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Singapore University, Singapore — Corporate Governance

Neil Richardson
Leeds Beckett University UK — Marketing Development

Times	Session	Session Link	Meeting code	Passcode	View anytime (join the group to view only)
		DAY 1 (8th April)			
9.00 - 11.00	Opening session	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85867259957?pwd=Y1NBd25jZWNiR0xRT1FjYkNrbFhKdz09	858 6725 9957	966542	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
11.00 - 11.30	***Break***				
11.30-14.45	Track 1: Marketing and Leisure	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84416820492?pwd=dno2NWhsUytpd1lTdHJMRXlkeWFBQT09	844 1682 0492	151026	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
11.30-14.30	Track 2: Business and strategy	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82520616661?pwd=UHhVZ0JxZ3hLS2kvWWt1WnN4dUVOUT09	825 2061 6661	129754	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
15.00 - 15.30	***Break***				
15.30-17.15	Track 3: Finance, Economics and Law	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86253047908?pwd=VGg0alBDOWpQNXlUMHFtb1dEek1WQT09	862 5304 7908	317942	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
15.30-17.30	Track 4: Digital marketing, Technology, HR and Higher Education	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83406725708?pwd=c2pkLzZoY0Z1L3phMTNjekJVVUxRUT09	834 0672 5708	210072	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
		END OF DAY 1			

DAY 2 (9th April)					
9.00 - 12.00	The structure of a PGT research project and dissertation	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84105778775?pwd=UThMM1ViSDJGc0hnSWhlNG5LdktDZz09	841 0577 8775	345894	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
12.00 - 12.30	***Break***				
12.30 - 13.30	So, you want to study for a PhD/DBA	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83807145760?pwd=d1BDcnNnTnNlVFR0b1hlWm9rMW90QT09	838 0714 5760	196519	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
13.30 - 14.30	PhD student experience – panel discussion	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86820721195?pwd=STZwUktpL2pPcHNJOHBuclJSUkM3QT09	868 2072 1195	911804	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
14.30 - 15.30	Closing session	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81222209773?pwd=YlFzTHpremlRbXJSc3cwM0tNd1dYQT09	812 2220 9773	841856	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154759393182091
END OF DAY 2 AND CONFERENCE					

Abstracts

Circle International

MARKETING AND LEISURE

Circle International

The nature of relationships between internal branding, behavioural branding and external stakeholder identity

Thomas Dehghan and Hans Ruediger Kaufmann
University of Applied Management Studies Mannheim

Abstract

This article focusses on the key issue that lies in the gap between theoretically formulated brand identities (corporate and individual) and the transfer of these identities into the real life of employers and employees. Based on a recent conceptual conference paper focuses on making brand identity components visible (Elikan & Pigneur, 2019), the proposed research intends to empirically validate the findings of the paper and to make the visibility factors measurable and transferrable. As Natarajan et al. (2017) propose, researchers in marketing can perceive the relationship and influence among internal branding, employees' brand commitment, knowledge of the desired brand, employee brand image and brand endorsement. The management can implement and enhance the internal branding activities to educate employees on the desired brand image, generate their commitment towards it and motivate them to deliver the same to customers to achieve better competitive advantage which strengthens the service brand. Elikan and Pigneur (2018) state that the development of a strategic tool that helps entrepreneurs co-design their brand identity, to express and communicate a clear and consistent image to all their stakeholders, is necessary and will be developed in further research. They state that if the ontology is well implemented in a formal language, it can serve as a basis for supporting small organizations in the development of a software to implement their brand identity strategy. According to Elikan and Pigneur (2019), this ontology has two parts: the internal and external environment. They, furthermore, state that culture triggers the relationships between internal and external stakeholders. Eid et al. (2019, p.17) recommend that "if internal branding practices or activities are to be improved and if concepts are to be insightfully extended, then the integration of these relationships into one conceptual model is considered appropriate".
Providing a so far missing concept regarding these factors could be the contribution to knowledge of this research. The proposed article will give an overview of the literature review as a fundament for upcoming research.

Keywords: internal branding, behavioural branding, external stakeholder identity, employer branding, relationship marketing

An analysis of the Impact of Household Income on Clothing, Footwear and Housing Consumption in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Lejla Dacić Čampara
University of Travnik

Abstract

In studying individual consumption behavior, an important issue is the analysis of the relation between commodity expenditure and income. The subject of this paper is the analysis of clothing, footwear and housing consumption of households in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aim of this paper is to quantify the impact of income on household expenditure for clothing, footwear and housing, with a focus on examining the validity of second Engel's law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Empirical research is based on the econometric modelling of Engel curves applying single equation modelling, using microdata from the Household Budget Survey in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are available for four years (2004, 2007, 2011, 2015). The surveys were carried out using the uniform methodology developed by the Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT). In order to achieve the research objective, six functional forms of Engel curves have been formulated and estimated. The intensity of the impact of income on relative changes in consumption was measured using income elasticities. Based on the estimated parameters and income elasticities derived from them, the hypothesis of unit elasticity of demand for the mentioned product groups in relation to household income was tested. Empirically estimated values of elasticities imply that the validity of the second Engel's law in Bosnia and Herzegovina was partially confirmed: while clothing and footwear expenditures became elastic over time, expenditures for housing are inelastic in observed years. By comparing the estimated elasticities for different years in which the survey was conducted, it was revealed whether there were significant changes in the preferences of households in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the observed period.

Keywords: household consumption, second Engel’s law, single equation modelling, household budget survey, income elasticity

Circle International

Ideal Satisfaction and Delight Realisation

Andreas Marquardt
University of Gloucestershire

Abstract

Customer satisfaction leads to higher customer loyalty and therefore to higher profits. Therefore, companies should in general aim for customer satisfaction. In practice the realisation is often not in focus or not conducted well.
Therefore, a case study with an improved approach to *realise* satisfaction in the retail business, and potentially in general was developed.
It also addresses issues that underpin a key question for many of companies: How can we gain and retain loyal customers?
The central question of how to satisfy and delight customers in practice is addressed. It is questioned how satisfaction and delight can (ideally) be created. Existing literature was reviewed to find answers and was further developed and combined with new insights from expert interviews. To derive this new insight, an appropriate methodology and methods were selected. Convergent in-depth interviews were shown to be a developed method that offered penetrating managerial insight. The output of the literature review led to a new combination of knowledge that already set a new basis for customer satisfaction with the derived models. In combination with the expert interviews a case study was developed. This case study on how to realize customer satisfaction and ideally delight quickly in a company or organisation is described in detail. The case study can be used as guide to improve the own organisation in practice.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, customer delight, retail, marketing, services, loyalty

Improving customer retention using loyalty schemes amongst airlines based in buffalo city, South Africa

Dinesh Vallabh
Walter Sisulu University

Abstract

The research was developed on the concept that the frequent-flier program enables the retention of profitable customers and the development of loyalty. The aim of the research is a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of frequent player program retaining customers and developing loyalty through an analysis of the customers of airlines that operate in the East London Airport. The objectives of research were to critically evaluate the concept of customer retention in the airline industry, analyse the effect of customer loyalty in the airline industry, analyse the frequent flyer programs employed by the airlines and to evaluate the effectiveness of the frequent flyer program in developing customer loyalty and to evaluate the effectiveness of the frequent flyer program into retaining profitable customers.

The literature review depicted the life cycle of the customer which is correlated with customer retention strategies. It was also found that the loyalty schemes developed by organisations are necessary to reduce vulnerability to competition and switching. In order to evaluate the different concepts developed during the literature review primary data was collected from 60 customers. The data analysis was conducted by dividing the responses collected from the customers into different tiers of the frequent flyer program. Based on the tier system the responses were divided and correlated with different aspects such as awareness of customer about the benefits of loyalty program, the types of usage in terms of international and domestic travel, the vulnerability to competitive action, comparison of frequent flyer program with that of the competitors, the repeat purchase behaviour developed from the loyalty program and finally the development of price sensitivity, willingness to pay and switching cost.

