



THE ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

# Abstract Book

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on  
Social Sciences  
29-31 July 2025, Athens, Greece**

**Edited by  
Domenico Maddaloni & Afrodete Papanikou**

2025



Abstracts  
12<sup>th</sup> Annual International  
Conference on Social Sciences  
28-31 July 2025, Athens, Greece

Edited by  
Domenico Maddaloni & Afrodete Papanikou

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## Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> *Annual International Conference on Social Sciences* (28-31 July 2025), organized by the Athens Institute.

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with Athens Institute's Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of Athens Institute's many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of Athens Institute and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. Athens Institute was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a new references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to Athens Institute's mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

**Table 1.** *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2014-2025*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2025	29	17	Maddaloni and Papanikou (2025)
2024	36	15	<a href="#">Maddaloni and Gkounta (2024)</a>
2023	43	19	<a href="#">Tsagkaris and Gkounta (2023)</a>
2022	36	22	<a href="#">Cerny and Gkounta (2022)</a>
2021	27	15	<a href="#">Papanikos (2021)</a>
2020	16	12	<a href="#">Papanikos (2020)</a>
2019	55	26	<a href="#">Papanikos (2019)</a>
2018	31	18	<a href="#">Papanikos (2018)</a>
2017	39	18	<a href="#">Papanikos (2017)</a>
2016	29	15	<a href="#">Papanikos (2016)</a>
2015	36	15	<a href="#">Papanikos (2015)</a>
2014	42	23	<a href="#">Papanikos (2014)</a>

It is our hope that through Athens Institute's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, Athens Institute has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 6 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of Athens Institute for putting this symposium and its subsequent publications together.

**Gregory T. Papanikos**  
**President**



## **Editors' Note**

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Social Sciences. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

Athens Institute's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The 12th Annual International Conference on Social Sciences accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 17 different countries (Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Jordan, Panama, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Taiwan, The Netherlands, Türkiye, UK, USA), which brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

**Domenico Maddaloni & Afrodete Papanikou**  
**Editors**

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Social Sciences,  
28-31 July 2025, Athens, Greece**

**Organizing & Scientific Committee**

All Athens Institute's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of Athens Institute, who contributed by reviewing the submitted abstracts and papers.

1. Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.
2. Dr. Philip G. Cerny, Director, [Social Sciences Division](#), Athens Institute & Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester (UK) and Rutgers University (USA).
3. Dr. Chris Sakellariou, Vice President of Finance, Athens Institute & Associate Professor of Economics (Retired), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
4. Dr. Domenico Maddaloni, Head, [Sociology Unit](#), Athens Institute & Professor, University of Salerno, Italy.
5. Dr. Thanos Patelis, Lead Psychometrician, University of Kansas, USA.
6. Dr. John Pavlik, Head, [Mass Media and Communication Unit](#), Athens Institute & Professor, Rutgers University, USA.
7. Dr. Barbara Zagaglia, Head, [Anthropology & Demography Unit](#), Athens Institute & Associate Professor, Polytechnic University of Marche, Italy.
8. Dr. Nikolaos I. Liodakis, Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada.

## FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Social Sciences, 28-31 July 2025,  
Athens, Greece**

### PROGRAM

**Monday 28 July 2025**

**09.00-09.30**

**Registration**

**09.30-10.00**

**Opening and Welcoming Remarks:**

- **Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.**

#### **10:00-11:30 Session 1**

**Moderator: Utku Özer, Research Fellow, Athens Institute.**

1. Yingxia Cao, Professor, University of La Verne, USA.  
*Title: Managing Organizational Digital Entrepreneurship for Competitive Business Outcomes: A Structural Equation Analysis.*
2. Jeanny Liu, Professor, University of La Verne, USA.  
Adham Chehab, Professor, University of La Verne, USA.  
*Title: Financial Markets Reaction to Banking Brand Value Announcements.*
3. Anthony Rodolakis, Executive Director of Tax and Economic Policy, Ostroff Associates, USA.  
*Title: Small Business, Economic Development and the Role of the State.*
4. Kemala Febrihadini, PhD Candidate, University of Groningen, The Netherlands.  
*Title: The Effect of Government Support Program on SME's Practice and Performance – Evidence from Indonesia.*

#### **11:30-13:00 Session 2**

**Moderator: Kemala Febrihadini, PhD Candidate, University of Groningen, The Netherlands.**

1. Si Hyun Kim, Professor, University of La Verne, USA.  
Giacomo Laffranchini, Professor, University of La Verne, USA.  
*Title: Relationship between Skill Shortages and the Deployment of AI in SMEs across Countries.*
2. Giacomo Laffranchini, Professor, University of La Verne, USA.  
Si Hyun Kim, Professor, University of La Verne, USA.  
*Title: Recovery Strategies of Declining Family Firms: The Effect of CEO Social Capital.*
3. Marek Matejun, Associate Professor, University of Lodz, Poland.  
*Title: Employee Readiness for Green Human Resources Management: Instrumental and Change-Based Approach.*
4. Mihaela Mikic, Associate Professor, University of Zagreb, Croatia.  
*Title: Senior Entrepreneurship in an Aging Europe: The Impact of Macroeconomic Conditions.*
5. Anica Hunjet, Vice Rector, University North, Croatia.  
*Title: Acquiring Knowledge in Higher Education for Labor Market Needs.*

#### **13:00-14:00 Session 3 – Microsymposium on Foresight**

**Moderator: Lampros Pyrgiotis, Research Fellow, Athens Institute.**

1. Andras Marton, Assistant Professor, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.  
Éva Hideg, Professor Emeritus, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.  
Judit Gáspár, Associate Professor, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.  
Gabriella Kiss, Associate Professor, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.  
Alexandra Köves, Associate Professor, Corvinus, University of Budapest, Hungary.  
Jing Ding, PhD Student, Tampere University, Finland.  
Máté Fischer, PhD Student, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.  
Zsombor Csupt, Student, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.

<p><i>Title: Technology for Multidisciplinary Futures Research: The Online Integral Foresight Methodology.</i></p> <p>2. Samira Yaghouti, Doctoral Researcher, Finland Futures Research Centre, University of Turku, Finland.</p> <p><i>Title: Reimagining Language Teaching in Europe: A Causal Layered Analysis of Educators' Professional Discourse.</i></p>
<p><b>14:00-15:00 Session 4 – A Public Lecture on A Critical Look at Indigenization of Canadian Universities</b></p> <p><b>Sponsored by the Canadian University Alumni in Greece (<a href="http://www.cuag.gr/">www.cuag.gr/</a>)</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.</b></p>
<p><b>Speaker: Jim Clark, Head, <a href="#">Psychology Unit</a>, Athens Institute &amp; Professor, University of Winnipeg, Canada.</b></p>

