

Varazdin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency and University North
in cooperation with
Polytechnic "Nikola Tesla" in Gospić
School of Advanced Social Studies
Faculty of Management University of Warsaw
Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences Sale - Mohammed V University in Rabat
Polytechnic of Medimurje in Čakovec



Economic and Social Development

99th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development

Book of Abstracts

Editors:

Mislav Ante Omazic, Igor Pihir, Mustapha Machrafi

ISSN 1849-7543



9 771849 754003 >

Plitvice Lakes, 15-16 September, 2023

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Title ■ Economic and Social Development (Book of Abstracts), 99th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development

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Publishing Editor ■ Spomenko Kesina, Domagoj Cingula

Publisher ■ Design ■ Print ■ Varazdin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency, Varazdin, Croatia / University North, Koprivnica, Croatia / Polytechnic "Nikola Tesla" in Gospic, Gospic, Croatia / School of Advanced Social Studies, Nova Gorica, Slovenia / Faculty of Management University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland / Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences Sale - Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco / Polytechnic of Medimurje in Cakovec, Cakovec, Croatia

Printing ■ Online Edition

ISSN 1849-7543

The Book is open access and double-blind peer reviewed.

Our past Books are indexed and abstracted by ProQuest, EconBIZ, CPCI (Web of Science) and EconLit databases and available for download in a PDF format from the Economic and Social Development Conference website: <http://www.esd-conference.com>

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SUSTAINABILITY: THE ULTIMATE LUXURY

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ABSTRACT

There is sufficient evidence in the scientific literature on the sustainability and its significance. However, despite the importance and implications of this phenomenon, there is a lack of literature on sustainability and ESGs within luxury industry. Therefore, the main goal of this research paper is to find a way to understand ESG approaches within the luxury companies. For better understanding of ESG practices, ETFs – investment instrument that comprises the luxury brands by different industries, are analyzed. Hence, the research utilized Refinitiv, an American-British global provider of financial market data and infrastructure. It contributes to the scientific body of knowledge in the context of sustainability practices within luxury sector. The implications of this study will be especially important to high-end companies in properly recognizing, comprehending, and using the findings to better organize their sustainability approaches. Luxury companies should also be aware of the significance of ESGs and their crucial position among investors. The examination of ESGs will allow luxury companies to evaluate and strengthen their sustainability approaches and help them identify which parts of their strategy need to be improved to provide company sustainability.

Keywords: *luxury, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, ESGs, ETFs*

LEGAL ETHICS, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND THE LAW OF AI

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ABSTRACT

Today, the use of AI in public administration raises important ethical and legal questions. Clear principles must be established to guarantee legality, data protection, equal treatment, transparency and respect for the fundamental rights of users. However, the current ethical approach is insufficient, requiring further legal regulation. It is essential to involve all

stakeholders, including governments, companies, civil society and technical experts, to promote dialogue and international cooperation in the governance of AI. UNESCO has highlighted the need to regulate the changes brought about by AI and to put in place ethical values that frame this technology. Political decision-makers are gradually becoming aware of the importance of regulating and legislating on the issue. Clear legal texts are needed to regulate and guarantee the rights of users and stakeholders in the use of AI in public administration. This paper aims to understand the impact of AI usage on public administration and raises a set of questions related to AI law, particularly from the perspective of administrative law.

Keywords: *Administrative Law, Artificial Intelligence Law, Data Policy, Ethics, Legal Principles*

AVAILABILITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN THE CONTEXT OF POPULATION AGING

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ABSTRACT

The Slovak Republic is in the golden age from the perspective of the demographic structure, as the productive population reaches its peak, as well as the ratio of the population in the productive age to the population in the pre- and post-productive age. However, in a few decades, the Slovak Republic will be affected by one of the most rapid aging of the population within the countries of the European Union, which will bring several challenges. We can prepare for some challenges, but some are already unavoidable. The changed demographic structure is mainly associated with expenditures on the social and health system, which are experiencing rapid growth causing pressure to strengthen segments such as long-term care, barrier-free premises as well as healthcare. Improving health care and a better quality of life bring results in the form of longer average life expectancy for both men and women. While in 1993, 64-year-old women lived for another 17 years, in 2019 it was 20 years. For men, there was an increase from 14 years to 16 years. According to the long-term forecast, in the year 2100 the life expectancy will increase for 64-year-old women to 28 years and for men to 26 years, which raises the question of how to ensure enough high-quality and affordable health and social long-term care for people dependent on essential help. However, aging will also affect caregivers, causing a shortage of them. In the article, we set ourselves the goal of identifying long-term care providers as well as applicants in the context of the effects of aging. Based on the above, in the article we have outlined the possibilities of using technology for remote care and continuous supervision of a vulnerable group. Innovations in technology complement the social service system and give family members a sense of peace.