It has been found that the loyalty programs reduce the vulnerability of the customers to competition, but this is directly correlated with the life cycle of the customers. The life cycle of the customers has been found to have significant correlation with repeat purchase behaviour and the reduction of price sensitivity. The frequent-flier program is effective in developing the switching cost which ensures that the customers search, and evaluation costs are increasing. In conclusion, the customer retention strategy through the loyalty program ensured the profitability from the retained customers because there was repeat purchase from the customers with a willingness to pay a premium price due to switching costs.

Keywords: customer retention, customer loyalty, consumer behaviour, business management.

Consumer Perceived Value from Sharing Economy. The Role of Consumer Environmental Consciousness and Attitude to Sharing Platforms

Agnė Gadeikienė and Asta Švarcaitė
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Abstract

The changing society views and evolving digital technologies contribute to the rapid development of the sharing economy around the world. Even with the high potential of this market, it is difficult for some sharing economy platforms to attract a critical group of consumers and compete with other market players. Thus, both from the scientific and practical point of view, it is important to analyze the consumer perceived value from sharing economy that would be used for a value proposition that meets consumer needs formulation. However, in the scientific literature, the construct structure of consumer perceived value from sharing economy and the factors that determine it are not sufficiently explored. To overcome this gap, this study aims to investigate consumer perceived value from sharing economy and explore how it is influenced by consumer environmental consciousness and consumer attitude towards sharing economy platforms. We argue that consumer perceived value from sharing economy consists of four dimensions: economic value, functional value, emotional value, and social value. The quantitative research findings confirm the direct effect of consumer environmental consciousness on attitude towards sharing economy platforms. Consumer perceived social value from sharing economy is directly influenced by consumer environmental consciousness, which indicates the importance of social connections or search for like-minded people in the sharing economy. The research confirms the mediating effect of the consumer attitude toward sharing economy platform in the relationship between consumer environmental consciousness and consumer perceived value from sharing economy dimensions (economic value, functional value, and emotional value).

Keywords: Sharing Economy; Sharing Economy Platform; Consumer Perceived Value; Consumer Environmental Consciousness.

The marketing potentials of social robots: a literature review

Nikola Draskovic, PhD
Rochester Institute of Technology

Abstract

During the past two decades, technological advances led to the development of various internet-based technologies and platforms with a certain level of automated interaction with users. Furthermore, thanks to the learning process, these technological platforms gain a certain level of autonomy and (artificial) intelligence. Combination of the internet-based technologies, advanced algorithms and contemporary hardware resulted with the concept of social robots. Defined as fully or partially automated technologies, the main task of social robots is to co-create value through interactions with humans. Social robots came in many flavours. The simplest form is represented by various types of robotic toys, while more complex representatives can offer their respective services in homes, entertainment industry, service sector and healthcare.

The aim of this paper is twofold. First of all, this paper investigates the available literature and research studies on social robots and potential marketing applications within the service industry. With the further improvement of the interaction with humans and more humanlike appearance, social robots can potentially excel in roles where service quality significantly relies on the skills and motivation of a service provider. Repetitive and dull activities, such as taking orders at the drive-in can drain energy and motivation from a person. On the other hand, social robots would be capable of performing such tasks without any deviations in behaviour. Finally, this paper aims to detect and describe potential routes for further research on this topic. In some countries, service industry faces challenges, such as trained staff shortages and a relatively long training process for newly appointed employees. Therefore, we can expect business to look for different types of solutions. However, the real commercial value of social robots will ultimately depend on the preparedness of customers to accept service from a social robot, as an alternative to the human service.

Keywords: social robots, service industry, marketing, artificial intelligence, literature review

The communication of influencer marketing on Instagram platform during the lockdown

Rossella Sagliocco, Sabrina Celestino, Raffaele Cecere and Enrico Bonetti
Università della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"

Abstract

Nowadays, the way to convey a message has changed. Traditional media are not the most effective way of communication anymore because the audience cannot interact with screens. Communication today is more immediate, direct and authentic.
Marketing influencers represent a personalized tool that does not have a form. During the lockdown, the number of people who started following these influencers increased as well as the number of people who improved their opinion about them. This article examines the role of influencers during the lockdown caused by COVID-SARS 19, since there is a lack of academic research on this topic. A qualitative methodological approach was adopted based on the content analysis of 559 Instagram posts by Italian influencers - Chiara Ferragni, Benedetta Rossi and Clio make-up. During the lockdown, the power and role of influencers could be understood as communication by means of the extraordinary content that has a social purpose rather than a commercial one. The paper reaches very interesting results, it emphasizes the role of the influencer marketing during the lockdown and identifies three trends: social inclusion, emotional solidarity, responsible and ethical communication.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, social media, covid-19, social inclusion, ethical marketing

Smart cities: Engagement and Participation

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University of Applied Management Studies Mannheim

Abstract

This research aims to investigate the function and extent to which the citizens of a city should and can partake in the planning and development of smart cities. Two research objectives were formulated: to find out whether and how a smart city involves its citizens in the planning process and to investigate the impact of citizen participation on the citizens themselves. The research questions relate to the level of awareness and engagement of citizens in smart city programs and to the perceived need to participate in such initiatives.

The research design followed an exploratory and descriptive approach. The qualitative research method of a case study applied the research technique of semi-structured interviews (14) with citizens from the city of Mannheim/Germany aged between 25 and 30.

Initially, a gap between the literature on citizen participation and the real extent to which it was present in smart cities today was discovered. Despite knowing the advantages of smart cities, citizens seem oblivious about such smart initiatives. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation was used as a reference model replicated and critiqued amongst others by Gaber (2019), Cardullo and Kitchin (2018), Gershman (2013) and Tritter and McCallum (2006).

Through content analysis several categories could be identified: self-awareness, importance of citizens' opinions by participating, views towards citizens' input in co-creation, usage of smart city applications in daily lives, privacy concerns, level of awareness among citizens in Mannheim, techniques that could be adopted to promote smart cities, benefits and drawbacks of citizen participation, need for authorities to provide incentives and the values that could be gained by public participation.

This research could potentially expand current knowledge on developing smart cities and specifically on citizen participation. It reflects the citizens' mindset regarding smart initiatives, their understanding and current integration in the growth of smart cities. It points to a greater need for the authorities to better involve citizens when designing smart city programs.

Keywords: 'citizen participation', 'engagement', 'smart/e-governance', 'ICT', 'co-creation', 'smart cities'.

Smart Cities – Smart People

Sean Dzamalija and Dolores Sanchez Bengoa
University of Applied Management Studies Mannheim

Abstract

The reason for the investigated gap as to a lack of people orientation when designing Smart Cities (Capdevila and Zarlenga, 2015; Costa and Oliveira, 2017), is the dizzily swift development of ever more technological devices and opportunities, which might shift the focus away from what is really important from the citizens' perspective. Hence, this research aims to examine how to improve a citizen-driven perspective for effective smart city development. Initially, this research project identifies the skills, traits and characteristics of smart people needed for proper smart city (SC) design. Consequently, the related research question refers to the role investment plays in developing requested human capital. Moreover, another research question relates to SC relevant roles for citizens and methods to engage them for participation (European Commission, 2016).

For this exploratory qualitative case study in the Mannheim setting, two informally and naturally conducted focus groups were held. Applying purposive sampling, the first focus group consisted of young adults aged between 20-30 with a natural drive for learning and engaging in public events. The second focus group discussion was conducted with a sample of 4 elderly citizens with lacking knowledge about technology. Deliberately they did not fit in the typical smart people scheme, as the ultimate goal of smart city projects should be to involve the society as a whole including marginalized groups.

For data analysis, content analysis followed the deductive qualitative analysis procedure suggested by Mayring (2004).

