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“Recent Ideas and Research”

18-19 November 2022

Venue : Université du Luxembourg, Campus de Belval, Maison du Savoir

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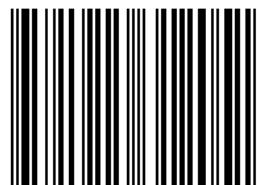
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KLODIANA LEKA

The Role of Accounting Profession in the Fight Against Corruption

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Abstract

Corruption is the main word of many discussions in developing countries. In the time of globalization and cially the current time of digitalization, corruption is found in many dimensions. Like many countries, Albania in the last decade has undertaken reforms to develop the regulatory framework for the fight against corruption. The perspective on corruption is different and it sometimes appears as a qualitative element as well as a quantitative one, but its effects are undoubtedly an obstacle to the economic development of a country, as well as damage the integrity causing the loss of the trust of the public. In this context, through our paper, we want to show the role of the accounting profession, in the fight against corruption and the steps taken in the field of accounting, especially in our country, and the innovations that can appear while performing the accounting profession. Currently, IFAC, through the "Action plan for fighting corruption and economic crime" (2022), has provided a conceptual framework, to improve the role of the accounting profession in the fight against corruption, aiming for alignment with the UN SDGs. Albania has also undertaken its reforms in several areas such as the tax system, the justice system, the police, financial reporting and accounting and auditing professions, etc., focusing on strengthening institutions, increasing public trust involving professionals with integrity and a high level of professionalism. But the future of every country depends not simply on the establishment and development of legal acts, but above all it will depend on everyone's awareness, so that with the professionalism that characterizes it, it can lead to a safe and honest future. In the paper, we will first present the framework of the role of the accounting profession in the fight against

corruption in Albania, "gangrene" which keeps on increasing, continuing with the empirical and statistical analysis through which it will be understood what the current situation in Albania in the initiative undertaken to fight against corruption. At the end, suggestions are presented for the main actors regarding the role of the accounting profession in the fight against corruption, including it as a main tool.

Keywords: Accounting profession, Corruption, Financial Reporting

1. Introduction

The development of a country is linked among other things and to many negative issues. One of these negative issues is corruption. Every country faces this phenomenon which if not fought takes on such dimensions by turning into a fellow traveler of our lives. Corruption can be encountered on fact in all sectors of public life, it is a complex phenomenon and depends on the specifics of society's socio-cultural history, political and economic development, bureaucratic traditions and governing practices, etc.

The meaning of the word corruption is given in various literatures in different ways, because it depends on the point of view of its study. We in our study will support the definition given by the Council of Europe, The Convention of the Civil Law on Corruption according to which the word "corruption" means the search, offering, giving or accepting, directly or indirectly, of a bribe or of any unfair advantage, or of expectation for them, which distorts the regular performance of the proper duties or behaviors of the bribery recipient, unfair advantage or expectation for them.

The phenomenon of corruption is one of the concerns of society worldwide. By exploiting the terrain of a so-called "democratic" society, this "virus" plunges society by not allowing it to cross into the trampolines of human and democratic development.

The fight against corruption is one of the biggest challenges for any country governed by the rule of law and democratic principles, including high standards of integrity and good governance. Through our work we will present the reforms taken in our country Albania, for the fight against corruption, mainly identifying the role of the accounting profession in this direction.

2. Literature review

According to the World Bank report (2020)¹the fight against corruption offers an assessment of the challenges facing governments in tackling corruption, what

¹ World Bank Group; "Enhancing Government Effectiveness and Transparency The Fight Against Corruption" Global Report, September 2020;

instruments are trying to function and why, and how increasing progress is being achieved in specific contexts of the country. If carefully analyzed, we can distinguish two key elements that are: (a) assessment and (b) instrument.

Figure 1 The Elements of the fight against corruption



Source: The authors

Also in the report are a series of the key messages between which we are highlighting:

- Progress is not linear, and reforms could suffer due to political setbacks and/or institutional weaknesses, yet even basic efforts could provide a foundation on which to build.
- The “how” of reform can be as important as the “what” of reform, as it requires an understanding of how key obstacles could be overcome in a particular context.
- There is no single success factor; impactful reforms usually require a combination of several layered or sequenced interventions.
- Open government reforms can lead to a stronger relationship between government and citizens, increasing levels of trust and social capital.
- Collaboration and information sharing across traditional agency boundaries, and across international boundaries are becoming increasingly important to address corruption.
- It is important to fact the historical, social, economic, and political realities of a country into anti-corruption reform efforts.

From the literature review, we found out there are several factors that affect the existence and level of corruption. These factors relate to the informal economy, problems in legislation and correct implementation of legislation, cultural and civic level of society, lack of internal controls, lack of monitoring of corruption, deficiencies and weaknesses in compliance audits and internal audits, etc.

A. H. James and C. W. Gray (2007), in their study analyzed corruption in several Eastern European countries in 2002-2005. The authors state that during this period, bribery in relation to customs was lowered in many countries due to systematic efforts to combat corruption that included *reviewing legislation, implementing risk analysis, random auditing and stronger enforcement and sanctions mechanisms*.

Le, Tuan Minh (2007) in his study shows that there is a correlation between countries with high developments of *corruption and wide shadow economy*. The author points out that corruption removes economic entities from developing activities in the compliance with the legislation. In this way they are more competitive, focusing on developing activities that use unfair business practices. Thus, according to him, the development of the legal/formal economy is undermined.

C. Ferreira, M. Engelschalk, and W. Mayville (2007) further supported and developed Tuan Minh Le's (2007) argument on the correlation between corruption and size of the shadow market. In their study, they come to the same conclusion that rising wage levels do not necessarily increase ethical behavior, although wage levels must at least correspond to a living wage. Among other things, the authors advocate *the creation of an internal audit unit, performance-related bonuses, and an open and transparent relationship with the private sector*.

Th. Cantens, G. Raballand and S. Bilangna (2010), in their study present the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the use of performance contracts in the customs sector, as one of the sectors most exposed to corruption.

Ch. Sampford, A. Shacklock, C. Connors, and F. Galtung (2006), examined methods to measure corruption, including Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index and Bribery Perception Index. They studied the reliability of the indexes and whether regular surveys could measure changes in corruptive behavior, as well as presented a statement assessing methodologies used in different countries.

B.W. Heineman, and F. Heimann (2006) studied corruption in developing countries. They suggest various strategies to soften corruption, including taking into consideration the cultural dimension of the problem. Understanding the cultural aspect, they argue, helps strengthen the implementation, prevention and construction of the state. After presenting a reflection of existing international legal agreements to combat corruption, the authors claim that ensuring compliance with these agreements/treaties is important and call for more rigorous monitoring to determine whether governments meet their commitments.

M. Bryane and M. Polner (2008), in their study, examine the problems of the legislation in force and the planning of action, as well as refers to the issue of the best organizational model to fight corruption. In conclusion, the authors argue that the implementation of a risk management system and the introduction of investigation and prosecution mechanisms could be effective in reducing corruption.

M.Bryane and A.Gubin (2012) in their study highlight the role of auditing of the compliance of regulatory acts against corruption. They come to the conclusions that "... Auditing anti-corruption compatibility – particularly focused on presenting conflict of interest statements and statements of asset declaration – may constitute the basis for recommendations that add more value than simply implementation. The internal auditing approach – as envisaged in the International Standards for Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (ISPPA) – may serve as a more valuable basis for assessing anti-corruption performance ... In general, with a greater understanding of the role and methods of internal auditing in social sciences, internal auditing – and especially auditing findings – can contribute to practical questions being asked in social sciences and anti-corruption literature."

Various researcher and bodies also highlight the important role of professional accounting bodies and accountants in the fight against evasion, corruption and economic crime in the private sector of the economy. Corruption is an issue with difficult problems and not easy solutions. Corruption is not typical only of the public sector, or only of large businesses and corporations, but it is even more extensive in the SME and with a wide range. Most of the literature studied describes the problem and its impact on public sectors or in the organization, but rarely offers possible solutions. A main challenge is also the awareness of each of us, as F.Chouthury (2015) puts it, "*In the fight against corruption, silence should never be the safest option for every individual. The profession of accounting and auditing, acting in the public interest, has supported this war for decades.*"

3.Methodology

This paper comes as an empirical study of the regulatory framework in Albania in the fight against corruption and in the field of the accounting profession, developing a descriptive analysis of the role of the accounting profession in the fight against corruption. Based on the data collected, the role of the profession and the impact it has on the correct application of legal acts taken over the years will be discussed. This study comes to the help the reader to understand the steps taken in Albania towards improving the role of the accounting profession in the fight against corruption, aiming to be in coherence even with the UN SDGs.

4.Discussion and analysis

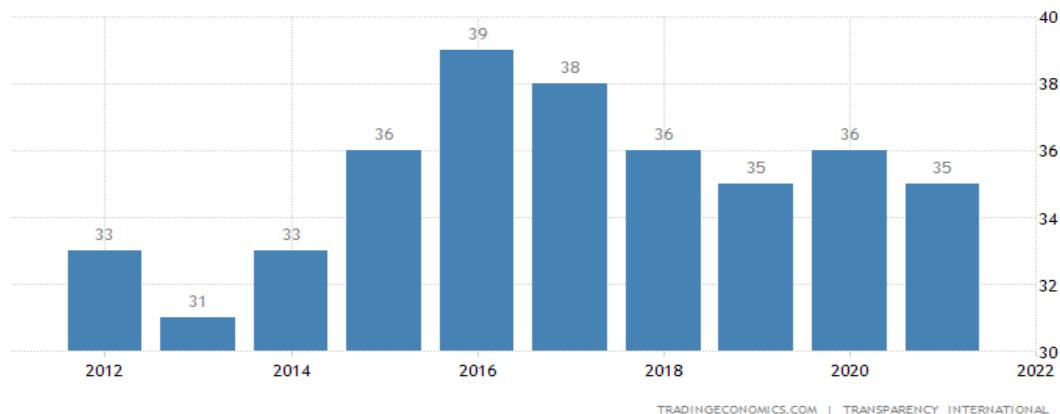
4.1 Regulatory framework and the fight against corruption in Albania

Albania, like any other country transitioning from centralized economy to decentralized economy (former communist countries), could not be out of the corruption problem. Currently corruption levels are highly discussed issues and the point of view for it, is different. Sometimes corruption appears as a quality element but also quantitative, but its effects are undoubtedly the obstacle to the economic

development of a country as well as damages integrity by causing the loss of trust of the people.

According to Transparency International between 180 countries studied for the corruption Albania for the year 2021, is ranked 110th with 35 scores, an indicator that has fallen by one point compared to 2020 and to understand the trend over years this index is presented in figures 2 and 3. Compared to 2012, our country has had an increase of only 2 points per cent but there is e very dynamic trendy during the period 2012-2021.

Graphic no 1 "Albania corruption index"



Albania Corruption Index

Actual	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Dates	Unit	Frequency
35	36	39	23	1999 - 2021	Points	Yearly

Source; Transparency International¹

The fight against corruption is not only a priority for the Albanian Government (AG) but is also one of the 5 key priorities the European Union has set for Albania in its integration into the European family.

The economic development came along with a series of reforms undertaken in different areas and sectors. The adoption forms the AG of the new Intersectoral Strategy for The Prevention and Fight against Corruption and for Transparent Governance 2008-2013 is clearly a positive development and the strategy itself was very ambitious. It aimed to continuously reduce corruption, increasing the integrity of institutions and promoting good governance and transparency. Albania in the last ten years has continuing reforms for further development of the regulatory

¹ <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/albania>, visit at 20.10.2022

framework for the fight against corruption. But on the other hand, active citizen participation in the complex governance process is a necessity and guarantee for maintaining the integrity of government. Transparency in state activity and citizens' access to government-held information is an essential condition for their participation in public life as well as for the protection of their private interests. Albania in its journey is continuing with the reforms undertaken and if we highlight some of them over the years and the most important ones, we would most pay attention are:

Table no 1 "The regulatory framework for the fight against corruption in Albania"

Year	Law	Responsible Institution	Goal
1997	8270, dated 23.12.1997 "For the Supreme State Control " actually by law 154/2014, dated 27.11.2014 "On the organization and functioning of the Supreme State Control"	Supreme State Control (KLSH)	through audits, it aims to use public funds, public property and state funds with efficiency, efficiency and economics, the development of an appropriate financial management system, properly conduct administrative activities, as well as inform public authorities and the public, through the publication of its reports.
2003	9049, dated 10.4.2003 For declaration and control of assets, financial obligations of elected officials and some public servants"	Supreme Institute of Declaration and Control of Wealth (ILDKPKI)	determining the rules for declaring and controlling wealth, legitimacy of the resources of its creation, financial obligations for elected officials, public servants, for their families and for their related persons
2005	9367 dated 7.4.2005 For the prevention of conflict of interest in the exercise of public functions	Supreme Institute of Declaration and Control of Wealth (ILDKPKI)	ensuring impartial, transparent decision-making, in the best possible interest of the public and of its trust in public institutions, through the prevention of conflict between public and private interests of an official in the exercise of its functions.

2008	9917, dated 19.5.2008 for preventing money laundering and financing of the Terrorism	Department for the Preventing Money Laundering / Ministry of Finance and Economy (DPPPP)	prevent money and products from being laundered by criminal acts, as well as preventing the financing of terrorism	
2015	114/2015 "For internal auditing in the public sector "	public sector entities: Ministry of Finance and Economy	regulates the activity of internal auditing in the public sector, as well as defines the area of action, mission, principles, organization, functioning and responsibilities	
2016	No.13, dated 18.02.2016 "For the way public services are available in offices -in the Republic of Albania"	ADISA (Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania)	the unique portal of denouncing corruptive practices https://www.adisa.gov.al/stop-korrupsionit/	
2016	60/2016 "For Signalers and their protection"	ILDKPKI and every public authority, which has more than 80 employees, and the private subject, who has more than 100 employees;	prevention and combating corruption in the public and private sector; protecting individuals who signal alleged corruption actions or practices in their workplace; and promoting the signaling of alleged acts or practices of corruption.	
2016	84/2016 "For the transitional reassessment of judges and prosecutors in the Republic of Albania"	KPK/ KPA	The definition of special rules for the transitional reassessment of all subjects of reassessment to ensure the functioning of the rule of law, independence of the justice system, as well as the restoration of public confidence in the institutions of this system, according to the	

2016	95/2016 For organizing and functioning institutions to fight corruption and organized crime	Special Structure against corruption and organized crime (SPAK)	The definition of rules for the organization and functioning of the Special Prosecution against Corruption and Organized Crime and the Independent Investigative Unit, as constitutional bodies, according to point 4, of Article 148, of the Constitution
2018	For the transitional and periodic evaluation of State police officers, Republic Guard and Service for Interior Affairs and Complaints in the Interior Ministry	External Evaluation Commission/ Police Oversight Agency (KJV/AMP)	the definition of principles, criteria, <u>procedures</u> and standards of transitional and periodic evaluation, as well as the organization and functioning of evaluation bodies for employees of the State Police, the Republic Guard and the Internal Affairs and Complaints Service in the Interior Ministry.
2019	106, dated 25.07.2019 Decision of the Prime Minister, 'For the creation, composition and functioning of the Network of Anticorruption Coordinators	Ministry of Justice (MD)	fight against all kinds of corruption and strengthen citizens' confidence in a public administration, efficient and with high integrity in the service of the citizen.
2019	34/2019 For the management of seized and confiscated assets	Interior Ministry / AAPSK	the most efficient, effective and economical management and use of assets seized and confiscated by the bodies of justice and assets seized at the order of the minister responsible for finances, the return to the community of illegally acquired assets and the financial compensation of victims of crime

Source: The authors

If carefully studied, it is noted that reforms to the fight against corruption in Albania have been undertaken in every dimension of it, over years including public institutions and the wide participation of the public/individual. The commonality of

any legal act is the element of asset assessment or as it is known in the literature "incomes", object of unfair individual benefits during the exercise of the duty and their profession. At this point it is undoubtedly evident the role of the accounting profession as an instrument in the identification and evaluation processes of "unfair benefits" by individuals exercising their functions in the public and private sector.

The Council of Europe's Committee of Experts, which assesses compatibility with FATF standards, in the 2018 report, has assessed that Albania has a reasonable understanding of the risks of money laundering in the formal economy and has taken steps to address FATF recommendations. However, due to the added risks associated with corruption, informal economy, etc., it is in a process of deepening monitoring (enhanced follow-up). The report of this monitoring, while positively reassessing the work done, again underlines that some recommendations have not been fully addressed and the assessment for them follows to be "partly in compatibility", both in legislative and implementation terms.

The categories of the subjects of the above legal acts are numerous, including both financial entities, individuals, and free professions. The focus of this paper will be regulated professions (accountants, auditors, certified accountants, tax advisers, etc.), who assist, facilitate, enable communication and conduct transactions for economic entities, as well as perform the role of the Cooperative Actor in the correct implementation of the legal acts in force.

Beyond any doubt, its worth's highlighting from the beginning that the role of members of the accounting profession and other professions that provide services for business, as subjects of the regulatory framework of fighting corruption and money laundering, is quite large and very important. It goes beyond simply respecting the applicable legal or regulatory requirements. The contribution of members of the profession cannot be a simple compatibility exercise, i.e., only care for formal compliance with certain binding requirements, provided for in specific laws.

4.2 Accounting profession and its role in the fight against corruption

Accounting profession, as defined in IFAC's IESBA Code of Ethics, has as its main mission, the performance of quality professional services, with required competence, integrity, objectivity, integrity and independence, as part of the main purpose of protecting the citizens and the public interest. Fulfilling this commitment requires that members of the profession contribute to the security of society and, especially, to its social sustainability, without which, no achievement until now can be protected and no further achievement tomorrow, will be guaranteed.

Under IFAC's IESBA Code, accounting professionals must act in accordance with the fundamental ethical principle, professional behavior, which requires them to respect applicable laws and regulations, whenever they take over to perform a professional service, for a client or employer. Sections 260 and 360 of the IESBA code, which

address incompatibility with applicable legal and regulatory requirements (NOCLAR), contain the professional obligation for accounting professionals to report when they receive knowledge, or have doubts of incompatibility with laws and regulations, including anti money laundering legislation.

In their role as "protectors" accounting professionals may be considered the first safeguarding hall, or more serious obstacles, for funds generated by illegal, or criminal activities, to find the opportunities to "clean up"¹ and enter the legitimate economy.

Albanian Law nr 9917/2008 for preventing money laundering and financing terrorism' defined that accounting professionals have a legal obligation to report suspicious money laundering activities to the responsible authority (Financial Intelligence Unit - FIU, or Anti money laundering Department). The requirement for reporting suspicious activities is also included in professional obligations



Source: Authors

It is noticed that accounting professionals play this important role, for reasons because during the exercise of the profession a certified accountant, auditor or accountant enables to provide events/transaction identification services, assessing them reliably based on accounting standards, which are offered through financial and non-financial reports to different users depending on the service contract agreed between the parties. The more accurately and correctly the events and transactions are recorded and showed in their accounting books and reports, the more correct will be the implementation of legal acts undertaken in the fight against corruption.

The work of accountants and professional auditors is essential to the architecture of the governance of economies, and along with other key elements serve to support transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. Of course, legal frameworks are also

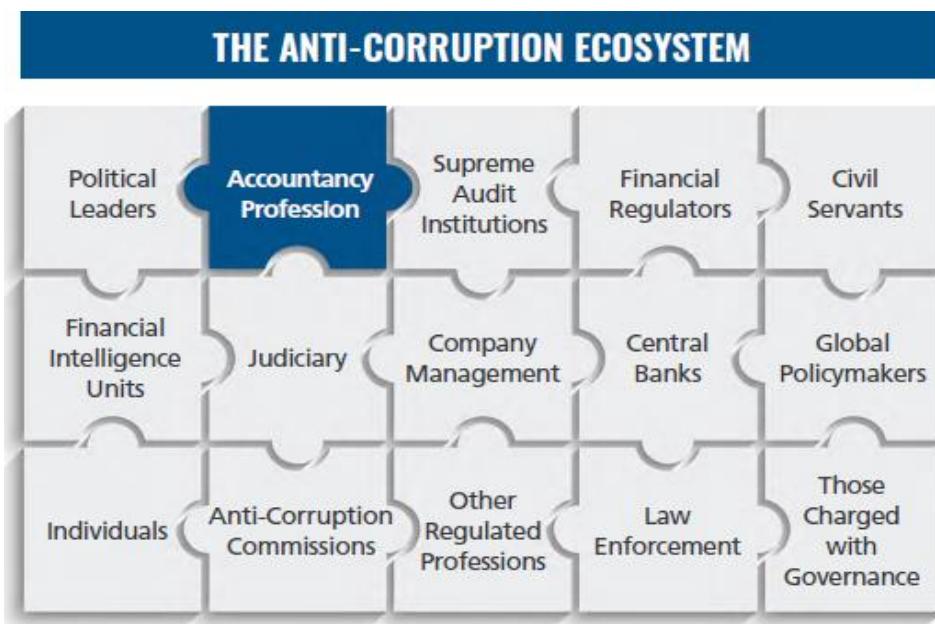
¹ Law no. 9917/2008 For preventing money laundering and financing terrorism', amended

undertaken and developed in Albania, in the field of accounting where we will highlight:

- Law No. 10 091, dated 5.03.2009 "For Legal Auditing, Organization of the Profession of Legal Auditor and Approved Accountant", which aims to improve and strengthen public supervision of the legal auditor's profession, as well as regulating the profession of approved accountant.
- Law No. 25/2018 "For Accounting and Financial Statements", which sets out the general principles and rules for the design and components of financial statements, the definition of applicable accounting standards, as well as the maintenance of accounting and the responsibility of the Financial Statements drafters.

Increasingly understanding the role of the accounting professional during the exercise of the profession, currently IFAC through the Action Plan for Fighting Corruption and Economic Crime (2022) has envisioned the conceptual framework for how to improve the role of the accounting profession in the fight against corruption by targeting an approximation even with the UN SDGs.

In this *Action Plan for Fighting Corruption and Economic Crime* (Anti-Corruption Action Plan). IFAC has noted five important pillars which provide a consistent framework for actions to support the Action Plan as it evolves over time against corruption. In accordance with IFAC a whole-ecosystem approach is composed of five pillars, with the global accountancy profession as a core part and contributor to that ecosystem. Other key actors include political leaders, government agencies, civil servants, business leaders, and company management and those charged with governance, global policymakers, law enforcement, other regulated professionals (such as lawyers), and individual citizens and taxpayers. According to IFAC these actors all must work together in an increasingly global—yet still largely domestic—policy framework of treaties, legislation, and regulations.



Source ; IFAC "Action Plan for Fighting Corruption and Economic Crime"2022

It is emphasised that the accountancy profession plays an important role in the Anti - Corruption ecosystem. According to IFAC organizing the Anti-Corruption Action Plan into five pillars has two primary objectives. First, it provides a narrative structure for what the global accountancy profession already does and connects this to the anti-corruption and economic crime agenda. This helps the profession and other stakeholders understand the role of accountancy profession. Second, and more importantly, the structure and organizing principles will inspire the profession. According to IFAC, PAOs, firms of all sizes, and individual professional accountants as self-employed, freelancer or the professionals that work in government to build on accountancy profession contributions with new or expanded actual activities that strengthen the positive impact in the Anti -Corruption ecosystem.

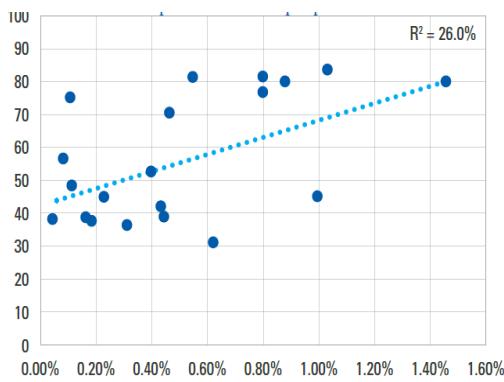
Professional accounting organizations (PAO) in Albania must support and have this plan as a guide within the role they have in the fight against corruption and economic crime. In drafting their action plans professional accounting and auditing organizations it is necessary to work, based on these IFAC orientations, to increase the role of accounting and auditors in the fight against corruption and economic crime, to strengthen the governance of economic entities and the state.

According to IFAC¹ there is the fact that its fight and effectiveness against corruption and economic crime that professional accountants and auditors are committed to these qualities and are members of strong PAO than for individuals who can identify as accountants but do not possess professional qualifications. As IFAC Executive Director *Fayez Chouthury said*, "*The Profession of Accounting and Auditing, acting in the public interest, has supported this war for decades - and we will continue to do so.*"

A study conducted by IFAC in 2015 states that there is a strong correlation between the percentage of accountants and professional auditors and a more favorable result in the corruption perception index of international transparency².

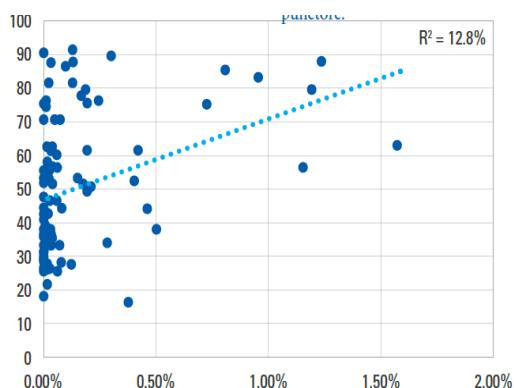
Graphic no 2

Corruption Perceptions Index Correlation with the International Transparency of country with % of accountants and auditors



Graphic no 3

Corruption Perceptions Index Correlation of the International Transparency with % of accountants and auditors



Source; IFAC 2017³

Above, we noted that Albania has undertaken its reforms in some areas such as the tax system, justice, police system, financial reporting and accounting and auditing professions, etc., with the focus of strengthening institutions, increasing public credibility, and involving in fighting corruption and money laundering professionals with integrity and high professionalism.

During the analysis of the legal acts in force is understood that the role of the **accounting** professional is evident in their application and can be mentioned:

¹ Accounting and Auditing Profession - Playing a Positive Role on Tackling Corruption- Independent Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) Report 2017-IFAC

² The proportion of members of IFAC member organizations in the workforce is used to approach the percentage of accountants and professional auditors in the economy.

³ IFAC, February 2017 "Accounting and auditing profession - playing a positive role in tackling corruption" pg 78

The accounting professional provides the services of preparing asset statements and individual Financial Statements based on the principle of cash in cash out payments in compliance with legal acts including accounting standards.

Legal auditors provide the services in case the relevant legal documentation of the seized property is missing, as well as the accounts of the commercial company.

Legal auditors, certified accountants, tax advisers, as well as any other person taking over to provide directly or through other persons assistance or consultation on tax matters, such as main business or professional activities, has the obligation to inform the relevant institution on suspicious criminal activities

Legal auditors, certified accountants, tax advisers, should not allow on the businesses or individuals to whom offer their accounting services, transactions to be carried out over the limits of cash actions allowed by law.

The legal auditor and internal auditor must submit audit reports to in compliance with auditing standards.

Etc.

But the future of each country depends not only on the establishment and development of legal acts, but above all will depend on the awareness of each one, that with the professionalism that characterizes it can lead to a Safe and fair future.

Conclusion

Accounting profession, as defined in IFAC's IESBA Code of Ethics, has its main mission, the performance of quality professional services, with required competence, integrity, objectivity, as part of the main purpose of protecting the citizens and the public interest. Fulfilling this commitment requires that members of the profession contribute to the security of society and, especially, to its social sustainability, without which, no achievement until now can be protected and no further achievement tomorrow, will be guaranteed. Albania like any other country has undertaken reforms in the fight against corruption by creating a full regulatory framework in both the public and private sectors. Its reforms certainly include professionals in the field of accounting, with key role along with other actors. This is noted even by literature studies on the role of the accounting profession in the fight against corruption. There is noted the strong link between them and the favorable impact of accounting professionals in the index of perception of corruption of international transparency.

In conclusion, we can say that the Accounting Profession can be an essential pillar of strong and stable government institutions, financial markets, economies, and society. A profession consisting of professionals with ethical and professional behavior, constantly trained in coherence with SNEs, strengthening professional accounting organizations, will increase transparency and accountability in the public and private sector. They will be supportive of the financial sector and affect economic

development, serve to increase public confidence, but the accounting profession cannot solve the problem of corruption alone, therefore it is necessary, and we suggest that there is necessary to be a commitment and partnership with all anti-corruption actors to work together on this important mission.

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Descartes' Non – Mathematical Method in His *Meditations on First Philosophy*

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Abstract

The goal of René Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* is to discover the first principles of human knowledge, that is, what must be known before anything else can be known. In the *Preface to the Principles of Philosophy*, he refers to this area of inquiry as metaphysics. If we are to understand the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, it is important to understand the methodology utilized in this work. In light of the fact that, throughout his writings, Descartes refers to mathematics and to the method of mathematics as a model for learning, many commentators regard Descartes as utilizing the method of mathematics in the *Meditations* in his effort to learn the first principles of metaphysics. At one time, I held this view, as well. Part of the difficulty in grasping Descartes' method in the *Meditations* stems from the fact that nowhere in this work does he reveal the method that he is utilizing. He does employ hyperbolic doubt, especially in the first meditation, but this type of doubt, although part of his methodology in this work, cannot explain Descartes' method throughout the *Meditations*. What changed my mind about Descartes' method in his *Meditations* is his explanation, in the *Replies to the Second Set of Objections*, of the method he utilizes in this work (he calls this method 'analysis'), and the contrast he draws between this method and the method of mathematics (which he calls 'synthesis'). Descartes urges in the *Replies to the Second Set of Objections* that the search for the first principles of human knowledge in the *Meditations* encounters difficulties which are never faced by the mathematician: all difficulties in metaphysics originate through the influence of the senses, which prejudice the mind into believing that certain empirical ideas are the true metaphysical ideas, and which prevent us from focussing our attention on the true metaphysical innate ideas, e.g. of the self and of God, through which the first principles of metaphysics can be learned. In the present keynote address, I propose to examine Descartes' method of 'analysis', which will provide insight into how he proceeds in his search for the metaphysical first principles of human knowledge, and why he rejects 'synthesis' as the method for the search for metaphysical first principles. Further, in a letter dated April 15, 1630, Descartes wrote to Marin Mersenne, informing him that he has discovered how to demonstrate

metaphysical truths "in a way that is more evident than the demonstrations in Geometry". In my presentation, I will seek an understanding of this claim in the context of Descartes' discussion of the methods of analysis and synthesis.

Keywords: methods of 'analysis' and 'synthesis', innate ideas, deductive arguments, sensory prejudice, metaphysics

Introduction

In a letter to Marin Mersenne, dated April 15, 1630, Descartes writes that he thinks he has discovered how to demonstrate metaphysical truths in "a way which is more evident than the demonstrations of geometry." When commenting on the nature and scope of the method Descartes develops in the *Regulæ*, L.J.Beck writes:

"The object of Cartesian methodology is to extend the method used in the mathematical sciences [detailed in the *Regulæ*] to all other branches of knowledge, including, of course, metaphysics and the other philosophical sciences."¹

Although this view is widely held among Descartes scholars, I will show that it is mistaken.

E. M. Curley² also quotes the passage from the letter to Mersenne about demonstrating metaphysical truths, but he argues that this passage reveals that Descartes abandoned, or at least came to attach less importance to, the method advocated in the *Regulæ*. Curley writes:

I suggest that sometime around 1628 Descartes came to feel that pyrrhonian scepticism was a more dangerous enemy than scholasticism, and came to feel the

¹All references to Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* are taken from the *Philosophy In - Focus edition*, edited and with a Critical Introduction, by Stanley Tweyman, Routledge, (London and New York), 1993. An e - book edition is also available, Taylor and Francis, London, 2003. The text of the *Meditations on First Philosophy* and the selection from the *Replies to the Second Set of Objections* in the *Philosophy In - Focus* volume are reprinted from the Haldane and Ross translation, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes, in two volumes*, first published 1911; reprinted with corrections 1931, 1956, 1970, by permission of Cambridge University Press. References are listed as M followed by the page number(s). All references to Descartes' other writings are taken from the Haldane and Ross two - volume edition, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1970, cited as HR followed by the volume and page number(s). I have also included references to Descartes' writings from the Cottingham, Stoothoff, Murdoch translation, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, in two volumes*, Cambridge University Press, 1988. References are cited as CSM, followed by the volume and page number(s).

L. J. Beck, *The Method of Descartes, A Study of the Regulæ* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1952) page 13.

²E.M Curley, *Descartes Against the Skeptics*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978.

force of sceptical arguments which cut against both his own position in the *Regulae* and that of the scholastics. (Curley, pages 37 – 38)

In this paper, I will show that Curley misrepresents Descartes' attitude toward the method Descartes develops in the *Regulae*.

Descartes does not discuss the method he utilizes in the *Meditations* in the *Meditations* itself. In fact, the method of the *Meditations* is not set out in any of Descartes' works. Rather, he discusses the method of the *Meditations* in only one place, namely, in a portion of the *Replies to the Second Set of Objections* (M 101 – 104; CSM 11, 110 - 113). I will show that the method that Descartes utilizes in the *Meditations* is not the method developed in the *Regulae*, and that this method has application only in his quest for the first principles of metaphysics in the *Meditations*. Once he grasps the self – evident first principles of metaphysics, the method utilized in the *Meditations* has no further application.

In the first and third meditations, Descartes questions the reliability of mathematics: in both meditations, his concern with mathematics stems from God's infinite power, and the fact that God might be a deceiver. Now, given that the *Regulae* accepts the certainty of mathematics, and that the whole of mathematics is subjected to doubt in the *Meditations*, it appears that Descartes has utilized a method in the *Meditations* different from the mathematical - type method developed in the *Regulae*. On this interpretation, when Descartes writes to Mersenne that he has discovered how to demonstrate metaphysical truths in a way which is more evident than the demonstrations of geometry, this is an indication that the method of the *Regulae* is not the method that he is using in the *Meditations*.

The first edition of the Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* appeared in 1644, well after Descartes had worked on the *Regulae*, and completed the *Meditations* (first edition of the *Meditations*, published in Latin in 1641). In the *Preface to the Principles of Philosophy* (HR 1, 211; CSM 1, 186), he recommends studying the basic logic of the *Regulae* before we apply ourselves to metaphysics, the subject matter of the *Meditations*. It is clear, therefore, that contrary to Curley's position quoted earlier, the logic developed in the *Regulae* has an important role to play in Descartes' overall philosophic scheme, and, it would appear, the importance of the *Regulae* is not diminished by the doubts raised about mathematics in the *Meditations*. Furthermore, since Descartes does not intend to abandon the method of the *Regulae* when he utilizes hyperbolic doubt in the *Meditations*, we can conclude that his remark to Mersenne that he has discovered how to demonstrate metaphysical truths in a way which is more evident than the demonstrations of geometry is not directed against the teaching of the *Regulae*.

Since the reliability of mathematics is not established until he deals with the truth of the clear and distinct in the *Meditations*, the discussion in the *Regulae* of mathematics as the model for learning is, at most, provisional. And, the provisional character of

mathematics is never removed in the *Regulae*. Given that the reliability of mathematics is established in the *Meditations*, we should ask what a mastery of the *Regulae* provides, without the advantage of the teaching of the *Meditations*. That is, granting the provisional character of mathematics in the *Regulae*, and the method developed from mathematics in this work, we must know the epistemic status of any solution which has been arrived at through the method taught in the *Regulae*. In this regard, Descartes' comments on the atheist in the *Replies to the Second Set of Objections* are instructive:

That an atheist can know clearly that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, I do not deny, I merely affirm that, on the other hand, such knowledge on his part cannot constitute true science, because no knowledge that can be rendered doubtful should be called science. Since he is, as supposed, an atheist, he cannot be sure that he is not deceived in the things that seem most evident to him . . . and though perchance the doubt does not occur to him, nevertheless it may come up, if he examines the matter, or if another suggest it; he can never be made safe from it unless he first recognizes the existence of a God. (HR 11, 39; CSM 11, 101)

The atheist can believe that s/he knows, but without a knowledge of God, s/he cannot know that s/he knows (Descartes' expression on this is "such knowledge on his part cannot constitute true science"). The paradigm for knowledge in the *Regulae* is mathematics; for Descartes, the distinguishing features of such knowledge are its clarity and distinctness. In the fifth meditation, he notes of the clear and distinct in mathematics that

. . . the nature of my mind is such that I could not prevent myself from holding them to be true so long as I conceive them clearly; and I recollect that even when I was still strongly attached to the objects of sense, I counted as the most certain those truths which I conceived clearly as regards figures, numbers, and the other matters which pertain to arithmetic and geometry, and, in general, to pure and abstract mathematics. (M 81; CSM 11, 45)

Without a knowledge of God, a solution reached by utilizing the method of the *Regulae* can yield, at most, the highest mode of psychological assurance of which we are capable. The conclusion will be irresistible, considering the evidence presented; nevertheless, nothing put forth in the *Regulae* can assure us that what we perceive clearly and distinctly is true. The *Regulae* and the *Meditations* make it clear that the mathematician is satisfied with the state of mind and level of certainty found in mathematics. The provisional character of the method developed in the *Regulae* can only be removed when Descartes has successfully established that whatever is perceived clearly and distinctly is true. And this, he tells us in two passages in the *Synopsis to the Meditations*, has been established in the fourth meditation:

... it is requisite that we may be assured that all things which we conceive clearly and distinctly are true in the very way in which we think them; and this could not be proved previously to the Fourth Meditation. (M 42; CSM 11, 9)

In the fourth Meditation it is shown that all these things which we very clearly and distinctly perceive are true... (M 43; CSM 11, 9)

In one passage in the *Regulae*, Descartes explains the role of the *Regulae* in regard to the pursuit of indubitable knowledge. It is a rather lengthy passage, but important enough for our purposes to be quoted extensively.

This method of ours resembles indeed those devices employed by the mechanical crafts, which do not need the aid of anything outside of them, but themselves supply the directions for making their own instruments. Thus if a man wished to practise any one of them, e.g. the craft of a smith, and were destitute of all instruments, he would be forced to use at first a hard stone or a rough lump of iron as an anvil, take a piece of rock in place of a hammer, make pieces of wood serve as tongs, and provide himself with other such tools as necessity required. Thus equipped, he would not then at once attempt to forge swords or helmets or any manufactured article of iron for others to use. He would first of all fashion, hammer, anvil, tongs, and the other tools useful for himself. This example teaches us that, since thus at the outset we have been able to discover some rough precepts, apparently the innate possession of the mind, rather than the product of technical skill, we should not forthwith attempt to settle the controversies of Philosophers, or solve the puzzles of the Mathematicians, by their help. We must first employ them for searching out with our utmost attention all the other things that are more urgently required in the investigation of truth. (HR 1, 25 – 26; CSM 1, 31)

From this passage, we learn that in the *Regulae*, mathematics is treated as the object of study, utilized to discover, and develop, the elements of the innate methodology which Descartes discovers in himself. No solutions to philosophical problems are attempted in this work. Rather, by making mathematics the object of study in the *Regulae*, Descartes is seeking a full understanding of how best to direct our reason if we are to discover the truth. This explains why, in the *Preface to the Principles of Philosophy*, he urges that the *Regulae* should be studied before we undertake to study metaphysics in the *Mediations*. The passage which reveals this appears in the *Preface to the Principles of Philosophy*, when Descartes sets out the order which should be followed in our self – instruction:

[After forming for ourselves a code of conduct,] we should likewise study logic - not that of the Schools, because it properly speaking is only a dialectic which teaches how to make the things that we know understood by others - but the logic that best teaches us how best to direct our reason in order to discover those truths of which we are ignorant....Then when he has acquired a certain skill in discovering the truth in these questions, he should begin seriously to apply himself to the true philosophy, the first

part of which is metaphysics, which contains the principles of knowledge, amongst which is the explanation of the principle attributes of God, of the immateriality of our souls, and of all the clear and simple notions which are in us. (HR 1, 210 – 211; CSM 1, 186)

We cannot seek metaphysical first principles without first understanding how to best direct our reason in the discovery of truth (hence, the need for studying the *Regulae*), but the method for discovering metaphysical truths is not the method utilized by the geometer.

Metaphysical truths for Descartes are first principles, or as he refers to them in the passage quoted above from the *Preface to the Principles of Philosophy*, "the principles of knowledge." First principles cannot be conclusions of geometric - type demonstrations. In fact, the principles of knowledge, being first principles, cannot be conclusions of any argument. Therefore, a geometric or deductive - type demonstration is ruled out in the case of metaphysical first principles. According to the third meditation, geometric - type demonstrations will always be susceptible to doubt, until we know that God exists and is not a deceiver. On the other hand, the *Meditations* reveals that knowledge of indubitable metaphysical principles can be had - in particular, knowledge of the self in the second meditation, and knowledge of God - without the need for the divine guarantee. Accordingly, Descartes realizes that he must develop a method for establishing metaphysical truths which is more certain than the method of demonstrating geometric truths: metaphysics is possible only if (at least, some) metaphysical knowledge can be had without the divine guarantee, whereas geometric - type demonstrations can be considered knowledge only after the divine guarantee is achieved.

At this stage, we are able to understand that, given the nature and importance of metaphysical knowledge for Descartes, it could never have been his intention, contrary to Beck's position discussed earlier, to apply the method developed in the *Regulae* to the *Meditations*. Both metaphysics and geometry utilize first principles (or axioms in Geometry). Descartes' account of the similarities and differences between metaphysics and geometry in regard to their respective first principles is to be found in the *Replies to the Second Set of Objections* (M 101 – 104; CSM 11, 110 – 113). He points out that the first principles of geometrical proofs "harmonize with the use of our senses, and are readily granted by all. Hence, no difficulty is involved in this case, except in the proper deduction of the consequences. But this may be performed by people of all sorts, even by the inattentive, if only they remember what has gone before..." (HR 11, 49; CSM 11, 111). In other words, no special method is required in order to learn the first principles of geometry, because sensory prejudice is never an impediment to learning in Geometry. Once we are presented with the geometric first principles and understand them, we will accept them as true. And once they are accepted as true, we are able to deduce the consequences which follow from them. He calls the method of deduction utilized in geometry, 'synthesis'.

Metaphysics, on the other hand, lacks this advantage:

... [Nothing] in metaphysics causes more trouble than the making the perception of its primary notions clear and distinct. For though in their own nature they are as intelligible as, or even more intelligible than those geometers study, yet being contradicted by the many preconceptions of our senses to which we have since our earliest years been accustomed, they cannot be perfectly apprehended except by those who give strenuous attention and study to them, and withdraw their minds as far as possible from matters corporeal. Hence if they alone were brought forward, it would be easy for anyone with a zeal for contradiction to deny them. (HR 11, 49 – 50; CSM 11, 111)

To apprehend the first principles of metaphysics, a unique method is required, which Descartes, in the *Replies to the Second Set of Objections*, calls 'analysis'.

Analysis shows the true way by which a thing was methodically discovered and derived, as it were effect from cause, so that, if the reader care to follow it and give sufficient attention to everything, he understands the matter no less perfectly and makes it as much his own as if he had himself discovered it. But it contains nothing to incite belief in an inattentive or hostile reader; for if the very least thing brought forward escapes his notice, the necessity of the conclusion is lost; and on many matters which, nevertheless, should be specially noted, it often scarcely touches, because they are clear to anyone who gives sufficient attention to them. (M 101 – 102; CSM 11, 110)

Geometry, with its method of synthesis, does not encounter these problems:

Synthesis contrariwise employs an opposite procedure; one in which the search goes as it were from effect to cause (though often here the proof itself is from cause to effect to a greater extent than in the former case). It does indeed clearly demonstrate its conclusions, and it employs a long series of definitions, postulates, axioms, theorems and problems, so that if one of the conclusions that follow is denied, it may at once be shown to be contained in what has gone before. Thus the reader, however hostile and obstinate, is compelled to render his assent. Yet this method is not so satisfactory as the other and does not equally well content the eager learner, because it does not show the way in which the matter taught was discovered. (M.101 – 102; CSM 11, 110 - 111)

Whereas obstinacy and hostility will not be impediments to grasping truths in geometry (the reader has only to follow the logic of the argument), obstinacy and hostility will prevent the reader from grasping the first principles in metaphysics. In Geometry, our understanding can often be assisted with diagrams and other empirical markings. But in metaphysics, empirical ideas can never be the basis for knowledge, as they never possess the accuracy in content to form the basis of metaphysical knowledge. In the search for knowledge of metaphysical first principles, the reader

must attempt to free her/himself of sensory prejudice, and to apprehend the very same innate ideas with which Descartes is dealing. This is accomplished by attending to what Descartes has written in the *Meditations*. However, this can be difficult, given the strong influence of sensory prejudice. Ideas of God, for example, obtained from reading, from conversations with parents and/ or friends, and/or from one's own imagination, will always be false ideas, and can never reveal the true nature of God. According to Descartes, the ideas required in the pursuit of metaphysical first principles are the innate ideas which God has given to us. The goal is to give sufficient attention to everything Descartes has written in his *Meditations*, so that we are not influenced by sensory prejudice, and we are able, through grasping the relevant innate ideas, to understand the matter no less perfectly, and makes it as much our own, as if we had discovered it for ourselves.

...[N]othing in metaphysics causes more trouble than the making the perception of its primary notions clear and distinct. For, though in their own nature than are as intelligible as, or even more intelligible than those the geometers study, yet being contradicted by the many preconceptions of our senses to which we have since our earliest years been accustomed, they cannot be perfectly apprehended except by those who give strenuous attention and study to them, and withdraw their minds as far as possible from matters corporeal. Hence if they alone were brought forward it would be easy for anyone with a zeal for contradiction to deny them. (M 102 – 103; CSM 11, 111 - 112)

With the method of analysis, there is always an aspect of self - discovery, in which the reader is involved with the very same innate ideas with which Descartes is dealing: "Analysis shows the true way by which a thing was methodically discovered and derived...so that, if the reader care to follow it and give sufficient attention to everything, he understands the matter no less perfectly and makes it as much his own as if he had himself discovered it. (M101; CSM 11, 110)

It is this method of analysis to which Descartes is referring in the letter to Mersenne. Notice that in his comment to Mersenne he says that he thinks he has discovered a way to demonstrate *metaphysical* truths which is more evident than the demonstrations of geometry. He is not saying that he has discovered a method for demonstrating *any* truth in a way which is more evident than geometry. It is in metaphysics that demonstrations are more evident than those in geometry, because, as we have seen, metaphysics must provide knowledge of first principles regarding the self and God without the assistance of the divine guarantee, whereas in all other areas of knowing, including geometry, the divine guarantee will be required.

Descartes points out in the *Replies to the Second Set of Objection* that "I have used in my Meditations only analysis, which is the best and truest method of teaching." (M 102; CSM 11, 111) Again, in a second passage in the *Replies to the Second Set of Objections*, he writes: "...my writing took the form of Meditations rather than that of

Philosophical Disputations or the theorems and problems of a geometer; so that hence I might by this very fact testify that I had no dealings except with those who will not shrink from joining me in giving the matter attentive care and meditation" (M 103; CSM 11, 112). He tells us that synthesis "though it very suitably finds a place after analysis in the domain of geometry, cannot so conveniently be applied to these metaphysical matters we are discussing" (M 102; CSM 11, 111), given that synthesis cannot be of assistance in eliminating sensory prejudice, nor direct the attention to the appropriate metaphysical ideas.

Analytic demonstrations are designed to guide the mind, so that all sensory prejudice preventing us from grasping the innate ideas involved in understanding metaphysical first principles will be removed, and the first principles themselves can be grasped by the mind. An analytic demonstration, therefore, is, as it were, a process of 'reasoning up' to first principles, the upward movement taking place as prejudice is removed, and our attention is focused on the pure or innate ideas which constitute the metaphysical first principle and the connection between these ideas. Accordingly, when, in the case of an analytic demonstration, Descartes speaks about drawing conclusions or concluding a first principle (e.g., at M 51; CSM 11, 17, he writes: "So that after having reflected well and carefully examined all things, we must come to the definite conclusion that this proposition: I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time that I pronounce it, or that I mentally conceive it"), he is not speaking of drawing a conclusion in a deductive argument. To draw a conclusion when employing analysis is tantamount to acknowledging that he is now able to grasp the truth of a metaphysical first principle.

In light of my discussion, we are able to draw the following conclusions:

*Any attempt to understand Descartes' *Meditations* by seeking to uncover its deductive logical structure is clearly mistaken, and will end in failure. Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* is not a logical work in the traditional sense of 'logical', namely, a work relying on premises and conclusions, in which the conclusion is arrived at deductively. Descartes' *Meditations* is designed to remove sensory prejudice, which hinders the mind's capacity to grasp the innate ideas through which metaphysical first principles can be apprehended (these metaphysical first principles constituting what must be known before anything else can be known). Toward the end of the first meditation, Descartes urges that the true starting - point of Philosophy is indifference, that is, the point at which we are no longer inclined to embrace any position on a particular metaphysical matter. He carries this out through the use of 'hyperbolic doubt', and the hypotheses of the deceiving deity and the evil genius, all of which provide a counter - balance to sensory prejudice. Once all sensory prejudice has been removed, he is then able, beginning in the second meditation, to lead us to the true innate ideas, which constitute the basis of all metaphysical knowledge of the first principles of human knowledge.

*Given that the *Meditations on First Philosophy* is not a logical work, we should not assess the arguments presented in this work in terms of validity and soundness. The arguments are didactic devices, through which Descartes seeks to guide our minds toward grasping these metaphysical first principles: they are not deductive arguments, where the truth, e.g. in geometry, is to be found in the conclusion of the argument. It is interesting to note that the majority of Descartes' contemporary interpreters and critics, as well as later interpreters and critics right up to the present, hold what I am urging is the mistaken view of the *Meditations* – that this is a work using deductive logical arguments, and should be assessed in this spirit. I suggest that this explains Descartes' expressions of frustration with many of his interpreters and critics, who he regarded as not understanding the method he employs in the *Meditations*, in that they regard the *Meditations* as employing the method of synthesis, rather than the method of analysis. On a personal note, I would add that the *Meditations on First Philosophy* would most likely have been better understood by interpreters and critics, had Descartes placed the explanation of the method that he utilizes in the *Meditations* in the *Preface to the Reader* of this work, where he introduces the nature and goal of the *Meditations*.

Notes on the Contributor

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Plastic Pollution in Albania: Survey on Citizen's Perceptions and Attitudes

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Abstract

Plastics are polymers synthesized from petrochemicals or from biomass raw materials. In recent decades, worldwide plastics production has increased exponentially. An estimated 8.3 billion tons of plastic have been produced worldwide resulting in an estimated 6.3 billion tons of plastic waste disposed in landfill or discarded into the natural environment. Plastic is widely used: is inexpensive, durable, resource efficient and easily attainable. The article makes some preliminary observations based on questionnaire data distributed through probability stratified random sampling method between November 2021 and July 2022. The data provides some useful insights into citizens perceptions and attitudes about plastic pollution. Majority of respondents agree on the fact that plastic pollution is harmful to the environment (94%). Additionally, 77.1% of respondents agree both on the fact that nature conservation activities are necessary and successful if community or citizens are involved. Strategies which can be used to reduce plastic pollution need to provide further incentives for public participation. An example is using citizen science, to address and mitigate plastic pollution both at local and national level.

Keywords: plastic pollution, survey, public participation, citizen science, Albania

Introduction

Plastic pollution is generated by the unsustainable use and disposal of plastic products in modern society, threatening economies, ecosystems, and human health (Prata et al. 2019). The possible risks of microplastics to the health of humans, ecosystems and animals are an increasing concern because they have been detected in human food, the air, and drinking water (Barboza et al. 2018; Gasperi et al., 2018;

Nikiema et al. 2020; Kirstein, Gomiero & Vollersten, 2021; Nikiema & Asiedu 2022). For example, aquatic plastic pollution is entirely due to humans (Pahl, Richter & Wyles, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic it is estimated that more than eight million tons of pandemic associated plastic waste have been generated globally, with more than 25,000 tons entering the global oceans (Peng et al. 2021).

According to World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Albania is considered one of the most problematic countries with the highest percentage of untreated plastic waste, 73%. According to World Bank (2021) approximately 65% of marine waste in Albania are synthetic polymers and 58.5% are found along the coast because of the improper waste disposal. Recently, according to a pioneer study in Albania, microplastic pollution in Kune-Vain lagoonal complex was confirmed (Aliko et al. 2022). Given rising concern over plastic pollution, on April 26, 2018, with the decision of the Council of Minister no.232 "For some changes and additions to the Decisions of the Council of Ministers no.177, dated 6.3.2012 "On plastic packaging and their waste" the Albanian government tried to reduce plastic pollution by the introduction of plastic bag charges. The government required that the new plastic material should have no less than 55 percent raw material from recycling or bio-degradable material, which dissolve in the environment and do not remain as a toxic residue. Pricing policy is considered an effective way to reduce plastic bag use (Jakovcevic et al. 2014; Monast and Virdin, 2022). Empowering local communities to actively participate in sustainability efforts is considered very important. Additionally, risk perception of plastic pollution can be improved by the utilization of citizen science which is considered of great value for informing evidence-based policy aimed to address and reduce plastic pollution (Syberg et al. 2018; Nelms et al. 2022).

Materials and methods

Separate visits were conducted from November 2021 to July 2022 as part of the sampling efforts in six major cities in Albania (Tiranë, Durrës, Vlorë, Shkodër, Lushnje and Lezhë). A face-to-face survey was conducted with randomly selected people ($N=947$). Within the scope of the survey, 41 questions were directed to participants under three sections: 1- Demographic data, 2- Perceptions and attitudes about plastic pollution, 3- Citizen participation. Statistical Analysis Data was gathered in MS Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS version 22 software. All assumptions were tested and met using SPSS. A p value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results and discussions

As mentioned, the number of respondents is 947. 60.8% of the respondents are female ($F=576$) and 39.2 % male ($M=371$). Most of them are young, aged 16 years old to 24 years old (45.3 %) (Table 1). Most of respondents are from Tirana, the capital city of Albania.

Table 1. Demographic data

		Respondent	Percentage
Gender	Female	576	60.8%
	Male	371	39.2%
Age group	16-24	429	45.3%
	25-34	224	23.7%
	35-44	127	13.4%
	45-54	100	10.6%
	>55	67	7.1%
Education	1st to 9th grade	71	7.5%
	High school	280	29.6%
	Bachelor's degree	325	34.3%
	Master's degree	246	26.0%
	PhD	25	2.6%
Working status	Unemployed	360	38.0%
	Part-time	148	15.6%
	Full time	409	43.2%
	Retired	30	3.2%

When perception and attitudes about plastic bags were examined (Section 2), it was found that majority of participants (70.2 %) use plastic bags in market and grocery shopping and agree with the fact that plastics is harmful to the environment (Table 2). Risk perception of plastic pollution is high.

Table 2. Relationship between plastic usage behavior and its effect on the environment

	I think plastic is harmful for the environment						
			Agree		Disagree		NR
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	NR	Agree	
I use plastic bags in market and grocery shopping	Agree	664	70.2%	8	0.8%	29	3.1%
	Disagree	126	13.3%	6	0.6%	2	0.2%

	NR	106	11.2%	1	0.1%	4	0.4%
When I buy anything, I take care that the packaging is plastic or not	Agree	164	17.3%	1	0.1%	4	0.4%
	Disagree	503	53.2%	7	0.7%	26	2.7%
	NR	229	24.2%	7	0.7%	5	0.5%
I sort my garbage in the house	Agree	238	25.2%	5	0.5%	3	0.3%
	Disagree	548	57.9%	9	1.0%	24	2.5%
	NR	110	11.6%	1	0.1%	8	0.8%

This cognitive dissonance is explained by the fact that plastic is easily accessed and despite regulatory law, is still spread in everyday life.

In terms of membership/volunteerism to nature conservation associations, participants were found not especially to be very fond of it. There is both a satisfactory degree on the need of active participation in nature conservation and being an environmentalist (48.3%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Relationship between citizens engagement and pro environmental perceptions.

Nature conservation activities without citizen's participation are unsuccessful							
			<i>Agree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>NR</i>
In general, I consider myself as an environmentalist	Agree	457	48.3%	31	3.3%	66	7.0%
	Disagree	74	7.8%	9	1.0%	24	2.5%
	NR	223	23.6%	19	2.0%	43	4.5%
I actively participate in nature conservation activities	Agree	208	22.0%	18	1.9%	25	2.6%
	Disagree	296	31.3%	30	3.2%	51	5.4%
	NR	250	26.4%	11	1.2%	57	6.0%
Nature conservation activities are necessary	Agree	729	77.1%	52	5.5%	112	11.8%
	Disagree	4	0.4%	2	0.2%	6	0.6%
	NR	19	2.0%	5	0.5%	15	1.6%

In addition, there is a high degree on the need of nature conservation activities involving citizens (77.1%). Although our respondents are not actively participating in nature conservation activities, they are somehow willing to get involved.

Conclusions

This is the first study to provide useful insights into Albanian citizen's perceptions and attitudes of plastic pollution. Our results suggest that respondents have both a high awareness on plastic pollution and a firm belief on participation. Based on these results, we believe that future plastic pollution mitigation strategies in Albania should take in consideration engagement such as frequent/ constructive dialogue between citizens and local government and the utilization of citizen science to rise participation. Engagement and participation of citizens are seen as key factors in addressing and mitigating the negative effects of plastic pollution both at a local and national level. In addition, we recommend the use of communication strategies involving possible health and touristic advantages for citizens to guide societal response on plastic's negative health and environmental impact.

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Peripheral Living in the Post-Urban Era: from Humiliation to the Struggle for Social Justice

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PhD

Abstract

Peripheral living in cities around the world often takes the form of neglect and humiliation with a lack of material resources. This phenomenon affects a significant percentage of the world's population and is destined to grow. Peripheral living, a "grey zone" of the "urban sea", is demarcated from the main institutions and is often seen as an undifferentiated space: included and excluded by the institutions; and included in and excluded from citizenship. In many cases the inhabitants on the periphery of cities and *megacities* are viewed as dangerous, delinquent, and incapable so the society that counts strives to protect itself by building lines of demarcation and urban fences. In the past, cities were founded with city walls for defence against possible external threats while today these boundaries have been replaced by internal limits that separate the urban area into zones reflecting the hierarchy of power. In this article I intend to provide an interpretation of peripheral living from the viewpoint of the social, cultural and political problems which cause the diverse types of deprivation and misrecognition towards the "inhabitants of the periphery". In my analysis of this negativity, I will discuss the strategies which peripheral communities implement in the struggle for recognition of their rights, for dignified and humane living, for social justice and to be recognised as capable of achieving personal fulfilment.

Keywords: Peripheral living, Megacities, Boundaries, Misrecognition, Commoning

1. Introduction

The rise of the global market with the expansion of *megacities* has profoundly transformed natural and urban landscapes by nurturing the progressive growth of settlements causing the erosion of fertile land and the destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity. According to UN data, by 2050 at least 70% of the global population will

live in cities. The exodus and migratory flow from the countryside, from the hills and mountains towards densely populated urban areas is destined to continue. With the expansion of cities the peripheries are growing. These areas often house millions of people struggling to exercise their rights and existing without basic services such as education and medical care besides being misrecognised as capable persons and in their way of life. In the face of such injustice individuals constitute communities that gain awareness of their material and social living conditions leading to forms and strategies of struggle. The communities are established on a common basis (*commoning*) and communicate through the creation of “communal spaces” which become bridges between people of different political, cultural or religious backgrounds. These communal spaces are like “thresholds”, allowing the differences to meet, facilitating the start of a differentiated “we” which is indispensable in a fight for common objectives.

2. Urban living in the post-urban era

During the 19th and early 20th centuries increasing industrialisation attracted significant migration resulting in industry-cities. This tendency continued into the second half of the 20th century with labour force movements from the Southern hemisphere towards the industrialised cities in the North. In recent decades, however, the migratory flows have no longer followed the same pattern. For some time now, as Alberto Magnaghi observes, there is “a double *territorial decentralisation*: firstly, *regional*, where the productive decentralisation and the molecularization of big industry has led to a territory with “sprawling towns” which destructively invade the countryside and “urbanise” vast regional areas; secondly, *global*, implying a move of the global productive cycle from the North to the South East of the world causing forced urbanisation, mainly from international migration, of millions of agricultural workers” (Magnaghi, 2020, p.71).

Commercial and production changes cause profound urban transformations: it is the end of the industrial city and with it the traditional town characterised by certain distinctive features. A powerful process of deterritorialization starts where inhabitants are separated from the historical and cultural heritage of their local environment. Regardless of their location, towns and cities all look alike and share architectural structures which are totally decontextualised and devoid of local historical connections. All these features are characteristic of the “post urban” era.

The “post urban” represents the cancellation of identifiable features of cities with deterritorialization and the disintegration of urban areas: like strands built up areas

spread along coastal regions and rivers, and in the valleys stretching into lowland areas, wherever possible. Riverbeds are narrowed with streams channelled underground and roads, seaside bathing resorts, pavements, restaurants and hotels form embankments along coastal areas. The boundaries between towns and the countryside give way to the spread of urbanisation characterised by construction homogeneity which is a common feature of urban settlements worldwide. The homogenization of the land is dictated by a mindset that asserts a certain way to build, plan and organise space.

Salvatore Settis states that a global urban model is establishing itself with “three converging characteristics: - the verticalization of architecture; - the megalopolis, cities without limits (*urban sprawl*); - new intraurban boundaries (*new urban divisions*), where the better-off live in safe, “modern” zones while the less fortunate are relegated to urban ghettos, *slums* and increasingly impoverished neighbourhoods” (Settis, 2017, p. 95). Urban sprawl is characterised by internal boundaries that often symbolise the division between civilised living and chaos, between legality and illegality, culture and subculture, development and underdevelopment etc. In certain cities in Africa, Latin America and Asia an extremely high percentage of the population of the megacities, up to 30-35% of the population, lives in *slums*, *favelas*, *bidonvilles* and shanty towns. In these poor, dangerous areas living conditions are degraded and insanitary with high rates of disease and criminality. The different forms of exploitation of the labour force in factories by Western and Asian multinationals and corporations together with mechanised farming methods have led to the loss of self-sufficiency of the local populations marking the shift from poverty to “mass misery” (Morin, 2016, pp. 61).

3. The divided city: *gated community* and peripheral community

The sprawling city fuels peripheral living or “grey zones” which arise where the land was once fertile or in urban areas that is no longer of value for the property market. People with hopes and a strong desire for self-fulfilment and those looking for a better life and opportunities flock to these areas. However, many fall into misery, deprivation, emotional stress, loss of references, violence, exclusion and humiliation. A lot of cities are internally divided by walls built to separate, contain, isolate and to marginalise those people considered “losers”, “defeated by life”, “incapable”, or idle and dangerous criminals. “The city expands devouring the countryside but, at the same time, it fragments creating two contrasting and complementary formations: the *favela* and the *gated community*. The walls of the city become walls in the city.

According to United Nations data, a seventh of the world's population, about one billion people, today live in *bidonvilles* or *shanty towns* which do not deserve to be called cities; in some countries (such as Ethiopia and Uganda) the "cities" are 90 percent made up of *slums*" (Settis, 2017, pp.74-75)

Wealthy neighbourhoods, the *gated communities*, are protected by insurmountable city walls with barbed wire and armed guard surveillance. These *gated communities* pursue the idea of building themselves a sort of "perfect community". If, once upon a time, the utopian ideal of a city aimed at justice, equality, well-being and happiness for all its inhabitants, the *gated communities*, on the other hand, represent a perfect community for a privileged few. As stated by Settis, the term *privatopia* has been adopted to indicate this type of community. A *Privatopia* project "(quite the opposite of utopian) aims to control the living space ensuring the quality of services and protection from incursions of "others" (immigrants, the poor)" (p. 75) from the so-called peripheries. In the areas and neighbourhoods of the excluded, the marginalised and the worthless according to the society that counts, other communities emerge. Individuals united in their need for survival, the rituals, beliefs and symbols of their culture, as well as existing connections, organise themselves into communities. These communities use communal spaces to meet, demonstrate and stake claims thus developing a "commune" (*commoning*).

In Africa, Latin America and in many cities in the Southern hemisphere "the roads in urban areas are transformed into crucial sharing spaces providing not only the ground, but also the emblematic images that represent, support and reproduce behaviours, habits and forms of communication" (Stavrides 2022, p 133).

4. Misrecognition of capabilities and peripheral living poverty

The living crisis reflects the social crisis and vice-versa. They go hand in hand. Social injustice, inequality and social differences lead to miserable and inhumane living without dignity. Such forms of dwelling, in turn, cause extremely serious social crises. The governments of wealthy nations ignore these situations in the same way as reason ignores subconscious desires. Their public policies tend to be restricted to dealing with the superficial symptoms rather than focusing on the root causes which generate misery and desperation. With regard to the millions of people who find themselves living in Dante's most desperate and inhumane circles, governments, supported also by the powerful elements in the global economy, ignore the mobilization of the less affluent in society by implementing a policy of *misrecognition* on various levels: from civil and social to political.

Civil misrecognition means that the concrete possibilities of an individual to exercise their civil rights as stipulated in their nation's Constitution are not recognised. Millions of people, mainly living in the world's cities and *megacities'* peripheries, have no way of exercising their rights or exploiting their freedom because they are excluded from education, with no internet access or professional opportunities, as well as having no financial backing or access to bank loans etc. Social misrecognition results in the exclusion from social services and the possibility to play an active role in society. The misrecognition of political rights deprives individuals of the chance to exercise their political rights. All these forms of misrecognition profoundly affect a person's emotional, sentimental and intellectual life; they influence an individual's sense of trust, approval and self-esteem. They trigger feelings of frustration, humiliation and desperation which are common sentiments amongst the whole community. But in many cases, according to Axel Honneth (1992), these feelings cause such a profound and strong sense of indignation that individuals and the community are driven towards a struggle for recognition.

The living crisis, thus that of cities, constitutes the litmus test in order to understand the problems of society. Social inequalities correspond to the arrangement of living spaces. The differences do not only stem from the enormous diversity in income which characterises the inhabitants of the various areas of a city, but also from the wide gap that separates those who have, from those who do not have, *capabilities* at their disposal, in other words, access to services, social structures and resources, the right to exploit their capabilities and opportunities.

Amartya Sen claims that liberty invests both the *processes* that "allow free actions and decisions and the real *possibilities* that human beings have in given personal and social conditions. Lack of freedom can derive both from inadequate processes (like the denial of the right to vote or other political and civil rights) and from the fact that some people are not given adequate opportunities to satisfy their basic needs (including lack of food, premature death, avoidable diseases or involuntary hunger)" (Sen, 2010, p. 23). Lack of liberty and *capabilities* result in a form of living characterised by material, spiritual and cultural deprivation. This is local *de-humanized* living. Zygmunt Bauman observes that anonymous, supranational economic and financial forces exert pressure so that individuals are denied the freedom to move, migrate or live elsewhere. In this state of deprivation their living takes the form of detention camps where exceptional destitution becomes the norm, in other words a "normal" form of living (Bauman, 2010, p. 85)

Deprived living offers only a future of limited opportunities because people are denied *capabilities* and therefore the chance to choose a lifestyle which fulfils their wishes and expectations. Being denied the ability to access fundamental resources such as education, medical care, nutritious food supplies, clean water, a healthy environment, protected stable employment and the internet leads to inequalities which profoundly and negatively affect the quality of living and a person's well-being and their expectations. Such deprivations affect the most fragile and vulnerable of the poor population: women, children and the disabled (M. Nussbaum, 2001).

The lack of income does not constitute a sufficient explanation for inequality since it often stems from the deprivation of ability and a state of illiberal living. Sen states that the poverty of degraded living needs to be considered not only as a lack of income, but also, and above all, as deprivation of fundamental freedom, lack of rights to access capabilities as an impediment to an individual's ability to realise a fulfilling and worthwhile life.

5. Common spaces and the struggle for a humane form of living

In the poorer neighbourhoods and in the peripheries the inhabitants organise themselves in democratic movements to manifest their discontent and to put forward legitimate demands. Such movements also exist to fight the appropriation of natural resources or to obtain access to basic goods and services or to show their disapproval of the various social injustices. They constitute real communities where individuals freely discuss issues and problems as well as the objectives and strategies to adopt as a movement. Political matters are debated and transformed. These communities frequently come up against opposition on the part of the ruling institutions which aim to contain, marginalise and interrupt the network linking the movements. In addition, the objective of the institutions is to establish a process of *normalisation* to render the movements' actions harmless. The communities are formed because they have something in common (*commoning*): energy, time, material and cultural resources, spaces and objectives etc. Stavrides in *Common Space. The City as Commons* states that "the process of redefinition is always a process of both material and immaterial transformations. Giving a new meaning to existing practices and resources becomes as important as inventing new practices" (Stavrides, 2022, p. 55). Newcomers contribute to this revision and transformation. In this way *commoning* contrasts the dangers, to which it is continuously exposed, of homogenisation and consensus stagnation, and of normalisation. Normalisation, he claims, consists in channelling behaviour "towards prevailing power relations" (p. 74). It is fundamental that the

communities remain open to dialogue not only internally, but also among the different communities.

The creation of “threshold spaces” is decisive as places where people can meet and discuss issues in reciprocal involvement. Stavrides, referencing Foucault, speaks about *eterotopie*: meeting places where “the differences meet” (p.71). These are common spaces that are decisive for the creation of a culture of involvement which is indispensable to reactivate traditional solidarity practices, to give living a humane face, to eliminate city boundaries and to implement forms of struggle for social justice. These communities temporarily use spaces that become common. It is also in this way that they evade the processes of normalisation implemented by the ruling institutions. In the common spaces the communities generate democratic processes of mutual recognition which have positive repercussions on the daily lives of the “peripheral people” economically, socially, ethically and spiritually. According to Rancière (2010), these communities are real political communities implementing democratic decision-making processes that are non-centralised and hierarchical. In many cases, they constitute examples of direct participatory democracy.

In certain cases, these communities acquire the collaboration of architects and urban planners in order to recreate the urban spaces and to give shape to healthy, aesthetically-pleasing, welcoming, functional and safe living able to generate a sense of well-being for those who live there. In some large Latin American cities, we find examples of large-scale peripheral construction projects aimed at grass roots regeneration and emancipation, promoted by the local authorities with involvement and collaboration on the part of the community.

Conclusion

Living, as a condition which specifies man’s “being-in-the-world”, characterises in an existential sense man’s way of being, way of life and behaviour. It becomes a form of degradation not only in relation to income, but also in the absence of and misrecognition of basic liberties, of *capabilities*. The cities of the poor are enclosed within the “barbed wire” boundaries of substantial deprivations of freedom. Sometimes these deprivations are compensated by a form of living that, though poor, does not descend into misery thanks to relationships and bonds of coexistence characterised by mutual aid, solidarity, friendship, a sense of sharing material resources and respect etc., in other words, a whole set of ethical values often absent in opulent societies.

In many cities around the world the mobilisation of communities, interconnected through the sharing of common spaces, constitutes for millions of people very important realities for implementing forms of democratic struggle for the elimination of social injustice, for the effective exercise of human rights, for humane dwelling where aspirations and projects for a good life “with and for others” can be fulfilled.

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The Importance of Parental Involvement in the Pre-University System During and After the Pandemic Covid-19

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Abstract

Parents have a strong desire to be kept up to date on their child's progress, accomplishments in the learning process, and extracurricular activities, as well as to participate in discussions and decision-making. They must have access to all information about the child's learning process participation, test results, and other tasks, opportunities, and skills that the child possesses. The study's goal is to present an overview of the significance of parental involvement in the pre-university school system during and after online learning based on teachers' personal experiences. The methodology of the study is based on a review of recent literature as well as a semi-structured interview with teachers from the public pre-university cycle who are also study subjects. Teachers, according to the data, place a high value on parental involvement. The parents' dedication to supporting their children's academic achievements was lauded, particularly by assisting them with their homework, which was an important component both during and after the online learning. Teachers report that parents are interested in and value their involvement in school problems and decision-making. During online class, all of the teachers believe that their effective online teaching is making a significant difference in their students' academic aspects, even with students who had lower learning results or learning difficulties. As a result, the parent's involvement as an important partner in the school community is required not only for school decision-making, but also as the main collaborator of the teacher, for an effective teaching process and his child's high school performance.

Keywords: pre-university, school, online learning, parental involvement, teacher, child

Introduction

The most important need that parents have is to be informed about their child's progress and accomplishments in the learning process and other extracurricular activities of them. Parents have the right to participate in discussions and decisions concerning their child. They have the right to all information concerning: the method of activation, the child's involvement in the learning process, their achievements in tests and other tasks related to the learning process, the child's opportunities and skills, his points of interest, strengths, difficulties, and problems that he exhibits in certain subjects, the methods that teachers use to ensure children's attention, increasing concentration, intervention techniques, stimulation methods that they use with students, relationships that the child forms with teachers, peers, the climate that surrounds the child inside class/school, and so on. Family and school are two important institutions in a child's life. Although parents and teachers want the best for their children, if they do not cooperate on a regular basis, their thoughts, actions, and attitudes can cause tension and disagreement. Previously, researchers asserted that the parental role in their children's education should only include selecting a school and creating an environment at home for their children's social, emotional, and moral development. Others, however, do not agree. The importance of parental involvement was highlighted during the pandemic situation. Even during the online teaching practice, it was discovered that there were some barriers to parental involvement in this process. A problem with parental involvement is that the teacher and parents have different perspectives or perceptions of what parental involvement is and is not only in online learning, and culture is a variable that can change ideas on parental involvement. Teachers may believe that a parent is not involved in their child's education because of opposing viewpoints. If you speak with the parent, you will learn that it is involved due to issues that the parent is dealing with with the children, which the teacher is unaware of or does not take personally.

My efforts as a researcher consist of presenting and analyzing the scientific opinions of researchers in the field, specifically on parental involvement in education, so the purpose of the study is to present an overview of the significance of parental involvement in the pre-university school system during and after online learning based on teachers' personal experiences.

Literature Review

Different authors interpret parental involvement differently. Volunteering, decision-making, parental role, learning, home-school communication, and school community are the six categories of involvement identified by Epstein and his colleagues. (Epstein, et al. 2002) Another definition comes from a survey conducted by Becker and Epstein (1982), who identified fifteen parenting activities that teachers believed promoted children's abilities and cognitive development while also instilling high expectations for academic success. These activities included talking with the teacher, checking school assignments, assisting his child with practice, sending the child to cultural activities, responding to notes sent home, and so on. (Becker & Epstein, 1982). These parenting activities are yet another way to define today's parental involvement. It can be divided into two categories: parental involvement at home and parental involvement at school. Sheldon (2002) defines parental involvement at home as parent-child interaction related to school or other learning activities, as well as the direct investment of parental resources in the child's education. The second type of parental involvement takes place at school. It may include, but is not limited to, volunteering at school, parent meetings, parent-teacher meetings, one-on-one reading with children in a classroom, and regular communication. (Sheldon, 2002) Children achieve academic and behavioral success. It is significant because parents are the child's first teacher and the only constant teacher throughout the child's life. As a result, the parent should know the child's interests, likes, and dislikes better than the teacher and can assist the teacher in getting to know the child better. Parents and teachers must maintain constant communication in order to stay informed about what is going on at school and at home. According to this line of thinking, during online teaching, the bridge of cooperation and communication between teachers and parents was strengthened not only in the academic sphere, but also beyond this, as parents worked closely with teachers on how to control their children's schoolwork, as well as appropriate online teaching strategies for effective learning. Bonilla and colleagues (2022) affirmed that children with parents who are more supportive academically tend to have better academic performance than children with parents who are less supportive. Thus, parents' educational attainment can be an important factor in facilitating learning and academic success. Parental engagement in their children's education is a powerful impact, and parents are a child's first and most persistent educator, and their importance cannot be overstated. This indicated that the educational attainment of parents has consistently been positively linked to different barriers encountered by them. The finding explicates also that parents have

difficulties in supporting their child's education as they demonstrated insufficient involvement in education amidst the pandemic. (Bonilla et al. 2022) According to Bhamani and colleagues (2020), parents believed that through schools, a formally structured routine is followed on most days of the week and this helps children to understand the importance of time, scheduling and doing assignments on a given timeline. Parents also pointed out that in addition to teaching their relevant subjects through online classes and social media platforms, teachers are also focusing on awareness regarding the pandemic. They teach students about the various preventive measures and emphasize on why they are important, hence making parents' job of keeping the children indoors much easier. Schools can facilitate this process and provide mental health support. (Bhamani et al. 2020) Mingming Shao and his colleague claimed that, parents who are not familiar with online education think that schools and teachers may not pay enough attention to their children compared with face-to-face education, which leads to parents' low evaluation of online learning. On the other hand, the quality of online learning is largely determined by family factors. Parental tutoring and help can affect the quality of online learning, suggesting that online learning is heavily dependent on parental support and involvement. Parent satisfaction reflects the comparison between expectations of educational quality and the actual achieved results. The higher the education level, the higher parents' expectations of online education, causing low satisfaction with online education. (Shao et al. 2022)

Methodology

The study's methodology is based on a review of the scientific literature on parent involvement in education and teachers' contributions to parent involvement. The semi-structured interview method was used in this study. The open-ended interview questions highlight the study's goal. The study sample consists of 180 teachers from public pre-university institutions. In the analysis of qualitative statistical data, qualitative descriptions were used. The anonymity of the respondents was emphasized during the dissemination of the interviews. It has been stated, however, that no one will be made aware of the subjects' identities. This is because the study's ethical standards were followed, and interviewers were encouraged to be open and trusting in order to collect the most accurate and trustworthy data possible. Non-responses had no bearing on the accuracy of the data generalization because they made up such a small percentage of the total sample.

Analysis and Discussion

Teachers place a high value on parental involvement in their students' education. This also implies that the triangle formed by the parent-child-school relationship is critical to the realization and advancement of our educational system. When referring to parents' commitment to supporting their children's academic success through homework assistance, teachers claim that parents assist their children with their homework. This is extremely beneficial because it influences both the child's emotional and academic development. Concerning parents' desire and motivation to become involved in the problems that a school institution may face, teachers say that parents want to be involved as members of the school community. The teachers also state that their school considers parents to be valuable partners.