Keywords: *Seniors, Social services, Demographic aging, Slovak Republic*

ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENT OF CROATIAN COMPANIES IN EDUCATION AND INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL AS A FACTOR OF THE COMPANY'S SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

The future development of modern economies depends on the ability of individuals, managers, and creative teams within corporations to learn and consistently enhance their knowledge, creativity, and innovation. The increasing competition and constant changes to which expanding social communities must adapt by improving their skills and knowledge paint the foundational picture of the operating environment. The quantity of a company's assets is becoming less important, while the skill of employees in generating added value for companies is gaining significance. As a result, the pivotal factors for success in the global market are now people, their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Consequently, this paper aims to underscore the significance of investing in education and intellectual capital to ensure successful business operations. Empirical research conducted on a sample of 150 employees from Croatian companies has substantiated the research hypotheses. The research concludes that companies enhance their satisfaction and efficiency by investing in the professional development of their employees. Nonetheless, companies in Croatia do not invest sufficiently in education and professional training, despite the crucial role continuous training plays in achieving workplace efficiency and satisfaction. Employees frequently take it upon themselves to invest in their own ongoing education and professional development.

Keywords: Education, Intellectual Capital, Business Investment, Business Success

BRAND COMMUNICATION OF MEDITERRANEAN TOURIST DESTINATIONS THROUGH PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS: YOUTUBE CHANNEL OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The remarkable evolution of digital technology in recent years has drastically transformed tourism marketing, ushering in a new era in which tourist destinations around the world use the power of digital platforms to promote their brand identity. This paper explores the impact and effectiveness of promotional videos as a form of brand communication for Mediterranean tourist destinations. The purpose of the study is to analyze the promotional videos used by the most popular Mediterranean countries on their official YouTube channels and evaluate their success in engaging and attracting potential tourists. The methodology includes conducting an analysis of the YouTube channels of the most popular Mediterranean tourist countries, with a focus on the frequency of their posts and indicators of viewer engagement. A quantitative approach was used to measure the number of videos created, views, and number of subscribers. Performance is compared with the ranking of other countries and channels. The findings of the paper emphasize the power of promotional videos in improving the perceived image of tourist destinations. Active interaction strategies such as comment responses and regular updates contribute to the overall success of brand communication. This study offers new insights into the growing field of destination marketing through promotional videos. It posits YouTube as an important platform for successful brand communication and emphasizes the importance of interaction to increase viewer engagement and tourism demand. The findings can serve as a guide for marketing strategies for tourism entities looking to harness the power of social media and video content to effectively communicate their brand.

Keywords: Brand communication, YouTube, Promotion, Engagement

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

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ABSTRACT

The crisis associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has had unprecedented consequences on the labour markets despite massive measures aimed at supporting economies and labour markets. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing labour market inequalities, making it even harder for people from vulnerable groups to keep or find jobs. Non-standard employment is typically associated with vulnerable groups and it significantly worsens their situation in case of any crisis almost immediately after its outbreak. Prevention of a situation

when short-term unemployment turns into structural and/or long-term unemployment should be a key policy worldwide. Especially for young people, a priority has to be to ensure that the harmful prolongation of their unemployment period is avoided. In this context, it is important to emphasize policies and measures focused on improving skills. The aim of the paper is to identify and summarize labour market developments associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on vulnerable groups in the labour market.

Keywords: COVID-19, Labour Market, Vulnerable groups

SOCIAL IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICIES ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

Within the project “Impact of public policies at family and work life quality and demographic situation in Croatia – spaces of change”, the association B.a.B.e. and the Department of Sociology of the University of Zadar conducted research on existing measures and indicators of public policies aimed at balancing the private and public spheres. Existing measures and indicators at the European, national and regional level were analysed, as well as strategic documents and legislative frameworks of the European Union and the Republic of Croatia. Also, regional government units were directly contacted. Based on the report of the aforementioned research, in this paper we provide an overview of the most important findings on the social impact of existing public policies regarding work-life balance of parents of minor children. Work-life balance concept is multidimensional and includes the relationship between the dynamics within the household and the labour market. It is very important to contextualise the above issue and take into account the socio-political framework. This paper focuses on the broader macro context, that is, on public policies that the state does or does not implement. The analysis of public policies at all levels shows the adequate detection of certain problems in the context of achieving a balance between the family and work spheres of women and men, as well as the activities that would need to be implemented. However, there is not a single document that would unify all the existing and propose new public policies that in any way affect the balancing of parents' family and work life. Following all of the above, this paper presents challenges and potential solutions for the purpose of improving the position of parents of minor children on the labour market.