However, the problem of transferring existing theories and approaches into practice is anticipated. Theories regarding a citizen-centric perspective exist but face the problem that they are not realized. Moreover, different social groups have various interest and needs, which makes it challenging for cities to include all of them. The results of this ongoing empirical research will be presented at the conference.

Keywords: Smart Cities; Citizens-driven perspective; Characteristics of smart people; Conflict of interests; Human Capital

Public Administration Marketing

Antun Marinac and Hrvoje Budić
Polytechnic in Požega

Abstract

The aim of the research is to analyse the possibility of applying marketing in the Croatian public administration. A special feature is the important role of public administration in stimulating the economy, given that it accounts for almost half of the GDP of the European Union (EU). The main problem that has been imposed is that the efficiency of the Croatian public administration is below the EU average ("European Commission Report for Croatia 2020"). From the research methodology, the following methods were used in the paper: secondary research, method of analysis, statistical and historical method and method of proof. With the National Development Strategy until 2030, which was adopted by the Croatian Parliament, the Republic of Croatia has committed itself to building a functional and open public administration. As this is an exchange relationship between public administrations and citizens, it is logical to impose the issue of marketing application. This primarily refers to the necessity of applying public marketing as a modern way of doing business based on determining human needs and the way they are met. Given the experience of certain countries, the application of digital marketing has also been useful, especially in emergency situations. This paper is an attempt to encourage the efforts of heads of public administrations to plan such activities that will, with the application of marketing mix (product, price, distribution, promotion), develop such businesses and investments that will best meet the needs of citizens. In this context, the basic principles of the practical operation of public administrations should be openness to the environment and a structural change in the current behaviour. The authors conclude that the application of marketing activities in public administration can help increase its effectiveness. Experience has shown that the application of marketing concepts in public administration can facilitate the delivery of services that are better tailored to the needs of users and more focused on those who need services the most. Ultimately, marketing orientation works best to boost citizen satisfaction with public administration services.

Keywords: public administration, public marketing, public services, citizens' needs, efficiency.

The image of Our Lady of Fatima (Portugal): an icon and a brand

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Instituto Superior de Gestão

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Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento do Território / Universidade de Lisboa

Abstract

Religious tourism has shown an increasing significance, with a considerable economic and social dimension. The individual search for faith and for spirituality has gained importance through the process of pilgrimage to sacred places.
One of the most sought-after Marian sanctuaries in the world is Fátima (Portugal) and a great contribution for being so well-known is the pilgrimage image of Our Lady of Fatima which has visited almost all countries in the five continents.
During its stay in a town / city there is a process of symbolic mobility and extraterritorial affirmation which growths the wish to visit the shrine in Portugal (built in the place where Our Lady appeared in 1917).
Although it is an icon, along the decades, the pilgrimage image assumed characteristics and developed the marks of a brand.
The investigation carried through questionnaires, statistical and documentary analysis, direct observations and interviews, allowed to determine the importance of the pilgrim image for the religious tourism sector of Fatima. The power and the influence that this icon exerts in a process of interaction with the public, it is the same that a brand employ.
In the article, it will be discussed and demonstrated that a religious image / icon can also be, at same time, a brand for religious tourism.

Keywords: Religious tourism, icon, brand.

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology through project ref. UIDB/04470/2020 CiTUR

Exploring causes of uneven decrease of international tourist arrivals cause by covid-19 pandemic in selected Mediterranean countries of EU.

Nikola Draskovic, PhD
Rochester Institute of Technology Croatia

Marin Romić
Algebra University College

Abstract

This paper reviews available secondary data on international tourist arrivals in 2020 in selected Mediterranean countries. Its purpose is to explore different variables that affected the country specific drops in international tourist arrivals and overnight stays and identify the most important ones. The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global health, social and economic event and travel and tourism is among the most affected sectors. Due to global lockdown, the pandemic made significant impact on country economies. COVID-19 effects are especially felt in Europe as it is a destination of around half of world's tourist arrivals. According to the official statistics, international tourist arrivals dropped significantly throughout Europe in 2020, but these drops differ between countries. Countries like Italy recorded less decline in international tourist arrivals than countries like Greece, Spain or Cyprus. This divergence can be attributed to different causes: proximity to large outbound tourism countries like Germany and Poland, preferred mode of transport for inbound tourist arrivals, structure of tourist accommodation capacities in a given country, type of tourism activities that the country provides etc. All these causes are analyzed using data from UNWTO and Eurostat. A change in consumer behavior during crises is also discussed and taken into account as the main agent of divergence between countries. The insights and conclusions of this paper could make impact on future research, marketing efforts and policy makers in building a more resilient tourism and travel sector business models.

Keywords: international tourist arrivals, COVID-19, pandemic, tourism and travel, lockdown effects

Circle International

Putting Internal Marketing into practice: to what extent can an Internal Marketing Orientation be measured.

Neil Richardson
Leeds Beckett University

Abstract

This paper consolidates and analyses the current literature on Internal Marketing (IM). It demonstrates how previous key studies (Lings, 2004; Ruizalba et al, 2014 amongst others) provided the foundation for the IM model entitled "Boundary-spanning employees at the internal-external markets interface" (Richardson, 2020, p223). Ultimately marketing models should be operationalised if they are to move beyond being purely academic and have real, lasting impact. Hence, a purpose of this paper is to seek constructive criticism of the model itself with a view to producing a revised version prior to primary research being undertaken.

The benefits of having a Marketing Orientation (MO) are well established. Extant studies espoused applying the MO approach internally resulting in an Internal Marketing Orientation (IMO) as a means of implementing the abstract concept of IM. This paper critiques previous attempts at quantifying IMO and other positivist approaches to improve the adoption of IM. The insights generated by this paper will partially address the paucity of IM-related studies and hopefully influence practice. This is to be tested by undertaking primary research into IM within service providers where respondents may not necessarily be aware of IM or the terms used therein (e.g. internal customers; internal markets; boundary spanning employees).

This development paper presents a critique of extant IM (and IMO) literature and Richardson's IM model. In doing so it lays the foundation for impending research.

The current analysis is conceptual and is hindered by the paucity of outputs on what is a key area of marketing. The extant research into IM has been mainly quantitative in nature and the upcoming qualitative study will provide new insights for academics and practitioners alike.

The paper contributes to the slim body of IM literature by consolidating the key research on the development of Richardson's model.

Keywords: Marketing Orientation, Internal Marketing, Internal Marketing Orientation, Boundary spanning employees.

Does the presence of children in the family and local origin influence the perceived quality and purchase intentions of organic food promoted by National Parks' Brands?

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Università Politecnica delle Marche

Ballestra Luca Vincenzo26
Università di Bologna

Abstract

The paper aims to investigate the possible effect of local origin and the presence of children in the family on the perceived quality and intentions of purchasing food products promoted by National Parks' brands. Data for this study were collected in Italy from 377 consumers using face-to-face interviews. Prospective participants were approached at the supermarket and asked to participate in a brief survey. Before completing the survey a packet of pasta was shown to them; the National Park of Sibillini Mountains brand was shown in the label. A two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) followed by two-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to investigate the effect of children and territory on perceived quality and willingness to consume. A moderating effect of children was identified for perceived quality and willingness to consume in the multivariate model. A strong main effect of territory was found for perceived quality and willingness to consume in both the multivariate and the univariate models. From the findings of this study important implications can be achieved in order to promote local food from National Parks, especially outside the territorial boundaries.

Keywords: food, National Parks' brand, children, perceived quality, intention to buy.

Circle International

BUSINESS AND STRATEGY

The Role of Smart Cities for the Circular Economy.

