legal Frameworks and Judicial Interpretations

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Abstract: *This research article provides a comprehensive analysis of the concept of “constructive dismissal” within the framework of European and Albanian employment laws, alongside pertinent case law.*

Constructive dismissal, where an employee resigns due to the employer’s conduct rendering continued employment untenable, presents complex challenges in legal interpretation and application, as well as poses significant implications for employee rights and employer responsibilities. This study critically examines the statutory provisions of case law governing these aspects of employment law in Albania. Through a doctrinal and case law analysis, the paper identifies the conditions under which resignations may be classified as constructive dismissals, exploring the threshold of intolerable conduct required to substantiate such claims. The research highlights the influence that the European Union directives and comparative legal principles should have on the development of Albanian employment law. By providing a detailed examination of the legal landscape surrounding employee resignation, this study contributes to the broader understanding of employment protections and the need for legal reforms to enhance labor rights.

The study employs a comparative legal methodology, scrutinizing statutory provisions and judicial interpretations across various European jurisdictions and Albania. The analysis reveals the doctrinal evolution and practical application of constructive dismissal, highlighting the convergence and divergence in legal standards. While many European legal systems recognize constructive dismissal as a mechanism for employees to resign in response to intolerable employer conduct, Albanian employment law lacks a comprehensive statutory or doctrinal basis for this concept. Through a detailed examination of landmark cases and legislative texts, this article discusses the critical elements constituting constructive dismissal, including employer conduct, employee resignation, and the requisite threshold of intolerability.

The paper argues for legislative reform to align Albanian employment protections with European standards, ensuring that employees are safeguarded against detrimental employer actions that effectively force resignation. The findings underscore the necessity for a harmonized legal framework to ensure consistent and fair adjudication of constructive dismissal claims, advocating for reforms that align Albanian laws more closely with European standards. This study contributes to the broader discourse on employment law by providing insights into shaping employee protections against constructive dismissal.”

Keywords: *Constructive dismissal, Employment law, European Union, Albania, Case law, Employee rights, Employee resignation, Employer conduct*

The Dark Shades of Green Labour Law: Green Works, Green Jobs, and Green Skills, but Also Green Gender Gap and Other Details

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Abstract: *Labour and Employment Law, as the Law of working people and working human beings, proves to be one of the most porous sciences to all realities.*

It emerges permeable subject to the transformation of the world of work, of the development of the new world of technologies, of the expansion of borders of space and time of work, of the evolution of mentalities and of the urgent need to protect the planet.

As a result, questions concerning sustainability, regardless of the color these issues are supposedly classified as (either environmental green, or space and sea blue, or all the colors of the diversity rainbow), also arise as Labour and Employment Law matters with a special labour law design.

Within this context, we talk about: the impact of corporate social responsibility and sustainable development objectives; how important is to adopt Environmental, Social Impact and Governance (ESG) action goals; how climate change is changing labour markets as a driver of progress in the labor market; green transition, green economy, green work, green technology, green skills, green jobs and green collars, green Labour and Employment Law (as a set of rules).

However, in all these aspects, as a repeater of the less positive facets of Labour and Employment Law, it is impossible to hide the other side, also green but bad, it is impracticable to avoid the green dark side of work and working conditions: the informal economy, the inequalities, the discrimination, the poverty, and the hunger for Justice, the indecent work.

Thus, even when it comes to green works, green jobs, or green skills, the large differences between genders are unavoidable and the not-so-green gap between men and women are already installed. As well as all problems related to equality and the prohibition of discrimination in general terms, in access to employment and working conditions.

For the good and bad, green is all over the world of work and all over the Labour and Employment Law. We must address it and face it. As we did before when Labour and Employment Law had to face the new world of work and the new information and communication technologies, growing into digital and AI labour law. We are already used to changes and adaptation in these matters.

Therefore, among the green jobs and the green skills, we find the green gender gap.

With this paper we intend to analyze these themes from an objective perspective, using terminologies and classifications adopted by the United Nations, the ILO, or the EU.

We will try to distinguish the relevant phenomenological realities and qualify them according to the most appropriate operational concepts, without ever forgetting the negative impact in terms of effectiveness and respect for workers' fundamental rights.

We aim to answer crucial questions such as, for example, the distinction between sustainable work, green work, and decent work, or if there is already a Green Labour and Employment Law.