Keywords: legislative framework, public policies, social impact, work-life balance

GENDER BUDGET AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

Within this paper, the state of budgets of local government units in Croatia and the possibilities of implementation of gender budgeting within public budget processes will be reviewed and discussed, taking into account theories of gender budgeting and current trends in the theoretical and practical consideration of the implementation of gender budgeting as a standard. In this sense public budget is a political document that distributes public funds and enters the space of work, opportunities and private and public life of the population through the framework of social and political turmoil. This paper points out the lack of a gender dimension within public budgeting, where the unequal position between men and women is ignored, including their different needs and different opportunities within society. It also highlights that putting gender budgeting with its social impact in the focus of social public policies would aim to close the gender gap between man and women in all areas of the society; including improving work-life balance for working parents. In this way, the macroeconomic framework of public budget production would be replaced by emphasizing complex social needs of different members of society, which would enable them to be viewed as equal, active social actors. Although gender-sensitive budgeting as a tool of social policy has been present for many years, in Croatia there have been no significant attempts to apply it, therefore this paper is based on the existing research of a small number of researchers and civil society organizations that have covered this subject in Croatia.

Keywords: *gender budgeting, social impact, work-life balance*

CHANGES IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE CONDITIONS OF INFLATION

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ABSTRACT

The war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic and the new euro currency in the Republic of Croatia are just some of the causes of inflation. Inflation, known as a rise in the general price level, has led to changes in consumer behavior, prompting them to adjust their purchasing decisions and priorities. Consumers faced rapid changes and therefore had to adapt their habits to adapt to the new situation. In the paper, an empirical study was conducted on a sample of 200 respondents, where the goal of the study was to compare consumer habits before inflation and during inflation, i.e. to investigate for which product categories during inflation they spend more money, for which less, and how much money an individual household manages to save. Studying consumer behaviorism in these situations is critical to understanding consumer needs and wants, and understanding these changes allows marketers to adjust their strategies and communications to meet consumer needs. Therefore, it is important to continuously study and analyze changes in the psychological states of consumers in order to better understand their needs and adapt marketing strategies accordingly.

Keywords: *consumer behavior, consumer habits, COVID-19, inflation, survey*

IMPACT OF CRISIS ON RECOGNITION AND MEASUREMENT OF PROVISIONS IN FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Provisions, as a separate item in the financial statements, have an effect on the balance sheet and the profit and loss account and are also published in the notes to the financial statements. The special and significant characteristic of provisions is that they are determined by the company's management, which means that they are subject to assessment. In this sense, there is a great risk and the possibility of manipulation with this position of financial statements in order to achieve the desired financial result. The aim of this work is to determine the practices of reporting provisions on a sample of Croatian companies with a special emphasis on determining and identifying practices in the recognition and measurement of provisions in financial statements in the period before the COVID pandemic and during the pandemic period. Research was conducted on a sample of 53 companies listed on Zagreb Stock Exchange in period 2016-2021. The main goal of the research is to determine whether companies increase or decrease provisions in periods of crisis as well as to analyze impact of provisions on financial result in period before crisis and in crisis period.

Keywords: *crisis, financial manipulations, provisions*

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EXCHANGE RATE REGIMES IN THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: A COINTEGRATION ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The group of Central and Eastern European countries primarily includes developing countries, which are characterized by significant dynamics of macroeconomic indicators in their aim to reach the economic development and standard of living of developed countries in the Western Europe. As developing countries, Central and Eastern European countries traditionally have higher economic growth on average than developed countries in Western Europe. At the same

time, half of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are members of the Euro Area, and the other half of CEE countries have chosen different exchange rate regimes. On the other hand, countries with fixed exchange rates experience stable, but lower economic growth on average, relative to countries with floating exchange rates, which raises the question of whether there is a relationship between the choice of exchange rate regime and economic growth. In the present study, economic growth and exchange rate regimes in the CEE countries are examined in the context of the presence of a long-term relationship between them, using cointegration analysis and the econometric software Eviews for this purpose. Data from the International Monetary Fund's Annual Report on Exchange Arrangements and Exchange Restrictions are used to determine countries "de facto" exchange rate regimes. As regards the exchange rate regimes, a major challenge facing the analysis is to which group the euro area member states should be classified in.