**15:00-16:00 Lunch**

**20:30-22:30**

**Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music, Dance)**

**Tuesday 29 July 2025**

<p><b>09:30-11:00 Session 5 – Microsymposium on “The Fundamentals &amp; Future of Social-Behavioural Health Across the Lifespan”</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Nkhangweni Mahwasane, Information Librarian, University of Venda, South Africa.</b></p> <p>1. Josh Firth, Associate Professor, University of Leeds; Oxford University, UK. <i>Title: Understanding Social Behaviour Across the Life-course in Real-World Populations: Fundamental Patterns, Trade-Offs, and Digital Solutions.</i></p> <p>2. Joseph Firth, UKRI Fellow, University of Manchester, UK. <i>Title: Healthier Interactions in the Online World: Emergent Findings &amp; Future Challenges.</i></p> <p>3. Alex Qian, Associate Professor, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore. <i>Title: Physician Dual Practice, Public Waiting Time and Patient Welfare.</i></p> <p>4. Libby Hubbard, Independent Scholar, Lovolution Studios, USA. <i>Title: The Moshiah, Madness, and Future Studies.</i></p>
<p><b>11:00-12:30 Session 6</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Marek Matejun, Associate Professor, University of Lodz, Poland.</b></p> <p>1. Zuohong Pan, Professor, Western Connecticut State University, USA. <i>Title: An Analysis of the United States Supply Chain Risks in Globalization.</i></p> <p>2. Chi-Yo Huang, Professor, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taiwan. <i>Title: Evaluating the Impact of Industry 5.0 Technologies on Women's Employment in the ICT Sector: A Text Mining and DRSA Approach.</i></p> <p>3. Nicholas Odhiambo, Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa. <i>Title: Natural Resources and Financial Development in Sub-Saharan African Countries: Is There an Inverted U-Shaped Curve?</i></p> <p>4. Daphne Vidanec, Tenured Professor, University of Applied Sciences Baltazar Zaprešić, Croatia. Dorian Vidanec, Freelance Commercialist, Croatia. <i>Title: Analyzing the Sales Process for Stimulating the Market Equilibrium: Deichmann SE Store Management Case.</i></p> <p>5. Tareq Hashem, Full Professor, Applied Science Private University, Jordan. <i>Title: How Do Entrepreneurial Characteristics Affect Marketing Performance in the Jordanian Manufacturing Sector.</i></p>
<p><b>12:30-14:00 Session 7</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Chi-Yo Huang, Professor, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taiwan.</b></p> <p>1. Ayla Ogus Binatli, Professor, Izmir University of Economics, Türkiye. Emre Can, Adjunct Professor/CFO Göztepe Football Club, Izmir University of Economics, Türkiye.</p>

<p><i>Title: A Professional Sports Team as a Medium-sized Enterprise: The Case of Göztepe FC.</i></p> <p>2. Ting-Ling Lin, Professor, National Taipei University, Taiwan. Mei-Chen Hsieh, Assistant Professor, Vanung University, Taiwan. Heng-Yih Liu, Associate Professor, Yuan Ze University, Taiwan. <i>Title: Bottlenecks, Coopetition, and Evolution of Travel Experience Service Ecosystem: A Case Study of Local-Based Industry.</i></p> <p>3. Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu, Graduate Student, Durban University of Technology South Africa. <i>Title: Heritage Management and Community Empowerment: The Role of Ecotourism in Livelihoods Sustainability and Heritage Conservation. The Case of Ushaka Marine World, Kwazulu Natal.</i></p>
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**14:00-15:00 Lunch**

<p><b>15:00-17:00 Session 8</b> <b>Moderator: Qi Si, Professor, Zhejiang University, China.</b></p> <p>1. Codruta Stoica, Professor, "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania. <i>Title: Beyond Statistics: Comprehending Gender Parity and Gender Equality.</i></p> <p>2. Angelo Nicolaides, Professor, University of Zululand, South Africa. <i>Title: Ethical Business Conduct in an Ultra Capitalistic World.</i></p> <p>3. Joan Miguel Tejedor Estupinan, Professor, Areandina University Foundation, Colombia. Carlos Bejarano Chacón, Professor, San Marcos University, Costa Rica. Ramses Moreno, Professor, University of the Isthmus, Panama. <i>Title: A Model for Integrating Climate Sustainability into MSME Management: Analysis in Colombia, Panama, and Costa Rica.</i></p> <p>4. Maria Kosma, Associate Professor, Louisiana State University, USA. <i>Title: Techne in Performing Arts is Key to the Love of Movement and Long-lasting Physical Activity Participation.</i></p> <p>5. Judy Porter, Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA. LaVerne McQuiller Williams, Associate Provost Rochester Institute of Technology USA. <i>Title: Unpacking Campus Victimization: A Quantitative Study of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation.</i></p> <p>6. Alexia Georgakopoulos, Professor, Nova South University, USA. <i>Title: Cultivating a Culture of Peace in Higher Education: Empowering Students as Agents of Change in a Global Society.</i></p>
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**17:15-20:30 Session 9**  
**Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk**

The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes professional tour guide and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappeion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by the Athens Institute exclusively for the conference participants.

21:00-23:00

[An Ancient Athenian Symposium: Continuous Dialogues, Timeless Flavors](#) (featuring authentic ancient Athenian dishes, local wine, and sweet delicacies from ancient Athens)

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Wednesday 30 July 2025  
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands  
or Nafplio & Mycenae Visit

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Thursday 31 July 2025  
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

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Friday 1 August 2025  
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

**Ayla Ogus Binatli**

Professor, Izmir University of Economics, Türkiye

&

**Emre Can**

Adjunct Professor / CFO Göztepe Football Club, Izmir University of  
Economics, Türkiye

### **A Professional Sports Team as a Medium-sized Enterprise: The Case of Göztepe FC**

The literature on the economic impact of professional sports teams establishes that their impact on full-time jobs generated is similar to a medium-sized enterprise although it also acknowledges that their broader impact, such as impact on tourism and city branding, is much greater than a typical medium-sized enterprise. In this paper, a case study of the Göztepe Football Club will be undertaken to highlight the impact of the football club on the neighbourhood in which it resides as well as the city of İzmir to highlight how the club is similar to other medium-sized enterprises of its size and how it differs from them. Göztepe FC is the first FC to attract a foreign investor in Turkey and boasts a new stadium, Gürsel Aksel Stadium, which was rebuilt during and opened on January 26, 2020 in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sport Republic, the owner of Premier League club Southampton, purchased 70% of the shares in August 2022. The team was competing in the second-tier league at the time of purchase having been demoted at the end of the 2021-2022 Season. This paper aims to investigate the strengths of Göztepe FC as a FC as well as a medium-sized enterprise to attract a foreign investor and become the first football club in Turkey to do so even though it is not a particularly successful team at the national scale.

**Yingxia Cao**

Professor, University of La Verne, USA

**Managing Organizational Digital Entrepreneurship for  
Competitive Business Outcomes:  
A Structural Equation Analysis**

Utilizing all digital resources to manage organizational constituents and business activities has become increasingly important to help organizations improve their business outcomes in an ever-changing digital environment. More scholarly attention has been directed to examine how and how well digital entrepreneurship has been used in business organizations. However, there is still need for systematic and scholarly quantitative study on whether digital entrepreneurship improves business outcomes and the mechanisms behind the improvement. This research intends to address this need. It investigates the role of digital entrepreneurship in enhancing business outcomes. Drawing from the resources-based view, goal setting theory, and planned action framework, this research empirically examines the drivers, practices, and outcomes of utilizing digital entrepreneurship in organizations. Data was collected from over 200 organizations representing different industries. The results indicate that the factor around strategic goals and objectives is the only key antecedent that influence organizational digital entrepreneurship utilization, which subsequently impact organizational performance outcome in operation and marketing as well as the satisfaction level of many constituents, including customers, employees, partners, and suppliers.