Keywords: *Green Labour and Employment Law, Sustainability and Work, Gender Gap in Green Jobs*

GDPR Implementation and Its Impact on European and International Companies

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Abstract: *In today's digital age, the protection of personal data is a major concern for both individuals and organizations. The implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 changed the way personal data is handled, both within the European Union and globally.*

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the impact of GDPR implementation on European and international companies, aiming to highlight the emerging challenges and opportunities in this new legislative framework.

The purpose of processing is the main objective of the use of personal data. The data is collected for a legitimate and well-defined purpose, it should not be further processed for a purpose different from that originally defined. The purpose of data processing limits how the data controller can use or reuse the data in the future. To be implemented, any data collection or processing must be based on a legal basis. This principle is the key reference for defining the basic principle of GDPR.

Security is also an essential part of personal data protection. This is mandatory for any data controller and data processor by Article 32 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In principle, each processing operation must be subject to a set of security measures decided on depending on the context, namely 'appropriate precautions having regard to the nature of the data and the risk presented by the processing' (Article 121 of the French Data Protection Act).

At the same time, a notable element in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation is that of penalties, given that GDPR has a substantial regime of fines, up to 20 million euros or up to 4% of the worldwide annual turnover of the following financial year, whichever is higher.

The specific objectives of the paper include assessing the awareness and readiness of companies for GDPR compliance, identifying the main changes in policies and procedures adopted by companies to align with GDPR requirements, analyzing the impact of GDPR on relationships between companies and customers, with a focus on transparency and consent in data processing as well as exploring the long-term effects of GDPR on innovation and competitiveness in the space digital.

The methodology adopted in this paper combines qualitative and quantitative analysis to measure managerial perceptions and reactions to regulation. Desk review of relevant legislation, as well as interviews with data protection experts, will complement the research, providing deep insight into the topic.

By conducting an extensive analysis of this topic, the paper aims to contribute to the existing academic literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of the effects of GDPR on the global business environment. Also, this paper includes practical recommendations for companies to efficiently navigate through the complexity of data protection regulations.

Keywords: *Data, Security, Law, Risk, Global, Regulations*

Equality Bodies as Mechanisms for Preventing and Fighting Discrimination Between Men and Women in Employment New Standards and Rules

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Abstract: *The equal treatment between men and women in the field of employment and occupation is one of the core values of human rights protection in the EU. In order to ensure the implementation of this principle, the EU adopted several pieces of legislation which required EU member states to establish special mechanisms -equality bodies to prevent and fight discrimination at the national level. However, these rules lacked precise definitions of the scope of duties and obligations of these institutions as well as strict rules concerning procedures of their work. Also, results achieved by equality bodies in preventing and fighting discrimination based on sex in employment and occupation varied by country, due to the different positions of these institutions in national systems. Some of these institutions experienced problems in their work because of insufficient independence or lack of resources.*

Regarding all the problems equality bodies were facing in their work in national systems of member states, the European Commission brought a proposal in December 2022 to introduce new rules and standards for equality bodies in order to improve their position and the level of independence as well as effectiveness in fighting inequalities in national systems of member states.

Keywords: *Equality bodies, Discrimination, Employment*

European Union Regulations and International Financial Reporting Standards Approaches Towards Government Grants and Assistance

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Abstract: *The recent crisis, which has developed rapidly in Asia, Europe, North and South America, Australia, Africa and elsewhere, and which is spreading to powerful and less powerful states, will have far-reaching dimensions and consequences in the short and long term. It challenges humanity, national governments, politicians and managers at various levels of corporate governance and management. Under the pressure of the crisis, which has had an unprecedented impact on the social, economic and political development of the world, the issue of government grants and government assistance has attracted increasing interest worldwide.*

Regardless of the political system, structure and social order of the state and society, and even regardless of the radically changing political and socio-economic conditions in some historical periods, the issue of government grants and government assistance has always been of social importance. In addition, it is now a substantial part of the subject matter and theoretical scope of international financial accounting and reporting. Under the pressure of the recent crisis, the issue has become even more relevant. No less important are the issues that arise in the processes of recognition, measurement (assessment) and presentation of government grants in financial statements. No less important are the issues related to the faithful representation of the impact and effects of such transfers to an entity on its financial position and financial statement items. Today, more than ever, the social importance and public need for transparency and appropriateness of accounting policy of disclosure should be emphasized.