This finding is reinforcement of many other studies, where Parents' educational caregiving plays an important role in children's learning, especially for young children. In the past decades, the influence of family factors on children's learning has aroused people's concern. (Schneider et al. 2010) Family factors, such as parental education level, family economic status, and family size, influence children's development (Cen, S., & Aytac, B. 2017). Parental education level affects their children throughout their lives and has an indelible impact on children's academic development. (Gurung et al. 2021)

The data regarding the semi-interview question posed to the teachers about the importance of the family in the positive encouragement of the student to achieve high academic results lead us to consider the above literature research, in which many researchers link the achievement of positive student results with the parents' social, cultural, economic, and so on status. As a result, the student's achievements are also influenced by the cultural and social status of the parents. Based on this data, we conclude that the parents of high school students have little influence on their children's academic performance before the adolescent years.

During the pandemic, online learning changed the way parents could learn how to help their children with homework assigned by teachers on online platforms. This finding is significant because it relates to the effectiveness of teacher-parent collaboration in facilitating successful learning development during online learning. How can parents learn to help their children with their schoolwork at home using online learning? Our experience in the secondary cycle revealed that not all parents collaborate with teachers and help to identify solutions for how to assist their children with schoolwork during online learning. Parents are now confronted with a

reality they have never known before, just as the technological revolution of online platforms has been reflected in students. According to the results of our data and other studies, the more involved parents are in their children's online learning, the more satisfied they will be with online education. On the one hand, the lower the degree of parental involvement, the less understanding of online learning. (Antony-Newman, 2019).

The teachers were asked a question about how he believes he is making a significant educational difference in the lives of his students through online learning. According to the data, teachers believe that online teaching and their commitment have resulted in significant success in the lives of their students. They stated that if this partnership trinomial could maximize their individual efforts, they would be able to achieve success even among students with lower academic results or learning disabilities.

Sending home letters/individual emails, informing parents of anything you might need or their children's academic results, is an element we discovered for the very reality we faced in continuous online activity. Teachers believe it is critical to send letters to their students' parents about their progress in the learning process via mail or email, not only during online teaching, but also during the continuation of the learning process under normal conditions. According to the data, teachers see it as an opportunity to avoid various conflicts from both sides, including parents and students. Confidentiality is extremely important in adolescence because it allows them to avoid many unpleasant situations while also not harming their personality.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on theoretical research findings and the current state of parental involvement in education in our country, teachers believe that parental involvement in education is critical for achieving high learning results. Another important factor is parental involvement and activation in assisting the teacher so that the latter is more useful with students, because our experience shows that parents collaborated with teachers during online learning to facilitate the learning of their children's knowledge as well as the learning process, but after online learning, they are more interested in the individual child and the school community. Teachers believe that their effective teaching, even through online platforms, to students with lower learning outcomes or learning difficulties is making a significant difference in the lives of their students both during and after the pandemic. Teachers are expected to send letters to their students' parents via personal mail or email, primarily regarding their children's educational progress, but not exclusively. Teachers see it as a chance to avoid various

conflicts from both parents and students. I recommend that parents be more cooperative with the teacher in terms of email communication, so that the parent does not focus solely on sending emails, but also presents his thoughts or suggestions to the teacher face to face during their monthly meetings. In order to assist both their child and the teacher, parents should be trained on the elements of online learning.

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Corporate Social Responsibility - Business Opportunity or Obligation for Georgian Companies

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Abstract

CSR is a relatively new concept for Georgia. Its history is not even two decades old, and the development process is taking place at a slow pace. In recent years, the concept of social responsibility has been more or less accepted by large businesses. From unsystematic CSR measures companies are slowly moving to a strategic approach, although their social initiatives are mainly focused on increasing the well-being of vulnerable groups of society. On the one hand, this is due to the insufficient level of awareness of CSR in the business sector, and on the other hand, the limited expectations of society because the public's perception of CSR is mainly related to charity. The paper presents an analysis of the modern trends in the development of CSR in Georgia using qualitative and quantitative secondary data. It is based on the works and studies of various scientists. Qualitative analysis, namely statistical and thematic analysis methods are used as the method of analysis.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, business strategy, altruistic responsibility, business opportunity, competitive advantage, sustainable development

Introduction

The role of the private sector in solving social problems and increasing public welfare is increasing. Modern society demands much more from business than fulfilling its traditional role. In addition, CSR is considered one of the effective tools for gaining a competitive advantage for companies, and they actively seek to integrate CSR into their business strategy.

In Georgia, in the last decade, there has been an activation of business in the direction of CSR, although we can say this only about a small part of them. For most companies, the owner's interests (profit maximization) are prioritized over the well-being of all

stakeholders, which hinders business social responsibility. However, it should be noted that the adoption of CSR may contribute to the improvement of the financial result, which simultaneously ensures the satisfaction of the owners' interests and the improvement of the stakeholders' welfare.

A number of studies confirm the positive relationship between CSR and financial results. However, Georgian companies do not realize what benefits CSR can bring to their business. Most companies do not perceive CSR as a business opportunity, which has a negative impact on the welfare of society, since companies do not have enough incentives to implement CSR and are less active.

Research methods. The literature review is used as a research method of modern trends in the development of CSR in Georgia. In the research, for trend analysis, we rely on both qualitative and quantitative secondary data (conducted research reports). Qualitative analysis, namely statistical and thematic analysis methods are chosen as the method of analysis.

Literature review

The concept of CSR has gone through a long way of development and understanding. In different eras its conceptualization and perception were different, due to the fact that there was no consensus around the concept of CSR.

"In order for the definition of social responsibility to fully fit the entire spectrum of business obligations to society, it should include economic, legal, ethical and discretionary categories of business performance" (Carroll, A three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate performance., 1979).

A. Carroll's CSR pyramid divides CSR into four categories, the first of which is economic responsibility. A company's economic responsibility is expressed in its profitable operation by producing and selling goods and services that society wants. Legal responsibility includes the performance of the economic activity by a business within the framework of legal requirements. Ethical responsibility includes behaviors and actions that are not defined by law, but society expects businesses to perform them. Along with economic and legal responsibility, A. Carroll considers ethical responsibility as an obligation, as opposed to discretionary responsibility. Discretionary responsibility depends on the view of the business and is purely voluntary because, in this case, the public does not have a clear message about it. Therefore, if the business does not act within the scope of discretionary responsibility, this in itself will not be considered unethical (Carroll, A three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate performance., 1979).

According to Carroll's approach, each of the four categories is only a part of the overall social responsibility. Therefore, they should be understood and accepted as a single system. Thus, we can conclude that CSR, depending on its aspects, is both an obligation and a business opportunity for the company.

To understand CSR in the context of both obligation and business opportunity, we should consider J. Lantos' (Lantos, 2001) approach. Lantos' categorization of CSR as an ethical, altruistic, and strategic responsibility clearly illustrates how CSR is transformed from an obligation into a business opportunity. J. Lantos presents ethical responsibility as a mandatory minimum level of CSR. It includes business actions that serve to avoid harm to society. Altruistic responsibility serves to solve a social problem, however, according to Carroll, businesses should limit charity and switch to strategic CSR, since altruistic CSR does not take into account all stakeholders' interests, in particular, owners' interests. The same cannot be said about strategic CSR. It implies the implementation of such investments which ensures the benefit of society and the company at the same time. Accordingly, if ethical responsibility is understood as an obligation for the company, strategic responsibility is presented as an important business opportunity. It is strategic CSR that considers discussing CSR issues as a business opportunity to achieve the company's goals (Galbreath, 2009).

Considering CSR as a business opportunity for companies is based on the voluntary nature of its implementation, although it should be noted that spending resources on CSR implementation may not be as profitable as investing in improving human resource management practices when the goal is to increase employee engagement (Smith V, 2011). The question arises: What makes companies in such a situation choose CSR, the consequences of which are associated with more uncertainty than alternative actions? In this case, CSR can be considered as an obligation arising from stakeholders' expectations harmonious relationship with stakeholders is the main focus of the CSR concept. Although there are different views on the organization's relationship with its stakeholders, the cultural and ethical norms established in the society represent the main characteristic on the basis of which this relationship should be formed.

Economic activity within the law is an important value in all countries, but expectations related to ethical and altruistic CSR are highly dependent on the cultural characteristics of the environment in which the business operates. Accordingly, the increase in public "pressure" on companies makes CSR an obligation, but this does not exclude the fact that at the same time it can be considered as a business opportunity. The mentioned possibility, in relation to the expectations of the ety, will be realized by integrating CSR into the business strategy.

CSR can be thought of as a business opportunity in the context of access to financial resources. Socially aware investors consider non-financial indicators along with financial indicators when making decisions. In responsible investing, companies are evaluated in terms of the ethical, environmental and social impact of their activities, because it is believed that the integration of sustainable development goals into the business strategy ensures corporate sustainability and the improvement of financial results in the long term (Friede, 2015), which in turn affects the effectiveness of

investments. Accordingly, we can conclude that CSR represents a business opportunity for companies to attract financial resources.

Thus, CSR is both an obligation and a business opportunity for companies. Obligations can be thought of as responsibilities related to its economic function, regulated by the legal framework and derived from ethical norms or society's expectations towards business. CSR becomes a business opportunity once it is integrated with the business strategy. As a result, we will get a strategic CSR, which unequivocally opens up wide opportunities for companies in different directions, ultimately manifesting itself in gaining a competitive advantage and improving financial results.

Discussion

In 1963, Joseph McGuire (McGuire, 1963) recognized the superiority of economic responsibility, but also proposed a broader view of CSR and explained that the corporation, in addition to economic and legal obligations, also has a number of responsibilities to society that are beyond these obligations (although it is necessary to fulfill them). Jules Backman also takes a similar position. According to his definition, social responsibility usually serves those goals and motives that go beyond the goal of making a profit by the company (Backman, 1975). Contrary to McGuire's and Backman's opinions, Henry Manne (Manne, 1978) considers CSR as a purely voluntary action. George Steiner proposes the concept of CSR as a continuum of responsibility that starts with economic responsibility and through legal and voluntary responsibility ends with "expectations beyond reality" (Steiner, 1975) Differentiation of social obligation, social responsibility and social response is proposed by Prakash Sethi (Sethi, 1975). In social responsibility, he combines corporate behavior that is dictated by market forces and legal constraints. Social responsibility is based on social norms, values and expectations in society. As for the social response, in this case it is not the corporation's response to public pressure that is important, but the long-term vision of what should be its role in the developing (dynamic) social system. Therefore, a social response has a preventive character, which, in its essence, can be matched with the fifth stage of CSR development proposed by W. Visser, which is characterized by systemic CSR (Visser, 2011). Within the scope of the systemic CSR measures, companies are focused on identifying the causes of current unsustainability and overcoming them by developing innovative business models, which, in turn, lead to the expansion of business opportunities.

Although CSR is not defined as an official obligation for business and also according to the definition made by the European Commission in 2001, the concept of CSR is based on the principle of voluntariness, some of the issues covered by CSR are regulated by international law¹. The United Nations (UN) "Ten Principles of the Global

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Declaration on Basic Principles and Rights in the Field of Labor; Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, United Nations Convention against Corruption

Compact" (United Nations Global Compact Web Site, 2000) provide a clear idea of these issues. The UN Global Compact is an international initiative that encourages businesses to behave responsibly. It is aimed at ensuring corporate sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The "Ten Principles of the Global Compact" are the basic standards that must be implemented for socially responsible companies. Its implementation and realization as a basic level of CSR is, on the one hand, a mandatory responsibility for business, and, on the other hand, an opportunity to ensure corporate sustainability.

Trends in the Development of Corporate Social Responsibility in Georgia

The activation of CSR in Georgia started in 2005 with cooperation between the non-governmental sector and business entities. We find the first large-scale research in the field of CSR in 2007, which was carried out by the "Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia" with the support of the "Global Compact" project of the United Nations Development Agency. The research concerns the attitude and expectations of society towards the social responsibility of business in Georgia. In the same year, the "Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia" conducted a study "Big Business and Corporate Social Responsibility of Tbilisi".

An insufficient level of awareness towards CSR is revealed in both studies mentioned above. According to the results of the survey of public attitude and expectations towards BSR, 93% of the surveyed respondents believe that BSR is a voluntary duty that companies should undertake, while 7% consider profit as the only concern of businesses. In addition, it should be noted that the part of respondents who expect businesses to take social responsibility, expect activities in this direction only from large businesses (CSRDG, 2007).

Traditionally, CSR has been seen as an event for large companies, as their impact on the environment and society has a wider scale, but taking social responsibility is also important in small and medium-sized businesses. They have the advantage of using CSR more effectively as an opportunity to increase competitiveness, as their small size allows for rapid development of corporate culture and more flexibility in the market to respond to the changing demands of society.

Despite this advantage, the problem of understanding the concept of CSR is even more acute in small and medium-sized enterprises. Often, compared to large companies, given their scale, they are more involved in social and environmental protection projects, but do not or cannot identify it as CSR. All this, among other reasons, is related to the skepticism of small businesses about the possibility of receiving benefits through CSR. The results of a 2019 corporate responsibility survey reveal that 69% of small businesses do not report their corporate responsibility activities and results to anyone. Only 12% of them provide information to employees. 92% state that the corporate responsibility activities and results implemented by their organization are not covered by the media (Innova, 2019).

As for the realization of the CSR concept by large businesses, the favorable situation is not in this case either. Although the majority of businessmen distinguish between CSR and charity, most of them see this distinction as incompatible with the concept. Only 22% of the respondents perceive this difference as more or less real (CSRDG, 2007)

In 2018, according to the results of the research carried out by the "Caucasus Research Resources Center - Georgia" (CRRC-Georgia, 2018) 18% of the 568 surveyed organizations did not have information about CSR. If we consider the results according to the location and size of the business, this figure increases even more in the regions and in the case of small businesses. In particular, 27% of the surveyed organizations outside of Tbilisi have not heard of CSR, while a similar figure in Tbilisi is only 7%. As for the size of the companies, 92% of the large businesses have heard this term, and 70% of the small businesses - have not. If we compare the results of the research conducted in 2007 and 2018, we will see that no significant progress has been made in terms of raising awareness of CSR in 10 years.

In Georgia, companies associate the improper practice of CSR with its unprofitability for business and the fact that their customers are not interested in CSR (CRRC-Georgia, 2018) This is where the problem that limits the ability to satisfy the interests of all interested parties with the concept of CSR appears. Local companies are not aware of the benefits of corporate social responsibility. Most of them do not see CSR as a business opportunity. Consequently, they do not have enough incentive to fulfill the CSR and as a result, they are less active. As for the second reason - the lack of interest of the user in CSR - there is a problem with the understanding of CSR here too. mentioned above, the vast majority of companies do not adequately distinguish between CSR and philanthropy, only 22% of the respondents distinguished them as a systemic and non-systemic (strategic and non-strategic) approach to CSR. Also, it should be noted that the majority of the interviewees consider CSR as a tool for forming a positive image of the company in society and name this as the main motive. (CSR DG, 2007). Based on this fact, it becomes clear that CSR as a strategic tool for achieving corporate goals is new for Georgian businesses.

Our opinion is substantiated by the corporate responsibility research report conducted in 2019, according to the results of which 69% of the surveyed companies do not have a document written in the direction of corporate responsibility. This indicator varies depending on the size of the business and if it is 49% in the case of large businesses, it reaches 89% in the case of small businesses (Innova, 2019).

Using CSR as a strategic tool requires its inclusion in the company's strategic development document. The CSR strategy should be considered as important and clearly written out as the sales strategy, marketing strategy, financial strategy, human resource management strategy and other strategies included in corporate policy and strategy documents (Emezi, 2014).

Unlike philanthropy and charity, which consider the application of profits as a one-time act to solve social problems, CSR is a systemic managerial approach that focuses on the processes through which profits are made. Therefore, along with the creation of the CSR service in the organization, it is important to develop the CSR strategy in accordance with the company's strategic visions and its effective implementation.

In addition to the fact that in most companies there is no written document in the direction of CR, only 3% of the 1053 organizations surveyed in Georgia in 2019 had a structural unit of corporate responsibility, and in 49% of the organizations there was no responsible unit or manager (refusal to answer -19 %). In most organizations in Georgia, public relations, marketing and human resource management departments are the structural units that manage the HR process.

In addition to the fact that in most companies there is no written document in the direction of CR, only 3% of the 1053 organizations surveyed in Georgia in 2019 had a structural unit of corporate responsibility, and in 49% of the organizations there was no responsible unit or manager (refusal to answer -19 %). In most organizations in Georgia, public relations, marketing and human resource management departments are the structural units that manage the CR process.

Activities planned within the framework of CSR should be in accordance with the company's mission, strategic visions and values. Compatibility with the CSR mission increases employee engagement because they clearly perceive the connection between CSR activities and their core business. Social involvement in CSR events leads to the maximization of benefits from it. In order to maximize benefits, it is also important to involve top management in both the implementation and control processes. Their involvement in the implementation process increases the motivation of employees even more, and control is an effective tool for the effective use of resources.

In Georgia, there are also problems in the direction of control and evaluation of the effectiveness of CR. According to the results of the research conducted in 2019, 56% of the surveyed organizations do not monitor CR measures, and 7% monitor them with internal research. The results in the direction of effectiveness evaluation show that 58% of organizations do not evaluate the effectiveness of CR at all, and 9% apply an internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of CR (Innova, 2019).

If we evaluate the state of CSR in Georgia according to the main areas of the "Ten Principles of the Global Agreement", we can more or less find the standards written in the organization's charter and the code of ethics in the direction of human rights, labor rights and the fight against corruption. Despite the fact that most companies claim that in a problematic situation they compensate for the damage caused by the violation of the rights of employees, the preventive approach to the issue does not work, as in the case of corruption. It should be noted here that if in all other cases, compared to medium and small businesses, large businesses were in an advantageous

position regarding the understanding and practice of the CSR issues, we find the opposite situation regarding the fifth principle of the "Ten Principles of the Global Agreement" of the United Nations, namely the effective prevention of child labor. In the case of small businesses, almost an absolute majority declares that no persons under the age of 16 work in the organization, which cannot be said for medium and large businesses, where this indicator decreases to 97% and 86% (Innova, 2019).

Despite the fact that in the context of CSR, the main emphasis of companies is on charity and sponsorship as a means of image formation, in most organizations there is no document and written strategy by which they will make a decision and implement relevant measures (Innova, 2019).

We find the same situation in the direction of environmental protection, which once again confirms that organizations in Georgia do not take a strategic approach to CSR, and it has an unsystemic, chaotic character.

Conclusion and recommendations

Finally, it can be concluded that both the practice of CSR and the results of research carried out in this field at different times reveal a significantly low level of awareness of CSR in Georgia. We can name the wrong and inaccurate perception of CSR as the determining factor for companies' passive position in the direction of CSR. Accordingly, it can be assumed that the understanding of the importance of CSR by the business and the perception of the possibility of receiving potential financial benefits from it prompts companies to switch to systemic (strategic) CSR.

In the recent period, Georgia has seen progress in the process of understanding the concept of CSR, and some companies, mostly large businesses, are on the path of strategic CSR, which can be considered to some extent as an effect of the Covid-19 pandemic. Against the backdrop of the economic and social crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, CSR acquired a special role. Taking into account the interests of stakeholders has become critically important in companies' actions, which has presented businesses with significant challenges, but at the same time provided an opportunity to create social and economic benefits through a new understanding of CSR.

Studies conducted in Georgia do not show a relationship between CSR and a company's financial results, which provides a great opportunity for future research. In order to perceive CSR as a business opportunity, it is important to conduct research in Georgia to reveal the connection between CSR and the company's financial results.

A large number of companies in Georgia associate the improper practice of CSR with its unprofitability for business. As mentioned earlier, CSR becomes a business opportunity after it is integrated into the business strategy. The development trends of Georgian CSR show that companies are slowly moving to a strategic approach to CSR. Therefore, the current trend creates a good opportunity for conducting future

research on the mentioned issue, so that Georgian companies can see what benefits CSR can bring to their business.

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Diaspora Impact on Foreign Direct Investment: State Institutions on Diaspora Engagement

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Abstract

In a globalized and interdependent world, every country needs cooperation and partnership. In the framework of this mission, every state undertakes policies and reforms that impose radical internal changes. Supporting these changes requires financial and human resources that states are trying to secure through various sources. Diaspora is in fact the first catalyst that provides incentives to the economy to meet national needs with financial and human resources and that helps overcome relative isolation from global trade flows. Through the engagement of the diaspora, states are extending their political and administrative functions beyond national borders and through agreements are improving relationships with other countries. This stimulates the interest of foreign investors who are always looking for new markets, less expensive, rich in natural sources. FDI through financial capital and foreign currency it brings, technological innovation, human capital development, trade opening contributes to the economic growth of the country. In other words, the state with the power given by law can create a bridge of communication between these two fundamentally different phenomena. So, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between the institutions created to support the diaspora, with the level of FDI flows. Then we go beyond this analysis to study if the type of institution engaged in this issue matters. We use data collected through different public data sources and panel econometric models are estimated for a sample of 20 countries over a 30-year period (1990-2020). Panel data analysis was conducted, implementing three different models (Pooled Model, Fixed Effect, Random Effect) Our results initially show that diaspora institution is a variable positively correlated with the volume of FDI and statistically significant. Second, based on the results, we conclude that, regardless of the type of institution engaged in the issue of diaspora, there is a statistically significant positive effect on the attraction of FDI.

Keywords: FDI, diaspora institution, market size, inflation, infrastructure, human capital, panel data analysis

Introduction

Declining transportation and communication costs, reduced barriers between states, and increased political and economic cooperation between them have led to a rapid increase in the mobility of people, goods, capital, and knowledge worldwide. So, on the one hand we have people leaving a country in search of better opportunities and on the other hand investors entering that country in search of new, less costly markets, rich in natural resources. Although these two phenomena seem like two different sides of a coin, they should actually be considered as complementary in meet a country's needs for financial capital, technological innovation, human capital development, overcoming relative isolation from global trade flows. Why do we believe that these two phenomena can have mutual effects between them? We know that people seek to emigrate generally motivated by difficult economic conditions, in search of a better life and more opportunities. Through the introduction of FDI flows the host country meets the needs for financial capital, new businesses are presented and transferred innovative technology.

FDI are looking for workers and providing training for them. All of these can be seen as resources that improve people's budget constraints, meet their professional needs and consequently we expect that emigration efforts to be reduced. The effects of FDI in the host country and especially on the emigration phenomenon are not standard and the same everywhere. This depends on the characteristics of the country, the level of qualification of the workforce in the country, the institutional quality of the host country and many, many other factors. If we look at the other side of the coin, immigrants themselves can influence the actions of foreign investors. Why? We know that when FDI decides to invest abroad in addition to the costs of geographical distance they will face in the host country the contextual distance, which refers to the environmental differences between the country of origin and the foreign country expressed in terms of cultural, administrative and economic distance (Beugelsdijk, Ambos et al., 2018; Beugelsdijk et al., 2017). The presence of people who know both sides of a border, such as members of the diaspora, who know the language of the country of origin and the country where they emigrated, know market structures, consumer preferences, business ethics, potential sectors, recognize the legal regime in both economies can contribute and stimulate mutually beneficial international transactions.

In an increasingly globalized world, the movement of people is a reality that cannot be changed and cooperation between states is a necessity that imposes radical

changes for the peoples of the world to be unified in a single society and to function together. Thus, in an ever-moving world where some leave and some enter with the common goal, the realization of their objectives, what remains for the state as the iron hand of the law is to ensure the proper functioning of society.

Exactly what we want to address in this study is these relationships diaspora-state-foreign investors. This paper is unique in first that it examines how a large number of countries relate to their diaspora. Unlike the extensive literature of different authors who have analyzed specific cases of how to connect with their diaspora, we present a broad overview of several countries studied simultaneously, with different histories and developments. As a criterion for the selection of countries is their level of development in terms of GDP, the history of migration (level of emigrants as % of the population of that country) and the level of remittances received from the country of origin as % of GDP. This combination of factors is not unintentional, we want the study panorama to be as complete as possible to include developed and developing countries and how they are dealing with this issue with their diaspora.

This analysis has served us to construct our variable of interest "diaspora institutions". Second, if so far the studies have focused generally on the quality of state institutions, we will empirically show the influence and role of institutions dedicated to the diaspora with the hope that the results of this study will be a message to the policy makers of these countries, about the importance of engaging with institutions dedicated to the diaspora not only as a basic task of any state to support its citizens everywhere, but for understand their impact as ambassadors representing their country of origin in the international arena. So, our purpose in this paper is to find out if there is a connection between the government's commitment to institutions for the diaspora in attracting and motivating foreign investors in these countries. Are governments contributing, through the involvement of part of the state apparatus to the issue of immigration and the diaspora, also in attracting a higher influx of foreign investment?

The motivation that drives us to conduct such a study derives from the importance of both FDI flows and the diaspora as pillars that have kept the economies of the countries afloat, alleviated poverty and today are contributing to their radical transformation. We have studied ten African countries and ten Asian countries. These countries have been analyzed from 1990-2020, as this period coincides with the moments when the first changes in organizational structures and engagement in the issue of immigration begin. We used different public data sources for data collection,

such as the World Bank (WB), The Global Economy, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) and a panel data are estimated for a sample of 20 countries over a 30 years period.

The paper is structured as follows. We first do a brief review of the literature to better understand the channels through which these two phenomena are interrelated. Second, we describe the empirical methodology of the study. Third we describe the variables selected to include in the model, the expected effects of each of them and the source from which these data are obtained. In section four we present the results of the study and at the end we discuss and conclude with some recommendations based on the findings.

Literature Review

Migration and foreign direct investment are two increasingly important aspects of globalization, where each can affect the other. So, we start our analysis with the study of literature that reveals the forms in which they can affect each other. In the first stand of the literature, we will see the impact of foreign direct investment on migration. FDI is considered a major catalyst for development. For the host country they represent financial capital and foreign currency, present new businesses and transfer innovative technologies. First at the macro level this means into opportunities for economic development of the host country. (See Sookram et al., 2022; Haq 2022; Kulu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Okwu et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Tsagkanos et al. 2019; Gungor and Ringim, 2017; Melnyk et al. 2014).

Watching this in the smallest of each individual this means better living opportunities by easing the budget constraint of potential migrants. FDI could affect emigration in multiple ways. An inflow of capital into a country increases the capital to labor ratio, thereby raising the demand for labor and its return. Creating new businesses FDI creates new jobs. Numerous studies have confirmed that FDI also offers relatively higher salaries than local businesses (Bircan, 2013; Earle et al., 2012; Huttenen, 2007; Heyman, 2007). Consequently, FDI, through new jobs and high wages, can reduce emigration efforts. Employment in new businesses and involvement in more complex processes with innovative technologies creates opportunities to grow professionally. (H. Nguyen et al 2020; V. Kheng et al 2017; Su & Liu 2016; M. Azam, et al 2015; D. Gittens, 2013) Indirectly again FDI meet a need of the people leading them to emigrate, professional growth / better career opportunities.

FDI through the demand for skilled workers affects the level of education (Fredriksson, 2020) On the one hand being more educated and on the other hand FDI by providing information about the destination country (country of origin of FDI), by offering jobs, training them in countries of origin can create potential contacts that can encourage employees to emigrate (Javorcik et al., 2011, Berthélemy et al., 2009). So, the literature shows that FDI can affect immigration in several ways by encouraging or discourage it. If we move to a wider spectrum, FDI affects the activity of local firms. FDI can affect local firms through four mechanisms namely, the demonstration mechanism (i.e., domestic firms identify and assimilate technological knowledge or practices demonstrated by foreign firms), the employee mobility mechanism (i.e., domestic firms employ local employees who previously worked for and were trained by foreign firms), the business linkage mechanism (i.e., technological knowledge can be transferred to domestic firms who use the same supplier or distributors as foreign firms), and the competitive pressure mechanism (i.e., the superiority of foreign firms can create pressure on domestic firms to push them to update their technology) (Chena, et all., 2020) Through all these forms FDI can help local firms overcome relative isolation and enter international markets. In other words, FDI influences from the core of a society that are its citizens, in their activities to the governmental level that impose radical changes and agreements to create a favorable business environment. (Kulu et al., 2021)

In the second stand let's see the other side of the coin, the impact of migration on investment (foreign direct investment). We know that when FDI decides to invest abroad, in addition to the costs of geographical distance, they will face in the host country the contextual distance, which refers to the environmental differences between the country of origin and the foreign country, expressed in terms cultural, administrative and economic distance (Beugelsdijk, Ambos et al., 2018; Beugelsdijk et al., 2017). The presence of immigrants, as people who know the countries at the same time can facilitate international economic transactions. Diaspora members can help FDI overcome language and cultural difficulties by recognizing both countries at the same time (see Matthias Lucke and Tobias Stohr, 2018) Members of the diaspora, by better understanding the market structure and legal framework of their country of origin, can help foreign investors obtain the necessary information before investing in the host country. (Javorcik, Ozden, Spatareanu, € & Neagu, 2011).

Members of the diaspora having the advantage of knowing the investment environment in their country of origin can provide the necessary information to foreign investors to reduce the risk of expropriation (Leblang, 2011). In other words,

the strong link between migrants and FDI lies in the fact that they represent information channels for foreign investors. Through the social ties that diaspora members maintain in their home country, it can help companies identify business opportunities, local tastes and foreign preferences, and can even help investors find joint venture partners. The positive association between ethnic networks and FDI has already been found by many papers (see Dany, 2020; Cuadros et all., 2019; Burchardi, Chaney, & Hassan, 2016; Federici & Giannetti, 2010; Foad, 2012; Murat et all., 2008) However, the role of migrants is not the same as long as they are different in personal characteristics, the way of emigration and the opportunities they have had to integrate in the host country and consequently in the potential to influence the host country. In this logical line Cuadros et al., 2019 define the importance of the working position of migrants in promoting Foreign Direct Investment. The aims of this study are analysis the role played by migrants' occupations in influencing FDI, with empirical evidence in a multi-country gravity framework.

The results show that highly skilled migrants, individuals born in the investor's home / host country, who occupy managerial or professional positions in the host / investment country positively influence the promotion of FDI in that country. The presence of immigrants with a high level of professionalism increases the potential for reducing transaction costs through access to wider information on foreign markets as well as through personal business contacts. Through accumulated capital abroad, gained experience and possible contacts, diaspora members can not only influence the firms where they are employed but can also be entrepreneurs themselves. A special form of foreign direct investment is those owned by companies or managed by members of the diaspora. DUIs are seen as the "firstmovers" in a country because of the advantages they have in terms of culture, language, organizational structure, legal framework, potential sectors based on information from social networks in the country of origin. etc. Through their activities in the country of origin they can help overcome the risk perceived from abroad and motivate foreign investors to make investments in these countries. (Naujoks et al., 2020) So immigrants can act as ambassadors of their country of origin and motivate FDI to invest in their homeland. Thus, for example, Parsons and Vezina in 2018 utilizing a unique event in human history, the exodus of the people of the Vietnamese Boat, showed the role played by immigrants in the resumption of bilateral trade between Vietnam and the US. Between 1975 and 1994, an estimated 1.4 million Vietnamese refugees moved to the United States. In the mid-1990s the US imposed a full trade embargo on Vietnam. After the lifting of trade restrictions in 1994, US exports to Vietnam increased more in the

US countries with the largest Vietnamese population, evidence of the pro-trade causal effect of migrants, i.e., migrant networks promote trade. The results show that US exports going to Vietnam over the period 1995–2010 grew most in those US states with larger Vietnamese populations. Specifically, 1995-cross-section results suggest that a 10% increase in the Vietnamese network raises exports to Vietnam by between 4.5% and 14%.

Members of the diaspora can also invest in origin themselves or can bring products of origin to international markets. In this case the diaspora serves multifaceted and often hybrid roles between consumer-distributor-marketer, acting as unique bridges across markets. (Elo et all., 2019; Minto-Coy, 2018; Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011; Newland and Taylor, 2010). Specifically, Elo et all., in 2019 empirically, explored the spread of three ethnic products in foreign markets, respectively the sauna from Finland as a service deeply ingrained in Finnish culture and lifestyle, patty from Jamaica, as the fastest food popular of this country and Pastel de nata from Portugal, a cream cakethat is served warm with cinnamon and baked in a wood oven. The purpose of this study was to identify the role of diaspora networks in the dissemination of ethnic products internationally. The results of this study affirmed that the role of diaspora networks in the dissemination of ethnic products has been crucial in the nascent and then the crossover phase of international marketing and product internationalization. Diffusion of ethnic products is not managed as a single firm enters the market with a normal product but is more of a co-created and networked process of different actors from the firm and the diaspora to third party developers with elements of cooperation and competition. So, migrants can play an important role in reducing non-tariff barriers between nations and influence the attraction of investment both from their country of origin to the host country and vice versa. Therefore, it should not be forgotten that among the multitude of criteria that evaluate foreign investors before undertaking an investment abroad such as market size, trade open, inflation, infrastructure, international reserves, natural reserves, quality of institution, political stability, control of corruption, human development index, etc. Diaspora can also play a decisive role in attracting FDI. Thus, for example Amar Anwar and Mazhar Mug, in 2017, analyzed the role of the Indian diaspora in attracting Indian outward FDI. In recent years Indian foreign investment has grown significantly, making India one of the leading investors in developing countries. Authors investigate the relationship between the Indian overseas community and OFDI in the developed countries (OECD countries) using data from 1999 to 2008.

The aim was to study whether Indians have invested in those markets where there is a larger Indian diaspora? The results of this study showed that the presence of Indian diaspora in a country has a statistically significant positive impact on the volume of Indian FDI entering that country. A ten thousand increase in Indian diaspora residing in OECD countries is associated with a 2 percent increase in the Indian OFDI to the host country. To summarize, we can say that the diaspora has a multiple role in the relationship with FDI, it is the information channel that facilitates and reduces costs for FDI, it is the channel that brings ethnic products to international markets (opens the country from isolation) is the channel that through cooperation and expansion of contacts promotes FDI and OFDI.

In a globalized world we see on the one hand an attempt to attract FDI and on the other hand a policy to promote effective cooperation with the respective diaspora. We intend to add to this extensive literature on these two phenomena an empirical study that shows how important it is to institutionalize the relationship with one of the most important links of this chain, such as members of diaspora.

Empirical methodology

The fundamental question we seek to consider is whether the volume of FDI is influenced by diaspora institutions. The full dataset contains annual panel data for twenty countries for the period 1990 to 2020. Also, we include several control variables, specific to the partner country i , commonly used in the literature on FDI determinants. Table 1 in Appendix 1, presents the variables considered in the analysis and data sources, Table 2 in Appendix 1 present the correlation matrix and the Table 3 in Appendix 1 present sources of information on diaspora institutions to create the independent variable diaspora institution.

Our panel data is balanced that means that have the same number of observations for all groups. We started our analysis by testing if our database has multicollinearity problems. Variance inflation factor (VIF) is a measure of the amount of multicollinearity in a set of multiple regression variables. As long as the vif value is less than 10 the data is no multicollinearity (Hair et al. 1995). We investigated the possible effects of independent variables on FDI, applying three different panel models, pool model, fixed effect and random effect model. Based on the relevant tests we concluded that the most suitable model for the analysis of our data is the fixed effect test (see Hausman test).

Fixed effect model analysis the impact of variable that vary over time and remove the effect of those time-invariant characteristics so we can assess the net effects of the

independent variables on the dependent variable. The fixed effect model investigates group differences in intercepts, assuming the same slopes and constant variance across the cross-sections (countries). In the fixed model time-invariant variable are absorbed by the intercept, so different entity has different intercept but the same slopes and constant variance across the cross-sections (countries). We considered this effect, as it allowed us to capture unobserved heterogeneity across countries where it is fixed over time. We estimate the following fixed effect panel model as well:

$$\log FDI_{it} = (\alpha + \mu_i) + \beta_1 \log_mark_size + \beta_2 \text{Infl} + \beta_3 \text{Inrastruc} + \beta_4 \text{Hum_devel} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where, i presents each country; t represents each time period (with $t=1,2,\dots,T$) and ε_{it} is the random error term and μ_i is a random variable that is part of the intercept α under the fixed effects model and it is assumed that it is uncorrelated with explanatory variables.

We begin our analysis with a model of factors that we think are closely related to FDI. In the second model we introduce our variable of interest, Diaspora Institution. Our goal through this model is to find out if there is a relationship between the commitment of the government and institutions towards the diaspora in attracting a larger volume of FDI. Our variable of interest is initially expressed as a simple dummy with two categories.

$$\log FDI_{it} = (\alpha + \mu_i) + \beta_1 \text{DI2} + \beta_2 \log_mark_size + \beta_3 \text{Infl} + \beta_4 \text{Inrastruc} + \beta_5 \text{Hum_devel} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

Based on the study of the institutions that each state has engaged to support the diaspora, we see that the forms and policies were different. It is understood that commitment and work are not the same how to have a dedicated office to listen to and inform immigrants, how to have a ministry for the protection of diaspora issues. Based on this, through model three and four, we want to study if the type of institution engaged in this matter is important in the motivation of foreign investors.

$$\log FDI_{it} = (\alpha + \mu_i) + \beta_1 \text{DI3} + \beta_2 \log_mark_size + \beta_3 \text{Infl} + \beta_4 \text{Inrastruc} + \beta_5 \text{Hum_devel} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (3)$$

$$\log FDI\ it = (\alpha + \mu_i) + \beta_1 DI_1 + \beta_2 DI_2 + \beta_3 DI_3 + \beta_4 DI_4 + \beta_5 DI_5 + \beta_6 DI_6 + \beta_7 log_mark_size + \beta_8 Infl + \beta_9 Inrastruc + \beta_{10} Hum_devel + \varepsilon_{it}$$

(4)

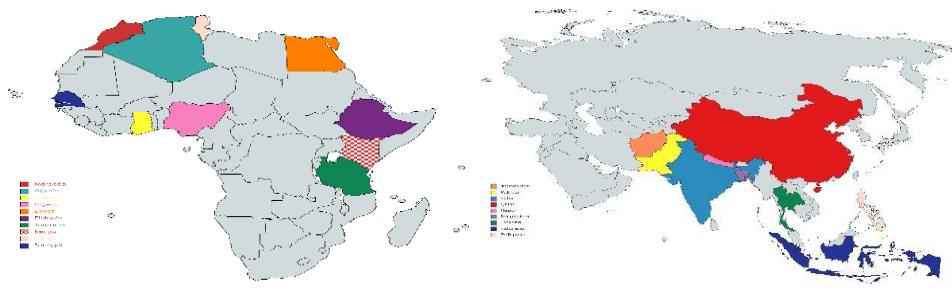
Models three and four differ from the second model only in the expression of our variable of interest. In the third model we organize our variable of interest as a dummy with three categories (0- there is no institution for the diaspora, 1- there is an institution for the diaspora at the maximum department level and 2 there is an institution at ministerial level) While in the fourth model, the variable of interest is organized in size categories (0-there is no institution for the diaspora, 1- quasi governmental, 2-legislative body (e.g., High Council), 3- Sub-ministry, 4-Executive Body (an organization housed within the office of the head of the executive branch of government (e.g., under the Presidential Office), 5-Hybrid Ministry, 6- Full Ministry). Our ranking system refers to the one proposed by Alan Gamlen, Michael Cummings, Paul M. Vaaler and Laura Rossouw in 2013. Our aim is to test whether the organization or type of institution dedicated to the diaspora affects the volume of FDI in different ways. We tested all models with fixed effect models. We choose this model based on the p value of the Hausman test but also for several other reasons. First, when the number of places is small, as in our case, the model with fixed effects is preferred to the one with random effects. Second, the places that were taken in the study were not taken randomly. This fact also favors the model with fixed effects. Thirdly, the purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of variables that change over time.

Data description

The data used in this study are based on several sources such as the World Bank (WB), The Global Economy, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF).

We collected data and studied the institutions dedicated to the issue of diaspora for 30 years, from 1990-2020 for 10 countries in Africa and 10 countries in Asia. Specifically, in the maps below we present the countries that are the object of the study.

Map 1: The countries studied in Africa Map 2: The countries studied in Asia



We created our variable of interest after a long study of the state apparatus of each country object of study, Country Migration Report by IOM on the issue of immigration and diaspora in these countries, "Human Geopolitics" by A. Gamlen, 2019 and data from European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) - Diaspora engagement map. Also, an extensive literature of different authors who have analyzed specific cases has helped us to acquaint the institutions involved with the issue of emigration and diaspora, which we cite in the references. More specifically the reference for created the variable Diaspora Institution are described in Table 3 in Appendix.

Also is important to note that the state object of study have several types of institutions engaged in the diaspora issue. In such cases our index has the institution of the greatest importance.

In the selection of other control variables, referring to previous studies, we select the following variables as important factors that affect the attraction of FDI:

Market size and growth: expresses the dimensions and potential of the market, have been commonly found to exert a positive influence and statistically significant relationship. This variable expresses the purchasing power of the population and, thus, the demand. It is usually measured by means of GDP per capita (Agiomirgianakis et al. 2006; Ranjan, 2011). However, it is also possible to find an adverse effect, likely explained because of is capturing the rising costs (Walsh & Yu, 2010).

Inflation as measured by the consumer price index reflects the annual percentage change in the cost to the average consumer of acquiring a basket of goods and services that may be fixed or changed at specified intervals, such as yearly. This indicator is believed to reflect the stable

development of the national economy. A majority of results have shown that this factor affects FDI attraction negatively (Jadhav, 2012),

Infrastructure is the foundation for production and business activities. The more developed a country's infrastructure is, the more suitable the operating environment for the business, so the lower the initial investment costs will be. In other words, a developed infrastructure has a positive effect on the attraction of FDI. Previous studies in general suggest that infrastructure is reflected in the criteria of telephone, Internet and telecommunication (Wich, 2012; Makhavikova, 2015; Le, 2015; Le and Nguyen, 2017).

The Human Development Index (0-1) measures three basic dimensions of human development: long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Four indicators are used to calculate the index: life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling, and gross national income per capita. Human capital has been recognized in numerous studies as a means of attracting FDI. The presence of skilled, highly qualified and healthy workers suggests that they have high productivity and are able to perform more complex functions.

We report the descriptive statistical measures in Table 1. In this table we present the average, the median, the minimum and maximum values, standard deviation, and the number of observations in the sample.

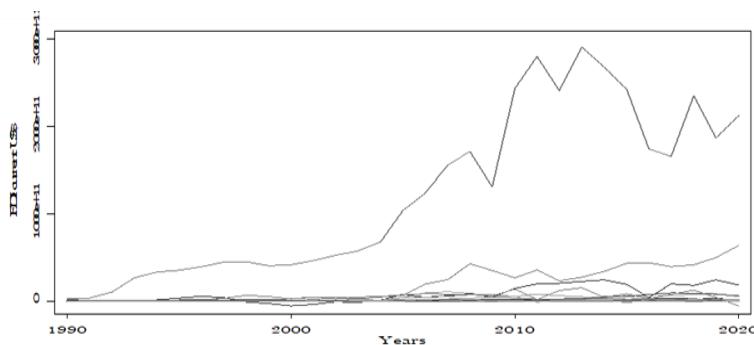
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
log FDI	595	20.357	2.769	2.303	26.396
DI 1	600	.039	.193	0	1
DI 2	600	.04	.197	0	1
DI 3	600	.334	.472	0	1
DI 4	600	.053	.225	0	1
DI 5	600	.218	.413	0	1
DI 6	600	.166	.372	0	1
log Mark Size	600	11.61	2.277	7.766	17.516
Inflation	583	8.361	9.573	-8.484	84.864
Hum Dev	582	.568	.118	.283	.782
Infrastructure	600	41.316	47.116	0	186.159

The first thing that stands out is the high fluctuation of FDI volume between countries. If we look at the maximum and minimum values, a very significant difference can be

seen. Specifically, of the countries I studied, the least attractive country for foreign investors is Afghanistan with the lowest level of FDI. In relation to our variable of interest, it is important noting that the main form that governments use to support the diaspora is sub-ministry, and in second place is engagement with hybrid ministries, which combine activities for several issue at the same time. One of the main indicators to draw attention to these descriptive data is the level of inflation which shows infact that some economies suffer from hyperinflation. Hyperinflation can occur in times of war and economic turmoil. In fact, these countries are characterized by political and economic unrest and wars such as the case of Afghanistan, Lebanon, etc. An indicator that should be emphasized is the human development index. From the min and max values, we see that there are countries with a very low index of human capital development (0.283 in Ethiopia) which must work to correct these

deficits due to the importance of this variable in attracting FDI. Also, if we refer to the maximum value (0.782 in Sri Lanka), improvements are still required to reach the maximum value of the index, which is 1. The proxy for infrastructure use is mobile telephone for 100 people. So, if we compare the average value with the maximum possible, we can say that there is still room for improvement. It should be noted that the min value of this proxy is observed in many countries, but mainly in the years 1990-1993, improving significantly over the years. Specifically, according to the 2020 data, the min value is recorded in Ethiopia of 38.7 and the max value in Thailand of 166.61 for 100 people.

From the descriptive data, comparing the max min and average values, we found that there are significant differences between the countries. Through the graph below, we present the volume of FDI during the years 1990-2020 for each country.



Graph 1: FDI over the years by countries

From the graph we can see that the country that has attracted the most foreign investment from all countries under study over the last 30 years is China. Factors important in attracting FDI to other countries have also been key to China's success. China's large domestic market, low wage costs, and improved infrastructure, complemented by open FDI policies (especially the establishment of OEZs).

Results

In this section, we present the results of our model. In our analysis we got the log of FDI, net inflows (BoP, current US\$) as dependent variable, while the other variables are used as independent regression variables. The question that arises from a panel analysis is the choice of the most appropriate model between pooled model, fixed effect and random effect model. We analyze the panel data with all three models and based on the respective tests (Hausman test and Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian multiplier test) we chose as the most suitable model for our analysis the fixed effect model.

We start our analysis with a simple model where we include the factors that we value as essential to attract foreign investors. As we expected all the factors as market size, that expresses dimensioned and the market potential, the level of inflation as in financial risk indicators, the

infrastructure as the basis on which the business activities are built and the human capital as the source that sets financial and physical capital in motion, are statistically very important.

VARIABLES	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4
DI_1				2.316***

DI_2			(0.487)	
DI_3			1.511*** (0.360)	
DI_4			1.304*** (0.243)	
DI_5			1.352* (0.755)	
DI_6			1.763*** (0.337)	
log_Mark_Size	-1.663*** (0.427)	-0.949** (0.432)	-0.805* (0.443)	-0.839* (0.449)
Inflation	-0.0501*** (0.00778)	-0.0395*** (0.00777)	-0.0426*** (0.00768)	-0.0397*** (0.00781)
Hum_Dev	32.26*** (2.986)	24.07*** (3.225)	20.68*** (3.570)	21.29*** (3.628)
Infrastructure	-0.00814*** (0.00261)	-0.00557** (0.00257)	-0.00443* (0.00263)	-0.00445* (0.00261)
DI2		1.333*** (0.231)		
DI3			0.857*** (0.154)	
Constant	21.84*** (3.819)	17.01*** (3.798)	17.35*** (3.799)	17.08*** (3.860)
Observations	541	541	541	541
R-squared	0.510	0.540	0.538	0.551
Number of countries	20	20	20	20
Country		YES	YES	YES

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The results of the control variables we can say that some are in line with what we expected and that support a lot of empirical study some are outside our predictions. Specifically, the role of Market Size, measured by GDP per capita differs from our expectations. Market size is one of the key considerations for multinational companies when selecting their next FDI destination. However, the size of a country does not always translate into purchases. Purchases are made by people. These people must have income to buy. For this reason, we chose to present the market size in terms of GDP per capita and we expected that this variable would have a positive correlation with FDI. Contrary to our expectations, it turned out that market size is a statistically significant

variable but related negatively in the attraction of foreign investments. Our results can be explained by the fact that being countries where the majority are low-income countries and our model shows an average result among these countries, our findings affirm that foreign investors do not decide to invest in these countries to trade there. The size of the market or more precisely the purchasing potential of these markets is not a reason that motivates them in choosing the countries. Also, Walsh & Yu, in a study conducted in 2010, find a negative effect of market size in the attraction of FDI, probably explained due to the rising costs in the development countries.

Contrary with our finds, L. Artige and R. Nicolini, 2010, in their paper show that regional market size, market potential and unit labor costs are significant positive determinants of FDI inflows into three regions, Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Catalonia (Spain) and Lombardy (Italy). Even Sookram etc. 2022, which studied the factors influencing FDI inflows into the Caribbean during the period 2000-2019, confirmed the potential of market demand as an essential factor in attracting FDI. Their results showed that FDI is affected by the size of their small market, high energy costs, prone to exogenous shocks from commodity prices, natural disasters and climate change that discourage them.

Our results affirm that one of the motivating variables that influence the attraction of FDI in these countries is human capital. The results are in line with what we expected because an improvement in human capital means more qualified and healthy workers. The presence of more skilled workers suggests higher productivity and involvement in more complex functions. In fact, the theoretical relationship between human capital and FDI has been demonstrated by Zhang and Markusen since 1995. Similarly to our results, Pantelopoulos, in a 2022 study, showed that an educated workforce positively affects the attraction of FDI. The author analyzed the OECD countries for the period 1960-2010 with the objective of empirically investigating the relationship between the labor force at all educational levels and FDI. The results confirmed that the different educational levels did not have the same level of importance. Tertiary education has a greater impact on the attraction of FDI.

Foreign investors when investing abroad also appreciate the infrastructure because the lack of the necessary infrastructure means into additional costs that the investor must realize to develop his activity. Contrary to what we expected, our results confirm that infrastructure is a statistically significant variable but that negatively affects the attraction of FDI towards these countries. The proxy for infrastructure varies. In this research we use the mobile cellular per 100 people. Contrary as our result Ta et al., In

2021 showed that infrastructure is a strong variable in FDI attraction. They have explored and measured the impact of factors influencing the attraction of foreign investors in Quang Ninh province. The empirical analysis used data from a survey of 206 domesticand foreign investors in this province of Viet Nam. According to the results, the factors that havea strong positive impact on the attraction of FDI are infrastructure, public services, and human capital.

The purpose of our study was actually to show if the engagement of the government to support thediaspora with institutions could also affect the volume of FDI. Thus, in the second model we introduce our interest variable DI if they affect the attraction of a higher level of foreign investmentflows. Diaspora Institution is a simple dummy that shows whether the government has an institution to support the diaspora or not, regardless of the type of institution. The results of the second model affirm that the government, by engaging in the issue of the diaspora, is contributingpositively to the attraction of a higher volume of FDI.

But we consider it necessary to go further with this analysis, because it is not the same level of engagement as simply having an office that informs and supports the demands of the diaspora, having a department or even a ministry dedicated to the issue of the diaspora. So, the difference between the second, third and fourth model lies in the way our interest variable DI is organized. Through the second model, it was shown that the commitment of the government in supporting the diaspora has a positive effect on the volume of FDI. In the third model, our variable of interestis organized as a dummy with three categories where level 0 indicates that the government has no institution for the diaspora, level 1 indicates that the government has a representative institution ordepartment and level 2 the government has an institution at ministerial level. While in the fourth model we have made an even more detailed division for the type of the government's engagementin the issue of diaspora support. The purpose of moving from the second to the third and fourth model is to study firstly if the engagement of the government with institutions for the economy is affecting the volume of FDI and secondly, we want to show ifthis influence changes according tothe type of engagement. In other words, we expect that a country that engages in the issue of the diaspora at the ministerial level will have made greater institutional and legal reforms and thereforehave a greater impact than a country that supports the diaspora with a quasi-governmental institution.

The results confirm that despite the institutional organization, the engagement of the governmentin support of the diaspora with any type of institution has a positive effect

on attracting a higher volume of foreign investment. In other words, the state through reforms and programs undertaken to create a climate of stability and motivation for members of the diaspora and especially by institutionalizing this relationship is contributing at the same time in expanding relationship with other countries and improving the image of the country in the eyes of foreign investors motivating them to invest in them.

To summarize we can say that our model is a good model (F-test) and the Foreign Direct Investment inflows are explained as 54% by the independent variables. Our interest variable (Diaspora Institution) has a positive effect on FDI regardless of the type of institution engaged in the issue.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Against the background of increasing interdependence between states, integration into the global economy and expansion abroad has become the focus of national policies. To break the walls of isolation, a window to the world is the diaspora. In recent years, in order to strengthen the diaspora as actors for development, state structures have been engaged in addition to social, cultural and humanitarian structures. Our results provide support for the solution of many governments which are paying increasing attention to the diaspora community. We showed that their commitment to the issue of emigration and the diaspora is important not only to better channel their contributions to the economic development of the country but also to attract higher FDI flows. Both diaspora and foreign investors can contribute to development.

On the one hand, the diaspora represents the information channel for the world, knowing the country, the legislation, the language, the culture. On the other hand, the governments engaged in the issue of the diaspora have undertaken a series of reforms, the implementation of which has imposed and brought about a radical change, both in the legal framework, in the economic reforms, favoring the business climate. Changing political and economic panorama can motivate foreign investors who also contribute to the country's economic growth. Economic growth means improved living conditions and this can reduce incentives to migrate. So even though these two phenomena are completely different, they should be considered as two sides of the same coin that both contribute to meeting a country's needs for financial capital, technological innovation, human capital development, overcoming relative isolation from global flows of trade and where the hand of the state with the power given by law can give life to this relationship.

Regardless of the economic and political problems of the countries subject to the study, we empirically showed that the countries that are engaging in the diaspora issue are improving the climate for doing business and attracting a higher volume of FDI. For more the results confirm that despite the institutional organization, the engagement of the government in support of the diaspora with any type of institution has a positive effect on attracting a higher volume of foreigninvestment.

So, our results support the countries that have taken initiatives to create bridges of cooperation with the diaspora. This partnership is a hope to change the image of the country in the eyes of the international community and to attract more of their attention.

Therefore, our results support the countries that have taken initiatives to create bridges of cooperation with the diaspora. This partnership is a hope to change the image of the country in the eyes of the international community and to attract more of their attention. Let these results be not only a message for policymakers, who we recommend to intensify policies and programs for building cooperation with their diasporas, but also a reflection on the complexity of this long-term process, which has a greater chance of being successful if is based on good communication, with the common belief that all parties benefit from this cooperation. Having said that, we understand that the regulatory framework and institutional capacities are important, but they cannot necessarily generate effective cooperation. What is essential is ensuring the applicability of the laws closely monitored by the competent authorities and a coordination of functions between the institutions without disconnection between the institutional chain. We showed the statistically significant positive impact of diaspora institutions, but obviously this analysis can be expanded by including a larger number of countries and above all by including a wider range of variables such as variables related to the political situation in country, to take into consideration the effect of the time of policy implementation, to see the effect of the size of the diaspora on the initiatives of the country of origin to institutionalize this relationship, etc.

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ERP Retirement: Some Considerations on Existing Literature

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Abstract

The final phases of the information systems lifecycle are no less important than the initial ones. However, previous research indicated a lack of studies on information systems discontinuance. This paper aims to verify whether this gap still exists by analysing the literature on enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, a type of software widely used in many organisations. To identify the relevant literature, the paper involved searching in Scopus and Web of Science databases. Despite several ERP literature reviews suggesting more studies on the retirement phase and no time limits in the search, very few studies have been identified. To sketch the current state of knowledge on the selected topic, the paper developed a scoping review and, based on the results, comments on possible critical issues. The work supports researchers and practitioners interested in information systems discontinuance, as it provides some considerations to develop future research. In addition, it has practical implications because the advancement of the knowledge frontier will help organizations cope with this kind of change.

Keywords: information systems discontinuance, enterprise resource planning, literature review, scoping review, erp lifecycle, erp retirement

Introduction

Today, most organisations adopt information systems to manage the enormous flow of data flowing through them (data from operations, data from partners, data from the market, etc.). Enterprise resource planning systems are packaged business software that enable efficient and effective resource management (Nah *et al.*, 2001). Their adoption can be considered one of the clearest proofs of IT acceptance in organisations, as they are critical projects (Moon, 2007)¹. Therefore, it is crucial to study ERP transition projects.

¹ Concerning this, some authors have estimated that 90% of ERP implementations do not deliver all the expected benefits (Momoh *et al.*, 2010).

Given that ERP systems increase enterprise performance, a considerable amount of literature has focused on them, in particular on the implementation phase and critical success factors (Shaul and Tauber, 2013; Ali and Miller, 2017; Kurni *et al.*, 2019). However, other areas deserve attention, like the post-implementation phases. Indeed, several authors have included ERP retirement among the under researched areas (Moon, 2007; Paulsson, 2009), and many ERP LRs called for more attention on this topic (Esteves and Bohorquez, 2007; Haddara and Zach, 2012).

ERP retirement is of interest today because information systems must evolve with the organisation, and if ERP vendors do not guarantee system update and evolution, replacement may take place. As new technologies emerge, decisions about discontinuing or switching ERPs will be recurrent. From this perspective, cloud-based computing represents a new way of delivering software applications (software as a service) which stimulated ERP replacement. In fact, as stated in some market reports (Columbus, 2016), most companies started to place their software and infrastructure in the cloud, and this could lead to a replacement of on-premise ERP systems, given that cloud-ERP systems offer attractive benefits such as lower initial investments, more flexible systems, simpler maintenance, faster upgrades, higher scalability, etc. (Owens, 2010; Peng and Gala, 2014; Abd Elmonem *et al.*, 2016).

To this author's knowledge, no dedicated review¹ has been published on ERP retirement. Considering this, the paper aims to investigate the state of knowledge in this lifecycle phase, to understand whether recommendations from previous ERP LRs have moved the knowledge frontier forward. To this end the paper is organized as follows: the following section presents the literature background. In the third section, I introduce the methodological choices and indicate the selected literature. Then, I describe the main features of the analysed literature. The discussion is presented in the fifth section, where I provide an overview of the state of knowledge and some considerations to support future research. Finally, the last sections present the conclusions.

Literature Background

The literature offers several conceptualisations concerning information systems continued use and discontinuance (see, for instance, Bhattacherjee, 2001; Furneaux and Wade, 2010 and 2011; Venkatesh *et al.*, 2011; Bhattacherjee *et al.*, 2012; Polites and Karahanna, 2012; Recker, 2016). In particular, Furneaux and Wade identified some reasons behind the cessation of an information system, such as low levels of integration, system capability shortcomings, and limited support services. With respect to the product lifecycle, decisions about the replacement of information systems can be attributed to the decline phase. Many ERP lifecycle models are

¹ Following Huang and Yasuda (2016) a dedicated review usually focuses on one single topic in the ERP research field.

available in the literature (see, for instance, Markus and Tanis, 2000, or Chang *et al.*, 2008). This paper adopts the framework proposed by Esteves and Pastor (1999), as it is one of the most widely used for the allocation of research (Esteves and Bohorquez, 2007; Shaul and Tauber, 2013; Albanese, 2019; etc.). This model consists of six phases: adoption decision, acquisition, implementation, use and maintenance, evolution, and retirement. In the adoption decision phase, the organisation acknowledges the need for an ERP and identifies its business needs and required ERP functionalities. In the acquisition phase, the organisation evaluates and selects ERP vendors and packages according to its needs. Implementation is a very critical phase because it is costly and time-consuming since it concerns the ERP system installation. Therefore, it may involve several activities such as process re-engineering, data migration, customisation, etc. The use and maintenance phase starts when the ERP go-live takes place and concerns the system use, user acceptance, maintenance processes, etc. In the evolution phase, the focus is on ERP development and extension and integration with other applications (e.g., advanced planning systems or customer relationship management). The retirement phase is related to the appearance of new solutions or the inadequacy of the adopted ERP (e.g., due to new business needs). Thus, this phase concerns the obsolescence of the information systems (which can be retired after a period of maturity), the abandonment of the adopted ERP, and its replacement with new software.

Esteves and Pastor (1999) were among the first authors to point out issues concerning ERP retirement. In subsequent years, few studies have explored this topic in depth as confirmed by a series of LRs adopting the ERP lifecycle as a classification dimension. Esteves and Pastor (2001) found no studies on the retirement phase, but in those years most organisations were in the implementation and use and maintenance phases, so this could be justified. The ERP LR by Esteves and Bohorquez (2007) also identifies no studies focusing on this phase and the authors conclude as follows (p.416): "*we expect that in the future these cases (ERP systems retirement) will be analysed in more detail*". Moon (2007) and Haddara and Zach (2012) pointed out that there are not many studies on ERP retirement with reference to both large companies and small and medium-sized enterprises. Finally, Huang and Yasuda (2016) developed an umbrella review (Paré *et al.*, 2015) based on 86 ERP LRs. They confirmed that (p.18): "*the implementation phase takes most attentions of researchers, and the pre-implementation phase is a little higher than the post-implementation phase*". Furthermore, considering the post-implementation phase, usage is the most studied topic, and retirement is the least. Something may have changed in the meantime; the current analysis aims to shed light on this issue.

Methodology

Although many scholars divide LR methods into qualitative and quantitative (Aldag and Steams, 1988; Rosenthal and DiMatteo, 2001; etc.), an author can conduct different types of LR and adopt different approaches and techniques. In fact, there is

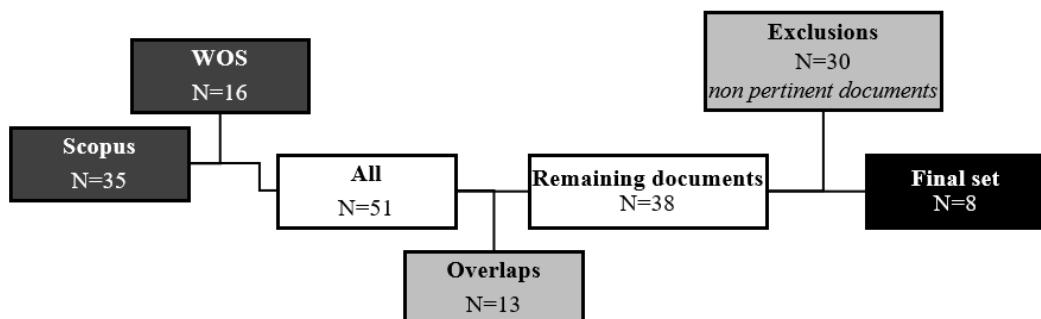
a continuum of LR typologies between these opposite approaches (Guzzo *et al.*, 1987; Massaro *et al.*, 2016), and LRs may vary from purely qualitative to semi-quantitative (moderately quantitative) to purely quantitative (King and He, 2005).

The literature offers many categorisations of LRs (Xiao and Watson, 2019; Paul and Criado, 2020; Booth *et al.*, 2021; etc.). To indicate the review developed, I refer to the taxonomy adopted by Paré *et al.* (2015). Following this classification, I conducted a scoping review, which is a qualitative systematic review aiming to provide some indications on a specific topic (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005; Levac *et al.*, 2010), and followed a sequential approach based on three phases: input collection, processing, and output generation (Levy and Ellis 2006).

To identify the relevant literature, I searched the Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases. This is because the most relevant contributions are supposed to be published in leading journals (Webster and Watson, 2002). In particular, I carried out some queries in September 2022 by searching the title, abstract and keywords for the following terms: retirement, ERP, and enterprise resource planning¹.

Although the queries had no time limit, the number of documents identified was not high, as I found 35 documents on Scopus and 16 on WoS. After comparing these records, I eliminated 13 duplicates. Then I analysed the abstract and, if necessary, the introduction and conclusion and identified the studies not related to the domain of this LR. In fact, due to the different meanings of the acronym ERP (e.g., early repolarization pattern, early retirement pensioning, etc.), I had to exclude 30 documents because they were not pertinent. Thus, the final set of selected documents consists of 8 studies (Figure 1). In addition, as one of these studies is not available in full text, I could only analyse 7 works in depth.

Figure 1 – Relevant literature



Source: elaboration on Scopus and WoS data

¹ I searched for documents by applying queries like this: (TITLE-ABS-KEY(retirement) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY(enterprise AND resource AND planning) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(erp))).

To depict the selected literature, I present the documents by year and indicate the publication outlet and authors. In addition, I analyse the research approach and method (Table 1). Given that the selected literature consists of a small number of documents, it is not convenient to adopt granular taxonomies. Therefore, I apply the following classes to determine the research approach: qualitative, quantitative, mixed, and conceptual. To define the research method, I adopt the following classes: single case study, multiple case study, survey, secondary data analysis, conceptual paper, literature review, mixed methods (qualitative dominant, equal status, quantitative dominant), and not defined method. Finally, I provide a snapshot of the research areas assigned by Scopus to the selected literature.

Main Features

The selected literature was published between 2009 and 2022. The analysis reveals that there is very limited research on ERP retirement, as only 8 documents were identified. Moreover, the number of studies reduces if one considers that a conference paper was later published in a journal (Haddara and Elragal, 2011 and 2013). This scientific production is fairly spread over time. Every two or three years, a study is carried out and, in most cases, published in a journal (Table 1). Several authors investigated ERP retirement, but Haddara is the only one who continued to analyse ERP retirement.

In the studies analysed, the qualitative approach prevails. In five cases, the authors adopted the case study method, but none have been developed as multiple case studies. The remaining three works are conceptual in nature since they are literature reviews. Unfortunately, none of these LRs focused on ERP retirement, which confirms the originality of the present analysis. No quantitative study was conducted.

Table 1 - Main characteristics of the selected literature

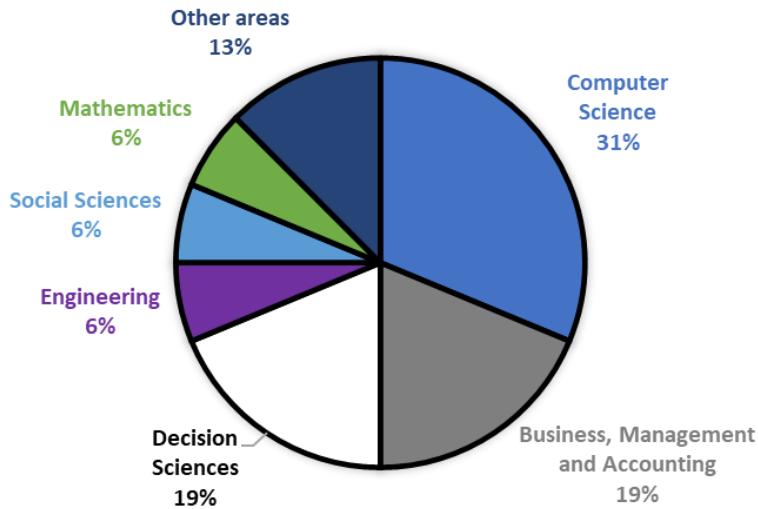
Year	Authors	Title	Publication outlet	Research approach	Research method	Available in full text
2009	Paulsson W.	Moving ERP research forward: The future directions for ERP research	Proceedings of the 3rd European Conference on Information Management and Evaluation	Conceptual	Literature review	No (only abstract)
2011	Haddara M., Elragal A.	ERP lifecycle: When to retire your ERP system?	Communications in Computer and Information Science	Qualitative	Single case study	Yes

201 3	Haddara M., Elragal A.	ERP lifecycle: A retirement case study	Information Resources Management Journal	Qualitative	Single case study	Yes
201 4	Chofreh A.G., Goni F.A., Shaharoun A.M., Ismail S., Klemeš J.J.	Sustainable enterprise resource planning: Imperatives and research directions	Journal of Cleaner Production	Conceptua l	Literatur e review	Yes
201 7	Kähkönen T., Smolander K., Maglyas A.	Lack of integration governance in ERP development: a case study on causes and effects	Enterprise Information Systems	Qualitative	Single case study	Yes
201 8	Demi S., Haddara M.	Do cloud ERP systems retire? An ERP lifecycle perspective	Procedia Computer Science	Qualitative	Single case study	Yes
202 0	Yasiukovic h S., Haddara M.	Tracing the clouds. A research taxonomy of cloud-ERP in SMEs	Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems	Conceptua l	Literatur e review	Yes
202 2	Kakhki M.D., Gargyea V.B., Mousavi R.	ERP systems transition in small manufacturin g companies: the tale of two countries	International Journal of Business Information Systems	Qualitative	Case study (2 cases)	Yes

Source: elaboration on Scopus and Wos data

The analysed literature intercepts several subject areas. Taking into account the classification used by Scopus, the areas with the highest number of articles are computer science, business, management and accounting and decision sciences (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Documents by subject area



Source: elaboration on Scopus data

Discussion

The literature analysed is numerically small and, in some cases, does not focus exclusively on the ERP retirement phase, as in the works of Chofreh *et al.* (2014), Yasiukovich and Haddara (2020) and Kähkönen *et al.* (2017). Indeed, the first two analyses are LRs, but not being dedicated LRs on the ERP retirement, the findings do not focus on the phase of interest. In particular, the first analysis focuses on sustainable ERP systems, intended as a holistic solution to support sustainability initiatives, which can replace legacy systems. The second study illustrates the current body of knowledge on cloud-ERP in SMEs and provides a holistic landscape. Following other studies, the authors recommend that ERP retirement needs further investigation. The third work is on integration challenges and problems due to the diversity of systems. This analysis indicates that problems with systems integration can lead to ERP retirement. Considering that one study is not available in full text (Paulsson, 2009), only four studies focused on ERP retirement are available. Therefore, the selected literature shows that the retirement phase is not only an under-researched topic but is almost unexplored.

As reviewers often remind us, the scarcity of studies does not imply a gap. However, this objection does not hold in this case, as ERP systems can be seen as one of the means for enterprise integration (Kien and Lian, 2009) and their retirement inevitably influences this feature. Thus, increasing knowledge about ERP retirement is important because it may affect enterprise performance and the work of ERP users. In particular, research on ERP retirement needs to be extended further to provide

insights into when, why, and how an organisation changes its ERP. Indeed, abandoning the ERP too early can affect the return on investment. At the same time, delaying the ERP replacement can reduce operational efficiency. In other words, it is important to know what causes ERP retirement, what influences migration, which conditions facilitate ERP retirement, which strategies are mostly pursued, which stakeholders are involved, etc.

The analysed literature provides only a few answers, and the findings have some limitations in terms of generalisability. Thus, this research strand cannot be considered mature, but what do we learn from the selected literature? Haddara and Elragal (2011 and 2013) developed a single exploratory case and investigated the factors leading to the ERP retirement decision. They identified some reasons for the ERP retirement, such as wrong ERP selection, insufficient involvement of managers and users, and lack of functionalities. Demi and Haddara (2018) offered a broader view on ERP retirement as they developed a single case study on an ERP vendor based on interviews with ERP consultants and sales. Consequently, the respondents responded based on many years of experience. This study proposes interesting results because it indicates further factors that lead to the switch from cloud or on-premise ERP to cloud ERP (availability of the newest functionalities, higher flexibility and scalability, fewer resources required, ease to swap to other ERP vendors). Also, they noted that cloud ERPs may have a shorter ERP retirement phase in contrast to on-premise solutions¹, but in general, they have a longer lifecycle. Furthermore, some interesting insights come from the work of Kakhki *et al.* (2022), who studied the transition from legacy systems to new ERP systems in SMEs in developed and developing countries. Although the authors had a broad focus on the entire transition process, they identified the following factors relating to ERP retirement/swapping, such as the increase in costs of support, reduction of support services, improvement of operational performance, inability of the early systems to support business processes (new needs).

Case studies are useful in exploring new phenomena and in situations of lack of knowledge they can provide important insights and indicate directions for future research, but their generalisability is limited (Yin, 2009). Given that none of the selected studies adopted a quantitative approach, the findings certainly show some weaknesses. But if ERP retirement is important, why do we have so few studies? It is not easy to answer with certainty. Among the possible reasons I include: the difficulty in identifying ERP retirement cases, the availability of key contacts (because it is easier to talk about successes than failures), the variety of determinants to be studied (which are not necessarily of a technical nature), and the amount of information to be collected. In fact, although Haddara and Elragal (2013) and Kähkönen *et al.* (2017)

¹ According to respondents, cloud ERP retirement could last from 3 months up to two years.

developed single case studies, they conducted numerous interviews (approximately 40 and 21 interviews).

This paper does not have a recipe for dealing with all these issues. However, some considerations are offered. To increase the generalisability of the results, the research strategy of Demi and Haddara (2018) is convenient, as it is based on interviewing ERP consultants and sales, who responded based on a larger number of cases. Interviewing ERP vendor side players is useful not only in this respect, but also in identifying interesting case studies. In fact, if an ERP vendor may be reluctant to talk about the replacement of its product, it will have little problem indicating when its ERP has replaced another product. Since the causes of retirement include factors related to both the ERP adopter organisation and the ERP vendor, to improve the findings, future qualitative studies should involve various key ERP actors (Albanese, 2017). Of course, there is no doubt about the need for quantitative studies, which are currently unavailable. Overall, more research is needed on ERP retirement, more empirical evidence, and systematic analysis of the drivers that lead to ERP switching, and the benefits and risks of ERP replacement.

Conclusion

In this paper, I developed a dedicated literature review on ERP retirement. It may have some limitations in terms of comprehensiveness. To increase it, future analyses may extend the databases searched (e.g., by including Google Scholar).

The number and exploratory nature of the selected studies showed that knowledge of ERP retirement is lacking. Filling this gap is important because the analyses will provide suggestions for enterprises and managers dealing with the final stage of the ERP lifecycle. This support will be especially relevant for SMEs in developing countries where ERP consultants are less available.

Following Yasiukovich and Haddara (2020) and Kakhki *et al.* (2022), I emphasise the need for more research on ERP retirement and suggest the development of new case studies, possibly multiple case studies based on different key ERP actors. To this end, I provide a few considerations to enhance the generalisability of future qualitative research results. Furthermore, there is a clear need for survey-based analyses covering different sectors and countries that seem to be missing in the literature.

Due to lower switching barriers, a considerable number of SMEs are modernising their legacy systems. Indeed, some ERP and sales consultants argued that "*replacing the ERP system would occur more often in the future*" (Demi and Haddara., 2018, p.593). The opportunities to advance in research will therefore increase, but will this be enough to close the gap? The publications of the coming years will answer the question.

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Posture and Balance: Study Case

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Abstract

Most of the postural problems are detected mostly as symptoms of muscular imbalance influenced by a variety of risk factors which can be internal or external factors. Through this study, we investigate how important a good posture is for a better balance stability by evaluating the impact of posture corrective exercises over the equilibrium parameter. Our study was conducted over randomly selected 67 children aged 10-11 years. Over randomly selected 34 children we used an Intervention Program (the isometric and stretching exercises) while the rest followed the routine of physical education class program. For the review we used Jab Ref, Pub Med, Medline, and Research Gate. To evaluate the postural shape of children we used "Posture Screen Mobile®-PSM (iPod) and Postural Analysis Grid Chart" and the Leonardo Mechanograph® GRFP for the equilibrium parameters. To analyze the data, we applied the SPSS 20.0 applying the Paired-Sample Test (T-test) and the Multifunctional Linear Regression. The results showed an efficacy of the postural corrective exercises on the posture alignment improvement and the equilibrium parameters too. In the end, we underline the importance of these kind of exercises to be implemented on the physical education program in order to insure a better posture and equilibrium too.

Keywords: posture, balance, children, postural deviations, intervention program

1. Introduction

Nowadays, poor posture among children became one of the most critical health issues analyzed and studied by different researchers of various scientific fields. This is why there are different definitions of posture as a concept, for example, atomists and the scientists of Kinesiology defined the "Normal Posture" as " the human body's ability to maintain a static and dynamic balance in relation to the force of gravity" (Loots, 1999; Kendall, McCreary, Provance, Rodgers & Romani, 2005). There are others who defined the Normal Posture as an important indicator of the mechanical efficiency of the kinetic condition and muscle balance or neuromuscular coordination (Latalski et al., 2013) and others as a mechanically performed behavior which can easily be

modified and affected by various actions or habits. (Kratěnová, Žejglicová, Malý & Filipová, 2007)

Despite these different definitions of Normal Posture as a concept, it is important for our study to underline the fact that the new generation of modern society is increasingly facing postural problems. Unfortunately, the technological evolution has negatively affected our child's posture shape causing poor posture (Motow-Czyż, Orczyk& Marek Orczyk, 2014; Brianezi L, Cajazeiro & Maifrino, 2011). Postural deviations are considered one of the most critical health issues recently because the incidents of poor posture among children unfortunately has increased. It is known that the human body change throughout life, but the greatest challenges regarding posture shape is during school age when posture is more fragile and sensible from different risk factors such as: using electronic games for hours, staying in class for hours in a seating position, holding heavy school bags and inaccurate way, using urban transport reducing physical activity level, unhealthy food, wearing uncomfortable shoes (Tremblay & Willms, 2000; Banfield, 2000; Kratenova et al., 2007; Misra, Nigam & Alagesan, 2012).

Despite these risk factors, studies underline that most postural deviation incidents are caused by the "lack of information" about posture (Brianezi et al., 2011). This is the reason why being aware of the "poor posture's risk factors" and "how to keep upright our body", is so important. If you are able to diagnose the existence of poor posture as soon as possible before that skeletal growth process finishes, you should know that postural misalignment can be easily corrected via physical exercises establishing muscle balance (Brianezi et al., 2011; Latalski et al., 2013; Gordeiro, Duarte, Collucci & Frade, 2014; Cosma et al, 2015). The necessity of intervention program implementation to correct poor posture in children during Physical Education Class is studied by many researchers emphasizing its positive impact on this prevalent physical condition. These studies highlighted that to correct poor posture it is important to use the "strengthening and stretching exercises" focusing on muscle balance development.

Furthermore, evidence showed that these physical exercises (strengthening and stretching) can significantly improve not only the poor posture, which is also the reason why these intervention programs were designed to be used for but even to improve balance stability (Cordeiro et al.,2014; Deutschmann et al., 2014). After a detailed analysis of how other studies could improve the detected postural deviations among children, we decided to implement an intervention program even among Albanian children using a combination of isometric and stretching exercises. It is important to emphasize that the isometric exercises chosen from us are based on the fact that they are characterized by an unchangeable motor scheme, making them more understandable for kids and easily executed by them (Bomba&Haff, 2009, Markola, Bardhyl, Markola&Quka, 2016). Educating a good posture shape or correcting children's poor posture shape is very important for their wellbeing

because the back pain caused by poor posture can be uncomfortable, affecting even their daily movement execution quality (Stroebel, 2002).

2. Research Methods

To build up an essential theoretical background regarding our study issues, we reviewed especially the contemporary scientific research articles collected by various research sectors such as JabRef research, PubMed, Google Scholar, Inspire, Medline, Sports Discuss act. We were focused more on those research articles that investigated more about the correlation between posture and balance stability. In our study participated 67 children aged 10 -11 years who were randomly selected and divided into two groups, from two public schools of Tirana. They were examined for their postural shape and balance ability twice, before and after the intervention program because of which we decided to divide them into two groups:a) the experimental group ($N = 34$, 16 boys & 18 girls), who participated regularly in the intervention program for 12 weeks, 2 times/week, b) the control group ($N = 33$, 16 boys & 17 girls) were not part of this experiment but they continued their daily routine.