**Joan Miguel Tejedor Estupinan**

Professor, Areandina University Foundation, Colombia

**Carlos Bejarano Chacón**

Professor, San Marcos University, Costa Rica

&

**Ramses Moreno**

Professor, University of the Isthmus, Panama

## **A Model for Integrating Climate Sustainability into MSME Management: Analysis in Colombia, Panama, and Costa Rica**

This chapter presents a model for integrating climate sustainability into the management of Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Colombia, Panama, and Costa Rica. The research adopts a parallel convergent mixed-methods approach, structured in four phases: (1) a systematic literature review to identify key components of climate sustainability management models; (2) context analysis through interviews and surveys to understand specific factors influencing the adoption of sustainable practices; (3) participatory design of the management model; and (4) model validation through focus groups and a pilot test.

The proposed model is structured into four interrelated components: strategic, operational, measurement and evaluation, and learning and improvement. It includes specific adaptations for each country and a set of practical tools to facilitate its implementation by MSMEs with varying levels of capacity and resources.

The study contributes to filling a gap in the business sustainability literature by developing a model specifically tailored to the realities of Latin American MSMEs, providing a comprehensive framework that enables them to address climate sustainability strategically and systematically.



**Kemala Febrihadini**

PhD Candidate, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

## **The Effect of Government Support Program on SME's Practice and Performance – Evidence from Indonesia**

The liability of smallness inherently limits SME in gaining a competitive advantage. Therefore, according to Resource Dependence Theory they are relying on external resources, including government support program (GSP) to build competitiveness. Using a difference-in-differences (DiD) approach, we examined the effects of seven types of GSP on 21 variables related to SME practices and performance. From the analysis of a panel dataset with 911 data points, we learned that: (1) GSP focused on capacity building and skills development, which lead to indirect and intangible outcomes, are more effective when provided multiple times; (2) GSP involving direct and observable interventions with immediate tangible outcomes are best delivered only once, as repeated treatment may have negative effects; (3) the impact of GSP on SME practices and performance is most significant when financial and non-financial programs are combined; and (4) trade fair facilitation stands out as a particularly effective GSP, driving improvements across multiple aspects of SME operations. Hence, the contribution of this study is in empirically showing the well-suited support program that leads to improvement in multiple aspects of SME's operational. It is also contributes to our better understanding of how support programs in emerging economy affecting SME's practice and performance.

**Joseph Firth**

UKRI Fellow, University of Manchester, UK

## **Healthier Interactions in the Online World: Emergent Findings & Future Challenges**

The rapid adoption of digital technology across the world has presented an entirely new context of human interaction across social, educational, employment and entertainment settings. In this context, this talk will begin by exploring impact of internet usage on population health, particularly with regards to the latest research on how the quality (rather than just quantity) of online interactions shapes mental health outcomes of digital device usage. First, the age- and use-specific risks and benefits of digital engagement will be discussed, drawing on evidence from neuroscience, epidemiology and clinical psychiatric research. Then, actionable, evidence-based recommendations for optimising our interactions with the online world will be provided.

From this, the talk will move onto a systematic overview of current evidence using internet interventions to improve mental health outcomes, examining the top-tier evidence for their efficacy to date, particularly through meta-analyses of RCTs in depression, anxiety, and stress-related conditions. Along with the empirical evidence, the main challenges to their adoption, and strategies for real-world implementation will be discussed. Following the discussion of current evidence and issues, the presentation will explore how emerging artificial intelligence (AI) applications, particularly large language models and AI-driven chatbots, are set to transform mental health interventions in future. Alongside this, the key challenges and concerns around using these powerful technologies will be presented, with “real life” examples for each.

Finally, the presentation will highlight an emergent opportunity for harnessing digital interventions in order to address the vast physical health inequalities associated with mental illness; discussing the latest evidence and early findings from Firth’s “e-PHIT Mental Health” research group; examining on how existing digital tech and online platforms could be used to encourage physical activity, balanced nutrition, and better sleep in youth, to improve physical and mental health outcomes of online time. Following this, some additional insights from our ongoing research on potential synergies between traditional care approaches and digital solutions will be shared, and the talk will conclude with a commentary on the importance of designing the future of digital mental healthcare with the end-user’s priorities and preferences in mind.

**Josh Firth**

Associate Professor, University of Leeds; Oxford University, UK

## **Understanding Social Behaviour Across the Life-course in Real-World Populations: Fundamental Patterns, Trade-Offs, and Digital Solutions**

The complex interplay among social behaviour, ageing and contagions is central to various aspects of our current understanding of health and societies, particularly in regard to how digital tools can address these challenges. This presentation synthesizes three interconnected strands of research around these topics, and cumulates in proposing that digital environments can support social engagement among ageing individuals while reducing the typical costs (such as disease) associated with conventional social interactions.

First, drawing on a recently commissioned Royal Society conference and Special Issue on ageing and sociality (Firth et al. 2024 Royal Society Phil Trans B), the talk will present how analyses of social networks in real-world populations reveal a common pattern of social ageing across species. In this context, the talk will discuss how a decrease in social interactions with age can be seen as a fundamental, natural process in diverse social systems, particularly when considering individuals that begin life with relatively robust immune systems and limited access to social information then develop weakening immune systems (and a reduced need for social information) as they age (Woodman et al & Firth 2024 Royal Society Phil Trans B).

Next, the talk will illustrate how new technologies, particularly the fine-scale tracking of human social interactions, have elucidated the relationship between disease risk and social networks. It will draw upon examples using GPS (Firth et al 2020 Nature Medicine) and Bluetooth devices (Pung & Firth et al 2022 Nature Communications) for monitoring human social connections, and demonstrate how social trends may hold across various real-world contexts (Pung & Firth et al 2024 Royal Society Interface) and how these can be used to inform disease control (Firth et al 2020 Nature Medicine).

Finally, the third part of the talk integrate these discussions with the latest research on how the online world is affecting human behaviour across the life-course (Firth et al & Firth 2024 World Psychiatry). It will conclude by highlighting how recent advances present a unique opportunity for ageing individuals to engage in beneficial social interactions while avoiding typical costs (such as infectious disease),

which may offer a potential framework for addressing key issues related to social ageing and ageing societies.

**Alexia Georgakopoulos**

Professor, Nova South University, USA

## **Cultivating a Culture of Peace in Higher Education: Empowering Students as Agents of Change in a Global Society**

In today's increasingly fractured world, higher education must embrace its transformative potential to foster a culture of peace. This presentation advocates for integrating peace education and conflict resolution into the curriculum across all academic disciplines, equipping students with the tools to become agents of positive change in their communities and beyond. By training students in the principles of mediation, facilitation, negotiation, and peacebuilding, educators can empower the next generation to engage constructively with conflict and lead efforts to build more just and harmonious societies.

Conflict resolution education should not be viewed as a peripheral or elective area of study—it is as essential, if not more so, than traditional disciplines such as history and mathematics. While the latter provide critical knowledge, peace education offers practical strategies to address the existential challenges of violence, war, and systemic injustice. When students learn to embody peace through structured and skill-based learning, they gain the ability to navigate and transform conflict in every domain of life.

The presenter will illustrate how educators can integrate these principles through dynamic and experiential teaching methods such as simulations, role plays, improvisation, and collaborative skill-building sessions. These approaches not only reinforce theoretical knowledge but allow students to practice peacebuilding in real-time scenarios, cultivating empathy, communication, and critical thinking.