The need for sound accounting policy and the proper application of an appropriate approach to accounting (for), faithful measurement, presentation and full compliance with the requirements for trustworthy disclosure, which is the focus of this discourse, is discussed from theoretical and methodological perspectives. The fundamental prescriptions of the International Accounting Standards Board, as embodied in the applicable standards, are considered by a significant part of the international professional community to be the prevailing guiding principles-based rules (to be applied). These principles are analysed in the light of the relevant objectives.

Our primary objective is to explore and analyse the nature of widely accepted approaches to the accounting for, recognition, assessment and presentation of government grants in general purpose financial statements, highlighting significant positive and negative features. Similarities and differences are identified on the basis of a comparative analysis of the relevant guidelines that underpin the philosophy of broadly accepted accounting principles. Other significant specific accounting and financial reporting issues that are critical to the full practical implementation of IFRS are discussed.

Keywords: Government grants, Subsidies, Donations, Premiums, Accrual concept, Matching concept, Fair disclosure

Sustainable Consumption and Consumers' Right to Product Repairment, as Emphasized in Recent EU Regulatory Frame

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Abstract: *The paper explores the problematics of consumers' right to product repairment, seen through the lens of the EC' "Proposal for a Regulation establishing a framework for setting eco-design requirements for sustainable products" which concentrates on encouraging sustainable consumption. Focusing on reducing and recycling E-waste, the recently discussed legislative framework regulates an obligation for the manufacturers to engage in repairing household products and to implement an additional one-year extension of the legal guarantee of conformity for repaired goods benefiting consumers in B2C contracts. Mechanisms such as the pre-contractual obligation of informing the consumers on post-contractual treatment facilities on disassembly, recycling, bringing products to conformity or defective product disposal at end-of-life (i), and the informative formalism requiring products to be accompanied by information for consumers and other end-users on installing process, maintenance and product repairment (ii) are epitomic in achieving sustainable consumption, while minimizing the environmental impact and ensuring product durability (iii). In the perimeter of selecting the legal remedies for product non-conformity, product repairment would still have preeminence and, therefore, should the product replacement be impossible to perform (most frequently, for out-of-stock situations/depleted supplies), the consumer's choice for product replacement is affected by caducity; similarly (although not expressly mentioned by the amended text), in cases where the replacement is disproportionate compared to the repair, the consumer will not be able to request the replacement and, consequently, the repairment would be de plano prioritized (for instance, in situations in which the retailer would be objectively able to relocate the stock, only by overly onerous measures).*

Keywords: Sustainable consumption, Product repairment, Product durability, Conformity warranty

The Invisible Minority in the “Birthplace” of Democracy

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Abstract: *All human beings are born with inalienable rights. The principles of non-discrimination and equality, which form the foundation of all core human rights treaties, are now the fundamental foundations of human rights and minority legal protection. Minorities' rights are protected under Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities is a document that establishes essential standards and guides states in developing appropriate legislative and other measures to protect the rights of minorities. Four elements are highlighted in UN definitions: national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic.*

Francesco Capotorti, Special Rapporteur of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in 1977 provided the following definition of a minority: “A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the state—possess ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion, or language.” Similarly to minorities, there is no universally accepted international definition for indigenous peoples, but by combining the conclusions from the work of the Working Group on Indigenous populations, the provisions of Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the contents of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we can define the “indigenous peoples as descendants of the peoples who inhabited the land or territory prior to colonization or the establishment of State borders; they possess distinct social, economic and political systems, languages, cultures and beliefs, and are determined to maintain and develop this distinct identity; they exhibit strong attachment to their ancestral lands and the natural resources contained therein; and/or they belong to the non-dominant groups of a society and identify themselves as indigenous peoples.”

Today, unfortunately, in the birthplace of democracy, we have façade democracies, with all the trappings and trimmings of formal democracy but with little of the substance of democratic values and principles.

The preservation and advancement of minorities' identities are essential to their rights. Protecting and preserving their identity prevents forced assimilation and the erasure of cultures, languages, and religions—the foundation of the world's diversity and hence a part of its history. This paper discusses the historical ethnocide, denial, and assimilation of Macedonians living in a country member of the European Union and the birthplace of democracy, the Hellenic Republic. In the paper, we will use qualitative research by analysing the fundamental principles of international law, international conventions, and the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) related to the protection of minority rights. The research will find that minority rights must be effectively protected in pluralistic societies, and Greece must take significant steps to guarantee that these rights are fully respected and protected.”