Keywords: Cointegration Analysis, Economic Growth, Exchange Rate Regimes

ANALYSIS OF THE ESG INDEX OF COMPANIES LISTED ON THE ZAGREB STOCK EXCHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The binding new legal regulation, Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, CSR Directive, which comes into force at the beginning of 2024, prescribes the reporting obligation for large, small and medium-sized companies that are subjects of public interest, as well as listed issuers are obliged to report on the impact companies on sustainability and the impact of sustainability on development, business results and the company's position. Publishers who will have the so-called green policies will more easily attract investors and funds from EU funds, and those "non-green" companies will not be able to be financed from incentive loans and loans (projects) of the EU. Non-transparent companies that do not report on their sustainability will have difficulty accessing loans, will pay higher interest rates on loans, potential investors will not invest in companies that do not report on sustainability. Therefore, the new regulation seeks to prevent "greenwashing", and sustainability reporting prevents this. The aim of this paper is to prove to what extent Croatian companies, which are listed on the Zagreb Stock Exchange, are transparent about their sustainability by measuring the ESG index using the HANFA Guidelines. The conducted analysis determined that the total sustainability index for 80 companies listed on the Zagreb Stock Exchange (those that have and those that have not published sustainability reports) is 1.40, which is significantly below the average of 2.5, while the highest possible index would be 5. From the obtained results, it can be concluded that companies listed on the Zagreb Stock Exchange do not sufficiently conduct socially responsible operations or report on sustainability.

Keywords: ESG index, sustainable business, socially responsible business, sustainability reporting, listed companies

THE ATTITUDE OF AGRONOMISTS AND FAMILY FARMERS ON THE USE OF SATELLITE TECHNOLOGIES IN AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The challenges of food safety, green economy, circular bioeconomy and climate change mitigation have become additional challenges of agricultural production. Overcoming the above mentioned challenges inevitably involves technological, technical, environmental, economic and social aspects of agricultural production. At the same time, the integration of technologies into digital agriculture represents a considerable potential for improving the efficiency, productivity and sustainability of agricultural production at the farm and global level. However, due to large differences in the capacities of applying digital technologies between small and medium-sized farmers and large agricultural producers, the scenario of digitalization of agriculture in rural areas is very uncertain and questionable. Services using satellite systems have a special place in the precise and smart agriculture. For stakeholders in Croatia, several different services are available. The possibility of using satellite services, as well as stakeholders' attitudes about them, are expected to be related to the price, the type and amount of data within the service, the type of production, the size of production areas and the IT literacy of service users. Therefore, a survey was conducted on the possibility of using satellite services and technologies in agricultural production in Croatia. The target group of respondents were agronomists and/or owners of family farms, irrespective of age and agricultural education. In the survey, a series of questions determined their opinion on the possibility and willingness to use the services of satellite technologies in agricultural

production, with special emphasis on the potential advisory role of agronomists and the reasons for possible non-use of satellite technologies. In total, the answers of 229 respondents were collected, of which 56 are agronomists. The conclusion is that there are great opportunities in increasing the use of satellite services, that stakeholders are interested in education, especially in courses and seminars and advisory education, both with an agronomist and with an internet advisory service. In this, the role of agronomists is very important, but there are significant differences in the views of agronomists and other stakeholders, which should definitely be taken into account when creating a strategy and realizing the digitalization of agriculture.

Keywords: advisory, applications, education in agriculture, extension services, training

MEASURING EFFICIENCY OF MUNICIPALITIES IN NORTH OF CROATIA USING DATA ENVELOPMENT ANALYSIS MODEL

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the efficiency of municipalities situated in the north of the Republic of Croatia is measured. The research is focused on municipalities from the counties of Međimurje and Varaždin in the year 2022. The quality of work of local government entities is significant for regional development as it depends not only on the development of the economy but also on the quality of life in that particular area. In the Republic of Croatia, local self-government units are municipalities and cities. In this paper solely the efficiency of municipalities is measured due to significant differences in the work of municipalities and cities. The most important document for each municipality is the municipal budget, which is proposed by the municipal mayor and adopted by the municipal council for each calendar year. The budget determines the financial plan, with a report on budget execution issued at the end of the fiscal year. The data used for the purposes of measuring efficiency includes information retrieved from these reports and the data on the number of inhabitants of each municipality. The scientific methods used are data envelopment analysis with descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient as statistical methods. The CCR model is used for data envelopment analysis. Variables, more precisely, inputs and outputs, are analyzed using statistical methods, followed by measuring efficiency by using the data envelopment analysis model. The obtained efficiency is additionally analyzed and compared with the given inputs and outputs. By further analysis, projections of improvement are calculated, providing each inefficient municipality with a set of guidelines on how to improve its efficiency.

