

Varazdin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency and University North
in cooperation with
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Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences Sale - Mohammed V University in Rabat
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Institute for Scientific Work in Varazdin



Economic and Social Development

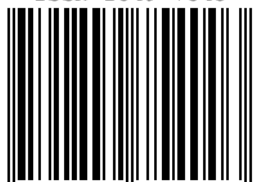
97th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development –
"Modern technologies and innovative concepts in the function of promoting cultural heritage"

Book of Abstracts

Editors:

Anica Hunjet, Abdelhamid Nechad, Mustapha Machrafi

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Varazdin, 1-2 June, 2023

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Economic and Social Development

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THE ROLE OF DIGITAL COMPETENCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN RELATION TO ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

One current issue among young people is a lack of digital entrepreneurship and competence. As a result, digital transformation is the current challenge for the educational system and its development, which entails focusing management through data and technology integration. Thailand has been focused on several strategies, especially building capacity at all levels of the education system and creating a comprehensive information and communications technology strategy. Despite Thailand's expanding educational development, the emerging role of entrepreneurial digital competence and entrepreneurial education has yet to be investigated. Therefore, this paper provides an important contribution by giving an insight into the influence of digital skills and entrepreneurship education, which are crucial components of students' intentions to start a business. The hypothesis tests on these two variables result in a positive relationship with the students' intention to be entrepreneurs. This would imply that a curriculum emphasizing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of digital and entrepreneurial endeavours is required to prepare all Thai students for the twenty-first century.

Keywords: *Digital Competence, Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Intention*

SATISFACTION OF USING QR CODES BY CUSTOMERS ON THE CROATIAN MARKET

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ABSTRACT

The use of QR codes has been on the rise in recent years due to their practicality of use, ease and low cost of production, dynamic form that is effective, but also the ability to monitor analytical data in real-time, which gives companies a simpler and faster way to connect with customers. Although this is an area of mobile marketing that is well accepted in practice and research papers on the subject of the application of QR codes in marketing, and satisfaction

with QR codes exist, these topics are insufficiently researched in the Croatian market. Therefore, this paper provides insight into the acceptance, use, and satisfaction of customers of QR codes in the Croatian market, both theoretically and empirically. The theoretical part of the paper provides an insight into the application of QR codes in mobile marketing and previous research in this field, while the empirical part of the paper presents the results of quantitative descriptive research conducted through a questionnaire as an instrument for collecting primary data on end customers in the Croatian market. So, the main scientific contribution of this paper is in understanding the circumstances and habits of using QR codes by customers in the Croatian market and the satisfaction of using them.

Keywords: QR code, mobile technologies, mobile marketing, customer satisfaction, satisfaction factors

THE CHALLENGES OF THE MINING INDUSTRY'S TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The mining industry has long been marred by many incidents around the world, the number of industrial accidents caused by mining in the four corners of the world are multiple, from the most mediatised to the least mediatised, the mining industry has been the cause of several environmental disasters, human rights abuses...It is therefore one of the industries strongly concerned by sustainable development in the sense that its activities directly impact the environment. Whether at the international or national level, mining companies never cease to multiply their efforts in terms of sustainable development. It is important to note that this is not without interest. Indeed, sustainable development involves various issues for the mining industry. These issues are environmental, social, economic and ethical. They are indeed the reasons why mining companies are increasing their sustainable development practices. Talking about the challenges of the mining industry's transition means analysing the impacts of mining activities on the four dimensions: economic, environmental, social and ethical. In this paper we will analyse the challenges of transitioning the mining industry towards sustainability so that it is economically efficient, socially equitable and environmentally acceptable.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Issues, Mining industry, Transition

ORTHODOX AND HETERODOX VIEWS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development is the result of the evaluation of the impacts of economic models, particularly industrial ones, on the environment and society in general. Thus, for several authors such as Vaillancourt (1990, p.21), sustainable development is a cry from those who work for the protection of the environment and who support the vision that any real economic development must not destroy the environment in the long, medium or short term. It is in this perspective that several authors propose, support and defend a conscientious management of natural resources and recommend the conservation of heritages from one generation to the next in an undegraded state (AUBRY and RAU, 1997). Sustainable development may have slight variations depending on the context in which it is used. The unclear nature of this concept has created several approaches to sustainable development that can be grouped into two: the orthodox approach and the heterodox approaches that have emerged from criticisms of the former.