To ground the presentation in real-world application, the presenter will share an example of a current training initiative she is leading with a group of peacebuilders and member of Mediators Beyond Borders involving university students in Ukraine—a region deeply affected by ongoing conflict and war. This program integrates conflict resolution and peace education into the academic experience, preparing students to serve as mediators and peacebuilders within their communities. Through this case study, attendees will see how higher education can play a powerful role in transforming societies even amid active conflict, as students learn to shift mindsets from division to reconciliation, and from reactive conflict to proactive peace.

The session will also highlight the crucial role of educators in leading this transformation. To effectively teach peace, educators must themselves be trained in conflict resolution and peace pedagogy. Professional development and institutional support are necessary to help faculty confidently and meaningfully integrate peace principles into their teaching, regardless of discipline.

Importantly, all students—whether studying business, engineering, law, medicine, or the arts—stand to benefit from learning how to navigate conflict constructively and lead with compassion. When embedded within the core of higher education, peace education fosters global citizens who are not only academically competent but socially and ethically grounded. These individuals are more likely to contribute to inclusive leadership, restorative practices, and cross-cultural understanding throughout their careers.

This presentation provides both a compelling vision and actionable framework for transforming higher education into a foundation for peace. It calls upon educators to recognize their unique power to inspire change and prepare students to carry peacebuilding values into every setting they touch. In doing so, education becomes not only a means of personal advancement but a catalyst for global healing and long-term cultural transformation.

**Tareq Hashem**

Full Professor, Applied Science Private University, Jordan

## **How Do Entrepreneurial Characteristics Affect Marketing Performance in the Jordanian Manufacturing Sector**

This study aims to study the impact of entrepreneurial characteristics on marketing performance in the Jordanian industrial context. This study is important due to the necessity of research concentrating on this vital subject. The study's practical value is underscored by the advice provided to industrial company management to address the identified challenges. A quantitative approach was used as a methodology of the paper. The study also focuses on managers in companies in Jordan's industrial sector. The researcher chose a suitable group of 500 managers to complete the study survey. In the end, they got back 391 usable surveys to analyze. The results of the analysis indicated the acceptance of the fact that employing literary works elements can increase branding and develop marketing strategies. It is found that entrepreneurial characteristics like self-control, self-confidence, risk tolerance, and creativity significantly impact marketing performance in Jordan's industrial sector. The study recommended that it is essential for Jordanian industrial companies to adopt the benefits of the characteristics of the entrepreneurial employee and their outcomes in building the entrepreneurial company.

**Chi-Yo Huang**

Professor, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology,  
Taiwan

**Evaluating the Impact of Industry 5.0 Technologies on  
Women's Employment in the ICT Sector:  
A Text Mining and DRSA Approach**

Industry 5.0 is crucial for the future digital transformation and competitiveness of the information and communication technology (ICT) industry, as it involves collaboration between humans and machines to enhance processes. The implementation of Industry 5.0 technologies could result in job loss for women and worsen gender disparity. Industry 5.0 technologies, like artificial intelligence and automation, have complex and interactive effects on women's employment opportunities. Despite this, major governments have not developed comprehensive policies on these issues, and there is limited research on the topic. Gender issues in technology management have been even more neglected. It is crucial to promptly tackle the employment obstacles faced by women due to Industry 5.0 technologies. Thus, this study aims to examine the effects of Industry 5.0 technologies on women's employment in the ICT sector. The research adopts text mining techniques to extract keywords that affect women's employment in the context of Industry 5.0-related technologies from journal papers, book chapters, and reports by major economies. We then extracted major topics using the Latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) technology. Next, we will use the dominance-based rough set approach (DRSA) to derive the antecedent and consequent implications. The decision rules derived can demonstrate the major factors influencing job loss for women and gender disparity in the era of Industry 5.0. Based on the analytic results, 11 topics, including "Gender Equality and Economic Empowerment", "Business Knowledge and Human-Centric Global Management", etc., were derived. Decision rules including "If gender-focused research is high and equality policies are strong, then gender disparity is low", "If digital access is inclusive and ethical concerns are high, then women's job security is high", etc. The topics and rules being derived can serve as the basis for governments' definitions of gender equality policy in the era of industry 5.0.



**Libby Hubbard**

Independent Scholar, Lovolution Studios, USA

## **The Moshiach, Madness, and Future Studies**

The talk that I would like to present is a true story about Tucson, AZ's HaMoshiach (Tzaddik Greenberg), who recently committed suicide in Washington, DC. HaMoshiach is translated as the The Messiah. The talk is about prophetic ideologies in individual lives and how they can lead to despair and madness when not fulfilled. On a national level, they have led to wars and militarization to protect religious mythos.

Is idealistic thinking about Messianic leadership and its promise of creating Heaven on Earth good for the world? Or has the myth of the King Messiah—the anointed one-- perpetuated delusional thinking over millennia? If so, to save the world from war and climate change, must the concept of Moshiach be immediately abandoned? Could the End of Days refer to the end of the anticipation of the Moshiach? In the 21st Century, with our scientific discoveries and technological inventions, is the promise of the Messianic Age an unrealistic, idealistic illusion, or can it lead the world to sanity, wholeness, and a sustainable relationship human/nature relationship?

We will look at the myth of the Moshiach and consider the role a King Messiah could play in bringing about a global renaissance. If the Moshiach has a universal message and global plan of action, what kind of renaissance could s/he create?

How would the Moshiach—the spiritual/political leader of the Jews-- relate to Israel's war on Gaza? So far, international law and the World Court of Justice have not been a force to stop Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. How could the Moshiach stop the genocide?

What if the student activists are the collective Moshiach dwelling within the heart of the student movement to end war, genocide, and climate change? What if they are the chosen generation to create radical transformation by taking back the global commons and making it into a democratic space? What is the Moshiach's strategy to create Heaven on Earth?

**Anica Hunjet**

Vice Rector, University North, Croatia

## **Acquiring Knowledge in Higher Education for Labor Market Needs**

Globalization processes bring significant changes to all segments of contemporary society and individuals, including higher education. The significant role of the higher education system lies in creating scientific professionals capable of advancing scientific activities through the rational integration and alignment of human knowledge, ultimately leading to discoveries that improve the quality of life and support economic development.

Through the higher education system, individuals acquire quality educational and intellectual capital, which serves as a foundation for generating numerous ideas and innovations. The quality of the education system is defined as one that generates knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences that enhance living standards and contribute to establishing sustainable growth and development for society as a whole. Gaining quality knowledge equates to building competitiveness, which is achieved through ongoing investment in personal learning and education, empowering individuals to excel, improve their efficiency, and ultimately strengthen their position in the labor market. The Republic of Croatia must orient itself toward the future and adapt to labor market needs to ensure that the higher education system remains competitive and capable of addressing the challenges of modern and fast-paced globalization.

This study will be based on an analysis of data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics related to investments in research and development within higher education institutions and scientific organizations. The research findings will ultimately serve as a basis for policymakers in Croatian higher education to undertake corrective actions and formulate future development strategies

**Si Hyun Kim**

Professor, University of La Verne, USA

&

**Giacomo Laffranchini**

Professor, University of La Verne, USA

## **Relationship between Skill Shortages and the Deployment of AI in SMEs across Countries**

The purpose of the paper is to examine the relationship between skill shortages and the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in small, medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across countries. We hypothesize that skill shortage is closely related to a lower interest for the deployment of AI technology in SMEs. Drawing from Eurobarometer537 dataset collected in 2023, we conducted a series of cross-country comparison analyses to evaluate how skill shortages correlate with the deployment of AI from country to country and what types of human resource are significantly difficult to recruit across 36 countries. We found that the main reasons for the company's skill shortages are various across countries, so it was worth to discuss how to overcome skill shortages and recruitment difficulties. Furthermore, we found that SMEs willingness to deploy AI technology over the next 5 years was closely related to its skill shortages and recruitment difficulties. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.