Keywords: municipality, data envelopment analysis, efficiency

AUDITOR ROTATION DETERMINANTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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ABSTRACT

Ethical behavior and auditor independence are pillars of quality external audit. How long an auditor can continuously audit his client's financial statements is a question that has been debated for many years by the auditing profession, especially regulators. Those who advocate the mandatory rotation of auditors believe that longer mandates of auditors reduce the quality of external audits. Such positions are based, due to the increasingly long time intervals of audit engagements, on the auditor's increasing dependence on the client whose financial statements are being audited. Multiannual engagements of auditors with the same client are a suitable framework for the greater financial interests of the auditors, which inevitably put their independence, and thus quality of the work performed, to the test. Frequent corporate scandals for a reason repeatedly raise the question of trust in the auditing profession. In this regard, the need for a faster rotation of auditors emerges, among other things, as an effective measure to ensure auditor independence and audit quality. The rotation of auditors and the desired time frame for client retention are influenced by numerous factors, among which, for the purposes of this research, are analyzed: indebtedness, classification of the audit firm in the "Big Four", return on assets and opinion of the independent auditor. In this context, an appropriate research model was designed and tested on companies based in the Republic of Croatia that are listed on the Zagreb Stock Exchange.

Keywords: external audit, auditor rotation, determinants of auditor rotation, Republic of Croatia

TOURISM, NATIONAL PARKS, AND CLIMATE CHANGE: IS THERE A NEED FOR AN EU DIRECTIVE ON OVER-TOURISM?

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ABSTRACT

The article is written as a conceptual paper reflecting on interrelation of nature protection and tourism in the context of European Green Deal. A focus of the article is the problem of overtourism present in specific EU destinations and in Croatia as a whole. The argument supporting the hypothesis that Croatia as a country is burdened with overtourism is linked to the statistical evidence showing that tourism contributes roughly 25% of country's GDP. Overtourism is perceived as structural problem inherent to unregulated flow of tourists in Europe and additionally supported by chaotic contraction of public sector in transitional economies. Thus, it is suggested that overtourism is an EU problem. The context of European Green Plan as a strategic EU development choice in the era of climate change is addressed. Within this context the growth of tourist visits to National Park "Plitvička jezera" is discussed

as an empirical example of overtourism where the context of European Green Plan, two Directives on Biodiversity and overtourism interrelate. Cases of overtourism in Barcelona, Venice, Amsterdam and Prag are also tackled as examples of scope of overtourism problems in Europe. It is concluded that body of secondary laws which ensure the rule of law in the EU are tools to regulate (negative) externalities immanent to overtourism. Therefore, a Decision on overtourism in Croatia and an EU Direction on overtourism is suggested.

Keywords: *Nature protection, overtourism, European Green Deal, National Park “Plitvička jezera, Decision, Direction, European Union*

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CARING IN THE UK

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ABSTRACT

This study was commissioned to examine how COVID-19 has affected caregiving in the UK. For the examination of the subject, the author reviewed the relevant literature and examined the secondary data provided by the Office for National Statistics (2020). The investigation revealed an issue with the COVID-19's effect on caring in the UK in April 2020. During this time, males did contribute more to providing care, but women continued to provide more care. Despite the fact that both men and women who supported someone living outside of their household in April 2020 compared to the prior years experienced poor mental health, the proportion of women who suffered from mental health was higher than men, which was highlighted as an additional issue when 65% of sandwich carers were women. The COVID-19 epidemic clearly had a significant effect on women who provided informal care. The three implications listed below are those that suggests. First, expanding supermarkets' delivery capabilities would help to lower caregiver stress levels because during the first month of the lockdown, shopping was the most important form of support. Second, additional government assistance for sandwich caregivers must be taken into consideration, such as online video/phone counseling for people with mental illnesses. Third, the government's responsibility for increasing public understanding of shared childcare duties between men and women needs to be addressed. The research is limited by the lack of assurance regarding the sincerity with which male survey participants stated their emotions at the time they completed the survey questionnaires. Future study may need to figure out how to account for the fact that men are less likely to talk about their stress and worries during the data analysis process.