Keywords: *Orthodox approach, Heterodox approaches, Sustainable development*

UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS AFFECTING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' INTENTION TO PURCHASE TERROIR PRODUCTS: AN S-O-R MODEL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to investigate the determinants of students' intention to purchase terroir products using the S-O-R theoretical model. While prior research has primarily focused on the theory of planned behavior, this study aims to provide insights using an alternative theoretical framework. The choice of students as a sample enables the identification of the key attributes of terroir products. A quantitative survey was conducted among 386 students from Mohammed V University of Rabat to collect data for analysis. The data analysis was performed using SPSS software. Correlation tests and chi-square tests were used to examine the research hypotheses, and logistic regression was applied to determine the limitations and potential for future research. The findings from the correlation test confirm the hypotheses of the proposed research model. The model highlights the influence of terroir of origin, terroir label and know-how, as environmental cues, on consumer perception of product quality and terroir image. These factors are significant emotional responses that impact the purchase intention of terroir products. This study contributes to the literature by applying the S-O-R model to the analysis of terroir products. While the study is limited to students, it provides a useful basis for future research.

Keywords: *Consumer purchasing behavior, Image of the terroir, Know-how, Perceived quality, S-O-R model, Terroir label, Terroir of origin, Terroir product*

SWOT ANALYSIS AND DEFINITION OF POSSIBLE STRATEGIES FOR ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW MODEL OF INSPECTION OF UNREGISTERED BUSINESS ACTIVITIES IN THE CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

In order to define their basic activities, organizations need to answer the following three questions: Who are we and what do we do (i.e., mission), who do we wish to become and what do we wish to do in the future (i.e., vision), and how are we going to get from the present to the future state (i.e., how can we get from the existing "AS IS" model to the future "TO BE" model). In order to develop a new model of inspection of unregistered activities, the Customs Administration needs to assess the organization's level of preparedness to accept the aforementioned new inspection model and follow through on the changes it brings. This paper will present a SWOT analysis that describes all the elements that affect the organization and the possible effects of said changes. The process of determining internal and external factors is carried out to identify internal elements that will allow easier implementation of the new inspection model (S – strengths) or weaknesses that will hinder its implementation (W – weaknesses). This paper defines possible strategies for implementation of the new inspection model using internal strengths and external opportunities, but also taking into consideration the severity of internal weakness and external threats, thus utilizing said strengths and opportunities to eliminate or minimize weaknesses and threats.

Keywords: *SWOT analysis, Customs Administration, inspection and supervision, strategy, efficiency*

THE EFFECT OF AMBIDEXTROUS STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ON CREATING SHARED VALUE

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ABSTRACT

The success of any organisation relies heavily on the quality of its strategic leadership. With the increasing importance of addressing societal challenges, including delivering and measuring social results, it's crucial to identify which strategic leadership characteristics

impact both social and business results. Using bibliometric and data-driven methods, recent research has identified ambidexterity as a key characteristic of strategic leadership that impacts social and financial results (Beveridge et al., 2021; DeCieri et al., 2020). Ambidexterity refers to a leader's ability to exploit current resources while exploring future opportunities and trends. The objective is to understand the impact of ambidextrous strategic leadership on creating shared value, including creation of social and financial results (Porter and Kramer, 2011). By examining how leaders with ambidexterity capabilities can achieve shared value, and organisations can develop more effective leadership development programs to drive business performance. The research aim: provide an overview of how the strategic leadership characteristic ambidexterity, impacts the creation of shared value in companies. This study builds upon a previous literature content analysis and relies on primary data collection and comprehensive analysis of the collected data. The structural equation modelling (SEM) technique was applied to examine the two constructs such as exploration and exploitation, as characteristics of ambidextrous leadership and its effect on business and social results. In this paper, the authors recognise the limitations in the application of the construct of ambidextrous strategic leadership. Although strategic leadership has several characteristics and constructs, this research focuses on ambidexterity and the two related its sub-constructs of exploiting and exploring. Moreover, the sample size of companies analysed in the study may not represent all types of organisations as the focus has been on medium and large sized companies. The analysis revealed that ambidexterity plays a significant role in creating shared value for companies. The results show that ambidextrous strategic leaders are more effective in creating social and business results simultaneously compared to those who do not possess this characteristic. The findings suggest a positive relationship between ambidexterity and creating shared value, meaning that the more ambidextrous the leader, the higher the likelihood of creating shared value. Furthermore, the study shows that leaders tend to be more optimistic about future opportunities and trends, which indicates that they focus more on exploring new opportunities rather than exploiting existing resources. However, the study also revealed that there is a more pessimistic view when it comes to exploiting current resources to their full potential.