The intervention program consisted of strengthening and stretching postural muscles using 6 isometric exercises (some of them for both sides, and legs), 20 seconds each, 3 repetitions, 1:1, and 6 stretching exercises, 20 seconds each. This intervention program was applied during physical education classes starting with different upright games focusing on keeping the body upright. Both of two (2) groups of our study underwent twice the postural and balance tests, exactly before and after 12-weeks of the experimental period. To analyze the postural shape of children, we took four (4) photos for each of 67 of them in anterior/ posterior and lateral views (left and right side). Participants were told to stand up in a relaxed way for several seconds, near to the Postural Analysis Grid Chart. After that, all taken photos were analyzed via Posture Screen Mobile® (PSM), software which has been recently and widely applied by researchers. (Figure 1)



Figure 1. Anterior, Posterior & Lateral Posture Analyse View.

To analyze balance stability we used Leonardo Mechanography® (GRFP), performing balance test in four (4) different positions, with eyes open and eyes closed, so in 8 variants and respectively in Romberg Test (eyes open, eyes closed -Rom EO/EC) Semi

Tandem Test (eyes open, eyes closed- Sem Tan EO/EC), Tandem Test (eyes open, eyes closed-Tan EO/EC) and 1 leg Test (eyes open, closed eyes-1L_EC/EO). (Figure 2, 3, 4 &5)



Fig 2.
Romberg

Fig 3.
Semi Tandem

Fig 4.
Tandem

Fig 5.
1 Leg.

The collected data were analyzed via SPSS 20.0 by using Paired Simple Test & Multifunctional Linear Regression. In order to determine the impact of the intervention program in posture shape and balance stability, we analyzed several variables such as:

EQ- Equilibrium, obtained from 8 variants of Balance Test

The angle of posture displacement (in total), in Anterior & Posterior View

Averaged Lateral Angle of "shoulder" and "hip-pelvis" displacement, in left & right side.

Results

In order to analyze and determine what really happened with the postural subject's shapes between two tests, pre-post intervention programs, for the experimental and control groups we used Paired Simple Test (T-Test).

Tables 1, 2, and 3 showed a difference of mean values between two measures (T1-T2) for the control group but not significant for $p<0.05$, while for the experimental group this difference seems to be significant in the Anterior, Posterior and Lateral View.

These results showed that postural habits improved significantly as a result of the intervention program used. In addition, these results showed quantitative changes in the postural shape of the control group but compare to the experimental group they resulted not statistically significant for $p<0.05$.

TABLE 1
View)

Paired Simple Test (Anterior/Posterior

Paired Differences

t

Sig.(2-tailed)

Posture Displacement (In total)	Mean	Std.	St. Error	95%		
	Deviation n	Mea n	Lower	Upper		
CONTROL GROUP						
Anterior (<i>M1 –M2</i>)	5.22	2.84	0.76	1.15	9.53	3.21 .226*
Posterior (<i>M1 - M2</i>)	16.18	4.27	1.67	2.97	26.34	4.53 .159*
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP						
Anterior (<i>M1 –M2</i>)	3.72	1.08	0.48	0.15	7.36	6.72 .002*
Posterior (<i>M1 - M2</i>)	12.28	3.69	1.12	2.61	18.26	7.88 .001*
*p<0.05						

TABLE 2
Paired Simple Test
(Lateral View)

Lateral Plan	Paired Differences				t	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.	St. Error	95%		
	Deviation n	Mean	Lower	Upper		
Control group						
Shoulder shift (<i>M1 – M2</i>)	4.77	0.85	0.079	-3.22	13.39	4.12 .108*
Experimental group						
Shoulder shift (<i>M1 – M2</i>)	3.47	0.72	0.046	-2.66	10.58	8.80 .001*
*p<0.05						

TABLE 3
Paired Simple Test (Lateral View)

Lateral Plan	Paired Differences				t	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.	St. Error	95%		
	Deviation	Mean	Lower	Upper		
Control group						
Hip/Pelvis Displacement (<i>M1 – M2</i>)	3.81	0.87	0.068	-14.49	4.61	3.63 .254*

Experimental group							
Hip/Pelvis	3.58	0.84	0.061	-14.31	3.56	5.13	.002*
Displacement							
(M1 – M2)							

*p<0.05

Multifunctional Linear Regression is a statistical technique that can analyze several variables at the same time and in our study, we used it to analyze exactly the posture displacement (in total) from anterior, posterior, and lateral view and one of balance stability parameters such as EQ-Equilibrium variable at 8 variants of Balance tests.

The results of Tables 4 & 5 show that the correlation between Balance (1 Leg, Romberg, Semi Tandem, Tandem) and Posture in total (anterior/posterior/lateral) are significant for all 67 subjects referred p <0.05, so every qualitative or quantitative postural change result to be well reflected at balance stability. The correlation between "Posture and Balance" is statistically significant meaning that poor posture reflects even at reduced balance stability and that our intervention program can improve not only posture but also balance stability.

Table 4. Multifunctional Linear Regression	P	Coefficient
Subjects (n=67)		
Age 10		
1LegTest / Posture	<0.01	0.487
RombergTest/ posture	<0.05	0.218
Age 11		
1Leg Test / Posture	<0.01	0.469
Romberg Test/ posture	<0.05	0.216

Table 4. Multifunctional correlation between 1 Leg and Romberg test with Posture in total

Table 5. Multifunctional Linear Regression	P	Coefficient
Subjects (n=67)		
Age 10		
SemiTanTest / Posture	<0.01	0.288
TanTest / Posture	<0.01	0.487
Age 11		
SemiTan Test / Posture	<0.01	0.282
Tan Test / Posture	<0.01	0.459

Table 5. *Multifunctional correlation between Semi Tandem and Tandem test with Posture in total*

Discussion and Conclusion

Our intervention program that took place in children aged 10-11 years during Physical Education Class, except isometric and stretching exercises were combined also with a variety of games educating good posture behaviors. Through these exercises, we aimed to restore muscle balance by “strengthening and stretching” postural muscles. This is supported by another author emphasizing the importance of strengthening postural muscles on having a good posture and helping to cope successfully with everyday life activity by reducing the possibility to be injured. (Grissaffi, 2007)

Our study showed significant improvement of postural behaviors and better ability to keep balance on those who were part of the 12 weeks intervention program. These postural changes that manifested in the children’s balance stability showed the relation between posture shape and balance.

From the results of Paired Sample Test, it is shown that the angle of postural displacement (in total) and the angle of averaged lateral shoulders or hip-pelvis displacement have changed in both groups (control and experimental groups) but it resulted significantly only for the experimental group. ($p < 0.05$)

These results clearly showed the impact of the intervention program on postural deviations correction because a significant improvement was detected on all four postural parameters that we analyzed. These results go alongside the literature which stated that physical exercises are important for postural deviations correction. (Cordeiro et al., 2014; Deutschmann et al., 2014; Misra et al., 2012; Annamaria et al., 2014; Oliver et al 2010; Byun et al, 2014; Cosma et al., 2015)

Multifunctional Linear Regression was used to identify the correlation between 8 variants of Balance Test performing (EQ -Equilibrium variable) and Posture in total (Anterior/Posterior and Lateral). By using this statistical analysis, we realized that every change in postural parameters (in total) was evidently reflected on balance ability. The results showed that these correlations are significant at $p < 0.05$ and respectively $p < 0.01$ between Posture Test-1 Leg, SemiTandem, and Tandem Tests and $p < 0.05$ between Posture -Romberg Test. These results are detected even at other foreign scientific studies, where it is clearly emphasized “the importance of postural correction exercises in poor posture and balance improvement”. (Cordeiro et al., 2014)

Our study showed also that strength and stretching exercises are essential for a better posture shape and to maintain balance as long as you can with ought forcing yourself.

Based on these conclusions we recommend that:

Physical Education Teachers should pay more attention to the education of good posture during school time especially to children in order to provide a beneficial education for a good-looking and healthy child.

For a better life for our child, strengthening and stretching exercises should be included as soon as possible at the Physical Education Program particularly because of its two positive impacts such as Good Posture and Balance stability.

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The Control of Vital Parameters and Their Importance in Soccer Players of the Women's National a in Albania

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Abstract

Vital parameters or otherwise vital signs are the measurements of the most basic functions of the body. They are the main pillars with which we determine the general physical condition of the athletes. It is important to first review vital signs assessment. Monitoring vital signs in athletes, during training, is highly important in order to avoid overtraining and to be careful at the same time in monitoring their health condition. The data for this study was collected during the preparatory training phase of the Women's National A in Montenegro in February 2021. Part of this study were 20 female athletes according to different age groups who were subjected to the measurement of vital parameters. The measurements were performed before the beginning and after the end of the exercise in order to understand which it would be specifically these values, also referring to their current physical and health condition. From the obtained data it was evident that the pulse is the vital parameter which changes as a result of the overload received during the training process performed by the athletes in relation to other parameters. In three of the athletes, a fluctuation of the values at the level of the respiratory apparatus was observed, which was related to their previous state of health. The measurement of vital parameters during exercise is a good indicator to assess general well-being physical and health of the athlete. Also, the importance of measuring these parameters before, during and after the sports activity is essential to avoid various problems that can even lead to fatality for the athlete.

Keywords: Vital parametres, prevention, athletes, measurements, health

1. Introduction

Vital parameters or otherwise vital signs are the measurements of the most basic functions of the body. They are the main pillars with which we determine the general physical condition of the athletes. It is important to first review vital signs assessment.[1] Heart rate (HR), blood pressure (BP), respirations, skin and body temperature assessment, and pupil assessment are considered the five basic vital

signs,in many areas, pulse oximetry is added to this list as a sixth vital sign.[2] Monitoring vital signs in athletes, during training, is highly important in order to avoid overtraining and to be careful at the same time in monitoring their health condition.In order to detect overtraining, the training load of each athlete needs to be monitored and individualized.Training load is the product of training volume times the training intensity, where training volume usually refers to the duration of training and training intensity refers to how hard someone is training and how this preparation at a high level of performance can affect their physical and health condition. Exercise causes a series of immediate responses from the body as it tries to adapt to sudden changes in its state of balance. When these increases come imposed on a regular basis training, the body responds by settling on new basic conditions that make it capable of more effective performance[8].The intensity of training can be objectively measured via vital signs and specialized indexes, such as heart rate, oxygen consumption, weight lifted, power output, blood lactate concentration, and hormonal levels [3,4]. Another noninvasive measure of training load, often used, is maximal oxygen consumption (VO_2max).More specifically, studied the effect of normal and overload interval training at VO_2 max on aerobic parameters and overtraining markers such as subjective ratings of fatigue and muscle soreness [5].There is general agreement in modern medicine on the fundamental importance of regular physical and sporting activity in individuals of all ages, including children, for maintaining the efficiency of the organism and for the primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular pathologies.The achievement of a slower and more regular heart pulse, a physiological cardiac hypertrophy that ensures a circulatory system adequate to the effort, the control of arterial tension values.The positive effect includes a favorable action on the parameters: carbohydrates (diabetes mellitus) lipid (higher HDL cholesterol, lower LDL, triglyceridemia within the limits) on the control of body weight, obesity, osteoporosis and in all pathologies linked to a sedentary lifestyle. Some clinicians may also be less familiar with pulse oximetry. Pulse oximetry provides a measure of the percentage of oxygen within the blood, obtained through use of an electronic finger sensor. Under normal conditions, the pulse oximetry reading will generally be between 96% and 100%, with patients exhibiting a reading of 90% usually requiring treatment.[6] However, it is important to note, that the pulse oximetry reading obtained should be correlated closely with the athletes signs and symptoms, and treatment should not be based on the oximetry reading alone.[7] In this context, the main goal is the classification of possible symptoms during their exercise by means of these vital parameters, which in some cases may also refer to an overfatigue or collapse as a result of an increased exercise load. The main causes of sudden non-cardiovascular death include hyperthermia, rhabdomyolysis and asthma.[9] Non-cardiovascular causes of sudden death are very real risks facing today's athletes.[10] Fortunately, these conditions they are often recognized by their clinical manifestations and symptoms,by the physician thus avoiding potentially life-threatening situations.The four main vital signs routinely

checked by healthcare providers include body temperature, pulse rate, breathing rate (respiration), blood pressure, along with some other specific examinations based on the medical analysis protocol of each athlete. As well as the normal values of the vital parameters are shown in table.1 as follow.

Common causes of collapse during activity

- Non-serious causes:
- Exhaustion
- Dehydration
- Lowering of blood pressure when standing
- Muscle cramps
- Serious causes
- Low blood sodium level (hyponatremia)
- Heat stroke
- Low blood sugar level (hypoglycemia)
- Low body temperature (hypothermia)
- Cardiac arrest
- Other clinical situations such as stroke, cerebral haemorrhage and diabetic coma.

Vital Sign	Normal Value
Body Temperature	36.1 to 37.9
Pulse	60 – 100 beats/minute
Respiration/Breathing	12 – 18 breaths per minute
Blood Pressure	90/60 to 120/80

Table 1

2. Methodology

The data for this study was collected during the preparatory training phase of the Women's National A in Montenegro in February 2021. Part of this study were 20 female athletes according to different age groups who were subjected to the measurement of vital parameters such as pulse, SPO2, temperature, arterial pressure during an exercise session. To perform these measurements were used, a pulse oximeter, thermometer, and a device for measuring arterial pressure. The measurements were performed before the beginning and after the end of the exercise in order to understand which it would be specifically these values, also referring to their current physical and health condition. All this by first referring you to a general

anamnesis which helped to clearly understand the entire physical and health status of each of them, before the measurement in such a way that the obtained reference values of the vital parameters were correct, excluding errors possible. In this way, each of the girls was asked separately about their physical condition, which refers to any possible damage during the exercise of their sports activity, or any possible current or past pathology that could affect in their performance during intensive training.

3. Results

From the obtained data it was evident that the pulse is the vital parameter which changes as a result of the overload received during the training process performed by the athletes in relation to other parameters. In three of the athletes, a fluctuation of the values at the level of the respiratory apparatus was observed, which was related to their previous state of health. As for the body temperature values, only one of the girls showed a slight increase that was accompanied by fatigue and what did not allow the continuation of physical activity at the moment it started and the increase in exercise load. Arterial pressure also showed no changes for any of the athletes, referring to its normal values. These measurements were performed during four training sessions on two different days to understand if any possible changes in these parameters would appear. These values before and after training are all referenced in table.2 below.

Age	Body Temperature Before/After	SPO2 Before/After	Pulse Before/After	Bloode Pressure Before/After
25 years old	36.3 / 36.4	98 / 97	82 / 124	120/80 mmHg;110/75 mmHg
25	36.5 / 36.5	98 / 96	80 / 125	130/80 mmHg;115/70mm Hg
29	36.2 / 36.3	97 / 98	76 / 120	100/65 mm Hg;105/65mm Hg
25	36.1 / 36.4	96 / 99	74 / 118	110/80 mm Hg;95/60 mm Hg
26	36.1 / 36.2	96 / 98	78 / 121	120/70 mmHg;110/65 mm Hg
27	36.4 / 36.4	97 / 98	68 / 118	130/75mm Hg;120/70 mm Hg
25	36.6 / 36.5	97 / 98	70 / 122	125/80mm Hg;115/80 mm Hg
20	36.3 /36.4	96 / 97	72 / 130	100/60 mm Hg;95/60mm Hg
23	36.2 / 36.2	98 / 97	80 / 126	120/70mm Hg;110/65 mm Hg
25	36.5 /36.5	98 / 96	82 / 131	110/70mm Hg;100/60 mm Hg

27	36.7 / 37.5	97 / 96	74 / 120	130/80mm Hg;125/80 mm Hg
19	36.2 / 36.3	97 / 96	76 / 122	115/80mm Hg;115/75 mm Hg
21	36.4 / 36.2	96 / 98	81 / 125	120/75mm Hg;110/75 mm Hg
21	36.3 / 36.4	98 / 98	68 / 128	120/70mm Hg;120/65 mm Hg
18	36.5 / 36.4	98 / 97	70 / 130	100/65mm Hg;96/60 mm Hg
19	36.1 / 36.2	96 / 97	80 / 125	125/80mm Hg;120/80 mm Hg
18	36.3 / 36.3	98 / 97	82 / 128	110/70mm Hg;110/75 mm Hg
20	36.4 / 36.5	97 / 98	76 / 124	130/75mm Hg;125/75 mm Hg
17	36.5 / 36.5	96 / 99	78 / 132	100/65mm Hg;110/65 mm Hg
19	36.2 / 36.4	97 / 99	75 / 125	115/70mm Hg;110/70 mm Hg

Table .2

4. Discussion

It is also worth discussing the fact that for each athlete, all medical examinations must be carried out in detail before the start of each competition to rule out the possibility of any possible pathology which could turn out to be dangerous if not detected in time. Also the medical staff as well as the athletic trainer of the team are the central component of the sports medicine team, ensuring that athletes experiencing injuries or acute illnesses receive appropriate evaluation, management, and referral as needed. It is not necessary for the medical staff to derive the precise diagnosis of an athlete's condition; however, it is critical for the medical staff to be able to recognize the need for immediate referral to a hospital's for a more specialized treatment as well as for the realization of the relevant more detailed examinations.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the measurement of vital parameters during exercise is a good indicator to assess general well being physical and health of the athlete. Also, the importance of measuring these parameters before, during and after the sports activity is essential to avoid various problems that can even lead to fatality for the athlete. From all the data and results of the table above, we see that football, the change in the values of the vital parameters comes as a result of the physical activity and the overload that occurs during the training session, and to improve in this way the physical performance. The changes of these values are at a normal level both for

the type of sports activity and for the age of the athletes, and do not pose a risk to the athlete's life.

6. Recommendations

Based on these data, the role of the doctor in the team should always be taken into account to prevent various pathological situations from the mildest to the most dangerous situations. This should be possible through teamwork between the doctor, the physiotherapist and the athletic trainer in order to achieve maximum results in training and in different competitions by the athletes, avoiding in this way any possible damage.

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The Role and Significance of Sociological Theory Within Research Traditions in Relation to the Historical Context of the Postmodern Turn

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Abstract

The paper starts from the role and meaning of sociological theory in the context of research traditions. It begins with a discussion of the positioning of theory within qualitative research approaches in the time context of the late 1980s and early 1990s during the so-called of the "postmodern turn". Given that the aim of the paper is to consider the genesis of research traditions in sociology with an emphasis on ethnographic research traditions, but it is difficult to start the discussion without grasping the essence of sociological theory. When talking about theory and ethnographic research, there are numerous forms of specific theories that ethnographers have, each of which is applicable to specific topics. The inappropriateness of the theory and the specific research topic results in a misunderstanding in relation to the main research questions. Within the work, the order of knowledge is also problematized, which is associated with ethnography on the one hand and postmodernism on the other, as well as a „reflexive" turn. The postmodern sensibility is especially visible within the reflective moment during the writing process. Postmodern ideas therefore first introduce a new level of criticality within ethnographic research and draw attention to certain topics, processes and phenomena that have not been sufficiently discussed within wider social reflection.

Keywords: research traditions, postmodernity, reflexivity, ethnography, theory

1. Introduction

The Role and Meaning of Sociological Theory - the Relationship Between Research Traditions and Sociological Theory

Always current discussions about the positioning of theory within the qualitative methodology of social sciences is related to discussions that are especially intriguing when it comes to ethnographic theory (Collins and Stockton, 2018). In this sense, the goal of the work itself is primarily reflected in the consideration of the genesis of research traditions in sociology with an emphasis on ethnographic research

traditions in relation to the historical context of the postmodern turn. The method of analysis and synthesis was used to study certain features, relations, and interrelationships within the studied context.

The word ethnography itself comes from the word ethnos, which represents a socio-cultural group, and the word graphy, which can describe the process of recording and recording reality, and at the same time implies the intention of openness. Thus, the etymology of the word refers both to the research process and to the product of the research in the form of an ethnographic report, usually a monograph (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001). Such doubts and ambiguities in the understanding of the term while simultaneously recording the experience of actors and asking questions within the cultural discourse result in the absence of connection between these qualitative methods with a research approach, which leads to questioning the position and role of theory within ethnographic research.

Understanding the historical genesis of research traditions in sociology, including the ethnographic research tradition, especially its incorporation within sociological methodological instrumentation, is difficult to begin without grasping the essence of sociological theory (Abrutyn, 2016; Calhoun et al., 2012; Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2021) "We could freely say that sociology is the science of progress", Afrić (1989, 8) believes, and continues that understanding the differences that appear between different sociological research traditions can be much easier if one points to its foundations, i.e. to the difference in the understanding of sociology as a science that is primarily reflected in different interpretations of social reality. This is where the way of understanding the subject of sociological study comes from. Given how they define their ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions differently, research traditions are classified into different worldviews, which are determined by their constituent paradigmatic theories. That is, research traditions are determined by theoretical compositions within which numerous normative, empirical, and axiological theories are elaborated (Afrić, 1989, 55-56). The structure of sociological theories arises as an answer to some fundamental questions. Regardless of the radically different answers to them, it is common to all sociological theoretical projects (Nisbet, 2007). What is common to all types of theories in sociology and to all sociological theories in general, and on which all sociologists agree, is the fact that theories are not things but processes (Wilson, 1983 as cited in Afrić 1989). Common to all sociological theories is the development in gradual processes of increasingly precise and detailed statements. "The fact is that sociologists who see the progress of sociological theory in its ever-increasing generalization on the one hand, while on the other hand they insist on more and more accurate and detailed predictions, i.e., those who see progress in the theory's ever-increasing approach to reality, do not see its progress in its practical effects" (Afrić, 1989, 106).

Mouzelis explains the emergence of the "disease" of sociological theory about the understanding of theory as a "final product" and tries to establish "why things went

wrong". This approach is in some respects like the generation of theory within grounded theory. One of the fundamental problems pointed out is contained in the excessive rejection of Parsons and the tradition of structural functionalism in its original or derivative forms, which leads sociological theory to a dead end (Čaldarović, 2000,11).

Excessive reactions to Parsons resulted in different variants of interpretive sociologies, as well as a fondness for the micro, which is only one side of the micro-macro dichotomy. According to Čaldarović Mouzelis takes on the difficult task of trying to find a "therapy" for a sick sociological theory (Čaldarović, 2000, 13).

One of the possible therapies is found within the attempt to connect the institutional and configurational structure (macro level), according to Mouzelis' conception, Parsons, and Marxist sociology "in one". This combination, which is otherwise unimaginable, is based, according to Čaldarović, on a very reductionist presentation of Marx's sociology on the one hand, and on the other hand on a slightly more innovative presentation and refinement of Parsons' AGIL scheme. Mouzelis begins with the classic distinction between two types of theory: theory as a set of interconnected independent statements that try to say something new that we do not yet know about the social world and whose claims can be confirmed or refuted by empirical research, and theory as a set of tools that only facilitate or prepare the ground for building a substantive theory. In non-Marxist sociology, the second type of theory is denoted by different names such as conceptual framework, paradigm, meta-theory, or heuristic tool. Preference is given to Generalities II. and Generalities III. coined by Althusser when distinguishing theory as a tool/means (Gen. II.), from theory as a provisional finished product (Gen. III.). All existing theories contain both types of theoretical claims (Mouzelis, 2000). The distinction between the two types of theories is considered essential, and neglecting it leads to misunderstanding among social scientists (Čaldarović, 2000, 19-21).

The real problem does not consist in the denial of sociological theory as a subdiscipline specialized in the construction of conceptual tools (Generalities II.), but it is necessary to ensure that the offered conceptual tools become more useful, and that the type of connections between theory and empirical research (between Gen. II. and Gen. III.) established by Parsons and his followers be strengthened and improved. Sociological theory, as an activity with a logic different from that of philosophy or other related disciplines, can help sociologists clear and prepare the ground for empirical research. Therefore, the main task of sociological theory is not exclusively to provide fully developed, conceptual creations, such as Parsons or Giddens, but also to provide provisional, flexible, open, transitional frameworks useful for empirical, comparative research of special sociological problems. The emphasis is on the elaboration of a smaller number of interrelated concepts that, instead of offering a general overview, are useful when reducing "distorted communication" and asking interesting empirical questions for specific problem areas. Given that sociology has a

multiparadigmatic character, the main task of sociological theory is to maintain and increase pluralism and try to transform the "separation" of disciplines into "open" differentiation (Mouzelis, 2000, 223-225).

2. The position of theory in qualitative and quantitative research: peculiarities of ethnographic theory

Within the tradition of qualitative research, one encounters an approach in which empirical and theoretical research are interwoven. Theoretical ideas may appear as a phase during or even at the end of fieldwork, rather than at the very beginning, which is not the rule. According to Bryman, one of the most cited approaches concerning theory and research is analytical induction (Znaniecki, 1934), and another concerning the relationship between theory and data in qualitative research is based on grounded theory (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). The shift has been made to the extent that the theory is allowed to appear among the data in a peculiar way, and in this way, it does not lose contact with empirics and manages to cope better with the complexity of social reality (as cited in Bryman, 1996).

Quantitative research seeks to define a theory based on the internal connection of variables. They are reciprocally connected through hypotheses or research questions. The position of theory in qualitative research is more problematic because there is no standardized terminology or rules here. The terminology (theory, sample) used by the researcher obviously varies with the type of qualitative research design (Creswell, 1994; Cardano, 2020; Cropley, 2021).

What Hammersley means by theory are assumptions about the necessity of connections within categories of phenomena. One form of theory developed through ethnographic work is labeling theory. Some theoretical developments that can be recognized in the methodological writing of ethnographers are the following (Hammersley, 1998): claims that ethnographic work produces theoretical insights whose validity and value can be assessed by the reader; the idea that theories are universal propositions that can be produced from the study of a particular case.

None of these arguments are entirely exclusive. But in any case, ethnographers should be sensitive to the indicated problems. According to Fetterman (1998; Fetterman, 2019), no research can be realized without a common, implicit theory or model, whether it is an explicitly anthropological theory or an explicit personal model. A theoretical approach helps to define and "come to grips" with research problems. The problem is most often approached with a certain theory or depending on a set of theories about how the work is progressing. The "trick" is therefore to choose the most appropriate level of theory for a given task. The ethnographer recognizes the importance of epistemological foundations for model selection. Thus, according to Fetterman, the typical model of ethnographic research is based on a phenomenologically oriented paradigm that best captures multicultural perspectives, that is, the multiplicity of existing realities. Fetterman here simply says theories or

models, which is in line with the opinion that there is no clear distinction between the terms model and theory, because both indicate some simplifications of reality, necessary in terms of reaching generalizations (Jary and Jary, 1999, 420).

In this context, it is necessary to point out the complex relationship between the theory and the model. If we start from the statement according to which "theories are statements that go beyond facts, and although they most often refer to systems of concepts and their interrelationships, they can also refer to just one concept, because the concept goes beyond a multitude of facts that make up the non-conceptual from the term "understanding" (Afrić, 1989, 102), contrary to this, the model is a representation of something else, which is designed for special reasons. This representation depends and takes many forms, depending on its purpose. All models have one common feature, regardless of their purpose, and that is: placement of elements in a system designed according to the model. It is possible for every relevant element to be located; in which case the model represents an absolute replica. The steps involved in building a theoretical model are as follows: the variables that should be used to characterize and understand the process must be specified; the forms of relations (relations) that connect these variables must be specified; ignorance and the need for simplification lead to the fact that all relations other than the identity of the subject are subject to error and therefore, with the aim of effective statistical judgment, these errors (wrong terms) must be specified; the parameters of the model must be estimated and the scope of identification established and verified. If it is inappropriate, the model must be reformulated and finally, the model must be updated and used, which speaks of its strength, durability, and reliability (Bullock et al., 1999, 536-537).

Models differ in relation to the degree of approximate reality. Its functions also vary, and it can be equally heuristic as well as explanatory. This includes proposals for new research hypotheses suggesting comparisons between unknown phenomena and those better known or better explained; these simplifications of a complex reality due to analytical requirements tend to obtain a general concept or tend to the most important places of fundamental explanations of the causal mechanism; the comparison between the "ideal" model and the real world is intended to increase awareness of real processes. In any case, it is concluded that there is no clear difference between the terms model and theory (Jary and Jary, 1999, 420).

According to Creswell, theory can be presented as a visual model. It is especially useful to translate the variables into visual images. Thus, Blalock (1969) translates verbal theories into causal models in a way that enables readers to easily visualize the connections between independent, mediating, and dependent variables (Creswell, 1994).

The ethnographic method and ethnography have their beginnings in anthropology and ethnology. The foundations of ethnography in anthropological research of diverse

cultures are highlighted in the works of Malinowski and Margaret Mead. Anthropological concepts, methods, and techniques of data collection in the ethnographic field itself create the so-called the process of producing ethnography (Fetterman, 1998). However, although it is not possible to deny the anthropological and ethnological foundations and ideas of ethnography on the research of diverse cultures, ethnographic research was shaped by the principle of openness which manifests itself towards the researched social groups, cultures, and societies, and thus also towards other social sciences. The development of ethnography thus takes place in a certain parallel way through historical stages and within anthropology, ethnology, but also sociology. The goal of this paper is the articulation of ethnography within the sociological discipline and the application of sociological theories in this approach.

Žažar (2016), citing several authors, points out that the diversity of sociological thought is visible through its multi-pragmatic nature and calls sociology a fragmented science that suffers from important levels of incoherence. The constant process of fragmentation at theoretical levels has turned sociology into a science focused on researching intricate details. Žažar sees interdisciplinarity as a solution to the process of dismantling sociological theories. Rogers (as cited in Žažar, 2016) defines interdisciplinarity as understanding a problem through the integration or execution of different concepts, methods, and epistemologies from different disciplines in a new way. Interdisciplinary research is not a substitute for research within one scientific discipline, but it gives specific research topics an additional dimension. It is possible to connect methodological and theoretical levels between sciences in this way in research but connecting the epistemology of each discipline would paradoxically lead to the disappearance of the foundations of that science (Žažar, 2016).

Returning to the discussion of theory and ethnographic research, we find countless forms of specific theories that are before ethnographers, each of which is applicable only for certain topics. At the same time, they can mislead or result in misunderstanding if they are applied to inappropriate problems. Theories then explain little. Out of the considerable number of theories offered, most researchers explicitly or implicitly opt for one or two theories: idealistic or materialistic. Idealist theories suggest that fundamental changes are the result of mental activities, thoughts, and ideas. Materialists, on the other hand, believe that these are material conditions: ecological resources, money, production models - in the sense of the first movers. However, no single approach can satisfy all requirements. Ethnographers therefore choose one of two approaches to tailor their efforts, specific needs, or questions of interest. Thus, one of the most represented idealistic theories in anthropology is precisely the cognitive theory, which implies the possibility of describing what people think. Using linguistic (ethnosemantic) techniques, it is possible to create taxonomies of the way individuals perceive the world. For example,

idealist theory explores the worldview from the perspective of mental origins, beginnings, cognitive maps, beliefs, and knowledge (Fetterman, 1998, 6).

Classical theory of idealism in anthropology includes culture and personality theory, sociolinguistics, symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology. On the contrary, ethnographers who support the materialist theory view the world as one that coincides with observed forms of behaviour. A limited but classic political-economic materialist theory is historical materialism or neo-Marxism. According to Marxist theory, all changes result from changes in forms of production, control over forms of economic power, class consciousness and class conflicts. Other materialist approaches in anthropology include techno environmentalism and cultural ecology. Theories should not be elaborated by adding constructions, assumptions, propositions, and generalizations; they can be medium-scale theories or personal theories about how the whole world works or just a small part of it. Ethnographers do not explicitly use grand theories because they do not automatically agree with them. Grand theory can be instructive, but many ethnographers point out that it is too broad and inappropriate for everyday research. Ethnographers typically use theoretical models indirectly related to grand theories to guide their work. Grand theories, models, and personal theories, all together fall into the idealist or materialist set-fundamental dichotomy useful when analysing other research projects. Approaches overlap in the field, but many researchers begin selecting theories or models (which are primarily idealistic or materialistic) before they even begin to conceptualize the problem. Furthermore, the choice of theories may also depend on simple reason, suitability, and ease of use. Ideological theoretical foundations are more often built, before conducting research, paving the way through the labyrinth of data. When theory ceases to be a guide, it is no longer useful, and when data ceases to feed the theory, it is time to perceive a new theory (Fetterman, 1998).

In general, regardless of the above, there is little discussion about the nature of theory within ethnographic work. There is agreement on the leading role of theory in historical explanations of the testing process, reformulations and retests that are also recorded in the ethnographic tradition in changing forms, such as grounded theory and analytic induction. The logic of progress in history and ethnography involves development from descriptive and explanatory accounts, through theories of development and testing, and back again towards better descriptions and explanations (Hammersley, 1998).

According to Hammersley, the concept of theoretical description is problematic, and it can be interpreted in several ways. The author also questions the possibility of ethnographic research when developing theoretical understanding. For him, the ethnographic adoption and acceptance of the goal of theoretical description leads to a fundamental misconception about the nature of description and the explanations it produces. Ethnography inevitably places great emphasis on description and offers a distinctive type of description: theoretical description. But the nature of these

distinctions is not truly clear. In short, according to this author, a description cannot be a theory, but all descriptions are theoretical in the sense of their relationship to concepts and theories. Ethnography, finally, according to this author, can hardly serve when developing theory (Hammersley, 1998).

3. Postmodern outlines of sociological theory as a basis for ethnographic research

The extent of knowledge-based discussion related to postmodernism on the one hand and ethnography on the other is quite a challenging task. Within the 1980s, postmodernism becomes its own negation. But regardless of what postmodernism means over time, it is certain that it signifies the spread of conflicting definitions that refuse any moulding. Here one encounters a legacy related to the problematization of the notions of representation and legitimacy of knowledge, and the concept of aporia is introduced as a fertile area for developing practices. Lather is not interested in the "new" ethnography but is looking for the shaping of ethnographic practice which abandons the indicated type of scientific followed by other disciplinary methodologies (Lather, 2001).

The postmodern approach within qualitative research unites several different topics, but three are the most obvious. The first concerns all existing knowledge and the leveling of hierarchy and differences in all its forms. Doubt becomes the primary guiding perspective. The postmodern context of doubt "concerns" all methods equally, and none of them remains immune, nor does it have a privileged status. This radical relativism, with its decentralizing impulse, dissolves the remains of empirical and methodological compulsions, "encloses" all voices and representations as equally valid. Second, postmodern sensibility illuminates the relationship between "self" and "self and others". Ethnography engages in the marginalization of the researcher's separation identities as "scientists" or "objective observers" from those within the study. The third element is the narrative turn, which manifests itself as a critique of traditional ethnography, treating the world as a text to be read and privileging subjective discourses (Snow and Morrill, 1995).

Katunarić points to the easy rejection of old theories by postmodernist interpretations of society. They, again, express something that prompts the need for a new theory. The indicated interpretive attempts introduce new expressions or at least added terms into classical and modern contents. The overall impression is confusing, since the new theory should revise the entire legacy of sociological thought about society, because society is built on foundations that were not observed until then or move in directions that "old" theories did not foresee. The postmodern statement hardly reaches the theoretical level, its own identity, the necessary generality, or establishes it in a reductionist way, which until a certain moment was considered to belong to the pre-modern phase of social science and sociology itself, and as far as sociological theory is concerned, it introduces two problematic

tendencies. One is the refutation of generalizing judgments about society, including teleological judgments about social changes, and the second tendency is the opposite, generalizing and teleologizing in a special sense, which finds the basis for a comprehensive theory of society outside of sociology, in economic models of human activity. The multiplication of theoretical viewpoints did not increase the debatability, polemic or dialogue between different authors. On the contrary, such communication is significantly decreasing (Katušić, 1995, 35-37).

The task of theory is to raise interesting questions and sensitize empirical research, and it is precisely with the results of empirical research that we return to general theory. The interdisciplinary field of ethnography is potentially "rich" in this sense, and therefore, despite different conceptions and approaches, ethnography can significantly contribute to theoretical grounding.

Mouzelis gives a useful instruction to the postmodernist orientation of the time, which, according to him, should "stop submitting to the tyranny of intellectual conveniences", "ignoring the old and automatically choosing the new, regardless of its true value". Mouzelis further states that its more "modernist" wing should discard its, according to him, "fundamentalist baggage and redirect its attention from universalist schemes and philosophical foundations "based on flexible, temporary conceptualizations that are suitable for the problems and dilemmas of empirical research" (Mouzelis, 2000:225).

Since the mid-80s of the 20th century, when postmodern challenges enter the scene, qualitative researchers undergoing "postmodern divides" demand the abandonment of all established and exclusionary values, perspectives, theories, and prejudices as the basis of ethnographic research. Qualitative researchers are now occupied with something "bigger" than mere recording and observation. The focus is on the researcher who plays an active role in the story. New pages are printed that reflect the researcher's direct and personal engagement within a certain historical period (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Delamont and Atkinson, 2011, Cooper and White, 2012).

Poststructuralist and postmodern criticisms are preoccupied with questioning "ethnographic authority", emphasizing the discursive naiveté in ethnographic writing that is unaware of the way in which something is "written" and plays the role of creator of culture rather than its inventor and "reflector". It is recognized that ethnographic practice and writing must be aware of its own position and connection to the world. This awareness mirrors the symbolic and structural positioning of all human subjects, the entire human experience (Willis and Trondman, 2000; Grgurinović, 2012).

4. "The death of theory" in postmodernism

According to Daly (1997), postmodernism means the end of traditional forms of theory (Mutman, 2006), but this certainly does not mean the end of theorizing activities within ethnography. On the contrary, theory retains its position as a rearticulation of what theory is in the postmodern sense. As well as Katunarić (1995), who calls postmodern theories of society a "confusing interlocutor", Daly finds that ethnographic theory viewed through the prism of postmodernity behaves like a lost person. Social scientists, in fact, argue for her presence, but there is no indication of her physical presence.

Studying the position and role of theory within the long history of ethnographic research has never lost its interest. This did not happen even in the period of postmodernity, which within that context introduced a dose of critical awareness of what it means to do ethnography as a form of social science. The Chicago School of Sociology started from ethnographic accounts that resulted in substantive theories regarding, for example, the "treatment" of death, the consumption of marijuana, and all the way too much more formal theories of identity and interactions. With postmodern theories, new epistemologies, paradigms, and discourses have resulted in greater reflexivity and are related to the results of ethnographic endeavors. Special attention was directed towards the final ethnographic text because of the reflection of numerous interpretive levels and meanings, social and cultural determinations. The most important contribution is seen within the "call" against privileged claims about the representation of truth or the reality of experience. In doing so, historical experience is imposed as a decisive factor when understanding postmodern theoretical transformations (Daly, 1997).

Within postmodern forms of thought, ethnographic authority was shaken, which was manifested through a crisis of representation. There is scepticism towards the researcher's direct recording of "lived" experience. The postmodern world suggests the impossibility of further presenting the theory as an objective representation of the participants' real world. The theorist is not perceived exclusively as a thinker, a reflective and participating member of the presented social reality. Theory no longer has a privileged place within the representation of the actor's experiences and intentions. Rather, the theory is, by its very nature, given. As Denzin agrees (1978 according to Daly, 1997) theory has an indispensable place within science, and its absence leaves the research report at the level of descriptive empiricism.

It is interesting to point out Daly's personal experience in connection with the theory, which is usually placed somewhere inside "thick complicated books". After a long and arduous journey, interdisciplinarity seemed to him a good reason against the use of any theory. He was of this opinion until he encountered this topic himself in his doctoral work. Then, according to him, he realized the importance of theory when looking at the world in a separate way, which was very encouraging. But that

happened only when he was able to conduct research and produce a theory in his own characteristic way, and this is due to the moment that enabled him to see the theory as something personal and at the same time as an independent process. Theory is then directly involved in the selection of key elements, construction of concepts, relevance, values, and emphasis within the study. The traditional position of the theory is recognized when the status of science is raised according to the "privileged voice" carried by the elite, and its creators are also those who supervise a certain disciplinary field. Postmodernism called for the abandonment of such monolithically shaped truths and sought to understand the changes and complexity of social reality. This leads to the demystification of the radical tradition of objectivity in favor of awareness of value, meaning, interpretation, and finally, the question arises: what does it mean to have the role of a scientist who is interested in researching people? While theory on the one hand may have a privileged position in science, the increase in diversity across and within paradigms results in growing scepticism about its overall status. The pluralization of scientific values, procedures and requirements increases uncertainty regarding the meaning and value of theory. The number of terms used when it comes to theory (models, paradigms, backbones) is noticeable, and three distinct levels of generality are noticeable: origin and variety, their use and multiplicity. The meaning of the theory is even more indicative in the light of postmodern considerations. So where is theory in postmodern science? If we move away from theory as an axiomatic, predictive, and predictable thing, what do we leave behind? Looking at it from the perspective of postmodernity, the question arises, is theory different from opinion? That is, if we define opinion as "a view that we consider significant", then is the theory different in any way? Is it more legitimate than some other forms of commentary, such as religious, journalistic, and political ones? Should theories be privileged? What is the difference between a theoretical story and another? (Richardson, 1991 according to Daly, 1997).

Within postmodern forms of thought, ethnographic authority was shaken, which was manifested through a crisis of representation. There is scepticism towards the researcher's direct recording of "lived" experience. The postmodern world suggests the impossibility of further presenting the theory as an objective representation of the participants' real world. The theorist is not perceived exclusively as a thinker, a reflective and participating member of the presented social reality. Theory no longer has a privileged place within the representation of the actor's experiences and intentions. Rather, the theory is, by its very nature, given. As Denzin agrees (1978 as cited in Daly, 1997) theory has an indispensable place within science, and its absence leaves the research report at the level of descriptive empiricism.

Theories in the interpretive tradition are essentially "stories". Theoretical stories are interpretations and creations of meaning that enable the theoretician to make sense of the stories of the research participants (first-class stories) and the theoretician's own experience of living in and being a part of these stories. Thus, theory, like any

other form of narrative, is a structure that shapes meanings and determines consequences. First-rate stories are locally narratively based. A secondary story is an interpretive commentary on those living stories. The scientific story is embedded in the lived and observed experience and language of social science. Calling a theory, a story confirms that it is a type of story (Van Maanen, 1988) shaped by the skill of the author, literary conventions and means (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994).

Within the traditional canons of positivist science, theory is a direct reflection of experience. Postmodernism, on the other hand, focused on the demands of intellectual, objective representations and the formation of a text that unites all the voices mentioned. At the most fundamental level, continuous observations of the subjective meaning of certain actions now become imperative. Scientists, who increasingly distance themselves from their own participation, become both research subjects and narrators. Theoretical stories and the experience of stories are rooted in culture and based on cultural understanding, which implies the simultaneous subjectivity of both theorists/researchers and participants. Theory is therefore transformed from a single voice, a single echo, towards a multi-voiced conversation (Daly, 1997).

Objectivity also has a significant place in theoretical formulation. One way of achieving this appropriateness at the theoretical level is to involve participants in theory building processes. The logical consistency of the presentation is one of the most prominent features that separates the objects of scientific thought from the thought objects constructed by common-sense thinkers in everyday life. Theoretical accounts are therefore more understandable when they are written in a logically consistent manner. When it comes to postmodern theory in the interpretive tradition, it is ordered as both generated and generative. By entering "self" into a scientific text, we encounter what Geertz (1983) refers to as the blurring of genres - humanistic and scientific models, and when subjectivity becomes an equally important part of the text, the result is something between quasi-scientific and quasi-humanistic. Moreover, the theoretical form is based on a combination of systematic observation, personal experience, and a complex sense-making process. In postmodern science, theories should not possess privileges and inviolability. There is an opinion according to which this science is "subjective, idiosyncratic, ambivalent, conflictual, related to inner life and related to experience that cannot be measured, tested or fully shared" (Krieger, 1991, 2, according to Daly, 1997).

Thinking of theories as second-rate stories affirms the importance of theory in interpretive science and reshapes our thinking about theory by keeping the storyteller in it. According to Daly, keeping theorists "in the game" is the basis of producing science with integrity. How else can we expect to support the position that our methods imply the active involvement of persons, and theories do not? (Daly, 1997).

According to Stewart, researchers' "slide" towards an ontology in which the actor's perspective becomes "truthful", and ethnographic demands tend to understand these multiple truths. Through their writing, postmodernists demonstrate an approach to a multiple representation of reality, which, however, did not answer how certain knowledge was acquired. The answer to this question leads to the method. It is the method that helps in getting to know the real world. Thus, the main contribution of postmodernism, specifically the contribution to the ethnographic method, is found in sensitizing readers to the existence of multiple perspectives, including ethnographic ones (Stewart, 1998).

The postmodern epistemological challenge at that time, therefore, does not only concern the connection between the observer and the observed, but also the relationship between the ethnographer-author and the ethnographic text. Ethnographic orientation must include true description and a systematic methodology analogous to reflexive awareness. In the wake of these considerations, while respecting all the resulting variability of criteria, Richardson (2000) discusses the judgment of ethnography with the help of two criteria: scientific and artistic. Postmodern, as it has been pointed out, anew "awakens" the processes of collecting and reporting results and brings new challenges within the discipline as well as boundaries of ethical, aesthetic, theoretical and empirical foundations. As a result, many ethnographers no longer wish to be distant, neutral, distant, and related to this, to practice traditional ethnography. Richardson welcomes the blurring of genres, the complexity of writing, the blurred boundaries between "fact" and "fiction", "subjective", "objective truth" and "imagination". It unlocks the door and gives freedom to the personal search for different possibilities of manifestation, and at the same time warns of the need for greater self-awareness in relation to authorship, authority, truth, validity, and reliability. The new way of writing opens a discussion regarding the criteria for evaluating ethnographic work - new or traditional. Traditional ethnographers are concerned about how their work will be received and whether it will violate the norms of ethnographic writing. Ethnography, namely, is always created through research practices. Richardson points out the requirement for the continuous formation of new criteria, as well as new parameters for selecting the criteria themselves. She believes in "maintaining" the entire ethnography in accordance with high and demanding standards. In doing so, Richardson singles out five criteria that she herself uses when judging ethnographic articles or monographs: Substantive contributions - do the texts contribute to the understanding of social life? Does the author demonstrate the deeper foundations of the human world of understanding and perspective? How do these perspectives affect the construction of the text? 2) Aesthetic merit: are the parts aesthetic enough? Is the text artistically designed, satisfying, complex and boring? 3) Reflexivity: how was the information obtained? Ethical problems? How is the author's subjectivity both the producer and the product of the text? Is there appropriate self-awareness and does it open the reader up to decision-making? Do the authors consider themselves responsible

according to the standards of knowledge and narrations of the participants? 4) Impact: Does it affect me? Emotionally? Intellectually? Does it produce new questions? Does it encourage writing? Does it encourage new research practices? Does it encourage action? 5) Expression of reality: does the text embody the feeling of lived experience? Is it experienced as a true/credible representation of culture, society, individuals, or "reality"? Finally, creative art is one prism through which we see the world and analytical/scientific is another, and attention is drawn to the fact that we still see the world best through both lenses (Richardson, 2000).

5. Conclusion

The question of the position and role of theory within ethnographic research, that is, the positioning of theory within qualitative methodology, is the subject of many discussions.

Ethnographers usually have no dilemma when diverging and abandoning a particular theory. When the data no longer "feeds" the theory, and it no longer proves to be a useful guide within the research, it is simply abandoned. The concept of theoretical description is also problematized, which according to critics lacks an element of distinctiveness, especially when it comes to explicitness and coherence, so one of the solutions is found within the proposal of the so-called dense descriptions.

Discussion based on the order of knowledge in the context of postmodernity and ethnography in ethnography itself manifested itself within a reflexive turn. The problems of representation and legitimacy of knowledge are revisited. The guiding perspective now becomes doubt. Dominant values, perspectives, and prejudices are questioned as sources of ethnographic research. It is about the depriving of texts, critical scepticism and knowledge, and the establishment of re-questioning of the relationship between oneself and others. The researcher's identity as an objective observer is placed in the background, and a narrative turn occurs as a kind of criticism of traditional ethnography. Ethnography enriched with postmodern sensibility brings new insight into newly established social relations and structures. Postmodern also implies the abolition of traditional forms of theory, but this does not mean the end of theorizing activities in ethnography. Postmodern ideas bring a critical awareness of what it means to "do ethnography" as a form of social science.

Finally, one of the main contributions of postmodernism to contemporary ethnography, which can also be seen as one of the contributions of this paper, is to sensitize the reader to the existence of multiple perspectives, which implies the multiplicity of ethnographic perspectives through the transmission of diverse experiences. Basically, postmodernism has awakened the problem of data collection and reporting, brought challenges within the existing rules of the discipline and the boundaries of ethical, aesthetic, theoretical and empirical foundations. Some of the directions of future theoretical and methodological efforts can therefore be directed

towards the analysis of the positioning of the theory in relation to the postmodern turn and within a wider disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary context.

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Relationship Between Strength Skills Performance and Speed Running Performance

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Abstract

Strength is one of the most important physical qualities to train in the post-pubertal phase of athlete development. This physical quality is among the trinomial of the most important physical qualities such as speed and endurance. The relationship between these motor skills affects the development of the athlete's physical qualities and locomotor pattern referring to the intensity and duration of the action. Normation of loads in strength training remains one of the main points of sports training planning to impact neuromuscular adaptations. The production of force and the ways of its generation depend on the norming of exercise loads, where the effect of the loads through exercises will affect the improvement of the athlete's abilities in relation to other physical skills. The aim of this study was to compare the norming of different strength training loads as a stimulating factor in improving speed running performance. To gather as much as possible scientific data, we used "Jab Ref" as a research sector focusing more on navigating Medline, Google Scholar, and Inspire options that this program contains. Without hesitation, the findings of all studies are consistent in showing that the components of strength are direct and important indicators that affect the increase in strength indicators manifested in different ways, where these indicators have a direct correlation with running speed in all neuro-motor parameters of the athlete.

Keywords: strength quality, speed, training, performance, relationship, loads

Introduction

Continuous improvement of athletic sports record results in all disciplines shows that at the same time estimates for the maximum limits of human performance are always relative, it is seen as a subject of study for continuous improvements. Developing strength and power we must improve these as the primary motor skills. As the basic requirements for strength physical skill development are necessary to select the most adequate and efficient training programs. To develop strength in an adequate manner

we must follow methodological principles that are focused on training muscles regime. According to Verkhoshansky different training methods have been studied to develop the exit power of muscle groups focusing on the development of muscular hypertrophy and adaptation of the specific neuro-motor system. Several coaches during their strategy training process regarding running speed improvements are focused more on strength, power, and speed training because these skill parameters are products of the same functional system and dependent parameters on each other. (Delecluse C., 1997) notes that the rate of force development displayed on maximum percentage voluntary isometric contractions rating percentage loads on the maximum of 1 repetition. According to Chestnut J. L., & Docherty D (1999), the minimum threshold on rating strength loads is 66% of 1 RM which is called the critical threshold for the development of isometric and isotonic strength. Important in rating strength loads is the duration of each muscle voluntary contraction in seconds or in hundredths of a second (Delecluse C., 1997). According to John B., Cronin & Keir T. Hansen (2005), rating training loads on 3 repetitions of 1RM have shown a nonsignificant correlation at the strength performance improvement. While power was training by weight depth squats (30 kg) and consecutive depth jump shows correlations in height jump, relative power, and improvement in speed running performance.

The attached study (John B et al 2005) on rating strength training loads (McBride et al 2002) reported strength training on 8 weeks, 1 RP 80% 1RM using squat exercises showed no significant improvement in jump height and speed performance. On rating the number of repetitions and exercise intensity Zatsiorsky states that enhance strength performance are recommended training programs that estimate the intensity of each repetition. Zatiorsky states that lifting above 90% of your 1RM leads to very slow bar speeds and low power outputs. Loads of 90% of 1RM and below are better suited to enhance the RFD (Zatsiorsky VM, 1995.) The study by (Warren B. Young., 2006). & (Harris G.R., et al 2000) focused not only on the improvement of movement structure speed running using strength exercises that mostly involve bilateral contractions of low limbs such as weighted vertical jumps, squats, and depth jumps but even on the improvement of the acceleration phase of speed running.

Force ability is one the most responsible factors in accelerating performance. This ability of the force to improve acceleration is related to the achievement of high-level muscle strength productions. The rate of force development correlates with the ability to accelerate and achieve optimal speed in accordance with the cinematic movement of sports discipline. To achieve optimal parameters of force ability Schimidtbleicher recommended explosive maximal intensity exercises that increase the rate of strength development. (Schimidtbleicher D., (1992).

Relationship between increasing strength skills performance and speed running performance Wilson. Gj has shown significant statistical value on the improvement of 40m sprint with 8 weeks of squat training. Wilson. Gj, emphasize that a 2.2% of

improvement in speed running required a 21% improvement of strength in the squat. (Wilson GJ et al (1996).

Many training methods were studied to determine the most suitable methods for the improvement of running speed and running phases. According to him enhanced speed running performance required high-resistance (HR) methods. These methods concluded that high-intensity loads with few repetitions where the stimulus intensity evokes enhancement of the rate of strength and power. Training methods termed high-velocity training (HV) included low-intensity loads with numerous numbers of repetitions where the stimulus intensity evokes enhancement of speed and velocity. These methods include the use of parachutes, weight vests, and sled pull that evokes improvement of explosiveness, quick acceleration, and first-step quickness. Generally recommended for maximal skill carryover light loads (10% of body weight), because they allow for technique, joint velocities, and loads similar to that for competition. However, many coaches and trainers use loads much higher in order for further overload to develop leg strength specific to speed skills, such as acceleration. (Vives, D., & Roberts, J. (2005).

With the use of ballistic movements, movements in which the weight can be released, power and acceleration are enhanced throughout the entire ROM. Ballistic exercises, Olympic lifts, plyometrics, jump squats, and bench throws are therefore far superior to speed reps for power development and allow the athlete to accelerate throughout the entire ROM. Maximal peak power outputs for the jump squat are seen with loads between 10% and 45% of 1RM (Wilson G.J et al 1993) (Newton RU et al 1996) (Clark RA 2008)

The aim of the study: is to highlight a kinematic analysis of physical and functional performance by emphasizing the strength and power results with their relationships with the speed performance results.

Research Methods

The research method that we used was JabRef 2.10. It is an open-source bibliography reference manager by which everyone can provide data in an easy way from online scientific databases. Because of this, we decided to use this methodology to gather as much as possible scientific information which was directly related to the goal of this review.

Literature was obtained by means of the Medline, Google Scholar, and Inspire search engines and was prompted by the following keywords: strength quality, speed, training, performance, relationship, and loads. Despite the fact that Jab Ref "reference manager" showed more than about 100 articles, we selected only 23 of them because they were directly related to our study aim.

Analysis of Literature Review

Relationship of strength quality components and their impact on running speed.

Strength training is not only focused on the improvement of strength physical skills but also it is more important transferring this performance on speed physical skills and for a consequence of this important training task many researchers have completed their study on the most efficient training methods for improvement of running speed performance.

Speed running athletes' training in all technical phases is very important and correlated between them. An athlete can possess the acceleration phase and rich maximal speed but can he hold maximal speed for as long as he can?

Starting faze is based on speed reaction time that includes phases between hearing the start-up signal to reaction time. Studies have determined reaction time skills as neural skills and genetically defined but their improvement from training is insignificant. (Young WB, 2006).

This study is focused more on the practical view of the correlation between strength and speed components as physical skills and on the most effective approaches used to improve strength components that affect speed performance. Maximal strength muscular performance and maximal speed performance are made by the same manipulative training parameters. (Zatsiorsky V. M & Kraemer J.W .2006).

Treatment with the training of maximal strength parameters induces at the same time improvement of power, muscular hypertrophy, and muscle perimeter. Power is the production of strength and speed in consequence of this all the changes in strength induce muscular power production. On the above facts, treatment parameters with training show correlations between them (Schmidtbileicher D., 1992). (Hakkinen K., 1994).

According to Verkhoshansky development of strength in the right way must follow the methodological rules according to the muscle's regime during motor activity.

Various training methods have been studied to develop the power output from these muscle groups. Some of the methods focus on the development of muscular hypertrophy and some others on the specific adaptation of the neuromotor system.

Many trainers in creating strategies for sprint training processes keep in main focus that strength, power, and speed are essentially interdependent because they are all the product of the same functional systems.

In speed sports training it is very important to maintain a balance in the training loads of the specific primary and secondary components. To achieve these trainers should consider specific strength training according to individual characteristics, based on performance capacity and technical stages of running. (Delecluse C., 1997).

The relationship between strength and performance indicators in sprinting is different according to the stages of running. Measurements performed on muscle contraction (concentric, stretch-shortening cycle (SSC)) and isometric, showed that the parameters of absolute maximum force were more related to the speed of distance running than to the starting ability. (Young, W. B et al 1995)

The type of contraction (stretch-shortening cycle or SSC) is important in the production of muscle strength, emphasizing that during the execution of this contraction the muscle-tendon connection is heavily loaded, increasing and transmitting the production of energy to the limbs. During this phase (SSC) a considerable amount of energy is deposited to be used for the production of force during the exchange of contractions from concentric to eccentric and vice versa. This cycle of contractions is very important in the manifestation of strength. It is very important to standardize the exercises that are characterized by this cycle (SSC) where researchers recommend plyometric exercises as the best form of development of this cycle (SSC).

Plyometric training, including one-sided exercises and horizontal movement of the whole body, causes a significant increase in the acceleration performance in the sprint, emphasizing the importance of the movement pattern and the speed of muscle contraction (Paavo V. Komi., 2000), (Chimera et al 2004) (John B., Cronin, and Keir T. Hansen., (2005), (C. Boreham 2006).

The importance of finding the minimum limit to normalize force loads is important for trainers. Recommendations refer to loads that are normalized as a percentage of 1 repetition or with the duration of each single muscle contraction in seconds or in hundreds of seconds. Load reduction to 66% of 1 repetition is classified as the critical threshold for the development of isometric and isotonic force. (Chestnut J. L., & Docherty D., 1999).

Referring to load norming for strength and power exercises, according to the study of John B., Cronin & Keir T. Hansen, who in their study norming squat jump with weight 30 kg and depth jumps, results showed a correlation with the height of the jump, relative strength, and in improving performance in sprinting. Joining the study of John B et al, on load norming for strength (McBride et al 2002) reported that subjects who trained for 8 weeks using 80% of the maximum of 1 repetition in the reclining, showed that it was not much significant in improving jump height or speed performance. (John B., Cronin & Keir T. Hansen., 2005) (McBride et al 2002)

On the regulation of the number of repetitions and the intensity of the exercise, Zatsiorsky shows that in order to increase the performance of the power, he recommends programs that promote the quality of each repetition. Zatiosky states that lifting above 90% of your 1RM leads to very slow bar speeds and low power outputs. Loads of 90% of 1RM and below are better suited to enhance the RFD (Zatsiorsky VM, 1995.) in the other side based on Newton et al 1996 studies speed

repetitions performed with 30% of 1RM will not improve the RFD (Newton et al 1996)

Consequently, the study of the rate of force development related to that strength is a directly responsible indicator of an athlete's accelerating ability. This can be argued with the fact that the faster it is produced or the higher level of muscle strength production is achieved in relation to the time the faster a response acceleration occurs. As a consequence of the running functions, the rate of force development is related to the ability to accelerate and achieve the optimal speed required according to the movements of the sports disciplines.

The most recommended exercises (isometric and dynamic) which affect the rate of force development, are characterized by explosive movements with maximum intensity (Schimidtbleicher D., 1992). Where to confirm this statement are attached the facts brought by the above works.

The importance of increasing strength and power performance has been shown to have a positive correlation in increasing speed running performance where the studies of Wilson GJ et al; Harris G.R et al, showed that training for 8 weeks with squats showed statistically significant values in gaining performance in the 40-m sprint. Improved performance by 2.2% in sprinting, is related to performance improvement of 21% of strength in the squat. (Wilson GJ et al 1996), (Harris G.R et al 200).

A variety of training programs have been studied to define methodologies to improve the performance of speedrunning, one of these methods is high-resistance (HR) training. This method includes in their content loads with high intensity and a small number of repetitions where the intensity of their stimulus promotes the development of strength and power. Termed high-velocity training (HV) training methods, include low-intensity loads but with a large number of repetitions where their stimulus promotes the development of speed and velocity. Other methods include teaching types of equipment such as parachutes, weight lifting, and stuffed vests that help develop explosiveness, quick acceleration, and first-step quickness (Delecluse, C., 1995).

Several studies have shown that to enhance maximal power, athletes should train with the velocity and resistance that maximizes mechanical power output (McBride et al 2002)

To maximize power and speed and to be enhanced throughout the entire ROM, coaches recommend the use of ballistic movements, jump squats, bench throws, and plyometrics (Newton et al 1996) (Clark et al 2008.)

The optimal load to maximize power outputs in Olympic lifts are higher compared with the jump squat. Maximum power outputs in Olympic lifts occur between 60% and 80% of 1RM and are therefore perfect to develop strength-speed (N Kawamori &

G G Haff (2004). The optimal load at jump squats is a load above 60% of 1RM but poses safety concerns because of the high impact forces on landing (Kaneko et al 1983) (N Kawamori & G G Haff, 2004). Without hesitation, the findings of all studies are consistent in showing that the components of strength are direct and important indicators that affect the increase in strength indicators manifested in different ways, where these indicators have a direct correlation with running speed in all neuro-motor parameters of the athlete.

Discussion

After the review of the literature, we identified facts brought through various studies on the components that affect the increase in the ability of the speed of running, but also the importance of the rationing of training loads as a necessary requirement and influencing the performance of speed running. All studies without question have in common that the components of strength are direct and responsible indicators that influence the increase of strength indicators displayed in different ways, where these indicators have a direct correlation and relationship in all neuro-motor parameters to athletes with running speed. The strong connection that is based on the correlation I of strength quality, not only shows a positive correlation and a relationship between the two physical abilities, but it has shown that training according to the rationing of loads and different strength methods has an impact on the improvement of movement parameters according to the technical phases of running.

Studies have shown that training strength qualities in relation to performance and speed runs have improvements from their training, but these skills have a wider genetic basis than the percentage of improvement as a result of training.

- For a more accurate and efficient methodology, the relevant rules must be followed according to the main regimes of muscular work that appear during movement activity.
- In sports training, strength training should be extended to all its components in a specific way, since the relationship of these components changes according to the technical phases of speed running.
- All training loads of strength, power, and speed are loads with high neuro-muscular intensity, which shows that the relationship of these physical qualities appears in direct correlation with one another.
- The rate of maximum force loads should start at least with 70% of 1 RM to 100% of 1 RM. If 100% of the load at the maximum strength exercises with more than 1 RM, there is no improvement in the performance of the maximum force display.
- The performance of speed runs is significantly improved by using exercises that include bilateral contractions of the leg muscles in vertical movement (leg extension, leg extension jumps with or without weights), which are adapted to the speed of muscle contraction in speed runs.

- In order to regulate the most efficient loads for the development of strength and power, studies recommend exercises with high intensity and a small number of repetitions, while for speed training they recommend low intensity with a large number of repetitions.
- From the studies, it was noticed that the most recommended exercises for improving running speed are ballistic exercises with weights, deep jumps, and Olympic lifts.

Conclusion

All of the training loads for speed, power, and strength have significant neuromuscular demands, suggesting that these physical attributes are directly related to one another. • Since the relationships between these components fluctuate depending on the technical stages of sprinting, strength training should be extended to all of its components in a specific method for sports training.

To improve running speed indicators, exercises are recommended that have a wide impact on muscle mass, especially on the relationship between agonist and antagonist muscles, also promoting rapid muscle contraction reactions. The optimization of the exercise's volume and intensity is also to be given attention as important influencers on the effect of the exercise.

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Emigration and Gravity Theory: Application on the Western Balkans

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Abstract

The use of gravity equations for explaining international migration flows has significantly increased during the last years. The increased availability of data have allowed scholars to investigate numerous independent variables related to both the origin and the destination countries. **The main objective of this study is the empirical investigation of Western Balkan emigration flows and some of the respective social and economic determinants. The region is both a migration source for developed EU countries, and a major migratory route for Asian and African migrants.** We formulate and estimate different gravity equations for **Western Balkan migrants**. The considered explanators include shares of population with tertiary education, human development indexes as well as incomes per capita. Empirical results show a satisfactory explanatory power of the formulated models.

Keywords: International Migration, Gravity Theory, Western Balkans

1. Introduction

There is no formal definition of an international migrant, but many scholars and experts agree that an international migrant is “someone who changes his or her country of usual residence, irrespective of the reason for migration or legal status”.¹ Migration decision can be influenced by both push and pull determinants. Push variables are associated with origin countries, i.e., countries from which persons emigrate. They can be related to poverty, poor living conditions, political persecution, discrimination, armed conflicts, or natural disasters. On the other hand, migrants are attracted by pull variables in destination countries, such as prospects for higher income, job opportunities, political stability, better living conditions, lack of

¹ <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/definitions>.

discrimination, etc. Migrants contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction in their home countries. Furthermore, they can stimulate foreign direct investments, trade and tourism. Migrants also impact the economies of receiving countries. They contribute to the workforce increase and fill important niches in fast-growing and declining sectors of the economy (OECD, 2014).

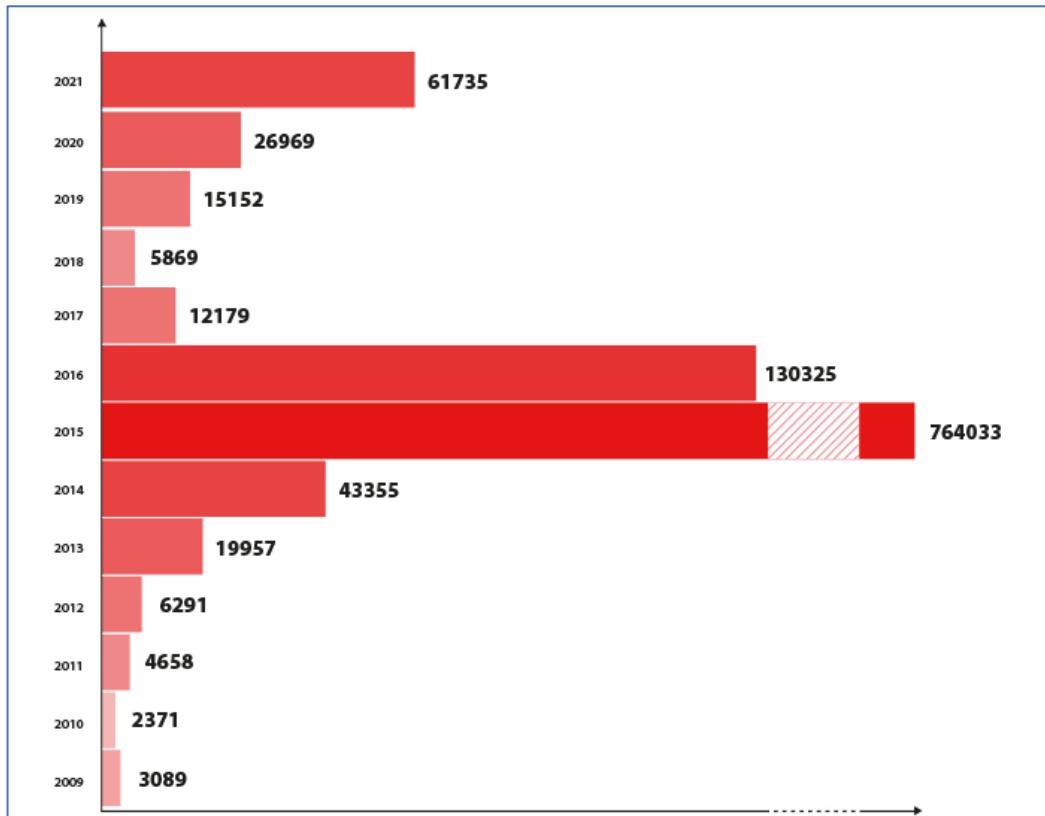
The main objective of this study is the empirical investigation of Western Balkan (WB) emigration factors. The paper is structured as follows. We report in section 2 important facts and figures about WB emigration and some of the respective social and economic determinants. In section 3 we provide a general overview of the gravity theory and also estimate different models for WB migration stocks. In the last section we illustrate the concluding remarks.

2. Migration Facts

The global number of international migrants was estimated to be about 281 million in 2020 or 3,6 per cent of world population. This estimation was lower by nearly 2 million than it would have been, due to COVID-19. The most important corridors are from developing countries to larger economies, including the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Germany. Europe remains the largest continent for international migrants, receiving 87 million in 2020, or 31 per cent of the global number (IOM, 2021).

The WB includes Kosovo, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and North Macedonia. Actually Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia are potential candidates for EU membership, whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are potential candidates. The WB is not only a migrant source for the European Union (EU) and other developed economies, but also one of the main migratory paths for Asians and Africans. Data from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) show that the number of illegal border crossings on this route fell steadily for some years after 2015, but it has started to increase again from 2019. In 2021, the number of detected irregular migrants was 61.735, or 129 per cent more than in 2020.

Figure 1. Number of illegal border crossings on the Western Balkans route. Source: European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).



The determinants of WB emigration and the respective consequences have been studied by several authors. Maroukis and Gemi (2011) study back-and-forth migration patterns of Albanians to Greece, starting from the 1990s. Albanian circular migration to Greece has been mainly related to geographical proximity and the relative ease of entry in the destination country. Positive experience and legal channels of migration have increased the likelihood of remigration. Whereas, Efendic (2016) investigates the intentions to emigrate from Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing both on individual and household factors, and on post-conflict influences. Empirical results show that the young, educated and poor respondents have the highest probability of emigration. Furthermore, emigration is stimulated by the post-conflict environment characterised by political and economic instability. Other lesser important determinants are household income, employment status, and perception of economic development. Blazhevska (2017) investigates the factors that contribute to the high youth emigration from Kosova. Empirical results show that the major reasons for emigrating are country instability, higher corruption levels, high

unemployment and political instability. According to the author, Kosova youth would return to their country in case of a social, economic and political improvement. Koleša (2019) studies the economic impact of WB emigrants on their countries of origin and the region. According to the author, emigrants seem involved in their countries' economies through remittances, foreign direct investment, and migrant entrepreneurship, but the overall impact on both regional and national economies is limited. Political instability and structural obstacles to development have been identified as key barriers to migrants' economic engagement in the Balkans. Nikoloski and Apostolovska-Toshevska (2019) analyze the migratory flows from North Macedonia to developed countries. The most important "push" factors include the high unemployment rate, a significant increase in poverty, and social exclusion. Empirical results confirm that emigration flows are higher for those occupations with low wage and modest employment opportunities in the domestic labour market.

Begović, Lazović-Pita, Pijalović and Baskot (2020) investigate the determinants of youth propensity to emigrate from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study considers socio-demographic variables, satisfaction with life conditions and sentiment, government and public services. Empirical results show that young respondents are more likely to consider emigration than older ones. In addition, there is a positive effect of high level of corruption and dissatisfaction with public services on tendency to emigrate. Muço, Merko and Kılıçaslan (2021) analyze the relationship among crime, inequality, and emigration in WB countries. Empirical results show that inequality stimulates both criminality and emigration. In addition, there is a positive relation between inequality and crime. According to the authors, the levels of inequality and crime are closely related to rule of law and good governance. Topalović (2021) investigates the factors that influence emigration, particularly of young and highly educated people of the WB countries. The regression analysis indicates a statistically significant relationship between the migration indicator and indicators of economic, educational, and political system. High unemployment rate, and a poor education and political system can be considered as important push factors of emigration, whereas pull factors include higher earnings, a higher economic activity, and a better education system. Mara and Landesmann (2022) investigate the relation between human capital endowment, labour market determinants and migration from WB countries. Empirical results show the statistically significant effect of wage gaps and their changes on emigration from the region. Furthermore, gaps in human capital are an important determinant for explaining emigration into economies with relatively higher returns to human capita. Ivanov, Palamidovska-Sterjadovska, Ciunova-Shuleska, Hester, Parker and Geegan (2022) study the emigration decision of educated and young residents of North Macedonia. The main factors that stimulate emigration are institutional systems, a lack of professional opportunities and cultural tightness. Whereas, the factors that discourage the phenomena are culture, community and social responsibility.

3. The gravity model

The gravity equation is often considered as one of the most successful models in economics. In a gravity model, the size of bilateral flows depends on factors related to the origin, factors related to the destination and other factors related to the distance between areas. Tinbergen (1962) and Pöyhönen (1963) were the first scholars who proposed the gravity equation. They affirmed that trade flows between two countries are proportional to their sizes and inversely proportional to bilateral distance. Anderson (1979) provided the first theoretical foundation for the gravity equation; he explained that gravity models can be derived from the properties of expenditure system. Bergstrand (1985, 1989) adopted a similar approach to define a theoretical equation, employing a general equilibrium constraint. Since then, numerous scholars have formulated and estimated gravity models for different types of flows, related to trade, migration, tourism etc.

The number of authors who have employed the gravity theory to international migration is relatively small. Vanderkamp (1977) formulates a set of assumptions underlying a gravity model of migration. According to the author, the gravity specification can be considered as a starting point in the investigation of migration behaviour. Ramos and Suriñach (2017) examine past and future migration trends between EU and ENC. The authors formulate and estimate a gravity model for around 200 countries. Empirical analysis show that migration flows depend on geographical, demographic, social and economic factors. According to Poot, Alimi, Cameron and Maré (2016), the gravity model owes its success to its consistency with migration theories, and to its ease of estimation. The authors reconsider the problems of distance deterrence measurement, and parameter stability. They conclude that the gravity model of migration should be applied in a multi-regional stochastic population projection system. Karemera, Onguledo and Davis (2000) investigate the impact of economic, political and demographic factors on migration flows to North America. The authors specify a modified gravity model, including immigration regulations and characteristics associated with the destination and origin countries. Empirical results indicate that income of destination countries and populations of origin countries are two major factors of migration. The dependent variable is also influenced by the domestic restrictions on civil and political freedom in home countries. Backhaus, Martinez-Zarzoso and Muris (2015) analyze the impact of climatic variations on international migration through a gravity model. Empirical results show that temperature and changes in precipitation are positively correlated with migration. The authors conclude that the reaction of migration due to temperature changes could be driven by the agricultural dependence of a sending country.

According to Ramos (2016), the availability of bilateral migration data has permitted scholars to investigate the effect of push and pull factors that had not been considered in the past. Scholars have gathered new evidence on the role of linguistic proximity

between countries and networks. The author concludes that there are still issues that require attention such as the excess of zeros in samples and the presence of endogeneity. Zhang, Wang, Harris and Leckie (2020) suggest a new multilevel gravity model of migration to study the urban migration in China. The authors propose a new method that allows for the interconnections among migration flows. Empirical results confirm the statistical significance of population size, distance, and regional income levels. In this section, we estimate different gravity equations, including basic and new independent variables. Our response variable is the number of WB immigrants in a developed European destination at a given year. The first equation includes basic gravity variables such as populations in home and host countries and bilateral distance. The second (extended) equation includes some additional independent variables, such as GDPs per capita, a dummy variable indicating whether countries share a common border, human development indexes, and shares of population with tertiary education in origin and destination countries. We estimate the following (extended) gravity model, where positively defined variables are expressed in natural logarithm. The variables definition and expected sign are displayed in table 1.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{mig_ijt} = & \alpha_1 + \alpha_2(\text{inc_it}) + \alpha_3(\text{pop_it}) + \alpha_4(\text{inc_jt}) + \alpha_5(\text{pop_jt}) \\ & + \alpha_6(\text{dist_ij}) + \alpha_7(\text{border_ij}) + \alpha_8(\text{hdi_it}) + \alpha_9(\text{hdi_jt}) + \alpha_{10}(\text{edu_it}) \\ & + \alpha_{11}(\text{edu_jt}) + \varepsilon_{ijt} \end{aligned}$$

The considered dataset includes WB migrant stocks in European Union countries and the respective determinants for the years 2010-2020. The Human Development Index (HDI) is calculated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). HDI is a measure of average achievement in crucial dimensions of human development: a decent standard of living, a long and healthy life, and being knowledgeable. The value is given by the geometric mean of normalized indices for each dimension. Migrant stocks are obtained from Eurostat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Populations and GDPs per capita are sourced from the World Bank databases, whereas bilateral distances between home and host countries are calculated by CEPII (Mayer and Zignago, 2011). The shares of population with tertiary education are obtained from OECD and the respective national statistical offices.

Table 1. Definition and expected sign of gravity model variables.

Variable	Definition	Expected sign
mig_ijt	Migration stock in country j from origin i at year t	Dependent variable
inc_it	GDP per capita in origin i at year t	-
pop_it	Population in origin i at year t	+
inc_jt	GDP per capita in destination j at year t	+

pop_jt	Population in destination j at year t	+
dist_ij	Distance between origin i and destination j	-
border_ij	dummy indicating whether countries share a common border	+
hdi_it	human development index in origin i at year t	+ or -
hdi_jt	human development index in destination j at year t	+
edu_it	share of population with tertiary education in origin i at year t	+ or -
edu_jt	share of population with tertiary education in destination j at year t	+

Table 2 shows the main estimation results for the different gravity equations. We have formulated two econometric models. Furthermore, we have applied two different estimation techniques for panel data: fixed effects and random effects. In a fixed effects (FE) estimation, the unobserved variables can have a relation with the observed variables. In such case we control for the effects of time-independent explanators with time-independent effect. Whereas, in a random effects (RE) model, we assume absence of correlation between the unobserved variables and the observed variables. This method allows the estimation of variables which do not vary with time. RE is the estimation method that presents the best fit to the sample. Estimation results confirm the statistical significance of both 'standard' and new independent variables. In addition, coefficients magnitude and sign are in line with theoretical expectations. The adjusted R-squared varies from nearly 46 percent to 73 percent, showing a satisfactory explanatory power of the formulated models. Estimation results are similar to many past empirical studies (e.g., Karemera, Oguledo and Davis, 2000; Ramos and Suriñach, 2016; Poprawe, 2015)

Table 2. Estimation results.