Lars Schäffner and Hans Rüdiger Kaufmann
University of Applied Management Studies Mannheim

Abstract

Cities are the centre of global production and consumption and, therefore, the main source of waste of all kinds. Against the backdrop of the urbanisation trend and further population growth, dealing with the expected masses of waste will be a major challenge for the city of the future. Solutions to this issue are currently being discussed in the context of the smart city movement. However, it has become apparent that the literature on smart waste management, has largely been limited to waste collection rather than addressing the root of the problem, which is the linear economic system. This view is widely debated within the research on circular economy. Nevertheless, overlaps can be found in the knowledge streams of technology development, consumer behaviour and circular business models. In order to overcome the separation of these research streams, this paper aimed to identify the role of Smart Cities for the transformation into a circular economy. Based on an exploratory qualitative research design, seven semi-structured interviews with circular economy experts were conducted and analysed by means of qualitative content structuring analysis. The results showed that cities are uniquely positioned to play a significant role in shaping this development, particularly through their proximity to citizens and businesses. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, various measures are presented on how cities can have an impact, also through the careful use of data-driven technology.

Keywords: Smart City, Circular Economy, Smart Waste Management, information gap, circular business model

Business Models Intended to Alleviate Food Deserts:
Examples from the United Kingdom, China, and Japan.

Mitsunori Hirogaki
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Abstract

Food deserts are places with limited access to affordable, nutritious food. To alleviate this difficulty in accessing nutritious food is an important challenge in developed countries. Improving access to healthy, nutritious food could provide great social benefits as well as contribute to the profitability of firms. Not only mega-retailers and small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs (SMEs) but also companies involved in the gig economy, such as Lyft, have launched business models with shopping support services. This study investigated the characteristics of consumer preferences for shopping support services that are under development by mega-retailers and SMEs for limited food access areas (food deserts). It also investigated the degree of price sensitivity that exists due to additional charges for this service, such as shipping fees. We selected three countries—the United Kingdom, China, and Japan—for investigation. A full-profile conjoint analysis was employed to evaluate consumer preferences for these shopping services.

We discovered that the format of the shopping services had the largest influence on consumer preference; they tend to prefer the format that mimics a real retail store. However, the degree of importance of other factors such as the frequency of the services and length of business hours for respondents is different from country to country when respondents in each country choose the services. Therefore, it is reasonable to anticipate that the dominant shopping support services in each country will be different in the future.

Keywords: International Marketing, Food access, Online grocery, Consumer behavior, Gig economy

Forecast of the impact of Covid-19 on consumption and employment in Bosnia and Herzegovina using the trend method.

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic shows that the impact on the health of the population is not its only negative consequence. Due to the protection measures against Covid-19, there was a decline in economic activities and consequently a decline in macroeconomic indicators. Data are regularly published indicating a decline in business activities, especially in some industries presented in the paper. Disruptions in the economy have led to cuts in investment, including those from the diaspora. This paper aims to determine the impact of the pandemic on employment and consumption in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to reduced business and investment activities. Consumption and employment forecasting for the next six months is based on time series, using the statistical trend method. The research is based on the claim that consumption in Bosnia and Herzegovina will decrease in the coming period with lower intensity than employment. The paper also deals with a descriptive analysis of consumption and employment from the beginning of the Year 2020, using the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and the minimum and maximum values of the analyzed variables.

Keywords: pandemic, employment, consumption, trend, forecast

Circle International

Building a Technology-Organisation-Environment Framework to understand the factors that facilitate the adoption of unified business platforms.

Raffaele Cecere, Rossella Sagliocco, Sabrina Celestino and Barbara Masiello
Università della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to identify the factors that influence firms in the adoption process of unified commerce platforms through the Technology - Organization - Environment (TOE) framework. Based on a careful literature review with several studies that have used the TOE framework to motivate the adoption of a new technology that fits the characteristics of unified commerce, this study results in aTOE framework dedicated to the adoption of the unified commerce platforms. Specifically, eight elements that positively influence the adoption process were identified: relative advantage, perceived benefits and utility, technological competence, top management support, organizational readiness, financial resources and capabilities, customer pressure and competitive pressure. Nevertheless, the main limitation of this study is the lack of empirical analysis, but its results, which can be evaluated in two ways, make it original. First, findings aim to shed light on the concept of unified trade with the intention of stimulating a debate among scholars and managers to create a fertile ground for future research and practical applications. Second, they enrich the literature related to the TOE framework by revealing a dedicated framework for the adoption of unified commerce platforms.

Keywords: Theory-Organization-Environment framework, TOE framework, Unified commerce platform, Unified commerce

How technological change threats affect Entreprenurial processes: a focus on the Italian fitness centers' during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Abstract

In this study we investigate how companies from a traditional industry such as the fitness industry activate entrepreneurial processes during the pandemic generated by Covid-19 to deal with a threat related to technological change. Both incumbent companies more prone to change and newcomers to the industry, i.e. players in the online fitness market, represent a threat to those less accustomed to change. This paper adopts a qualitative methodology used on a sample of six Italian fitness centres. The results show that fitness centres with fewer economic and financial resources in crisis situations tend to exploit more opportunities including partnerships with other actors in the area and the use of online fitness courses not only as a way to maintain a relationship with clients, but also as a momentary source of income. Furthermore, all fitness centres believe that online fitness players are only a temporary threat and therefore are not willing to change their business model. Finally, the study addresses its limitations and offers important insights into business process theory with implications for future research directions and practical advice for managers.

Keywords: entrepreneurial processes, business model, entrepreneurial opportunity, threat, Covid-19, sport entrepreneurship

Role of Networks and EU funded projects in the INVs internationalization process.

Barbara Kulaga and Silvio Cardinali
UNIVPM

Abstract

Internationalization is generally an intense and dynamic phenomenon that requires huge resources to be triggered and this is all the more evident for International New Ventures (INVs) because of the so-called liability of newness and liability of foreignness. In fact, INVs are more disadvantaged in the internationalization process due to the limited availability of resources such as human and financial capital. The literature review revealed that the main mechanism by which INVs try to deal with the lack of resources is the use of relational networks.
This exploratory study seeks on the one hand to contribute to the literature on network theory in internationalization, focusing on one of the possible categorizations of networks - social and business networks - by interpreting and investigating the two-phase internationalization process (exploration and exploitation), from the point of view of the International New Ventures entrepreneurs; on the other hand, to fill a gap in the literature regarding the dearth of studies on both European funding and these financing (or co-financing) instruments as a resource for internationalization. The results obtained from a multiple case study, carried out through semi-structured interviews with five Italian entrepreneurs who in recent years have benefited from funding for internationalization, show that, INVs use personal networks during the exploration phase, business networks in exploitation and European funding in both phases of the internationalization process to counteract the liability of foreignness, liability of smallness, and liability of newness.

Keywords: internationalization, INVs, social and business networks, multiple case study, European funding.

Revenue controlling in the German dairy industry - status quo and potential for improvement.

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Abstract

The German dairy industry produces vast quantities of dairy products, which are to a large extent sold through food retailers. The big retail chains in particular wield a great bargaining power due to their market penetration. This means that the dairies' prices necessarily get under pressure. According to Simon and Fassnacht as well as Meffert, the effective sales price is to be regarded as the most crucial profit driver. The pricing policy also influences capacity utilization, the entire value chain and the liquidity of the company (Simon and Faßnacht, 2016).

This clearly demonstrates that revenue controlling is of the highest relevance for the German dairy industry. Instruments and methods have been developed in theory and practice to facilitate revenue controlling. These include, for example, annual turnover/ sales planning, the price scale for assessing sales deductions, contribution margin calculations for analyzing the profitability of company divisions, customers and products, as well as deviation analyses regarding turnover, sales volume, prices, contribution margins and costs (Gleich et al. 2016, Weber 2018 and Pepels 2019).

In order to identify the status quo of revenue controlling in the German dairy industry as well as possibilities for improvement, this empirical study was carried out.

The research question "What is the status quo of revenue controlling in the German dairy industry and what are the possibilities for improvement?" was divided into two sub-questions:

a) How high is the status and professionalism of revenue controlling in the companies to be assessed?

b) What possibilities for improvement exist regarding organization and implementation?