Keywords: Ambidexterity, Strategic leadership, Shared value, Data analytics, Resources

STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH VALUE ADDED SERVICE SECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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ABSTRACT

The subject of analysis in this paper are the structural characteristic of the high value added service sector in the Republic of Croatia and comparison with other European Union member states, in the time period from 2010 to 2020. High value added services (information and communication; professional, scientific and technical activities; administrative and support service activities) are very important for the entire economy, since they directly contribute to increasing efficiency and competitiveness, as well as the implementation of innovations in business. The aim of these paper is to analyze shares of high value added service sector in number of totally employed, wage adjusted labour productivity and gross operating rate. The

results of research indicate that the movements of structural characteristics of Croatian high value added service sector are complied with structural characteristics of high value added service sector of other European Union member states. If the Republic of Croatia will continue to develop, and it can be assumed that the development process will harmonize the economic structures with the typical structure of the European Union member states, it is likely that the largest number of new jobs will be created in the high value added service sector. The expected contribution of this paper is unique research of structural characteristics of high value added service sector since there are no existing comparative research that analyze high value added service sector in Croatia and other European Union member states in longer term. The conclusion of this research has practical value for economic policy decision makers, who should focus on competitiveness strengthening through decrease of regulatory and administrative burden and stimulation of European Union funds usage. These policies should finally be useful for achievement of higher level of services export, competitiveness and growth of other economic sectors.

Keywords: *structural characteristics, value added, services sector, Republic of Croatia*

CRISES AND ECONOMIC IMBALANCES: FROM INFLATION TO EMPLOYMENT

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ABSTRACT

The relationships between inflation, unemployment and economic growth have long been examined by notorious economists. The nature of these phenomena is obviously critical, as inflation and unemployed connect directly to ordinary people lives. Overall, inflation is historically a reason of main concern, due to its impact on society, particularly on low income population. Moreover, there is always the risk of prices going out of control, entering even on an uncontrolled growth spiral, possibly triggering massive social unrest. Cases of severe crises are very well documented, not to mention historical revolutions. The French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the National Nationalism Revolution, the Great Chinese Inflation, are some of the most iconic examples of severe disruptions where inflation played a critical role. Unsurprisingly and understandably, public and economic powers do tend to closely monitorize prices growth, acting accordingly, basically in order to keep some price stability. Likewise inflation, unemployment is another critical phenomenon for governments and society, being

another major trigger of crises and revolutions, being the Great Depression one of the best examples of such. One can argue that inflation and unemployment develop in tandem, while having devastating effects on the economy and society. Nevertheless, despite the aforementioned risks associated to inflation, it has been observed that some moderate level of inflation can be acceptable, or desirable even. Even though, the discovery of the Phillips Curve, which depicted an inverse relationship between money wage changes and unemployment in the British economy, came with much surprise, as wage changes could be regarded as a proxy of inflation and, therefore, the inverse relationship between inflation and unemployment could be formalised. Indeed, later economists observed this pattern in other datasets, allowing to theorize such relationship. Despite the merits of such novel theory, the Phillips Curve was never fully consensual, even if embraced by many top economic theorists, moderately at least. Samuelson and Solow writings, or Friedman's developments, are some good examples. Furthermore, not so long after this new theory come to light, stagflation come to add to the controversy. More recently, some economists started questioning again Phillips Curve effectiveness. The low inflation environment that followed the 2008's Great Recession is to blame. However, the extremely loose monetary policies that followed the 2008's financial crisis, its reinforcement with the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemics, starting in 2020, and the energy and geopolitical challenges from 2022 Ukraine's invasion, totally reversed the inflation scenario and the monetary policies, which became tightening at a dramatic pace. The urge for such pace is a recognition of the current inflation perils. In this paper, the relationship between inflation and employment is examined, using datasets covering recent decades of different evolutions for the European Union (EU) countries.