Response v.:				
<i>mig_jit</i>	<i>model I (FE)</i>	<i>model II (FE)</i>	<i>model III (RE)</i>	<i>model IV (RE)</i>
<i>pop_it</i>	1,19***	1,15***	1,22***	1,19***
<i>pop_jt</i>	1,01***	0,97***	1,11***	1,13***
<i>dist_ij</i>			-2,29***	-2,55***
<i>inc_it</i>		0,021		-1,62***
<i>inc_jt</i>		0,268**		1,49***
<i>border_ij</i>				0,56***

<i>hdi_it</i>	-0,04		0,49**	
<i>hdi_jt</i>	0,54*		0,61**	
<i>edu_it</i>	0,031**		0,056**	
<i>edu_jt</i>	-0,11		0,091***	
<i>Adjusted R2</i>	0,461	0,488	0,653	0,729
<i>N</i>	1650	1650	1650	1650

Note: * $p < 0,10$; ** $p < 0,05$; *** $p < 0,01$.

4. Final remarks

The main objective of this study was the empirical investigation of WB emigration flows and some of the respective social and economic determinants. The region is both a migration source for developed EU countries, and a major migratory route for Asians and African migrants. The number of illegal border crossings fell steadily after 2015, but it has started to increase again from 2019. Empirical results showed that migrant stocks are positively related to total populations, income in host countries, existence of a common border, human development indexes, and shares of population with tertiary education in origin and destination countries. On the other hand, the response variable is negatively related with incomes in origin countries and bilateral distances. Governments of WB countries should implement drastic reforms in order to promote the economic activity, speed up the process of *European integration, and minimize emigration*.

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Determinants of Patient Satisfaction with Health Care: A Literature Review

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Abstract

This research paper aims to explore the field of patient satisfaction in health care, by performing a literature review on existing healthcare articles that analyse determinants of patient's satisfaction and theories on patient satisfaction assessment. Patient satisfaction is one of the most important factors to determine the success of health care providers. Determining the exact definition, determinants and characteristics of patients that influence satisfaction, as well as different theories on satisfaction, are highly discussed elements in the literature for a long period of time. The research instrument was a literature review by combining different view from many researchers. The literature was searched in databases such as Emerald, Medline/PubMed, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Scopus. Patient satisfaction appears to play an important role in evaluation of service quality. From the literature review, it was observed that the main determinants of patient satisfaction were the demographic characteristics, expectations and experiences of the patients. Communication is also an extremely important element that affects patient satisfaction. Other research should be conducted to delve even more into this very important area of health care.

Keywords: patient satisfaction, health care, satisfaction theories, literature review

1. Introduction

Satisfying patients' needs is the first step toward having loyal patients. For a long time, the understanding of the relationship that exists between satisfaction and service quality was a key issue in determining development strategies in the health sector. Donabedian (1980), identified the importance of patient satisfaction so well that his work later became the basis for further research on health care. In this sector, the importance of measuring patient satisfaction has been clearly defined (Lin and Kelly, 1995), as it has been measured and studied extensively as an independent factor but also as a component of the quality of health products (Heidergger et al., 2006), and often in special cases also as an important factor in studies on the evaluation of the

quality of the health service. Patient satisfaction has begun to be seen as a product of service quality which also affects clinical outcomes, economic measures and quality of life (Heidegger et al. 2006). The very fact that we have many opposing opinions, satisfied authors or not, shows by itself that the measurement of satisfaction is too complex and regardless of whatever result is concluded, we will still encounter dissatisfaction.

To demonstrate the unresolved conceptual difficulties related to the structure of satisfaction, in the literature it has been defined as: summation between psychological state and specific situations (Oliver, 1989), discrepancies between expectations and actual performance (Yi, 1990), composition of two components together, both emotional and cognitive, as a fulfilling response and a creation of experience (Oliver, 1989), a response to both the process and the end result (Hill, 2003).

Risser (1975) considers patient satisfaction as the degree of convergence between the expectations patients have of ideal care and their perceptions of the care they actually receive. Lochoro (2004) supports this view and also points out that satisfaction corresponds to the gap between expectations and perceived characteristics of a service. Howard and Sheth (1969), explain consumer satisfaction as a cognitive response of consumers. Churchill and Surprenant (1982) define consumer satisfaction based on the cognitive and emotional dimensions of the concept. Later, Oliver (1997) outlined various definitions of customer satisfaction that acknowledged their emotional impact on desired products or services. Mutava et al. (2006) pointed out that the product or service itself is one of the main factors in achieving customer satisfaction, defining it as a system through which the consumer passes for a given value of money.

It is very important to distinguish between interpersonal care and patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is usually measured and considered as an indicator of the quality of medical service (Cleary, Mc Neil, 1988). For this, it is necessary to specify the interpersonal aspects of a high quality of service and to ask patients about these experiences. It may also be useful to measure the extent to which care meets patient expectation, always bearing in mind that high satisfaction does not necessarily correlate with the delivery of high quality care (Cleary, et al., 1991). Shi and Singh (2005), from the perspective of patient satisfaction, explain service quality in two ways:

Quality as an indicator for satisfaction, which depends on individual experiences on features such as medical service (comfort, dignity, privacy, security, autonomy in decision-making and attention to personal preferences).

Quality as an indicator of individuals' total satisfaction with life and perceptions of some medical interventions.

On the other hand, Safavi (2006) thinks that patient satisfaction depends on three basic issues of the health care system. They are patients' perceptions of the quality of care provided, skilled physicians and organizations capable of providing decent service. He reached at the conclusion that satisfaction with hospital service is driven by dignity and respect, speed and effectiveness of service delivery, comfort, information and communication as well as emotional support.

2. Methodology

A narrative review approach was used to achieve the purpose of this study. Out of 84 articles that were read electronically, only 60 of them were taken into consideration for this paper. The studies range in years from 1969 to 2019. No time restrictions were applied. The research instrument was a literature review by combining keywords such as patient satisfaction, health care, satisfaction theories, literature review. The literature was searched in databases such as Emerald, Medline/PubMed, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Scopus. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were adopted. The articles were selected based on content such as research on patient satisfaction, determinants of patient's satisfaction, health care services, patient's expectations and experiences and theories on patient satisfaction assessment. As sources were reviewed, additional citations were found and explored. The purpose was to see which are the determinants of patient's satisfaction and the theories most used to measure it, more applicable to the health sector.

3. Determinants of patient's satisfaction

Most of the studies reported in the literature showed the relationship between demographic factors such as age, gender, health status and level of education with patient satisfaction, but the results of these studies are different.

Two studies, one followed in Scotland on patients treated on emergency department in hospital between February and March 2002, and the other in 32 tertiary care hospitals in the USA, both showed that male patients older than 50 years , who had stayed a short time in the hospital in a not very serious health condition, as well as those patients with a lower level of education, had reported higher levels of satisfaction compared to other groups of the population. On the other hand, a questionnaire developed in various accredited hospitals in Taiwan showed that characteristics such as age, gender, and level of education had very little influence on patient satisfaction and that patients with less severe conditions had higher levels of satisfaction. Even Nguyen et al. (2002) and Jenkinson et al. (2002) stated from their studies that the two strongest and most consistent determinants of satisfaction were old age and good health status. Meanwhile, two studies conducted in Norway in 63 state hospitals, on overall patient satisfaction and control variables such as age and gender, showed that these variables were not significant determinants of patient satisfaction at all.

In 2004, Otani et al. developed a questionnaire on hospitals in the USA to see the relationship between nursing care, medical care and the surrounding environment, and the overall satisfaction of patients, showing that all these factors were statistically significant and positively related to patient satisfaction, and nursing care had the greatest impact of these three factors. Research also showed that the courtesy and respect shown by medical staff also affects patient satisfaction, while the way of communication plays a secondary role. On the other hand, a study conducted in Ireland in 13 hospitals showed that effective communication and clear explanation of situations had the greatest impact on improving patient satisfaction (Sweeney et al. 2008). These studies showed the importance of the role of nurses, as the most important determinant in the overall satisfaction of patients.

Other studies showed that the interpersonal communication skills of doctors expressed in variables such as behavior, explaining situations, level of care, emotional support, respect for patients and their preferences, as well as involving patients in decision-making, were more influential factors than competencies, clinical and equipment and technology used, for increasing patient satisfaction (Chang et al. 2006; Andrabi 2012). Research conducted in the USA in various hospitals by Clever, Levinson and Meltzer (2008), also showed that the way of communication played an important role in patient satisfaction. The same results on communication, staff sensitivity and care were achieved by Carlson et al. (2015).

The study conducted in France by Nguyen et al. (2002), and studies conducted in South Korea by Chat et al. (2005), showed that the equipment and technology used were the ones that most affected patient satisfaction, and that the biggest problems came from the lack of these dimensions. Otani et al. (2009) in his study revealed that staff care is the most influential attribute, while Alrasheedi et al. (2019), reported that the greatest dissatisfaction was caused by the long waiting time at the reception and the prolonged time of registration in the hospital. Contrary to them, Jenkinson et al (2002), in his study showed that physical comfort had the highest degree of association with satisfaction, compared to other dimensions such as information, or emotional support.

Patient expectations as a determinant of satisfaction - Different patients have different expectations, based on their knowledge and previous experiences, and consequently these expectations tend to change as their experiences accumulate over time. Patients with low expectations generally have higher satisfaction rates (Jawaid M, et al. 2018). As a quality assurance measurement and evaluation tool, expectations make the concept of satisfaction even more complex. We distinguish three categories of patient expectations identified from the literature: 1) background expectations, which come as a result of knowledge gathered from readings or consultation processes, 2) interactive expectations, which come as a result of the exchange of information between the patient and the provider health care and 3) active

expectations, which are created as a result of actions performed by doctors, in providing treatments or counseling in the past (Greenberg RP, et al. 2006).

From a study conducted in Pakistan, emotional support provided by staff, waiting time of no more than 30 minutes, and consultation time of no less than 20 minutes were the factors most involved in creating patient expectations (Naseer, 2012). These expectations are also influenced by patient characteristics such as age, sex and marital status, as well as psychosocial determinants (Siddiqui et al. 2011; Saleem T, et al. 2009).

Patient experiences as determinants of satisfaction - Patient experiences are a strong predictor of patient satisfaction. Almost all patient questionnaires conducted worldwide attempt to measure patient experiences in the health sector to improve the quality of service in this area. WHO uses the measurement of patient experiences in the health sector as an indicator of the accountability of the health care system.

The performance and consequently the accountability of the system is reflected in a general improvement of the health status of the people who have received the service, ensuring equity and efficiency, while protecting individuals from excessively high costs (WHO, 2009). The level and distribution of accountability is therefore an important determinant of patient satisfaction, related to the performance of the health care system. Responsiveness refers to the ways and environment in which patients were treated when they needed health care. Eight areas of patient experience define health system responsiveness, and all of them are positively related to patient satisfaction.

Other determinants of patient experiences that affect patient satisfaction have also been determined from other studies. Thus, lack of beds, long waiting time at the reception and prolonged administrative procedures, unavailable medical staff, lack of basic medical equipment, cleanliness of rooms have also proved to be as determinants of patient satisfaction (Sajid, Rashid, 2008). Also, focus on the patient, which includes the time dedicated to the patient by the staff, the listening skills of doctors and nurses, the way of communication, has been proven to have a positive relationship with patient satisfaction (Karim, 2003). Lack of autonomy, ineffective communication and non-immediate service are some of the main factors leading to patient dissatisfaction (Oliveira, 2012). We can say that patient trust and doctors' communication behavior and waiting time were more strongly associated and positively affect patient satisfaction with the service received (Chandra, 2018).

Other factors that affect patient satisfaction are the continuity of health care provision and the proximity of health centers to residential areas or work centers (Thornton 2017). Having a hospital center far from the place of residence makes it difficult to attend treatment regularly and leads to unsatisfied patients.

Failure to meet patient expectations also affects satisfaction levels. On one hand, most patients have their own specific expectations about health care services (Kravitz, et al., 1996; Greene, et al., 1980; Sanchez-Menegay and Stalder, 1994; Lazare and Eisenthal, 1997) and on the other hand physicians, not being in aware of these wishes, often fail to provide the right service, causing in most cases dissatisfied patients.

4. Measuring patient satisfaction

Patients, in general, receive various health care services and judge the services provided (Choi et al. 2004). Questionnaires on patient satisfaction have been used to examine quality in health care and have proven the positive or negative relationship of satisfaction with service quality (Brady and Robertson, 2001; Gotlieb, 2000; Rust et al. 1994; Andaleeb, 2007).

Regarding the measurement of patient satisfaction, there are also different opinions in the literature. The best way to measure satisfaction is questionnaires, which have been used very successfully for more than 30 years. Howthorne (2006) after reviewing the literature related to patient satisfaction, concluded that none of the instruments used to measure it could be considered satisfactory.

Major theories on patient satisfaction assessment were published in the 1980s, and later Howthorne (2006) synthesized more recent theories that were "restatements" of these assessments.

The Discrepancy and Transgression Theory by Fox and Storms (1981), advocated the idea that as patients' orientations to health care change, so do the conditions of care providers; if the orientations of the patients and the conditions offered are in harmony (match), then the patients are satisfied, if not they are dissatisfied.

The Expectancy-Value Theory of Linder-Pelz (1982), assumed that satisfaction was a combination of beliefs and personal values about care as well as prior expectations about it. They identified the importance of the relationship between expectations and the variance in the evaluation of satisfaction by offering an operational definition of satisfaction as "positive evaluations on various dimensions of health care". In 1983, Pascoe further developed this theory, taking into account the influence of expectations on satisfaction, and then Strasser (1993), based on this theory, developed the model with different psychological factors, which were: formation on cognitive and emotional perceptions, form multidimensional, dynamic process, iterative response behavior and improvement from individual differences.

The theory of Ware et al. (1983) based on determinants and components, which presents patient satisfaction as a function of the patient's subjective responses to health experiences, influenced by personal expectations and preferences.

Multiple Models Theory by Fitzpatrick and Hopkins (1983), according to which expectations are mediated by social factors, reflecting the patient's health goals and the degree to which the illness or health care affects the patient's personal feelings.

Donabedian's (1980) theory of health care quality states that satisfaction was the primary outcome of the interpersonal process of care. He argues that the expression of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a judgment of the patient on the quality of the service in all its aspects, but especially in relation to the interpersonal components of care.

Brady and Cronin (2001) proposed a hierarchical model to measure satisfaction considering the primary dimensions such as: interactive quality, quality of the physical environment and quality of the results obtained. Some authors showed that studies on patient satisfaction have a real impact on the behavior and habits of health professionals and are likely to stimulate improvement measures in the health service (Greco et al. 2001). A study conducted in France reported that among doctors of a university hospital, 94% of them had a positive opinion on patient satisfaction studies, 60% of them were aware of the results of these studies in their departments, and 40% reported that these studies brought about improvements in service and even modified their own behavior (Boyer et al. 2006).

Aragon et al. (2003) conducted a research in the emergency department of different hospitals and suggested that the main theory for measuring patient satisfaction depended on the measurement of latent variables such as: medical service, waiting time and nursing care. These variables define according to him the characteristics of the quality of health care. They proved that the overall satisfaction of the patient depends on these three variables and that satisfaction is also positively related to two other indicators such as: the desire to recommend the hospital and the degree to which the service justifies the payments made by the patient.

Kano (1979) develops the 'M-H property of quality' by adapting the work of Herzberg et. al.'s (1959) 'Motivation-Hygiene Theory'. He suggest a two-way model on quality based on customers' perception and experience. The Kano model proposes that the relationship between performance of attributes and customers' satisfaction is non-linear. Kano considered five quality elements: Attractive Quality Elements, One-dimensional Quality Elements, Must-Be Quality Elements, Indifferent Quality Elements, Reverse Quality Elements.

CAHPS (Consumer Assessment of Health care Providers and Systems) is another instrument used to measure patient satisfaction and its relationship with service quality. It is a valid international tool for measuring satisfaction, focusing on assessing patients' actual experiences during care, without measuring their expectations.

All of the above methods of measuring patient satisfaction suggested that service quality is one of the main predictors of overall patient satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, from the review of the literature on the factors that influence patient satisfaction in summary, we can say that patients are more satisfied with the health service if these health systems are responsible in terms of dignity, autonomy, prompt service and achievement of patient expectations. Patient expectations, which are influenced by patient characteristics such as age, gender, social class, education, and less so by gender and ethnicity, are very important predictors of patient satisfaction in many important studies. However, patient perceptions and other psychological factors are also potential determinants and should not be neglected.

Patient characteristics such as age, gender, education, ethnicity, marital and socioeconomic status have been widely used to measure patient expectations (Bleich S, et al. 2009). Patient factors that influence their expectations of health care are: older age, male gender, low socioeconomic status, and education, which have been shown to have a positive relationship with patient satisfaction.

Older people have lower expectations and are therefore more satisfied with health care than younger people. They expect less information from doctors and tend to accept treatments more easily than younger people. Gender has been labeled as an inconsistent predictor of patient satisfaction, but the trend is that women are less satisfied with the health service compared to men. High expectations and greater experiences are thought to be the reasons for this result (Sultana A, et al. 2010).

Communication is also an extremely important element that affects patient satisfaction. If the patients did not feel well informed, close to the doctors or unclear about their health status, this could also affect the process of their recovery. Therefore, correct communication and establishment of good cooperative relations, play an important role in increasing patient satisfaction. In particular, patients expect doctors and nurses to communicate clearly, in a friendly manner, and to properly explain test results, diagnoses, medication, health regimens, etc. On the other hand, nurses must also understand patients' problems well and communicate them correctly to doctors. It has already been proven that the better the quality of communication perceived by the patient, the higher their level of satisfaction (Andaleeb, 2010). Patient expectations of health care providers and the health system in general play an essential role in the concept of patient satisfaction. Patients compare their experiences in this sector, with their expectations on this service, allowing the providers of this service to measure their satisfaction (Constantino et al. 2011).

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Identification of Volleyball Players in Sports Associations in Tirana, Albania

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Abstract

Anthropometric and physical measurements are necessary to take place every year in age groups different. The purpose of this study is to identify physical and anthropometric skills between ages in female volleyball players in Tirane, Albania. Methods: Participants in this study were ($N=138$) volleyball players from three Association Sports; the average age (15-16 yrs.). Measurement for anthropometrics (body weight, body height and waist circumference) and physical abilities T -TEST (Briar mac). Results: Results from ANOVA analysis between three Association Sports show significant differences. Multiple comparisons- LSD post hoc analysis showed results for anthropometrics and also for physical abilities showed different differences between groups of volleyball players. Conclusion: The results show the training process of volleyball players in Association Sports Tirana in Albania is conditioned by the factor available to develop training session with a specific training purpose. There are changes in the agility and speed of the game of volleyball. The results of this study clearly show that the development of female volleyball agility improvement of these skills scores can be achieved with a specific training model to help players improve their skills.

Keywords: volleyball, association, anthropometric, t-test

1. Introduction

Physical ability are of particular importance to every player who plays but specifically, physical skills play a crucial role and affect the intelligence and tactics of the game because during these games a high physical performance is required. Team games require a comprehensive preparation of skills such as technical, tactical, physical etc. Volleyball has become one of the most practiced sports in the world.

Volleyball is characterized by continuous jumps combined with blocks and spikes, numerous short-distance sprints as well as short agility movements that occur repeatedly throughout the match or training session [16]. In volleyball, anthropometric characteristics, individual physical performance and technical and tactical skills are most important factors that contribute to the success of a team in competitions [10]. The performance of these precise and structured movements depends on anthropometric parameters and physical abilities [12]. Also, players in volleyball need to have strength and power in high performance during the game [1]. Especially in the game of volleyball, this type of physical ability is of great importance [13] knowing that volleyball is a sport with short intervals and efficient physical loads combined with rest phases. According to scientists, the role of the coach in enhancing an athlete's performance is very important the increased indices of speed, strength, coordination and balance being able to contribute to achieve sports performance [15]. The coaches who deal with the training are convinced and oriented quite accurately that there is a difference in performance for the anthropometric parameters and physical abilities according to gender and positions in the field with regard to volleyball [2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 14] and in other team sports [7; 11]. The purpose of this study was to identify physical abilities in groups 15-16 years old female volleyball players in the Sports Associations Tirana in Albania. According to author's findings and experience, skill-based training could be a part of training programs in younger volleyball players where the intensity of training is not as high as in professional and elite volleyball players. However, studies investigating the effectiveness of game-based training in female volleyball are limited. Therefore, more research is needed in order to confirm this theory

2. Methods

Anthropometric measurements were carried out in the respective gyms of the sports associations, according to their training schedules. The volleyball players were also tested in the T-test skill test (Brian mac)

Protocols of the test

Body weight and height; Weight- Players were asked to remove their footwear (shoes, slippers, sandals etc.) and socks and step onto a scale stadiometer. It was recorded the weight measurement in kilogram. Height- Players were asked to remove their footwear (shoes, slippers, sandals etc.) and socks and step onto a scale stadiometer. They were asked to stand on the board facing the coach and also were asked to stand with feet together and heels against the backboard. It was recorded the height measurement was in centimetres.

Statistical Analysis

ANOVA is a statistical analysis for testing whether there is no significant difference between two or more group's means. This study used one-way ANOVA to investigate the significant difference by age groups. ANCOVA was used to test the main and interaction effects of the independent variable on the dependent variables, controlling for the effects of covariates. Multiple comparisons- LSD post hoc analysis showed results for variables measures in this study. After collecting field test data, it was used SPSS version 23, at $p \leq 0.05$ level.

3. Results

Data from table 1 show descriptive statistics (mean, Std. Dev.) for anthropometric variables for the three sports associations with regard to volleyball girls. Participants in this study were (138) volleyball players. Descriptive mean data are shown for body height, body weight and waist circumference.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for anthropometric variables in girls' volleyball players by age group categories

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Body Height cm	(15-16 yrs.)	138	172.3	7.3
Body Weight kg	(15-16 yrs.)	138	63.6	8.7
Waist Circumference cm	(15-16 yrs.)	138	70.6	6.9

Figure 1. Descriptive statistics for T-Test variables in girls' volleyball players

Time	12.05	seconds	Calculate	10.89	feet/sec	7.43	mph	3.32	m/sec	11.95	Km/h
Excellent		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Poor			
<10.01 secs	10.01 - 10.13 secs	10.13 - 10.37 secs	10.37 - 10.67 secs	>10.67 secs							

4. Discussion

This study investigated the 3 association sports Tirane, Albania for female volleyball players for anthropometric parameters and physical fitness components in T-Test. T -TEST is the tests similar to volleyball players' movements in the front, back and forth. The analysis of the T-Test and results is compared showed the lower level of skill volleyball players 15 -16 age old in association sports Tirane, Albania. Results from ANOVA analysis show significant differences between girls. The findings of this study are in line with the results of which found significant differences for body height. Comparison data for waist circumference between girls (mean difference= 0.4

cm; Sig= 0.895). Other data results from [9] showed that anthropometric parameters are age dependent. Finding from [9] showed that physical performance seems to be dependent on the playing positions. Also most studies reveal that physical and physiological characteristics between playing positions in female volleyball players are age dependent [9; 8; 14]. In the best interest of the study, it would be good if other teams were involved from different cities of Albania. Suggestions for other studies we recommend in comparing data by positions in the field.

5. Conclusion

Results showed that anthropometric parameters are age-dependent. There are changes in T-Test between girls. The training process of volleyball players in Albania is conditioned by the factor available to develop training sessions with a specific training purpose. The results of this study clearly show that the development of female volleyball agility improvement of the se skills scores can be achieved with a specific training model to help players improve their skills.

6. Recommendations

This study has limitations with regards to the sampling number of female volleyball players which is justified for not having sufficient funds. In the best interest of the study, it would be good if other teams were involved from different cities of Albania.

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Evaluation of Gait in Albanian β-thalassemia Patients

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Abstract

One of the most prevalent genetic diseases in the world is beta thalassemia. Hemoglobin synthesis is decreased by the blood condition beta thalassemia. Patients with thalassemia exhibit a range of bone problems, including as spinal deformities, osteopenia and osteoporosis, as well as growth failure. This study's main goal was to evaluate gait and balance in Albanian β-thalassemia patients. In this study, 18 participants aged 17 to 29 years old (*5 males and 13 females*) from three distinct epidemiological cities in Albania took part. Gait analysis was performed using "*T&T medilogic medizintechnik gmbh*" wi-fi insoles. "General Gait Parameters", results of the "Effective Foot Length, left [%]" parameter mean results [67.59%], reveals approx a 2% difference compared with the relative normative mean [69.7%]. Also, "Effective Foot Length, left [%]" mean results [65.49%], reveals approximately a 3.5% difference compared with the relative normative mean [69.7%]. "General Gait Parameters", data comparisons revealed statistically significant differences between "is" and "nom." measurements for the following variables: "Rel Double Step Length", "Double Step Duration", "Effective Foot Length Right" and "Width Of Gait Right" ($p<0.005$). Results for the rest of the variables shwed a not statistically significant difference. The aim of the study was to assess the gait parameter in Albanian individuals with thalassemia. Based on the result of the "General Gait Parameters", data reveal a difference in the % of the average gait line which is related to effective distribution in the insole length showing a specific indication of insecure gait. According to the findings, gait issues are a significant health issue for beta thalassemia patients which are most likely caused by disease-related side-effects such high calcium levels after blood transfusions, inactivity caused by insufficient muscle mass, and all other health-related disease conditions. It is advised that the gait analysis exam to be included in their regular health check-ups. Future studies should be conducted involving larger β-thalassemia patients take into account the unique state of this category to better evaluate the gait problems related with general static and dynamic posture problems. Clinicians' health specialists and rehabilitation experts when planning B-Thal rehabilitation programs sholud use gait analysis exam as a regular health check-up.

Keywords: Gait analysis, Evaluation, β-thalassemia patients

Introduction

A hereditary condition of hemoglobin synthesis known as beta-thalassemia causes a reduction in the production of the b-globin chain. Intramedullary hemolysis and inefficient erythropoiesis are caused by a relative imbalance of the alpha and beta globin genes. Lifelong transfusion treatment is used to treat this disease, which can cause iron excess and toxicity. It has been demonstrated that multiorgan illness is brought on by iron accumulation in the heart, liver, and endocrine glands. The most severe iron-mediated consequence and the main reason for mortality in those with thalassemia major is cardiomyopathy (Borgna-Pignatti C et al., 2004; Modell B et al., 2000; Zurlo MG et al., 1989). The quality of life (QoL) of thalassemia patients is anticipated to be impacted by some of the major clinical and psychological aspects of the condition, such as: (1) having a chronic condition and the subjective feeling of being different; (2) physical changes, such as bone deformities and short stature, which affect one's self-image; (3) treatment (transfusions and iron chelation therapy); (4) delayed or absent sexual development and issues with fertility; (5) heaving; and (5) he (Telfer P et al., 2005; Mikelli A et al., 2004). Changes in bone architecture, bone quality, and mineral density are among the main impacts of thalassemia on the bones. Other serious morbidities include osteoporosis, fractures, spinal abnormalities, nerve compression, and discomfort. Baldini M. et al., 2017; Steer K. et al., 2017; Baldini M. et al., 2014).

Gait Analysis

The coordination, balance, and synchronization needed for gait are activated by the appropriate operation of the central and peripheral (musculoskeletal) neural systems. Each person's gait characteristics are drastically variable depending on their physical and mental health, resulting in a distinctive pattern (Horst, F et al., 2017). The gait cycle, which is similar to a stride and consists of two subsequent steps, is used to assess gait. A gait cycle has the following phases: (a) the stance phase, which lasts until the same foot leaves the ground, and (b) the swing phase, which starts when the foot leaves the ground. Speed affects a number of gait factors, and speed also depends on body height. On the other hand, when it comes to techniques and modern tools for evaluating gait analysis, sensor insoles are one of the most cutting-edge options available today since each gait event can be defined by a pressure pattern (Daz, S. et al., 2020). Unstable gait is frequently seen in people with neurological and musculoskeletal diseases because it compromises the capacity to control where the body's center of mass (COM) is in relation to the base of support (BOS) (Albertsen, I. M et al., 2017; Kristiansen, M et al., 2019).

Objectives

Main objective of this study was to evaluate gait and balance in Albanian β -thalassemia patients.

Methodology

In this study, 18 participants aged 17 to 29 years old (*5 males and 13 females*) from three distinct epidemiological cities of Albania. Gait analysis was performed using “*T&T medilogic medizin technik gmbh*” wi-fi insoles (Figure 1, 2, 3). For the measuring setup, a 10-m flat indoor walking area was utilized.

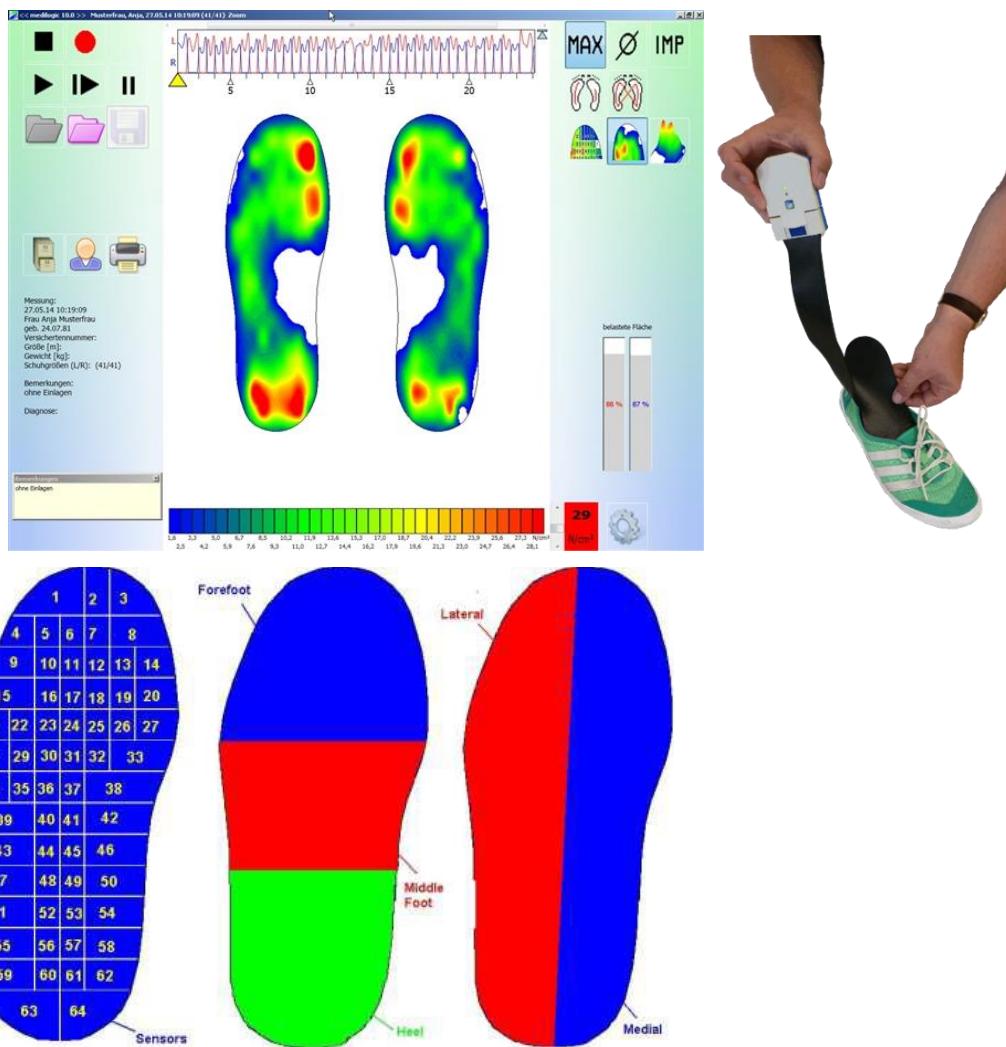


Figure: 1, 2, 3. *T&T medilogic medizin technik gmbh* wi-fi insoles

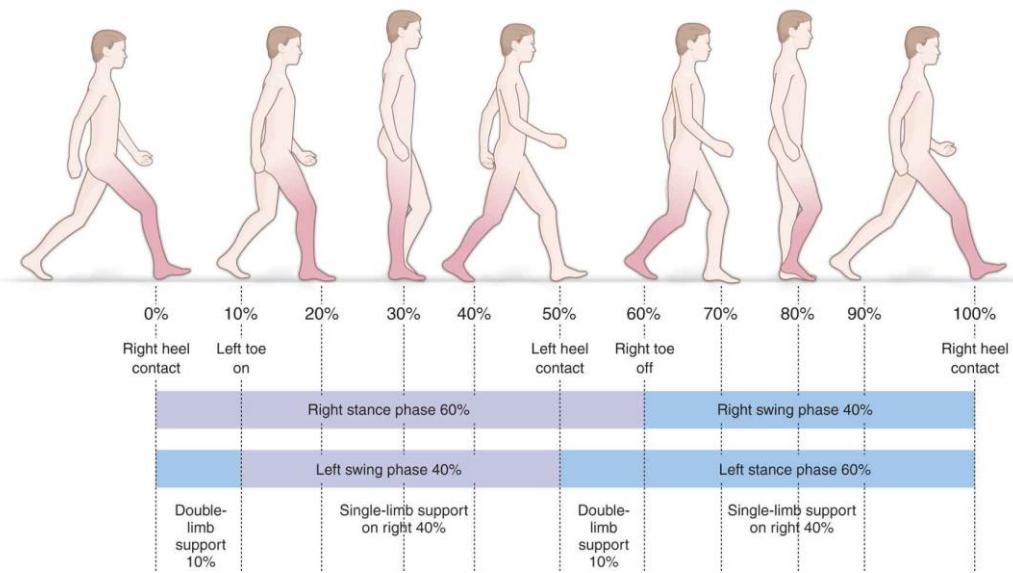


Figure 4. <https://musculoskeletalkey.com/gait-and-posture-analysis/>

The “Gait Parameter”, reading

Gait analysis from T&T Medilogic has identified a few crucial human gait metrics that are helpful for actual evaluation. The distribution of the load under the foot forms a significant portion of the parameters. General factors like speed, step length, and stance phase are included in addition to them. A database of comparison values (Nom.) has been constructed from a set of test subjects with unobtrusive gait patterns for examination and interpretation. The relative location of each parameter in relation to the comparison group is displayed using color. Green denotes a near match to the comparison values, yellow denotes a little difference, and red denotes a significant departure. About 800 measurements from 164 test subjects were used to create the internal database, which removed the speed dependence of several metrics. The quantitative gait analysis's primary metric is speed. A person automatically selects the speed that best suits their locomotor capabilities. Therefore, a significant drop in walking speed is a clear sign of pathology. Many characteristics rely on speed, therefore comparisons utilizing those factors (such before-and-after care) are only valid at walking speeds that are comparable. Determining the relative speed has been beneficial (V_{rel}) taking into account the body height (L_0) of the patient: $V_{rel} = V/L_0$ in [1/s]. From one ground contact of the same foot to the next ground contact of the same foot, a whole gait cycle is formed; this is referred to as a double step. The length of a double step (L) is the distance that is traveled in a single double step. The relative double step length (L_{rel}), which also depends on body height, is defined as follows: $L/L_0 = L_{rel}$. This variable is independent of the unit. A short double step length indicates an unstable stride. The reciprocal of the double step frequency,

which has the unit min-1, is the double step duration (DSD). The two-footed position, as defined by %DSD, is when both feet are on the ground. An unstable gait is also indicated by a high value of these parameter. The proportion of DSD during which one leg is on the ground during the stance phase is computed for each leg independently. Patients who only have one side affected (because to an accident or a leg prosthesis, for example) typically have a shorter stance phase length on that side. The effective foot length is calculated as a percentage of the effective insole length using the average gait line. It is a measurement for the entire foot's roll. The variance in the gait line's medial-lateral direction is known as its width, and is measured as a percentage of the insole's width. Thus, it serves as a gauge for how much the gait line deviates during single steps. Ankle and prosthesis gait injuries can result in an extremely narrow gait line. The same can be said for a gait issue indicated by a very broad gait line.

Measurements

Each subject's age, height, weight, and BMI were noted before to data collection. To establish a secure fixation, the Medilogic insoles were placed directly on the subject's feet while wearing athletic shoes. The same walking pace, cadence, and step length were chosen for each subject to provide a high level of standardization. To begin the test, a "GO" auditory signal was given. All measuring units began as soon as the subject took the first step. Each participant did 4 gait cycles (8 steps). Each participant crossed the walkway two or three times before data collection to become used to it.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was performed via IBM SPSS Statistics 26 using Descriptive Statistics and Student's *t* test. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

Results

Table 1. Anthropometric measurements results

Subject ID	Age (years)	Body Mass (kg)	Height (cm)	BMI
ID L001251 (F)	19	58.3	169	20.4
ID L001250 (F)	19	61.9	160	24.2
ID L001232 (F)	20	53.2	153	22.7
ID L001233 (F)	21	67.6	177	21.6
ID L001237 (F)	20	48.8	164	18.1
ID L001236 (F)	27	56.7	154	23.9
ID L001234 (F)	20	51.6	161	19.9
ID L001235 (F)	30	52.3	151	22.9
ID L001238 (M)	30	69.2	175	22.6
ID L001253 (M)	17	48.2	149	21.7
ID L001256 (F)	17	55.9	159	22.1

ID L001257 (F)	22	41	145	19.5
ID L001261 (M)	23	53.3	161	20.6
ID L001259 (F)	22	42.7	145	20.3
ID L001260 (F)	22	56.6	164	21
ID L001255 (M)	21	50.7	154	21.4
ID L001254 (F)	26	42.5	154	17.9
ID L001258 (M)	29	67.2	169	22
Mean	22.61	53.76	159.11	

Table 2. General gait Parameters 1

	Spee d [km/ h]	Rel. Spee d [1/s]	Double Step Length [m]	Rel Double Step Length	Double Step Duration [s]	Two Leg Stance [% DSD]				
Subject ID	ls	ls	ls	No m.	ls	No m.	ls	No m.	ls	No m.
ID L001251 (F)	3.9	0.64	1.3 5	1.24	0.8	1	0.8 1	0.71	17.5	21.9
ID L001250 (F)	4.2	0.72	1.2 7	1.39	0.7 9	0.76	1.1	1.08	20.5	21
ID L001232 (F)	3.8	0.68	1.1 7	1.28	0.7 7	0.73	1.1 2	1.1	23	21.4
ID L001233 (F)	4.6	0.72	1.5 7	1.32	0.8 9	0.76	1.2 3	1.08	21.5	21
ID L001237 (F)	3.2	0.55	1.2 1.1	1.14	0.7 4	0.65	1.3 3	1.21	23.5	23.2
ID L001236 (F)	3.6	0.65	1.1 8	1.24	0.7 6	0.71	1.1 7	1.13	24	21.9
ID L001234 (F)	3.6	0.62	1.1 7	1.22	0.7 4	0.69	1.1 8	1.15	18	22.2
ID L001235 (F)	3.6	0.65	1.2 1.5	1.24	0.7 8	0.71	1.2	1.13	24.5	21.8
ID L001238 (M)	4.6	0.73	1.5 3	1.34	0.8 8	0.77	1.2	1.07	20	20.9
ID L001253 (M)	3.9	0.71	1.2 2	1.31	0.8	0.75	1.1 3	1.09	21	21.1
ID L001256 (F)	4	0.69	1.2 4	1.29	0.7 5	0.74	1.0 8	1.1	23.5	21.3
ID L001257 (F)	4.1	0.78	1.2 4	1.39	0.8 4	0.8	1.0 8	1.04	22	20.4
ID L001261 (M)	3.4	0.58	1.0 5	1.17	0.6 4	0.67	1.1 1.0	1.18	19	22.7
ID L001259 (F)	3.9	0.75	1.1 2	1.35	0.7 7	0.77	1.0 3	1.06	19	20.7

ID L001260 (F)	4.1	0.7	1.2	6	1.3	6	0.74	1.1	1.1	20.5	21.3
ID L001255 (M)	4.5	0.81	1.4	8	1.41	6	0.81	8	1.02	21	20.1
ID L001254 (F)	3.5	0.62	1.0	9	1.22	0.7	0.69	2	1.15	21.5	22.2
ID L001258 (M)	3.8	0.61	1.3	5	1.2	8	0.68	9	1.16	19	22.4
Mean	3.90	0.67	1.2	1.28	0.7	0.74	1.1	1.08	21.0	21.5	
Standart Dev.	5	8	6	1	9	6	4	7	6	3	
	0.40	0.07	0.1	0.08	0.0	0.08	0.1	0.11	2.09	0.82	
			5		7		1				

Table 3. General gait Parameters 1

	Stancephase Duration, Left [% DSD]		Effective Foot Length, Left [%]		Width of Gait Line, Left [%]		Stancephase Duration, right [% DSD]		Effective Foot Length, Right [%]		Width of Gait Line, right [%]	
Subject ID	Is	No m.	Is	No m.	Is	No m.	Is	No m.	Is	No m.	Is	No m.
L001251 (F)	58	61.2	80.1	69.7	6.3	3.8	59.5	61.2	73.4	69.7	3.8	
L001250 (F)	60.5	60.7	73.4	69.7	3.1	3.8	60	60.7	71.8	69.7	3.8	
L001232 (F)	62	60.9	65.1	69.7	5.9	3.8	61	60.9	57.5	69.7	3.8	
L001233 (F)	60.5	60.7	66.8	69.7	5.4	3.8	61	60.7	65.9	69.7	3.8	
L001237 (F)	61.5	61.9	59.8	69.7	7.6	3.8	62	61.9	60.3	69.7	3.8	
L001236 (F)	63	61.2	71	69.7	1.4	3.8	61	61.2	54.8	69.7	3.8	
L001234 (F)	59.5	61.4	56.7	69.7	4.7	3.8	58.5	61.4	53.1	69.7	3.8	
L001235 (F)	61.5	61.2	62.6	69.7	5.1	3.8	63	61.2	64.8	69.7	3.8	

ID													
L001238	60. (M)	60. 5	70. 2	69. .7	4. 3	3. 8	59. 5	60. 6	76. 7	69. .7	4.1	3. 8	
ID													
L001253		60. (M)	60. 60	64. 8	69. .7	5. 1	3. 8	61	60. 8	69. 4	69. .7	3.5	3. 8
ID													
L001256	61. (F)	60. 5	77. 9	69. .7	2. 7	3. 8	62	60. 9	66. 5	69. .7	3.5	3. 8	
ID													
L001257	61. (F)	60. 5	65. 3	69. .7	9. 3	3. 8	60. 5	60. 3	62. 5	69. .7	7.7	3. 8	
ID													
L001261		61. (M)	61. 58	69. 7	2. 9	3. 8	61	61. 7	66. 7	69. .7	5.1	3. 8	
ID													
L001259		60. (F)	60. 58	63. 5	69. .7	3. 2	3. 8	61	60. 5	62. 6	69. .7	3.3	3. 8
ID													
L001260		60. (F)	60. 61	71. 8	69. 5	3. .7	3. 3	59. 5	60. 8	70. 8	69. .7	4.4	3. 8
ID													
L001255		60. (M)	60. 61	62. 1	69. 3	3. .7	3. 3	60	60. 1	62. 7	69. .7	5.3	3. 8
ID													
L001254		61. (F)	61. 5	69. 4	69. 2	3. .7	3. 4	62	61. 4	67. 7	69. .7	6.4	3. 8
ID													
L001258		61. (M)	61. 5	69. 5	69. 3	3. .7	3. 2	59. 5	61. 5	71. 7	69. .7	5	3. 8
ID													
Mean	60. 39	60. 98	67. 59	69. .7	4. 7	3. 8	60. 66	60. 98	65. 49	69. .7	5.4 611	3. 8	
Standart	1.4	0.4	5.9	0.	1.	0.	1.1	0.4	6.4	0.	1.9	0.	
Dev.	3	8	5	00	9	00	5	8	2	00	8	00	
					4								

T-Tests Results

Ten paired samples t-test were conducted, in order to compare values between "Is" and "Nom" values for each dependent variable (Table 4). These comparisons revealed statistically significant differences between "is" and "nom." measurements for the following variables: "RelDoubleStepLength", "DoubleStepDuration", "EffectiveFootLengthRight" and "WidthOfGaitRight" ($p<0.005$). For the rest of the variables the differences between "is" and "nom" values were not statistically

significant based on paired samples t-test results ($p>0.005$). Box-plot for "WidthOfGait" is presented in figure 5.

Table 4. Paired Samples Test results

Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences									
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	DoubleStepLength_Is -	-	.13095	.03087	-.08734	.04290	-.720	17	.481
	DoubleStepLength_Nom.	.02222							
Pair 2	RelDoubleStepLength_Is -	.04000	.07623	.01797	.00209	.07791	2.226	17	.040
	RelDoubleStepLength_Nom.								
Pair 3	DoubleStepDuration_Is -	.04944	.06958	.01640	.01485	.08404	3.015	17	.008
	DoubleStepDuration_Nom.								
Pair 4	TwoFootedStance_Is -	-.4722	2.2510	.5306	-1.5916	.6472	-.890	17	.386
	TwoFootedStanced_Nom.								
Pair 5	StancephaseDurationLeft_Is -	-.6000	1.5904	.3749	-1.3909	.1909	-1.601	17	.128
	StancephaseDurationLeft_Nom.								
Pair 6	EffectiveFootLengthLeft_Is -	-	5.9498	1.4024	-5.0643	.8532	-1.501	17	.152
	EffectiveFootLengthLeft_Nom.	2.1056							
Pair 7	WidthOfGaitLineLeft_Is -	.6722	1.9423	.4578	-.2937	1.6381	1.468	17	.160
	WidthOfGaitLineLeft_Nom.								
Pair 8	StancephaseDuration_Right_Is -	-.3222	1.1533	.2718	-.8957	.2513	-1.185	17	.252
	StancephaseDurationRight_Nom.								
Pair 9	EffectiveFootLengthRight_Is -	-	6.4249	1.5144	-7.4006	-	-2.777	17	.013
	EffectiveFootLengthRight_Nom.	4.2056					1.0105		
Pair 10	WidthOfGaitRight_Is -	1.6611	1.9814	.4670	.6758	2.6465	3.557	17	.002
	WidthOfGateRight_Nom.								

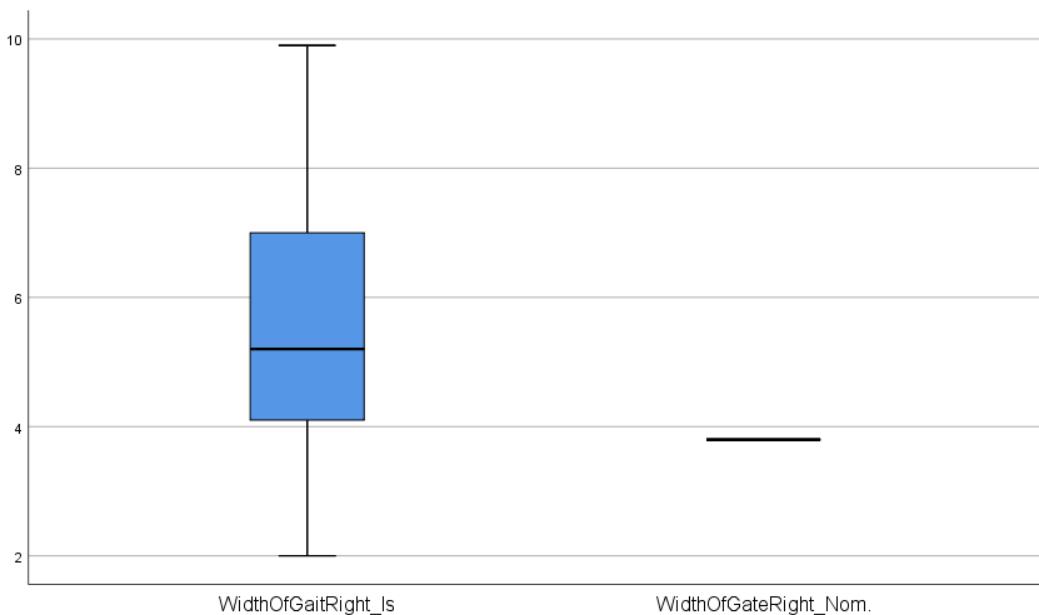


Figure 5. Box-plot for “WidthOfGait” distribution.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to assess the gait parameter in Albanian individuals with thalassemia. Based on the result of the “General Gait Parameters”, the “Double Step Length” mean were 1.26[m] and compared with the “Nom.” relative mean values that were 1.28[m] we have a difference of 0.2[m] which is an indication of an insecure gait. Nevertheless, mean results of “Double Step Duration [s]” parameter was 1.14[s] compared with the “Nom.” relative mean values that were 1.09[s] resulting in a non significant difference 0.05[s]. In the “Two Footed Stance [%DSD]” parameter the mean results were 21.06 [%DSD] compared with “Nom.” 21.53 [% DSD], indicating approximately 1[% DSD] which is not a high value to indicate a sign for an insecure gait (Table 2). Regarding the “Stancephase Duration of Left Foot [%DSD]” parameter, mean data results values were 60.39[%DSD] compared with the “Nom.” relative mean values that were 60.98[%DSD], which is not a significant difference to reveal any gait problem. Also “Stancephase Duration of Right Foot [%DSD]” parameter, mean data results values were 60.66[%DSD] compared with the “Nom.” relative mean values that were 60.88[%DSD], also demonstrates a non significant difference for any gait problem. The “Effective Foot Length, left [%]” parameter mean results [67.59%], reveals approximately a 2% difference compared with the relative “Nom.” mean [69.7%]. Also, the same parameter for the left foot (“Effective Foot Length, left [%]”) mean results [65.49%], reveals approximately a 3.5% difference compared with the relative “Nom.” mean [69.7%]. Both these parameters reveal a difference in the %

of the average gait line. Continuing with the “Width of Gait Line, left foot [%]” parameter, results [4.47%] show a minor difference [0.7%] compared with the relative “Nom.” mean [3.8%]. Also, the results of this parameter for the right foot (“Width of Gait Line, right foot [%]”) show a 1.66% difference compared with the relative normative mean [3.8%] (Table 3). These comparisons revealed statistically significant differences between “is” and “nom.” measurements for the following variables: “Rel Double Step Length”, “Double Step Duration”, “Effective Foot Length Right” and “Width Of Gait Right” ($p<0.005$). These parameters reveal a difference in the % of the average gait line which is related to effective distribution in the insole length showing a specific indication of insecure gait most probably related to the mentioned problems associated to this specific category population has. Results for the rest of the variables showed a not statistically significant difference.

Conclusions

To conclude, our findings showed that, β -thalassemia patients, based on the results had specific indicators revealing an insecure gait. Based on the result of the “General Gait Parameters”, we can say that gait problems are mostly related to the specific health related problem and side effects like, skeletal deformities and posture related problems, iron overload, high calcium levels related with periodic blood transfusions, inactivity associated with low muscle mass etc.

Recommendations

Future studies should be conducted involving larger β -thalassemia patients take into account the unique state of this category to better evaluate the gait problems also associated with general postural problems in static and dynamic phases. Clinicians’ health specialists and rehabilitation experts when planning B-Thal rehabilitation programs should use gait analysis exam as a regular health check-up.

Study Limitations

Some of this study limitations issues were the small sample size and also the lack of on physical activity intervention program in order to compare gait analysis data prior and after the intervention program. Also giving the specifics of the insoles and software usage and the specificities of this population category it was difficult to find normative data to compare with.

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Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination and Free Self-Determination in the Health Field in Italy

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic and the issues related to health emergency management have raised concerns about fundamental rights protection. One of the most complex and contentious issues in doctrine and jurisprudence is the introduction of mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for specified categories of subjects, such as healthcare workers and individuals of a specific age range, as occurred in Italy. The debate in Italy over the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement focuses on whether this obligation interferes with the individual's fundamental right to free self-determination as guaranteed by Article 32 of the Italian Constitution. In jurisprudence and doctrine, conflicting opinions are noted concerning this topic. Part of the doctrine argue that mandatory COVID-19 vaccination compromises some fundamental rights guaranteed by the Italian Constitution, such as the right to free self-determination and respect for human dignity. Other opinions find the basis of the vaccination in the community's best interests, citing Article 32 of the Italian Constitution, which allows for the imposition of compulsory health treatment to safeguard citizens' health. In this regard, the issue of mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requires a reflection on the balance of two fundamental rights: the individual right to free self-determination and the community's interest in terms of protecting public health.

Keywords: Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination, free self-determination, fundamental rights, human dignity, Italian Constitution

Introduction

This contribution analyses the much-discussed issue of the mandatory Covid-19 vaccination requirement that the Italian state adopted during the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Decree-Law of April 1, 2021, No. 44, converted into Law No. 76 of May 28, 2021, concerning the "*Urgent measures for the containment of the COVID-19 epidemic, in the matter of anti-SARS-CoV-2 vaccinations,*

*justice, and public competitions,"*¹ provided for the COVID-19 vaccination as an essential requirement for the exercise of the profession for all health professionals who carry out activities in public and private health, social-assistance establishments, as well as in pharmacies, parapharmacies, and professional offices. Subsequently, the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination has been extended to workers in residential and social facilities by Decree-Law No. 122/2021² and all Italian and non-Italian citizens residing in Italy of at least 50 years of age by Decree-Law No. 1/2022³.

This obligation has been the subject of several rulings by some regional courts, which have raised the question of constitutional legitimacy because it interferes with the enjoyment of some fundamental rights guaranteed by the Italian Constitution.

A second relevant profile relating to mandatory COVID-19 vaccination is the provision of informed consent before the vaccination. In this regard, a brief reflection on the nature of informed consent is necessary, considering that the latter assumes relevance only for voluntary medical treatment.

Methodology

This paper carries out a legal and philosophical analysis of the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement introduced by the Italian legislator. For this purpose, the study is composed of three parts: The first section addresses the concept of free self-determination in the health field, its relevance in health protection, and the restrictions placed on this principle by the Italian Constitution. The second section explores the diverse doctrinal and legal perspectives on obligatory COVID-19 vaccination. The last part of the study focuses on discussions regarding the principal concerns and issues raised by various Italian courts about mandatory COVID-19 vaccination.

To better comprehend the topic of compulsory COVID-19 vaccination, the study employs qualitative research methods, taking into account the various perspectives offered by doctrine and jurisprudence.

¹ Decree-law 1 April 2021, No. 44, converted into law 28 May 2021, No. 76, "Urgent measures for the containment of the COVID-19 epidemic, in the matter of anti-SARS-CoV-2 vaccinations, justice, and public competitions", in GU General Series No. 128 of 31-05-2021.

² Article 2, Decree-Law No. 122/2021, "Urgent measures to deal with the COVID-19 emergency in schools, higher education, and social and healthcare facilities", in GU No. 217 of 10-09-2021.

³ Decree-Law 7 January 2022, No. 1, "Urgent measures to deal with the COVID-19 emergency, in particular in the workplace, schools, and higher education institutes", converted with amendments by Law 4 March 2022, No. 18, in GU No. 56 of 03/08/2022.

Free self-determination as a fundamental right

Informed consent is an essential prerequisite for any medical treatment. In line with Article 32 of the Constitution, no medical treatment can be carried out without the person's prior and explicit consent. The necessity of informed consent to medical treatment is foreseen by a variety of sources, including international law sources such as the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, adopted in Oviedo on April 4, 1997, ratified by law No. 145 on March 28, 2001, in Article 5 and Article 3 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, proclaimed in Nice on December 7, 2000.

The patient's free self-determination in the constitutional design includes not only the right to express free consent after being informed but also the right to express dissent and refuse (See Montange, 1973-1974, p. 1664; Furramani & Bushati, 2021, pp. 268 et seq.) or suspend a medical treatment already in progress when possible. The purpose of informed consent is to make the patient aware of his state of health (Bilancetti, 1997, pp. 354 et seq.) while also allowing him to participate in the selection of medical treatment by adequately informing him (See Cass. Pen., Sez. Un., 21 January 2009, No. 2437; Pulitanò, 2007, p. 1209; Rodriguez, 2014, p. 572) on health conditions, diagnosis, prognosis, potential risks of treatment, alternative medical treatments, and the consequences of refusing the medical treatment¹ (See Furramani & Bushati, 2021, p. 266 et seq.; Furramani, 2017, pp. 364-365; Fresa, 2008, p. 67; Ruggiero, 1996, p. 192; Norelli & Mazzeo, 2001, pp. 63 et seq.). It is crucial to recognize that free self-determination is a fundamental right that safeguards a person's health², and for this reason, a considerable part of the doctrine considers it an essential instrument for fully implementing the right to health (Casonato, 1995, p. 195; Gennari, 2006, p. 1413; Guerra, 2008, p. 438; Gorgoni, 1999, pp. 488 et seq.; Santossuoso, 1996, p. 16; Furramani, 2017, p. 364).

Limits to the patient's free self-determination: Compulsory health treatment

The implementation of compulsory health treatment is an exception to the general rule that medical treatment must be voluntary. In the constitutional provision, obligatory medical treatment is covered by the absolute legal reserve (Veronesi, 2011, p. 63; Mazzacuva, 1984, pp. 424 et seq.; Gribaudi, 2012, p. 6; Casciaro & Santese, 2012, p. 234; Della Rocca, 2014, p. 394; Vallini, 2008, p. 71; Eusebi, 1995, p. 734;

¹ Article 1, Law 22 No. 219, December 2017, "Rules on informed consent and advance directives on treatment", in GU No. 12 of 16.01.2018.

² Article 2 of the Italian Constitution: "The Republic recognizes and guarantees the inviolable rights of man, both as an individual and in the social formations where his personality takes place, and requires the fulfillment of the mandatory duties of political, economic, and social solidarity."

Negroni, 2021, p. 110) to protect public health (Veronesi, 2011, p. 64)¹, while respecting the human person.

On closer inspection, compulsory health treatment must necessarily involve a benefit for the community's health since it compromises the fundamental rights of the individual, such as his free self-determination and his right to health (Casclaro & Santese, 2012, pp. 112–113), and from here we can notice the collective dimension of the right to health as an interest of the community. According to Italian legislation, to impose compulsory health treatment, it is necessary to present a current, concrete, and direct danger to the community (Veronesi, 2011, p. 69). In addition to protecting collective health, medical treatment must also protect the health of the individual who undergoes it² (Veronesi, 2011, p. 69; Mantovani, 1992, p. 61). Only in this way is it permissible to limit a person's free self-determination and ensure a fair balance in the protection of fundamental rights.

In the opinion of Carlassare, "*any limitation to freedom (...) must find an adequate justification in the collective interests, taking into account that in principle, the Constitution makes affirmations of freedom and the limitations are not the rule but the exception*" (Carlassare, 1967, pp. 110–111). According to this opinion, the Constitution guarantees individual freedom, and the latter can be limited only in exceptional cases in the presence of a relevant interest of the community (See Negroni, 2021, p. 41).

This orientation finds its basis in the jurisprudence of the Italian Constitutional Court in Decision No. 307 of 1990, in which the Court examines the admissibility requirements of compulsory health treatment. In this case, the Court found that "*compulsory health treatment is applied only when it does not negatively affect the state of health of the person who is obliged, except for those consequences which, due to their temporariness and insignificance, appear normal for any health intervention and therefore tolerable.*"³ The Court also recognized the right of the individual to compensation for damage, even minimal damage, suffered as a consequence of compulsory health treatment (See C. Cost., June 22, 1990, No. 307; Flick, 2013, p. 19; Fineschi, 1990, pp. 924 et seq.).

According to a part of the doctrine that carries out a combined reading of Article 32 of the Constitution, compulsory health treatment necessarily requires the coexistence of individual and collective interests. In this context, it must not have a detrimental

¹ See Cass., Sez. III, 30 January 2009, No. 2468, in *Giust. civ.*, 2009, 4-5, I, p. 885.; Even when public interest is in danger, Law No. 180/1987, in Article 1, Paragraph 5, provides that: "*The compulsory medical examinations and treatments (...) must be accompanied by initiatives aimed at ensuring the consent and participation of those who are obliged.*"

² ECHR, *Vavřička and others v. The Czech Republic*, applications nos. 47621/13 and 5 others.

³ In this sense, Italian Constitutional Court Decisions Nos. 5/2018; 307, 22 June 1990, in *Riv. it. med. leg.*, 1990, p. 914; 218/1994, 258/1994, and 118/1996.

impact on personal health and must avoid causing harm or endangering community health¹ (Carlassare, 1967, pp. 109 et seq.; Vincenzi Amato, 1976, p. 172 et seq.; Sandulli, 1978, p. 517; Luciani, 1980, p. 782; Modugno, 1982, pp. 311 et seq.; Veronesi, 2011, pp. 154-155; Negroni, 2021, pp. 39-40).

In this sense, also based on the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, compulsory health treatment does not represent any incompatibility profile with Article 32 of the Constitution if the latter is aimed at safeguarding both individual and community health². On the other hand, it should be noted that in Decision No. 307 of 1990, the Constitutional Court also stated that: "*The constitutional importance of health as an interest of the community is not alone sufficient to justify the health measure. This observation (...) does not imply that each person's health should be sacrificed for the protection and health of others*"³.

The mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement in the Italian legislation

The imposition of the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement by the Italian legislator, in Article 4 of the law decree of 1 April 2021, No. 44, converted into Law No. 76/2021, has involved great debates in doctrine and jurisprudence, and it must be noted that today there is still no univocal interpretation on the topic. The basic question is whether this vaccination violates some fundamental rights that are constitutionally guaranteed, such as the right to free self-determination in the medical field and human dignity, along with a series of other constitutionally guaranteed rights, such as the right to work and to receive a salary. The issue has been the subject of legal debates and several decisions by regional administrative courts.

Part of the doctrine, contrary to the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement, has advanced the theory that COVID-19 vaccines, such as those from Pfizer BioNTech, AstraZeneca, and Moderna, approved by the European Union's competent authorities, represent a type of experimental medical treatment (Negroni, 2021, p. 128). In support of this thesis, the doctrine underlines that those vaccinations have been authorized by the EMA through conditional marketing authorization, taking into account that it is impossible to report comprehensive and complete data on the drug's effectiveness and long-term side effects. Conditional marketing authorization is usually issued when the pharmaceutical product presents insufficient data and evidence compared to the regular approval, and the producer must submit comprehensive risk and benefit data after the authorization (Cenci, 2021, p. 5). In this respect, part of the doctrine (Negroni, 2021; Cenci, 2021) considers that mandatory vaccination against COVID-19 exposes the person to unknown health risks, given that

¹ Italian Constitutional Court, Decisions Nos. 307/1990; 218/1994; 258/1994; 118/1996; 27/1998; 226/2000; 107/2012; 368/2017; 5/2018.

² Italian Constitutional Court, Decision No. 307/1990.; In the same direction ECHR, *Vavřička, and others v. The Czech Republic*, applications nos. 47621/13 and 5 others.

³ In the same direction, the Italian Constitutional Court, Decision No. 118/1996.

long-term damage is impossible to predict and the safety and efficacy of vaccines are not certified by complete clinical evidence.

In this regard, the doctrine highlights that the notion of free self-determination in the medical field, as enshrined in Article 32 of the Italian Constitution, contains another fundamental principle according to which no one can be subjected to medical experimentation. This concept emphasizes respect for human dignity and human beings. Consequently, experimental medical treatment, including mandatory vaccination, cannot be imposed even by law as it contrasts with the letter and spirit of Article 32 of the Italian Constitution (Negroni, 2021, pp. 120-122).

Another concern about obligatory vaccination is the harm caused by COVID-19 vaccines. Doctrine and jurisprudence perceive these damages as superior to normal tolerance, resulting in a conflict between the individual and collective dimensions (Baccarra & Rinaldi, 2022, p. 64). A part of the doctrine, based on the Constitutional Court's ruling No. 307 of 1990, considers that mandatory vaccination generally affects individuals' health, causing damages in the pursuit of collective interest, but these damages are permissible if they are bearable or of normal tolerance. Accordingly, the doctrine based on statistics, argues that adverse events, including fatal ones caused by COVID-19 vaccines, are significantly superior to those of vaccines practiced for years and cannot fall into the category of events of normal tolerability (Cenci, 2021, p. 19).

The court of Padua intervened on the topic of mandatory vaccination and evaluated the vaccination obligation based on the proportionality of the measure taken in relation to the objective it seeks to achieve. In this sense, the Court of Padua ruled that compulsory vaccination against COVID-19 is "*unsuitable - and thus unreasonable (...) - to achieve the intended purpose*"¹, declaring it in violation of the principles of proportionality, adequacy, and reasonableness guaranteed by Article 3 of the Italian Constitution and Articles 15 and 52, first paragraph, of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights (Tundo, 2022).

Contrary to the above, another part of the doctrine believes that vaccines against COVID-19 are not experimental and that even if approved by the competent authorities with conditional authorization, they have exhausted the experimentation phase (Barracca & Rinaldi, 2022, p. 54). In the same direction, we find the decision of the Italian Council of State No. 7045 of 20.20.2021, which highlights that COVID-19 vaccines are effective and not experimental (Baccarra & Rinaldi, 2022, p. 68). With this decision, the Council of State emphasized the significance of two fundamental rights: on the one hand, the right of the individual to free self-determination and, on the other hand, the right to health as a community interest, both guaranteed by Article

¹ Court of Padua, Judgment of 28 April 2022. In this direction also T.A.R. Lombardia, Sez. 1, 16 giugno 2022, No. 1397.

32 of the Constitution, accentuating the need for a fair balance between these two fundamental rights¹. In this regard, the Council of State refers to Decision No. 5 of 2018 of the Italian Constitutional Court concerning the mandatory vaccination requirement for minors introduced in 2017, where the latter declares that the imposition of compulsory health treatment is not incompatible with Article 32 of the Italian Constitution if the medical treatment is directed to recover or preserve the health of the person who is obliged and to protect the community's health² (See Pisani, 2022, p. 911); the compulsory health treatment must not adversely affect the state of health of those subjected to it, except for tolerable consequences; and in the case of damage to the subject's health, the law must provide fair compensation in favor of the latter. However, in all cases, this treatment must respect the human person³ (Negroni, 2021, p. 38). Therefore, the Council declared that the doubts about the constitutional legitimacy of the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement, introduced by Decree-Law No. 44/2021, were manifestly unfounded.

This decision has been the subject of criticism from a part of the doctrine (Conti, 2022), specifically when it considers manifestly unfounded the question of constitutional legitimacy proposed by the applicants. On this occasion, Article 4 of Decree-Law No. 44 of April 1, 2021, converted with amendments into Law No. 76 of May 28, 2021, was alleged to be in contrast with Article 32 (free self-determination) and Article 3 of the Italian Constitution in terms of reasonableness, proportionality, and equality, together with a series of other articles, including Articles 2, 9, 33, 1, 2, 4, 35, and 36 of the Italian Constitution. As a result, Conti observes that the rejection of the constitutional legitimacy check of the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement reveals the system's poor health in terms of constitutional guarantees (Conti, 2022).

Despite the rejection of the question of constitutional legitimacy by the Council of State, several regional courts have found this question not unfounded⁴, leaving the final verdict to the Constitutional Court, which has scheduled a hearing for the following November 29th. The Administrative Justice Council for the Region of Sicily, with Ordinance No. 351 of March 22, 2022, was one of the courts that considered the issue of constitutional legitimacy to be not unfounded. In this ordinance, the Council analyzes the requirements for the legitimacy of obligatory health treatment. Based on Constitutional Court Decision No. 307/1990, the Council reaffirms that compulsory medical treatment must preserve and benefit the health of the obliged subject, as well

¹ Council of State, Third Section, 20 October 2021, No. 7045, para. 35.

² Italian Constitutional Court, Decision No. 5/2018.

³ Italian Constitutional Court, Decision No. 307/1990.

⁴ See T.A.R. Lombardia, Sez. 1, 16 giugno 2022, No. 1397; Administrative Justice Council for the Region of Sicily, Ordinance No. 351 of March 22, 2022.

as protect public health and if adverse events occur, they must enter the limit of normal tolerability.

The Council ordinance raises critical issues concerning mandatory vaccination, including the adverse effects of COVID-19 vaccines. In this regard, the Court refers to the Supervisory Institute's statistics on the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine, where it is noted that the percentage of adverse events occurring is well above the average of adverse effects occurring with vaccines used for years¹. The Court's concern is whether adverse effects fall within the normal tolerance, considering the relatively low number of cases with fatal outcomes. In light of the findings of pharmacovigilance controls based on spontaneous reporting of adverse events, the Council concludes that the tolerance limit for adverse events has been surpassed (Gambardella, 2022). Another critical profile that the Council highlights concerns the collection of informed consent, even in the case of mandatory vaccination. The Council observes that informed consent is relevant in the context of free willful self-determination but not in the context of a legal obligation². In case of compulsory vaccination should be provided an information document³. In the opinion of the Council, Article 4, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Decree-Law No. 44/2021 (converted into Law No. 76/2021) conflicts with some Articles of the Italian Constitution, such as: "*Article 3 (under the parameters of rationality and proportionality); Article 32 (in terms of the impact on free self-determination regarding health treatments that have effects that are neither mild nor transitory); Article 97 (good performance, also about the criticalities of the monitoring system); Article 4 (right to work); Articles 33 and 34 (right to education); Article 21 (right to free expression, which includes the right to dissent)*"⁴.

However, the question of the legitimacy of the mandatory COVID-19 vaccine requirement has not yet found a definitive answer. Consider the orientation of the European Court of Human Rights, which has deemed inadmissible the request to suspend the mandatory vaccination requirement under Article 39 of the ECHR, presented by firefighters and first aid workers in France due to the provision of the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement⁵. The Court ruled that the applicant's request was inadmissible because there was no risk of infringement of the rights guaranteed by Articles 2 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights⁶.

¹ Administrative Justice Council for the Region of Sicily, Ordinance No. 351 of 22.03.2022, para. 18.1.

² According to Giovanni Maria Flick, informed consent has no relevance in front of a legal obligation (Milella, 2022).

³ Administrative Justice Council for the Region of Sicily, Ordinance No. 351 of 22.03.2022, para. 18.7.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ French Law No. 1040/2021, 5 August 2021.

⁶ ECtHR, *Abgrall and other 671 v. France*, dec., No. 41950/21, 24 August 2021.

Discussions

To adequately address the topic of compulsory vaccination against COVID-19, we have to consider several issues. In the first place, we have to assess whether this obligation violates human dignity, as noticed by Negroni (See Negroni, 2021). Accordingly, it is necessary to analyze whether vaccination against COVID-19 represents an experimental treatment. In this respect, we have to consider that the vaccines against COVID-19 have obtained conditional marketing authorization from the EMA for the immediate use of drugs due to the grave health situation caused by COVID-19 after having exhausted the experimental phase (Barracca & Rinaldi, 2022, p. 54). Based on these statements, part of the doctrine and jurisprudence exclude that they constitute an experimental treatment (Barracca & Rinaldi, 2022; Council of State, No. 7045/2021). On the other hand, we have to take into account the fact that these vaccines produce adverse effects, and this has been reported by the evidence of the institute of pharmacovigilance based on spontaneous reporting of adverse events¹ and long-term effects are impossible to know, considering the lack of complete and exhaustive evidence.

The second concern is the infringement of the principle of free self-determination in the health field. In this sense, Article 32 of the Italian Constitution guarantees the right to free self-determination in all decisions concerning health and psycho-physical integrity; on the other hand, this article provides a limitation of free self-determination to protect public health in the cases explicitly provided for by law. For this purpose, we should consider the decision of the Italian Constitutional Court No. 5/2018, which recently declared that the vaccinal obligation imposed on minors is not incompatible with Article 32 of the Italian Constitution.

When interpreting this statement, we must consider the requirements that need to be met by mandatory medical treatment. According to the Italian Constitutional Court decision No. 307/1990, compulsory medical treatment must preserve and benefit the health of the obliged subject, as well as protect public health, and if adverse events occur, they must enter the limit of normal tolerability. So the question that doctrine and jurisprudence see as crucial is whether adverse events caused by COVID-19 vaccines, including the rare fatal ones, fall into the category of tolerable events. In this context, the principal question is what should be considered "tolerable" in light of the Italian Constitutional Court's view. On the other hand, this assessment may require complete and exhaustive evidence regarding the long-term adverse effects of these vaccinations, which is currently lacking.

The last concern is whether the legislator's obligation complies with the principles of proportionality, equality, and rationality of the measure adopted concerning the goal

¹ *Rapporto sulla sorveglianza dei vaccini anti COVID-19*, 12, 27.12.2020 – 26.6.2022, retrieved from:https://www.aifa.gov.it/documents/20142/1315190/Rapporto_sorveglianza_vaccini_COVID-19_12.pdf.

to be achieved, as outlined in Article 3 of the Italian Constitution¹. In this sense, we have to assess whether this is the only measure to protect public health or whether other more appropriate measures with the same purpose are possible. It is crucial to recognize that the issue of mandatory Covid-19 vaccination is a complex and delicate ethical, political, and legal issue with two significant interests at stake that are diametrically opposed: on the one hand, the individual's interest in protecting his health and not being forced to undergo unwanted medical treatment; on the other hand, public health protection.

Conclusions

The aim of the present research was to examine the different concerns that the mandatory Covid-19 vaccination requirement has raised in Italy. The findings of this study indicate that we have to consider the issue of mandatory COVID-19 vaccination in light of two fundamental principles: free self-determination in health choices on one side and public health on the other. In this context, the Italian Constitutional Court has the difficult task of analyzing whether the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination interferes with the delicate balance between individual and public health, considering the adverse events caused by COVID-19 vaccines.

The most acceptable thesis seems to be the less intrusive policy, which respects individual autonomy in decisions involving health and psycho-physical integrity (Negroni, 2021, pp. 86-87). In this respect, the lawmaker is recommended to consider appropriate measures that respect individual autonomy while also preserving public health.

The issue of the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement in Italy is still controversial, considering that several regional courts have raised doubts about its constitutional legitimacy. Subsequently, the Italian Constitutional Court has set the first hearing for November 29, 2022, in such a way as to express the compliance of this obligation with the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Italian Constitution.

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Transfer of Personal Data to Third Countries and the “Equivalent Level” of Protection According to the European Court of Justice

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Abstract

The focus of this study is the transfer of personal data to third countries or international organizations according to EU Regulation No. 679/2016 (GDPR) on the protection of personal data. The primary goal of this Regulation concerning data transfer to third countries is to ensure that the subject's rights and freedoms are safeguarded at the same level as provided by GDPR. According to GDPR, before any transfer to a third country or international organization, it must first be ascertained whether the European Commission has established that a third country ensures an adequate level of protection. Regarding personal data protection in the third state, the Court of Justice of the European Union has intervened on different occasions. In the last decision, in 2020, the Court declared invalid the European Commission's Decision No. 2016/1250 on the adequacy of the protection provided by the EU-US Privacy Shield (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16) because it does not provide effective and enforceable rights for personal data subjects in cases of interference. According to the Court of Justice of the European Union, the US does not guarantee an "essentially equivalent" level of protection to that provided by the European Union under Article 45(1) GDPR, read in conjunction with Articles 7, 8, and 47 of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights, which guarantee respect for private and family life, personal data protection, and the right to effective judicial protection.

Keywords: GDPR, personal data, transfer, third country, Privacy Shield.

1. Introduction

The rapid evolution of the digital economy and the considerable changes in international trade have brought new challenges regarding personal data protection. One of the challenges the European Union faces today is data transfer from European Union or Exclusive Economic Area countries to other countries or international organizations outside this area (Kirschen, 2019, p. 262). The European Union Regulation No. 679/2016 (General Data Protection Regulation, hereafter GDPR) provides that the transfer of personal data outside the European Union or the

Economic Exclusive Area is generally prohibited unless the state in question offers the appropriate safeguards (GDPR, 2019; EDPB, 2018). The principal purpose of this provision is to protect personal data and preserve the security provided by EU legislation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Recital 6; EDPB, 2018). From this perspective, the transfer of personal data to third countries or international organizations should be accompanied by the protection established for personal data in the European Union (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16). In this regard, on July 16, 2020, the Court of Justice of the European Union found that the United States does not provide an "*essentially equivalent*" level of protection to that provided by the European Union, invalidating the European Commission's adequacy decision No. 2016/1250.

2. Methodology

This paper focuses on the transfer of personal data from the European Union or Exclusive Economic Area to countries or international organizations outside this area according to European Union Regulation No. 679/2016.

This research uses qualitative research methods to analyze the transfer of personal data outside the European Union and the guarantees provided for personal data protection. The paper is divided into three sections, where the first part refers to the concept of personal data and the transfer of personal data according to the EU Regulation. The second section of the paper examines the provisions of the EU Regulation governing the transfer of personal data to third countries and all of the criteria that must be satisfied if a transfer occurs. The third part of this paper refers to the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union, which has intervened, highlighting the importance of the "equivalent level" of personal data protection in the case of transfer to third countries. The third part of this paper includes discussions concerning the critical issues the Court of Justice of the European Union raised concerning the equivalent level of protection.

3. Transfer of personal data

The GDPR specifies that personal data signifies any information relating to a particular person that may be identified or identifiable (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Recital 26). Under the first paragraph of Article 4 of the Regulation, personal data refers to "*any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier, or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural, or social identity of that natural person*" (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Article 4). In light of the above, any information that may be used to identify an individual, such as a name (See Valsecchi, 2022, p. LII-LIII), phone number, or other information that may be linked to an IP

address or cookie identifier, should be deemed personal data (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Recital 30; Arnaboldi, 2018, p. 25).

The protection of personal data is a fundamental right under Article 8 (1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and Article 16 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Recital 1). On the one hand, these documents provide that everyone, regardless of nationality or residence, has the right to personal data protection (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Recital 1 and 14). Nonetheless, the right to personal data protection is not absolute, and it must be evaluated in relation to its purpose in society in order to strike a balance with other rights in line with the principle of proportionality. (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Recital 4; CJEU, C-507/17, 2019, September 24; C-92/09 and C-93/09, 2010, November 9; Schwarz, C-291/12, 2013, October 17; EDPB, 2020, p. 9). In this context, the right to data protection may be restricted when necessary to protect the rights or freedoms of others under EU legislation (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, para. 174). In this regard, the European Data Protection Board in 2020 adopted recommendations for controllers and processors based on the principle of accountability, which requires them to ensure the equivalent level of protection guaranteed by the GDPR in every transfer of personal data to third countries or international organizations (EDPB, 2020, p. 5-8).