**Maria Kosma**

Associate Professor, Louisiana State University, USA

## **Techne in Performing Arts is Key to the Love of Movement and Long-lasting Physical Activity Participation**

Although the healthcare costs in the USA far exceed those of its peers, the US life expectancy at birth is the lowest (77.5 years) of all similar, large, wealthy countries (82.2 years), and this disparity continues at older ages (Rakshit et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2022). Obesity rates in the USA have also significantly increased over the last 20 years, whereby about 44.3% of young adults are classified as obese. Even though regular exercise is key to longevity and can curb high obesity rates and its underlying conditions (e.g., heart disease, stroke, type II diabetes and certain types of cancer) (CDC, 2022; Lee et al., 2022), long-lasting participation in physical activity is a significant challenge. Therefore, the purpose of this concept-based paper is to showcase how the artistic (techne) element in performing arts like aerial dancing, dancing, and physical theater can lead to the love of movement and thus long-term exercise participation. Drawing on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 B.C.E/1999), techne is art (craft) and it is practical to a certain task like painting and dancing. In performing arts such as aerial dancing and physical theater, not only does the performer master meaningful and physically demanding movement skills, but also, he/she experiences sensations of play, flow, creativity, and expression that tend to be immensely enjoyable and lead to the love of movement and long-lasting physical activity participation (Kosma, in review). Creating arty pieces like choreographies and dynamic shapes and sequences while sharing a story and expressing before an audience is lively and highly pleasant with positive consequences to lifestyle, health, and well-being (Kosma, 2024a, 2024b; in review; Kosma et al., 2023a, 2023b; Kosma et al., 2021a, 2021b). Such artistic expressions are highly valued in society, leading to wise decisions about living the good life like following an active lifestyle and a healthy diet (Kosma 2024a, in review; Kosma & Buchanan, 2018). Wisdom in decision making – derived from meaningful and valued life experiences like movement-central artistic expression (techne) – reflects phronesis (moral wisdom or reasoning), which, like techne, is practical knowledge (Aristotle, 1999/350 BCE; Kosma, 2024a, 2024b). In other words, when people engage in the techne of movement, such as performing arts, they find joy in the accomplishment of skills, creativity, and physical expression leading to the love of movement and long-lasting physical activity participation – link between techne and phronesis (Kosma 2024a, 2024b, in review).

**Giacomo Laffranchini**

Professor, University of La Verne, USA

&

**Si Hyun Kim**

Professor, University of La Verne, USA

## **Recovery Strategies of Declining Family Firms: The Effect of CEO Social Capital**

In spite of over 30 years of research on firms' strategic responses to life-threatening performance decline, our knowledge of this salient topic still presents significant whitespace. The available research on strategic responses to declines largely focuses on firms' first response to decline (i.e. retrenchment measures) and overlooks the second stage of decline response (i.e., recovery measures), or a set of actions geared at returning the firms to profitability (Trahms, 2013). Yet, recovery measures are generally recognized as an essential step of decline-response, which is needed to return the firm to profitability and ensure long-term survival (Pearece et al. 2008). Additionally, scholars have largely neglected the effect CEO characteristics have on strategic response to decline (Abebe & Tangpong, 2018). Hence, understanding firms' recovery actions in response to organizational decline warrants investigation.

The knowledge gap on this topic is even wider when it comes to family firms (FFs), a predominant organizational form across the globe. This is surprising because FFs are subject to frequent crises, and their strategic decisions are highly idiosyncratic. Indeed, FFs' strategic preferences are driven by the owning family's assessment of the expected financial and non-financial (or socioemotional, SEW) consequences connected with the strategy being pursued (Laffranchini et al., 2022). This is particularly true when the survival of the firm is in jeopardy and decline-response decisions could have emotionally and financially devastating impacts for the owning-family (Laffranchini et al. 2020). Thus, in this study, we bridge this gap by addressing the following research questions: *Does the CEO's social capital affect the FF's recovery actions? If so, in what ways?* Additionally, to acknowledge the multi-stage nature of strategic response to organizational decline, we also investigate the moderating effect that retrenchment decisions (i.e., first response to decline) may have on the focal relationship in our study.

To address the research questions in our study we bring together the two-stage mixed gamble SEW model (Kotlar et al., 2018) and the

literature on social capital (Lin, 2002). We theoretically argue that CEO social capital alters the problem framing of FFs by limiting the prospects of financial and non-financial losses

**Ting-Ling Lin**

Professor, National Taipei University, Taiwan

**Mei-Chen Hsieh**

Assistant Professor, Vanung University, Taiwan

&

**Heng-Yih Liu**

Associate Professor, Yuan Ze University, Taiwan

## **Bottlenecks, Coopetition, and Evolution of Travel Experience Service Ecosystem: A Case Study of Local-Based Industry**

Most of existing researches about ecosystems have focused on sectors such as information technology, electronics, and renewable energy, often emphasizing how dominant firms (e.g., Google, Apple, Microsoft) lead, coordinate, and navigate industrial innovation and transformation. The emergence and evolution of ecosystems frequently involve complex interactions among local stakeholders and broader institutions, where actors must align divergent goals and interests, often encountering goal conflicts and competition (Fligstein & McAdam, 2015). However, limited attention has been given to local travel experience service ecosystems comprised of numerous small-scale enterprises. This study investigates how such ecosystems are formed, how firms overcome bottlenecks in local travel development, and how they collaborate under conditions of simultaneous competition and cooperation to conquer resource constraints and enhance the visibility of local value to domestic and international visitors. This research aims to unveil the successful development, evolving process, cooperative patterns and competitive landscape of this travel experience ecosystem. Employing a multi-case study approach centered on a single locale, this research examines six second-generation ceramic entrepreneurs in Yingge District, New Taipei City, Taiwan, who, having received higher education (university level or above), chose to return to their hometown and continue their family businesses. In-depth interviews were also conducted with other local stakeholders to enrich the empirical base. Our research findings reveal both external and internal problems. Externally, these young entrepreneurs face several challenges, including industry decline, difficulty in attracting educated talents, limited financial resources, misalignment between product design and consumer needs, a lack of innovation beyond technical refinement, and the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the firm, communication barriers between generations lead to prolonged decision-making processes, and

many elder business owners are reluctant to see their children invest in a declining industry—representing key external and internal bottlenecks. However, these second-generation entrepreneurs participated in government-sponsored initiatives—specifically the T22 Program promoted by the Taiwan Design Research Institute—and leveraged their professional expertise and personal interests to transform former industry competitors into resource-complementary collaborators. Together, they restructured travel experience routes and progressively get more local stakeholders involved in each event. This strategy not only mitigated local resistance but also enriched the diversity and depth of the travel offerings. Through collaborations with universities introducing 3D AR animation technologies, they embed Taiwanese aesthetics and cultural imagery into their products. Moreover, in response to ESG initiatives, they worked with government agencies to develop “recycled porcelain” by repurposing ceramic waste into environmentally sustainable and aesthetically appealing products, thereby advancing circular economy practices. The evolution of this travel experience service ecosystem demonstrates how these young entrepreneurs reintegrate their educational backgrounds and other industry experiences into local revitalization efforts. By synthesizing geographic characteristics, industrial heritage, and cultural narratives, they amplify local travel value through digital transformation to a broader audience. Adopting AI technologies, they reduce the limitations imposed by scarce resources, realize more of precision marketing activities enabling personalized visitor experience, and thus enhance the overall attractiveness and competitiveness of the local travel industry.