Seven interviews with senior executives (CFOs, heads of Controlling) were conducted on the basis of a structured interview guideline.

The main results of the study could be assigned to the categories "Purpose of revenue controlling", "Role of the controlling department", "Instruments and methods", "Deviation analyses", "Pricing and sales deductions", "IT and digitalization". Potential for improvement was discovered in almost all fields.

Due to the small number of participants in the sample, no representative claim can be made for the results presented here. Nevertheless, the study shows interesting and relevant findings for practice and theory regarding revenue controlling in the German dairy industry.

Keywords: SMEs, Germany, dairy industry, revenue controlling.

The position of women in the Croatian labour market

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the glass ceiling theory issues aiming to explore if there is empirical evidence proving objective reasons for its influence on women careers development in The Republic of Croatia. Although gender equality has reached a satisfactory level in Croatian society's formal legal framework, we often witness equal rights do not imply equal opportunities in social reality. Therefore, the subject of research interest is related to the question of the reasons for the existence of a glass ceiling in Croatia and its nature: objective or subjective, related to intentional and conscious choices of women or some other reasons.

The paper examines the attitudes of women and men on whether women are equally capable of performing higher managerial positions as men and how they are promoted from entry positions to higher managerial positions. The paper also examines the differences in attitudes of female and male respondents with a non-parametric test, namely the Chi-Square Test of Independence, which determines whether there is an association between categorical variables.

The data is collected through online survey questionnaire using the snowball method based on the set of multiple qualitative and quantitative questions conducted during 2020 on a representative sample of 1021 respondents in different employment areas.

The study results reveal noticeable differences towards glass ceiling theory assumptions in two groups of respondents observed, proving how we need to work more on education policy for gender equality towards the full, practical implementation of gender equality in Croatian national society.

Keywords: glass ceiling theory, gender diversity, women career development.

Using the Film Process for Sales Education: The Results of an EU project

Silvio Cardinali, Barbara Kulaga and Marta Giovannetti
UNIVPM

Abstract

In recent years, increasing innovative learning techniques have been applied to sales education (Whalen and Coker 2016, 2017; Labrecque et al. 2019; Spiller et al. 2019; Cummins et al. 2020). The mix of traditional and innovative teaching techniques is grounded on social learning theory, that demonstrated the efficacy and students' preference for practical instruction rather than theoretical lectures (Kelly, 2004), especially in skill-based disciplines such as sales (Lastner et al. 2016).
This work presents the results of the development and implementation of an innovative, active learning methodology based on edutainment, the "Movie education" (Conform 2019, as a part of the overall IN.K.A.M.S. Erasmus Plus project (International Key Account Management & Sales – cofounded by European Union in 2017), which consists in involving students in the application of storytelling techniques and the creation of short films related to the didactic topics covered, in order to give a more experiential approach to the course.
Movie education consists of student participation in Film process laboratories, to acquire storytelling techniques, act and make short films dedicated to typical sales situations, based on the knowledge acquired in previous lessons. The integration of Movie education with other educational methods (lectures, discussions, video/film analysis, and tests), resulted in advanced knowledge elaboration and transfer, critical evaluation and development, memorization, behavioural response, with elevated student involvement and engagement.
This work presents the benefits and challenges of using Movie education through experimentation in five business university courses in five different EU universities, also providing contributions and suggestions for further implementation of this methodology.

Keywords: sales education, selling, active learning, blended learning, experiential learning.

Circle International

Sustainable and affordable housing in Nigeria

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Abstract

Access to adequate housing has long been viewed as a basic human right. It is considered as an integral part for the realization of other economic, social and cultural rights. According to the United Nations (UN) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights(CESCR), satisfactory housing consists of legal security of tenure, availability of accessible services, facilities and infrastructure, habitability, accessibility (e,g access to employment, health services, schools, shopping malls), cultural adequacy and affordability.

Housing affordability continues to be a major limiting factor for home ownership at the bottom of the income pyramid in Nigeria. Nigeria has continued to face enormous housing challenges and gaps are being recorded in the face of geometric population growth, dwindling revenue from oil, composite disposable income, purchasing power parity of the Naira and the attendant cost of construction of housing units. According to a new report, Nigeria has a deficit of between 16-22million housing units, This, as Ashkin (2013) puts it require an investment of circa $600 billion based on an average house price N5million ($13000, at the official exchange rate of N383/$1 USD).Similarly, Ayedun, andOluwatobi(2011) noted that only 10 percent of Nigerians can afford their own house either by house purchase or personal construction as compared to 72 percent in the United States, 78 percent in the United Kingdom, 60 percent in China, 54 percent in South Korea and 92 percent in Singapore.

In view of this development, and to consistently address housing gaps in Nigeria , there is need for a paradigm shift. According to UN Habitat: The proposed paradigm shift will change the way housing has been addressed as an isolated product in the form of housing estates. This change will be achieved by utilizing national urban policies, urban planning and urban design as well as urban economy and legislation as the essential entry points. The aim is to integrate housing in the urban fabric with other uses, to integrate different economic groups, at appropriate densities to achieve better mobility, and to reduce the urban footprint, to ensure environmental sustainability as well as taking social and cultural needs into account through participatory approaches. This research project is currently in progress.

Keywords: Housing, sustainability, affordability, housing delivery, housing gaps, adequate housing, private and institutional developers.

The link between human capital and Entrepreneurial perceptions: insights from Vietnam

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University of Szczecin

Duong Cong Doanh
National Economic University Vietnam

Abstract

Previous studies on entrepreneurship tended to support the existence of a positive relationship between human capital and entrepreneurial activity. However, studies examining this relationship have not yielded consistently strong results. Hence, this study tries to help close this research gap by focusing on the impact of human capital on entrepreneurial perceptions. We draw our analyses on a sample of 2018 general adult population from GEM Vietnam 2017-2018. In order to test the relationship between independent and dependent variables, the binary regression analysis is employed. We found a positive relationship between specific human capital (knowledge, skills and experience related to starting a new business) and perception of business opportunities and feasibility. Meanwhile, general human capital (education level) does not have a meaningful relationship with perception of feasibility but helps individuals realize better business opportunities. From these results, some recommendations have been suggested in the article.

Keywords: Human capital, entrepreneurial perceptions, feasibility, opportunities, Vietnam

After Covid-19, the new challenges of globalization:
a case study from the wine sector

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Abstract

Covid-19 has changed the business landscape suddenly for almost all firms in the world. It is possible to argue that some businesses might suffer from the outbreak effects more than others, as these might face major challenges in order to survive and develop in the near future. The study posits that one of those industries that are suffering more than others after the outbreak is the wine sector. So far, almost one year is gone since the Covid-19 outbreak begins, and several events succeeded that had a profound impact on the wine industry. Considering some data, it is possible to underline that the global wine trade has fallen dramatically and that from March to May 2020 international export flows reduced by 1.8 billion euros, which is equivalent to a -17% in value compared to 2019. This decrease has broken for the first time the positive general trend of the last decade (Sanchez Recante, 2020). The exploration of the effects of the pandemic crisis might also shed light on the structural problems that characterised the Italian wine sector since this time. A survey, conducted by "Wine Monitor Nomisma", pipoint that small wineries (e.g.: under 1 million euro of turnover) have suffered more compared to other players in the wine sector during the economic crisis related to the outbreak. These firms are showing worse performance in terms of sales contraction in several sales channels. Furthermore, exports have been deemed to be paramount for the small firms in this sector. Therefore, the paper aims to analyze how small wineries cope with the present crisis, and how these might redesign their export strategies, considering the new challenges posed by the after-covid context and strong future uncertainty. To this end, the study adopts a case study methodology, encompassing the case of a small winery based in Marche region (Italy). Data have been collected through in-depth interview with key informants.