Pursuant to Article 44 of GDPR, the EU Regulation applies to "*any transfer of personal data which is undergoing processing or is intended for processing after transfers to a third country or to an international organization.*" The term "transfer" refers to any type of transmission activity that can take place via any form or device (Kirschen, 2019, p. 264; Piroddi, 2021, p. 621), excluding dissemination and communication in the strict sense (Rich. Imperiali & Ros. Imperiali, 2003, pp. 8 et seq.). The Court of Justice of the European Union has commented on the notion of "transfer" more than once. In the Lindqvist case, the Court of Justice of the European Union has analyzed whether the mere fact of uploading personal data to a website stored by a server located in the same state or another state, should be considered a "transfer". On this occasion, the Court has concluded that the uploading of personal data onto an Internet page does not constitute a transfer of personal data, even when those data are accessible to "*anyone who connects to the internet, including people in a third country*" (CJEU, Case C-101/01). Subsequently, in the Schrimm I case of October 6, 2015, the Court of Justice deals with the notion of transfer, including "*any operation or set of operations carried out with or without the aid of automated processes and applied to personal data*" (CJEU, C-362/2014, para. 45).

4. Conditions for allowing the transfer of personal data to third countries or international organizations

According to Article 45 of the GDPR, several steps must be taken to enable the transfer of personal data from the EU or EEA countries to third countries or international

organizations. The first step in the transfer of personal data is to assess whether the destination country or the international organization provides an adequate level of protection (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Article 45 (1), Recital 103). In this regard, it is necessary to know whether there is a European Commission decision on the adequacy of the country where the transfer will take place. Through this decision, the European Commission states that the country offers adequate protection for the rights and freedoms related to personal data by allowing the transfer of data if it is under the provisions of the Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Recital 103). In assessing the adequacy of the level of protection, the European Commission, based on Article 45, Paragraph 2 of the GDPR, considers various elements such as laws, respect for human rights and freedoms, national security, rules of personal data protection, the existence of a data protection authority, and binding commitments made by the country concerning data protection (Kirschen, 2019, pp. 269-270; Piroddi, 2021, pp. 634-639; Bernardi, 2020, p. 144). Another requirement added by the Regulation is that the Commission conduct a review of the adequacy decision every four years (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 Article 45, paras (3), (2a, 2b, 2c), (5), and Recitals 103 and 104; Arnaboldi, 2018, p. 173).

When a third country, according to the EU Commission, does not offer an adequate level of data protection, transfer to the latter is not permanently prohibited, but some other conditions are provided. It may, however, continue to comply with the provisions relating to transfers subject to appropriate safeguards (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Article 46 (1), (2), and Recital 108; EDPB, 2020; EU Regulation No. 2018/1725, Article 48) according to Article 46, paragraph 2. Based on Recital 108 of the GDPR, the appropriate safeguards provided for by Article 46¹ must respect the protection of the personal data of the interested parties and ensure effective administrative or judicial remedies together with the possibility of compensation for damages (Recital 108, GDPR; Kirschen, 2019, p. 272; Piroddi, 2021, pp. 642-643; De Mozzi, 2022, p. 141). In the absence of the appropriate safeguards, Article 49 of the GDPR provides for some derogations to the general principle that personal data may be transferred to a third country if the latter provides for an appropriate level of protection. The basic rule for performing any data transfer is that the data exporter

¹ According to Article 46, paragraph 2, the appropriate safeguards consist of: "(a) A legally binding and enforceable instrument between public authorities or bodies; (b) Binding corporate rules in accordance with Article 47; (c) Standard data protection clauses adopted by the Commission in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 93(2); (d) Standard data protection clauses adopted by a supervisory authority and approved by the Commission pursuant to the examination procedure referred to in Article 93(2); (e) An approved code of conduct according to Article 40 together with binding and enforceable commitments of the controller or processor in the third country to apply the appropriate safeguards, including as regards data subjects' rights; (f) An approved certification mechanism according to Article 42 together with binding and enforceable commitments of the controller or processor in the third country".

must first respect the adequate level of protection under the provisions of Article 46 to guarantee the exercise of fundamental rights concerning the processing of personal data and only, in the absence of the latter, utilize the derogations provided for in Article 49 (1) (Arnaboldi, 2018, p. 182). These derogations allow the transfer of data in specific situations, such as based on the explicit, informed consent of the interested party, for the performance or termination of a contract, for the exercise of lawful requirements, to protect the vital interests of the data subject, when they cannot give consent or for important reasons of public interest (See Piroddi, 2021, pp. 675-677; Arnaboldi, 2018, p. 181). Given the fact that derogations do not provide adequate protection or guarantees for the personal data being transferred (Kirschen, 2019, p. 285; Piroddi, 2021, p. 679) and that they do not require prior authorization from a national supervisory authority (EDPB, 2018, p. 4), the rights and freedoms of the data subjects being transferred may be at risk. The condition to be met in the case of derogations is that transfers must be random, necessary, and not repetitive (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Article 49 (1); EDPB, 2018, p. 4; De Mozzi, 2022, p. 143; Bernardi, 2020, p. 149). In case of application of this derogation, must be informed the Supervisory Authority and the interested party for the transfer and the legitimate interests pursued.

5. The invalidation of the European Commission's Decision No. 2016/1250 on the adequacy of the protection provided by the EU-US Privacy Shield by the Court of Justice of the European Union

The Court of Justice of the European Union has issued two important decisions on the transfer of personal data from the EU to the United States. The first decision, on October 6, 2015 (Schrems I), declared the invalidity of Decision No. 2000/520 regarding the Safe Harbour Agreement (Commission Decision 2000/520/EC) because it failed to provide an adequate level of protection required by Directive 95/46 for the transfer of personal data from the European Union or Exclusive Economic Area to the United States. And in the second decision (Schrems II), the Court of Justice of the European Union declared the invalidity of the European Commission's Decision No. 2016/1250 on the adequacy of the protection provided by the EU-US Privacy Shield (Commission Decision No. 2016/1250) because it didn't ensure a level of protection for personal data equivalent to the European legislation (See Piroddi, 2021, p. 625; De Mozzi, 2022, p. 151). The European Commission's decision No. 2016/1250, on the adequacy of the protection provided by the EU-US Privacy Shield, adopted in 2016, provided for the possibility of the transfer of personal data from the European Union to the United States. This tool was used by businesses in the EU or EEA to transfer personal data to US companies listed on the Privacy Shield and provided specific guarantees for personal data protection (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16).

The issue concerns an Austrian national who was a Facebook user whose personal information was transmitted from Facebook Ireland to Facebook Inc., situated in the

United States. Mr. Schrems filed a complaint with the Commissioner in June 2013 to prohibit the transfer of his data to the United States, claiming that the latter did not ensure the same level of protection as guaranteed by the European Union (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, paras 50, 51 and 52). Following a reformulation of Mr. Schrems' complaint, the Commissioner published a draft decision stating that the personal data transferred to the US was destined to be consulted and processed in a manner that was incompatible with Articles 7, 8, and 47 of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, paras 55 and 56). As a result, the Commissioner took the issue to the High Court.

According to the High Court, the United States processed personal data without ensuring adequate protection as provided for in Articles 7 and 8 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. As a result, European nationals' data was not protected at the same level as American citizens. To begin with, the Court declared that the United States Constitution's fourth amendment does not apply to European nationals. According to the Court, the protection of the personal data of European individuals encounters some obstacles. The first issue is the *locus standi*. The second is the National Security Agency's (NSA) activity, which includes copying and filtering internet traffic flows without being subject to judicial oversight. And the third issue is the Privacy Shield's Ombudsperson, who is not a tribunal in the sense of Article 47 of the Charter (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, para. 65). So the High Court brought the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union for a preliminary ruling.

The Court of Justice of the European Union in the case Schrems II examined various issues, concluding that, according to Article 45 GDPR, the transfer of personal data from the EU or EEA to a third country or international organization should be based on an adequacy decision of the Commission. In the absence of the latter, the controller or processor may transfer the personal data only in the presence of "appropriate safeguards" to guarantee the appropriate protection of the subjects' rights and effective legal remedies (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, paras. 91 and 92) under article 46 GDPR. In this sense, the controller or the processor may transfer personal data from the EU or EEA to a third country only in the presence of effective protection of personal data "essentially equivalent" to the GDPR.

The Court considers the role of national supervisory authorities in the protection of personal data in accordance with Article 51 (1) and 57 (1) GDPR, stating that national authorities are responsible for ensuring that the EU Regulation requirements are followed when personal data is transferred from the EU or EEA to third countries or international organizations (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, para. 107 and case C-362/14, 2015, October 6, Schrems I, para. 47; Piroddi, 2021, p. 631; De Mozzi, 2022, p. 151). Even if the Commission has issued an adequacy decision allowing the transfer of personal data, the national supervisory authority should be able to investigate a complaint and determine whether the transferred data meets the GDPR's standards (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, para. 120).

According to the Court, the European Commission Decision No. 2016/1250 affects the fundamental rights of people whose personal data is transferred from the European Union to the United States because of the restrictions provided for by this decision. These restrictions are based on national security and public interest considerations as well as US domestic legislation (Commission Decision, No. 2016/1250, 2016, July 12, para. 1.5, Annex II, Recitals 67-137), and are particularly related to the access or use of personal data by US public authorities (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, paras. 164-165). However, the Privacy Shield stipulates that restrictions are placed only where they are essential for a legitimate goal and that the subject's rights are protected (Commission Decision, No. 2016/1250, 2016, July 12, Recital 140).

The Court of Justice of the European Union argues that the communication of personal data to public authorities under US law constitutes an infringement on the fundamental rights guaranteed by Articles 7 and 8 of the Charter (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, para. 171; De Mozzi, 2022, p. 151). On the other hand, the Court believes that the interferences with the subjects' rights are not limited to what is strictly necessary and do not respect the proportionality principle established by the European regulation (CJEU, Press release No. 91/20).

In this sense, the Court of Justice of the European Union considers that the Privacy Shield does not ensure, in the cases of interference, effective and enforceable rights to the subject whose data has been transferred (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, paras 168 and 181) in violation of Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which provides the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial. Furthermore, because the Privacy Shield's ombudsperson is appointed by the Secretary of State, it is not an independent institution and is not a tribunal within the meaning of Article 47 of the Charter (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, para. 168).

In conclusion, the Court found that the United States does not provide an "essentially equivalent" level of protection to that provided by the European Union under Article 45(1) GDPR, read in light of Articles 7, 8, and 47 of the Charter, which guarantee respect for private and family life, personal data protection, and the right to effective judicial protection, invalidating the adequacy decision. Accordingly, the transfer from the European Union to the United States should be based on other instruments under Chapter V of EU Regulation, such as Article 46, paragraph 2, which provides appropriate safeguards.

Following the repeal of the Privacy Shield, the European Commission adopted two sets of standard contractual agreements on June 4, 2021, to facilitate the transfer of personal data from the EU to third countries (Commission implementing decision of 4 June, Nos. 2021/914/UE and No. 2021/915/UE). These contractual clauses introduce novelty profiles concerning the number of parties that can adhere to the contract using these clauses and also provide for all the measures required to carry

out the personal data transfer following the European Court of Justice's decision in the Schrems II case (De Mozzi, 2022, p. 155).

6. Discussions

The focus of the debate in the context of personal data transfer is on the level of protection that the third state or international organization provides for personal data. In this sense, according to the EU Regulation, the European Commission decision, which considers that the third state offers an adequate level of protection, is usually based on different elements that evaluate its adequacy. Those elements include legislation, respect for human rights and freedoms, national security, personal data protection standards, the presence of an independent data protection authority, and enforceable data protection commitments made by the country (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Article 45, para. 2).

In this direction, in Decision Schrems II, the Court of Justice of the European Union addressed critical issues about the degree of personal data protection based on those elements. In this regard, the Court's crucial considerations are specifically connected to the communication of personal data to public authorities under US law. This communication, in the judgment of the Court, constitutes an interference with the enjoyment of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights in Articles 7 and 8 (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, para. 171; De Mozzi, 2022, p. 151).

But the most problematic issue regards the fact that those interferences are not limited to what is strictly necessary as provided for by the Privacy Shield, which limits the restrictions only where they are essential for a legitimate goal and that the subject's rights are protected (Commission Decision, No. 2016/1250, 2016, July 12, Recital 140). In this context, we are in front of an infringement of the proportionality principle (CJEU, Press release No. 91/20), which considers the measure applied in relation to the purpose and goal it seeks to achieve and to what is strictly necessary, and in any case, respecting the rights of the subjects. In this context, unlimited interference infringes on the rights of the subjects whose data is being transferred. On the other hand, the lack of an independent institution, such as an Ombudsman person equivalent to that provided by the GDPR, which can guarantee the rights and freedoms of individuals regarding personal data is a critical issue too, because the lack of this mechanism does not ensure the right to adequate judicial protection (CJEU, Schrems II, 2020, July 16, para. 168).

However, the Court of Justice of the European Union has ruled only on the European Commission's adequacy decision for the transfer of personal data from the EU to the US and not on the other European Commission adequacy decisions based on which personal data is transferred to other third countries, considering the fact that the legislation of those countries may formally fulfill EU criteria on fundamental rights

and freedoms (See Meltzer, 2020). Consequently, we had to wait for the impact of the Court of Justice of the European Union decision in practice.

7. Conclusions

The issue of an "equivalent level of protection" in the third state, provided by the GDPR and subject to two decisions by the Court of Justice of the European Union, represents a problematic matter because different countries offer diverse mechanisms for the enjoyment of the right to personal data protection.

In this context, to ensure an "equivalent level of protection" to that provided by the GDPR, after the repeal of the Privacy Shield agreement, the European Union started negotiations with the United States to reach a new deal for data transfer. In March 2022, the UE and the US agreed in principle on the Trans-Atlantic Data Privacy Framework, based on which they will carry out the transfers while addressing the issues raised by the Court of Justice of the European Union with the Schrems II decision. In line with the Court decision, this mechanism provides US intelligence authorities with limited access to personal data in order to protect national security while adhering to the principle of proportionality¹. In this context, we have to assess how the new US-EU agreement will address all of the issues highlighted by the court judgment, including the right to adequate judicial protection for the personal data of EU citizens.

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The Role of the School Psychologist Nowadays

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Abstract

The school psychologist fills multiple roles. Changes have been made in the field of public perceptions about the roles of a school psychologist. The main purpose of the paper is to get information about the perception of the students of master's degree in psychology at the University of Shkoder regarding the school psychologist's profession. The paper is quantitative research and it is based on the survey research, descriptive and correlational research. The questionnaire consists of several parts. The first part contains demographic data, such as gender, age, study course, and study program. The second part contains data related to the opinion of students regarding the school psychologist's profession and the third part contains information about the general perception and students' perception about the roles of a school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions and intervention. There are given the conclusions and recommendations. The students' opinion and general perception about the school psychologist profession is good, but it is necessary to improve the perception of students in the following aspects: a) Improving the general perception of students regarding the profession of school psychologist, especially at older ages, at the students of second year Master and at the students of the Master of Sciences study program in Organizational Psychology; b) improving students' perception of the role of information that the psychologist performs in school; c) improving the perception of second year students about the role of identification and the role of assessment; d) improving the perception of first year students about the role of participation in various commissions and the intervention role. It is also recommended to conduct other studies, to identify the factors that affect students' perception of the profession of school psychologist, and it is recommended the curricula and the syllabuses review of these study programs.

Keywords: school psychologist, students' perceptions, job satisfaction

Introduction

School psychologists are noted for responding and adapting to the needs of clients (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000; Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, Wallingsford, & Hall, 2002; Thielking & Jimerson, 2006) (cited by Bell & McKenzie, 2013).

Initially, the role of the school psychologist varied. Some school psychologists were generally viewed as psychometrists who solely interpreted the statistical outcomes of tests and scales used in the school environment in order to assess student's cognitive abilities and emotional well being (Davis, McIntosh, Kehle, & Phelps, 2004). Later, school psychologists were typically charged with the primary role of determining special education eligibility through the examination of the results of a standardized test of cognitive ability and academic achievement (Fagan et al., 2000) (cited by Krupp, 2010).

Traditionally, school psychology has been limited to a gate-keeping role; that is, school psychologists have been predominantly committed to the referral, testing, and placement of students for special education services (Corkum et al., 2007; Fagan, 2002; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). Given their extensive training and expertise in cognitive and academic testing, as well as identification of learning difficulties and disabilities, the school psychologist provides an essential service to the school and the student (Cole & Siegel, 2003; Weiss, Saklofske, Prifitera, & Holdnack, 2006) and psycho-educational assessment is an important tool to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations for services and follow-up (cited by Reader, 2014).

Today school psychologists fill multiple roles and typically work with teachers, educational support personnel, and district administrators to identify the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and academic needs of the students they serve (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). Furthermore, school psychologists collaborate with educators, parents of students, and other helping professionals to promote healthy, safe, supportive schools, that provide the least restrictive environment (LRE) for all students (NASP, 2009). School psychologists also work to bridge the gap between the school and community settings to help promote mental health and academic achievement among students in the educational environment (Krupp, 2010).

In Albania, the psychologist's profession is relatively new and dates back to the last two decades. Concerning the Order of Psychologist, on 31 May 2019, its full membership in the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP) was finalized.

On 06.07.2019, the General Assembly of EFPA (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations), unanimously voted for the membership of the Order of Psychologists of Albania, as the 38th full member in this organization.

Law No.10 171, dated 22.10.2009 "On professions regulated in the Republic of Albania" considered the profession of a psychologist as a profession regulated by law. This law also sets out the conditions and criteria for practicing the regulated profession.

Law n°.40/2016 "On the order of the psychologist in the Republic of Albania" aims at determining the rules of organization and activity of the Order of Psychologist, as well as the legal and ethical-professional relations of psychologists. This law determines who can practice the psychologist's profession, in the public or private system in the Republic of Albania, and which criteria must be met. One of the criteria is that individuals must have had a degree of "Bachelor" and "Master of Science" or "Professional Master" studies in psychology or equivalent, according to the legislation in force for higher education, issued by the institution of higher education, inside or outside the country, recognized by the Ministry of Education.

According to Abdurrahmani (2014), "On 11.10.2004, MASH (The Ministry of Education and Science) announced the Decision n°. 321 "Experimenting psychological service in the pre-university education system in the following school years 2004-2005-2006" (MASH, 2004). The decision specifies the qualities of the psychological service employee, his/her specific education, the main role of the school psychologist as a psychological service specialist who cooperates with the three main actors: students, teachers, parents, realizes the assessment of student's achievements, carries out school and professional orientation of students, their psycho-social, emotional development, personality development, etc".

Law on the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania, in Article 20 states "1. Local educational Directories provide psycho-social service to students and employees of educational institutions. 2. The psycho-social service provides support through psychologists or social workers to address the issues of various cases, to assess cases of children with special psycho-social needs, to design preventive programs, according to the needs of the school community "(LAW n°. 69/2012).

Likewise, the normative dispositions of the pre-university education system (Tirana, 2013), in Article 46 defined the main tasks of the psychologist/social worker at the educational institution. Now, the Regulation about the functioning of pre-university educational institutions in the Republic of Albania (2020), in Article 31 defined the main tasks of the psychologist/social worker at the educational institution.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education and Science proclaimed the Order (Order N°.334, dated 19.08.2013) "On the establishment of psychosocial service unit" and defined the role of this unit, the psychologist and social worker/students' ratio, the level of education that psychologists and social workers must fill, the mode of functioning of this unit, etc.

Given the fact that the school psychologist's profession is relatively new in Albania, it has been considered necessary to examine the perception of students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs about this profession, about the roles of the school psychologist.

Methodology

Research Design

The paper is quantitative research and it is based on the survey research, descriptive and correlational research.

The main purpose of the paper is to get information about the perception of the students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs at the University of Shkoder regarding the school psychologist's profession.

The research questions of the paper are:

1. What is the opinion of students regarding the school psychologist's profession?
2. What is the perception of the students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs regarding the profession of the school psychologist?
3. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their age?
4. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their course of study?
5. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their study program?

According to the study done by Rich Gilman and Michael L.Handwerk (2001) with 622 students (psychology majors, education majors, and "other" majors) to assess their understanding of various psychology disciplines , it was concluded that " although undergraduate students rated their perceived knowledge of school psychology significantly higher than clinical psychology, the mean ratings for both disciplines were low. Undergraduates utilized different sources of information to learn of clinical and school psychology. Both psychology and education majors assigned low priority to school psychology as a graduate school choice. Further, psychology majors rated clinical psychologists as being more involved in individual therapy, assessment, consultation, and research than school psychologists".

Poulou (2003) examined the reflections of school psychology students on the role of school psychologists. The results indicated that the majority of students attributed the role of leader to the school psychologist in relation to school personnel. It was also found that the school psychologists were expected to work on providing prevention, implementing treatment for children's problems, and facilitating teachers' tasks. Furthermore, Trice (2007) found that advanced psychology students viewed assessment as the chief role of school psychologists to the exclusion of other roles, i.e., consultation, counseling, and research (cited by Tangdhanakanond K., 2009, p.72).

According to the study made by Yaakov Weiner (2018) with 182 newly enrolled graduate students in NASP approved and/or APA accredited school psychology specialist, Master's and doctoral programs, it was resulted that participants underestimated the percentage of time school psychologists spend conducting special education evaluations by nearly 20 percentage points when compared to results from the 2010 NASP survey. They overestimated the time school psychologists spend providing individual counseling and group counseling by approximately 2 percentage points, in comparison to results from the 2010 NASP survey. After presenting data about the actual time school psychologists spend engaged in special education evaluation and direct service, over 25% of participants indicated regret for pursuing training in school psychology.

In her study Jessica D.Crislip (2011) done with undergraduate students in general psychology courses at colleges and universities located in various regions of West Virginia in order to determine the relationship between knowledge of undergraduate students regarding school psychology and the selection of school psychology as a major, the results indicated a significant difference in school psychology knowledge between those students who choose school psychology as a career and those who do not. Results also indicated a significant difference in school psychology knowledge due to the student's year in school. No significant differences were found for race or gender.

Trice (2007) found that advanced psychology students view assessment as the chief role of school psychologists to the exclusion of other roles; consultation, counseling, and research. Farrell, Jimerson, and Oakland (2007) synthesized the studies of school psychology in 43 countries around the world. It was indicated that the core services of school psychologists generally included direct services (e.g., counseling, assessment, and assistance with academic work) and indirect services (e.g., consultation with teachers, consultation with parents, implementing interventions). They also indicated that the relative amount of time invested in school psychologists' various services varied considerably between countries (cited by Akem & Ukeli, 2014).

Methods

A questionnaire has been designed, based on several sources: a) the Dissertation "Dynamic School Psychology: Perceptions Between School Psychologists, Teachers, and Administrators on School Psychology Services and Paradigm Shift Theory" by Homero Flores, presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Education at Seattle Pacific University In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree; b) the Dissertation "Teacher Perceptions of the Role of School Psychologists: Needs and Expectations" by Anita Reader, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in School Psychology. Mount Saint Vincent University Halifax, Nova Scotia; c) the Dissertation "Examining Aspects of Role and Practice Changes for School Psychologists in Georgia: A Mixed

Methods Analysis" by Bruce A. Rogers; d) the Dissertation "Bermudian Educators' Perceptions of the Roles and Functions of School Psychologists" by Lana V. Talbot; e) Regulation about the functioning of pre-university educational institutions in the Republic of Albania (2020), Article 31.

The questionnaire consists of several parts. The first part contains demographic data, such as gender, age, study course, and study program. The second part contains data related to the opinion of students regarding the school psychologist's profession and the third part contains information about the general perception and contains information regarding students' perception about the roles of a school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions and intervention.

Participants

The sampling consists of students of the Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs (Master of Sciences in Clinical Psychology study program and Master of Sciences in Organizational Psychology study program) during the academic year 2021-2022 at the University of Shkoder, Faculty of Educational Sciences.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0. The data analysis has included descriptive and inferential statistics. The analysis of data through the relative and absolute frequencies, through the mean, the median, the mode, the standard deviation served for measuring the general perception of the students regarding the profession of the school psychologists and their perception regarding the roles of the school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions, intervention.

It was used correlation analysis to measure the extent to which two variables (students' age and their general perception regarding this profession and students' age and their perception regarding the roles of the school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions, intervention) are related.

It was used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the relationship between students' course of study and their general perception regarding this profession and to examine the relationships between students' course of study and their perception regarding the roles of the school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions, intervention.

It was used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the relationship between students' study program and their general perception and to examine the relationships between students' residence and their perception regarding the roles of

the school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions, intervention.

The dependent variable is *students' perception* and the independent variables are *students' age*, *students' course of study* and *students' study program*.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic data of the participants in the study

60 students are enrolled in the "Master of Sciences in Psychology" study programs during the academic year 2021-2022 (30 students are in the "Master of Sciences in Clinical Psychology" study program, respectively 11 students are in the first year and 19 students are in the second year; 30 students are in the "Master of Sciences in Organizational Psychology" study program, respectively 12 students are in the first year and 18 students are in the second year).

Table 1. Data about the participants course of study

Course	MS in Clinical Psychology	MS in Organizational Psychology		
	Enrolled	Participants	Enrolled	Participants
First year	11	8	12	7
Second year	19	13	18	9
Total	30	21	30	16

37 students participated in the study. 21 students (56.8%) participating in the study are in the Master of Sciences in Clinical Psychology, 16 students (43.2%) participating in the study are in the Master of Sciences in Organizational Psychology. The representation rate is 70% for the students of Master of Sciences in Clinical Psychology, whereas the representation rate is 53% for the students of Master of Sciences in Organizational Psychology.

The age of the participants in the study ranged from 22 years (12 students or 32%) to 43 years (1 student or 2.7%). The average age of the students that participated in the study is 25.45 years. The majority of students participating in the study are females. 2 students (5.4%) of the participants are males, 35 students (94.6%) are females. 24 students (64.9%) live in the city, 11 students (29.7%) live in the village, while 2 students (5.4%) did not provide information regarding their place of residence.

II. Data related to the students' opinion regarding the school psychologist' profession

Participants think that school psychology has significantly evolved for the past 15 years (item 1). 26 students (70.3%) think that there is Moderate change or Significant change, whereas 11 students (29.7%) think that there is a slight change.

Most of the students participating in the study think that there is a paradigm shift in school psychology services (item 2). 23 students (62.2%) agree, 2 students (5.4%) disagree, whereas 12 students (32.4%) don't know.

Participants have the right perception of the level of education needed to be a school psychologist (item 3). 2 students (5.4%) think that a Bachelor's degree is needed; 28 students (75.7%) think that a Master's degree is needed and 7 students (18.9%) think that a Doctoral degree is needed.

They consider helpful the school psychological services to teachers, administrators, and student support personnel (item 4). 32 students (86.5%) have such a perception.

They consider the school psychological services helpful to children (item 5). 32 students (86.5%) have such a perception.

In general, participants think that a student's problem should not be serious before involving school psychological services, but not all students think so (item 6). 13 students (35.1%) think that the problem should be serious, 4 students (10.9%) think that the problem should be moderate, 10 students (27%) think that it should be less serious, but noticeable, whereas 9 students (24.3%) think that the problem should be mild. 1 student (2.7%) didn't give any response.

Students' perception of job satisfaction as a school psychologist is good (item 7). 1 student (2.7%) should be very unsatisfied, 2 students (5.4%) should be somewhat unsatisfied, 21 students (56.8%) should be somewhat satisfied, whereas 13 students (35.1%) should be very satisfied.

33 students (89.2%) think that the teachers are well-informed about the services that can be provided by school psychologists, whereas 4 students (10.8%) think that the teachers are not informed (item 8).

III. Data about the students' perception about the roles of a school psychologist

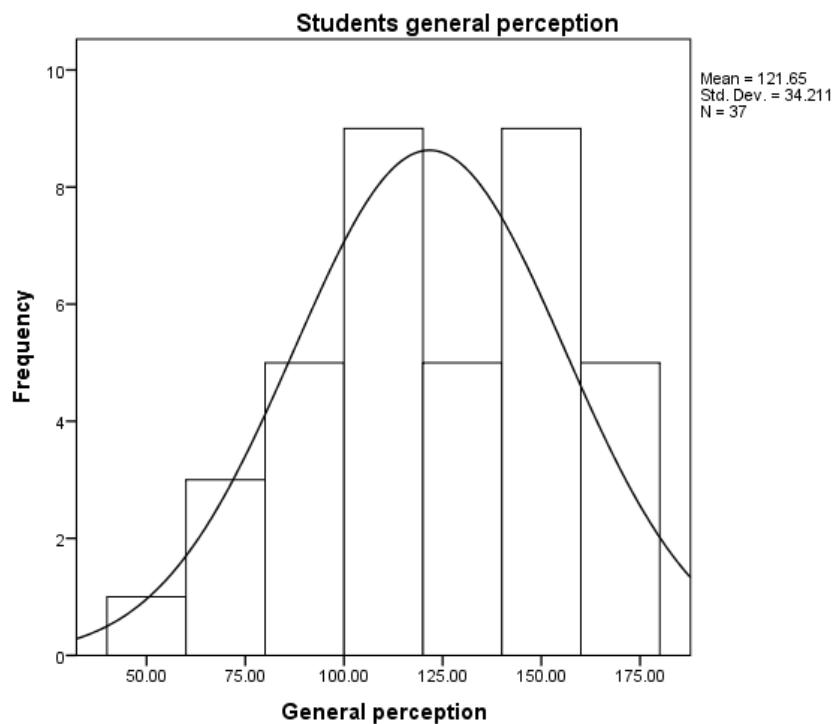
There are 32 items for measuring general students' perception of the roles of a school psychologist. The students were asked to rate these items on a six-point Likert scale (with 1 equalling "No involvement", with 2 equalling "Very little", with 3 equalling "Little", with 4 equalling "Some", with 5 equalling "Much", and with 6 equalling "Total involvement". So, the students' answers were based on a nominal 6-point rating scale (1=No involvement, 2=Very little involvement, 3=Little involvement, 4=Some involvement, 5=Much involvement, and 6=Total involvement).

It has been judged that students' perceptions regarding the role of a school psychologist should be classified in 5 (five) categories. These categories are: a) Information (items: 5, 27); b) Identification (items: 23, 24, 25, 26, 32); c) Assessment (items: 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 30, 31); d) Participation in various commissions (items: 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17); e) Intervention (items: 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29).

Table 2. Data related to the students' perception of the roles of a school psychologist

	General perception	Information role	Identification role	Assessment role	Participation role	Intervention role
Mean	121.64	7.13	20.35	33.37	32.83	27.94
Median	122	7	23	33	34	28
Mode	143.00 ^a	7	14.00 ^a	29.00 ^a	27.00 ^a	25.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	34.21	2.52	6.39	9.80	9.87	7.785
Minimum	43	2	5	14	11	9
Maximum	173	11	30	50	50	40
Valid	37	37	37	37	37	37
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0

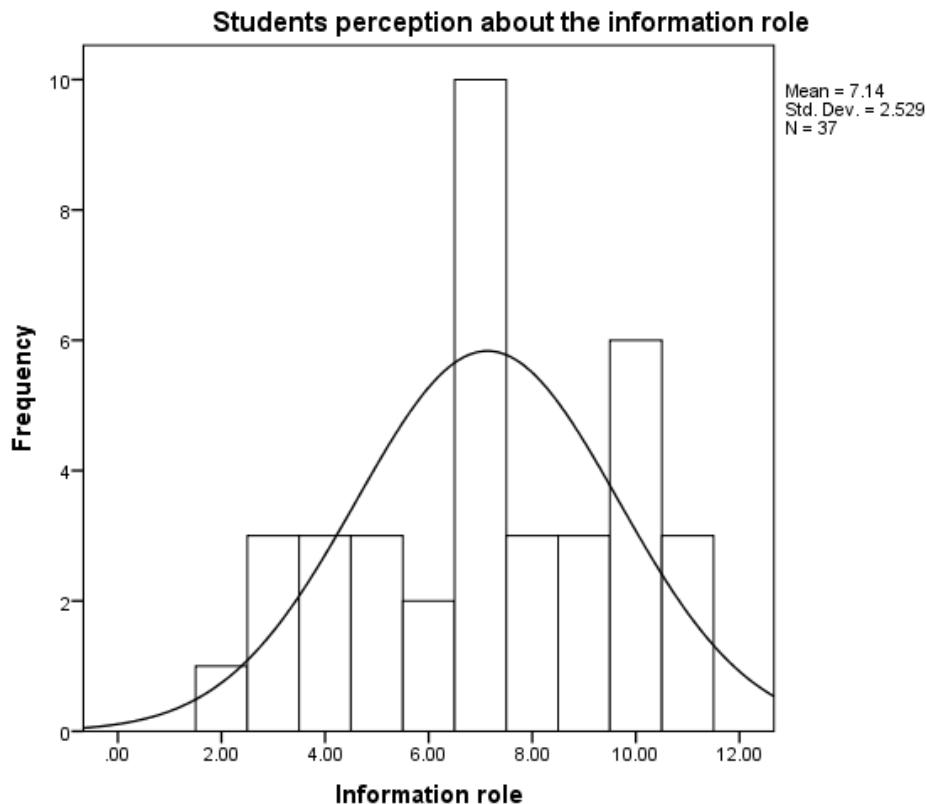
Graph 1. Data related to the student 'general perception of a school psychologist



As we can see, students' general perception about the roles of a school psychologist is good. The values range from 43 to 173, the mean is 121.64 and the mode is 143.

The students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist is not so good. The mean is 7.13 and the mode is 7, the values range from 2 to 11.

Graph 2. Data related to the students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist



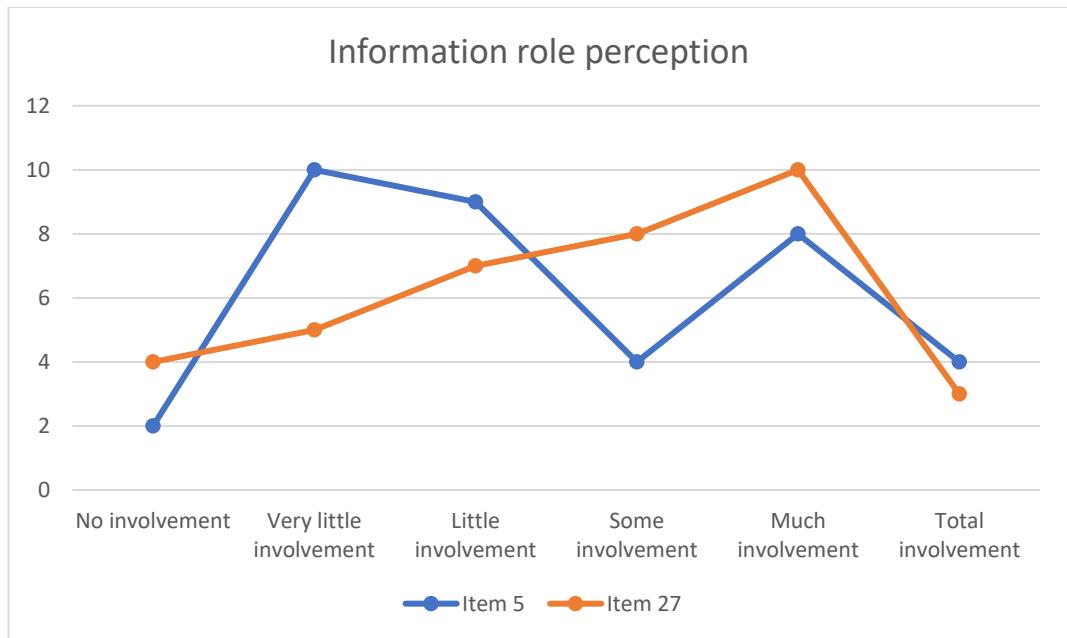
There are 2 items for measuring students' perception regarding the information role of a school psychologist.

Table 3 - Data related to the students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist (item 5, 27)

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little invol	Some invol	Much invol	Total invol
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			vement	vement	vement	vement
5	2	10	9	4	8	4
27	4	5	7	8	10	3

Graph 3. Data related to the students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist (item 5,27)

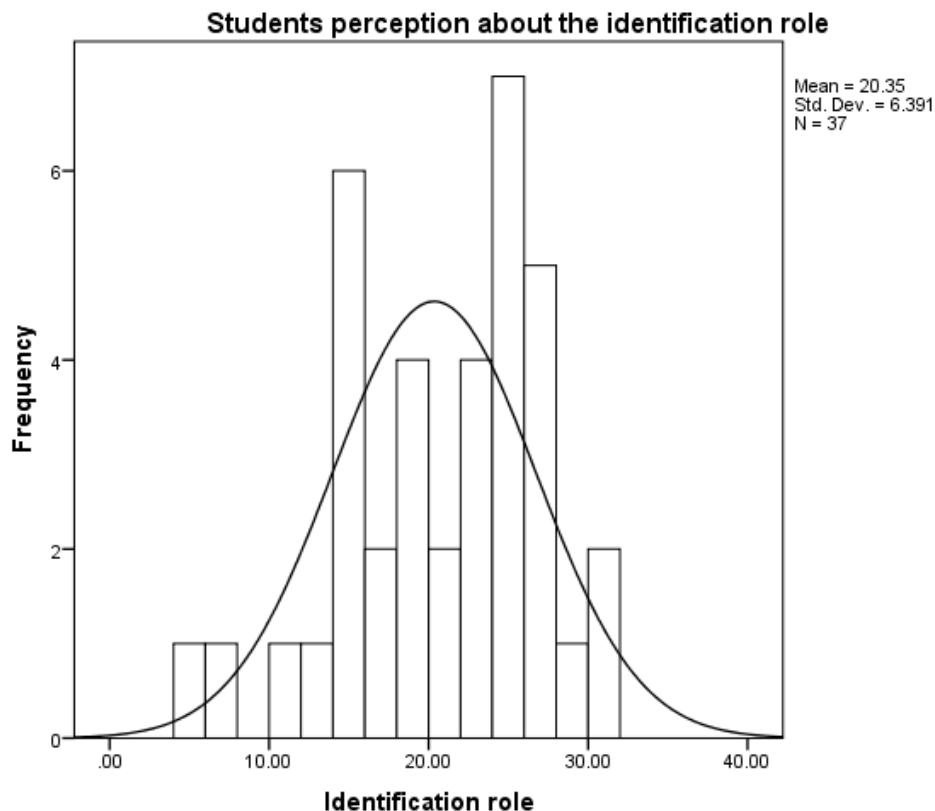


Participants think that school psychologists provide not to much in-service presentations to school staff, parents, and community members (item 5).

Regarding the item 27 "School psychologists inform through conversations and lectures the educational institutions' staff about the typical age development of pupils and informs also about the typical problems that pupils face in the teaching and learning process", the participants think that school psychologists do not perform this role very well. So, the perception of students is that the school psychologists fill well the information role, but there is still work to be done in this regard.

There are 5 items for measuring students' perception regarding the identification role of a school psychologist.

Graph 4. Data related to the students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist



The students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist is good. The mean is 20.35 and the mode is 14. The values range from 5 to 30.

Table 4. Data related to the students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist (items 23, 24, 25, 26, 32)

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little involvement	Some involvement	Much involvement	Total involvement
23	1	4	7	7	8	10
24	4	4	5	10	9	5
25	3	5	6	6	12	5
26	2	4	11	6	8	6
32	2	4	2	10	5	14

Participants think that the school psychologist identifies as early as possible pupils with behavioral or learning difficulties (item 23).

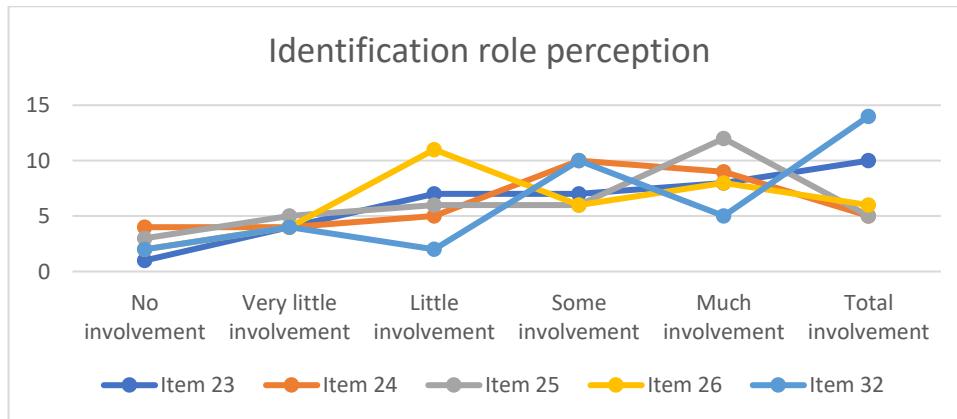
Participants think that the school psychologist assists the educational institutions' staff, parents, and pupils in preventing or eliminating the educational institutions' staff abuses against pupils (item 24).

Participants think that the school psychologist assists educational staff, parents, and pupils in preventing or eliminating pupils' abuses of each-other (item 25).

Participants think that the school psychologist helps educators, parents, and pupils prevent or eliminate pupils' abuses of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc. (item 26).

Participants think that the school psychologist reports in writing to the head of the psychosocial service unit any facts of pupils' abuse by educational staff or by pupils' parents (item 32). So, the participants think that the school psychologists perform well their role of identification in their work.

Graph 5. Data related to the students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist (items 23,24, 25,26, 32)



There are 9 items for measuring students' perception regarding the assessment role of a school psychologist. The students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist is good. The mean is 33.37 and the mode is 29. The values range from 14 to 50.

Graph 6. *Data related to the students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist*

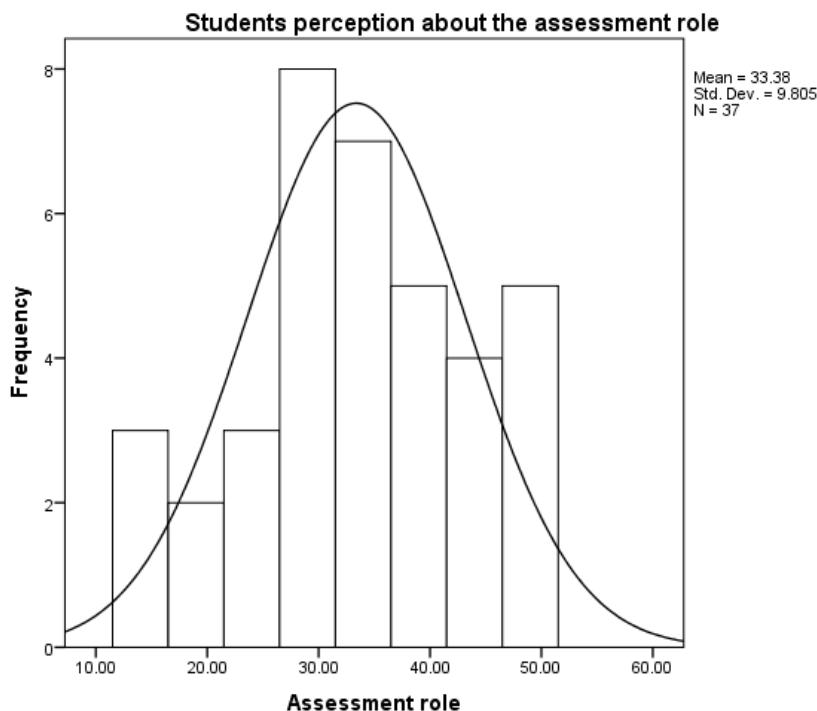
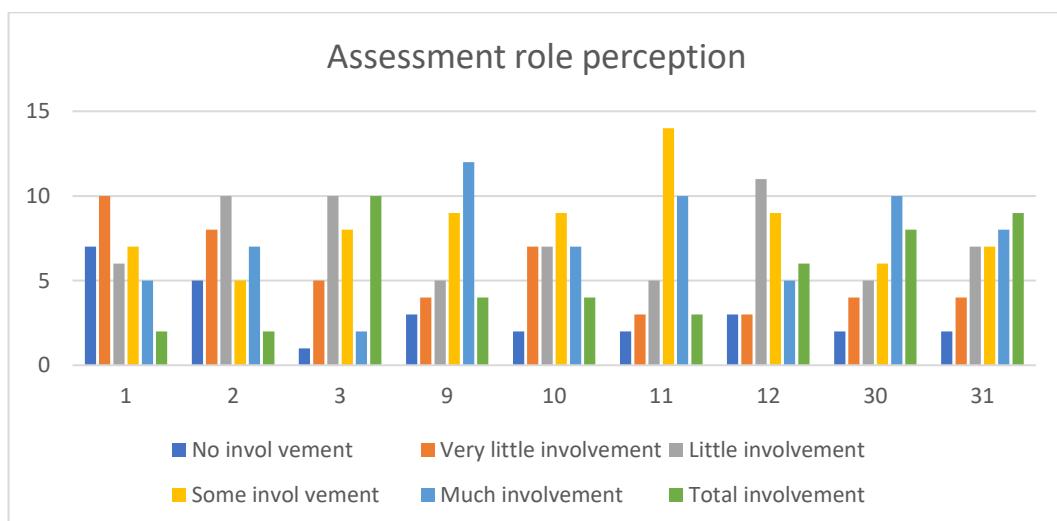


Table 5. *Data related to the students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist (items 1,2,3,9,10,11,12,30,31)*

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little involvement	Some involvement	Much involvement	Total involvement
1	7	10	6	7	5	2
2	5	8	10	5	7	2
3	1	5	10	8	2	10

9	3	4	5	9	12	4
10	2	7	7	9	7	4
11	2	3	5	14	10	3
12	3	3	11	9	5	6
30	2	4	5	6	10	8
31	2	4	7	7	8	9

Graph 7. Data related to the students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist (items 1,2,3,9,10,11,12,30,31)



Participants think that the school psychologist provides written assessment feedback to school personnel (item 1).

Participants think that the school psychologist provides verbal assessment feedback to school staff and/or parents (item 2).

Participants think that the school psychologist assesses individual students in need of prescriptive remediation (item 3).

Participants think that the school psychologist evaluates progress towards goals on students' Individualized Education Programs (item 9).

Participants think that the school psychologist evaluates the effectiveness of instructional methods, materials, or programs (item 10).

Participants think that the school psychologist evaluates the effectiveness of academic/ behavioral interventions/ programs/ positive supports towards student success (item 11).

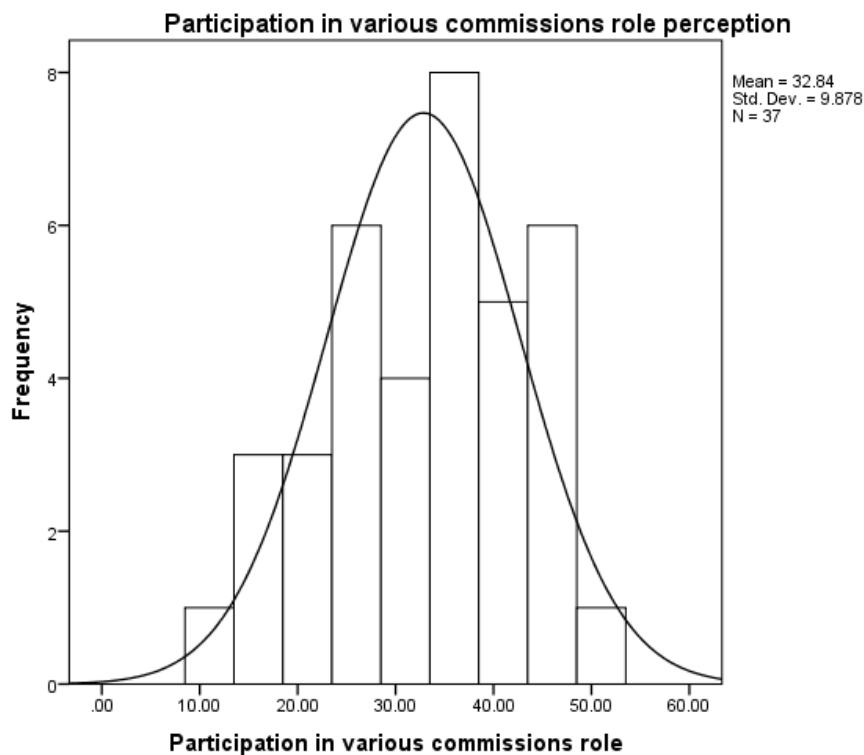
The students think that the school psychologist evaluates the efficacy of crisis intervention plans, procedures, and protocols at the county and/ or the school level (item 12).

The students think that the school psychologist administers and interprets psychological tests (item 30).

The students think that the school psychologist fulfills an individual portfolio of students who have benefited from psychosocial services (item 31). So, the students have the right perception of the assessing role of the school psychologist.

There are 9 items for measuring students' perception regarding the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist.

Graph 8. *Data related to the students' perception about the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist*

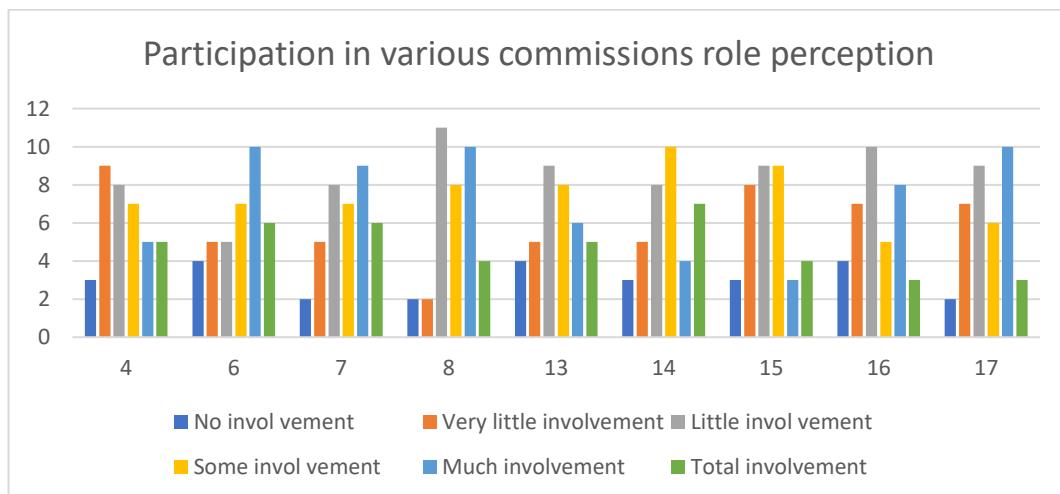


The students' perception about participation in various commissions is good. The mean is 32.83 and the mode is 27. The values range from 11 to 50.

Table 6. *Data related to the students' perception about the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist (items 4,6,7,8,13,14,15,16,17)*

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little involvement	Some involvement	Much involvement	Total involvement
4	3	9	8	7	5	5
6	4	5	5	7	10	6
7	2	5	8	7	9	6
8	2	2	11	8	10	4
13	4	5	9	8	6	5
14	3	5	8	10	4	7
15	3	8	9	9	3	4
16	4	7	10	5	8	3
17	2	7	9	6	10	3

Graph 9. *Data related to the students' perception about the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist (items 4,6,7,8,13,14,15,16,17)*



Participants think that the school psychologist consults with teachers and/ or student support teams to develop pre-evaluation strategies to address students' needs (item 4).

Participants think that the school psychologist serves as a link to external agencies (Mental Health, physicians, private counselors, etc.) (item 6).

Participants think that the school psychologist consults with intervention teams regarding progress monitoring data (item 7).

Participants think that the school psychologist serves on committees making educational decisions (curriculum development, staff development, reorganization, etc.) (item 8).

Participants think that the school psychologist conducts research to establish general education knowledge (item 13).

Participants think that the school psychologist conducts research to help solve local school-related problems (item 14).

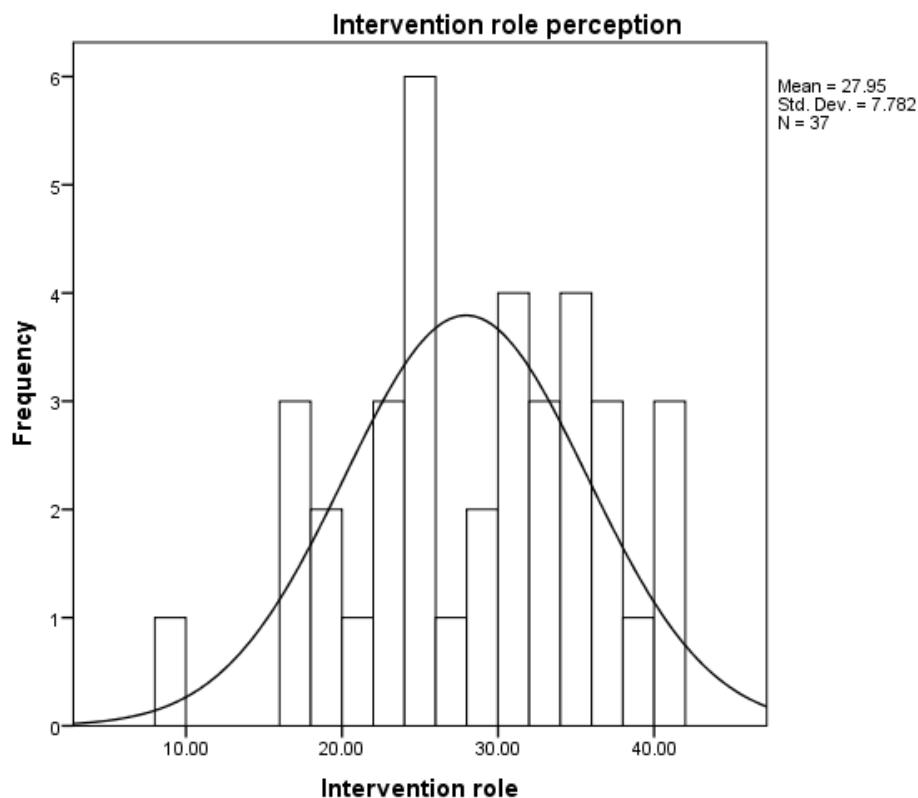
Participants think that the school psychologist disseminates research results for local practical applications (item 15).

Participants think that the school psychologist develops and collects local normative data for academic/ behavioral applications (item 16).

Participants think that the school psychologist conducts an analysis of disciplinary data on the county and/ or school level for practical applications (item 17). So, the participants have a good perception of the role that school psychologists fill to participate in various commissions.

There are 7 items for measuring students' perception regarding the intervention role of a school psychologist.

Graph 10. Data related to the students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist



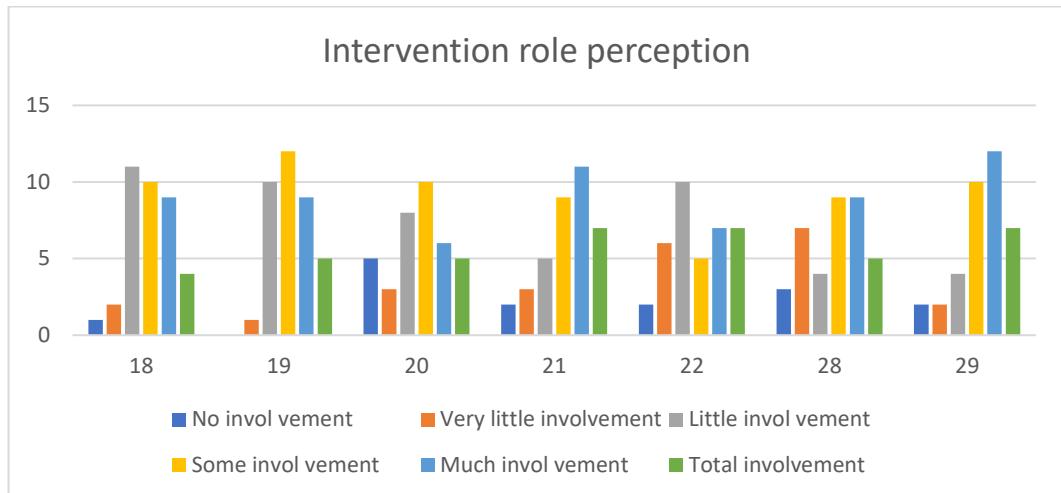
The students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist is good. The mean is 27.94 and the mode is 25. The values range from 9 to 40.

Table 7. *Data related to the students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist (items 18,19,20,21,22,28,29)*

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little involvement	Some involvement	Much involvement	Total involvement
18	1	2	11	10	9	4
19		1	10	12	9	5
20	5	3	8	10	6	5
21	2	3	5	9	11	7
22	2	6	10	5	7	7

28	3	7	4	9	9	5
29	2	2	4	10	12	7

Graph 11. *Data related to the students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist (items 18,19,20,21,22,28,29)*



Participants think that the school psychologist provides counseling services to students and/ or families as needed (item 18).

Participants think that the school psychologist provides crisis intervention services for students (student or staff death, natural disaster, etc.) (item 19).

Participants think that the school psychologist mediates conflicts between and among teachers and parents concerning students" needs (item 20).

Participants think that the school psychologist provides mentoring/ implementation of positive behavior supports for students as needed (item 21).

Participants think that the school psychologist provides classroom modeling of intervention/ technique for students as needed (item 22).

Participants think that the school psychologist assists foster teachers and subject teachers to integrate children with disabilities into the classroom of mainstream educational institutions (item 28).

Participants think that the school psychologist advises students on their careers (item 29). So, the students have a good perception of the intervention role of a school psychologist.

IV. Data about the relationship between students'age and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist

There is a negative correlation between students age and their general perception (Pearson Correlation= -.083).

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the information role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= -.064).

There is a positive correlation between students age and their perception about the identification role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= 0.033). This relationship is statistically significant.

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the assessment role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= -.119).

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the participation in various commissions role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= -.124).

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the intervention role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation=-.065).

V. Data about the relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist

V.a. *Data about the relationship between students'course of study and their general perception of the school psychologist profession*

Table 8. *Data about the relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist profession*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Variance
General perception						
Course of study						
First year	122.0667	15	32.58936	67.00	164.00	1062.067
Second year	121.3636	22	36.02981	43.00	173.00	1298.147
Total	121.6486	37	34.21112	43	173	1170.401
Information role perception						
First year	6.8667	15	2.74816	3.00	11.00	7.552
Second year	7.3182	22	2.41792	2.00	11.00	5.846
Total	7.1351	37	2.52941	2.00	11.00	6.398
Identification role perception						
First year	20.8667	15	5.85377	12.00	30.00	34.267
Second year	20.0000	22	6.84523	5.00	30.00	46.857
Total	20.3514	37	6.39104	5.00	30.00	40.845
Assessment role perception						
First year	34.2000	15	9.45818	16.00	47.00	89.457
Second year	32.8182	22	10.21500	14.00	50.00	104.346
Total	33.3784	37	9.80462	14.00	50.00	96.131
Participation role perception						
First year	32.6667	15	9.72968	17.00	46.00	94.667

Second year	32.9545	22	10.20493	11.00	50.00	104.141
Total	32.8378	37	9.87847	11.00	50.00	97.584
Intervention role perception						
First year	27.4667	15	7.43416	16.00	40.00	55.267
Second year	28.2727	22	8.16603	9.00	40.00	66.684
Total	27.9459	37	7.78155	9.00	40.00	60.553

There is a relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the school psychologist profession ($\text{Sig}=0.952$). The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the information role of a school psychologist ($\text{Sig}=0.601$). The perception of students of the second year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the identification role of a school psychologist ($\text{Sig}=0.691$). The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the assessment role of a school psychologist ($\text{Sig}=0.680$). The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist ($\text{Sig}=0.932$). The perception of students of the second year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the intervention role of a school psychologist ($\text{Sig}=0.762$). The perception of students of the second year is more positive.

VI. Data about the relationship between students'study program and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist

Table 9. *Data about the relationship between students'study program and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist profession*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Variance
General perception						
MS in Clinical Psycholoy	121.9524	21	37.24040	61.00	173.00	1386.848
MS in Org. Psycholoy	121.2500	16	30.97634	43.00	164.00	959.533
Total	121.6486	37	34.21112	43.00	173.00	1170.401
Information role perception						
MS in Clinical Psycholoy	6.8571	21	2.74382	3.00	11.00	7.529
MS in Org. Psycholoy	7.5000	16	2.25093	2.00	11.00	5.067
Total	7.1351	37	2.52941	2.00	11.00	6.398
Identification role perception						
MS in Clinical Psycholoy	19.9524	21	6.72664	7.00	30.00	45.248
MS in Org. Psycholoy	20.8750	16	6.09781	5.00	30.00	37.183
Total	20.3514	37	6.39104	5.00	30.00	40.845
Assessment role perception						
MS in Clinical Psycholoy	33.9524	21	11.34229	14.00	50.00	128.648
MS in Org. Psycholoy	32.6250	16	7.62343	16.00	47.00	58.117
Total	33.3784	37	9.80462	14.00	50.00	96.131

Participation role perception						
MS in Clinical Psycholoy	33.3333	21	10.28267	16.00	48.00	105.733
MS in Org. Psycholoy	32.1875	16	9.61401	11.00	50.00	92.429
Total	32.8378	37	9.87847	11.00	50.00	97.584
Intervention role perception						
MS in Clinical Psycholoy	27.8571	21	8.36233	16.00	40.00	69.929
MS in Org. Psycholoy	28.0625	16	7.21543	9.00	37.00	52.063
Total	27.9459	37	7.78155	9.00	40.00	60.553

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their general perception of a school psychologist ($Sig=0.95$), but it is not statistically significant. The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the information role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant ($Sig=0.45$). The perception of students of the MS in Organizational Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the identification role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant ($Sig=0.67$). The perception of students of the MS in Organizational Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the assessment role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant ($Sig=0.68$). The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the participation role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant ($Sig=0.73$). The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the intervention role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant ($\text{Sig}=0.93$). The perception of students of the MS in Organizational Psychology is more positive.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to get information about the perception of the students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs at the University of Shkoder regarding the school psychologist's profession.

The research question N.1. What is the opinion of students regarding the school psychologist's profession?

Participants embrace the evolution of school psychology in recent years and they think that there is a paradigm shift in school psychology services.

Participants have the right perception of the level of education needed to be a school psychologist. They consider helpful the school psychological services to children, teachers, administrators, and student support personnel.

In general, participants think that a student's problem should not be serious before involving school psychological services.

Students' perception of job satisfaction as a school psychologist is good.

Most of the students that participated in the study think that the teachers are well-informed about the services that can be provided by school psychologists.

So, we can say that the opinion of students of Master Sciences in Psychology regarding the school psychologist's profession is good.

The research question N.2. What is the perception of the students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs regarding the profession of the school psychologist?

The students' general perception about the general school psychologist profession is good.

Their perception about the information role of a school psychologist is not so good. Participants think that school psychologists provide not too much in-service presentations to school staff, parents, and community members. They also think that school psychologists do not perform very well the role of informing through conversations and lectures the educational institutions' staff about the typical age development of pupils and about the typical problems that pupils face in the teaching and learning process.

The students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist is good. Participants think that the school psychologist identifies as early as possible pupils with behavioral or learning difficulties, assists the educational institutions' staff,

parents, and pupils in preventing or eliminating the educational institutions' staff abuses against pupils, assists educational staff, parents, and pupils in preventing or eliminating pupils' abuses of each-other, helps educators, parents, and pupils prevent or eliminate pupils' abuses of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc., reports in writing to the head of the psychosocial service unit any facts of pupils' abuse by educational staff or by pupils' parents.

The students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist is good. Participants think that the school psychologist provides written assessment feedback to school personnel, provides verbal assessment feedback to school staff and/ or parents, assesses individual students in need of prescriptive remediation, evaluates progress towards goals on students' Individualized Education Programs, evaluates the effectiveness of instructional methods, materials, or programs, evaluates the effectiveness of academic/ behavioral interventions/ programs/ positive supports towards student success, evaluates the efficacy of crisis intervention plans, procedures, and protocols at the county and/ or the school level, administers and interprets psychological tests and fulfills an individual portfolio of students who have benefited from psychosocial services.

The students' perception about participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist is good. Participants think that the school psychologist consults with teachers and/ or student support teams to develop pre-evaluation strategies to address students' needs, that the school psychologist serves as a link to external agencies. They think that the school psychologist consults with intervention teams regarding progress monitoring data, serves on committees making educational decisions (curriculum development, staff development, reorganization, etc.), conducts research to establish general education knowledge, to help solve local school-related problems, disseminates research results for local practical applications and develops and collects local normative data for academic/ behavioral applications. They also think that the school psychologist conducts an analysis of disciplinary data on the county and/ or school level for practical applications.

The students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist is good. They think that the school psychologist provides counseling services to students and/ or families as needed, provides crisis intervention services for students (student or staff death, natural disaster, etc.), mediates conflicts between and among teachers and parents concerning students' needs, provides mentoring/ implementation of positive behavior supports for students as needed, provides classroom modeling of intervention/ technique for students as needed, assists foster teachers and subject teachers to integrate children with disabilities into the classroom of mainstream educational institutions and advises students on their careers.

So, we can say that students' perception about school psychologist profession is coherent with what the contemporary literature affirms, which points out the many

roles that a school psychologist performs today. The findings of the paper agree to a significant extent with the findings of similar studies of other authors, such as, for example, the studies made by Poulou (2003), Trice (2007) and Oakland (2007).

The research questions N.3. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their age?

There is a negative correlation between students age and their general perception and between students age and their perception about the information role of the school psychologist. There is also a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the assessment role, between students age and their perception about the participation in various commissions role, and between students age and their perception about the intervention role of the school psychologist. There is a positive correlation between students age and their perception about the identification role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= 0.033). This relationship is statistically significant.

Such changes in the perceptions of students of different ages probably have their source in the fact that in Albania the psychologist's profession is relatively new and older people probably find it more difficult to adapt to a new reality.

The research question N.4. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their course of study?

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the school psychologist profession. This relationship is not statistically significant. The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the roles of school psychologist. These relationships are not statistically significant. The perception of students of the second year is more positive regarding the the information role, regarding the participation in various commissions role and regarding the the intervention role.

The research question N.5. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their study program?

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their general perception of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant. The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist, but these relationships are not statistically significant. The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive regarding the assessment role and regarding the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist.

Conclusions and recommendations

Participants think that school psychology has significantly evolved for the past 15 years and that there is a paradigm shift in school psychology services. They have the right perception of the level of education needed to be a school psychologist. They consider helpful the school psychological services to children, to teachers, administrators, and student's support personnel. In general, participants think that a student's problem should not be serious before involving school psychological services, but not all students think so. Students' perception of job satisfaction as a school psychologist is good. Most of them think that the teachers are well-informed about the services that can be provided by school psychologists.

The students'general perception about the school psychologist profession is good. Their perception about the different roles of a school psychologist is good, too, but the students'perception about the information role of a school psychologist is not so good.

There is a negative correlation between students age and their general perception, between students age and their perception about the information role of the school psychologist.

There is a positive correlation between students age and their perception about the identification role of the school psychologist. This relationship is statistically significant.

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the assessment role of the school psychologist, between students age and their perception about the participation in various commissions role of the school psychologist and there is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the intervention role of the school psychologist.

There is a relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the school psychologist profession. The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

The perception of students of the first year is more positive also regarding the identification role and regarding the assessment role of a school psychologist.

The perception of students of the second year is more positive regarding the information role, regarding the participation in various commissions role and regarding the intervention role of a school psychologist.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their general perception of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant. The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the different roles of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant.

The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive regarding the assessment role and regarding the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist.

The perception of students of the MS in Organizational Psychology is more positive regarding the information role, the identification role and regarding the intervention role of a school psychologist.

It is necessary to improve the perception of students in the following aspects: a) Improving the general perception of students regarding the profession of school psychologist, especially at older ages, second year Master students and students of the Master of Sciences study program in Organizational Psychology; b) improving students' perception of the role of information that the psychologist performs in school; c) improving the perception of second year students about the role of identification and the role of assessment; d) improving the perception of first year students about the role of participation in various commissions and the intervention role.

It is also recommended to conduct other studies, in order to identify the factors that affect students' perception of the profession of school psychologist, and it is recommended the curricula review of these study programs and the syllabuses review of subjects in these study programs.

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The Principle of Autonomy of Contractual Will

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Abstract

One of the fundamental principles on which the contractual law of any democratic state is based is the *principle of contractual freedom*. This principle is accepted by both Western legal systems, civil law and common law as well. Therefore, in dealing with this principle of contractual law, we shall have to refer to both the civil legislations of the states that are part of the civil law system, as well as those that are included in the common law legal system. One of the main issues of this paper concerns the meaning and content of the principle of autonomy of contractual will. In this matter, the most important aspects of this principle will be dealt with in summary, starting from the right of the parties to freely determine the content of the contract and ending with the limitations placed on the will of the parties in application of this principle. The elements of the principle of contractual freedom will be addressed in this paper, looking at them in a comparative perspective with the legislation of other countries, in addition to the Albanian civil legislation, highlighting the mutual features and differences between them. Another issue of this paper will be the application of the principle of autonomy of will to consumer contracts. Our focus herein in particular on the special rules that apply in this case, where it is worth noting that contemporary civil legislations have imposed a number of restrictions on the implementation of this principle, in order to protect the consumer. In this paper, the rules that are applied in the cases of standard or adhesion contracts will be treated, in a summarized way, in application of the principle of contractual freedom. At the end of the paper, the conclusions will be provided, as well as the bibliography on which it is based.

Keywords: contractual autonomy, will of the parties, public interest, consumer contracts, standard contracts

Introduction

The meaning and content of the principle of autonomy of the will

The principle of contractual freedom consists of several aspects or elements. One of the most crucial aspects of this principle is that the parties are free to determine the

content of the contract in accordance with their interests that they intend to achieve by concluding it. In a market economy that is always changing and developing, the number and type of contracts that parties can enter into is endless. Especially nowadays, in the conditions of the great development of technology and information, an increasing number of new contracts are being born, with an international character, which has laid the need for regulation in the field of private international law of contractual freedom of parties.

This aspect of the principle of contractual freedom is expressly contemplated in the applicable Civil Code, according to which *the contracting parties are free to determine its content, in accordance with their legitimate interests*. Based on this principle, the content of each contract, as well as its terms, are determined by the parties by agreement. Neither the state nor other public bodies, nor third parties are entitled to interfere or influence the will of the parties in determining the content of the contract, provided that it does not infringe the rights of others and does not come contrary to a mandatory norm of the law.¹

The right of the parties to freely determine the content of the contract concluded between them is a principle that finds wide application in practice. In the implementation of this principle, it does not matter if one of the parties concluding the contract is the state or its bodies, while the other party is a private natural or legal person. This is due to the fact that the state and its bodies, when acting in the field of contract law, are equal to private natural or legal persons and therefore cannot impose on the latter conditions or clauses that contradict the principle of contractual freedom.

The issue of the right of the parties to freely determine the content of the contract is controversial in cases where the terms of the contract are drawn up by one party, while the other party does not participate in drafting the content of the contract, but only is entitled to choose to sign the contract or not. These contracts are recognized by contract law as *accession contracts or adhesion contracts* or even as standard contracts and in the conditions of continuous economic development of society, they are becoming widespread, especially in developed countries, in application of the principle of the fair treatment of all entities that can enter into such a contract.

In the theory of contract law, the issue of whether adhesion or standard contracts violate the contractual freedom of the party who does not participate in the drafting of the terms and content of the contract has been raised for discussion. Regarding this issue, our opinion is that in the case of standard contracts, there is no violation of contractual autonomy for the party that does not participate in the drafting of the terms of the contract, because the right of the party to choose freely of its own will, to

¹ Article 660 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Albania provides:

"The parties to the contract freely define its content, within the limits established by the applicable legislation".

enter or not in such an agreement, shows that contractual freedom is not violated in this case. However, we must be careful with standard contracts, in cases where the party drafting the terms of the *contract has a dominant position in the market or has exclusivity in providing a certain service*, which means that it is in a monopoly position and individual consumers do not have right of choice, except to conclude the contract according to the conditions set by the dominant party in the market or that owns the monopoly.

Under such cases, *it is necessary for the state and society to foresee concrete mechanisms and institutions, which make it possible to audit the economic activity of these public or private companies*, especially in the field of unfair competition. This is because in the absence of other choices by the individual, as well as in the absence of the efficient action of these supervisory and controlling institutions, *we would be facing the violation of contractual autonomy*.

The authors of civil law in Italy pay special attention to the treatment of the said principle. According to them, what distinguishes the contract from other ways of entering into, changing or terminating a legal relationship *is the will of the parties*. The contracting parties agree on the establishment, change or termination of a property legal relationship between them. The legal effect of the establishment, change or termination of this relationship is the product of the will of the parties who have concluded the contract.

In order to determine this role of the will of the parties, it is necessary to clarify the principle of autonomy of contractual freedom. The contractual freedom and autonomy of the parties is considered in a double aspect; in the negative aspect and in the positive aspect. *Contractual freedom and autonomy in the negative aspect means that no person can neither be deprived of his property rights or other rights that he enjoys, nor can he be forced to perform obligations in favor of others against his will*, since as a principle every man obeys only his will and cannot be bound by the will of others, except when the law expressly provides for such a thing.

In the positive sense, contractual autonomy is in the general concept of the contract as an agreement of the parties to create, change or extinguish a legal relationship. The contract, by rule, binds only the parties who have participated in the agreement and who have expressed their will for the establishment or change of legal relations. This principle is expressly defined in law; the contract does not produce effects on third parties, unless the law provides otherwise. In the positive sense, the principle of contractual freedom and autonomy means that the parties can, through the act of their will, i.e. the contract, establish, change or terminate legal relations, that they can dispose of their belongings and can be obliged to execute obligations in favor of others. In this sense, contractual autonomy corresponds to the owner's right to freely dispose of his belongings, within the limits set by the law, which is included in the subject of the right of ownership.

In the positive aspect, contractual autonomy may appear in three forms:

- i. *The right of the parties to choose to conclude the kind or type of contract that is consistent with their legitimate interests.* According to this form, the parties may freely dispose of their belongings by means of a sales, donation or exchange contract etc., they can be obliged to others in the form of a contract of rent, loan, deposit, enterprise, commission, etc.
- ii. *The right of the parties to freely determine the content of the contract, in accordance with the agreement reached between them.* Such a right can be the determination of the sale price, the time and place of delivery of the sold item, the modalities of payment of the sale price or the terms of payment of rent and return of the rented item, of the value of the work built by the entrepreneur and the time of delivery of the work and the price, etc.
- iii. *The right of the parties to conclude non-typical or non-named contracts.* These are contracts that are not expressly provided for in the Civil Code, but that are established and practiced by business relationships, where this right will be dealt with later in this paper, as it constitutes one of the special aspects of the principle of freedom of contractual autonomy.¹

The civil law of the Republic of Kosovo expressly provides for the autonomy of contractual freedom. According to the said law, the parties are free to determine the content and terms of the contract based on their will and according to the interests they intend to achieve through it. Contractual freedom as one of the basic principles of contract law is reflected in several provisions of the Kosovo civil law, which is a new law and has received the best models of western legislation for the recognition and guarantee of this principle.²

English contract law pays special attention to the principle of autonomy of will. According to English contract law, the classical law of contracts is based on contractual freedom and *the sanctity of the contract*, which means the freedom of the parties to decide on the content of the contract according to their will, while the duty of the court is to give effect to the agreement reached between the parties. But contract law cannot be based on one principle alone, to the exclusion of other principles.

Civil law in any case aims to regulate the fairness of the agreement reached and the protection of the weaker party. Thus, children do not have the ability to conclude contracts or the court has refused to give effect to contracts that are illegal. The

¹ See also: Galgano, F; "Private Law", translated by Alban Brati, Tirana 2006, pages 266-268.

² Paragraph 1 of Article 2 of Book 2 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Kosovo provides:

"*The parties are free to regulate their contractual relations on the basis of their will, within the limits determined by mandatory provisions, by public order or by proper custom.*"

autonomy of contractual freedom is confronted with the need to protect the party who has no experience or who is vulnerable, while in the case of an illegal contract, it cannot have any effect, because it violates the clause of public order or a mandatory norm of the law. *The law endeavors to establish a fair balance between the autonomy of contractual freedom on the one hand and fairness in the conclusion of contracts on the other.* This conflict of interests is named as "commercial individualism" and "consumer welfare" by the well-known English authors J. Adams and R. Brownword in their article "*The ideologies of contract.*"¹

According to these authors, there is an academic debate on how far the limits of contract law extend, in relation to the fact that which laws and judicial precedents constitute contract law. Authors who are known as functionalists (modern authors who are based on the fact that the contract has the function of establishing or changing civil rights and obligations) argue that contract law deals with the regulation of any agreement concluded between the parties and any material law that has to deal with the regulation of these agreements, should be included within the contract law. Traditional authors have a narrower view according to which contract law includes only contracts that are expressly regulated by law. According to them, only a known and clearly defined number of cases, together with the laws governing them, similarly organized in certain books, constitutes contract law.

The view embraced by traditionalists defends the theory of commercial individualism, according to which contract law should minimally regulate contracts. On the other hand, the view defended by functionalists is related to the theory of consumer welfare and argues that contract law should regulate contracts in detail, providing for most of the clauses that the parties can include in a contract.

The theory of commercial individualism has both commercial and individualistic grounds. Both of these bases mutually support each other, but to get a better insight into this theory it would be useful to treat each of them separately. According to the free market theory, the field of commerce is the place of exchange of competing interests. The function of the contract is not simply to create opportunities to carry out the exchange of goods and services between the parties, yet to create opportunities for a competitive exchange.

Contract law defines the basic rules according to which competitive trade can be carried out. Thus, the party who is subject to fraud, misrepresentation, threat, etc., cannot be forced to fulfill what he has promised. In many cases, the line between the misunderstanding of the party in the binding of the contract and the non-disclosure of the facts that are important for its binding, emphasizes this view. There are a number of restrictions on contracting parties. Commercial law is not the law of the

¹ See also: McKendrick, E, "*Contract Law, Text, Cases and Materials*", Oxford University Press, Oxford 2020, page 9.

jungle and these rules deal with cases where there is a misunderstanding between the parties in the conclusion of the contract. However, the non-disclosure of certain information that constitutes advantages is simply a matter of caution on the part of the parties in concluding the contract – the contracting parties are involved in a competitive situation and cannot be expected to disclose any information to each other. Based on the above assumptions, the free market theory is based on these main conclusions:

Firstly: The *security of contractual transactions* must be guaranteed and promoted. This means that when a party develops a commercial activity and signs a contract for the development of this activity, it is reasonably presumed that it intended to enter into a contractual relationship and this presumption must be protected by law. The interest in the security of the contract leads to the doctrine of the objective recognition of the intention to conclude the contract, as well as to the warning of subjective errors and the protection of third parties who are not parties to the contract¹

Ideally, contractual security means that the parties fulfill the obligations they have assumed according to the contract signed thereof, but as judicial practice proves, a large number of contracts are executed late and the possibility of not executing the contracts at all is increasing more and more. In order to protect the innocent party, the contract contemplates expected compensation measures in its favor and in principle the contract sanctity hardly accepts excuses for its non-execution.