**Jeanny Liu**

Professor, University of La Verne, USA

&

**Adham Chehab**

Professor, University of La Verne, USA

### **Financial Markets Reaction to Banking Brand Value Announcements**

In this study, we propose to evaluate the financial markets' reaction to the announcement of the American banks' brand value. The study will concentrate on the top 500 American banks' brand value for the period between 2008 and 2023. We will also investigate the determinants influencing these banks' brand value. The findings are expected to provide insights for banks to increase their market valuation.

**Andras Marton**

Assistant Professor, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

**Éva Hideg**

Professor Emeritus, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

**Judit Gáspár**

Associate Professor, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

**Gabriella Kiss**

Associate Professor, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

**Alexandra Köves**

Associate Professor, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

**Jing Ding**

PhD Student, Tampere University, Finland

**Máté Fischer**

PhD Student, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

&

**Zsombor Csúport**

Student, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

**Technology for Multidisciplinary Futures Research:  
The Online Integral Foresight Methodology**

Exploring the mid-term or farther futures of sustainable development in the European Union requires a detailed and complex foresight methodology. To outline the qualitatively different future alternatives, futurists often apply foresight methods which detect elements and patterns of the future on a broad spectrum and involve a variety of stakeholders to gain a large pool of visions and expectations. Our research aimed to collect experts' ideas on post-growth solutions and options in the EU, for which we chose to conduct the horizon scanning (HS), scenario building (BG), and e-Delphi techniques, implementing them into an integral foresight discovery process. Due to the colorful multinational group of participants and our intention to minimize environmental impact, we decided to organize the research activities in an online format as workshops. This is accepted and widely used for the e-Delphi survey but innovative and exploratory for complete HS and BG assessments. The research group used either freely available or institutionally licensed software. Artificial intelligence was also applied during scenario building to refine and uniform in style the different narratives before finalizing by the experts. Our results show that most of the workshop activities worked well and led to a similarly rich collection of insights as former (offline) HS studies. Some advantages were that conversations were easy to record

and transcript, online whiteboards could be used simultaneously, and the inputs were easier to process since only a minor transformation was needed. However, occasional problems with internet access, the slower pace of interactions, and the varying skills in using the online tools caused difficulties to an extent. Team dynamics could be handled similarly, and the number of participants was not higher than at in-person workshops. We conclude that the integral foresight process was successfully accomplished using only online tools, a multinational range of stakeholders could be involved in a series of workshops, but the overall effectiveness was approximately the same as with personal participation.

**Marek Matejun**

Associate Professor, University of Lodz, Poland

## **Employee Readiness for Green Human Resources Management: Instrumental and Change-Based Approach**

Green human resources management (GHRM) is a relatively new, innovative, powerful and far-reaching concept for aligning employees with a company's environmental strategy and sustainable development endeavors (Fernandes & Machado, 2022; Garg & Arora, 2025). Many previous studies confirm the high effectiveness of GHRM in improving environmental performance in various types of organizations (Hameed et al., 2020; Rehman et al., 2021; Elshaer et al., 2021; Al-Alawneh, Othman & Zaid, 2024). A weakness of the analyses to date, however, is the paucity of attention paid to the issue of readiness to the implementation of the concept in business practice. Research in this field to date has focused on identifying individual perceptions of the importance of GHRM practices (Ooi, Amran & Nejati, 2017) as well as on organizational (Zihan, Makhbul & Alam, 2024) and country readiness for GHRM (Kodua et al., 2022). These studies were conducted in specific national contexts and sectoral contexts. Their weakness was a one-dimensional approach to measuring GHRM readiness and a lack of attention to the individual antecedents of the formation of this readiness in business practice.

Taking it into account, the aim of the presentation is to identify and assess the formation of employees' readiness to implement the green human resources management concept according to two research approaches: an instrumental and change-based approach, as well as to demonstrate the influence of selected individual antecedents on the formation of this readiness in business practice.

The aim of the study was achieved through empirical research conducted using a survey method on a sample of 214 employees and managers from Poland. The respondents were mainly young people, representatives of the Z Generation, who will shape the labour market in the coming years. They were well prepared to take part in the survey, which resulted in more valuable and reliable results. In the research model, based on the literature review, were assumed the existence of 2 specific, complementary models for measuring employees' readiness to use GHRM: instrumental model and change-based model. Further, theoretical link among the employee readiness for GHRM and (1) personal environmental norms, (2) new

environmental paradigm and (3) organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment as individual antecedents, was considered.

The results obtained indicate a high level of readiness of the respondents to implement the GHRM concept in their companies, regardless of the measurement method used. Moreover, it was shown that personal environmental norms, following the new environmental paradigm as well as organizational citizenship behaviors towards the environment (OCBE), significantly and positively shape the level of readiness for GHRM in the surveyed group.

This study makes an original and novel contribution to the literature by proposing different approaches to measuring employees' GHRM readiness. The research results are particularly useful for companies planning to implement GHRM practices to improve environmental performance. They will also be useful for increasing the effectiveness of using current GHRM practices. The conclusions formulated address also the implementation factors of the GHRM enabling more effective implementation of this concept into the business practice.

**Nkosingiphile Trevor Mchunu**

Graduate Student, Durban University of Technology South Africa

**Heritage Management and Community Empowerment:  
The Role of Ecotourism in Livelihoods Sustainability and  
Heritage Conservation. The Case of Ushaka Marine World,  
Kwazulu Natal**

Maritime tourist centres in Durban are many and they constitute an economic base, a livelihood source for locals and the government itself. However, the cultural heritage and biodiversity in the Global South face unprecedented and escalating threats from multiple factors, including unmonitored urban expansion, large-scale infrastructure projects, and the vicissitudes of climate change. This paper intends to examine how the U Shaka Marine World is managed and conserved as a bio-cultural heritage. Bio-cultural heritage, as a concept, has gained popularity over the past 15 years, fueled by a growing interest in conserving cultural landscapes, whose values are viewed as eroding away rapidly. The concept captures the profound interrelation between biodiversity and cultural diversity, making its role critical in sustainable development and environmental conservation, especially in indigenous societies. The consideration of bio-cultural heritage paradigm for U Shaka Marine World has significance in ecotourism, ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation discourses. This is an inclusive framework in heritage management that incorporates indigenous perspectives to the natural world. The environmental dimension of cultural heritage management is increasingly significant, with climate change and natural disasters posing threats to cultural sites and artifacts. Recognizing this interplay is crucial for developing adaptive strategies that ensure the longevity and resilience of cultural heritage in the face of environmental challenges.