Keywords: small business, wine industry, export, distribution channels, globalization.

Impact of cognitive trust on SME business-to-business long-term orientation within Qatari construction sector

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Abstract

This investigation focused on the association between cognitive trust and long-term orientation between sub-contractors (a group of Small to Medium Sized Enterprises, SMEs) and Qatari government. The research framework was based on the cognitive trust drivers (to include formal communication, expertise, reputation, flexibility, credibility and integrity) and their relative impact on long-term orientation within the studied business-to-business network. In total, thirty-two SMEs were studied who were providing different construction services to Qatari government. In-depth face-to-face and Zoom interviews were conducted with the owners and/or the managing directors of the SMEs to gather the relevant data. The results indicated a significant and a positive correlation between cognitive trust antecedents of expertise, reputation, flexibility, formal communication and long-term orientation. In particular, the impact of expertise and reputation was found to be the most dominant in establishing and driving long-term orientation with the analyzed business network.

Keywords: Cognitive Trust, Business-to-Business Network, SMEs, Qatari Construction Sector.

Survey and Model for data governance with respect to operational needs in different process domains

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Abstract

According to previous studies, there are new trends, which add complexity and volatility to business domains. With the help of an effective data governance model and by implementing process standardization these challenges can be successfully tackled. The aim of this paper is to investigate the future preconditions with regard to master data management processes and to assess to what extent a one-fit master data governance model can be developed. To meet these objectives, the research design of this qualitative case study comprised three focus groups with participants from North America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region and five individual interviews from Germany, China, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States. The participants were interviewed based on 18 Semi-structured interview questions. A combination of a deductive qualitative analysis and inductive qualitative analysis approach was used to extract data from and derive a category system. Most of the findings were consistent with the previous literature and similarities were seen in the trends reported by several scholars. However, there were some innovative findings discovered such as for external trends: market disruption, protectionism & trade, EDI, and client's CRM. Internal trends: employees preferred to have more internal communication with the business domains across geographical regions. The business demands category “completeness and correct” and the master data dimensions category “volume and reuse” were innovative findings compared to the literature.
To conclude, the research could determine the future requirements of the business domains, and a one-fit data governance model was developed which promotes more standardization and more top-down communication in the organization and provides flexibility to different regions to alter some processes based on idiosyncratic regional and cultural influences.

Keywords: Master data process management, standardization, business domains, data governance, future trends.

FINANCE, ECONOMICS AND LAW

Capital structure and firm efficiency: does firm size matter

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University of Lagos

Abstract

Capital structure and firm's efficiency have been one of the major topics discussed in corporate financial parlance due to its importance for the survival and sustainability of firms. Several theories such as the pecking order theory, trade-off theory, agency cost theory, and capital structure irrelevant theory have been employed to delineate the relationship between capital structure and firm efficiency. This study examined the moderating effect of firm size on capital structure and firm efficiency of listed firms on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. The data for eighteen (18) financial firms and forty-four (44) non-financial firms was obtained for the period 2010 and 2017. For this study, the panel fully modified ordinary least square method (PFMOLS) was employed because all the variables are stationary at first difference and are cointegrated. More so, the PFMOLS can rectify the problem of serial correlation and heteroscedasticity and give an optimal estimate. The outcome of the study revealed that firm size has a moderating effect on the relationship between capital structure and efficiency of non-financial firms, while it has no moderating effect on the relationship between capital structure and firm efficiency of financial firms in the country.

Keywords: Capital Structure, firm size, firm efficiency, financial firms, non-financial firms

Firm specific and macroeconomic determinants of capital structure

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Abstract

The interdependency between capital structure (financing decision), profitability, and ultimately the going concern of firms either financial and non-financial has ripple effect on the overall economy and this has made it imperative for finance experts and academic researchers to continue to dig deep into its influencing factors to scientifically contribute to this ever topical and germane issue. This study examined the firm-specific and macro-economic determinants of capital structure of financial and non-financial firms listed on the exchange. The study obtained data from eighteen (18) financial firms and forty-four (44) non-financial firms for the period 2010 and 2017. The study employed the panel fully modified ordinary least square method after carrying out the stationarity test and test of cointegration. Findings from the study revealed that earnings per share, liquidity, firm size, and revenue growth are the key firm-specific determinants of capital structure for both financial and non-financial firms are. The paper also found that macroeconomic determinants of capital structure for non-financial firms include real effective exchange rate and banking sector development while that of financial firms are GDP growth rate, inflation, and real effective exchange rate and banking sector development.

Keywords: Capital Structure, Firm Specific, Macroeconomic, Financial Firms, Non-Financial Firms.

Financial literacy: a banking sector corporate social responsibility agenda in Nigeria

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Abstract

The role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in promoting financial literacy has recently become a topic of scholarly debate in academic literature. Few researchers that attempted to study financial literacy failed to investigate the integration of financial literacy as a potential CSR agenda in the Nigerian financial institutions. This study investigates how banks in Nigeria could potentially use financial literacy as an intrinsic construct to integrate CSR as a mainstream agenda and philosophy for knowledge-based acquisition to improve financial literacy in the Nigerian society. The study therefore, presents financial literacy as an adopted CSR agenda in the Nigerian banking sector that could create shared value for the banks and the Nigerian society. Data were sourced through the engagement of CSR directors of selected banks operating in Nigeria and a key regulatory body of the financial institutions in Nigeria using semi-structured interview to identify the viability of adopting financial literacy as CSR agenda. The underpinning theoretical framework adopted in this study is stakeholders and social exchange theory. Stakeholder is defined as any individual or group that can affect or be affected by the realization of the organisation's objectives. They are individuals or groups, which have a legitimate interest in the substantive aspect of the corporate activities; whose interest are of intrinsic value. Social exchange theorist posits that, human behavior is an exchange of rewards between the actors, the investing public and the banks. These theories are used to present argument for the banking sector in engaging in CSR using financial literacy. Findings revealed that, the cash-driven nature of the Nigerian economy and the lack of readiness of institutions and government agencies to support CSR agenda of the banking sector to be the major challenges faced by banks for the implementation of financial literacy programmes in Nigeria. The study recommended that socially conscious leadership in the banking sector could create shared responsibilities by stakeholders which could potentially change the CSR narratives from philanthropic gestures to a more sustainable business model beneficial to the Nigerian economy.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Financial Literacy, Shared Value, Financial Inclusion, Socially Conscious Leadership.

The importance of applying forensic accounting and auditing to reduce financial fraud in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

Scams are an increasingly serious global problem, inaccurate financial statements give a misleading picture of returns and the financial situation of the company. Decisions taken by investors and other users of financial statements made on the basis of incorrect financial information, cause huge damage to users of information, but also the general public. The financial crisis and trends in corporate governance have led to a rapid increase in fraud, which threatened the confidence of a large number of user's needs in the financial information disclosed in the financial statements. Reliable and credible information presented enables users, managers, business owners and potential investors to manage corporate governance more effectively. Due to flexible accounting regulatory framework, brought into question the quality of accounting information presented in the financial statements and the effectiveness of corporate governance. This paper deals with the role and importance of forensic audit in corporate governance and detection of fraud in the companies. Preventive actions of internal control and internal audit are among the most important functions. The paper shows how well-placed internal controls and internal auditors lead to fraud prevention and deterrence. Auditor education in the field of internal, external and forensic audits in order to detect financial fraud and build a system of education that would respond to any changes in the labor market is the most significant measure to increase auditor efficiency and investor expectations.