Secondly: It is of paramount importance for those who enter the free market, in order to enter into a commercial transaction, to know their place and position in this market. This means that the basic rules of the contract must be clear. While the restrictions on the conclusion of contracts should not only be minimal, in the context of the competitive nature of the free market, but should also be clearly defined, in the context of the fact that free trade requires predictability, accountability, etc. Acceptance of a postal rule is an example of the theory of commercial individualism, in the sense that it is clear, simple, and not surrounded by various interpretations that leave the contracting parties constantly uncertain. Similarly the classification of cases of repudiation of contract involves the virtue of certainty, which is sacred to the theory of commercial individualism.

Thirdly: As long as the contract deals with free market transactions, the law must apply commercial practices and not other practices which are not related to commerce, such as practices in the field of personal non-property relationships, marriage, etc. Differences in the implementation of commercial practices are evident

¹ See also: Torrente, A; Schlesinger, P; "*Manual of Private Law*", Publication of the Chamber of Advocates of Albania, Tirana 2021, page 540

for the theory of commercial individualism, alongside the implementation of other practices.

Also, we should not overestimate the general importance that many rules related to the conclusion of the contract, such as the display of goods in the shop window together with the price, whether it constitutes an offer or negotiation for an offer, are simply obstacles to the conclusion of the contract. This fact may constitute a clear rule, but one that should never be neglected. The rules of contract law, which aim to avoid the conclusion of inappropriate contracts, are an exceptional measure, which at the end of the day aim to ensure free trade between the parties.

According to individualism theory, a constant theme of it is that *judges should have a non-interference role in relation to the issue of contracts*. The principle of non-interference of judges in matters of binding and implementation of contracts originates from the part of the theory of individualism as an aspect of the theory of commercial individualism. The basic idea is that the parties must enter the free market, choose their own contracting party, determine the terms of the contract and sign it. *The essence of the theory of individualism are the doctrine of the autonomy of the contractual freedom and that of the sanctity of the contract.*

Emphasizing contractual freedom means *freedom of choice* for the parties. *First, the parties must be free to choose the other party as a partner in concluding the contract.* Like the tango dance, the contract can only be performed when there are two parties, and both parties, in theory, must have chosen each other by consensus. *Second, the parties must be free to choose the terms of the contract they will enter into.* The contract involves the exchange of competing interests, but this exchange must be consensual.

Regardless of the fact that the principle of choosing the other contracting party has been fading, this principle is an essential and vital principle for the development of contract law. This can be observed in two main directions:

The right of the parties to choose the other contracting party for concluding the contract and for determining its content, in principle, should be maximized and

The parties must implement the agreements made of their own free will, based on the Roman principle "pacta sunt servanda"; the agreements entered into cannot be violated.

The second direction of the freedom of contract is nothing else but the principle of the sanctity of the contract. By providing that the parties must implement their agreements, the principle of sanctity of the contract places the emphasis in a two-fold manner. *First*, if the parties adhere to their agreements, they should be treated as professionals of the agreements made and the court should not interfere with the agreements of the parties by evaluating them as being made unreasonably or negligently. *Second*, if the parties adhere to their agreements, then the court cannot

release one of the parties for non-fulfillment of the obligations arising from these agreements.

2. Application of the principle of contractual freedom to consumer contracts

This principle in cases of consumer contracts means that even in these cases, the court does not have the right to re-evaluate the adequacy of the legal interest; the principles on which the contracting parties were based in concluding the contract; difficulties facing the assessment of mistakes made by one party; common mistakes made by the parties and their difficult economic situation in concluding the contract; anxiety to define the doctrine of inequality of contracting power, etc. The principle of the sanctity of the contract is a principle that operates in contract law from the beginning of the conclusion of the contract, to its end, allowing the courts to be very careful in violating this principle, only in cases where contractual freedom is substantially breached or where one or both parties have acted in bad faith.

The theory of consumer welfare stems from consumer protection policies and the principles of fairness and reasonableness in contracting. It is not based on the premises of individualism commercial theory, according to which all contracts must be minimally regulated by law. On the contrary, it presupposes that consumer contracts should be regulated expressly and in as much detail as possible and that commercial contracts, which can be viewed as an exchange of competing interests, should be subject to more extensive regulation by law than theory of commercial individualism allows.

Difficulties with consumer welfare theory emerge as soon as one attempts to identify its specific guiding principles. For example, are the principles of fairness and reasonableness applicable in every case of concluding a consumer contract? Without pretending to give exhaustively the main principles on which the consumer theory is based, we can say that some of its principles are:

- a. *The principle of stability.* According to this principle, the parties should be stable in the development of their civil legal relations, even in the absence of a written contract. They are not allowed to "jump up and down", that is, to have an unstable relationship, either in the choice of contracting parties, or in determining the content of the contract. A person must not encourage another to act differently or create a legitimate expectation different from the usual.
- b. *The principle of proportionality.* According to this principle, the compensation of the innocent party for the breach of contract by the guilty party must be in accordance with the seriousness and consequences of the breach. We can see this principle applied in determining the terms of the contract for the size of the amount of compensation. Thus, the criminal conditions do not apply, since they are not related to the real losses of the innocent party.
- c. *The principle of bona fide,* according to which parties who act in bad faith cannot claim to be protected by applying the principle of good faith.

- d. *The principle according to which no one can profit from his own misdeeds.* Of course, this principle in civil law has its exceptions, such as the examples of the acquisition of ownership by prescription without title, or the acquisition of objects by occupation, but in consumer law these exceptions do not apply and this principle is applied in any case, unless the law expressly provides otherwise.
- e. *The principle of unjust enrichment.* According to this principle, no party, even when it is not at fault, is allowed to dishonestly enrich themselves at the expense of the other party. Thus, it is not reasonable and permissible for the innocent party to use the breach of contract committed by the other party so that the innocent party is dishonestly enriched. Also, on the basis of this principle, the provision of criminal terms in the contract is prohibited, as well as the occurrence of the other party in a difficult financial situation cannot be used by the other party as an opportunity for unjust enrichment.
- f. *The principle of the least possible damage,* according to which when a loss must be distributed between two or more innocent parties, it is reasonable that the loss should be borne by the party that possesses the most economic opportunity to do so. Because of their role, trading parties are better able to bear losses than consumers.
- g. *The principle of non-exploitation of the other party.* This principle means that the stronger party is not allowed to exploit the weakness of the other party in concluding the contract, but the parties to the agreement with the same position and economic strength are not allowed to exploit the weakness of the other party. The first part of this principle constitutes a positive aspect of intervention by allowing the application of a general principle of ignorance and justifies consumer protection policies. The second part of the principle is equally important, because it does not allow the intervention of the state in commercial contracts.
- h. *The principle of a fair agreement for consumers.* According to this principle, consumers should be offered protection against the practices of "sharp advertisements", which constitute those that are too complicated or exciting that prevent the consumer from having a clear opinion about whether or not to enter into a contract. Also, according to this principle, conditions that may lead to misinterpretation or those related to the presentation of false, untrue elements or that limit the rights of the consumer are prohibited. Furthermore, the consumer's misunderstanding in the conclusion of the contract must be fairly compensated.
- i. *The principle of information of advantages by the party that enjoys these advantages.* The party that has special advantageous information must inform the other party, but the parties that have the same advantageous information do not have the obligation to notify each other. The positive aspect of the advantage information principle is protective, but its negative aspect does not

provide assistance to representatives who are judged to have to find such information themselves.

- j. *The principle of responsibility for the fault committed.* The party that is at fault should not be given the opportunity to avoid its responsibility for its fault. This principle includes both exclusionary clauses dealing with negligence and indemnification clauses intended to leave liability for negligence to chance.
- k. *The principle of pater familias care.* According to this principle, parties who enter into an agreement for which they have shown due care can renounce it, if justice requires so. The cases when the party has the right to renounce the contract concluded pursuant to this principle is when it is the weak party to the contract or has shown itself to be naive. Also, the theory of consumer protection in cases of ordinary mistakes or the difficult situation of the party, suggests the termination of the effects of the contract¹

Another aspect of the autonomy of contractual freedom is that *the parties are free to enter into other contracts that are not expressly provided for in the Civil Code, as well as to freely determine their content.* Regarding this aspect of contractual freedom, our Civil Code is not expressed in a taxing manner, however, by making a systematic interpretation of its provisions, we can conclude that this Code recognizes this aspect of contractual freedom. Thus, according to this Code, the parties have the right to conclude other contracts that are not foreseen and not regulated thereof, it is sufficient that through them they realize their legitimate interests and their content is not in conflict with its mandatory provisions or special laws.

The right of the parties to conclude contracts that are not expressly regulated in the Civil Code has been accepted in unison by various authors of the law of obligations in Albania. Thus, some of the most well-known authors of this right state that the parties can conclude other contracts that do not belong to the types regulated in the Civil Code, so-called atypical contracts, it is enough that these contracts aim to regulate the interests of the parties that are protected by the subjective law. According to these authors, in such cases it may be difficult to define precisely the rules that will be applied to atypical contracts concluded by the parties, but such a thing can be solved by means of the extended interpretation of the civil law or by analogy, bearing in mind the legal provisions governing contracts and legal actions in general¹

Regarding such aspect of contractual autonomy, it seems that the position held by the doctrine of civil law has been the same. Thus, according to another well-known author of the law of obligations in the communist period, in each Civil Code different types of contracts are provided which are encountered more often in practice, but the law may not provide for all types of contracts that may arise in practice. In this case, according to this author, the question arises whether the parties can conclude contracts that are not provided for in the Civil Code and do these contracts have legal power? According

¹ See also: Nuni, A; Mustafaj, I; Vokshi, A; "The law of obligations Part I", Tirana 2008, page 49.

to him, the answer to this question is that the parties could conclude contracts that were not expressly provided for by the law, and such a thing was provided for in the second paragraph of Article 33 of Law no. 2359, dated 15.11.1956 "*On legal actions and obligations*"¹

This author, in relation to this aspect of contractual autonomy, further reasoned that the parties are free to enter into other contracts that are not provided for in the law, as long as these contracts are not contrary to a mandatory provision of the law, with the rules of socialist coexistence and not intend to harm the state or third parties. As a typical example that was not regulated by the law of that time, the above author gives the life annuity contract, which, although it was not provided for by the law, could be concluded by the parties, this fact was also accepted by the judicial practice of the time.

The author in question includes this aspect of contractual autonomy in the so-called mixed contracts. As such are those contracts which contain the elements of two or more contracts provided by law. As an example of such a contract, the case of the exchange of land by the owner with the entrepreneur, against the construction of a certain work by the entrepreneur, which is usually a residential building or a building for the exercise of commercial activity, is provided above.²

If we look at this aspect of contractual autonomy in a comparative perspective, we find that it is recognized by the legislation and legal doctrine of most of the contemporary states. Thus, the Civil Code of Kosovo expressly provides that the parties may conclude other contracts that are not provided for by law, as well as freely determine their content³

The Italian Civil Code more fully contemplates this aspect of contractual freedom. According to this Code, the parties can also enter into contracts that do not belong to the types that are regulated in a special way in the Civil Code, provided that they aim to realize the legal interests that are protected by the Italian legal order. For the conclusion of contracts other than those expressly regulated by civil law, the Italian Civil Code requires that two conditions be met at the same time; a) the parties to the conclusion of these contracts must aim to realize their legitimate interests and b) the realization of the legitimate interests of the parties deserves to be protected by the legal system⁴

¹ See also: Article 33 of Law no. 2359, dated 15.11.1956 "*On legal actions and obligations*".

² See also: Sallabanda, A; "*The Law of Obligations, General Part*", pages 55-56, publication of the Faculty of Law of the University of Tirana, Tirana 1962, pages 55-56.

³ Paragraph 2 of Article 2 of Book 2 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Kosovo provides:

"*2. Within the limits mentioned in paragraph 1, the parties may enter into contracts other than those previously provided by law and determine their content*".

⁴ The second paragraph of Article 1322 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Italy provides:

Even the doctrine of contract law in Italy pays special attention to this aspect of contractual autonomy, according to which the parties are free to enter into contracts that are not expressly regulated by civil law, known as non-typical or non-named contracts. These contracts do not correspond to the types of contracts provided by the Civil Code or by special laws, but are created and practiced in the business world.

It is worth emphasizing the fact that a significant part of typical contracts in contemporary civil legislations have their origin from non-typical contracts. They were born and spread in the business world before the law predicted and regulated them. As examples of such contracts, we can mention some of the bank contracts, such as the opening of the bank loan, or the bank advance contract, which today are regulated by civil law, but which previously existed as non-typical contracts created by practice of banks in the field of banking activity.

As the Italian Civil Code defines, non-typical contracts are valid if they aim to realize interests that deserve to be protected by the legal system or legal order. This condition of validity for non-typical contracts constitutes the cause of the contract, which is one of the essential conditions of its existence. Non-typical contracts are subject to the legal norms that regulate contracts in general, while the rest are regulated by the conditions that the parties themselves have provided in the contract¹

Despite the fact that the courts have in some cases been able to protect the weaker party by applying strict rules of interpretation or by refusing to include as part of the contract exclusion clauses in favor of the business, the general picture is the impossibility of common law to solve such issue. Instead it is left to Parliament to step in and fix the problems these standard contracts present. Such a thing was done by the English Parliament with the approval of the law of 1977: "*Law on the unfair terms of the contract*".

Pursuant to such law, consumers have been given a great protection against standard contracts drawn up by businesses. The amended "Consumer Protection" Act of 2008, which originates from the European Union Directive of the same name, provides the consumers with wider protection against unfair contract terms. The law has finally provided for the existence of certain rules for consumer protection in standard contracts²

The second issue to be discussed is that the *form and content* of contemporary contracts have become more and more complex. Today's contracts usually include a large number of conditions, which seek to foresee a variety of events that may have an impact on the performance of the contracts.

"Parties can also conclude contracts that belong to types that do not have a special discipline, provided that they intend to realize interests that can be protected according to the legal order."

¹ See also: Galgano, F; "Private Law", translated by Alban Brati, Tirana 2006, page 268-269.

² See also: Law no. 9902, dated 07.04.2008 "On consumer protection", amended.

Some of these conditions are provided to avoid rights that the law would otherwise recognize, such as in the case of the exclusion clause and the terms of the contract in its entirety. Other conditions are the results of the perceived stiffness of the common law. Common law has usually been reluctant to cancel a contract on the claim of its unfair terms, and to solve such problem, the parties include in their contracts a set of complex conditions, such as the party's sudden and unforeseen economic hardship, force majeure, which make it possible to adjourn the implementation of the contract or to suspend or terminate it, without forcing the party that has not implemented the contract, in these cases to compensate the damage caused.

Conclusions

From the above paper we can draw some crucial conclusions. One of them is the fact that the principle of the autonomy of the will constitutes the basis for the establishment and implementation of contracts in contemporary legal systems. This principle implies not only the right of the parties to freely determine the content of the contract, but also any of their rights related to the execution and termination of the contract. Nevertheless, this principle is not unlimited. In its implementation, the parties must not violate the rights of third parties nor the interests of society in its entirety, and this limitation of the application of the principle of contractual freedom is known as the "*public order clause*".

In dealing with the content of the principle of autonomy of will, two are the principal theories recognized by contract law; a) individualism theory and b) consumer welfare theory. The individualism theory supports the idea that the parties are free to determine the content of the contract in each of its elements, they can conclude any type of contract, as long as they do not violate the public order clause. This theory requires that the state should interfere as little as possible in the autonomy of the will of the parties, since according to it, no one can protect their interests better than the parties.

The theory of consumer welfare recognizes that the will of the parties in concluding contracts is not unlimited and the content of a contract must be in accordance with the principles of justice and honesty. The above theory requires the state to regulate in the most detailed way possible, the autonomy of the will of the parties, as well as to issue special norms in favor of consumer protection.

Nowadays legislations of democratic states, including Albania in the regulation of the principle of contractual autonomy, endeavor to find a balance as fair as possible between these two theories, in order to ensure a faster circulation of goods and services on the one hand, and protect consumer rights, on the other hand. From the above treatment, it follows that the individualism theory is more applicable in the cases of commercial contracts, while the consumer protection theory is applied in the cases of consumer contracts.

If we look at the civil legislation in Albania, it is found that recently more priority is being given to the theory of consumer protection, this fact is also expressed with the approval in 2008 of the law "*On consumer protection*", which has been continuously amended in order to adapt it to the European Union Directive in this field. Likewise, we find the application of this theory in the provisions of the Civil Code, which contains as part of contractual freedom the conclusion, execution and interpretation of the contract based on the principles of bona fide and impartiality. We find such a fact more expressed, especially in the standard contract, where the law determines that the conditions set by the parties have priority over the general rules set in advance by the party that drafted them.

Regardless of the limitations that have been imposed today on the principle of contractual autonomy, we can affirm again that it finds wide application and constitutes the basic principle on which the conclusion, execution and termination of contracts are based. It constitutes a universally accepted principle of private international law, the roots of which can be found in Roman law applied more than 20 centuries ago and which continues to be applied even nowadays in democratic states.

The civil legislation in Albania fully guarantees this important principle of contract law, taking in this direction the best models from the legislations of the most developed countries. What is worth emphasizing at the end of these conclusions is the fact that the principle of the autonomy of the contractual will does not only mean rights for the parties, but also responsibilities for them, not only not to unfairly infringe the interests of the other party, but not to infringe the interests of third parties or the interests of the public in its entirety.

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Looking for a Legal Concept of Religious Freedom as Much as Possible Ad Includendum and as Little as Possible Ad Escludendum: Italian and Albanian Constitution Compared

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Abstract

Since ancient times, human beings have sought the spiritual and supernatural dimension, in fact it is believed that freedom of religion can be found in the twelfth edict on stone of Ashoka, which dates back to 250 B.C. (¹). The search for the transcendent has been continuous and has crossed the entire history of man, consequently also the freedom of religion. But what is freedom of religion? With the changes and evolution of modern societies, the concept of religious freedom has also taken on different facets, such as the freedom not to believe, or active atheism, transforming in this way from the freedom of the believer in the freedom of the non-believer. In the Albanian and Italian Constitution, freedom of religion is integrated with freedom of thought, freedom of assembly, etc., since it alone is unable to protect such a broad concept. All this has made it even more difficult to identify the concept. Any attempt to define from the outside the category of religion worthy of protection would go against the provisions of the Constitution which establishes the right of everyone to profess their faith. The analysis carried out will aim to identify who is competent to outline this notion.

Keywords: Freedom of religion, Freedom to profess one's faith, Legal concept, Italian Constitution, Albanian Constitution

Introduction

The right to freedom of religion. What is freedom?

Capogrossi writes to Giulia "*freedom must be the principle of freedom, it must be a human freedom, the one that frees us, the one that frees us (...) only man can be happy or unhappy, good or bad, hate or love, at your choice*" (G. CAPOGRASSI, 1981, pp. 149, 599.). Therefore "*true freedom is that of the soul*" (V. FAGIOLO, 1990, p. 166).

(¹) Translation of C. FORMICHI, *Apologia del Buddhismo*, Formiggini, Rome, 1925, p. 91.

Undoubtedly, freedom of religion is a need that "*concerns humanity in its entirety, therefore it runs through the whole constitutional spirit*" (P. CONSORTI, pp. 20, 21; Cf. M. OLIVETTI, 2004, p. 40).

For this reason it has been recognized with priority over others since, as Grossi points out, "*it is the first to be invoked since the end of the ancient world when the clash between Christianity and paganism occurs*" (P. GROSSI, p. 105; Cf. A. C. JEMOLO, 1961, p. 131; T. MARTINES, 1990). For this reason, today it is considered as the archetype of modern freedoms (S. FERLITO, 2003, p. 20).

The right to freedom of religion "*in the purity of its realization represents a good in and of itself and is the crowning achievement of a fundamental and irrepressible human aspiration*" (P. GROSSI, 2008, p. 105).

In law books it was conceived as "*the freeing of the human spirit from any dogmatic or confessional concept: for others, on the contrary, as the faculty of conforming one's life, not only private, but also public, to the precepts of one's religion. Both of these extreme positions have historically led to positions of intransigence and intolerance*".

But "*true religious freedom consists in making possible a situation in which every individual - whether he believes or does not believe - can enjoy the same freedom. In other words, religious freedom is not a philosophical or theological concept, but essentially a juridical one*" (F. M. BROGLIO, 1991; Cf. F. RUFFINI, Milano, 1967, p. 7).

His intent, according to Ruffini, "*is not, as in faith, beyond worldly salvation; it is not, as with free thought, scientific truth. His intent is subordinated instead to these, and is much more modest and all practical*".

It emerges from his thought that the true intent of religious freedom as an essentially juridical principle lies "*in creating and maintaining in society a condition of things such that each individual can continue and attain those two supreme ends in his own right, without the other men, either separated or grouped into associations or even personified in that supreme collectivity which is the State*" (F. RUFFINI, 1967, p. 7) (1).

Freedom of religion is a legal freedom founded on natural human freedom, according to De Luca (P. DE LUCA, 1969, p. 15), which distinguishes between the concept of "*religious freedom*" considering it a theological concept and "*right to religious freedom*" as a juridical concept. The latter, in fact, is nothing other than "*legal freedom in religious matters and activities, that is with regard to a special object, that is, the faculty of the will to self-determine in religious affairs within the sphere of religious purposes and juridical-religious norms, without any legal, constricting or impeding coercion*". (P. DE LUCA, 1969, p. 45)

(1) For the A. freedom of religion is configured only in the juridical category, excluding the theological and philosophical ones. See ID., Religious freedom as a subjective public right, cit.

With the changes and evolution of modern societies, the concept of religious freedom has also taken on different facets, such as freedom not to believe, or active atheism, transforming itself in this way from the freedom of the believer into the freedom of the non-believer.

Thus the freedom of religion provided for in Article 19 of the Italian Constitution is integrated with the freedom of thought, assembly, etc. since it alone is unable to protect such a broad concept. All this, as has been highlighted, has made it even more difficult to identify the concept itself (Cf. M. MANETTI, 2007, p. 854).

The same difficulty also results in defining freedom of religion in associated form, since the Constitution fails not only to define the concept but also to outline the elements that constitute it. That is why, in this way, art. 8 of the Constitution is considered an open norm (In these terms also R. BOTTA, 1994, p. 100), also capable of adapting to modern times (Cf. A. C. JEMOLO, *Lezioni di diritto ecclesiastico*, Giuffrè, Milano, 1963, p. 104) ⁽¹⁾.

Even the Albanian constitution in Article 24 outlines a more detailed protection of religious freedom, but even in it there is no notion of religion.

Furthermore, from a legal point of view, there is a real difficulty in defining the concept of religion and religious denomination, not to say that it is "not possible", as some authors believe. (S. FERRARI, 1995, pp. 20, 22. Also in note 5 of p. 22 also lists the Authors, who consider it impossible to define the concept of religious freedom).

Over the years the notion of religion has been understood and defined in a different way ⁽²⁾, but every attempt in legal doctrine - and not only - has failed as it has been shown that the functional and content elements are not capable of leading to a legal definition (S. FERRARI, 1995, pp. 20, 30) ⁽³⁾.

State, Individual or Judicial Recognition?

In the absence of a concept, even those who are competent to delineate this notion appear very difficult. Is it the state, the jurisprudence or the individual? ⁽⁴⁾

(¹)The Author believes that this concept is not even legal, but sociological.

(²)In the Bible, faith is defined as "the salt of the earth". Bible, Mt, 5, 3.

(³)The Author believes that the difficulty of defining freedom of religion can lead us to two solutions, the first to self-qualify it, and the second to apply a special discipline to it (p. 30). It also reminds us of the principle of state incompetence, in the sense that "*public bodies have no competence to make an evaluation - positive or negative - on the contents of a religion or, ultimately, to declare whether or not it is a religion*"(p. 35).

(⁴) Interesting in this regard is the story of the Harrisburgers, who found a very ingenious way to avoid paying taxes. Taking advantage of the gap in the definition of religion and religious denomination, they decided to affiliate with a Californian Church to be ordained ministers of worship, thus evoking the tax exemptions for this category. The local authorities who were not able to define the religious phenomenon, when in doubt applied the most favorable laws. The story, quoted by S. FERRARI, *La nozione giuridica di confessione religiosa (come sopravvivere senza conoscerla)* (The juridical notion of

Ferrari notes that it is not up to the state to say what a religion is and what is not, because this would involve a violation of art. 19 of the Constitution (S. FERRARI, pp. 30, 35).

Furthermore, article 19 of the Italian Constitution, in establishing that everyone has the right to profess their religious faith, reminds us that the term "their religious" indicates not only the individual as the holder of freedom of religion, but that it is him to estimate what it is, and whether it is a religion. It should be emphasized that is an absolute possessive adjective. Therefore, there can be no external evaluation of the individual in the qualification, positive or negative, of a belief as a religious value.

Instead in Article 24 of the Albanian constitution the term "their religious" is missing, but the individual character of believing or not believing in religion is highlighted with the term "each".

The fact that the term "their religious" is not mentioned in the Albanian Constitution does not imply that the constitution does not recognize it as such but it implies that faith is linked to something very personal and that faith is what everyone feels is their own.

The adoration of a tree or other inanimate object as a fideistic element cannot be considered by anyone to be insufficient to constitute an element of worship, if it is considered as such by a subject.

This means that a ranking of religions does not exist or must exist, nor the supremacy of one cult over another, this means that, without prejudice to reasons of public order and common morals, no one else, if not the holder of the feeling can or is entitled to attribute the dignity of religion to a given creed.

Furthermore, if the judgment did not derive from the holder of liberty but from the state, this fact would historically take us back in time, that is, to the admissibility review on cults.

Thus, according to this thesis, in the light of Article 19 of the Italian Constitution ⁽¹⁾ and Article 24 of the Albanian Constitution, the incompetence of the State in assessing what is religious or not is affirmed, and a form of individual and collective self-qualification is deduced. Moreover, in matters of freedom of conscience this solution

religious confession (how to survive without knowing it), p. 19-20, and taken in turn by R. L. BEEBE, *Tax Problems Posed by pseudo-Religious Movements*, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1979, pp. 101-103.

(¹) Furthermore, also the Italian Constitution Court in the sentence. n. 467 of 1991 defined freedom of conscience as a "creative principle that makes the reality of fundamental freedoms possible as a realm of the virtualities of expression of the inviolable rights of the individual in the life of relationships. (...) In other words, "thematic areas with which a man can identify himself in his behavior". Consequently, not only art. 19 of the Constitution but also art. 21 of the Constitution.

appears to be the best (N. COLAIANNI, 2000, pp. 30, 31), because, as Bin also maintains, "*the only position that the State can take with regard to religious sentiments and freedom of conscience is one of perfect indifference as to 'vertical' relationships, and of intransigent protection of the individual right of negative freedom, as to 'horizontal' relationships*". (R. BIN, 1996, p. 44)

The doctrine, but also the Italian and Albanian Constitutional jurisprudence, has not found a definitive solution and has not fully resolved the interpretative problem on the concept of religion and religious confession (Cf. B. RANDAZZO, 2008, pp. 22 and the following;), because "*it is undecidable without hurting constitutional principles*". (R. BIN, p. 41)

This is because, also on the basis of what is stated in the epigraph, any attempt to define from the outside the category of religion worthy of protection would go in contrast with the provisions of Article 19 of the Italian Constitution and Article 24 of the Albanian Constitution, they sanction the right of everyone to profess *their faith*, thus attributing to individual feeling the role of conferring the dignity of religious worship on a given creed.

This concept inevitably leads to the consequence of unconstitutionality any state intervention in defining what a cult worthy of protection is or is not.

In the same way, recognition in the courts would appear to be an "elastic" solution (So S. FERRARI, 1998, pp. 53 and following) above all dictated by a certain personal conviction of the judges (B. RANDAZZO, p. 23; Cf. ID., 2001, pp. 180 and following). In essence, the law would shift from the ownership of the individual to that of a third party, the judge, who inevitably takes a decision on the basis of his religious sensitivity. It is evident how a solution of this type contrasts sharply with Article 19 of the Italian Fundamental Charter ⁽¹⁾ and with Article 24 of the Albanian Constitution.

Ultimately the choices are two, *tertium non datur* (See. L. OLIVIERI, 1996, p. 202), in the sense that either the concept is determined by the state or by the individual (in the case of the definition of religious denomination, by themselves).

(¹) See also sentence no. 467 of 1992, in which the Italian Court took an intermediate position, declaring the religious attribution of the Dianetics Institute association unfounded, and ruled that, "the Court of Turin considered, on the basis of a preliminary non-disputable assessment, that enforce the rules whose constitutional legitimacy is questioned. It is not possible, here, to assess whether the "Dianetics Institute" is to be qualified as a religious association or an organization of a different nature, nor can a different logical sequence be imposed on the judge of merit in the order of the checks necessary to affirm that the concrete elements exist to qualify, in application of the abstract provision of the law, an association as religious or as an organization of a different nature".

The first solution appears more convincing from a legal point of view (1), because what is qualified by the state is also recognized by the rules, by the individual and by the judges. However, the question remains whether this constitutes a *vulnus* of Article 19 of the Italian constitution and Article 24 of the Albanian one which we have dealt with up to now. Obviously, the question remains open, but it is difficult to hypothesize that any strand of faith can assert itself as worthy of protection when it is not recognized as such by the state body.

Conclusion

If, from a strictly constitutional perspective, the law should be traced back to the individual, from the point of view of legal protection, there can be no other subject than the State to define the canons that should characterize a cult that deserves such protection.

This concept has in itself the characteristic of an *erga omnes* guarantee that is based on species and not gender profiles without going into the merits of the fideistic contents. In this way a juridical norm is crystallized which as such has a general value.

Obviously, since it is a very delicate matter and which involves different and personal sensitivities, in defining the canons at the basis of protection, the State must take into account all the elements that contribute to forming the concept of religion in a logic that is as inclusive as possible. In other words, it is necessary to move according to an interpretation that is as much as possible *ad includendum* and as little as possible *ad escludendum*.

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Intercultural Communication in the Iraqi EFL Online Classes

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Abstract

A review of previous studies shows that intercultural communication competency (ICC) needs to be measured in culturally diverse groups of participants. This paper describes the development and preliminary testing of a new ICC instrument. Students are regularly confronted with the fact that they understand the laws of language to a large extent. However, they cannot always use the language effectively as required because they lack sufficient knowledge of the target culture. This article aims to investigate intercultural communication competence in EFL classrooms. This study has been conducted in the Department of English at the College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad, to identify first-year EFL students' incompetence in intercultural communication. This study highlights the development and initial empirical testing of a unique and new instrument of intercultural communication (ICC). The sample for this study was 30 female first-year students in the Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad. The study was conducted during the academic year 2021–2022. The reliability of the instrument and concept validity were assessed using regression, factor, and correlation analyses. The initial results are quite satisfactory.

Keywords: intercultural communication competence, instrument development

1. Introduction

With the increasing complexity of today's multicultural society, academics and professionals alike are interested in the concept of intercultural competence. To be effective in today's globalized world, it is critical that any tool used to assess an employee's intercultural communication skills also works well with people from

various cultural backgrounds. This study aims to show a general review of the process of making and testing such an instrument.

The term "communication competency" refers to the ability to communicate in a way that is both efficient and suitable (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Being a skilled communicator means being able to accomplish one's aims while also displaying behavior that is appropriate for the context. In order to apply this concept of communication competence to intercultural contexts, one must take into account the cultural/relational context in which the behavior is expected and accepted. Most researchers agree that intercultural communication skills may be divided into the following three categories: cognitive, affective, and behavioral studies. (Cui & Van den Berg 1991; Sercu 2004; Spitzberg 1991). Most attempts to measure ICC have used these dimensions and a few more as a starting point. A brief look at ICC's past tools will help us understand how the current instrument evolved.

2. Measures of ICC

The Intercultural Behavioral Assessment (ICC) indicators by Ruben (1976) are one of the earliest measurements of ICC in the literature. Participants are assessed on seven characteristics, including their ability to tolerate ambiguity, manage their behavior in social situations, show respect, interest in learning new things, and attitude toward others. This tool has been utilized successfully in previous investigations (Chen, 1989; Ruben & Kealey, 1979) but has not been used substantially in recent years. The instrument's applicability to people from diverse cultural backgrounds is also unclear.

Bennett (1986, 1993) developed a theoretical framework for an intercultural sensitivity development model, which was used to design the Intercultural Developmental Inventory (Bennett & Hammer, 1998; Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman 2003:422). The authors claim that analyses are based on data gathered from the inventory since cultural awareness indicates intercultural competence. (Greenholtz, 2003). However, further research is essential to determine the extent to which ICC may be predicted by an individual's level of intercultural sensitivity. ICC, on the other hand, is fundamentally distinct from intercultural sensitivity.

The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000; van der Zee, Zaaij, & Piekstra, 2003) analyses a person on five dimensions: cultural empathy, emotional stability, open-mindedness, flexibility, and social initiative. It has been used in empirical studies with good results in the past (van Oudenhoven & van der Zee, 2002; van Oudenhoven-mol & van der Zee, 2003; van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004). However, the instrument is mainly a psychometric tool developed to assess multicultural orientation and adaptability and does not essentially address the communication aspect of intercultural competition.

3. A New Instrument's Development

As previously stated, the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately is considered to be a form of communication competency. Self-reported data can be a reasonable way to assess efficacy if one's communication aim is to be achieved. To determine whether or not one's behavior was appropriate, one must look at both the communicator and the person with whom the conversation is taking place. This level of precision is necessary to understand someone's ICC in context. The ability of a person to consistently behave in a way that is viewed as acceptable cannot be understood by analyzing efficacy and appropriateness in a single type of scenario unless several scenarios with significant differences are considered. According to the rationale behind this instrument's development, someone competent in one intercultural exchange can competently engage in another international exchange. Emotional intelligence, intercultural experience/training, motivation, global awareness, and the ability to listen well through conversation are all characteristics of competent intercultural communicators (from the perspective of the other person). If there are observable variables in an intercultural communicator that transcend the cultural context and the cultural identity of the perceiver, this technique was chosen to investigate. Analyzing the data as a semantic network revealed patterns in the interview responses. The common themes that emerged from the research were the five variables discussed earlier. As a result of these findings, it is not out of the question to construct an ICC instrument that depends on self-reported data, as evidence suggests that variables inherent in a person contribute to perceived ICC.

The present instrument was constructed with five items for each of the three domains of cognition, affectivity, and behavior. Findings from earlier studies on the relationship between cognitive complexity and communication skills influenced the questions on the cognitive component. Persuasive and integrative communication skills related to competence have been documented in those with higher levels of cognitive complexity (Kline, Hennen-Floyd, & Farrell, 1990; Leighty & Applegate, 1991; O'Keefe & Shepard, 1987). As a result, Chen (1996) found only minimal evidence that high levels of cognitive complexity were connected with interpersonal relations and the creation of intercultural appropriate messages. A standard definition of cognitive complexity (Adams-Webber, 2001; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003) states that it refers to one's ability to distinguish between personal constructs and apply those distinctions in social interactions and behavior interpretations. Accordingly, the five items on the instrument assessed one's ability to do just that in cross-cultural settings.

According to available research (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Arasaratnam, 2006), ICC appears to be associated with the ability to empathize with and experience a sense of belonging to people from other cultures. An investigation conducted by Redmond (1985) into affective empathy (the ability to decenter one's emotions) and communicative competence reveal that these concepts' behavioral manifestations

share a great deal. Affective components of the measure were therefore concerned with one's ability to understand someone from a different culture.

Additional factors were included in the study to ensure that the new ICC instrument was reliable. ICC's (2006) model reveals favorable connections between ICC and characteristics such as motivation to interact with individuals from different cultures, positive attitudes about people from other cultures, and interaction involvement. These variables were selected based on this model. Arasaratnam and Doerfel's (2005) findings were used to build the model, which depicts the association between ICC and a set of five factors identified in the study. As a result, the model's relationships between the various variables were examined. There are few models of international cultural competence (ICC) based solely on data from individuals representing a wide range of cultural backgrounds (Arasaratnam, 2007; Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005). In addition to the three previously mentioned variables, ethnocentrism was included as a measure, with the reasoning that those with high ICC will also have low ethnocentrism. (Lin, Rancer, & Trimbitas, 2005; Wrench et al., 2006).

4. Method

4.1 Participants

Participants were 30 female students in the Department of English Language, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad. This study was applied during the academic year 2021 / 2022.

4.2 Measures

All instruments were in the form of Likert-type scales with 7-point variation, 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. Items that were phrased negatively (concerning the concept measured) were reverse coded.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify problems encountered by Iraqi students learning English as a foreign language. Students in the first year of the English Department at the University of Baghdad's College of Education for Women face a variety of challenges. The process of studying and analyzing can help learners become much more aware of and knowledgeable about how meanings interact in their minds. Students are drawn in unexpectedly by a new method and flexible perspective for achieving L2 surface and deep meaning connections. As a result, as they evaluate or search for intercultural information, they may open more and more doors for intercultural learning. They can improve their background knowledge.

6. Results

Based on Arasaratnam's (2006) model of ICC, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using ethnocentrism, motivation, ATOC, and interaction commitment as independent factors. In addition, all the variables were conducted for correlation analysis.

Results from the regression analysis revealed positive relationships between the dependent variable (ICC) and all three independent variables, namely ATOC ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$), motivation ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$), and interaction involvement ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$). Correlation analysis found positive relationships between ICC and ATOC ($r(30) = .51$, $p = .01$), ICC and motivation ($r(30) = .50$, $p = .01$), and ICC and interaction involvement ($r(30) = .54$, $p = .01$), and a negative correlation between ICC and ethnocentrism ($r(30) = -.62$, $p = .01$). Disconnected correlations were calculated due to the low reliability of some of the instruments and are identified in brackets where the correlations are presented.

7. Conclusion

This study tested a new ICC instrument. It was based on the assumption that communication competence consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components. The items were created specifically to tackle multicultural communication abilities. Initial results indicate that this tool can offer helpful data in further studies. Based on previous research, we need an ICC instrument that works successfully with various participant groups with various cultural backgrounds. The present study is the first step toward developing such a device. The findings of this study produced the development of additional studies to address the weaknesses of the present one and further evaluate the tool.

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The Relationship Between Personality Traits and Stress at Work

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Abstract

Introduction: Stress is one of the normal phenomena, which in most cases are accompanied by problems and defects in the work we perform. There is a big burden in our education system, due to various reforms and socio-economic transition, but on the other hand we also have problems with the quality of teaching which are affecting the development of teaching in inadequate forms.

Methodology: The research included a total of 60 teachers from schools in the municipality of Prizren, based on a random sample. Descriptive methods and correlation were used as methods of analysis to measure the correlation between the two variables, ie how much personality affects the level of stress at work. The main purpose of the research was the correlation coefficient of personality type to the level of stress in the work of teachers. *Results:* The general level of personality factors affects the increase of stress at work. The results show that the correlation between personality and stress (things that teachers find difficult to do) is .113 a low positive correlation, while the significance level is .389 which means that it is above the 5% confidence level, while even the correlation between personality and stress (the things teachers do most) has a low negative correlation of -.159, whereas the significance is .224 which is above the 5% confidence level. Teachers who feel attractive and extravagant do not have high stress. Teachers who feel the need for power have high levels of stress. *Conclusion:* Personality is an important factor for each individual, especially his impact on stress at work. For teachers the formation of personality should be done during the stages of development and formal education. Teachers have different personalities and also have different work habits. From the confirmation of the hypothesis it has resulted that personality has no influence on the increase of stress in the work of teachers.

Keywords: Personality; Stress; Teachers; Work

Introduction

Stress is a normal, necessary and unavoidable phenomenon of life which can create temporary discomfort as well as long term consequences. The concept of stress was introduced into medical terminology in 1936 by the Canadian philosopher Selye. He describes "General Adaptation Syndrome" as the body's attempt to respond to the demands of the environment (Selye 1977). Scientific data confirms the idea that personality is an important factor in identifying, reacting, and approaching stressful events. It is a well-known fact that the perception of stress depends on the degree of compatibility between individuals and their environment, so that individual experiences only state if a certain situation is considered as threatening (de Jong & Emmelkamp 2000). Research conducted in 2000 identified the relationships between physical health and positions characterized by increased repetition, monotony, sustained alertness, and working shifts (Le Blanc et al. 2000).

According to these studies, stimuli with stress-generating potential within an organization can be divided into four major classes: job content, working conditions, employment conditions, and social network in the workplace. Results of a study on health professionals conducted in 2005 show that personal relationships with patients are highly demanding and require emotional sensitivity and involvement. In the medical profession emotion management is considered an essential part of the job (Best et al 2005). Other researchers point out that increased exposure of women to daily stress, including occupational stress, is caused by their marital and parental roles (Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton 2001). Many studies consider self-confidence to be an important source of coping. Individuals with a high level of self-confidence are more prone to adopting more effective coping strategies than those with low self-confidence (Cassidy & O'Connor 2004).

Personality types are important factors in determining stress, thus being able to explain how some people are managed to function for years by handling large amounts of stress, while others collapse after a few months under the same amounts of stress (Cooper 2005). A key component of sustainability is provided by the coping mechanism of these people, which involves an active modification of stress perception by approaching it as a challenge they are capable of overcoming (Landy & Conte 2004).

All the big changes in life create a certain amount of stress. This is partly because big changes in life cause strong emotions, and even joy and excitement can upset the body and start affecting it a lot. Big events in life can be stressful because every new experience requires some adjustment, they motivate us to change our behavior in some way, but only a few of them cause stress. As for example, stop the traffic signals when the red light turns on. Normally, this does not stress. But imagine if you are in a hurry for an important meeting or have to catch the train and the red light, of course it will be too late. In this case stress is caused, because the situation not only requires

adjustment, but it creates both tension and anxiety. Some events, wars and natural disasters, are generation after generation very stressful. The danger is real, life is threatened and often people can do little or nothing to save themselves.

In a more general classification, stress is divided into: Eustres-positive or beneficial stress; and Distress — negative or harmful stress. But, depending on the time, we also have long-term stress and short-term stress. Long-term stress is very harmful, and even causes damage and disorders in different parts of the body. Not all forms of stress are negative. The word "Eustres" is used to describe positive stress. Eustress comes as a result of experiencing joyful experiences such as a victory or a successful achievement. In a state of stress certain types of hormones engage and bring the body into a state of alarm as if it were ready for battle or ready to give a quick response. This is exactly why we often feel tense and deeply anxious when we are in a state of excessive stress. Stress weakens the immune system and makes us more vulnerable to infections.

In addition to physical stresses such as illness, noise, temperature extremes, there are three major psychological causes of stress: pressure, conflict, frustration. Pressure occurs when we try to meet the social and psychological demands we make on ourselves or others. When we try to maintain self-confidence by forcing ourselves to achieve higher standards we experience an internal pressure.

Internal pressure is caused when we study hard in school, when we try to be more popular with our friends, when we try to overcome great difficulties when we try to look attractive. In the presence of internal pressure we try hard to achieve more. Without internal pressure we would not be motivated to improve and try harder. However, as a result of internal pressure we experience a harmful stress.

External pressure is caused by the demands other people make on us. We try to please the people who are important to us. We can try to weaken just to please or seduce a loved one, get high grades to make happy parents, be successful to be liked by our peers, and so on. External pressure helps us to adapt to the social environment. But when others make too many demands on us or when those demands are difficult, then we experience stress. Sometimes different pressures are exerted on us at the same time and cause a situation called conflict.

When we talk about personality we are talking about those aspects that are part of each of us, constant, enduring. If you are aggressive nowadays, the chances are high that you will be aggressive tomorrow, if you are shy now, you will be very shy when you wake up tomorrow morning.

The term introvert and extrovert was popularized by Carl Jung. Extrovert types tend to be talkative, with energetic behaviors, while introverts manifest in more reserved and lonely behaviors. In any case, people fluctuate in their behavior all the time, and even extreme introverts and extroverts do not always act according to their type.

Excitement is the brain that wakes itself up by putting it on alert, a state of information. Braking is the brain that calms itself, in any common sense of fatigue and falling asleep or in the sense of defending itself in the event of overwhelming stimulation.

The extroverted type according to Jung has a positive attitude towards objects, affirms the importance to the point that manages to refer to them as well as his subjective attitude. The introverted type always acts by abstracting how to infringe on the rights of the object of his libido he wanted to protect himself from the extraordinary power he possesses in himself

As for learning difficulties it is assumed that extroverts will not have much learning difficulties because they are open, and if they have dilemmas about any problem they very easily ask others to find an adequate solution to that problem while in introverts it happens the opposite thing, because they have a closed character and are reluctant about anything, and that these persons in their future may fail in many spheres of life.

Extroverts are sociable, and feel very comfortable around society, in groups, or at gatherings. They are generally happy have self-esteem, and are optimistic and look at the world in a positive light, they also prefer more decorative clothes, much better understand a problem when they speak loudly, in order to get the opinion of others about that problem. They are generally on the move, but you like to get others to activate as well. Introverts tend to be closed, selfish, they are mostly anxious, and are interested in a self-mental life, prefer to focus on a single activity, they feel pleasure while reading, writing, fishing, etc. introverts generally choose more comfortable, simpler clothes.

Methodology

The research was of quantitative type and as a tool for data collection was used the questionnaire, which consists of two parts. One part presents statements and questions about personality and the other part the level of stress.

The research included a total of 60 teachers from schools in the municipality of Prizren, and gender and age is based on a random sample. Questionnaires were initially distributed in schools and data were collected within a period of 1 month. Gender aspect, age and other demographic aspects were according to random sample. I personally initiated and implemented the research.

SPSS program was used for data processing, while descriptive methods and correlation were used as methods of analysis to measure the correlation between the two variables, ie how much personality affects the level of stress at work.

Research problem: Stress is one of the normal phenomena, which in most cases are accompanied by problems and defects in the work we perform. There is a big burden in our education system, due to various reforms and socio-economic transition, but

on the other hand we also have problems with the quality of teaching which are affecting the development of teaching in inadequate forms. All these factors are led by the personality traits of each person, especially in teachers in schools. To measure the impact and correlation between personality traits and stress at work, this research was conducted in schools with teachers, to see if personality factors are influencing the increase in stress in teacher work.

The main purpose of the research is the correlation coefficient of personality type to the level of stress in the work of teachers.

Results

The general level of personality factors affects the increase of stress at work. The correlation method for data analysis was used to confirm this impact. Three variables were analyzed, personality as an independent variable and two dependent variables, the stress that corresponds to the things that teachers find difficult to do, and the stress that teachers do the most.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PERSONALITY#	1.5850	.32904	60
Stress_Things I find it hard to do	3.0182	.12725	60
Stress_The things I do most	1.9821	.57499	60

Correlations

		PERSONALITY#	STRESS_1#	STRESS_2#
PERSONALITY#	Pearson Correlation	1	.113	-.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.389	.224
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	6.388	.280	-1.779
	Covariance	.108	.005	-.030
	N	60	60	60
STRESS_1#	Pearson Correlation	.113	1	.229
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.389		.079
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	.280	.955	.987
	Covariance	.005	.016	.017
	N	60	60	60
STRESS_2#	Pearson Correlation	-.159	.229	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.224	.079	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-1.779	.987	19.506

Covariance	-.030	.017	.331
N	60	60	60

The results show that the correlation between personality and stress (things that teachers find difficult to do) is .113 a low positive correlation, while the significance level is .389 which means that it is above the 5% confidence level, while even the correlation between personality and stress (the things teachers do most) has a low negative correlation of -.159, whereas the significance is .224 which is above the 5% confidence level. From this it can be concluded that in none of the cases do we have a significant correlation or influence of teachers' personality, on their stress at work. So, we say that statistically the overall level of personality factors does not affect the increase of stress at work.

Correlations			P2	STRESS_1#
Spearman's rho	P2	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.243
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.061
		N	60	60
	STRESS_1#	Correlation Coefficient	.243	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.061	.
		N	60	60

Teachers who feel attractive and extravagant do not have high stress. To confirm this statement, a statistical analysis of the correlation of was performed which is .243, while the significance is .061, which means that statistically these teachers who feel comfortable do not have high stress. With this we accept the hypothesis that teachers who feel themselves to be attractive and extravagant do not have high stress.

Teachers who feel the need for power have high levels of stress. To confirm this statement, a data analysis was performed, which showed a correlation of .290* and a significance level of .025, which means that the desire for power affects the level of stress to be higher. So the hypothesis has been confirmed that teachers who feel the need for power have high levels of stress.

Correlations			P27	STRESS_1#
Spearman's rho	P27	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.290*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.025
		N	60	60
	STRESS_1#	Correlation Coefficient	.290*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.
		N	60	60

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion

According to the analysis of the results of this study, personality is an important factor for each individual, especially his impact on stress at work. For teachers the formation of personality should be done during the stages of development and formal education. Teachers have different personalities and also have different work habits. The hardest things or the ones that do them the most are an issue that probably needs to be further researched, interviewing them to arrive at perhaps the most accurate answers they have given. From the confirmation of the hypothesis it has resulted that personality has no influence on the increase of stress in the work of teachers.

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Transformation of Out-of-Home Services for Children in North Macedonia: Towards Individualized and Child Tailored Care

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Abstract

Republic of North Macedonia in the last several years undergoes comprehensive social protection reform. The reform processes have been focused on furthering the processes of deinstitutionalization, decentralization and pluralization of social services delivery. The transformation of social protection institutions has been one of the key priorities in this period, specifically out-of-family services for children. In this respect, alternative care services for children without parents and parental care has been strengthened and promoted. Foster care as a traditional form of protection has been given particular attention and has undergone considerable changes. This article will review key reform processes in the domain of social protection in the country, with focus on social services for children without parents and parental care. To do this, results from recent empirical research will be presented. Mixed methodology research findings target current conditions in respect to foster care, small group homes and supported living as services used for placement of children without parents and parental care as well as professional approaches used to provide for individualized and child-tailored care. Cross-cutting issues relate to human rights, basic human needs and social integration of children.

Keywords: child, social services, tailored care, group homes, foster care

Introduction

Methodology

The situation of children in alternative care in the country has been in the focus of policy-makers, professional and scientific public in the last several years. This interest is a result of the intensive processes of deinstitutionalization and changes in the delivery of social services for children. In line with this, a number of qualitative and quantitative researches has been carried out, predominantly targeting children without parents and parental care.

This article contains findings and conclusions from a qualitative research (Bogoevska, N., Bornarova, S., Geogrgievska, S.) "Social services for children without parents and parental care: conditions and challenges" carried out within the project "Addressing Systemic Gaps-Support to Child Welfare System Reforms" in Republic of North Macedonia implemented by SOS Children's Village – North Macedonia in 2022.

The baseline study was prepared based on findings from desk and field research conducted in the second quarter of 2022 in Skopje and Pelagonija region. Desk research and content analysis of relevant statistical data sources, reports, legislation etc. was carried out prior to the field research. For the qualitative research, focus group discussion, expert and group interviews were used as techniques, while a survey was applied as a quantitative technique. The qualitative research targeted a total of 29 professionals, 26 foster parents, 36 children without parents and parental care and 9 media workers.

Social Protection Reform Processes

The Republic of North Macedonia initiated comprehensive social protection reform in 2017. A new Law on social protection was enacted in 2019 which presented a considerable step towards fulfillment of the strategic goals set in the National Programme for social protection 2011-2021. During social reform process, social services were given particular attention having in mind that this sector has been underdeveloped and neglected for years back. This was done with an intention to facilitate and enhance the process of deinstitutionalization and transformation of large residential facilities. With the new types of social services anticipated within the law, the basis for facilitating the process of deinstitutionalization, prevention of institutionalization and increasing the quality of social services, was created.

Within the social reform process social prevention was strongly emphasized and activities and measures to be taken for preventive action were extended. The services of information and referral, professional assistance and support and counselling were regulated and clearly defined as separate social services. Previous classification of social services as institutional and non-institutional services was replaced with a new classification depending on the place where beneficiary receives the service:

- home-based: home assistance and care service, personal assistance service;
- community-based: daily services (day care service, rehabilitation and reintegration service, resocialization service); and temporary services (temporary stay service, respite service, half-way house);
- out-of-family services: assisted living, foster care (general, specialized, temporary, urgent, kinship) and residential placement.

In terms of the home-based services, personal assistance was regulated as regular social service (previously implemented as program activity). Both personal

assistance and home assistance and care were in more detail regulated which generated basic preconditions for their practical implementation.

As to the community-based services, the services for rehabilitation, reintegration and resocialization were amended with the respite care and half-way house as new social services. In addition, the socially vulnerable groups (drug addicts, sexual workers, alcohol addicts and gambling addicts) were recognized and given an increased access to a broader set of services.

Out-of-family services were enriched with the nursing care residential services for chronically and terminally ill beneficiaries. This provided for the possibility to encourage development of socio-medical services and to further extend access to social services for different beneficiary groups. The introduction of the kinship care for the first time in our social protection system enabled utilization of best possible caring environment for the beneficiary in a family of his/her relatives. The previously poor regulation of some out-of-family services (such as supported living, group homes vs. placement in institutions) was improved and upgraded.

In general, all social services were redefined, the list of potential beneficiaries was more appropriately developed and the entry criteria were more precisely defined. The main advantages of the reform changes in the domain of social services relate to: introduction of the functional capacity assessment of the beneficiary as eligibility criteria (such as for home assistance and care and personal assistance); promotion of the possibilities for establishment of joint social, health and educational services; enhancing the legal provisions for integrated social services delivery; and creating an environment for enhanced focus on development and utilization of home and community-based services as alternatives to out-of-family services (Eptisa, 2021).

Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of Out-of-Family Services

As a result of social reforms, the deinstitutionalization process has intensified in recent years. Following the guidelines of the National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization 2018-2027 - Timjanik, significant steps have been taken to replace the type of protection in large institutional facilities and to humanize the living conditions of users in accordance with the transformation plans. The process of transferring service users and transformation of large institutions is still ongoing. So far, the large residential institutions for children have been transformed into group homes as organizational units of the Children's home "11th of October" - Skopje, Home for infants and small children - Bitola, Public Institution for care of children with upbringing and social problems and disordered behaviour. As of 2017, 180 children under institutional protection have been transferred to alternative services (small group homes, supported living facilities and foster families). The Institute for Protection and Rehabilitation-Banja Bansko no longer accommodates children. Further placement of children in all existing large residential facilities was stopped (MLSP, data as of December 2021).

The process of deinstitutionalization also takes place in the residential institutions for children and adults with disabilities. The Special Institution - Demir Kapija established supported living units and group homes for children and adults with disabilities with a total of 45 users, 25 up to 30 years of age, of whom 15 are without parental care (ISA, June 2022). It is planned this institution to be transformed into a provider of integrated services, as follows: supported living, respite care and temporary accommodation of vulnerable groups during crisis situations and natural disasters. Services of supported living have been provided for persons with intellectual disabilities in Skopje and Negotino and for children without parents and parental care for over 14 years by authorized social service providers (Poraka - Negotino and SOS Children's Village Macedonia). They deliver these services as licenced service providers based on an administrative contract with the Ministry of labour and social policy. Also, the process of transformation of the Institute for Rehabilitation of children and youth Skopje (Topansko Pole) into a centre for early identification and intervention, for daily services for children and persons with disabilities and for professional rehabilitation, has begun.

Foster families are increasingly used for alternative care of children without parents and parental care. With the establishment of the three centres for support of foster families, two of which are state-owned, and one is established in cooperation with the SOS Children's Village North Macedonia, the quality of this service is expected to improve significantly.

However, the delivery of out-of-family social services faces numerous challenges, yet to be overcome:

- The process of deinstitutionalization predominantly focuses on children and disabled persons;
- Available out-of-family social services for older people are not sufficient to cover the needs, there is uneven geographical distribution, while existing state residential care institutions are massive, for large numbers of users which affects the quality of care provided;
- There is a limited number of small group homes and supported living units given the demand for these services;
- The established small group homes and supported living units are often placed in rented facilities which may cause uncertainty and disrupt the continuity of the social service delivery. Also, rented facilities often require additional adaptation to suit the needs of users;
- There is evident lack of staff in the small group homes and supported living units, unregulated work status of part of the staff (i.e. caregivers), as well as lack of focus on counseling and therapeutic approaches in the professional work with users;

- The integration of service users in the community and gaining undisrupted access to health and educational services for people with disabilities is sometimes limited;
- Foster care services which are more intensively being used as alternative to residential placement are not adequately enhanced and improved, which in turn negatively affects quality of care;
- There are lots of unsolved issues related to sustainability, price, continuity, development planning and alike, related to delivery of out-of-family services by non-state providers when contracting with the state;
- Integrated social services have been developed in initial phase, while combined socio-medical services are not developed at all;
- The rulebook for out-of-family services is not yet adopted (except for the supported living service and institution for treatment and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, persons with problems of addiction and other marginalized groups), which is an obstacle for service providers due to the current absence of standards and norms for these services (Bogoevska, Bornarova, 2021).

Alternative care for children without parents and parental care

The status, rights and institutional context for protection of children without parents and parental care are regulated in several laws: Family law, Law on social protection, Law on child protection and Law on justice for children. According to the Family law a child without parental care is a child whose parents are deceased, missing, unknown or with unfamiliar residence for over a year, and a child whose parents temporary or permanently do not comply with their parental rights and duties, irrespective of the reasons. Unlike the definition of children without parental care in the UN Guidelines for alternative care of children as children not in overnight care of at least one of their parents, for whatever reason and under whatever circumstances, the definition used in the domestic legislation is broader and extends to the reasons and duration of parent's absence, as well as lack of parental care for the child.

Alternative care for children without parents and parental care is provided as formal and informal. Formal alternative care is provided in out-of-family care placements: residential care in group homes, supported living units and foster care, including kinship care. There is an evident trend of declining number of children in residential placements and a parallel increase in the number of children accommodated in foster and kinship care.

Group homes are established as organizational units of the following social protection institutions: Home for infants and small children – Bitola (accommodates 32 children in 5 group homes), Children's Home "11th of October" – Skopje (accommodates 19 children in 4 group homes), Public institution for children with upbringing and social problems and disordered behavior (28 children with upbringing and social problems

in 5 group homes and 9 children with disordered behavior in 2 group homes) and Centres for social work – Shtip (5 children in 1 small group home), Berovo (5 children in 1 small group home) and Kavadarci (7 children in 1 small group home)(ISA, 2022a).

The sole provider of supported living service for children without parents and parental care is SOS Children's Village, based on administrative contract with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. There are 4 supported living units established in Skopje, accommodating 7 children per unit (SOS Childrens' Village, 2022).

There is a total of 241 foster families with 453 children and 106 kinship families accommodating 146 children. Majority of foster families provide general foster care. Of 241 foster families, 106 have status of specialized foster families for children with disabilities. Only 2 foster families in the Skopje region are specialized for children victims of family violence and children in risk. Majority of foster families are in the Skopje region (95 or 39% of the total number of foster families in the country). There are currently 3 centres for support of foster families, promotion of foster care, preparation, assessment and training of future foster families established in 2021/2022 (ISA, 2022).

Challenges in Alternative Care for Children without Parents and Parental Care: critical situation overview and discussion

In the last several years, residential care for children without parents and parental care considerably improved with the establishment of group homes and supported living facilities as a result of the process of transformation of large residential institutions and humanization of living condition for children. Nevertheless, the care in these institutions is quite expensive, their number is limited, while the practice of renting facilities causes uncertainties, inability to invest in renovation and reconstruction, discontinuity of care and transfer of children from one to another facility. Existing facilities are not geographically evenly dispersed while some of them are not located suitably. There is no local/regional establishment of social services and specialized separate facilities for children without parents and parental care with specific problems.

Of all forms of alternative care, foster care in which majority of children without parents and parental care are accommodated, faces most substantial challenges that affect the quality of care provided to children. These relate to shortcomings in selection of the foster parents, recruiting specialized, temporary and interventive foster families, provision of initial, continuous and specialized training, entry into care, respect of children's rights and meeting children's needs during care, provision of support services, contacts with biological families, oversight and monitoring of care etc.

The protection of children without parents and parental care in all stages of the process, from his/her removal from the family to after care and independent living, is

characterized with a number of challenges and shortcomings that affect appropriateness of responses to children's needs:

Removal of a child from the care of the family is applied as a measure of last resort, sometimes even belatedly. However, it is not temporary and in most of the cases results in a long-term placement.

Financial and material poverty are not seen as the only justifiable reason for the removal of a child from parental care. Yet, the conditions in such families are rarely seen as a signal for provision of appropriate support to the family to prevent child detachment.

Most common reasons for child placement in out-of-family care are: abandonment by parents, unknown parent (usually the father), deceased parents, parents deprived of parental rights, parents' addiction, parents serving a prison sentence, material deprivation and alike.

Every child placed in alternative care is assigned a guardian by the CSW, although communication and contacts between guardians and children in care are not regularly maintained. This is mostly because of geographical distance, assigning large number of children to one guardian and work engagement of guardians as case managers on other cases.

The selection of the alternative care placement for the child is not made based on prior rigorous assessment, planning and review of the living conditions and specific needs of the child.

Siblings with existing bonds are usually not separated by placements in alternative care, unless there is a clear risk of abuse or other justification in the best interest of the child, except in supported living settings. The occasional practice of changes and transfers of a child from one to another alternative care placement disrupts the principles of provision of permanency in care and non-separation of siblings.

Children who require specialized care and treatment are accommodated in same facilities/foster families with other children due to the lack of separate social services for children victims of abuse and neglect, addicts, children with traumatic experiences etc.

The right of the child to be heard and to have his/her views taken into account in accordance with his/her age and maturity is not fully respected during planning of care and preparation of the individual plan in all alternative care settings. The preparation of the individual plan is not participatory, inclusive and tailor-made.

Decisions concerning alternative care do not take full account of the desirability, in principle, of maintaining the child as close as possible to his/her habitual place of residence, in order to facilitate contact and potential reintegration with his/her family and to minimize disruption of his/her educational, cultural and social life.

Decisions regarding accommodation of children in alternative care are not made with due regard to ensuring children safe and continuous attachment to their community and caregivers, with permanency generally not being a key goal. This is predominantly result of the undeveloped network of social services available close to the place of residence of the child and the established practice of accommodating children further from their homes.

Ensuring the child's safety and security, grounded in the best interests, rights of the child and in conformity with the principle of non-discrimination is generally provided in the alternative care settings, such as group homes and supported living facilities. Situation in foster care placements in this regard varies significantly, with children not receiving appropriate care in some foster families.

Children in alternative care are commonly treated with dignity and respect and there are mechanisms in place for protection from abuse, neglect and all forms of exploitation, whether on the part of care providers, peers or third parties. However, the application of these mechanisms in some foster care settings is questionable.

Biological, social and psychological needs of children, including but not limited to access to food, clothes, housing, education, health, cultural, sport, recreational and other basic services, freedom of religion or belief, safety and privacy, are commonly met in group homes and supported living facilities, unlike foster care placements where serious deviations are noted in some cases.

For children in all alternative care settings there is a substantial lack of specialized community-based services, especially for children with traumatic experiences, children with disabilities, children with behavioral problems, children with addiction problems.

Once in care, contacts of the child with his/her family, other close persons such as friends, neighbors and previous caregivers, are not satisfactorily encouraged and facilitated, while the child is not always informed about the situation of his/her family members.

There is no clear policy and practice for appropriate aftercare and follow-up of the situation of children after leaving care, especially in public institutions and foster care families. This is not the case with the SOS managed alternative care services where separate after-care programme is in place.

The system of social protection for children without parents and parental care is not oriented towards prevention of the need for alternative care, strengthening informal care capacities, reintegration of the child with the biological family and application of alternative care as temporary form of care. The State is responsible for protecting the rights of the children without parents and parental care through ensuring appropriate alternative care. Although the legal framework allows local authorities and authorized civil society organizations to provide for such protection, most of the

social services are state-owned. Families and informal kinship families do not have access to forms of support in the caregiving role, except for the financial benefits if they meet eligibility criteria. The network of services for primary and secondary prevention is poorly developed. As a result, the child care system is not directed towards enabling the child to remain in or return to the care of his/her parents, or with other close family members. Overall, the practice is not fully in line with the UN Guidelines for alternative care of children (Bogoevska, Bornarova, Georgievska, 2022).

Professional Work – Towards Individualized and Child Tailored Care

Methodologies and tools used by professionals when working with children without parents and parental care differ based on the professional profile of the worker, type of alternative care, age and health status of the child, as well as the stage of professional work with the child. They are incorporated within the standards, procedures and guidelines for professional work developed by the Institute for social activities. Professionals are also advised to use techniques, questionnaires and other instruments published on the webpage of ISA. There is Manual for assessment of the best interest of the child, as well as brochures and other materials in use.

When dealing with children victims of neglect, abuse and sexual violence, professionals act upon the Protocol for inter-agency cooperation in cases of child sexual abuse and pedophilia and the Protocol for acting in prevention and protection of children from abuse and neglect. There is a lack of specialized methodologies and tools for professional work with different categories of children, including children with traumatic experiences. In this respect, special instruments for recognizing trauma, assessment of needs, identification of treatment resources and referral, cooperation between relevant agencies for the purposes of coordination, application of the trauma-informed care approach, are not developed and applied.

For each child in alternative care there is a case file which includes information on their admission and departure and the form, content and details of the care placement of each child, together with any appropriate identity documents and other personal information. Information on the child's family is included in the child's file, still insufficiently in the reports on regular evaluations. Records on children in care are maintained, and in principle are confidential and secure, but they are not available to the child, as well as to the parents, within the limits of the child's right to privacy and confidentiality, as appropriate.

However, there are still remaining challenges related to developing an individualized and tailored made care when working with children without parents and parental care. Professional work is guided by a limited number of specialized methodological instruments, guidelines, protocols. Quality standards for all alternative care services are missing, which affects quality of care provided to children and impedes the monitoring and its effectiveness. Professionals and

caregivers lack specialized knowledge and skills for high quality, sensitive and effective professional work with children without parents and parental care. Although some continuing training is organized, training modules are too general, partial, theoretical, oriented towards rather gaining knowledge than skills. Training is not specialized for professional work with specific categories of children, including children without parents and parental care, and does not include gaining skills for counseling and application of therapeutic approaches.

In addition, full consultation in all stages of decision-making with the child according to his/her maturity, and with his/her parents, is not applied by the case managers appointed for each case. Same applies to the preparation of the individual plan which is not participatory, inclusive and tailor-made. Moreover, in most cases caregivers, especially children are not familiar with this document and its contents. The child and his/her parents or legal guardians are not fully informed about the alternative care options available, the implications of each option and their rights and obligations in the matter. Overall, assessment results and individual plans are too formal, alike and not appropriately used as essential tools for planning decisions in future.

Monitoring and supervision of the safety, well-being and development of children placed in alternative care and regular review of the appropriateness of the care arrangements should be strengthened. Existing monitoring mechanisms are not easily accessible to children without parents and parental care and parents, who are not familiar with the ways and procedures to use them in case of need.

Conclusion

Social reforms taking place in the last several years considerably improved the social protection system in the country. The processes of pluralization and deinstitutionalization have been intensified in line with the national strategic goals. The key benefit of this process is the humanization of the living conditions of beneficiaries placed in large residential facilities and establishment of small, family-like services, with focus on persons with disabilities and children without parents and parental care. In the last several years, residential care for children without parents and parental care considerably improved with the establishment of group homes and supported living facilities as a result of the process of transformation of large residential institutions.

Despite the significance of the social reform results, there are many challenges yet to be overcome. Overall, the system of social protection for children without parents and parental care is not oriented towards prevention of the need for alternative care, strengthening informal care capacities, reintegration of the child with the biological family and application of alternative care as temporary form of care. Biological, social and psychological needs of the children are commonly met in group homes and supportive living facilities, unlike foster care placements where occasional deviations are present in some cases.

Nevertheless, the care in these institutions is quite expensive, their number is limited, while the practice of renting facilities causes uncertainties, inability to invest in renovation and reconstruction, discontinuity of care and transfer of children from one to another facility. Existing facilities are not geographically evenly dispersed while some of them are not located suitably. There is no local/regional establishment of social services and specialized separate facilities for children without parents and parental care with specific problems. Of all forms of alternative care, foster care in which majority of children without parents and parental care are accommodated, faces most substantial challenges that affect the quality of care provided to children. These relate to shortcomings in selection of the foster parents, recruiting specialized, temporary and interventive foster families, provision of initial, continuous and specialized training, entry into care, respect of children's rights and meeting children's needs during care, provision of support services, contacts with biological families, oversight and monitoring of care etc.

Professional work with children still requires interventions for enhancement of professionals' knowledge and skills, practical methodologies and instruments, as well as individualized and tailor-made approaches when working with children. Development of quality of care standards and strengthening monitoring and supervision of practice is expected to fill in the existing implementation gaps.

The system of social protection for children without parents and parental care should be further developed and enhanced following the UN Guidelines for alternative care of children. In that respect, the state should allocate human and financial resources to ensure the optimal and progressive implementation of the Guidelines and facilitate active cooperation among all relevant authorities and the mainstreaming of child and family welfare issues within all ministries directly or indirectly concerned. Based on the UN Guidelines, the state should ensure preparation of national and professionally specific guidelines that build upon the letter and spirit of the Guidelines.

The national legal framework regarding alternative care for children, in particular secondary legislation, should be revised in terms of the care, monitoring and evaluation standards and introduction of critical professional approaches applied for work with children without parents and parental care, such as trauma-informed care.

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The Concept of “Change” in the Assessment of International Relations in the Xxist Century - New Concepts and Paradigms

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Abstract

The world has not been the same throughout the centuries. Evolution and involution, wars and revolutions, technological and economic change, etc., all have accompanied human history and international relations. If history and international relations would be a symphony, change is its principal theme, a theme that can be found continuously, in recurrence, of course in different variations. This essay will assess what type of change theory we could find to define more adequately the future of international relations in XXIst century. I will summarize some of the existent theories of change and a pair of new concepts – hazardous change vs. pre-set change. I will have also a multidisciplinary approach, at the intersection between the field of international relations and organizational theory, introducing in our discipline the concept of <<change management in IR>>. Change management would be a good modality for international leaders not to wait for the events to rush hazardously on their stressed and occupied heads, but a way to control events and define a better future for humankind.

Keywords: change, theories of change, international relations, hazardous change, pre-set change, change management

Introduction

“Politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards. It takes both passion and perspective. Certainly all historical experience confirms the truth that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible. But to do that a man must be a leader, and not only a leader but a hero as well, in a very sober sense of the word [...]. Only he has the calling for politics who is sure that he shall not crumble when the world from his point of view is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer. Only he who in the face of all this can say 'In spite of all!' has the calling for politics.”

(Max Weber- Politics as a vocation¹)

¹ Weber Max, *Politics as a vocation*, p.30,
<http://f2.american.edu/dfagel/www/Class%20Readings/Weber/PoliticsAsAVocation.pdf>. Accessed on 6th Feb. 2021

This before-mentioned quotation of Max Weber in "*Politics as a vocation*" made me to choose this subject.

I think that a world leader (in the proper sense of the word) has to be not only a politician of the occasion, which sees himself/herself only in a temporary position of power, which has only the aim to be a demagogue and to manipulate the consciousness of masses. But he/she has to be also a **visionary with a perspective for the future, with a project for the next generations of human beings and that manages change with precision and determination to apply that project for the future of our species!** It has to be a visionary that doesn't renounce its ideas and ideals, despite difficulties, despite the harshness of the international life of our XXIst century. So a world leader has to manage change in international relations and to manage it with success and abnegation!¹

The research question of this paper is: **What type of change theory we could find to define more adequately the future of international relations in XXIst century?** And here, I will analyze a pair of new concepts – **hazardous change vs. pre-set change**. I will summarize some of the existent theories of change and a pair of new concepts – **hazardous change vs. pre-set change**. I will have also a multidisciplinary approach, at the intersection between the field of international relations and organizational theory, introducing in our discipline the concept of "**change management in IR**". Change management would be a good modality for international leaders not to wait the events to rush hazardously on their stressed and occupied heads, but a way to control events and define a better future for the humankind.

Few researchers analysed "change" in international relations. I will evaluate here only the theories of Michael Wesley, Aseema Sinha and K.J. Holsti (for the reasons of space requirements of this essay), before introducing my new approach in the theory of change.

In the article "*Building a Theory of Change in International Relations: Pathways of Disruptive and Incremental Change in World Politics*", Aseema Sinha sees another characteristic of change. She defines global change "*as a shift in three dimensions: Power or interests, ideas, and institutions. So, international change can be revealed through shifts in global power distributions, changes in ideological commitments by nations and non-state actors, and reorientations in the workings of institutions or the creation of new institutions, defined broadly to include regimes or informal rules and norms*"².

¹ Of course, we distinguish here between leaders like Lenin, Stalin or Hitler - that dreamt utopias like communism or fascism, killing millions of human beings during the last century and visionaries like Woodrow Wilson - that created even the fundaments of nowadays regulations in terms of international law of nations, considering first of all war as a crime and peace as a common good that all the nations should enjoy!

² Aseema Sinha, *Building a Theory of Change in International Relations: Pathways of Disruptive and Incremental Change in World Politics*,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325209397_Building_a_Theory_of_Change_in_Internationa

She finds a typology, distinguishing between slow incremental change and disruptive change. The process of change as continuity/change within institutions leads, according to Sinha theory to *endogenous change with a cumulative cause* as slow and cumulative or incremental change (example: economic modernization in Germany, followed by a decline) or *endogenous change with threshold effects* as disruptive change (example: perestroika and glasnost reforms in USSR, made by Gorbachev. In contrast, the whole system can change and it is a revolutionary realignment or change as an *endogenous revolutionary change* as slow and incremental or cumulative change (for example Cold War or détente or balance of power) or *exogenous change* as disruptive change (for example WWI, WWII). (see table 1)

Process of change→ Outcome↓	Slow and incremental or cumulative	Disruptive
Continuity/change within institutions	I. Endogenous change: cumulative cause	II. Endogenous change: threshold effects
Change within institutions/system	Economic modernization in Germany, followed by decline Economic growth in China, India	Gorbachev's reforms: glasnost and perestroika Hungary's decision to allow free passage to Austria in 1989; this led to the ultimate fall of the Berlin wall.
The whole system changes or revolutionary realignment or change	Technological changes Internationalization of production and changes in supply chain Military Modernization, for example in Japan, Germany, and now China	III. Endogenous revolutionary change
Systemic	Cold War or détente or balance of power Rise of BRICs and G-20 Reform of global institutions, e.g., IMF reform, UN Security Council reform	IV. Exogenous change Wars: WWI, WWII End of WWII with bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Fall of the Berlin wall Fall of the Soviet Union

Source: A similar table can be found in [Streeck and Thelen \(2005, 9\)](#). I have modified the table to make it relevant for global examples and my argument.

Table 1: Aseema Sinha's typology of change¹

[I_Relations_Pathways_of_Disruptive_and_Incremental_Change_in_World_Politics](#), accessed on 5.02.2020, p.3

¹ Idem, p.4

Michael Wesley analyses three different approaches in international relations regarding change: "teleology", "cyclical" and "episodism". In the paper "***Teleology, Cyclical and Episodism: Three competing views of change in international relations***", he divides teleological approach into liberal and critical variants: "For liberals, progress in international relations results from the slow triumph of human interests over human passions, of material concerns over emotive drives [...] In stripping away the intellectual garb of the workings of the current order, critical writers intend to expose the inequities and injustices of the current system, as a first step to changing that system. In this conception, human agency in the evolution of international relations is refined down to the international relations scholar him/herself as the radical agent of change"¹

The characteristics of change viewed through the lenses of teleology, according to Wesley are that change is progressive and unidirectional, may alternate between periods. It is an optimistic theory of change, in contradiction with the cyclical view of change. *The cyclical theory of change* has in its core the idea that we can find parallels between historical events and those that are happening today and this, in order to learn how to behave today. "Drawing inspiration from Machiavelli, cyclicalists believe the role of international relations is to provide clear policy advice on the current and future state of the cycle of history" ² The third theory – episodism – conceives change as episodic and unpredictable in its timing, extent, and direction. "It is a conception of international relations as a realm of human activity that tends towards routines and stasis, accreting over time structures and forces of inertia that are periodically overwhelmed by underlying change."³

I don't think that this concept of **teleology of change** is analysed well in Wesley Michael's article. He put the etiquette "teleological", naked from its sense... "Teleology – from Greek "telos" refers to an action that is purposely planned. Teleology means goal-orientation towards a defined aim. Action is considered to be intentional acting or working in a constant reaction. Teleology is thus fundamentally different from simple stimulus and response relation"⁴. As I will introduce the term pre-set change in international relations theory, we will see that this kind of change is namely **teleological** – aimed towards a goal, to a pre-set action driven by an aim and realized through a strategy. Wesley Michel's theory lacks in analysing this point!

¹ Wesley, Michael. "Teleology, Cyclicity and Episodism: Three Competing Views of Change in International Relations." *Change!: Combining Analytic Approaches with Street Wisdom*, edited by Gabriele Bammer, ANU Press, 2015, p.3 JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16wd0cc.8. Accessed 6 Feb. 2021.

² Wesley, Michael. op.cit, p.5

³ Idem, p. 6

⁴ Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, Sigrid. "Mechanisms of Teleological Change." *Management Revue*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2009, pp. 126–137. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41783609. Accessed 6 Feb. 2021, p.1

I think the most prominent of the authors dealing with the subject of “change” in IR is K.J. Holsti. In the article – *“The Problem of Change in International Relations Theory”*, he studies the many sides of change in international life:

- Markers of change: trends, great events, great achievements, significant social/technological Innovations
- Concepts of change: change as replacement, change as addition, dialectical change, change as transformation
- Systemic and lower levels of change
- Change and international institutions and possibilities of institutional change

Within this article, we have also Rosenau’s conception about change. *“For Rosenau, global change occurs only when system parameters become variables. In his definition of parameters, one gets a sense of distinction between the ephemeral and the critical change”*¹.

In plus with these theoretical conceptions about change, we want to introduce through this article the concepts of Hazardous Change vs Pre-set Change and Change Management.

Most of the events in the world are not planned to happen. They simply occur. A kind of Hazardous Change would be the COVID Pandemic. Letting aside the conspirative theories about COVID, we consider that no one had planned a virus like COVID19 to appear, to develop, to evolve gradually into a pandemic. COVID changed society. Humanity will never be the same because it has send firstly globalization into the history books. But the attempts to deal with and to manage this pandemic, like restriction masses, hygiene measures, change in legislation, etc. could be considered an attempt to make a pre-set change that stops the course of a hazardous change and modifies the hazardous variables with a desired course of action.