The components of bio-cultural heritage are embedded in indigenous people's daily lives and worldviews and passed down through generations. In most cases, communities ascribe spiritual or sacred values to landscapes which enhance the conservation of bio-cultural resources to benefit indigenous communities. These spiritual attributes manifest themselves through features such as rocks, caves, pools, trees, and animals, especially lions and eagles. The ascription of spiritual and sacred values to landscapes inculcates a sense of individual and collective responsibility in resource utilisation and conservation. Thus, societies with a long-term evolutionary association with a specific environment are better placed to manage their future

sustainability. The concept of bio-cultural heritage is yet to be fully adopted in South Africa, both in policy and practice. The richness of indigenous knowledge significantly enhances heritage conservation strategies, ensuring that preservation efforts are effective, sustainable, and culturally respectful. Indigenous knowledge represents a comprehensive repository of wisdom closely connected to the land and its resources. The research findings offer a profound understanding of the environment's interconnectedness, including flora, fauna, and natural resources. The researcher employed multivariate methodologies which include, existing literature on e-tourism, surveys, interviews and observations.

**Mihaela Mikic**

Associate Professor, University of Zagreb, Croatia

## **Senior Entrepreneurship in an Aging Europe: The Impact of Macroeconomic Conditions**

In recent years, inclusive entrepreneurship has gained significant attention in Europe, driven by socio-demographic changes such as rising unemployment and an aging population. Senior entrepreneurship, defined as entrepreneurial activities undertaken by individuals aged 55 and above, is particularly important given the increasing proportion of seniors in the population. By 2050, the population aged over 60 in developed regions is projected to rise from 25.8% to 32.9%, with the European Union expecting 37% of its population to be over 55 by 2030. Despite the potential benefits of senior entrepreneurship, including economic growth, job creation, and alleviating pressure on public pension systems, older individuals often face age discrimination and are less likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities compared to younger counterparts.

This study explores the relationship between macroeconomic conditions and senior entrepreneurship, focusing on indicators such as GDP, unemployment, inflation, average salary, risk of poverty for pensioners, and retirement age. Using data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor and Eurostat, the research employs a fixed-effects panel model to analyze the impact of these macroeconomic variables on the Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) of seniors aged 55-64 across 11 European Union countries. The results reveal that GDP per capita has a positive and significant influence on senior entrepreneurship, aligning with previous studies that suggest higher income levels stimulate entrepreneurial activity due to increased demand for goods and services. Conversely, inflation has a negative and significant impact, as rising inflation increases the perceived risk and costs associated with starting a business, discouraging senior entrepreneurship.

The study contributes to the limited literature on senior entrepreneurship by highlighting the unique macroeconomic factors that influence this demographic's entrepreneurial activities. It confirms that the positive relationship between GDP and entrepreneurship observed in general populations also applies to seniors, while the negative impact of inflation on entrepreneurship is similarly relevant. However, other variables, such as unemployment, average salary, and social security factors, did not show significant effects in this context.

The findings underscore the importance of fostering a stable economic environment to encourage senior entrepreneurship, which can contribute



to active aging, economic growth, and social security sustainability. This study lays the groundwork for further investigation into the economic and social dynamics of senior entrepreneurship, offering insights for policymakers aiming to harness the potential of this growing demographic.

**Angelo Nicolaides**

Professor, University of Zululand, South Africa

## **Ethical Business Conduct in an Ultra Capitalistic World**

This paper will hopefully help to ensure that professional executives, business leaders, ethics officers and public officials understand the importance of ethical conduct. Although ethics is the key focus, the paper promotes awareness of inter alia, ethical responsibilities, corporate social responsibility, professional conduct of executives, business leaders and public officials and these aspects are critical to consider if they wish to be positioned to identify and resolve ethical issues or conflicts that may arise in the workplace and beyond.

By understanding the role of ethics-in-practice in driving organizational sustainability and enhancing social and environmental performance toward stakeholder inclusivity, leaders and managers must be positioned to make a sound business case for implementing ethical policies and adhering to regulatory frameworks of corporate governance. Business ethics has moved from a philosophical study in institutions of higher learning to the executive boardrooms and is incorporated into virtually every aspect of business strategy and decision making and is essential for the sustainability of organizations. Consequently, ethics is undoubtedly a core component of the knowledge and skills set required of today's professional executives, business leaders, ethics officers and public officials. As key business decision makers, they need to be proficient in dealing with ethical dilemmas and moral mazes which arise, regulatory frameworks, compliance requirements, legal requirements and effective governance mechanisms to ensure that what they do is lawful and ethically correct and effective in terms of corporate behaviour and operations. Ethics are important not only in business but in every aspect of life because it is a fundamental part of the foundation on which of a civilized society is built. Any business or society that lacks ethical principles is unsustainable and bound to fail sooner or later.

**Nicholas Odhiambo**

Professor, University of South Africa, South Africa

## **Natural Resources and Financial Development in Sub-Saharan African Countries: Is There an Inverted U-Shaped Curve?**

This study examines the impact of natural resources on financial development in sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. The study also examines whether an inverted U-shaped relationship exists between natural resources and financial development in the studied countries. According to the inverted U-shaped curve phenomenon, the impact of natural resource rents on financial development is expected to be positive during the early stages and negative at later stages. Although a number of studies have been conducted on the natural resource curse that examines the relationship between natural resources and economic growth, very few studies have examined the link between natural resources and financial development. Moreover, the majority of such studies have primarily focused on Asian and Latin American countries, leaving sub-Saharan African countries, which are also abundant in natural resources, with very little coverage. In order to examine the existence of an inverted U-shaped curve between natural resources and financial development, the study employs a quadratic specification in a stepwise fashion. Unlike most previous studies, the study uses various proxies of financial development, namely FDI - Financial development index, FII - Financial institutions index, and FMI - Financial markets index to examine this linkage. In addition, the study employs a wide range of modern panel data techniques to examine this relationship. Some of the key panel data techniques used include: i) four cross-sectional dependence tests - Breusch-Pagan LM, Pesaran scaled LM, bias-corrected scaled LM, and Pesaran CD; ii) the second-generation unit root test based on Pesaran's CIPS approach; iii) two cointegration tests based in Westerlund (2005) and Pedroni (1999, 2001), iv) Driscoll-Kraay standard errors for robust inference; and v) the recently developed Dynamic Common Correlated Effects (DCCE) approach by Chudik and Pesaran (2015). In order to corroborate the relationship between natural resources and financial development, the study also applies Granger causality tests in heterogeneous panels developed by Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012). Departing from the majority of the previous studies, the study decomposes SSA countries into low- and middle-income countries, thereby estimating three specifications: i) low-income SSA countries, ii) middle-income SSA countries, and iii) all SSA countries. Our preliminary findings show that the relationship

between natural resources and financial development within the inverted U-shaped context depends largely on the estimation techniques used and the country's level of income.

**Zuohong Pan**

Professor, Western Connecticut State University, USA

## **An Analysis of the United States Supply Chain Risks in Globalization**

In an increasingly globalized world, the United States' supply chains face numerous risks that can disrupt the flow of goods and services, posing significant challenges to businesses, governments, and consumers as evidenced by the major supply chain disruptions in recent years. Economic risks, including inflation, labor shortages, and material scarcity, have also been exacerbated by global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. Furthermore, technological advancements, while enhancing supply chain efficiency, have introduced new risks, including cybersecurity threats and technological dependencies. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the risks faced by U.S. supply chains in the context of globalization. The study will explore the key drivers of supply chain vulnerabilities and the implications these risks have on U.S. industries, the broader economy, and national security, highlighting factors such as geopolitical instability, economic fluctuations, environmental concerns, and technological vulnerabilities. Through a mixed-methods approach that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data, the study examines historical trends, case studies of recent disruptions, and potential strategies for mitigating these risks. Key findings suggest that geopolitical risks, particularly those arising from trade wars and shifting international relations, significantly impact U.S. supply chains, as seen in the ongoing tensions between the U.S. and China. This paper also explores the various strategies that businesses and policymakers can adopt to strengthen supply chain resilience. These include diversifying suppliers, nearshoring, improving data transparency, and integrating advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, and blockchain to better monitor and respond to risks. Policy recommendations emphasize the importance of coordinated efforts at the federal and international levels to improve infrastructure and create robust regulatory frameworks that support supply chain security. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the vulnerabilities inherent in U.S. supply chains and provides actionable insights for improving their sustainability in the face of global challenges.