Keywords: *Inflation, Employment, European Union, Economic crises, Interest Rates, Monetary Policy*

ECONOMICS CAREER OF AN INDIVIDUAL - ANALYSIS OF PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS IN CHOOSING A CAREER

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ABSTRACT

A comprehensive understanding of personality requires an understanding of a whole range of factors. This paper aims to define certain personality concepts that are recognized as potential predictors for a successful economic career. We consider personality traits to be an important factor in selection procedures and work performance, and in addition to academic and professional competencies, employees are also expected to have personal competencies. The definition of personality (Larsen and Buss, 2008) states that personality is a set of organized,

relatively permanent psychological traits and mechanisms within an individual that influence his interactions with the environment and adaptation to the environment. This paper will present two recent personality concepts: the dark triad construct derived from the work of Paulhus and Williams (2002) and the five-factor personality model of Costa and McCrea (1992). The paper will deal with each of their components individually and with recent research and scientific works published on these topics. At the same time, it will outline connections between personality traits and economic career choices of the individual.

Keywords: *Economic career, personality concept, five-factor model*

THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN BOOSTING IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY IN STE(A)M CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of the STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) project was to emphasize the importance of these distinct disciplines while educating more competent workers for competition on the global market. By adding arts and humanities, STE(A)M (Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) additionally tried to enrich integrated curricula with the same goal in terms of easier connection of content and developing creativity in students. Countries around the world differ regarding the extent to which they develop specific STEAM study programs based on more or less comprehensive national educational policies. The greatest challenge is the creation of specific curricula that achieve the targeted educational outcomes. Philosophy as a scientific discipline has developed tools that can facilitate the integration of subjects within specific STEAM curricula and improve the development of creative thinking among students.

Keywords: *STEM, STEAM, Creativity, Philosophy*

DISABLED PERSONS INCLUSION PATTERNS IN THE CROATIAN EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the quantitative research on disabled persons' social inclusion patterns in the Croatian employment sector. Croatian Employment Service and Croatian National Institute for Expertise, Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities aggregated open source data have been used to calculate the national structure and movement of employed and unemployed persons with disabilities in the Croatian employment sector from 2005-2022. The paper used a statistical analysis of the dynamic change of employed and unemployed persons with disabilities in the period from 2005 to 2022 in monitoring changes in the number of employed and unemployed persons with disabilities. The shares of the number of employed persons in the total number of persons with disabilities and the shares of the number of unemployed persons in the total number of persons with disabilities were calculated. Statistical coefficients were also presented, showing the ratio of the number of unemployed persons with disabilities to employed persons with disabilities. The analysis results show a positive trend in the employment of persons with disabilities in the Croatian employment sector from 2005 to 2022. Observing the direct relationship between employment and unemployment of persons with disabilities, there is an encouraging trend. Since 2005, the number of unemployed per employed person with disabilities has been decreasing year by year. There is a noticeable reverse trend of decrease in the period of the great economic crisis 2008-2011 and a discrepancy in 2020 at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating the employment sector reaction to pressures of significant socio-economic changes on the employment rates of people with disabilities, which are consequently negatively reflected and primarily affecting employment status of vulnerable social groups. Finally, research and practical implications, limitations and further research recommendations are discussed.

Keywords: *Disabled persons, Employment sector, Social inclusion*

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORIGINALITY AND AUTOCHTONITY IN THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

One of the most common words in everyday use is globalization, which began to be talked about at the end of the 20th century. Public opinion is focused on globalization processes. On the one hand, it becomes impossible for all countries to "hide" behind their borders, while on the other hand, the economic policy of individual countries cannot passively observe contemporary processes of globalization that have affected world flows of production, capital, export, import, labor mobility, and the like. There is a need for countries to fit into these processes because the demands of international markets are becoming more and more strict. Globalization has influenced the increase in the importance of original (traditional) products and services as key elements of tourist content that enable the differentiation and competitiveness of a tourist destination on the global tourist market. The aim of the work is to prove the role and significance of culture, history, traditional crafts and lifestyle of the local population through the consumption of original (traditional) products and services by tourists and their representation in the tourist offer. Furthermore, the aim of the research is to gain an insight through an in-depth interview with the local population of Varaždin County that traditional crafts and intangible heritage necessarily require a special way of preservation.