So, we define the hazardous change in international relations, as ***an event or a set of events that happen spontaneously, that is not planned.***

On the contrary, a pre-set change ***is a course of action planned consciously by the leaders to make modifications at the international level.***

Pre-set change cannot be made randomly. I propose the introduction in IR of the term “change management” from the organizational theory. Change management at the international level would be the goal of “homo teleologicus”. << *Homo teleologicus can be characterized according to Roman philosopher Lucius Seneca with the adjudicated sentence of: “to dream”, “to be able” and “to dare”.*>>²!

¹ K.J. Holsti, *The Problem of Change in International Relations Theory*, p.13,
<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/46511/WP26.pdf>. Accessed 8 Feb.2021, p.13

² Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, Sigrid, op. cit. p.13

The pre-set change would be simultaneously a teleological change that means <<goal- or purpose-oriented change>>. ¹

In organizational theory, there are many models of how to make change management at the level of an organization. We can adapt them to the whole international system.

We take into consideration a simpler change management model in this introductory essay.

According to it, change management can be implemented in eight steps, as below

- Define the change.
- Select the change management team.
- Identify management sponsorship and secure commitment.
- Develop implementation plan including metrics.
- Implement the change—in stages, if possible.
- Collect and analyse data.
- Quantify gaps and understand resistance.
- Modify the plan as needed and loop back to the implementation step.²

Also, we will consider that change will occur only if Gleicher formula is put into action.

“The Gleicher formula was developed by Gleicher and Beckhard. In Hungary, it is also known as the 4EL model. According to Gleicher formula:

D*V*F<R

D = Dissatisfaction

V = Vision

F = First concrete steps

A change may only take place if the product of multiplication is bigger than the resistance.

R = Resistance”³

I agree with the fact that in recent years, “many change management gurus have focused on soft issues, such as culture, leadership, and motivation. Such elements are important for success, but managing these aspects alone isn’t sufficient to implement transformation projects. ... What’s missing, we believe, is a focus on the not-so-fashionable aspects of

¹ Idem, p. 7

² <https://asq.org/quality-resources/change-management>, Accessed on 8.12.2021

³ Gergely Nemeth, Menedzsment-tanácsadási kézikönyv: innováció, megújulás, fenntarthatóság., Edition: 5th, Chapter: Managing Change – Változásmenedzsment, Publisher: Akadémia kiadó, Editors: Poór Józse, p. 361, (PDF) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314235747_Managing_Change, Accessed on 8.12.2021

*change management: the hard factors*¹ And one of the most important and urgent issues that should be subject to change management at the international level is the **total nuclear disarmament of all states**. All the leaders of the states should agree that nuclear weapons are to be destructed because a world without them would be more peaceful and without the danger of a nuclear holocaust that can endanger the survival of our species. It is a vision that, in my opinion, could save us from the sombre possibility of our very extinction. This vision has to be greater than the resistance of states and world leaders to keep their nuclear advantages because there is at stake a greater interest than the narrow power politics of our generation: the survival of humanity...

I treated in this essay the interesting subject of “change” in international relations. I evaluated some of the existent theories of change. My contribution is that I introduced in IR the terms of “hazardous change” as opposed to “pre-set change” and “the change management” chapter at the interdisciplinary intersection between international relations and organizational theory. These ideas can be developed further on, this is only an introductory sketch in this subject.

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Community Enterprises: Snapshots from Italy

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Abstract

Community enterprises are not a new type of organisation, but in recent years they have attracted increasing interest for their role in various areas, particularly in depleted contexts. Numerous studies analysed these enterprises in their natural context, but national and international overviews are lacking. We, therefore, do not know how many community enterprises there are, in which sectors they predominantly operate, and so on. Due to the scarcity of data, it is very difficult to provide a picture of community enterprises at the international level, whereas it is more feasible to represent these realities at the national level. Although Italian community enterprises are organisations that are not easily identifiable in the available databases, this paper aims to provide some snapshots to sketch the phenomenon in Italy. The work has a heterogeneous audience because it is of interest to scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. It has implications from a research and practical point of view, as it develops a way to identify Italian community enterprises and provides valuable elements for understanding the efficacy of specific policies and actions, and a piece of knowledge to build a picture of community enterprises.

Keywords: community enterprise, community cooperative, Italy, active citizenship, secondary data analysis

Introduction

In recent decades, economic and energy crises, pandemic, reduced public spending, fewer job opportunities, a lack of services, the rising cost of living, etc., have worsened the living conditions of large sections of the population, even in developed countries and cities (De Muro *et al.*, 2011; Dueilla and Turrini, 2014; Perez and Matsaganis, 2018; Harari *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, the rate of population at risk of poverty and social exclusion has increased in several countries. For example, in 2017, Eurostat (2019) estimated it to be around 113 million people in the EU-28 who lived in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion, equivalent to 22.4% of the population (Appendix A). As Bernaschi (2020) notes, Europe is facing serious

inequalities and is struggling to preserve social cohesion, economic efficiency, and political freedoms.

Unfortunately, our institutions, which are often set up to deal with single issues (sometimes in limited scopes), are not always suited to address problems that need to be tackled from different angles (Linhart and Papp, 2010). Therefore, to reverse the deterioration in living conditions and revitalise depleted contexts, initiatives are developed where citizens and authorities work together as equal partners, as well as bottom-up initiatives inspired by the motivation of individuals, small collectives, or communities (active citizenship), and characterised by varying degrees of autonomy (Olsson *et al.*, 2004; Van der Jagt *et al.*, 20016). Active citizenship initiatives can take place at various levels (small and large-scale projects) and involve people in various modes and activities. The collective action of these initiatives (e.g., community enterprises, social cooperatives, or farmers' groups) plays an important role in improving living conditions. Therefore, it deserves the attention of scholars and practitioners.

In particular, small-scale projects include community enterprises (CEs), which are a peculiar entrepreneurial form of active citizenship providing jobs, services, and other benefits to the population of the target community (Somerville and McElwee, 2011; Bailey, 2012; Utaranakorn and Kiatmanaroach, 2021). As pointed out by Buratti *et al.* (2022b) community enterprises are a social phenomenon that can take different forms, depending on the community involvement, geographical area of origin, local culture, types of activities implemented, etc. Unfortunately, they are not easily identifiable by a specific type of enterprise (e.g., in Italy CEs take the form of cooperatives, but elsewhere this is not the case). For these reasons, CEs are difficult to analyse as a group of enterprises. In fact, as highlighted in a recent literature review (Buratti *et al.*, 2022b) quantitative studies are lacking and the readership has qualitative knowledge derived mainly from case studies.

The collection and processing of data on CEs and conversion into knowledge represent crucial tasks, as the use of this knowledge can support the decision-making processes of institutions and community entrepreneurs. Performing an analysis on an international level is almost impossible in a study developed by one or a few researchers. However, national scale analyses can represent a starting point or a piece of the puzzle and are therefore of interest, especially where there is a lack of overview on CEs, as in the Italian case. This is the goal of this paper, as it aims to provide a series of snapshots on Italian CEs, thus expanding the few data available today. The work is organized as follows: the second section presents the literature background and focuses on some key elements. In the third section, I summarise the method of analysis. Then I provide and describe a series of snapshots of Italian community enterprises. Finally, I comment on the empirical evidence and conclude the paper.

Literature background

Community enterprises or community institutions do not represent a new type of organisation, neither in Italy nor abroad. In fact, studying the literature on the subject, several experiences emerge (Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Del Baldo, 2014), such as the “Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme”¹, founded in the 12th century (Duinker and Pulkki, 1998), the electric cooperatives born in the Alps at the end of the 19th century, such as the “Società cooperativa per l’illuminazione elettrica”, founded in Chiavenna in 1894 (Mori, 2015; Mori and Sforzi, 2018), the “Mondragon Co-operative Corporation”, which was created in Spain in 1956 (MacLeod *et al.*, 1997), the “Community of Chiquicocha Trade Fair” (Peredo, 2003) or “Floriculture Using Hotsprings Energy” (OECD, 1995), created in Peru and Japan respectively in the 1970s.

Although many studies on community enterprises are available, there is no broad convergence on the definition and the type of entrepreneurship that characterises them (Buratti *et al.*, 2022b). Frequently, CEs are intended as a particular category of social enterprise due to the social nature of their aims (Pearce, 2003; Tracey *et al.*, 2005). However, CEs may take various forms, depending on the type of stakeholder involvement, the features of the target area, and the type of activities carried out. Therefore, different definitions can be found in the literature. This leads to diversity in definitions to the extent that Albanese (2021) and Buratti *et al.* (2022b) view CE as a fuzzy concept. Johannsson and Nilsson (1989) described CEs as enterprises aimed at both business venturing and community revitalization. In defining CEs, Peredo and Chrisman (2006) focused on the community, which acts collectively as an entrepreneur and enterprise for the common good. This view of the community as a unified body of individuals has not always been shared, as there may be CEs that involve only part of the target community (Somerville and McElwee, 2011). Following the Development Trusts Association (2000), CEs work for sustainable regeneration in a specific community developing a mix of economic, environmental, cultural, and social activities. They are independent, not-for-profit organizations and involve local people. Considering this, some authors view CEs as hybrid organisations (Tracey *et al.*, 2011).

Following Buratti *et al.* (2022b), several distinguishing features are useful in identifying CEs. They are usually bottom-up collective entrepreneurial initiatives. CEs aim to achieve economic, social and environmental goals for the well-being of the target community and carry out a mixture of activities (economic, environmental, cultural and social) (Albanese, 2021 and 2022). CEs, therefore, pursue multiple logics (profitability and social goals) and are locally accountable (Van Meerkerk *et al.*, 2018; Kleinhans *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, they usually grow in depleted contexts, namely in areas characterised by depopulation, low-income levels, lack of services, and job

¹ Details are available at the following link: <https://www.mcfiemme.eu/>.

opportunities (Buratti *et al.*, 2021; Albanese, 2022). Given all this, a suitable definition is that provided by Buratti *et al.* (2022b, p.20), which consider CE as “*an organization established by people living and/or working in a spatially defined community, that engages in commercial activity. By leveraging local resources and social capital, it operates for the development of the local community, by bringing economic, social and/or environmental benefits. It is locally accountable and involves local people in its activities and governance*”.

In the vast majority of cases, Italian CEs are cooperatives (Mori and Sforzi, 2018; Buratti *et al.*, 2022a). This feature probably stems from the long cooperative tradition of Italy (Bernardi, 2007), the mutualism at the heart of these initiatives and the advantages that the cooperative form offers in terms of democratic governance and interrelations between the enterprise and the target community (Buratti *et al.*, 2022a). As shown in many studies (Euricse, 2016; IRECOOP, 2016; Me.Co., 2019), Italian community cooperatives (CCs) may differ, even considerably, and it is not easy to identify the determinants. However, the specificities of the areas where CCs are born (Buratti *et al.*, 2022a), such as inner areas (UVAL, 2014), and the regulatory variable play an important role. In particular, Italian CCs may differ as there are different regional laws governing community cooperatives in Italian regions¹. In addition, at the national level, there is no law recognising CCs as a type of enterprise or a cooperative category. Therefore, the label community cooperative indicates status and is not a recognised type of enterprise (Alleanza delle Cooperative Italiane, 2018).

As pointed out by Interreg Me.Co. Project (2019) and Buratti *et al.* (2022b), the literature essentially offers qualitative knowledge on CEs and a mapping of these companies and quantitative analyses would be necessary. In the Italian case, no consolidated data on CCs are available. A survey was recently conducted by Venturi and Miccolis (2021), but only an executive summary is available (released after filling in a form). The purpose of this paper is to support the development of an overview of Italian CCs and to identify a method to map and regularly analyse these organisations.

Methodology

As pointed out in previous work (Albanese, 2022), Italian CCs are elusive organisations as they are difficult to detect in databases as community enterprises. This is an obstacle and prevents the development of periodic analyses. To this end, the only certainty available is that Italian CEs are cooperatives in the vast majority of cases (Euricse, 2016; IRECOOP, 2016; Me.Co., 2019). To tackle the most challenging task, namely the identification of Italian CEs, I relied on this feature. In Italy, there is

¹ An overview of the main features of the laws of some Italian regions can be found at the following link: <https://www.legacoop.coop/cooperativedicomunita/sintesi-delle-leggi-regionali/>.

in fact a register of cooperatives¹ in which active cooperatives and winding up cooperatives (not those that have been discontinued) are listed. Therefore, this register contains the Italian CEs. The problem is that the register permanently contains more than 100,000 records. Since the community cooperative is not a recognised category of enterprise, it is not possible to filter the register and identify Italian CCs. However, by applying a few keyword queries, it was possible to considerably reduce the number of database records. After this, searches were conducted on all cooperatives in the subset to recognise Italian CCs. In particular, searches were conducted on the web and the main social networks (Facebook and Instagram). This demanding activity allowed for not only the exclusion of enterprises that are not CCs but also the identification of cooperatives that were excluded from the filters initially applied. A typical case is when, while searching for information on community cooperative A, it was discovered that the latter received funding together with community cooperatives B and C. Furthermore, by searching the web and literature analysis, additional CCs and some discontinued CCs were identified. The latter are few in number, but their study can be very interesting in understanding the weaknesses of Italian CCs. This time-consuming activity was completed in early 2021 and resulted in the selection of 229 Italian CCs founded before 2021. Based on this sample, I developed a secondary data analysis (Johnston, 2014) by exploiting data available in different databases such as Bureau van Dijk's AIDA and MISE's database on cooperative companies.

Main results

In Italy, the phenomenon of community cooperation has accelerated significantly since 2015. In fact, considering the year of the foundation of the selected CCs, one can see that the areas assigned to the last years fill a large part of the treemap visualisation (see Figure 1). As noted by Buratti *et al.* (2021) through the analysis of an exemplary case, among Italian community cooperatives some enterprises were not born as community cooperatives but have become CCs. This trend is difficult to analyse by studying such a large sample since specific in-depth studies and interviews would have to be conducted. However, some signs may come from the cooperatives in the sample that changed their name by including the term "community". In about 4% of the cases, this modification occurred, and it is interesting to note that these companies were established before 2012. Therefore, this seems to be a way for existing enterprises to identify themselves as community cooperatives.

But where are community cooperatives located? Figure 2 shows how the sample is spread across the Italian regions. The highest density is in Tuscany and Emilia Romagna, followed by Abruzzo, Apulia, Liguria, and Campania. Taking into account the year of foundation and location, Figure 3 offers some heatmaps showing where

¹ The register can be consulted at the following link: <https://dati.mise.gov.it/index.php/lista-cooperative>.

community cooperatives have grown in Italy. Until 2010 these enterprises were mainly present in specific areas of northern and central Italy. Subsequently, the number of CCs grew in neighbouring areas, probably in the wake of some successful experiences. In the last five years, the phenomenon has grown noticeably and has affected a large part of Italy.

However, it should be noted that, while there are many positive experiences, there are also community cooperatives that have faced difficulties and have gone out of business. These cooperatives account for almost 10% of the sample (Figure 4). CCs operate in most cases (more than 80%) in economic sectors related to the service macro sector, namely social assistance, commerce, landscape maintenance and care, tourism and cultural heritage management. The form of the social cooperative is quite widespread (about 23% of the sample), although other categories of cooperatives are very common among Italian CCs (Figure 4), such as production and work cooperatives or cooperatives belonging to the residual class of “other cooperatives”. The latter class assumes a significant weight within the sample.

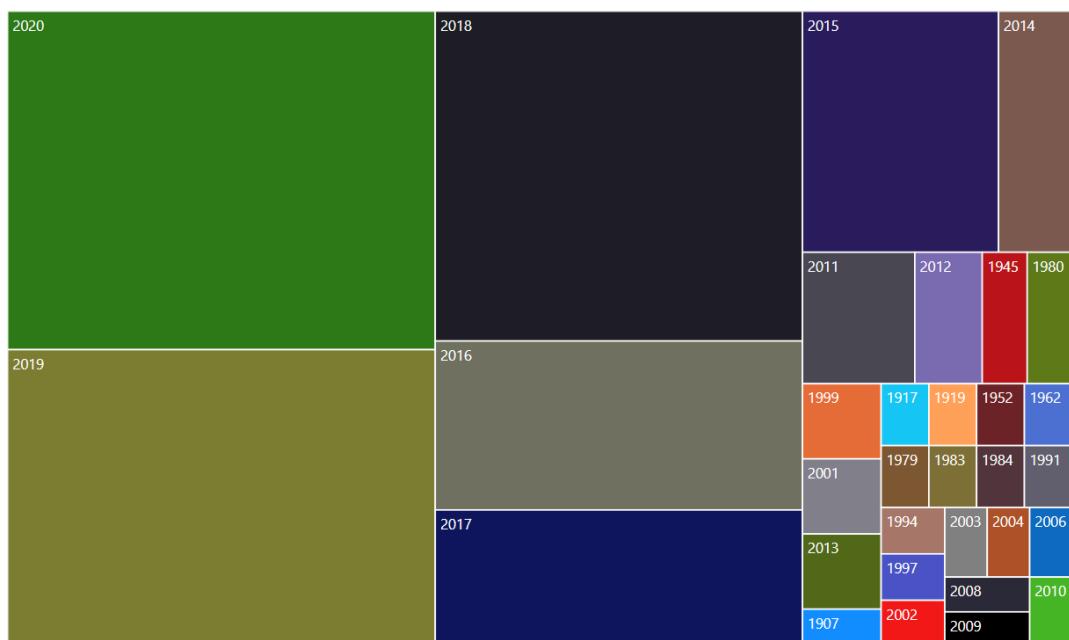


Figure 1 – Italian community cooperatives by year of foundation

Source: elaboration on AIDA data (Bureau van Dijk)

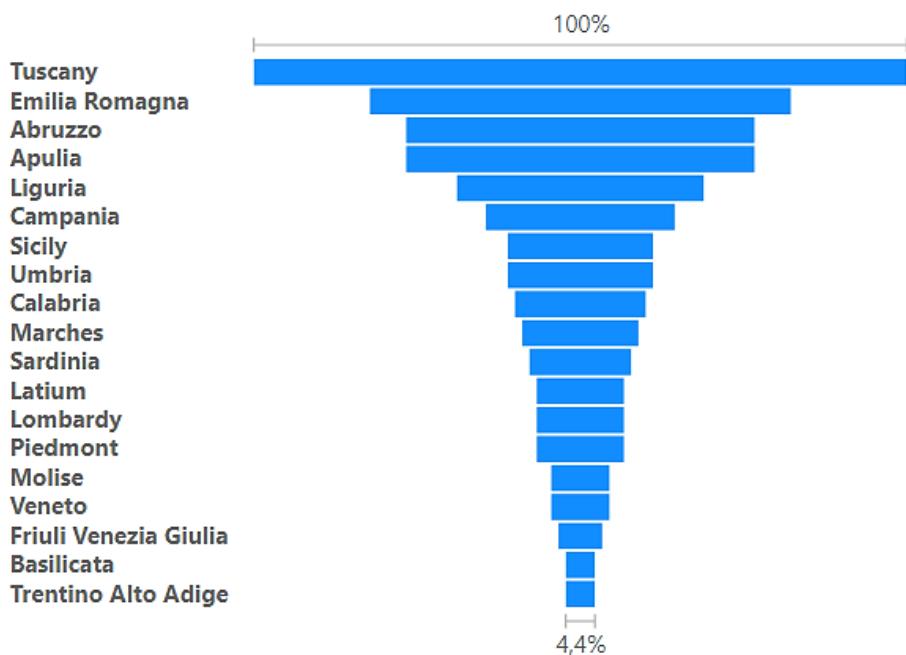
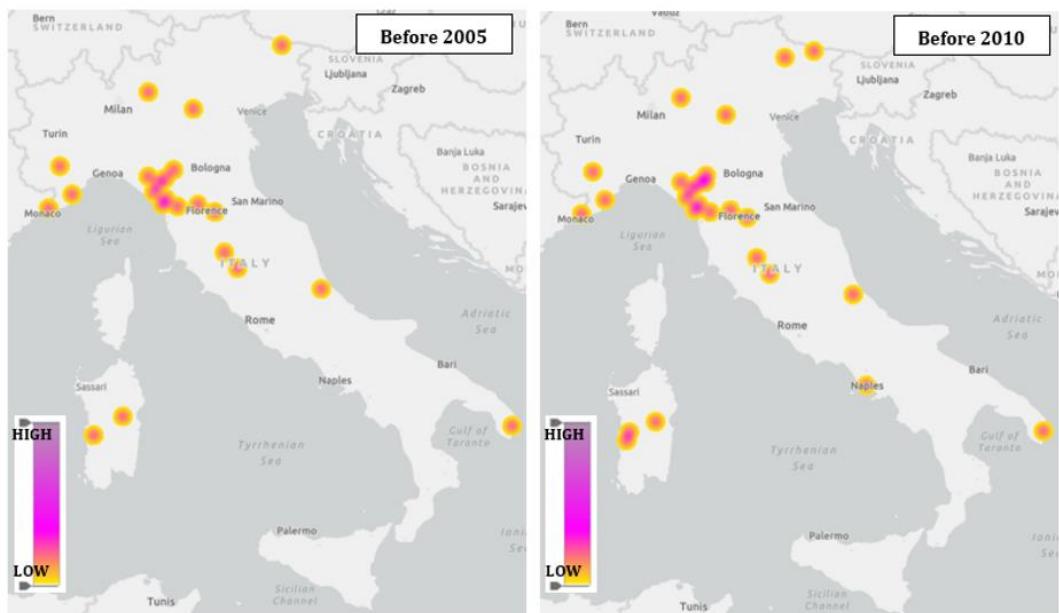


Figure 2 – Italian community cooperatives by region. Source: elaboration on AIDA data (Bureau van Dijk)



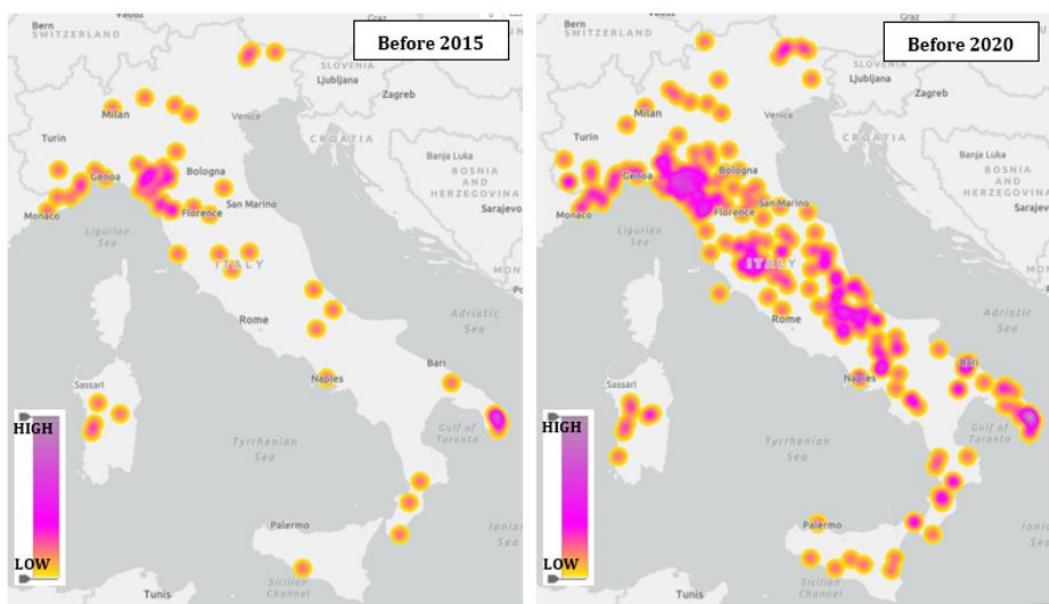


Figure 3 – Locations of Italian community cooperatives

Notes: the heatmaps consider enterprises born as CC and become CC and include some discontinued CCs.

Source: elaboration on AIDA data (Bureau van Dijk)

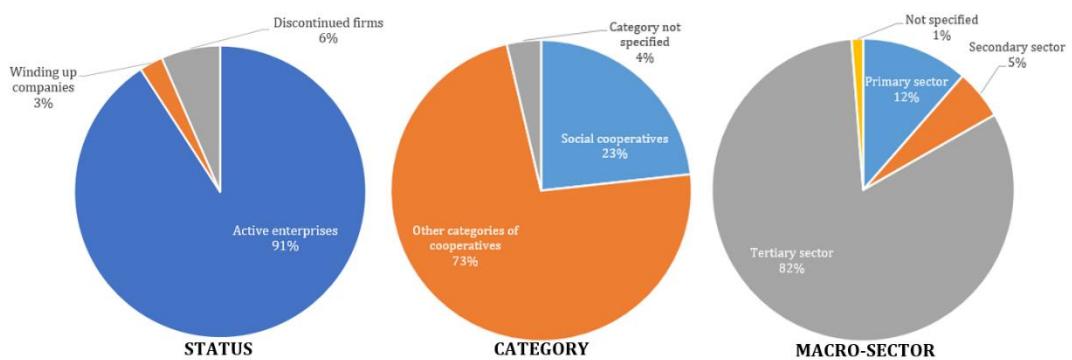


Figure 4 - The status, category, and macro-sectors of the selected CCs

Notes: The class "Other categories of cooperatives" includes the categories of cooperatives that are not social enterprises. The class "Category not specified" includes cooperatives with missing data.

Source: elaboration on AIDA data (Bureau van Dijk)

Discussion

The method used to identify the sample appears to be effective, as the number of CCs identified is higher than the sample of the analysis developed by Venturi and Miccolis (2021), who mapped 188 CCs at the end of June 2021. Since no one can currently be certain about the total number of Italian CCs, it is not possible to indicate the level of representativeness of the sample. However, considering the only analysis available to date, I believe that the level of representativeness of this work is good and that its results expand knowledge of Italian CCs. Unfortunately, the method used has some limitations in terms of efficiency, since the activities for the identification of CCs started in June 2019. However, the heaviest work has been done, and updates can now be carried out on a six-monthly or annual basis to have an up-to-date picture.

As Figures 1 and 2 as well as Venturi and Miccolis (2021) show, community cooperation is growing in Italy and some Italian regions include a high number of CCs. Different factors may have contributed to this feature. Certainly, the presence of disadvantaged areas is an important factor. However, inner areas exist in many Italian regions. Therefore, other determinants are proposed. Regions with a high ranking have issued regional laws defining community cooperatives and recognising their role in terms of economic and social development and territorial cohesion. In particular, some regions have implemented policies and actions and provided funding to support community cooperatives. For example, Tuscany went on to offer new funding and in 2022 published a call aimed at facilitating the creation, development, and consolidation of CCs. Through this call, nonrepayable contributions are provided equally to 80% of the amount of the admitted project (for a value from a minimum of 20,000 euros to a maximum of 100,000 euros). Therefore, to support community entrepreneurship, it is not enough to issue a law, but financial support must also be provided since in most cases community enterprises operate where traditional enterprises have previously failed. Another factor that seems to favour the birth of community enterprises is the attitude towards cooperation. Emilia Romagna has long traditions in cooperative enterprises (Degl'Innocenti, 1990; Bartlett and Pridham, 1991), so there is *humus* in this region that favours the creation of CCs. This is combined with the imitation effect (Santarelli and Tran, 2021) since Emilia Romagna has two of the most famous Italian CCs, which are internationally successful cases, namely "Valle dei Cavalieri" and "I Briganti di Cerreto" (Buratti *et al.*, 2022a). These considerations are confirmed by some evidence from a case study developed in Interreg Me.Co. Project (2019). In an interview, in fact, one of the representatives of the community cooperative "Impossible" (located in Reggio Emilia) stated that the cooperative was born in the wake of the successful experiences of the CCs "Valle dei Cavalieri" and "I Briganti di Cerreto". Consistent results come from Figure 3, which shows that the areas with the highest density of CCs are located on the border between Tuscany and Emilia Romagna, especially in the province of Reggio Emilia and neighbouring areas.

Although the literature emphasises the resilience of CEs (Somerville and McElwee, 2011; Depedri and Turri, 2015), they are often small organisations that may encounter difficulties that jeopardise the enterprise lifecycle. In the sample, the mortality rate of CCs is around 10% (Figure 4). However, this percentage is expected to increase due to the impact of the pandemic on a large part of Italian companies, especially SMEs. In fact, looking at the 2019 annual reports of the sample, the average size in terms of employees is less than 6 and the average revenue is around 240,000 euros. The literature analysed qualifies CEs as a sub-species of social enterprises. The available evidence partly confirms this, as around 23% of the sample takes the form of social cooperatives (Figure 4). However, it would be interesting to understand why numerous CCs fall into the residual class “other cooperatives”.

Finally, given the places where CCs are usually born and their purposes, it is not surprising that the sectors where they operate are predominantly the tertiary and primary macro sectors. In this regard, it must be specified that the data refer to the sector in which CC mainly operates, but since CCs are in most cases multibusiness (Buratti *et al.*, 2021), the results of Figure 4 have some limitations.

Conclusion

Community enterprises are important because they generate social, environmental, and economic benefits. Therefore, having an overview of these organisations (places of birth, activities, main issues, etc.) is useful for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. In terms of suggestions for future research, the study calls for more in-depth and updated analyses. From this perspective, it is recommended that quantitative research be advanced on a national and international scale. Whether on a national level, these projects can be carried out by small groups of researchers. However, as Buratti *et al.* (2022b) note, the development of an international picture must necessarily involve institutional actors (e.g., the European Social Enterprise Network or EMES).

This paper seeks to expand knowledge of Italian CCs. The empirical results partly confirm and partly complement the findings of the only available survey on Italian CCs (Venturi and Miccolis, 2021). The study defined a method for the identification of Italian CCs that will allow the picture to be updated periodically. This is a significant achievement considering that CCs are companies that are difficult to identify in the available databases.

In addition, considering that CEs are multipurpose enterprises (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982), they should invest in reporting and disclosing their achievements to different stakeholders. This is not an easy task because CEs are often small enterprises, which may therefore lack suitable expertise. However, support could come from future studies which should develop a flexible and easily applicable approach to periodically communicate the results of these organisations.

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Appendix A

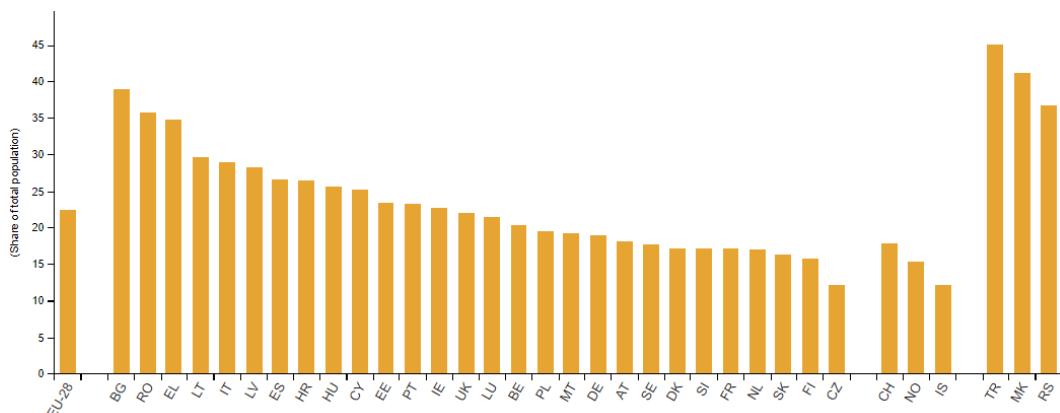


Figure A1 – EU population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (rate, 2017)

Notes: Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Turkey, North Macedonia: 2016 data instead of 2017

Source: Eurostat (2019)

A Significant Hidden Truth Concerning the Leaky Gut Syndrome; It Might Be a Small Intestinal Enteropathy Rather than It is a Gluten-Induced Intestinal Dehiscence

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Abstract

Aim: Demonstration of a hidden fact concerning the leaky gut (LG) challenge due to a natural gut bacterium misbehavior. **Background:** Great scientific efforts are dealing with the topic of the LG challenge; many are unsupported by true etiologic evidences, some are indirectly close the real truth while few are touching near the roots of this truth. The truth might date since 1985 and 1986 where a biological bacterium (*Helicobacter pylori*) has been forced outside the stomach with consequent disease flare up. The traces of this bacterium while in the stomach helps digestion, absorption and intestinal motility. If it migrates and occupies the small intestine for nutrition, its products in profuse amounts would definitely cause indigestion, malabsorption and intestinal delay with subsequent excess fermentation, even putrefaction, excess production and absorption of many toxins that could explain the adverse symptoms encountered in the LG syndrome. **Methods:** A prospective study included 9 male patients known with LG disease. They were given a side dish of chickpea flour béchamel or puree during or in between the attacks of symptoms. **Results:** All patients demonstrated marked improvement and decreased frequency of symptoms. **Conclusion:** The chickpea flour is a good fluid absorbent helping to turn the gut fluid contents into semi-formed pasty matter which is less fermentable and moving better in the gut resulting in less production and less absorption of toxins. Scientific efforts should be better directed towards control of environmental chemicals and the antibiotic abuse which could lead to misbehavior of some natural gut microbiota.

Keywords: antibiotic abuse, chickpea flour, date's fibers, enteropathy, gluten sensitivity, gut barrier, intestinal permeability, *Helicobacter pylori*, leaky gut, microbiota

Introduction

Most of the world's scientific efforts dealing with the hot topic of the leaky gut (LG) challenge are locked upon repair of gut permeability due to a chronic inflammatory disease, damage of intestinal barrier due to non-inflammatory stress-associated conditions, gluten and gluten sensitivity, intestinal dysbiosis and auto-immunity, misbehavior of gut microbiota and endorsing dietary exclusion; most of them are indefinite and unsupported by truly clear evidences [1-6]. Those investigators who are searching for a link between the LG syndrome and a microbiome-related potential intestinal inflammatory states, the link of the syndrome with microbiota and Alzheimer disease, a combined link between LG disease with microbiota and autism even those who are suggesting an association with colorectal cancer are possibly approaching indirectly very close to a real truth as concerns this conflicting medical challenge [1,7-10]. Employment of a probiotic cocktail though is not sufficiently decisive per its own yet it could be an intelligent idea enough to touching the roots of this truth [11]. The journey of this truth might have a bit long history since nearly 170 years before with significant stops before nearly 90 years, 30 years later and further 20 years after where an investigator has reported in 1853 that there is ammonia that exists in gastric lumen, in 1930s it was reported that the source of ammonia in the stomach is due to the activity of a urease enzyme, in 1960s a scientist has confirmed that the urease activity in the stomach is not a property of the stomach but of a bacterial origin and as early as the beginning of 1980s where it was illustrated that the amounts of ammonia existing in the stomach are not toxic but even beneficial [12]. That is until 1985 and 1986 where a biological bacterium (*Helicobacter pylori*) has been forced via antibiotic aggression to migrate outside the stomach with an associated world's disease flare up; the LG challenge could be among these diseases. *H. pylori* while in the stomach could function to protect from acid reflux, significantly it also helps to protect the gastric wall from its acid if it goes in excess and protects from absence of the acid during absence of food [12-14]. Its traces while in the stomach helps digestion, absorption and intestinal motility. If it is forced to migrate from its natural habitat and occupies the small intestine for nutrition during the process of digestion, its products in profuse amounts would definitely cause indigestion, malabsorption and intestinal delay with subsequent excess fermentation, even putrefaction and production of toxins [14]. Absorption of these toxins could explain the adverse symptoms encountered in the LG syndrome.

Aim

Demonstration of a hidden fact concerning the LG challenge due to a natural gut bacterium non-intentional misbehavior.

Motive of Study

In spite of all the extensive therapeutic efforts a successful achievement for the management of the LG disease is indefinite. Although some investigators emphasized

an aging-related LG disorder [11], yet newly-developed gluten allergy between 60-70 years of age was not enough convincing. The successful trials to develop a happy gut via dietary exclusion of some elements of food for some temporary periods then returning to them infrequently without developing any gut problems might signify that a permanent gut pathology is not a constant cell damage related to the disease but it could be a sort of constitutional dysfunction. These observational findings were sufficiently motivating this study to search for a temporary definite pathophysiological dysfunction that could explain the symptoms encountered in the LG syndrome.

Design

A prospective multiple-case clinical study has been done in Zaitona medical cupping center during 2019-2021 in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

Methods

Nine male patients known with LG disease on symptomatic medications were included in the study, they were in three age groups, each group included three patients and the age range was 16-25, 34-50 and 61-72 years. Their symptoms varied from mild to moderate while one of them aged 40 years used to develop sometimes severe symptoms. They were given a side dish of chickpea flour béchamel or puree during or between the attacks of symptoms for 6-9 weeks. They were also given a dried dates powder as an alternative sweetener when required when they feel craving for sweets. They tolerated both stuffs without problems as concerns their disease condition and they liked both of them. A specific test for existence of *H. pylori* in the colon (*H. pylori* fecal antigen) was done for all patients [12,14]. All patients were allowed and instructed to employ their own symptomatic medications when required.

Results

All patients were found positive for existence of colonic *H. pylori* strains. All patients have tolerated both food stuffs used in the study and they mostly preferred and enjoyed the chickpea béchamel or puree. All patients demonstrated obvious improvement and decreased frequency of symptoms even most of them did not find any need to use their own symptomatic medications during the period of study. Follow up of patients for further six months showed similar observations.

Ethical Considerations

All patients were re-assured about safety of the food stuffs used in the study as concerns their disease condition and it is just a dietary stuff. Patients were allowed to lead their own style of life and they were free to quit the study whenever they like. An informed signed consent was taken from all patients.

Discussion

The challenge of the LG is a hot world's topic that has been extensively studied, great scientific and sophisticated efforts have been dealing with this problem but without definite cure outcomes. The literature reports include attempts to cure disorders in gut permeability barrier related to chronic inflammatory or stress conditions [1,2], management of gluten/food sensitivity and auto-immunity via dietary exclusion [3-6], and further efforts to rectify dysbiosis whether it is abnormal existence or misbehavior of natural microbiomes within its natural habitat [4,7,8]. However, all these great efforts were unsupported by clear evidences. Those investigators who are searching for a link of the syndrome with microbiota and Alzheimer disease, a combined link between LG disease with microbiota and autism and even those who are suggesting an association with colorectal cancer are possibly approaching indirectly very close to a real truth as concerns this conflicting medical challenge as all these pathologies could be a result of the same reason which is translocation or mal-existence of a natural microbiome where it does the proper good function in an improper site [7-10,15-17]. Employment of a probiotic cocktail though is not sufficiently decisive per its own yet it could be an intelligent idea touching the roots of this truth which could be dysbiosis [11].

The interest of the investigator of this study with the LG challenge started since 2017 through suggesting meals for LG disease patients as alternatives for wheat, milk products and sugars. Whereas his attention towards the hot world's topic of *H. pylori* began as early since 2003; whether *H. pylori* is guilty, not guilty or innocent; whether it is biologic or pathologic; whether its antibiotic eradication is necessary and possible or un-necessary because impossible; whether the antibiotic eradication therapies are effective or ineffective; whether *H. pylori* is eradicated or forced to migrate and should we fight and kill or save *H. pylori*!! It has been found that *H. pylori* colonized the stomach since an immemorial time as if both the gastric wall and the bacterium used to live together in peace harmless to each other, it has been also reported that recurrence of *H. pylori* in the stomach is unavoidable and it was further emphasized that *H. pylori* has got huge defense talents for survival within the hell fire of the gastric acid [12,14,17]. Could these criteria altogether suggest that *H. pylori* might be a natural bacterium!!

Physiological intelligence has been praised for juxta-mucosal ammonia of the stomach as the ammonia adjacent to the gastric mucosa is responsible for the endothelial-derived nitric oxide (NO) liberation from micro-capillaries of gastric mucosa via a shear stress effect whereas NO is entitled for the control of mucus secretion from gastric mucosa and mucus thickening; hence ammonia and NO are responsible for the formation of the thick viscid alkaline gastric mucus layer that constitutes the main gastric wall protection from its strong acid meanwhile *H. pylori* is lying safe under this mucus shield and protected by a sheath of ammonia at its immediate vicinity which helps to buffer any acidity that penetrates the mucus shield

[12,14,18,19]. Then what is the nutrition of *H. pylori* and how it could gain it!! *H. pylori* eats organic urea to produce its ammonia and pyruvate in order to gain energy, it picks up its food from the remnants of gastric lumen contents in a blink after travel of the meal and drop of the acid to low residual level but still protected by a jacket of ammonia thus leaving before returning traces of ammonia in the gastric lumen that excites back the acid secretion [12,14]. Accordingly, *H. pylori* helps to protect the gastric wall from its acid if it goes in excess and helps to protect the gut and the human body from absence of the acid during absence of food as the gastric acid is the major defense line against bacteria invading the gut with food and drinks. This biological competitive buffering phenomena between ammonia of *H. pylori* and the gastric acid is constant leaving all the time residual traces of ammonia in gastric lumen that assists to maintain the integrity of the gastro-esophageal sphincter as ammonia is smooth muscle tonic helping in turn to protect from acid reflux [13,20-23]. If *H. pylori* is natural it should have a function, and if it plays these wonderful functions in only one area of the gut it should be natural and hugely biologic. It has been emphasized that *H. pylori* is not essentially pathologic in attitude by its own but it is mostly forced to its pathologic sequels either due to misbehavior in food habits or the antibiotic violence towards it. It has been further realized that misconception and misbehavior towards *H. pylori* was leading to major spread of illness during the latest three decades [14,17]; the leaky gut disease could be among these diseases.

NO is a cure and poison in the meantime; that is in normal levels it is cure while in overdoses it is toxic. As ammonia in the gut liberates NO via a shear stress effect, accordingly; ammonia in the gut is a cure and poison at the same time meaning that ammonia in low residual levels is healthy whereas in profuse amounts it could be toxic and pathologic [18,19,24]. Therefore; while *H. pylori* exists in the stomach, travel of few traces of its ammonia from gastric lumen to the small intestine is supposed to assist digestion, absorption and intestinal motility. If *H. pylori* is forced to migrate from the stomach and it comes to occupy the small intestinal mucosa for nutrition, it would definitely cause indigestion, malabsorption and intestinal delay with excess fermentation in turn, even putrefaction and production of toxins [14]. Absorption of these toxins could explain the adverse symptoms related to the LG syndrome without existence of a damage in gut barrier or constant pathologic change in intestinal permeability.

The chickpea flour béchamel was selected in this study for satiety as an alternative for wheat products while the dried date's powder was chosen as a sweetener alternative for sugars and both of them are also suitable for the patient's disease condition. It was interesting to observe apparent improvement and decreased frequency of symptoms among all patients upon using these two food stuffs even during the symptom attacks. It has been realized that the chickpea flour and the dried fibers contained in the date's powder are known fluid absorbents and bulk formatives that could turn the liquid indigested gut contents into formed stuff which is less

fermentable and travels better in the gut resulting in less production and less absorption of toxins. This could explain the improvement of symptoms among patients of this study upon adding the chickpea flour recepies and the dried date's fibers to their diet. Further investigators have also emphasized that dietary fibers could impact a protective effect on gut barrier integrity being poorly fermented by gut microbes and likely promote the gut transit rate thus reduce the time available for bacterial fermentation of non-digested food stuff [25].

It was not scientifically sound then to suggest that any of these two food stuffs employed in this study would instantly correct a permanent pathologic dehiscence in the gut barrier. It is also scientifically silly to imagine that the gut bacteria change its behavior to cause anaerobic fermentation of the gut contents. It is better logic to consider that the fault in the LG disease is not a permanent gut permeability damage but it could simply be a potential inflammatory error. As all patients were found positive for *H. pylori* strains, thus; the assumption that the migrating *H. pylori* strains could come to occupy the mucosa of small intestine simply for nutrition seems logic whereas its produced ammonia which would be entrapped within the gut mucosa in excess amounts in this situation as being unbuffered by any acidity would be then toxic leading to indigestion, malabsorption and intestinal delay with excess fermentation particularly for fermentable food products containing gluten. Hence; could the challenge of the LG disease be a potential small intestinal enteropathy rather than it is a gluten-induced intestinal dehiscence!! Could a big compromise be as simple as such!! Could the challenge of the LG syndrome be just small intestinal enteropathy rather than it is true gut barrier damage!! Could the matter be a non-intentional misbehavior of a natural bacterium due to the antibiotic violence towards it and would correction of the antibiotic use alleviate the problem!!

Acknowledgement

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Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest is existing.

Conclusion

The challenge of the LG syndrome might be a small intestinal enteropathy rather than it is a gluten-induced intestinal dehiscence. Scientific efforts should be better directed towards control of environmental chemicals and the antibiotic abuse which could lead to misbehavior of natural gut microbiota. Natural specific potent measures should be employed to correct abnormal behavior/existence of gut microbiota.

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"I am afraid if my students can't understand me." - A Consciousness-Raising Approach to Teaching the Modal System

Thomas H. Goetz

Abstract

Teaching the modal system through Consciousness-raising is a way of educating the learner about grammatical features using form-oriented activities. It can indirectly facilitate L2 acquisition. Through this approach, learners identify modal usage. Ellis advocates that learners transform input into intake to facilitate learner output, increasing the probability that the output will be comprehensible. As Swain points out, output facilitates acquisition by making learners aware of gaps, enabling hypothesis testing, and allowing learners to reflect on their performance and develop linguistic meta-understandings (Swain 1985). The following can elicit learner output: 1) Consciousness-raising for explicit knowledge, 2) feature focus exercises, and 3) focused identifying activities. In line with Ellis' theory, a pedagogical design was created to allow learners to facilitate input into intake. As learners comprehend, they draw upon their general knowledge. Measuring such involves a grammatical Consciousness-raising task on the modal system with a pre and post-test. *Moodle*, a widely available LMS, was the learning management system used for data collection. It is hoped that this approach will highlight a student's implicit and automatic grammatical knowledge rather than explicit and controlled knowledge. Preliminary results will be shared.

Keywords: Consciousness-raising, Hawthorne Effect, Solomon Squares, Moodle, modal system, English grammar, EFL, Japan

Introduction

The title of this paper enshrines a well-worn sentence *I am afraid if my students can't understand me. It is better to say, "I am afraid my students won't understand me." This paper examines the modal system for teaching English to Japanese college students, who may or may not become teachers in the future. Nevertheless, their professional business careers may require English for communication.

Background

After Krashen's Input Hypothesis gained wide acceptance, ways of applying it evolved. In short, Krashen believes that during a period of silence, a child gets massive

amounts of comprehensible input, i +1. The child builds up competence as well as confidence through interaction. The more they can understand, the more they will feel comfortable when they begin to speak. Adult L2 learners, however, are not usually given the luxury of a silent period. Adults are asked to produce almost from the first day of the language class, which causes anxiety (Krashen & Terrell, 2011). Krashen argues that forcing learners to produce, be they children or adults, can be counterproductive, so learners revert to their L1 (Krashen, 1984: 27). To answer this problem is Consciousness-raising.

Consciousness-raising (CR) refers to teaching grammar in which instructions in grammar through drills, grammar explanation, and other form-focused activities are viewed as a way of drawing the learner's awareness of the grammatical features of the language. It can indirectly facilitate L2 acquisition. Consciousness-raising differs from traditional approaches in that it accommodates itself to the learner's place on the interlanguage continuum. It is practice-oriented (learner-centered) and not presentation-oriented (teacher-centered). In "The Role of Practice in Classroom Learning," Ellis states that there are two kinds of practice, controlled and accessible. Controlled practice takes the form of various drills, which require the mechanical production of specific language forms. This free practice involves the students engaging in simulated communication which has been set up to provide opportunities for using those forms (Ellis, 1988: 21). Controlled practice can have a delayed effect, especially in light of language's developmental and variational features (Ellis, 1988: 36). Student attitudes and motivational and social factors can explain shortcomings of practice. One factor which may explain why controlled practice appears to work is that the learner has already acquired the structure and the learner, therefore, feels confident and free to practice. And with controlled practice comes language acquisition. When controlled practice is credited with causing learning, it is often a developmental artifact, a positive example of the i +1 Input Hypothesis. What is an effective way of doing this?

In "Interpretation Tasks for Grammar Teaching," Ellis examines an alternative approach to grammar teaching based on interpreting input. This approach has three goals which emphasize helping learners to 1) enable learners to identify the meaning(s) realized by a specific grammatical feature, otherwise known as form-function mapping; 2) notice grammatical features in the input and comprehend their meanings; and 3) compare the forms present in the input with those occurring in learner output, or "noticing the gap" (Ellis, 1995: 94). A pedagogical application of this approach can be realized in a threefold application. In step one, the learners are required to comprehend input that has been specifically contrived to induce learners to attend to the meaning of a specific grammatical feature, in this case, the modal system. In step two, learners are greeted by a task to induce them to pay careful attention to the critical properties of the target features. And step three is to have them perform a cognitive comparison task (Ellis, 1995: 94).

Theoretically, there are two types of knowledge at any learner's disposal: explicit and implicit. One can draw upon knowledge consciously or automatically. In "A Theory of Instructed Second Language Acquisition," Ellis assembles a theory of language acquisition that takes place in a classroom that is input based on the overall goal of automatizing L2 knowledge that had been explicit indirectly into implicit L2 knowledge (Ellis, 1994: 99).

In short, input has to become intake for the linguistic information to interact with the learner's interlanguage and facilitate output. The learner's interlanguage constitutes all the implicit knowledge of the L2 the learner has at their disposal. The role of explicit knowledge indirectly affects the transformation of input to intake and the probability of the learner generating comprehensible output. Explicit knowledge is consciously analyzed and exists independently of actual instances of use. Explicit Knowledge is knowledge about language. For the output to be made from a learner, Ellis argues in favor of a weak interface position. Under some conditions, explicit knowledge can become implicit. A learner is only capable of features compatible with the current or next development phase. Therefore, when learning implicit knowledge, the learner is involved in conscious attention to forms in the input (noticing and then comparing) to change that input into the intake. Learners must also integrate what they notice and compare into their interlanguage systems (integrating); this is likely to occur unconsciously. In short, the automatization of L2 knowledge, both implicit and explicit, can happen through controlled practice.

When learners practice, they need to produce language. Output has a role to play in this theory. According to Swain, output pushes learners to process language more deeply with more mental effort than input. Students' meaningful production of language should then have a potentially greater significant role in language development (Swain, 2000). It may force the learners to move from semantic processing to syntactic processing (Swain, 1985: 252). Swain suggests output aids acquisition in that it promotes noticing the gap, enables hypothesis testing, and learners may reflect on their output and thereby develop a meta-lingual understanding. For eliciting learner output, the following can be used: 1) Consciousness-raising for explicit knowledge; 2) feature focus exercises, such as interpretive tasks; and 3) focused communication activities.

As for the particular task or treatment, the preferred scheme for structure-based comprehension tasks is that found in Loschky and Bley-Vroman's "Grammar and Task-Based Methodology" (Crookes and Gass, 1993: 152). They argue that useful grammar has a task-utility of a particular structure. In other words, a grammatical structure will be helpful if it has a function in the learner's grammar. They claim the learner has to be in control of the task, both for comprehension and production. Therefore, they developed a scheme for structure-based comprehension tasks. Input comes, and the learner has to notice the target and other distractors, then

contextualize the features that distinguish its referents. Finally, there needs to be negotiated interaction and feedback in the feature context (152).

In the treatment section, learners facilitate input into intake. Through comprehension, learners are to draw upon their general background knowledge, a selected episode from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll, 1994). In the short excerpt, Alice and the irate queen argue using many target modals. The student is to identify all the modals. Then, the next section focuses on the contextual features that distinguish referents. In the section after that, some sentences from the text have been altered, and others have been made up. The learners are to negotiate using their contextual features. The pedagogical design reflects a systematic and focused approach and application to Consciousness-raising for input to become intake.

Methodology

Data collection in SLA, ESL/EFL research falls into two paradigms: qualitative and quantitative. These represent more than two relative extremes but terminals on the qualitative-quantitative continuum of research methodologies. A qualitative paradigm concerns understanding the acquisition of a second language from the learner's frame of reference. Data are collected from naturalistic settings, and there is no control group. Therefore it is highly subjective. On the other side is the quantitative paradigm that seeks to objectively quantify the facts or causes behind the facts of behavior with minimal emphasis on the role of individuals or conditions beyond the researcher's control. This way, the researcher is removed from the data and willingly maintains an outsider's perspective.

This study takes a quantitative approach, albeit with limitations. Here, causation is sought between control and treatment groups. The independent variable manipulated is whether or not a Consciousness-raising approach differs from a more traditional approach to teaching the Modal System as reflected on the dependent variable or the outcome. The results will be compared against the control group's performance. It is important to remember that the participants come from preselected classes. That being said, the overall structure may look experimental, but the generalization of results is limited due to a lack of complete randomization.

Pedagogical Design

The design of this Consciousness-raising task is experimental, with the null hypothesis being tested. The null hypothesis holds that there is no difference in students' understanding and use of the modal system between those who received Consciousness-raising treatment and those who received explicit, teacher-fronted instruction.

The Solomon four-group design, a useful experimental design to investigate a pre-test's main effect and the interaction between the pre-test and treatment (van Engelenburg, 1999), is incorporated. The basic design of the experiment includes a

pre-test, treatment, and post-test X₁ T X₂. The pre-test has a grammaticality judgment section - to probe how well the learner can judge the correct usage of the modals. This design would show change within a person. The measure is a Consciousness-raising task on the modal system, with pre and post-testing. This design may be modified into a repeated measures design.

To guard against the Hawthorne Effect does the pre-test itself alert students as to what will be important, the Solomon Squares (van Engelenburg, 1999) design offers a design with two treatment and control groups.

X₁ T_{a1} X₂

Ø T_{a2} X₂

X₁ T_{b1} X₂

Ø T_{b2} X₂

The pre-test between sections one and two are the same, which permits a much more comprehensive null hypothesis while working with intact groups.

H₀ T_{a1} = T_{a2} and H₀ T_{b1} = T_{b2}

If this condition can be met, the pre-tests may be dropped altogether, and what remains two experiments in one; a replication is built into the experimental design.

Subjects

Participants included four classes of students enrolled in a university in Northern Japan. All are at the CEFR A-2 or B-1 levels. The treatments were assigned as an online activity. All students, non-English majors, have a positive outlook on their English studies. There were two first-year and two second-year classes. Given the need for four groups, first-year students were members of the control and treatment groups without the pre-tests. The second-year students were given the pre-tests, control or treatment, and post-test. The rationale here is to test for the Hawthorne effect.

Treatments

There were two treatments. The control included a Youtube video about the Modal system (Learn English with Rebecca · engVid, 2017), followed by a worksheet adapted to Moodle that would test for Bottom-up skills with the Modal system (Rosmanitz, 2022, p. 007). The second treatment was a Consciousness-raising lesson based on Alice in Wonderland about the Modal system. Should the null hypothesis for the post-tests of both groups be accepted, the Hawthorne effect can be dismissed where T_{a1}=T_{a2} and T_{b1}=T_{b2}.

X₁ T_{a1} X₂ N=14 - 2nd Year

Ø T_{a2} X₂ N=16 - 1st Year

X₁ T_{b1} X₂ N=15 - 2nd Year

Ø T_{b2} X₂ N=13 - 1st Year

The second-year students received the units requiring the pre-test.

The Pre-test and Post-test

The pre and post-tests are the same. About instrumentation: Moodle is a learning management system that can run simple psychology experiments in cognition and applied linguistics. It is handy for devising quizzes and recording the time needed to accomplish a quiz. In short, this experiment is created by administering twenty-five stimuli, each describing an event (sentence), series of events, or linguistic contexts to be presented to the subject. These trials are run randomly.

Pre and Post-Test: Grammar Judgement

Directions: If a sentence is correct, select *Good*. If not, then select *Bad*.

He can to go. *Error: present ability*

Clotilda should not stay. *advice*

Ann said that she must to work. *Error: obligation*

Fred must have heard her say that he could get a raise. *certainty and past ability*

Oh, yes I could very much. Thank you. *Error: request verification*

You may leave the room. *future possibility*

We can should study hard for the exam. *Error: present ability/advice*

I might be able to go to the game. *future possibility*

Should I bring anything? *advice*

I am not able to must go on my tennis club's ski trip. *Error: present ability*

You should buy some salt and pepper. *advice*

It must have be night time. *Error: past certainty*

I'm sorry, you must not to speak Japanese. *Error: obligation*

I must meet Margo at 7:00. *obligation*

Will you like some cake and ice cream for dessert? *Error: request*

May you fix this bicycle, please? *Error: request*

I couldn't pick up the tickets last night. *past ability*

Mike cans help you with your homework. *Error: present ability*

Can you tell me how to get to Martz Chevrolet? *present ability*

We should study lots for that class last term. *Error: advice*

They should have warned us. *advice*

I will prefer to stay. *Error: request*

I shouldn't have told her. *advice*

I could read at an early age. *past ability*

You will can go there. *Error: future possibility*

Pre and Post-Test: Output

This part is at the end of the pre and post-tests. The three questions cover the modal system's present, past, and future aspects. The manner of grading is relevant to implicational scaling. Moodle's auto-grading essay was used to count words at 40% of the grade and then search for modal words at 10% per item.

The directions were given in both their L1 and L2. The three questions are as follows:

Write about your abilities, things which you can do very well, and explain why.

Write about what you enjoyed doing as a child and explain why.

Write about the things you will possibly do in your retirement years and give reasons why.

The Treatments

Two treatments are needed to satisfy the Solomon Squares setup. The first treatment is the control which requires the participants to watch a Youtube video about Modals and then complete two Moodle versions of a Bottom-up worksheet.

can't shouldn't might not mustn't might must have can't have must

Complete by matching the words with the spaces provided.

That pizza was gigantic. I'm sure Mary [] eaten it all.

Nobody was able to tell the police who that man was, so he [] be someone from here.

Be careful when you walk across that old wooden bridge. It [] be very safe.

I see you haven't finished your homework yet. It [] be very difficult, then.

You [] touch the oven! It's very hot, and you [] hurt yourself.

They are putting the suspect into the police car. The police [] arrested him.

I don't know where he is. Take a look in the garage. He [] be there.

You [] do any more training today. You look so tried. Take a break!

I can't see very well but that [] be Claire over there. At least, she looks like Claire.

Everyone scored over 95% in the first test, so it [] been so difficult.

Figure 1. One of two Bottom-up Skills Worksheets for the Modal System

The second treatment is the Consciousness-raising unit designed to elicit learner awareness of the Modal system. The students in this group also watched the same Youtube video but were then to identify all the places about possibility and probability. The aim is to develop an awareness of how the modal system works within a narrow set of parameters. Grammar rules are not taught explicitly. The students can attempt the quiz three times as they wish and receive feedback, receiving an average score on their attempts.

Step 1: Comprehension

Directions: Identify all phrases or sentences about possibility and probability by selecting a P. If not, then select ø.
可能性と確率に関するすべてのフレーズまたはセンテンスをPを選択して識別し、そうでない場合はøを選択します。

"There's certainly [P] much pepper in that soup! It will [P] ke me sneeze." Alice said [ø] herself, as well as [P] could before sneezing. There was so much [ø] pepper in the air that even the Queen sneezed. The only others who [ø] not sneezing were the cook and a large cat grin[ø]g from ear to ear.
"Plea[P] would you tell me," said Alice, "why your cat [ø]ns like that?"
"It's a Cheshire cat," said the Queen, "and [ø]t is why."
"I didn't know that Cheshire cats always grinned; I didn't know [P] cats could grin."
"They [P] all can," said the Queen; "most of [P] m can and will."
"If I may [P]ly, I don't know any that do," Alice said ve[ø]olitely.

Figure 2. The first of two tasks of identifying possibility and probability.

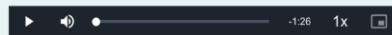
They were then to show their learning, such as forming new rules and experimenting with the input in ways that will provide the most immediate benefit for them. There

were two tasks. The first is to read a short explanation of modal rules and then follow up with a modal identifying task based on Alice in Wonderland.

Directions: The text uses the following verb forms: please study them.

- (1) Present simple tense (e.g. 'is')
- (2) may/might + verb → noun phrase (e.g., direct object or a prepositional phrase)
- (3) can/could + verb → noun phrase
- (4) will/would + verb → noun phrase
- (5) may, can, will + no other verb (an intransitive verb)

Now look at the text again and listen. Select which modals and verbs are used.



"There's certainly too much pepper in that soup! It [] make me []." Alice said to herself, as well as she [] before []. There was so much pepper in the air that even the Queen sneezed. The only others who were not sneezing were the cook and a large cat grinning from ear to ear.

"Please, [] you [] me," said Alice, "why your cat grins like that?"

"It's a Cheshire cat," said the Queen, "and that is why."

"I didn't know that Cheshire cats always grinned; I didn't know that cats [] []."

"They all []," said the Queen; "most of them do and []."

"If I [] say, I don't know any that do," Alice said very politely.

"You don't know much, said the Queen, "and that's a fact."

Alice did not like the tone of this remark and thought it [] be as well to introduce some other subject of conversation. But while she was thinking, the cook suddenly began throwing everything within her reach at the Queen and the baby.

"Oh, please mind what you are doing!" cried Alice in terror and agony.

But the Queen said, "If everybody minded their own business, the world [] [] a deal faster than it does."

Figure 3. Students determine which modals and verbs go where.

This task asks students to listen, read, and place into position modals and verbs. The Moodle quiz allows students to receive immediate feedback without penalty. That way, they can interact and develop their awareness as they work. The advantage is that their attention is focused, and they can establish their own form-function maps.

Consciousness-raising - Error Identification

The directions ask students to identify errors and ungrammatical.

"It would be an advantage I will add."

"They all can to grin," said the Queen.

"It must have been all that pepper in the air!" said the cook.

"May you stop throwing all those things, please!"

"The world could stop spinning whenever it wishes, but it still spins."

Consciousness-raising

Students are prompted to write about their understanding of when “can/could” and “will/would” are used. The directions were offered in English and Japanese. The rationale is that while they have learned to read, many students’ reading abilities have not reached the point where they are dependably reading to learn. By offering instructional language in their L1, the goal is to keep them focused on the tasks for their benefit and not lead to frustration. After this, the post-test was administered.

Evaluation

The rationale is to maintain as much of an experimental design as possible. Randomization of students was limited to intact groups. However, with Moodle, items can be randomized on the pre and post-tests. The written components aim to uncover the students’ grammatical knowledge, hopefully, more implicit and automatic than explicit and controlled. The post-test as an assessment is summative in that it appears at the end of the unit. The goal is to evaluate how much students have learned and how effective the unit has been. An Analysis of Variance shows that the second treatment, CR, brought about a more desired outcome than the first treatment, control. Moreover, the Hawthorne effect was not an issue.

Results

The post-test results would indicate that the treatments for the control, grammar-based, Bottom-up lesson would not differ from the Consciousness-raising lesson. The results are significant.

One Way ANOVA test, using F distribution df (3, 53) (right-tailed)

Source	DF	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F Statistic	P-value
Groups (between groups)	3	55.2636	18.4212	5.2651	0.002972
Error (within groups)	53	185.4318	3.4987		
Total	56	240.6954	4.2981		

Table 1. F table for a One Way ANOVA for the post-tests.

A One Way ANOVA test, using F distribution df (3, 53) (right-tailed) testing for the null hypothesis, H_0 , was used. It was noticed that the two groups' averages are

considered to be not equal. In other words, the difference between the averages of some groups is big enough to be statistically significant.

The P-value, where it equals 0.00297211, means that the chance of type 1 error, rejecting a correct H_0 , null hypothesis, is small: 0.002972, less than 0.3%. In short, the smaller the p-value, the stronger it supports H_1 , showing statistically significant differences between the groups. The test statistic F equals 5.265136, which is not in the 95% acceptance region: [-∞: 2.7791] (*Statistics Kingdom*, 2017a).

With a significant difference between the groups, a Tukey HSD / Tukey Kramer was run to compare the means, which indicated that the following pairs were significantly different: the control group with the pre-test differed from the Consciousness-raising group that did not have the pre-test, and Consciousness-raising group that did not have the pre-test differed from Consciousness-raising group that had the pre-test. Conducting a Consciousness-raising lesson, a pre-test, or an introduction to the lesson benefits the students.

Are the pre and post-tests for the control and treatment groups the same or different, and if different, where? Comparing the pre and post-test results indicate that the treatments for the control, grammar-based, Bottom-up lesson does not differ from the Consciousness-raising lesson. The results show a significant difference.

One Way ANOVA test, using F distribution df (3, 56) (right-tailed)

Source	DF	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F Statistic	P-value
Groups (between groups)	3	1595.0802	531.6934	90.8937	4.441e-16
Error (within groups)	56	327.5787	5.8496		
Total	59	1922.6588	32.5874		

Table 2. F table for a One Way ANOVA for the Pre and Post-Tests.

A One Way ANOVA test, using F distribution df (3, 56) (right-tailed) testing for the null hypothesis, H_0 , was used. It was noticed that the two groups' averages are considered to be not equal. In other words, the difference between the averages of some groups is big enough to be statistically significant.

By looking at the P-value, where it equals 4.44089e-16, it means that the chance of type 1 error, rejecting a correct H_0 , null hypothesis, is small: 4.44089e-16, less than 14%. In short, the smaller the p-value, the stronger it supports H_1 , showing statistically significant differences between the groups. The test statistic F equals 90.893677, which is not in the 95% acceptance region: [-∞: 2.7694] (*Statistics Kingdom*, 2017a).

With a significant difference between the groups, a Tukey HSD / Tukey Kramer was run to compare the means, which indicates that the following pair was significantly different: the Consciousness-raising pre-test group differed from the Consciousness-raising post-test group. This illustrates the earlier findings that conducting a Consciousness-raising lesson, a pre-test, or an introduction to the lesson would benefit the students. Regarding the control group, there was no significant difference between student performance on their pre and post-tests.

The Hawthorne Effect

The final consideration is if the Hawthorne Effect influenced the participants in both groups. This was accomplished by conducting a Two-Sample T-Test (Welch's T-test) for each group using the scores from the treatment sections. In both cases, the null hypothesis was confirmed, and the Hawthorne Effect can be dismissed as a moderating consideration.

For the control groups, the null hypothesis, H_0 , was accepted. The difference between the sample averages of the two groups in the control group was statistically insignificant. The p-value equals 0.5074, ($p(x \leq T) = 0.7463$), which means that the chance of type 1 error, rejecting a correct H_0 , is too high: 0.5074 (50.74%). The larger the p-value, the more it supports H_0 , the null hypothesis. T equals 0.6718, which is in the 95% region of acceptance (*Statistics Kingdom*, 2017b).

For the Consciousness-raising groups, the null hypothesis, H_0 , was accepted. The difference between the sample averages of the two groups in the CR group was not big enough to be statistically significant. The p-value equals 0.09737, ($p(x \leq T) = 0.04868$), which means that the chance of type 1 error, rejecting a correct H_0 , is too high: 0.09737 (9.74%). The larger the p-value, the more it supports H_0 . T equals -1.7265, which is in the 95% region of acceptance (*Statistics Kingdom*, 2017b).

In short, the Hawthorne Effect was not a factor for both groups, as demonstrated by using the Solomon Squares design.

Discussion

A look at the treatment scores suggests that all learners had limited implicit knowledge of the Modal system. This was also affirmed in the pre-test scores. Their limitations, however, became apparent in the treatment scores for the control groups $\bar{x} = 5.546$ and $\bar{x} = 5.222$. Their mean scores indicated an insignificant decline. In the pre and post-test writing component, the treatment groups outperformed their control counterparts with mean scores of $\bar{x} = 6.997$ and $\bar{x} = 7.980$, respectively. According to Welch's T-Test, both groups' differences were also insignificant. Yet, in the pre and post-tests, when seen in the aggregate, significant differences were observed, especially in the treatment groups suggesting improvement.

At differing places in the data are mixed results, which ask whether it is necessary to teach grammar. This may be an example of L2 knowledge that had been explicit - indirectly and is now implicit L2 knowledge. This confirms that L2 acquisition occurs in the classroom (Ellis, 1994: 99). Learners can pick up the Modal system. Krashen has said teachers should provide an $i + 1$ learning, acquisition-rich environment. In this case, it is inside the $i + 1$ zone (Krashen & Terrell, 2011). In light of observations made here, it can be said that 1) the L2 learner will learn something, but not everything, about the Modal system and 2) that grammar teaching is an appropriate classroom time. The zero approach to grammar remains an option, but a return to grammar instruction can happen, albeit with qualifications. The structural syllabus and a grammar-translation approach are not recommended, but the task-based communicative syllabus, supplemented with a grammar syllabus that utilizes Consciousness-raising, is (R. Ellis, 1995: 94).

While YouTube tutorials might be better than nothing, an actual hands-on set of tasks is better and, in this case, a Consciousness-raising lesson. To answer the question of what makes a task good, it can be said the Consciousness-raising tasks, which draw upon the learners' existing knowledge and direct their attention to areas of need, were more effective than the Bottom-up materials in the control group.

Are teachers from now to go off and author their own CR units and lessons? Hardly. While some may be up to that monumental task, the main point is for teachers to know and recognize what Consciousness-raising tasks look like in existing textbook materials. With the teacher informed and able to manage such, students will have greater benefits than teachers who cannot tell the difference.

Conclusion

Consciousness-raising tasks can be applied to EFL learners' acquisition of the modal system. It is recommended that further research be done to focus on the output data of this experiment that appears in the pre and post-tests. These contain two parts, 1) the 25-item grammar judgment section and 2) the forced output writing section. As for the present study, pre and post-test scores were handled in the aggregate. But, the question now is to what extent was their variation in the writing component, if any. Moodle offers a systematic approach in that with the two Moodle plugins, the Self Correcting Essay, where expected features such as word length and lexical items are determined for recognition and set for scoring, and the Quiz Section data organizer, where data can be downloaded for analysis that would track learner performance within the writing sections, according to the particular questions, in both pre and post-test environments. The researcher is now at a level to ask how the learners applied their understanding of the Modal system in questions that required past, present, and future writing and then processing the data at the population level. The main point is now, with this approach, the days of manually counting data for the occurrences of the correct usage of the Modal system in present, past, and future

contexts can be done digitally. In short, Moodle won't conclude about learner proficiency in the Modal system, but it can count where learners are correct in its usage.

It is accepted that the Consciousness-raising approach where 1) grammar can be taught through controlled practice; 2) the student has to participate as fully as possible in constructing their own rules, and 3) the student has to produce the targeted structure in an automatic context that would show the structure's place in implicit knowledge aid in learner L2 acquisition to a significant extent. With further study on the writing, it is hoped that new observations will aid in the process of not only L2 acquisition but assist materials writers in creating meaningful L2 educational materials.

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Random Individual Facades, Informal Buildings and Aesthetic Chaos: How Can Urban Architecture Help - The Case of Tirana, Albania

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Abstract

In recent years, the situation of informal buildings in our country it is getting serious. There is ample evidence proving that many informal buildings have been constructed in sites decided by the entrepreneurs/ owners of the land not following any urban planning logic/ analyses, supposedly as something like that does not formally exists yet. There seem to be a correlation and causation relationship between this phenomenon and encroachment on the urban space and the loss of the archetype. Informal building has taken many definitions in Albanian context from extensions of floors and or interventions on facades to the extreme but significant cases of the occupation of public spaces. The spontaneity of the process has led to the creation of an urban chaos as far as the relationships of the citizen with urban architecture leading to a chaotic urban aesthetics. Tirana is one of developing cities that has had a "construction boom." The benefits as far as employment and services that "the construction boom" brought about were welcomed with such a high enthusiasm that the implications of having, in certain cases, entire areas with informal buildings have been much neglected. This unchecked phenomenon is putting in danger the heritage values of the city and their identity/archetype. The diversity has not led to any certain aesthetics, with facades lacking the minimum of basic composition and design criteria of urban architecture principles, therefore causing an irregularity on the urban areas. This is a point to raise the hypotheses: Can Urban Architecture still help with minimal cost and damage? Is there still possibility for making things right? Will time and Budgetary issues become an issue? Does political will has to be taken into account? Should Citizen Participation in decision making in Urban Architectural Improvements have a role to play and what will the instruments for this Citizen Participation be? This research paper does represent a work in progress. It analyzes these interventions and look at the impact that they have on urban context and its aesthetics and provide tentative suggestions on how to improve the current situation. The case referred to in the paper is more than an exercise to help us to reflect and to propose novel approaches.

Keywords: Facade, informal buildings, urban aesthetics, buildings, public space

Introduction

This paper will analyze the impact of informal buildings facades on urban aesthetics. There are examples to be taken in study that will analyze and will explain the impact of these building on urban site. A historical background of informal buildings in Albania, and the causes that have influenced it are to precede this presentation. The compositional elements of buildings will be analyzed based on the parameters of architectural and urban design form both historical perspective as well as contemporary situation. Many elaborate details and elements have been taken into consideration during the research followed by analyses of the impact of these interventions. Suggestion and the improving tools will follow.

The current situation is a representative of a phenomenon of which, on of the main causes are the frequent changes in legislation. According to the law "No.9482, Date 03.04.2006" For Legalization, Urbanization and Integration of Buildings without Permission", it allows all the construction of these informal buildings where then legalizes them and equipping with ownership certificates. The latter made it possible to build these informal buildings anywhere and regardless of the urban context. (Act, 9482,2006 and Act. 9482 updated 2017). The phenomenon resulted in a different urban aesthetics. This leads one to put forward research questions one of which is: *which are the elements that affect urban aesthetics, and secondly what the instruments to minimize and improve this phenomenon are feasible?*

Literature Review

The literature considered and reviewed in this study is carefully selected in order to analyze every compositional element that we must keep in mind when designing to preserve and achieve the so-called urban aesthetics. Examples and cases of developed countries have been considered where these parameters have been applied where they have created the proper urban designing rules and models.

A historical background of informal buildings has been created to have a more detailed overview of this phenomenon in our country. The selected literature proved helpful in theoritacally comprehending the situation created by current Albanian phenomenon that has directly affected to the urban aesthetics. Moreover, the literature researched helped provide a better understanding in determining and defining-in an Albanian context- what urban aesthetics is and what the elements that define it are. It becomes apparent that informal buildings are a phenomenon that is present in other countries of world. However, significantly different from the Albanian case, in other developed countries the process has been better coordinated and efficiently managed by governmental institutions.

The situation created in Albania and mainly in Tirana has in most cases resulted from the migration of population, thus increasing the need for housing and space. A considerable number of local and foreign researchers have paid academic attention to the phenomenon of informal construction, where informality in construction has left strong traces creating an unaesthetic appearance and bypassing every

compositional element of design, which highlights the chaos created in many parts of our country. A population indomitable for space has made it possible to occupy land and lay the foundations for a building without architectural values, without urban planning, without geological analysis, feasibility, etc., not knowing where they are building and what they did built. As a result, the chaos created has often facilitated and fallen prey to natural phenomena such as floods, landslides, etc. (Evoked Architectural Diptychs,2016, p.10-11)

The examples taken in this study and the selected literature will help us to analyze more precisely the phenomenon of informal buildings in our country, and the impact of its facades on the aesthetic or urban site. Facade, as the first visual impact plays an essential role in the view of the city. The exercise which is taken in this study will presented in these elements.

- *Which are the adequate compositional elements that we should follow in order to have an urban aesthetics?*
- *How is the current situation of informal buildings in our country?*
- *How may we improve and minimize this phenomenon applying these compositional elements on informal buildings facades?*

The Hypotheses and Method

To answer this question, we propose the following hypothesis: Is it possible that Urban Architecture principles if put in action can still help with minimal cost and damage?

To precisely tackle this exercise in this study, we will proceed as follows. *Firstly*, in our research we are detailing the hypotheses as following: Can Urban Architecture still help with minimal cost and damage? Is there still possibility for making things, right? Will time and Budgetary issues become an issue? Does political will has to be considered? Should Citizen Participation in decision making in Urban Architectural Improvements have a role to play and what will the instruments for this Citizen Participation be?

We are fully aware that to this treatise is bound to needed. Furthermore, it is beyond doubt that a scientific analysis of an analysis of the current situation of the facades of informal buildings and the impact of these facades on the urban aesthetics must be conducted. An innovative approach to the research topic is considered of the utmost importance taking into account Budgetary Issues and Social Problems. We have ascertained that a thorough understanding and presentation the compositional elements of urban aesthetics in a pre-condition of the utmost importance for this treatise.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

When we design, we have to take in consideration several criteria in order that for our intervention to be sustainable and long-term. The moment we realize an intervention, in addition to accurate design criteria, contemporary standards, we may also consider the aesthetic elements in order that for our intervention to be curated down to the detail.

According to the studies conducted by two professors Kevin Lynch and Gyorgy Kepes, they have presented a genuine study on the visual appearance of a city by creating urban aesthetics. American professor of urban planning Lynch, as a good connoisseur of urban planning, urban form and environmental psychology, he defines the appearance of the city in five essential elements that implicate urban aesthetics. In this book "The image of the city," Lynch highlights five crucial elements in the silhouette that are: paths, districts, edges, landmarks and nodes. (Review Kevin Lynch, 2009) He argues that the city is a powerful symbol of complex society and for any given city, a corresponding set of mental images exist in the minds of the people experiencing that city. Thus, according to him we have some interesting definitions for these five essential elements that have to take into consideration at the time of performing interventions on the urban site:

- *Paths*. Main traffic routes. It has found that the paths provide important points of view for other elements of the city.
- *Districts*. A part of the city that has an ordinary form and activity. Building plays a significant role in producing this image.
- *Edges*. The end of one circle and beginning of another. A stream or path may function as an edge joining two circles. Architecture can clearly articulate an edge.
- *Landmarks*. Prominent physical objects. Landmarks work to orient yourself within the city. They can be viewed from a distance or multiple focus.
- *Nodes*. The main centers or centers of activity. These are benchmarks in the sense that nodes provide orientation. Open activity spaces which are closed by groups of buildings are expression of nodes.

These five elements explain us more clearly and give us a more detailed overview of what we need to consider and create now that we will conduct an urban intervention. According to the research conducted by professors Kevin Lynch and Gyorgy Kapes, they shed new light on understanding of the visual image of the city and laid the foundations for a positive thinking in this area. They hypothesized that the environmental each person builds his own mental image of parts of the city in physical in relations to each other. Also, that the most essential part of an individual's mental image of the city will closely match that of anyone else. These main parts, common to almost everyone, would thus represent the image of the city. This hypothesis was then tested and validated by a series of surveys across the country. Thus, they noticed that

the image of the city consisted of these five elements that intertwined with each other are essential to the image of the city. (Urban aesthetics: Theory and application of physical design control within the urban renewal program, 1961, p.6-8).