Keywords: Democracy, Human rights, Protection of minorities, Rule of law

Political Crises and Their Influence on Governance

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Abstract: *The political crises have always influenced the stability of states. But the question is: how deep are these influences? Can they change the type of the regime? Can they affect the political system? Can they disturb the governance?*

The current study follows some crises in Eastern Europe and their influences from the political and administrative point of view. It is well known that Eastern Europe has known a dramatic change since 1990. These countries changed the regime and this was done with major implications. The new democracy brought new types of governance which were easily accepted at the beginning. However, after some years of implementation, society discovered that not everything was perfect, so it was a good moment for political crises to appear.

So, we will try to analyze how these crises affected the society, the political regime, the head of the state, the Prime Minister, and the administrative organization with special regard in Romania.

Like all Eastern countries, Romania was not excepted from these "tectonic movements" and the society reacted every time, stronger or weaker. Sometimes, the crisis was not so obvious but it created big changes in governance. This is the case of today's regime, a mix between two political parties with two different ideologies. How is this possible? Only a crisis can generate such a mix and we will try to explain how it works and if it works.

Keywords: *Political regime, Democracy, Crises, Head of state, Stability*

Risk Management of Critical Military Infrastructure Relying on AI and VR

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the application of virtual reality (VR) technologies in combination with the innovative GEOBIM-9D model for risk prediction in subjects of the critical infrastructure of military industry of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Considering the complexity and importance of security challenges in the critical infrastructure sector, especially in this industry, this paper represents a pioneering approach in the analysis and prediction of potential risks. GeoBIM-9D model, which integrates geospatial information with Building Information Modeling (BIM) technology enables detailed insight into physical, technical and operational characteristics of critical infrastructure facilities. The implementation of VR technologies allows users to interactively and intuitively explore complex risk scenarios visualized, which contributes to a better understanding of possible security threats and more effective planning of protection measures. The Critical Entities Resilience Directive of the European Union strengthens the resilience of critical infrastructure to a range of threats, including natural hazards, terrorist attacks, insider threats, or sabotage, which is the main goal of method described in this paper.*

Keywords: *Risk, Military, VR, AI, Prediction*

Nutritional Characteristics of Iron Biofortified Soft Wheat and Flour

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Abstract: *The aim of biofortification is to make crops more nutritious as they grow rather than adding nutrients when processing them into foods. The content of ash, wet gluten, protein, fat, and Fe's concentration of Macedonian wheat variety "Radika", treated with Fe-chelates fertilizers by soil, soil-foliar and foliar application were determined. In whole wheat grain samples, the content of ash was in range (2,15%-2,06%), wet gluten (36-33), and Fe's concentration (65,9 mg/kg-49,5 mg/kg) were increased. Lower values in wheat grain show the percentage of fat (1,46%-1,12%) and content of protein (13-12,25). After the Fe fertilizers treatment values of all analyzed parameters in flour samples were increased. The content was in range-ash (0,59%-0,57%), wet gluten (38-34), fat (2,16%-1%) protein (12,9-11,9), and Fe's concentration (43,6 mg/kg-38,9 mg/kg). Agronomic biofortification with Fe-EDTA fertilizers applied in different ways has influenced and also improved the nutritional characteristics of soft wheat and flour. These conclusions may have an important role in developing evidence of nutritional efficacy, on absorption of nutrients from bio-fortification crops, first by using models, then by direct study in humans in controlled experiments.*

Keywords: *Biofortification crop, Soil-foliar application, Fe-EDTA*

The Desertification Monitoring Evolution with GIS

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Abstract: *Climate change leads to the existence of extreme differences in temperature between different areas. This can also be seen from the sequence of the different yellow, orange or red weather alert codes. Drought represents one of the most worrying extreme phenomena. and has increased in frequency and intensity over the last 20 years. The area most affected by this phenomenon is the south of Romania, annually losing significant areas of agricultural land through deforestation and desertification. Romania is not safe from climate change. The south of Romania is turning into a Sahara desert, on a smaller scale, through agricultural surface loss. The phenomenon of drought can be combated by afforestation or by creating agricultural plantations.*

The use of geographic information systems (GIS) can lead to an integrated approach to managing the negative effects produced by drought phenomena. Gaining an overview of the various forms of spatial data can examine the approaches used for hazard and risk assessment.

Keywords: *Agriculture, Desertification, Evolution, Drought, GIS*