Keywords: *traditional crafts, originality, autochthonousness, experience economy, Varaždin County*

ABOUT THE MUSEUM AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN THE SERVICE OF PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE: THE CASE THE OF VARAŽDIN CITY MUSEUM

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ABSTRACT

Considering the educational importance of museums for the preservation of cultural heritage, this paper focuses on the relationship between educational institutions and museums on a concrete example. The review of the Report on the work and financial operations of the Varaždin City Museum in the last five years shows the current situation and provides guidelines on how to improve the collaboration between the museum and other forms of educational institutions. The paper establishes that museum content made for elementary and high school visits almost always follows current exhibitions or permanent collection and very rarely adapts to students' needs that came from a strictly prescribed teaching curriculum. Therefore, for regular visits to the museum to become an established educational practice, the Varaždin City Museum should clearly define the target group for which it organizes the educational content and in consultation with teachers and professors adapt it to the prescribed learning plan. Finally, to better educate a wider audience with the importance of cultural heritage through the acquisition of transversal skills, the study suggests the inclusion of educative institutions such as faculties and Public Open Universities in Varaždin City Museum educational program.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, educational institutions, museum pedagogy, Varaždin city museum

NATIONAL CULTURE AND POLITICAL DECISION: LEGITIMACY OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

Governments around the world have made various decisions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Our study provides a better understanding of the dynamism between national culture and the different policy choices made to address the pandemic in 2020. In contrast to existing studies that focus on formal institutional factors, this study applies a comparative approach involving 17 European countries to demonstrate that country-specific cultural dimensions and differences were

key factors in whether Lockdown was chosen as the first policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of this study show that policy responses to the same threat depend on the cultural orientation of each country.

Keywords: *First response to COVID-19, Lockdown, National culture, Policy analysis, Qualitative comparative analysis*

PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP FINANCING

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ABSTRACT

This review article examines the many forms of funding accessible to entrepreneurs, with a focus on the significance of a suitable choice of financing for the success and stability of the business. It addresses the elements that influence the selection of funding sources as well as the options for combining sources to produce an optimal capital structure. Additionally mentioned are the European Union's finances and initiatives and their contribution to the funding of the private sector. It is stated that the selection of an acceptable source of finance is vital for a company's performance in a dynamic business climate, and suggestions are made for further research.

Keywords: *finance sources, selection considerations, source combination, European Union funds, capital structure*

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN DATING INDUSTRY: ONLYFANS PLATFORM

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ABSTRACT

The aim - of this work is to analyse the changes within the dating industry that have resulted from the development of the OnlyFans platform. The platform took over the dating market with a model of digital transformation of an already existing industry. On the one hand, the habits and behaviour

of the participants of the dating market have changed, and on the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic directly benefited the development of the platform's business model. The research is based on the financial parameters of the platform's income, and on the analysis of the trend of the number of users. The research will use models of financial and statistical analysis, for financial indicators and user trends, as well as a descriptive method of proving the factors that most significantly characterized the model of digital transformation. Result of the analysis indicate an exponential growth in revenue and the number of platform users over a period of five years, which proves the effectiveness of the digital transformation model. The change in consumer habits and the digital transformation of all forms of production and consumption of digital content directly influenced the exponential growth of the platform's income. At the same time, a large number of globally known influencers have established themselves on the platform, who have millions of followers and earn higher amounts than their fellow influencers in other industries.