Keywords: scams, manipulation of financial reports, internal oversight, education, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Circle International

Managing Business Cycle in a Recession: A Case for Nigeria

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University of Vitez

Abstract

This paper sought to evaluate the most appropriate mix of stabilization policies needed for economic recovery in Nigeria. This comes against the backdrop of the recent economic recession in the country, which resulted from the series of containment measures implemented to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The study utilized the framework of a vector autoregressive model with exogenous variables (VARX), to simulate the impact of varying combinations of monetary and fiscal policy options on the outlook of real economic growth in the near term. In addition, the study evaluated the impact of the policy mix on real economic growth, under conditions of stable crude oil price and inflation. Findings from the conditional outlooks of real economic growth suggests that expansionary monetary policy could be more effective in pulling Nigeria out of the recession when compared with fiscal expansion. The study recommends the need for the monetary authority to further stimulate broad money growth to rise above its current level, to as high as 50.0 per cent. This would accelerate the recovery process, which may see the economy record early growth by 2021Q2. Also, addressing structural reforms that can relax supply constraints, can engender a reduction in transport costs, minimize delays and generate employment.

Keywords: Stabilization Policies; Business Cycle; Economic Growth; Monetary Policy; Fiscal Policy; Conditional Outlook.

Comparative analysis of the sector compatibility of the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union in the function of the convergence of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards EU

Edin Arnaut, Jelena Ljubas Ćurak and Siniša Dukić
University of Vitez

Abstract

The problem encountered by transition countries or developing countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the process of European integration, requires a certain degree of sectoral harmonization of its economy with the European Union economy in the function of convergence towards the EU at the macroeconomic level.

The aim of this research is to problematize the importance of meeting the conditions and criteria of convergence for joining the European Union, by analyzing the sectoral compatibility of the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the economy of the European Union, using the comparative analysis method. In the continuation of the paper a comparative analysis of the economic structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the economy of the European Union will be presented, with a view to determining their structural coherence.

The application of the Krugman specialization index and the Balassin specialization index will result in a clearer and more transparent comparative analysis of the structural coherence of the BaH economy with respect to the European Union's economy.

Keywords: comparative analysis, economic policies, macroeconomic indicators, Krugman specialization index, Balassin index of specialization, Bosnia and Herzegovina, EU.

Legal Status of Territorially Concentrated Minority Communities within European States

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Polytechnic in Požega

Abstract

The aim of the research is to analyse the legal status of territorially concentrated minority communities within European states, without considering the issue of the position of immigrant and migrant minorities (guest workers) and refugees. The paper starts from the basic hypothesis that the rights of territorially concentrated minorities depend on the position of the minority territorial units in which they are concentrated. From the research methodology, the following methods were used: normative method, secondary research, comparative method, method of analysis, statistical and historical method and method of proof. Special emphasis is placed on minority rights based on territorial concentration, as part of the human rights corps. The fact is that these rights are exercised, for the most part below the state level. The authors point out that in addition to minority rights, there are also the rights of territorial units, i.e. regions (community rights) on the basis of which an individual can more easily exercise their rights. Using the comparative method, the constitutional position of minority territorial units in Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, France and Croatia is analysed. Minority territorial units, in most cases, represent the territories of historical settlement of autochthonous national minorities. Their position is determined on the basis of ethnic and linguistic characteristics. The authors come to the conclusion that in European multinational states most minority territorial units have a special autonomy status and there are differences with regard to their constitutional position. The position and rights of territorially concentrated national minorities in selected European states depend on the position and autonomy of minority territorial units within different states.

Keywords: autonomy, minority communities, special autonomy status, rights of national minorities, territorially concentrated minorities, constitution.

Knowledge of anti-discrimination legislation and readiness to seek anti-discrimination protection of respondents employed in the system of science and higher education of the Republic of Croatia

Dragana Bjelić Gaćeša and Antun Marinac
Polytechnic in Požega

Abstract

This paper aims to examine if research participants, Croatian science and higher education system employees, are acquainted with anti-discrimination legislation and if so – to what extent. It also aims to examine if they are prepared to seek protection against discrimination.

Empirical research was conducted in pursuit of the above objective. Employees of two Croatian universities – the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek and the University of Rijeka – were selected as research participants.
Data was collected using an *online* questionnaire hosted on Google Drive in the period from 29 May to 21 June 2017. A list of contacts containing e-mail addresses of the research participants was compiled using official websites of components of the above universities and their chancelleries, allowing identification of a total of 2958 addresses specifically 1506 at the University of Rijeka and 1452 addresses at the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek.

An analysis of the empirical research results revealed the following:

1) Only 21.43% of the research participants are aware that the Anti-Discrimination Act exists in the Republic of Croatia and familiar with its contents.
2) Only 15.43% of the research participants who were discriminated against based on age reacted in some way (by contacting their employer, consulting with a trade union representative, contacting the ombudsperson, or bringing an action before a court)
3) Only 13.53% of the research participants would certainly turn to a court in cases of future exposure to age discrimination even after exhausting all other options
4) The most frequently cited reasons for avoidance of courts are distrust of courts and duration of proceedings.

Keywords: discrimination, anti-discriminatory legislation, protection against discriminatory, science and higher education system, Republic of Croatia

DIGITAL MARKETING, TECHNOLOGY, HR, HIGHER EDUCATION.

Circle
International

A (reflective) Journey to Academic Maturity

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Abstract

In 2015 it seemed the perfect time to pursue my PhD. I had a safe workplace and no other responsibilities. However, the more time passed and the deeper I got into the work and what it meant, I started to have doubts and felt overwhelmed and not ready for a journey so demanding for the next few years. Then, some lifechanging events (both positive and negative) demanded my full attention and I saw this as a good reason to pause and step back from my PhD journey, questionable if I would ever pursue it again. Five years later, amidst a global pandemic, a new start-up idea made me look back into the world of electronic- and mobile Health, which was the core of my PhD topic back then. The research I had to do for the start-up led me back to the idea of continuing my PhD. But this time it was and is different in terms of motivation, engagement and understanding the overall idea of academic research and my own topic alike. Reflecting on that, it is easy to understand why: there is a big difference between when time seemed to be right from a theoretical perspective and when time actually is right from a personal perspective. What I had gone through without knowing (and actually acknowledging just now) was the inner process of academic maturity. A process that equipped me with what I needed in order to be able to pursue that complicated and demanding road of a PhD. Methodologically this essay is based on evocative autoethnography as it is reflecting on the authors personal experience and thinking.

Keywords: Reflection, Doctoral, PhD, Journey, Essay

Optimal fiscal policy and business cycle in Nigeria

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Abstract

Given the imperative of achieving macroeconomic stability and spurring economic growth, this paper investigated the optimal fiscal policy that is consistent with the level of economic activity in Nigeria, as well as determined the nature of fiscal cyclicality (with a focus on the dynamics of public debt) in Nigeria. To achieve this, it adopted an eclectic approach, combining a time-variant state-dependent model and an unrestricted Vector-Autoregressive (VAR) model, using data spanning 2010Q1-2020Q3. The estimation of a 3-variable VAR model revealed that fiscal policy was countercyclical in the period, and that fiscal multipliers are larger in periods of economic distress, compared to times of economic boom. The paper also established that public debt in Nigeria should increase by 5.3 per cent on a quarterly basis, consistent with the rate of growth of the economy. Consequently, it recommended the utilization of debt policy to drive economic growth, particularly in economic downturns, and for the Debt Management Office (DMO) to consider integrating the 5.3 per cent value in its framework, to ensure the fiscal sustainability and macroeconomic stability.