Keywords: *Caring, COVID-19, mental health, well-being*

THE COLOR OF DENG XIAOPING CAT: CAPITALIST CHINA OR SOCIALIST CHINA?

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ABSTRACT

After presenting the developmental success of communist-led China, this article defines the economic system of this country. It argues that its mixture of socialism and capitalism is more efficient than not only China's own past of complete state control over the economy but also more efficient than the modern Western economic model based on neoliberal economic theory. In fact, China's main advantage is a mixture of state interventionism (visible hand) and market (invisible hand), a unique socialist system balanced with many elements of capitalism which allows both hands to function together.

Keywords: *China's economic system, capitalism, socialism, state, state-owned enterprises*

TRANSFORMATION OF MEMORABLE GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCE: APPLICATION OF STORYTELLING AND BRAINSTORMING APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

As the COVID-19 crisis affected changes in tourists' preferences, the purpose of this research was to examine the key elements of tourists' memorable gastronomic experience (MGE). Data collection was carried out in the "User interviews" template of the Mural online platform, in which each of 16 respondents wrote their story about the MGE. The results of the research indicate that the respondents identified the following 7 elements of the MGE: facility aesthetics, service quality, local food, social distance, novelty, enjoyment, and relaxation. The contribution of this research is reflected in the improvement of theoretical knowledge about importance of social distance element in creating MGE for tourists.

Keywords: *gastronomy, transformation, brainstorming*

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOYALTY PROGRAM ELEMENTS IN THE CROATIAN DRUGSTORE MARKET FOR MEMBERS OF GENERATION Z

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper was to investigate which elements of the loyalty programs on the Croatian drugstore market are important to members of Generation Z. For the purposes of the study, qualitative and quantitative research was conducted. For the purposes of qualitative research, in-depth interviews were conducted in which the research instrument was a guide. For the purposes of quantitative research, a survey was conducted in which the research instrument was a questionnaire. In both surveys, a non-probability convenience sample was used, from Generation Z members who have used a loyalty card or a loyalty application. The sample size for the qualitative research was 25 respondents, and for the quantitative research 339 respondents. The results of the research showed that the key elements of the loyalty program on the Croatian drugstore market for members of generation Z are the simple use of points and discounts. Furthermore, it is important for respondents to collect points quickly. When it comes to products with which drugstores want to encourage customers to make additional purchases, for which customers receive multiple points, respondents use the mentioned products to a lesser extent. Respectively, multiple points do not represent a sufficient incentive for respondents. An interesting result is that the respondents don't have enough information about the current benefits of the loyalty programs.

Keywords: drugstore market, Generation Z, loyalty programs

QUEUE MANAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION WITH THE SPEED OF SERVICE IN CROATIAN POST OFFICES

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ABSTRACT

The way customers perceive waiting for service can have adverse effects on their behavioural approach towards the service organization and influence their overall perception of the company negatively. The study aims to predict post office customer satisfaction with the speed of service based on customer characteristics, their satisfaction with postal service clerks, and their satisfaction with the implemented queue management solutions. Data was collected through interviews with 580 postal service customers from 29 post offices, with an equal number interviewed in each office and an almost equal gender distribution (58.4% women;

41.6% men). The questionnaire assessed customer satisfaction with the speed of service, satisfaction with postal service clerks, and satisfaction with the queue management system (queue kiosk visibility, queue kiosk menu clarity, counter plate device visibility, counter plate display visibility, and counter number visibility). Respondents rated their satisfaction on a scale from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 4 (extremely satisfied) for each item. Additional data on gender, age, education, work status, frequency of post office visits, and the type of service used were collected. A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted, with six customer characteristics entered in the first step, five characteristics of the queue management system in the second step, and customer satisfaction with postal service clerks in the third step. The results revealed that the 12 independent variables together significantly predicted customer satisfaction with the speed of service ($R=.56$), explaining 31% of the variance. Satisfaction with the work of postal service clerks and queue kiosk menu clarity were found to have the most significant contributions ($\beta=.46$ and $\beta=.17$ respectively). The findings highlight the importance of customer satisfaction with the service clerks and with the queue management system in determining overall satisfaction with waiting time experience. The research provides valuable insights into modern postal operational management and proposes new guidelines for future studies on customers' satisfaction with the speed of service.

Keywords: queue management, satisfaction with the speed of service, waiting time experience



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