Keywords: dating industry, digital transformation, disruption, OnlyFans, platform economy

MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS RESILIENCE DURING WARTIME IN UKRAINE: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight the resilience of business during wartime in Ukraine. Threats for the survival of businesses in Ukraine during wartime have been analyzed. To gain insight into how businesses adapt to wartime conditions, an expert survey has been conducted. The research findings indicate that the overall goal of strategic marketing management in times of war is to develop and implement effective strategies that enable businesses to adjust to highly volatile and unpredictable business environments. The war brought about uncertainty, risks of property destruction, physical dangers, unpredictability, market loss risks, contract disruptions, and infrastructure destruction. 25% of businesses ceased to exist, while the rest attempted to adapt through relocation, production reduction of business activities, product adaptation, and changing their business activities. Strategies for adaptation should reduce uncertainty, mitigate physical damages and losses, improve safety measures, and maintain the stability of businesses. In such circumstances, the primary focus lies in continuously monitoring and assessing the risks associated with the changing environment. Among the possible strategies applied for business adaptation in times of war are: strengthening security measures to protect the company's assets, employees, and customers; enhancing employee resilience and offering flexible work arrangements; diversifying product/service offerings; diversifying suppliers; establishing relationships and collaborations with other businesses, both domestically and internationally; exploring new markets and partnerships; and using innovations to improve efficiency and reduce dependence on human resources.

These strategies aim to enable businesses to adapt and survive during times of war by ensuring security, flexibility, diversification, collaboration, and innovation.

Keywords: Business, Marketing Strategy, Resilience, Wartime

IS THERE A RISK OF GREENWASHING IN THE APPLICATION OF THE EU SFDR IN THE SRI FUND INDUSTRY? SOME CRITICAL ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

The present research has the aim to analyze the effects that the new European legislation is having on the sustainable investment market in order to evaluate whether the predisposed goals can be said to be achieved or not. In particular, the author wants to analyze the impact of the EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (2019/2088 EU), known as SFDR, on the SRI Fund Industry, considering that interpretative difficulties have arisen in the SRI market with the introduction of SFDR. The analysis shows that critical issues in the implementation of SFDR reside not so much in its disclosure obligations, but upstream, in the definition of sustainable investment and in its product classification (as Article 6, Article 8 and Article 9) that lead to a situation characterized by an excessive subjectivity by asset managers of SRI Funds when they are called to qualify the products they offer. Because of the consequent risk of greenwashing in SFDR application, the necessity of its urgent adjustment can be pointed out and the work presents in its final part the indication of some policy recommendations to policymakers drafted by Eurosif just to realize these necessary adjustments of the EU regulation.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, SRI Funds, SFDR, Greenwashing, EU ESG Reglamentary Framework

ROLE OF AI-POWERED CHATBOTS IN BUILDING CUSTOMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS: USING SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY RESEARCH DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been shaping marketing and service-related tactics including sales approach, customer behavior, and customer support options on a larger scale. Therefore, in the era of Artificial Intelligence, many firms are widely taking advantage of AI-powered

Chatbots to enhance customer relationships with the brand. But the question that arises here that how the brands can use the tactics to create a customer relationship with the brands. Keeping it in view, this paper aimed to explore the experiences of customers and brands in using AI-powered Chatbots and to evaluate the impact of these tools on customer-brand relationships. In this regard, the research followed a mixed method using sequential explanatory research design, including quantitative and qualitative approaches, whereby the primary data was collected using an online survey. The research collected a total of 116 responses and carried out analysis using SPSS STATISTICS. In second phase, the study used previous articles and literature to present the secondary findings. The results indicated a positive and significant influence of interactivity, information/accessibility, and customization features of AI-Powered Chatbots on the customer-brand relationship. In addition, the study's findings revealed a positive and strong association of these features with the customer-brand relationship. Based on the results of the research, it can be recommended that companies and brands looking to enhance customer-brand relationships should consider using AI-powered Chatbots.

Keywords: *AI-powered Chatbots, Customer-Brand Relationship, Mixed-Method Research, Brand*

COMPARATIVE VIEW OF ENERGY TAXATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA AND THE COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

The paper compares energy taxation in the Republic of Croatia and the European Union and analyzes the economic, environmental and fiscal impacts. The purpose and objectives of the study are to compile the theoretical determinants of excise taxes on energy products and other taxes related to the sale of energy products, the legal determinants of taxation of energy products and electricity at the level of the European Union and in the Republic of Croatia, the results of a comparison of energy taxation in the Republic of Croatia and the countries of the European Union, and the fiscal, economic and environmental impact of energy taxation in the Republic of Croatia and the Member States of the European Union.

The paper enables an overview of the differences in energy taxation between the member states of the European Union and the effects resulting from the taxation.

Keywords: *Taxes, economic, environmental and fiscal impact, excise*