**Judy Porter**

Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA

&

**LaVerne McQuiller Williams**

Associate Provost Rochester Institute of Technology USA

## **Unpacking Campus Victimization: A Quantitative Study of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation**

This study explores the intersection of gender identity and sexual orientation in shaping the experiences of threatening behaviors and sexual abuse on university campuses. It highlights how cisgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals report significantly higher rates of verbal threats, sexual harassment, stalking, and sexual violence compared to their male or heterosexual peers. The findings emphasize the compounded vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, especially LGBTQ+ women, who experience heightened risks of severe violence due to both gender-based and sexual orientation-based marginalization. These results support the importance of an intersectional approach in understanding victimization and advocate for tailored sexual violence prevention strategies in university settings. The study calls for comprehensive policies that address the unique needs of marginalized groups, with a focus on creating inclusive and supportive environments for all students.

**Alex Qian**

Associate Professor, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore

### **Physician Dual Practice, Public Waiting Time and Patient Welfare**

Motivated by Manitoba cataract surgery evidence, we use a stylized model to investigate the waiting time difference between dual-practice physicians and public-only physicians. We study the impact of physician dual practice on patient's waiting time and welfare. We show that in equilibrium, patients of health providers with higher service qualities have longer waiting times. Patients with lowest time costs have to endure a longer waiting time if physician dual practice is allowed. However, some of these patients may benefit from allowing physician dual practice as they could self-select dual-practice physicians and enjoy a service of higher quality. We show that the number of patients who would benefit from allowing physician dual practice increases in price.

**Anthony Rodolakis**

Executive Director of Tax and Economic Policy, Ostroff Associates, USA

**Small Business, Economic Development and the Role of the State**

Small businesses are the key engines of innovation and economic growth. In this presentation, the author will provide an overview of the tax incentives that authorities provide in the context of New York State, the 10th largest economy in the world. The interplay of Federal vs. State tax and regulatory frameworks in the USA. How can the tax system be utilized to maximize the return on investment (ROI) of the taxpayer dollar? Where should lawmakers look for tested strategies to incentivize small and medium size business growth without penalizing their economies of scale? Latest developments related to the new Trump Administration and the tax tools that are under consideration. How do apprenticeships factor in the broader context of enhancing the manufacturing sector? Examples from US and NYS.



**Codruta Stoica**

Professor, "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania

### **Beyond Statistics: Comprehending Gender Parity and Gender Equality**

This article explores the nuanced distinction between gender parity and gender equality, two concepts often used interchangeably in discussions on social justice and equity. Gender parity refers to the statistical representation of men and women, typically used as a measurable benchmark in areas such as education, politics, and the workplace. In contrast, gender equality encompasses a broader vision of fairness, encompassing equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities regardless of gender. While gender parity can be a useful indicator of progress, it does not inherently guarantee equality.

Gender parity and gender equality, while related, are distinct concepts. Gender parity focuses on achieving equal representation of men and women in specific areas, like education or the workforce. It's a measure of whether equal numbers of men and women participate in a particular field. Gender equality, on the other hand, is a broader concept that encompasses equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for all individuals, regardless of gender. It involves a shift in societal norms and how people perceive gender roles.

We examine how overemphasis on numerical balance can mask deeper structural inequalities and argues for a more holistic approach that prioritizes both parity and substantive equality. By analyzing global trends, policy implications, and real-world case studies, the article advocates for strategies that go beyond surface-level representation to address the cultural and institutional roots of gender-based disparities.

**Daphne Vidanec**

Tenured Professor, University of Applied Sciences Baltazar Zaprrešić,  
Croatia

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**Dorian Vidanec**

Freelance Commercialist, Croatia

## **Analyzing the Sales Process for Stimulating the Market Equilibrium: Deichmann SE Store Management Case**

The authors' initiative for analyzing the key-concept related with the Store Management Process (SMP) came out of the mutual cooperation between a business theorist and a business practitioner, who used to work as an intern in a shoe store for one of the largest manufacturers and distributors of (mainly men's) footwear, the Deichmann SE – the Deichman Group.

The core of the paper was formulated almost a decade ago, for the educational purposes. But, the main them of it: "Market as the relationship between supply and demand" still echoes certain questions that arise from economic theory; e. g. How to attracts the consumers; How to encourage people to buy something; What makes one successful salesman; How to run a store; How to become one of the most reworded store managers among hundreds or thousands of them? – Such and similar questions draw us into direction of knowing the Store Management Psychology – i. e. employability skills; moreover, management skills are mostly welcomed.

Our method is comparative in its fundamental aspect, with deductive approach to analyzing the SMP policy (or SMPP).

Discussion part of the paper includes description and analysis of the elements included into behavior specific to purchasing decision particularly concerning the men's footwear.

The reason, why we chose the Deichmann global brand footwear retailer is work ethics specific to a store management and leaderships: the principle of chain related store (CRS) tasks appointed to different positioned salesmen and merchants.

Our thesis is that the sustainability of the sales rating in the store management plays a key role in purchasing decision: an outcome for which any professional store manager or any profiled trader wants to reach.

The paper consists of the two basic parts; in the first part the authors will discuss about the market and its fundamental functions (i. e. supply and demand concept), and the second part is focused on the

men's shoe market with the emphases on the Deichmann company foundation, leaderships, organization, sustainability and, the store management and purchase decision policy.

**Samira Yaghouti**

Doctoral Researcher, Finland Futures Research Centre, University of  
Turku, Finland

## **Reimagining Language Teaching in Europe: A Causal Layered Analysis of Educators' Professional Discourse**

This presentation examines how language educators across Europe construct professional discourses around both present challenges and imagined futures in the field of multilingual language education. Drawing on data from a future-oriented qualitative questionnaire, the study applies Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), a critical futures methodology that investigates meaning across four levels: litany, systemic causes, worldview, and myth/metaphor. This analytical framework enables a multidimensional exploration of how teachers articulate their professional realities within broader institutional, cultural, and ideological structures.

Findings reveal a complex interplay between educators' concerns over resource inequities, technological disruption, and policy marginalization, and their deeper beliefs about the role of language in society. Participants invoke symbolic metaphors such as "language as a gateway," "teaching as juggling," and "the dying language" to express layered emotional, pedagogical, and cultural positions. These metaphors function not only as reflections of structural conditions but also as discursive resources through which educators critique the present and envision alternative futures.

The study contributes to interdisciplinary dialogue in discourse and interaction research by demonstrating how futures-oriented methodologies can enrich qualitative inquiry into professional talk. By integrating insights from discourse studies, applied linguistics, and futures thinking, it offers a novel approach to understanding how educators' language both mirrors and reshapes the sociopolitical landscape of language education. The presentation highlights CLA's potential to support more inclusive and forward-looking strategies in multilingual education policy and practice.

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