Keywords: Fiscal policy, Business cycle, Debt, Fiscal sustainability, Aggregate demand, Output growth, Macroeconomic stability

Sales Tech Infusion: a case study in the medical device industry

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Abstract

Over the years, sales in the BtoB have become increasingly complex, strategic, value adding and technology dependent. Today's salespeople can rely on a myriad of technological tools, apps, programs, devices to conduct their activities and support their job, and companies are investing conspicuous resources on them. However, these technological investments are often under-utilised or misused. On the other hand, the Sales Technology Infusion (STI) concerns the maximum awareness, use and integration of the technological tools from the salesforce, allowing to obtain better sales performances and customer needs satisfaction.
This study investigates the issue of STI with respect to the organizational change in progress, the evolution of the salesperson's role, personal orientations and objectives, with a single case study approach, involving a leading multinational company in the medical device industry. The sales management, through in-depth interview and data triangulation, allows to trace the organizational solutions, the salesforce management and the transforming role of the salespeople in interaction with sales technologies. The analysis of the codes and themes from the various data sources, related to literature, brings out relevant insight into the current use of sales technology in this industry.
Findings suggest that the use of sales technology by salespeople can be implemented and maximized according to the potential and needs of the salesforce. The cultural perspective prevails over the instrumental one: selling therefore remains seen as a phenomenon consisting of people and their interactions, while technology mediates interactions and supports sellers in the transformation of information into knowledge.
The STI, together with the concept of Sales Enablement, can be useful to overcome the conception of technology as a set of tools. Furthermore, the case analysis, offers ideas and considerations for organizations in the implementation and infusion of sales technology, as a lever for maximizing sales results and effectiveness in satisfying customer needs, essential in today's settings intensive sales market.

Keywords: sales technology, salespeople, sales management, sales technology infusion, sales process

Exploring the Applicability of Artificial Intelligence in Transnational Higher Education

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a rapidly evolving phenomenon that is increasingly discussed in terms of its transformative impact in education. In the context of specific management challenges faced by TNE providers this paper explores the application of AI. The integration of AI can have a significant impact on a wide range of educational processes that can enhance the sustainability and development of TNE programmes by improving efficiencies and transforming management and administration, student recruitment and pedagogical processes.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, machine learning, transnational education, higher education, adaptive software, intelligent tutor systems.

Circle International

Students' entrepreneurship intention vs supporting by the families and close relations

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Abstract
Entrepreneurship is one of the most desired determinants of every economy in the world. The development of the economies depends on many determinants and entrepreneurship is treat as one of the most influenced the development. Most innovative and creative solutions are given by the highly educated people who are involved in the company's activities or creation of new ventures. Students are recognized as a group belonging to a labour force that is expected to present entrepreneurial activities. This group is the object of the research undertaken in this paper.
The paper's objective is to find out if the students can rely on the other close people in their new venture creation idea. The two methods of research are used: analysis of the poll questionnaires responses and statistical analysis of the data from the respondent's answers.
The research we have made are cross country recognize of the students' entrepreneurship intentions determinants. The wide range of the determinants were examined. Referring to the paper the international group of respondents were asked several questions. One of the determinants, that will be tested in the text is the support of the members of the families and close relatives in the business creating and developing. The cross-country analysis presents opinion of the students from several different countries.

Keywords: entrepreneurship intentions, determinants of entrepreneurship, family support

Application of data mining to recommender systems

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Abstract

In the last few decades, globalization, hyper-production of all kinds of goods, and most of all, global IT and online sales have brought new opportunities for customers. Stores are no longer limited by the size of their sales space, storefronts, and shelves. Shelves in physical stores are now represented by menu listings and links in virtual stores that can be "indefinitely" large. Making the right decision based on the information we get from a few friends or acquaintances is no longer possible. Now, much more useful information is needed, i.e., other people's opinions and experiences (which we do not know) to make the right decision. The development of recommender systems has caught the attention of many experts from a variety of disciplines, including data mining, statistical and mathematical methods, machine learning, and human-computer interaction research. The referral system is a specialized part of filtering (data mining), based on finding, things, or objects that might be useful or interesting to the user.

This paper will outline the principles of recommender systems and provide simple examples that illustrate specific problems. Through the appliance of classification methods, it was shown which referral systems exist and on what basis differ. Methods used by these systems are described, but no specific programming algorithms were introduced. The "black box" method was used, which is typical for the analysis of complex systems.

Keywords: recommender systems, collaborative filtering, personalization, survey.

Circle International

A comprehensive study on the elements of a smart education system and the role of IoT in smart education system

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Abstract

The all-embracing trend of digitalization contributes to making lives in cities easier, more efficient, and more sustainable. These benefits are in tandem with the mission of the global movement of ‘Smart Cities’ for which digitalization can be regarded as the driving force. IoT is one such revolutionary technology that is used in multiple socio-economic realms including smart education changing the educational landscape into a more advanced, modern, interactive and personalized way of learning and teaching exemplified in the time of the current pandemic.
Based on secondary data, this research paper presents the elements of a smart education system. Furthermore, it aims to explore the role of digital technologies in the design of a smart education system. In particular, the still ongoing qualitative exploratory research is guided by two objectives: 1. Investigating the contribution of smart pedagogy towards the smart education system; 2. Exploring the role of IoT to improve the traditional education system. The research method of a case study applied semi-structured interviews as its research technique. The sample members for this research paper are IT experts, professors, and students from different universities. The empirical data are analyzed via deductive qualitative analysis. The keys findings of the research indicated that smart pedagogy is still an evolving field with many European universities being successful in integrating IoT with their education system which resulted in smart campuses, smart classrooms, smart labs, etc. Initial conclusions refer to existing challenges of integrating IoT into the education system such as security, privacy, cost, management. The empirical findings are provided and conceptualized.

Keywords: Smart Education, Digitalization, IoT, Smart Pedagogy

Circle International

Cultural heritage between tradition and innovation: Technology as enabler of the visitors' experience

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate whether edutainment, engagement and ambience can be considered as suitable dimensions of visitors' experience at a museum that has a high level of technology adoption. Furthermore, it seeks to analyze whether visitor satisfaction influence loyalty intention and word of mouth. A structured questionnaire was developed, and data were collected at the Ara Pacis and Baths of Caracalla in Rome (Italy) via 300 face-to-face interviews. Exploratory Factorial Analysis (EFA) and a structural equation modelling approach were run for the purpose of the study. This study adds to the growing literature on technology adoption in museum experience and suggests that edutainment, engagement and ambience aspects should be considered simultaneously when measuring visitors' experience. Further, it suggests that visitors' satisfaction has a positive influence on loyalty intention and word of mouth. However, the study is site-specific. The application of the study to other museums would allow for wider generalizations to be made from the results obtained.

Keywords: Consumer experience; heritage marketing; technology acceptance; learning; AR

Perspectives for Underprivileged

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Abstract

The corona virus pandemic is teaching us how quickly groups within the society can be separated from each other: for example, by closing borders for health security; mentally by losing a job, an own business, the home; the elderly who live “outsourced” in special homes and who suddenly cannot be visited any more for longer periods; or personal survivors of the crisis having lost close relatives without any final good-bye. They all can be summarized as sub-groups of society which need help – they all are “underprivileged” in comparison to the rest of society which live under “normal” circumstances whatever is understood locally or ethnologically by the definition of “normal”.
Worldwide there could be seen one phenomenon in the daily TV-news from the hotspots around the globe: Isolated people in solidarity clapping hands or singing together with neighbours at open windows or on balconies for those who are/were fighting against Corona or who continued their daily duties at traffic companies, schools, wholesale, retail etc. despite the risks of infection. Those observations in the media show that there is a great demand to be reunited as soon as possible into the daily life of the total of society: it is what in other fields is called “Inclusion”.
This glimpse of hope expressed by clapping hands, singing or making music can be seen as an indicator that the emotional communication in this form is a demonstration of /for an enlarged cluster of research targets for art therapists - and that those actions themselves are already mentally part of healing by art of this specific target group. The media are full of frustrations of people being affected directly or indirectly by Corona. The mental aspect of resilience to solve individual or group therapies is not covered appropriately.
The following contribution will file as example case experienced by the author herself from different other fields of application of art as a therapy which show the scope of possibilities of this academic discipline. The point of the lecture is an interdisciplinary input to show a box of tools of art therapists under the slogan "healing by art" which seems not to be known so much in the public as this discipline is rather young on the one hand side.

*Keywords***:** Art, Art Therapy, Self-Healing, Inclusion, Cluster