The study of Lynch and Kepes is a major contribution to the art of urban aesthetics. It provides the basic emotional framework of the city, without which the city would have no meaning.

Another interesting, detailed perspective is realized by Stephen Jacobs and Barclay Jones in their outstanding book "Urban Design Through Conservation". The theory was put forward the emotional responses that an observer experiences from the city may be grouped into approximately three categories.

- An emotional or psychological response to a physical stimulus
- Emotional response to form
- An emotional intellectual response in which physical stimulus is interpreted in the light of experience

The three principles may be expressed more simply as the evaluation of materials, form and expression. Of course, these emotions will vary within us individually and for this reason we tend to accept the opinion of experts when it comes to placing a value on these responses. Undoubtedly, some object will not fall exclusively into any of the three categories as an object may have some effects on the observer. However, it is not essential that these categories be completely distinct and separate. It is important that these objects are recognized as constituting the essential aesthetic structure of the city.

From what we have stated above, we have some elements that define the urban aesthetics which appear as a superficial, two-dimensional quality that expresses sensory attraction. Some of these essential elements that are of special importance are: texture, color, pattern, etc. The detailed explanation of these essentials elements that define the urban aesthetics according to the study of Lynch and Kepes will help us to understand their role.

To begin with color is one of the most essential elements. Color plays a role that should be in the proper coordinated look within the city. This can be expressed either through contrast or continuity. It has an aesthetic dominance in the first impact of observer environments (as a consequence of instinctive pull), and for this misuse in colors caused by the great colors for the city and its aesthetics. Another element is texture. When we analyze the texture of a surface of a building, we notice that it is composed of several parts, sometimes from different angles and distances it can look like you are guilty, which makes us perceive it as an aesthetic element. There are always a proportion and relation of the size of the texture, the facade and the shape of the building, which is manifested in a dichotomy of them. Jacobs and Jones argued that "the value of large-scale application depends on the probability of being seen."

Pattern, throughout history, those involved in city planning have been interested in photography as a basic form or organization - whether in terms of street layout or land appearance. "Today, the model is a big problem in the city's aesthetic school, with a primary interest in grouping design elements in such an imaginable way that observation is all that is needed to determine these elements." And the last but not the list, rhythm. One of the elements associated with the model is rhythm. Like the model, rhythm is recognized by a number of elements within the field of view, the difference becoming significant for the intervals between them. (Urban aesthetics: Theory and application of physical design control within the urban renewal program, 1961, p.9-11).

Thus, all these elements are closely related to the facade where it is also considered and called "the skin" of a building. A well-designed facade makes possible a city livable and the people who live them are lively. In the contrary it becomes boring and stressful by the disharmony of these essential elements of the urban aesthetics which are presented above.

Having a thorough comprehension of these essential elements of urban aesthetics, we need to analyze the situation of informal buildings in our country and mainly in our case study, in Tirana.

The question that we have risen in this study is: How can the situation in the case under study be defined, analyzed and implemented?

Informal buildings in our country are a factual phenomenon. Like many other countries in the world, informal building in our country has a sharply rise and uncontrolled way. Different from other countries, this phenomenon in our country tended to use durable and costly as far as materials, in order to create permanent structures and non-temporary ones. These informal buildings tended to high structures, and they are often not covered with the prospect of extension or adding more floors, that is becoming higher. These informal interventions have been implemented following a dangerously spontaneous pattern of behavior, no doubt following no design and urban planning criteria.

The phenomenon of informal buildings it is something reflected over the years. In the beginning, it began like a transition of the population where our country went through the process of population migration. The past archetypal situation changed. This phenomenon often brings harm for residents or for existing buildings.

There are of course, some problems connected with the technical elements of designs or of the urban planning. In addition to that, another responsible reason are the interventions in the legal field about the informal building. It appears that these interventions established the popular idea that everything was fine, unaware that this phenomenon would soon become unmanageable in certain instances.

An analysis from the perspective of elements that define urban aesthetics as mentioned above, unfortunately cannot be applied as elements of analyses. This does refer to an even deeper chaos of the created situation, but also a challenge for developing tools of improvement.

Let us analyze a concrete situation in order to realize a summary of this phenomenon and to create a clearer view of the real situation that we face every day.

The selected area is located in Selita, Tirana, around 15 min (by car) from city center and it is part of the informal building phenomenon. The map will help us showing the selected area which is taken in the study.

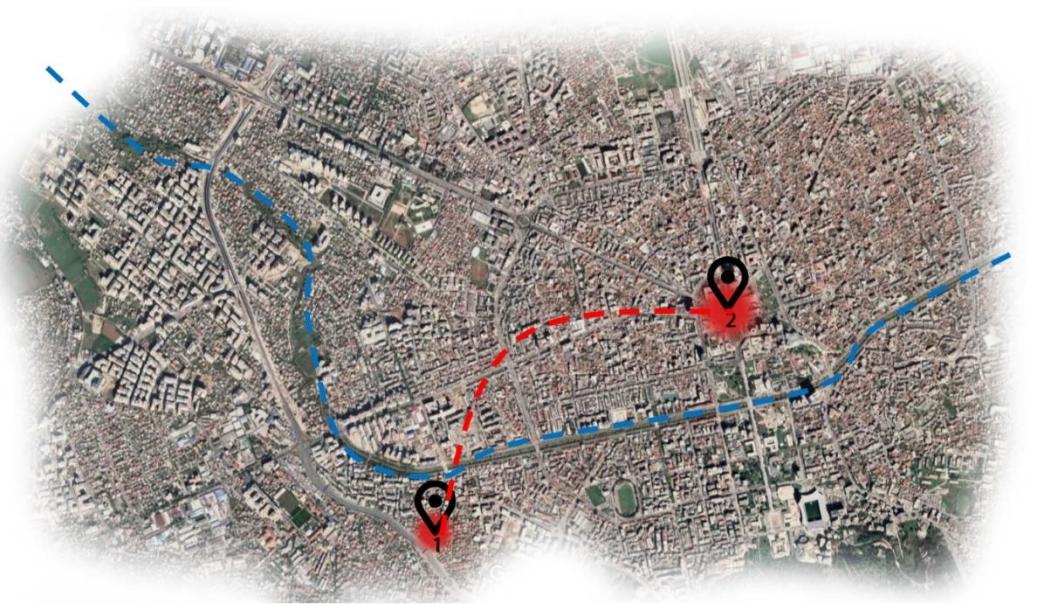


Photo 1 – Map of Tirana (Source Google Map)

Selected zone

Center of Tirana

Lana River

The map shows the distance between the selected area and the center of Tirana. It provides us that the zone has a strategic location at the entrance and exit of the city. It has access to one of the city's attractions, such as Lana River. It is only 5 min away (on foot).

The selected zone is populated by informal building since the '90s. There is different typology of informal buildings where over the years they have adapted and changed

their function. Randomly placed without scale or module. We find them mostly in one, two or three floors.

For having a clearer view of the current state, the photo below will show us the actual situation.



a)

b)

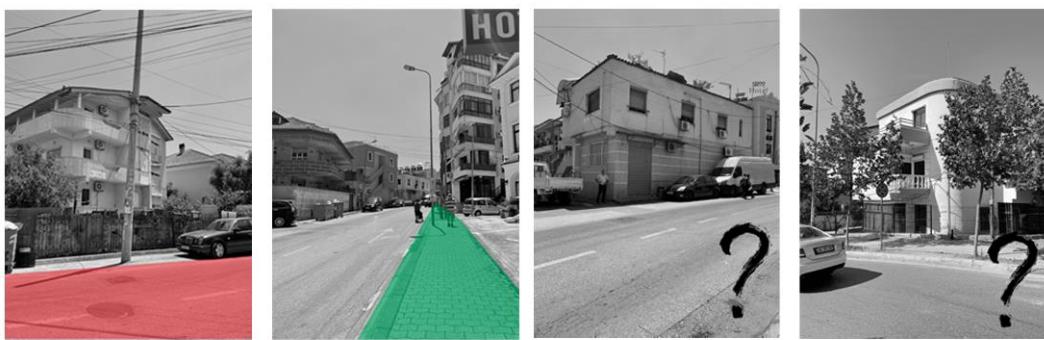
c)

d)

Photo 2 (a, b, c, d) – Current situation (Source, made by K. BIQIKU)

According to the photos above, there are shown all the problematics and the manner of their implementation. There are informal buildings, and this detail is clearly visible from their way of construction, the materials used, their positions, the implementation of urban rules and of course their impact on urban site.

If we take in analyze these photos, we will find lack of all the elements of urban aesthetics and the five essential elements that indicate the silhouette of the urban site for a functional, flexible, and fluid city.



a)

b)

c)

d)

Photo 3 (a, b, c, d) – Analysis of current situation (Source, made by K. BIQIKU)

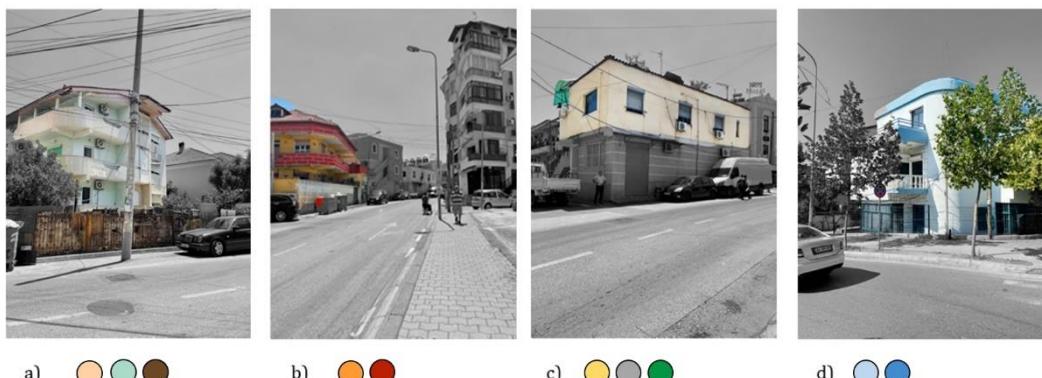
Road ●

Sidewalk ●

According to the study of Lynch and Kepes, there are five elements such as: paths, districts, edges, landmarks, and nodes. However, the only elements in the selected area are just two, a road and a sidewalk. The latter is available only in one side of road. Elements like edges, landmarks or nodes do not exist in this area, which makes it a place without these necessary urban elements.

The lack of these elements in an informal zone like this, may cause many problems and handicaps in certain times when we have the peak of circulation of vehicles, pedestrians and the traffic jam is one of the most common phenomena. Another consequence is that the area is becoming day by day poor, without vitalization and it is turning into a source of pollution thing that provide a pronounced lack of urban aesthetics and well functioned of the area. It might be stated that this area with informal buildings has a basic composition in the urban site that makes it possible to neglect all the rules and criteria of planning.

After analyzing these five essential elements that define an adequate urban planning, it is more necessary to analyze and define the most principal elements that affect urban aesthetics. Color, texture, pattern, and rhythm are these simple elements that indicate the aesthetics of urban fabric. According to the study and the definition of these elements by two professors Jacobs and Jones, now it is our turn to find out these elements of composition in our selected zone.



a)

b)

c)

d)

Photo 4 (a, b, c, d)- Analysis of facades (Source, made by K. BIQIKU)

Color plays an essential role on urban aesthetics as long as it leaves the first visual impact that we perceive. In the selected area that we have taken in study, in a short view, we may see distinct colors in facade which are not combine to each other. In one place we see blue, a little further we see yellow, red, and so on. The colors used in some cases are pale, dramatic, and lifeless and in some other buildings they are brighter and creating a strong and an unrelated contrast between them. Referring to the study of Jacobs and Jones, the color used in this zone are not coordinated within the city what makes the latter without proper contrast and continuity.

Another essential element which indicates the urban aesthetics is texture. Varied materials, shape, size should be in proportion in order to have an aesthetic view. The materials used in this zone are basic without any treatment or composition. The facades look the same as other informal buildings, and people sometime for having a different facade or for making it "special" they use imitation of the natural material such brick, clearly shown in the photo 4b and c.

Pattern is another fundamental element in urban planning. In those informal buildings that populate our zone it is impossible to find an adequate pattern or a module to be synchronized with other building. The latter is as a result of informal way of building and the thirst to conquer space.

And the last but not the least, rhythm. As a determining element associated with form, rhythm do not appear in those informal buildings. In the above photos 4 (a, b, c, d) there are a lack of this compositional element.

All these informal buildings are designed without these principal elements. The disuse of these elements is associated directly with the urban planning and bringing disorder and chaos. These interventions with the absence of these elements are affecting in urban fabric and create a malfunction of the total area and vice versa like a chain reaction.

Discussion

Apart from all this situation we are faced with this phenomenon and the best way is to find novel approach to minimize and to recover the urban aesthetics from this non-aesthetic situation.

The current situation of informal buildings is spontaneous and very challenging. These buildings are in an already built-up area and this phenomenon may not be changed. All the interventions that we may propose are expressed in cost which is billed to the country. The new perspectives are being considered by many researchers that sometimes they require time to be realized.

It is important to be emphasized that to conduct the appropriate interventions, it should be realized in a gradual transformation of these area. According to the Danish architect and urban design consultant, the gradual transformation in urban redevelopment allows for greater flexibility in the design process in order to be able to adapt people and to experiment the new ways of using city. (Project for Public Spaces, Jan Gehl,2008).

However, what we may propose in this study, according to the examples and the exercise is to find an opportunity solution and having the least economic impact. An immediate solution is to intervene in these facades and to revitalize them relying on the essentials elements that may be considered for reaching an urban aesthetics

which is defined these elements. In this way this area will become livable and all people who live it will experience an urban regeneration.

Another crucial step in macro-term is the stopping of new informal buildings in order to prevent the deepening of this phenomenon, where the government support and afford is great. There are many cases where the informal interventions have been stopped in the right moment.

A prolonged process with many difficulties and handicaps which have many perspectives and opportunities to develop these areas and the overall urban aesthetics. Definitely, the new urban plans, new approaches in urban designs and the immediate intervention in the informal buildings will help the situation and will create a reduction of this phenomenon.

Conclusion

At nutshell, in the end of this study we reach the conclusion that facade of informal buildings had a negative impact on urban aesthetics. Untreated facades, without fundamental elements of design and aesthetics like color, texture, pattern, and rhythm, they are nothing but a negative impact and chaos on urban site. As a consequence, elements like paths, districts, edges, landmarks, and nodes, are not included in these areas. The latter leads to the lack of necessary spaces for pedestrians, car lanes, bicycle lanes, or recreational spaces with park and greenery.

The exercise which we analyze in this study makes possible to understand the criteria of designing a building in order to create livable city. Facade is the most essential element of a buildings as long as it is the first impact that may cause an aesthetics area or not. This is a phenomenon which will take time to recover and improve, but we should be optimist and we should implement immediate solutions for this transitional period until a final solution so that these areas do not turn into a problem for the city. What we should emphasize are all the aforementioned essential elements that paraphrase the urban aesthetics in order to have flexibility, circulation, aesthetics, and a suitable city for all of us which may be in considered by all architects, designers and urban planners for the long-term interventions.

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The Significant Role Played by Long Social Connections and a Pleasant Interactive Experience Among Traditional Bapedi Music Practitioners

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Abstract

In Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, Limpopo Province in South Africa, music is a form of communication and plays a functional role in the Bapedi society. Indigenous Bapedi music is often collaborative and requires communal undertaking and coordinated cooperation. Music and dancing are social activities in which almost traditional Bapedi music practitioners participate. Rhythm and percussive sounds are highly emphasized in indigenous Bapedi music, while the melodies and rhythms of the music usually form the song texts. The main objective of this paper is to examine the creative domain of musical performance among different traditional Bapedi music practitioners, and to share some insight on how traditional Bapedi music practitioners organize, conceptualize, and experience various aspects of their daily lives. The main question the study addressed is: what motivates traditional Bapedi music practitioners to work together, and to struggle for common goals? To achieve the objectives of this study, contextual approach was employed, and data was collected through observations, interviews and video recordings of rehearsals and performances during social gatherings. Relevant sources to the context of this study in the form of published journal articles, book chapters, books and theses were also consulted to compare and complement data collected from the field research. Closer investigation has revealed that music is not alien or extraneous to the Bapedi people, but part of the Bapedi culture. It was concluded that in Bapedi society, traditional music groups were also formed voluntarily with the primary purpose of music performance and dancing, by invitation at ceremonial occasions.

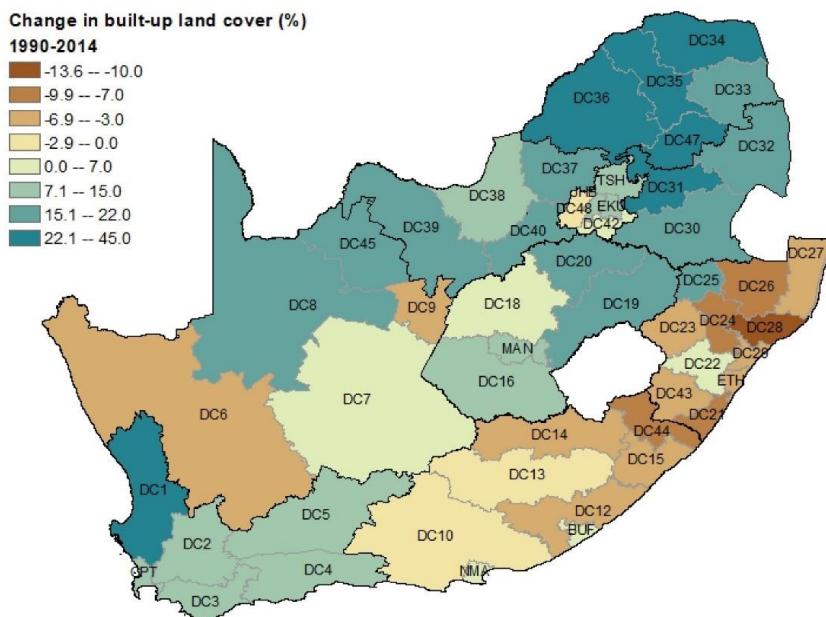
Keywords: Indigenous Bapedi music, Limpopo Province, South Africa, traditional music practitioners, music, and dancing

Introduction

In contemporary Bapedi society, music tends to bring traditional Bapedi music practitioners together. Mutual relationship and social cohesion play a vital role in knowledge sharing and skills' transference. Coming together and sharing their expertise afford them the opportunity to have joy, but they are also learning so much from each other or one another. The communalistic, interactive, communicative nature of music and dance creates a high degree of social cohesion. Within Bapedi people's cultural context, music and dance are the most potent means of expressing the values and fundamental structures of socio-cultural and economic life of contemporary Bapedi society. Fostering social cohesion is much deeper than just coming together and sharing expertise from one another, but it's about understanding the self and how traditional Bapedi music practitioners think as human race, putting humanity '*Ubuntu*' first above all. Music and dance thus play a key role in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and socialisation, and the mitigation and socio-psychological prevention of stress through the promotion of social communal cohesion and group solidarity.

Bapedi people are a diverse ethnic group with a rich history and fascinating culture. They are almost exclusively found in South Africa's north-eastern provinces which are Limpopo and parts of northern Mpumalanga. Bapedi tribe is the largest indigenous group in Limpopo Province in South Africa. Their tribal language is called 'Sepedi', one of the eleven official languages in South Africa. Bapedi people is primarily living in Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality (**see figure 1**), where they form the majority of the population. They are grouped according to the dialect of the language (Sepedi) they speak. In Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, music and dance are tangible cultural expressions of human values, mores, and principles of life. Bapedi people's cultural, social, and ritual performances are primarily functional and communal.

Figure 4. Net percentage change in built-up land cover (tier 1) by district municipality, 1990–2014. District municipalities are assigned a DC and metropolitan municipalities are assigned a code associated with the municipality name



Source: Statistics South Africa, *National Land and Terrestrial Ecosystem Accounts, 1990 to 2014, Discussion Document: D0401.1*

Figure 1: Geographical Location Map of South Africa showing Limpopo Province & Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality (DC47).

In Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality music is an inseparable part of culture, an organised way of life that includes customs, laws, morals, technology, beliefs, knowledge, religions, and other cultural habits acquired by man as a member of the society. Culture is seen as the state of intellectual development of a people. Although Limpopo Province is extremely diverse, there appears to be some shared moral ideas across many ethnic groups found within the province. Following next, research strategy and theoretical underpinning will be discussed.

Research strategy and Theoretical Underpinning

This research has endeavoured to utilize interviews and observation methods to supplement a literature study. Both oral interviews and observations were employed to gather data. Most of the interviews were informal and spontaneous. However, the researcher also carried out other interviews that were longer, more formal, and in some instances taped. Virtually, all the interviewing, formal and informal, revolved around questions emerging from my observations. Ultimately, the research is an investigation of the creative domain of musical performance among different

traditional Bapedi music practitioners, and to share some insight on how traditional Bapedi music practitioners organize, conceptualize, and experience various aspects of their daily lives.

The subjects for this study were interviewed (using Sepedi, a local dialect) independently from each other, in the confines of their respective homes. They were identified because of their knowledgeable and informative qualities. Specific ethnographic data were collected from four (4) villages, namely: Ga-Phaalha Mmakadikwe, Mohwelere, Ga-Marodi and Ga-Mmachacha. These villages are in Nebo area, in Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, approximately 13km North of Jane Furse. The sample size of subjects consisted of knowledgeable traditional music practitioners and members of their traditional music ensembles. The researcher also attended different social and cultural rehearsals and performances, and other relevant events that would further understanding of the significance role played by long social connections and a pleasant interactive experience among traditional Bapedi music practitioners. Ethnography¹ as the most common method and Contextual approaches were adopted in this study.

The present study is underpinned by Afrocentric theory of human personhood as advocated by Molefi Kete Asante (1985, 1987, 1999). This theory views a person as a person through other persons. This resonates well with the concept of '*Ubuntu*' in African context. My interpretation of Asante's theory in the context of this study is that there is no person on this planet earth who can live in isolation. According to Asante, Afrocentricity seeks to relocate the African person as an agent in human history in an effort to eliminate the mission of the fringes. In his view, the problem of cultural location takes precedence over the topic or the data under consideration. Asante provides an Afrocentricity theory grounded in the African context. He argues that Africans should view phenomena from the vantage point of an African worldview which is in turn informed by African culture. He observes that an Afrocentric worldview or the African-centered one is based on African cultural beliefs, practices, and values. Furthermore, Asante postulates that Afrocentricity implies the placement of African culture at the centre of any analysis that involves the study of African people. In his view, Afrocentricity is a perspective that allows Africans to be subjects of historical experiences rather than objects on the fringes of Europe. Further, Asante elaborates that culture-based indigenous knowledge should reflect the customs, beliefs, values, knowledge habits, skills, arts, and way of life of African people. As in this study, culture-based indigenous knowledge, which involves customs, beliefs, values, skills, and arts is reflected in the Bapedi way of life. The theory is adopted for

¹ Ethnography is the most common method. According to Gobo (2008), it is highly relevant because there is no other way to understand the role of music in diaspora than to investigate it in its real-life context, and this methodological approach provides a rich, detailed, and complex understanding.

this study because within Bapedi people's cultural context, a person is a person through other persons, and communal undertaking is central to Bapedi way of life.

Previous related studies

The significant role played by traditional music in African context has been rehearsed by different scholars such as Aasoglenang (2014); Casimir et al. (2015); Ekpo & Onyeji (2020); Gobo (2008); Kawooya (2010); Lebaka (2018); Lebaka (2019); Lebaka (2019); Lidskog (2017) and Mapaya (2014). In particular, Aasoglenang et al. (2014:5) opine that indigenous African music has an enormous impact on its indigenes due to the messages (communication) it carries across all fields of endeavour because music is intimately linked with language. According to these scholars, music and dance have utilitarian function as it is used for everyday activities: for a child's naming ceremony, tutelage, initiation rites, hunting and fishing practices, agricultural production, national ceremonies, war times, religious and other auspicious occasions. These scholars are in agreement that the central role of these ceremonies is to recount history, define and ascribe lineage, transfer knowledge and skills, challenge and motivate action through praise singing. All these roles apply in the context of this study, and this is precisely what is happening in the Bapedi culture (2014:17).

Attesting to the above observations, Ekpo & Onyeji (2020:4) observe that traditional heritage of which music is paramount, informs the ethnic groups. Ekpo and Onyeji write that African music to the owners, is as simple as the air they breathe (2020:4). These scholars further mention that the posterity and complexity of the elements of African music, as well as the classification of the instruments which in most cases form the different ensembles are found in Africa (2020:3). In agreement with Ekpo and Onyeji's words, Casimir et al. (2015:136) state that the importance and role of music in the growth of a child cannot be over-emphasized. Casimir et al. believe that philosophy gives us the meaning and provides the sense of solutions that help humanity to know why we exist or why performing certain activities in life (2015:142). According to these scholars, the concept of music in an African cultural context encompasses more than patterned expressive sounds analogous to felt life (2015:144). These scholars emphasize that Africans view their music as the aspect of their traditional life, which provides repositories of traditional beliefs, ideas, wisdom, and feelings (2015:145). They emphasize that these beliefs, ideas, and wisdom and feelings do not just throw light on the music in the strict referential sense, as enhancing the meaning of music, but they are about a half of what is meant by "the music". Based on the foregoing, they assert that what constitutes meaning in music is an essential aspect of the music educator's philosophy (2015:145).

Other scholars such as Mapaya (2014); Nethsinghe (2013); Trehub et al. (2015); Southcott & Joseph (2006), share insightful information on the concept '*Cross-cultural perspectives on music and musicality*'. In particular, Trehub et al. (2015:4) assert that songs also function as a repository of knowledge and cultural values that can be

transmitted across persons and generations. These scholars write that music is ubiquitous in caregiving. They observed that carers across cultures sing to infants and have done so from time immemorial (2015:4). They believe that conjoining music, dance, and ritual language within an event that addresses the existential concerns of the community is the most universally valued of musical activities (2015:4). They are also of the opinion that making music together is simultaneously building a community together, which is considered by many to be the most adaptive and evolutionarily significant aspect of musical experience worldwide (2015:4). These scholars advocate that prosocial consequences are evident even when synchronous activity occurs without music (2015:5). They are convinced that synchronous action is one route to social bonding and prosocial behaviour in childhood (2015:6). They also believe that for members of many small communities, past and present, musical rituals have meanings that are transparent within the native community but opaque to others (2015:6).

Results and Discussion

The socio-cultural background of Bapedi music

In Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, music and dance play a prominent role in Bapedi people's ability to communicate and celebrate social, cultural, and religious ceremonies, with an array of sounds announcing important ceremonies. In the Bapedi society, music is a social activity in which almost everyone participates. Music highlights Bapedi cultural values and norms, with various music genres accompanied by a melody. Numerous ceremonies of importance are celebrated with music, whether it is a ceremonial rite of passage, birth, or marriage. There are songs recounting history, and songs of praise and criticism. Indigenous Bapedi music is often collaborative and requires coordinated cooperation, in which traditional music practitioners belong to 'constituencies' that are not similar but complementary. Rhythm and percussive sounds are highly emphasized in indigenous Bapedi music. The above observations are endorsed by Lebaka (2018:501) by stating that Bapedi musical instruments are used in both vocal and instrumental dance ensembles, in festivals, religious rituals or funeral processions, as often as in musical entertainment. According to Lebaka (2018:501), the instruments used in these ceremonies and rituals are *meropa* (drums), *dinaka* (whistles and reed pipes), *dithlwathlwadi* (leg rattles) and *phalafala* (sable antelope horn). Sharing more insight on the Bapedi music tradition, Lebaka postulates that in the Bapedi culture, like in many cultures in Africa, traditional musical instruments have many functions and significances besides that of making music (2018:502). In his view, among Bapedi people, music making on ceremonial and ritual occasions may be integrated with the event characterised by symbolic actions which are dramatic in character (2018:503).

Communalistic, interactive, and communicative nature of music and dance.

It has emerged from this study that in Greater Sekhukhune district municipality, music-making is a social performance, even when performed or listened to alone. The solidarity performer often has an audience in mind. Because musical performances are socially and culturally situated, they come to be ethically saturated as well. It is noticeable that in this culture music is often ascribed to spiritual or supernatural aspects of the natural world. Congruent to the above viewpoints, Trehub et al (2015:1) opine that music is universal, transmitted through generations, usually performed in the presence of others, and of extreme antiquity. These scholars believe that all peoples engage in activities that we would call music, often in relation to play, and everywhere in relation to ritual (2015:1). Furthermore, they contend that music-making is necessarily a cultural performance because conventions about the structure of music, its instrumentation, context of performance and meaning are all learned (2015:1). They argue that music-making is a system of communication transmitted through ongoing transgenerational interaction (2015:1). In the same vein, Mapaya (2014:2008) observes that *mmino wa setšo* (indigenous music) has been in existence from the time immemorial. He believes that most African music genres are in fact song-dance compounds (2014:2010). In his view, Africa has its own indigenous systems that deal with the metaphysical and the epistemological aspects of their existence, despite the threat of epistemocide, these systems have persisted while coded in orality (2014:2012). Furthermore, he asserts that the systems are encoded within the African languages, both specialised and ordinary, and in this regard, besides burying these epistemologies within specialised language forms, other strategies exist which fulfil the function of maintaining intellectual integrity of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (2014:2012).

Music and dance as the most potent means of expressing the values and fundamental structures of socio-cultural and economic life.

From the interviews, it was established that Bapedi people's history has also stimulated the sporadic but continuing search for historical perspectives in Bapedi music tradition, and to some extent, influenced the transmission process of indigenous Bapedi music. Informal discussions have also revealed that indigenous Bapedi music is such an integral part of social and cultural life as well as a functional element of Bapedi people's Local Knowledge System, and its history is bound to have both a stylistic and social dimension. In consonant with the above viewpoints, Lebaka (2019:62) writes that participation in the transmission process of indigenous Bapedi music has been the most salient example of the traditional music education practice. Lebaka contends that Bapedi songs establish mutual relationships as well as cementing friendships, but also communicate social and ethical values within Bapedi culture (2019:63). Lebaka further postulates that music and dance are fundamental to the Bapedi ways of life, and culture is everything that characterizes Bapedi society (2019:68).

Fostering social cohesion, mutual relationship, social connections and sharing expertise through music and dance.

The results yielded thus far have shown that when traditional Bapedi music practitioners have performances, they sing and dance together. Based on research findings, it is evident that creative music-making involves retention of musical ideas, gestures, and actions (Lebaka 2019:67). The results have also shown that musical creativity revolves around improvisation, recreation, and variation. From observations and interviews, it was also established that indigenous Bapedi songs are accompanied by dancing, handclapping, ululation, and different types of percussion instruments. Communal music-making (**see photo 1**) plays a vital role in knowledge/expertise sharing among traditional Bapedi music practitioners.



Photo 1: Cultural festival (Dikgageng village; Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, Limpopo Province, 24.09.2018); Photographer: Morakeng Edward Kenneth Lebaka.

These observations are endorsed by Casimir et al. (2015:136). These scholars observe that African music manifests core African values as embodied in African philosophy. According to them, the traditional systems of the African society philosophically

consider music to be an indispensable part of education and therefore a valuable component of the traditional education of indigenous communities and families before the onset of colonialism and its educational systems (2015:136). Casimir et al. further emphasize that musical performances also constitute a dynamic forum through which members of a society respond and adapt to new conditions through the retention of relevant elements of existing tradition and assimilation of new ideas (2015:138). They argue that religious and social engagements, initiation and funeral rites, naming and marriage ceremonies provide occasions for members of the traditional societies to engage in communal music-making and share together a rewarding and satisfying musical experience (2015:140). These scholars also believe that such occasions also provide a means of expressing group solidarity and transmitting traditional norms and beliefs from one generation to another (2015:140). They are convinced that it is within such contexts that much of the socialisation process which music provides takes place (2015:140). In agreement with Casimir et al., Kwooya (2010:iv) attests that historically, traditional music in Africa was attributed to the collective society and not to individual musicians. He is of the opinion that customs reflect peoples' ways of life, resources around them and the community's rules of engagement, but also set parameters of acceptable and unacceptable conduct (2010:27). Furthermore, he emphasizes that music in traditional African societies plays different roles and retains the core evolving character based on the old (2010:72).

The most important finding of this study is that in Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, music is a form of communication and plays a functional role in the Bapedi society. Indigenous Bapedi music is often collaborative and requires communal undertaking and coordinated cooperation. The study contributes to the notion that music and dancing are social activities in which almost traditional Bapedi music practitioners participate. Based on lived experience, indigenous Bapedi music is a total art form closely linked to dance, gesture, and dramatization. It permeates Bapedi peoples' way of life and has a function, a role to play in the Bapedi society. Closer investigation has revealed that music is not alien or extraneous to the Bapedi people, but part of the Bapedi culture.

Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

Based on observations, interviews and viewpoints by different scholars cited in the text, it can be concluded that in the Bapedi society, music-making is a social performance, even when performed or listened to alone, and traditional music groups are also formed voluntarily with the primary purpose of music performance and dancing, by invitation at ceremonial occasions. The impression created during interviews and observations was that music and dance are the most potent means of expressing the values and fundamental structures of socio-cultural and economic life of contemporary Bapedi society. It has become evident from the interviews that indigenous Bapedi music is such an integral part of social and cultural life as well as a

functional element of Bapedi people's Local Knowledge System, and its history is bound to have both a stylistic and social dimension.

It has emerged from this study that Bapedi people sustain and strengthen Bapedi cultural heritage and identity through music and social connections. Based on these findings and discussions, it is arguable that within Bapedi cultural context indigenous Bapedi music is used to entertain, inform, to promulgate Bapedi cultural tradition and values, as well as to educate. In the light of the findings and discussions of this study, the over-riding recommendations of the study are that 1) a research study of this kind should be taken seriously in South Africa for an exploration of indigenous values influencing the preservation of cultural heritage and identity; 2) Bapedi people should keep and perpetuate their valuable heritage, which is still needed for survival and for the welfare of our next generation. It was concluded that in Bapedi society, traditional music groups were also formed voluntarily with the primary purpose of music performance and dancing, by invitation at ceremonial occasions.

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The Feature of New Poetics in Albanian Poetry: The Case of Luljeta Lleshanaku's Poetry

Vjollca Osja

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the tendency that Luljeta Lleshanaku's poetry shows, after the 2000s, in discourse, theme and form. The focus will be on the poetry of this period, but comparing it with its changes in relation to the poetry published before this period because we think it would be worth outlining, in the form of a outline, the way, form and specifics in the topic and discourse, with which Luljeta Lleshanaku's poetry emerged in Albanian literature of the 90s. The study traces poetic leaps, which in terms of value do not prove to be the same for all authors. Likewise, it aims to argue the impact that the experience of being a writer resident in the USA and taking part in writer's programs have in opening up to new poetics, especially regarding discourse and form.

Keywords: Albanian poetry, poetic language, poetic strategies, style change, thematic aspect, formal aspect

Introduction

Before moving on to the main issue, we think it would be worth outlining, in the form of an outline, the way, form and specifics in the topic and discourse, with which Luljeta Lleshanaku's poetry emerged in Albanian literature of the 90s. We think that, at the beginning of the 90s, the volume entitled "The Eyes of Somnabulist"¹ drew the attention of the reader for two seemingly contradictory reasons:

* *Luljeta Lleshanaku is an Albanian poet who is the recipient of the 2009 Crystal Vilenica award for European poets. She was educated in literature at the University of Tirana. In 1999, she took part in the International Writers Program at the University of Iowa. She is the author of four poetry collections which has been translated into English:*

- a. *Fresco*, New Directions Publishing, 2002 (translated by Henry Israeli, with an afterword by the same and an introduction by Peter Constantine)
- b. *Child of Nature*, New Directions Publishing, 2010
- c. *Haywire: New & Selected Poems*, Bloodaxe Books, 2011
- d. *Negative Space*, New Directions Publishing, 2018 (translated by Ani Gjika) (shortlisted for the 2019 Griffin Poetry Prize). The critic and editor Peter Constantine, in his introduction to *Fresco*, sums up her style in this

Firstly, poems of this book marked an obvious break with the tradition of “programmed” poetry of the time.¹

Secondly, the compilation of the volume and the foreword of the book was done by the poet Dritëro Agolli, whose poetry, in its largest and most important part, was within the “orders” of socialist realism.²

In order to be more exhaustive in argumentation, we would say that this volume (like those that would follow it later: “Sunday’s Bell”³ or to some extent “Half-cubism”),⁴ for the most part, had distinctive features such as:

1. Theme: themes of autumn, winter, solitude, twilight, childhood, sea, etc., through the lyrical voice, modulated the feeling and condition of the moment, completely genuine in themselves and cleansed of the falsehood with which they were conveyed in the literature before the 90s, but there were also modulations of a deeper level for situations with sometimes personal and sometimes collective signs; added to these, themes of abandonment, uniformity, denature, persecution, victimization, existential dilemmas and remorse.⁵

2. Language: these poetic compositions denote a discourse that attracts attention mostly to the cautiousness about language. Poetic language, makes you feel a tension in its choice while it does not allow mixing of discourses, prevails in translating the human condition and one’s feelings to another dimension. (Friedrich: 1959)

The poetic discourse of this volume is woven with metaphors and a lot of similes and not only as a quantity, but also as a figure having a strong organizing function for the

way: “Luljeta Lleshanaku is a pioneer of Albanian poetry. She speaks with a completely original voice, her imagery and language always unexpected and innovative. Her poetry has little connection to poetic styles past or present in America, Europe, or the rest of the world. And it is not connected to anything in Albanian poetry either. We have in Lleshanaku a completely original poet.”

¹This book was published at the time of vigorous formal experiments, which more than poetic material offered the tendency to escape from traditional templates, but without any noticeable outcome. This was a book of poetry that was different as a poetic conception, as well as formulation and aesthetic articulation...” R. Musliu on Luljeta Lleshanaku’s volume “Yellow Marrow”, Pristina 2000, pp.7

¹ All levels of the poems’ organization of this poetic text: motives, voice, discourse, stylistic register, tone, etc., suggested another poetics was suggested, an anti-poetics we can say, if we take into consideration what was considered poetics for the aesthetes of socialist realism and what poetry the reader was used to read.

² In fact, Lleshanaku’s poetry “forced” D. Agolli to abandon the discourse he was used to utilize when writing about poetry and, to implicitly highlight in the preface what, explicitly, this volume aimed at; a new aesthetic, as a result of a lucky meeting point of sensitivity and the poet’s new relationship with reality and personal excursion in the discovery of human conditions and language that would figuratively bear this sensitivity.

³ Luljeta Lleshanaku, “Sunday Bell”, League of Writers Publishing House, Tirana 1994.

⁴ “Half-Cubism”, Euro Rilindja Publishing House, Tirana 1996.

⁵ Poems: Requiem for Autumn, First Autumn’s Day, Late Autumn; Winter, A Beach in Winter, Snow; Lonely House, Nursing Home; Wardrobe of Clothes; Crippled conscience; Night of terror etc.

text and its spirit. Simile is in fact the most used tool in the first volumes, but the frequent use, moreover, of closed similes (juxtaposition of similar concepts), somewhat diminishes the power of imagery that the text should evoke in the mind of the reader, because as a figure, this type of simile closes the boundaries of approximation within the two images, by setting limits. However, the similes of this volume (as well as of the other two volumes) are quite special. In very rare cases, repeated: simile with the figure of the soldier, for instance, is found in more than one poem.

3. Spirit and tone: the poems of this volume (as well as in "Sunday's Bell") carry a gray, even dark color. Most of the lexicon denote or semantically refer to sadness, pessimism, while some poems attempt to end with a didactic or aphoristic argument.

¹ In terms of the form of the verse/stanzas, its organization and dynamics, we do not think it differs from the tradition that was created in the 80s: a verse poem with a moderately short stanza and a fast pace towards the end.

Discussion

What does the reading of Lleshanaku's poetry suggest after the 2000s

In an interview² given in the fall of 2000, almost a year after the American experience she had in the writers' colonies and the poetry creative writing program, Lleshanaku, feeling the internal pressure of change (which actually was natural due to this opening as a encounter, and from her maturation as a poet) would articulate: *I began to write in a narrative and calm style, with long verses and within an atmosphere that was not mine. I began to adopt a different rhythm. We and our literature itself are the product of this reality and outside of it we feel as strangers.* (Lleshanaku:2000)

It is interesting how this statement, constructed as a dislike, as a rejection of another way of writing, would actually have value for the opposite: it would foretell some of the features that her poetry would have after the 2000s and revealed that change that Lleshanaku had begun to reflect in her style (even without admitting it). In a way, signs of this change were slightly emerging in the conception of the texts of the poetry volume "Antipastoral" (1999) and a little more clearly in "Yellow Marrow" (2000), mainly in some poems, which were not taken from the previous volumes.

If we were to look for stronger manifestations of this change, we think that "Children of Nature" (2006) marks the first strong turning point, already as a demand of the creator. With this volume begins the opening of the discourse, a hybrid discourse: within a poem are combined registers of various discourses: poetic everyday,

¹ In the poem "Requiem for Autumn" the closing verses "O, life is a circle/ if you start, one day you arrive", pp. 15, or in the poem "Winter", pp. 20, of the volume "Eyes of the Somnambulist"

² Literary magazine *Mehr Licht*, no. 15, Autumn 2000, "Writing like getting demons out of the body," Interview, pp.199

technical, biblical, philosophical, cultural and encyclopedic.¹ The long line, which extends even where it graphically breaks, gives the rhythm the elasticity it needs to hold together the cores of meaning that complete the theme.² The lyrical voice shifts to the instance of the narrative voice, the text mixes meditation with narrative traces,³ and the style takes on narrative modulation.

On the other hand, the themes are not created from one core, but from several such cores. There is not a line break, but several semicolons. They don't come out as themes from the "ivory basket", but from the mundane commonness of the past, the present, the things that surround her, that exclude her, and the things that define her, essentially the poet/Human. These features are elaborated in each of the books that follow, thereby constituting, in the meantime, some constants that build the poetics of the 2000s and beyond.

It would seem complete to us to look at each of the other poetry volumes, but it would end up in a long study, while we think it more fruitful to extract some texts that are paradigms of this poetics. This was done by Lleshanaku herself in the last edition.⁴ In this selection, although it is not based on a list of criteria articulated in any special introduction, are the criteria⁵ themselves. Her intention, a la Mallarmean, "...to publish a single book, with those poems that I consider to be my best in years",⁶ proves her creative demand.⁷ Choice has defined poetics. All books published before 2000 were left out, except for some poems which were taken from the volume "Yellow Marrow". Therefore, all the texts included in this book, in relation to those published during the 90s, contain one denominator: style change.

As we said above, the opening of poetry to discourse, which means an inclusion and mixing of discourses, registers of different spheres, constitutes the first constant. These different types of speech are also associated with different voice modulations. A good case for illustration would be the two poems *Water and carbon* and *Homo Antarcticus*. At this moment, we would like to present our arguments by combining

¹ Most of the poems are like that, but it is enough to illustrate it with a few of them, "In the absence of water..." Sunday. From the soles of the shoes/in the corridor/ snow plasma dissolves and the amnesia of shortcuts/ / 150 W lamp in the middle of the room...; "Yellow books" ...; "Flashback 2" ...; "Monday in Seven Days"; "Children of Nature".

² It is said that it was precisely the perfumes, the reluctance to leave Versailles without her favorite/body scents/ (when the horses sniffed the danger in the yard), the cause that took Marie Antoinette's life. / *A small delay, that changed history. / Once, my luggage/ arrived two days after me in Dublin....*

³ An example could be the homonymous poem "Children of Nature" B. speaks of the other world/ with the same certainty.

⁴ Luljeta Lleshanaku "Selected Poetry", Onufri Publishing House, Tirana 2020.

⁵ The poems are selected from *Yellow Marrow*; "Children of Nature;" "Almost Yesterday".

⁶ Interview of L. Lleshanaku in *Exlibris* newspaper, December 23, 2020.

⁷ Interview of L. Lleshanaku in *Exlibris* newspaper, December 23, 2020.

with them those of the scholar Shira Wolosky,¹ when she seeks to identify as an authentic value of Elizabeth Bishop's² poetry the multitude of voices and perspectives that are projected as poetic strategies in her texts. (Wolosky:1995)

What exactly do the poems suggest? Both poems³ are built on the principle of polyphony. The composition of the parts of each poem (the first has 12 parts, the second 19) is done through the unit of voice (in fact, they are also evident grammatically through different grammatical units), respectively, and the stylistic register, which is not homogeneous.

In *Water and carbon*, the voices shift from one position to another: they speak from the outside, they speak from the inside. Depending on the perspective, the voices sometimes become unfocused and evidential (I, II, VI, VII ...), and sometimes focused and witnessing (like part III; V). And even within one part, that V, two voices are modulated: the witnessing voice and the one that evidences, which are graphically differentiated through markers: one with cursive letters and the other not. Polymodality gives such dynamics to a poem that the long, narrative verse does not. Twelve variations of experiences are built on the same theme (twelve ways to prove how dignity can be taken away from a person), which are connected by a thread, by a suspicious voice that is released by the ironic strategy of the text, and that in the end it is his *intentionality*: can a human be only water and carbon?!!! Each of the parts has a wealth of registers and poems themselves a wealth of discourses ranging from the sphere of science, everyday life, philosophy, religion and history.

In *Homo Antarcticus* the discourse is created by the alternation of several voices: from the voice of Frank Wild, with whose testimony the poem begins, to the synthesizing voice that conveys the wild life experience (parts IV, VI, XIV), the clear voice of the poet who through allusion interferes with biographical elements, the experience of her parents (*No emotions. No regrets.... My father was like this more or less.; ... And mother? Oh, she was simply Captain Cook's niece, (implying Abaz Kupi)*), (Lleshanaku:2020), in the voice soliloquies (XIII), as a witness that evidences the consequences of a long absence in a normal life and the impossibility to acclimatize

¹"The ability to project the variations of the voices in the visual perspective and to associate these variations with certain rhetorical and stylistic garment, which convey the poet's attitude and point of view, thus making the voices distinguishable from one another, but converge in the intention of the text" Shira Wolosky, *Representing other voice: Rhetorical perspective in Elisabeth Bishop*, published in Style, 29.1, Spring 1995

² It is the occasion to point out that E. Bishop is one of Lleshanaku's favorite poets, included in the short list of poets she likes, to whom he opened the door in an internal communication he made with him in the poem *The Book used*. Many signs of this poem are evocations of the appreciation of Bishop's poetics, starting from the narrative style, the rhetoric used, the subject, the evidence of one of Bishop's best volumes as "Geography III" to the symbolism of the title.

³ In fact, the same opportunity is provided by the poem "Monday in seven days", the poem "Scissors", "Condition to be remembered", "Negative Space", the quintet "Sicilian Vespers" and others.

to one. Each of the voices fits a specific register (*The very day after....*). (Lleshanaku:2020)

Conclusion

In the thematic aspect, after the 2000s, themes starting from personal signs are constant. Signs, objects, traces, real situations become poetic creations. Certain details, which build Lleshanaku's identity, become clues from where the thematic units begin and open, which, thanks to analogies and other techniques that the poet introduces, avoid projecting autobiography in the text. Thus, for example, in the poem *Negative space*, although each of the nine units has signs of the poet's biographical segment, even referable details, none of them recreates her autobiography. Through the technique of abstraction, analogical parallels that are removed, as well as the strategy of alternating voice and manipulation of perspective, the text is filled with units that shift the reading from individual data to historical, cultural data, from the personal experience of the poet, to that collective. Meanwhile, there are also poems that develop the personal theme at the level of metaphor. In these texts, the power of the image is great, it opens the text to multiple readings. Such are the deconstruction of personal signs in the metaphor of a wooden suitcase (*Inside the suitcase*), of stairs (in the homonymous poem *Stairs*), of wardrobe (*Self-Portrait in Woven Fabrics*), of scissors (in the homonymous poem *Scissors*), gloves (in the poem *Gloves*)... Or poems with an open personal approach such as the *Mystery of Prayers; Milk Flavor; In Absence of Waters, Via Politica* etc. (Lleshanaku:2020)

In terms of form, as we mentioned above, since the volume *Children of Nature*, one feels the trace of narration in the text, going towards the forms of narrative poetry. Narrative poems are perhaps Lleshanaku's best texts.

Another element that can be felt in Lleshanaku's poetics after the 2000s has to do with the reduction of the simile. In most of the texts, one feels the withdrawal of simile (dominant figure in the first volumes) to leave more room for metaphor, contrast, paradox,¹ verbal and intertextual irony.² (Lleshanaku:2020)

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- [4] Lleshanaku, L. "Eyes of the Somnambulist", Tirane 1993

¹ Paradox and irony dominate in the stylistic register of the most parts of the texts of the volumes "Almost Yesterday" and "Homo Antarcticus".

² Such an approach can be noticed in several texts, we could single out the poem *I Came, I Saw, I Went...*

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Current Status of Ethnobotany in Albania

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Abstract

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) concerning the use of plants for different purposes had survival value, are embedded in culture and considered adaptive responses to environmental challenges. Albania is known for its rich linguistic, cultural and biological diversity. Albanian flora has a high considerably number of medicinal plants and they have been extensively used albeit expressed in folk medicinal knowledge and practices. Several ethnobotanical studies and extensive fieldwork have been conducted in Albania both by local and foreign scientists. In addition, ethnobotany is experiencing a theoretical and conceptual diversification. The history of ethnobotany can be at least can be traced back in 19th century. This article aims to provide an historical and theoretical review of ethnobotany in Albania and outlines possibilities for future advancements.

Keywords: plants, traditional ecological knowledge, ethnobotany, Albania, Balkans

Introduction

Traditional ecological knowledge can be defined as a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmissions, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment (Berkes, 1999). Stated differently, TEK are cultural responses to solve the many adaptive problems humans faced in their evolutionary past and still face today. The TEK concept is most closely associated with the field of ethnoecology and together with subdisciplines of ethnobotany and ethnozoology, composes the broader area of ethnobiology (Anderson, 2011). As Anderson points out (2011) ethnobiology as a scholar endeavor and an interdisciplinary field which has established relationships with various other disciplines such as biology, anthropology, cognitive psychology, ethnology, it is most closely associated with studies focused on local classification systems for biological species. Ethnoecology, in turn, is associated with local ways of understanding the relationships between humans and their natural environment, which includes ecological aspects such as soil, climate, ecological communities and

other environmental factors in addition to the species themselves (Hunn, 2007). The history of ethnobiology can be traced back in 19th century. The first period, which we might call the "preclassical," began in the last century when the foundations of the discipline were laid and its various branches, e.g., ethnobotany and ethnozoology, first designated and defined (Clement, 1998). In 1874, S. Powers coined the term "aboriginal botany" (1875) and J. W. Harsheberger (1896) used the term ethnobotany as "plants used by primitive and aboriginal people" (1896). The first studies were conducted among "aboriginal" or "primitive" people and their botanical knowledge were not considered valid, in comparison to Western Science development and use of systematic nomenclature. According to Hunn (2007) in the second phase, ethnobiology was elaborated in the cognitive/linguistic anthropology of the 1960s and the institutionalization of ethnobiology coincided with the emergence of the cognitive sciences and was entangled with more general ambitions of cognitive anthropology and ethnoscience. The main assumptions and guiding principle relied on the conception of the "psychic unity of humankind" *alias* irrespective of their cultural background, all humans have at their disposal the same cognitive toolkit (Bender & Beller, 2011). The works of B. Berlin and P. Kay (1969) and B. Berlin (1992) supported this assumption. In this framework, the evolved computational programs in the human mind are assumed to be responsible for producing a universal (that is, species typical) human nature (Tooby & Cosmides, 2005). In contrast, the influence of culture in the formation of cognitive processes is related to the organization of the brain by experience and the fact that the experience is organized by culture (Bender et al., 2010). That is, the human mind does not consist of pre-specified programs but is built via a constant interplay between the individual and its environment (Karmiloff-Smith 2009). From this view, traditional ecological knowledge is embedded in culture and considered adaptive responses to environmental challenges.

The role of learning: Accumulation and transmission of TEK

The wealth of knowledge about the local environment has developed over thousands of years and been passed down through a multitude of generations in oral teachings (Berkes, Colding & Folke, 2000). Topics common to ethnobiology studies are the modes of transmission (D'Andrade, 1981) and distribution of local knowledge or TEK in a certain society (Romney and Moore 1998). Modes of transmission are enabled by social learning which includes a wide array of behaviors such as imitation, observational learning of novel foraging techniques, peer or parental influences on individual preferences, as well as outright teaching (Gariepy et al., 2014). The capacity to learn from others enables humans to gradually accumulate information across generations and develop well-adapted tools, beliefs, and practices that are too complex for any single individual to invent during their lifetime (Boyd, Richerson & Heinrich, 2011). In animals, there is accruing evidence for systematic individual variation in social learning within species and reliance on cultural knowledge to solve

a novel task (Messoudi et al., 2016; Gruber et al., 2009). Close to 50 cultural variants have been reported, including subsistence behavior, tool-use, communication signals, and grooming patterns (Horner & De Waal, 2009). Understanding when, how and why individuals learn from others is a significant challenge (Rendell et al., 2011). To make good use of learning from others (social learning), we need to learn from the right others; from agents who know better than we do (Heyes, 2016).

In addition, cultural transmission refers to the process of acquired cultural information through modes of learning, including symbolic learning. It occurs through at least three different, non-mutually exclusive paths: (1) from parents (vertical); (2) from age peers (horizontal); and (3) from older generations (oblique) (Reyes-Garcia et al., 2009). In this context, long-term pair bonds, kin recognition, exogamy, and multi-locality create ties between unrelated families, facilitating the transmission of medicinal knowledge and its fitness implications (Salali et al., 2016). Mechanisms for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge are embedded in social systems (Berkes, Colding & Folke, 2000). Many cognitive and motivational systems that originally evolved to solve non-social problems have been co-opted by evolution to contend with social challenges (Gould & Lewontin, 1979). Complementing these general-purpose mechanisms are a small set of brain areas for which there is tantalizing evidence of uniquely specialized social functions, which may have evolved in only a limited number of species that have confronted the most complex social environments (Gariepy et al., 2016).

Cultural values are an essential component of every society, and they act as checks and balances in the management of natural resources (Verschuren et al., 2010). They are integrated and are part of the socio-cultural systems, which involve the socio-ecological system. The latest refers to the interplay between members of society and traditional ecological knowledge which are responsible for the construction of the cultural niche in that humans uniquely developed ability to learn which is crucial for human ecological success i.e adaptations to their natural habitat (Boyd et al., 2011). The advocates and the proposers of the cognitive niche hypothesis, Tooby and De Vore (1987), do not take fully in consideration the ability to learn from others, or social learning. According to Boyd et al., (2011) despite the cognitive basis for cognitive niche construction, the cultural niche construction assumes that cultural learning is cumulative, which enforce adaptations and maladaptation's. In this context, the cultural niche construction is related to environmental modification to solve the adaptive problems a society face and sometimes responses, can be as well as maladaptive. The evolutionary perspective is essential to the growth of ethnobiology as a science (Santoro et al., 2018; Bajrami and Qirjo 2019a; Bajrami and Qirjo 2019b; Bajrami, 2022).

Methods

For the short review presented in this paper, we searched for papers cited in the Scopus, PubMed, and Web of Science. The search was performed using combination of keywords like Albania, ethnobotany, and the Balkans. A total number of 16 publications were recorded in the databases for the period 2000 to 2022. In addition, we conducted a bibliographic search from the year 1945 to 1990 to find materials, articles and books, that have botanical data and ethnobotanical knowledge, including folk botanical names.

Ethnobotanical Studies in Albania

The geographical and ecological specificity along with cultural diversity of the Balkan region has resulted in the development of a distinct diversity not only of medicinal plants but also knowledge, transmission, and use of them (Jaric et al 2018). Over the past decades several ethnobotanical studies and extensive fieldwork in the Balkan region has been conducted, including Albania.

Albania geographical position in Mediterranean and in the Balkan peninsula results in many different types of landscapes and includes 3 250 species belonging to 165 families and 910 genera of those 30 are endemic and about 180 sub-endemic (Paparisto et al., 1988; Vangjeli et al., 1995). Albania is rich in biological and landscape diversity and has a high considerably number of medicinal and aromatics plants, specifically, 310 species which belong to 62 family (Papathopulli, 1976). Albanian traditional medicine is created and developed almost like traditional medicine found in other socio-cultural systems. The use of medicinal plants and the emergence of medical system it is related not only to their own tradition but also their being part for over five centuries of the Ottoman Empire. More specifically, between 1479 and 1912, Albania was part of the Ottoman Empire.

During the medieval and early modern period in the Ottoman Empire, the medical hierarchy had three official distinguishable positions: physicians (known as *hekims* or *tabibs*), surgeons (*cerrahs*), and ophthalmologists (*kehhals*) (Shefer-Mossensohn, 2011). *Cerrahs* in Albania were specialized in one or several body organs or medical techniques and they used different parts of plants like *Sanbucus nigra*, *Hedera helix*, *Iris dalmatica*, *Hypericus perforatum*, *Urtica dioica*, *Artemisia absinthium*, *Papaver somniferum* etc. during their work (Minga, 2009). In addition, a pioneer study by Saraçi and Damo (2021) based on a review of 39 texts from 23 authors that include travelers, explorers, missionaries, naturalists, anthropologists, botanists, etc. who had written about Albania from the end of the 18th century (1796) to the first decades of the 20th century (1940) highlighted the ethnobotanical knowledge on their texts. They have collected traditional knowledge on plant uses related with magic, rites, folk, beliefs, medicine, and food (Saraçi and Damo 2021).

Traditional ecological knowledge in Albanian culture is expressed in people's perceptions and cultural practices in relation to nature. More specifically, in their perceptions and cultural practices regarding mountains, rivers, *Orët* (*The Hours*). vegetations etc. (Tirta, 2004). Even after the improvement of sanitation, healthcare and building of the hospitals before and during communism period in Albania, most of the population counted on traditional medicine and traditional healers. Mainly, ethnobotanical studies were conducted by researchers working at the Institute of Folk Medicine, for the identification and study of traditional receipts and traditional practices (Kokalari et al., 1980). Data and sources on traditional use of plants during communism can be found on the works of several Albanians botanists and ethnobotanists (Mitrushi 1952, 1953a, 1953b, 1955; Demiri 1958; Lako 1965;).

After the fall of communism, a major and rapid cultural transition was associated with the loss of long-held traditions in relation to nature, including dietary habits (Bajrami, 2019c). Additionally, the migration to major urban areas caused the further loss of medicinal plant uses and practices. Today those practices are found in somewhat isolated rural areas and the need for their conservation and sustainability is of crucial economic importance. Albania is ranked 24th World MAP exporter in 2014 and sage (*Salvia officinalis*) dominates the medicinal crops in Albania, even though, there is an observed reduced supply of wild MAPs, due to both damaged MPAs resources and a reduced labor force in mountainous areas (Imami et al. 2015).

After 2000s, there have been conducted several ethnobotanical field studies in Albania. These studies have been important in documenting traditional ecological knowledge and ethnobotanical knowledge in Albania. They were conducted mostly in north, north-eastern, east, south, and south-eastern Albania (Dinga et al. 2001; Pieroni et al., 2005; Pieroni, 2008; Pieroni, 2010; Pieroni et al., 2014a; Quave & Pieroni, 2014; Pieroni & Quave, 2014; Papajani et al. 2014; Pieroni et al., 2015; Peçi, Proko & Mullaj, 2016; Bussmann et al., 2016; Pieroni, 2017; Pieroni & Soukand, 2017; Stillo, Içka & Damo, 2018; Tomasini & Thelaide 2019a; Tomasini & Thelaide 2019b).

Conclusions

Traditional ecological knowledge is continually evolving, are socially transmitted, and are considered as components of a particular socio-ecological system, which is included in a socio-cultural system. TEK among Albanians are expressed in their classification, perceptions and cultural practices in relation to nature. These perceptions and behaviors are responsible for the construction of the socio-ecological system as a whole. Both wild and locally cultivated plants for different purposes are still used in some part of Albania, especially in isolated and rural areas, to meet people's needs. As noted, ethnobotanical knowledge is generally under-documented for minorities such as Roma, Greek minorities and Çam population, Albanians living in the southern part of Albania and Greece. Albania represents a great potential for ethnobotanists, to help documenting and conserving the rich biocultural heritage of

the entire Balkans. In the future, ethnobotanical studies among Albanians should be focused in deep south of Albania, where exists a vast amount of cultural diversity and minorities, using an evolutionary approach.

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The Implementation of Accounting Information Systems for its Role in Marketing and Management Processes

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Abstract

Nowdays the technological innovations evolve faster and in this conditions it is necessary to examine how this technology affects the accounting profession in the same way as it has affected everyday aspects. Accounting is transformed into something more than simple recording, summarizing and reporting of transactions exceeding these routines and practical functions and extending throughout the organization including, delegated functions, processing methodologies, controls and expected outputs, which considered all together as "the system". It includes all dimensions of business operations, including the flow of financial data across the organization and beyond. Consequently, this paper aims to address issues such as how knowledge about IT deal from accounting professionals and how they further develop their professional development during the subsequent training. This paper shows the importance of the IT knowledge in accounting, marketing, management and decision making. We conclude the paper by giving a short overview relying on the analysis of data collected from a survey.

Keywords: information technology, accounting information system, management, marketing

Introduction

Objectives of the theme

Understand the specifics and needs of the management for accounting information systems. To identify the main activities and the impact of information technology in the accounting profession in the operating activities, the efficiency of which is improved by the AIS (Accounting Information System) used.

The widely used AIS accounting programs in the world and understand the importance of these programs.

Impact of information technology in the accounting profession

Basically the objective function and the basis of accounting have not changed. It remains in essence "provision of information on the economic performance of a business unit" objective achieved by identifying, recorded, processed, stored, summarized and reported various events organization. However, with technology changes accounting is transformed into something more than simple recording, summarizing and reporting of transactions exceeding these routines and practical functions and extending throughout the organization including, delegated functions, processing methodologies, controls and outputs expected, all of which are considered as "the system". The system is in fact "anatomy" of accounting. It includes all dimensions of business operations, including the flow of financial data across the organization and beyond. The complexity of their businesses and computerization have done that in various trades must be knowledge about information technology and one of these is profession and the accounting profession. During the formation of an accountant, that he recognized university with knowledge about IT in general are general knowledge and then develop further knowledge with further qualifications that enhance knowledge in certain directions. Marketing and management accounting are separate sectors in a company but they must interact with each other to effectively manage promotional campaigns, marketing elements in a company and market research to increase sales and maximize profit. When these departments in an entity interact together, the sales trend in the market is easily tracked and complete and accurate information about Customers and Suppliers is obtained.

Clients are classified as trustworthy clients and bad clients who are grouped in the "Bad Debt" accounting account and a client's background is easily traceable through the use of Financial Programs to manage and analyze important information in decision making.

The entity also needs up-to-date and accurate information on utilities.

Today, when the financial reporting problems have become more complex, could not be given the right solution on time and without computerization. This requires an ongoing cooperation in the field of accounting professionals and informatics.

Through this paper will first give a theoretical treatment must possess knowledge that a professional accountant, then through a field survey this target will be recorded how these professional groups possess knowledge accountants passing further recommendations direct what measures should be taken to increase the level of knowledge. The main issues on which it is focused this paper are as follows:

What are the knowledge about IT after the award of Accountant and where accountants take this knowledge?

As further develop them in their professional development.

An overview of the literature review

Often found in literature studies and efforts to strengthen the integration of IT in education in the field of accounting. For example, Collier et al. (1990), Crawford & Barr (1998), Salleh (2000) have discussed the alternative use of computer education in the field of accounting. There are professional accountancy bodies and academic organizations such as Dearing (1997), QAA (2000a, 2000b, 2000c), IFAC in the case of the United Kingdom (1995, 2003, 2007), etc. which encourage and provide some guidelines for development IT skills for graduates in the field of accounting.

Integration of IT experience in university teaching and learning that IT is still lacking in comparison with the minimum requirements of professional bodies encouraged; for example, the study by Ahmad (2003) in the case of Universities UK showed low levels of IT, skills, information systems (IS), integration of knowledge (competence) in the accounting school programs. So it is important to investigate the factors that influence the development of IT skills in the teaching programs.

Another problem in the integration issues related to resources. Although similar IT modules are highly favored by the student branch of the branch of accounting and finance, they are not offered or can be offered only for a limited number of students, due to limited resources in terms of personnel and infrastructure (Gazely and Pybus, 1997). Aisbitt and Sangster (2005) have identified infrastructure problems such as inconsistencies, problems of access to software and technical support. Some other factors that contribute to the "failure" of integration of IT in the accounting profession are overcrowded academic programs (overcrowded) in the field of accounting and lack of institutional support (Long and MacGregor, 1996, Baker and White Jr., in 1999, Allen, 2000), a number of existing training and beliefs, such as resistance to change, etc. (Kelly et al., 1999).

But today the application of IT in financial and management accounting has created great potential and current accounting systems in many countries of the world it is not possible or practical to perform financial accounting or management accounting without the help of IT. IT made the future of any organization to compete in the global economy. By studies are evidenced IT supports this decision and accountants and proactive but limited evidence that IT provides wider dissemination of information, saving the time to provide the desired information, etc. The pace of integration systems is slow growing though.

Information Technology for the accounting profession

International Education Practice Statements (IEPs s)-Declarations and international practices to help members of the IFAC Education in the implementation of generally accepted practices in the education and professional development of accountants.

Education International Standard (IES) 2-International Standard of Education

Includes educational programs accounting profession (knowledge) that candidates should gain during qualifying as professional accountants.

Provides guidance for IFAC members and other educators on how to apply this standard in relation to IT components and knowledge of pre-qualification of accountants.

Also serves as a guide for the implementation of two other standards:

- IES 7, Continuing Professional Development;
- IES 8, Competence and knowledge they need to earn Professional Auditors regarding the further development of knowledge about IT and powers of the post-qualification.

International Standards Board of Education of Accountants-International Accounting Education Standards Board (IAESB) - takes into account:

- The diversity of culture, development, education and language, legal system and social development of countries which are members of IFAC and implementing these standards;
- The variety of accounting functions;
- IFAC member bodies find place in various stages of developing their pre-and post- qualification of accountants.

A professional accountant has a responsibility to judge not only about recording transactions but also for the importance of accounting information. Therefore, he must have knowledge about IT because of their increased career opportunities with: Minimum level of computer skills; Accounting skills combined with computer knowledge; Advanced computer skills in accounting; Knowledge of new developments in this field; Some of the main reasons for the importance of IT to accountants are;

IT will affect their work in the future.

But also the importance of obtaining knowledge about IT, also affects the fact of being competitive as it mentions in JACH Welch "If you do not have a competitive advantage, could not compete". The increased value and benefits of information technologies have also forced accounting professionals to improve their skills in the use of IT, in order to better perform their jobs. As a result, there is growing concern about the level of competence that accountants possess the use of information

technologies and if they are prepared to meet the challenges of the modern business environment. However, the skills gained from professional accountants are still below the minimum level drawn by professional accounting bodies such as the International Federation of Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. This paper focuses on information technology within the core competencies for accounting professionals, particularly those that operate on small entities and schools. This study makes a significant contribution to the practice by providing the theoretical basis for the development of information technology competencies related to professional accountants in general and particular.

For the above we can say that even in Albania, are being given even more important role in the IT accounting profession. It knowledge of educational programs are part of the first cycle of studies and second cycle studies in the field of accounting (bachelor and master degree). And not only that, but knowledge on IT are also part of the testing was developed for professions statutory auditor or internal auditor.

Methodology

We have made a survey for data collection. It was circulated around of 150 respondents, of whom 100 were collected. Target group of this questionnaire are economists, accountant and manager with a distribution 65 in the city of Vlora and 35 in Pogradec mainly employed in related entities small and medium enterprises. This sampling of 100 questionnaires highlights accountants who have knowledge of these cities about information technology. The questionnaire of this paper is formed by several different sections, separated by the problem or arguments that will be analyzed. Questions are open and closed leaving the respondents the opportunity to express his thoughts. Questionnaires were distributed in electronic format as well as hand delivery which can easily be worked on problems that the respondent could face the interviewees. Certainly the paper has its limitations, but can easily serve to create an image on the importance of IT in accounting profession.

Analysis of data

Initially we give a general overview of the characteristics of the respondents such as age group of respondents and the knowledge they have on IT and how possess basic computer programs. As they have gained this knowledge, how long they use computer programs, which are basic programs that they use more, why they choose to use exactly this program, the way they throw the data in the program. All these issues will be addressed in more detail below.

The selections of respondents consisting of 66 % economist, 24 % are Approved Accountant and 10 % of respondent's low audit. Graph No. 1 given age groups of respondents where the main weight is 25-30 years' age groups. It was observed that the title that economists possess affected by age that they have, we see that accountants who belong economist title only age group from 25 to 30 years old.

Accountants who have adopted Accounting title belonging to the age group of 31-40 years and the auditors were generally aged over 50.

Age group of respondents affects how they answered the question of what information technology and understand the definitions that they provide are some of them are presented below;

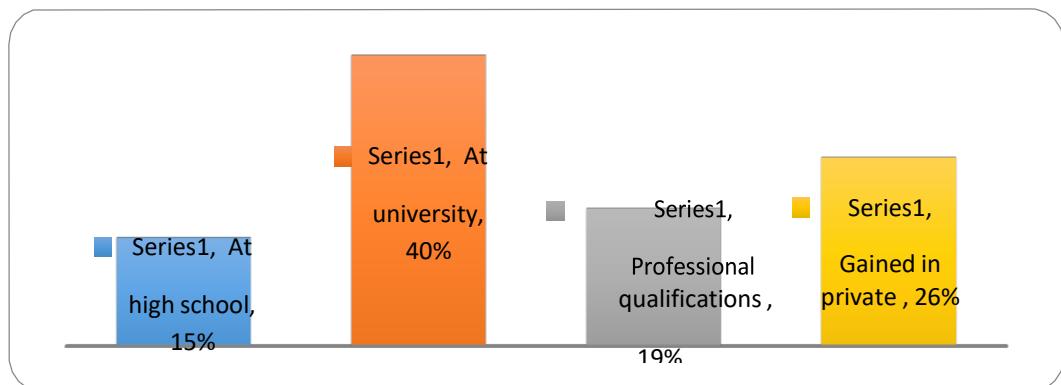
- Information Technology is the technology (hardware and software) necessary for data processing and other information.
- Technologic information is the term which includes all technologies used for creating, processing, transmission, storage, exchange and use of information in all its forms.
- Systems taking and giving, information storage through the use of various types of technology.
- Computer equipment, technologies used for processing, storing, sharing and use of different information.
- All technologies used for creating, processing, transmission, storage, exchange and use of information in all its forms, such as business records, conversations, photographs.
- Technology which enables the processing of information in a computerized, which gives precision, speed, occasional Updates etc.
- Computer equipment used for various processed further information, storage, processing and use of data.

From the definitions given about IT was found that 95% of respondents gave answers that implied that what is information technology and the analysis of the findings shows that there is alienation definition of IT. It was found that economists belonging to 25-30 age group, 31 to 40 have in-depth knowledge about information technology as well as their knowledge of the computer occurred in an age earlier than age 50. One other variable that the variable that affects the possessing extensive knowledge in these age groups is that they have got knowledge on Information Technology (albeit not very extensive) since high school level where subjects have developed computing, while over 40 age group cannot say the same thing. Knowledge that they acquire about the subject develop IT systems Informatics and Computer. Provided that the knowledge's IT of the exam include 10% of the points. Business environment in our country is an environment that is much coming and digitalize and the variety of programs that are being used are rising to the judge (which also constitutes a recommendation) that these modules should not restrict knowledge about IT for accountants.

b) To investigate the relationship between the accounting profession and IT respondents are addressed two specific questions related to the level of knowledge and the importance of IT in the exercise of the accounting profession.

This question was followed by testing the way the gaining of knowledge, because it would serve to determine where to focus to realize the changes that should be applied in future levels of our educational system as well as beyond it. These changes certainly looked for accountants assist you and which will necessarily lead to deepening their knowledge by enabling a successful career.

As seen from the graph no. 3 that about 41 % of the respondents acquire knowledge at university, then come the knowledge gained in private and 26 % of respondents. Also play an important role in the professional qualifications that are developed by professional bodies such as IKM, IEKA SHFKSH, etc., which we acquire knowledge about 19 % of the respondents. Graph No. 3. "Acquisition of IT knowledge"



Implementations of the following questions are important to this work because highlight programs used by accountant's reasons why they choose to use them and for how long programs use them. These questions enable the identification of problems in IT knowledge you possess accountants.

About 30 % of the respondents stated that they use the program to account for the transactions is therefore evident that Excel Microsoft economists continue to use Excel to keep accounts, which is a program that comes to the aid of the tables with calculations also built with logical formulas you can use. But this program does a data processing and their interactions make financial programs as Alpha Business, Finance, etc.

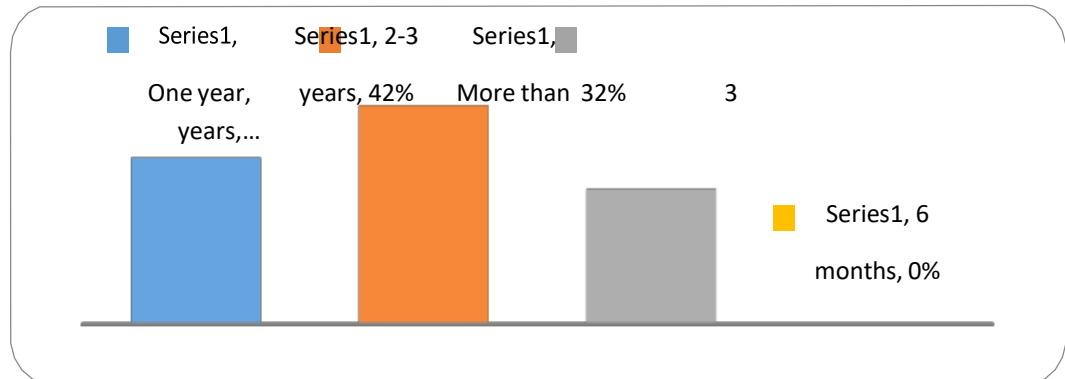
It was found that 52 % of respondents use financial Alpha Business program which is a program that helps them in the performance of work by providing a range reports and elaborate information about Financial Statements.

While 14 % of the financial software respondents use Finance 5.0 percentage lower than Alpha Business use.

Balance program does not use any of economists surveyed.

When carrying interviewing some of the companies that operate in the service sector use other types of software as QuickBooks, Navision.

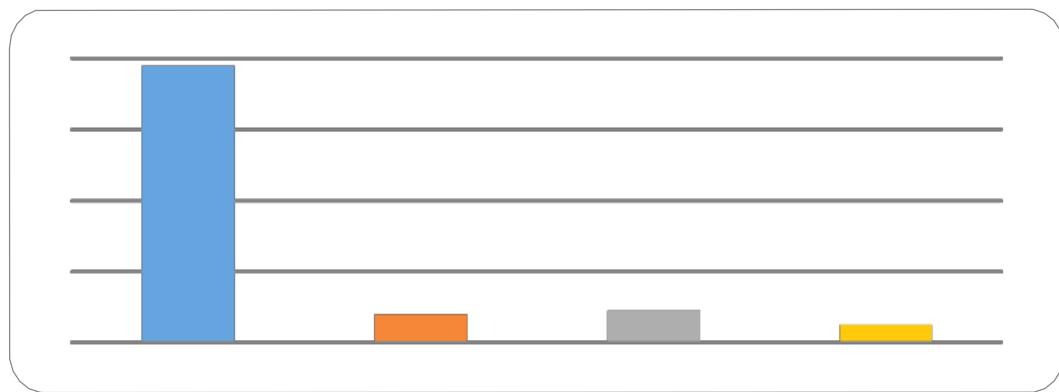
Asked how long the financial software uses the respondents answered as follows:
Graph No. 5 "Period of use of software"



This question is of particular importance as it has a direct connection between duration of use and the ability to program the laying of transactions, meaning the logic in data processing by the program. See: 32 % have over 1 year who use the program; 42 % have about 2-3 years and 26 % majority have more than three years. Asked whether understand the logic of processing the data from the software and how it works 100 % have the answer yes. And further to understand how to understand the logic of the data processing program you jump question is asked: During the recording of transactions by economists (who cast the program operators) do so simply jumps and mechanical or logical data. Results showed that 10 % said they do so jumps 90% in mechanical and logical manner.

In the latter including operators who simply do data entry. Then come those who use software's to build financial statements as transactions are jumping from operators and mainly belong here Economists and Accountants Approved Expert accountant. Use reports for decision making, management and marketing from the software made mostly from corporate administrators. For the above found that the majority of accounting professionals make registration simple entity transactions, which of course will require a logical way of working. But they do not need to use for other software and other purposes such as analysis of financial statements, making the reports for the purposes of decision making, for the purposes of internal control etc.

Graph No. 6 "Reasons for use of the software"



To further understand the relationship between a professional and software were questioned if they understand the architecture of the program in which they work and the results showed that 55% have returned 45% responded yes and no. This question is contrary to the above questions as to understand the architecture of a financial program must have in depth knowledge and have received additional knowledge about IT related courses. This paradox can be explained by the respondent identification.

To continue on the meaning of the level of knowledge they have about specific IT systems implemented economic units is realized the question "what is ERP?" Results showed that 60% of respondents shall reply yes while 40% do not. This is another question that is affected by the variable length of the interviewees, because when you are asked to provide a definition about ERP, most of them leave the space blank which means that they have not provided an answer to the question above really.

Main Findings and Conclusions

Bases on data collected can draw some conclusions that follow and serve to deliver some recommendations. In accordance with the aforementioned standard of International Education Practice Statements (IEPs s) in our country shows that this standard does not apply because there are no generally accepted rules to adjust with the accounting profession

regarding knowledge on IT. Cycles of first level and the second level of study programs are aimed at acquiring bases knowledge on IT in accounting profession.

From the analyzed data collected from questionnaires it was found that the most of accounting professionals have the necessary knowledge on IT and that knowledge. They also know how to use software in the field of accounting mainly throwing entity transactions. But knowledge about IT should not be left just to the university level. Identification of some paradoxes during the implementation of the questionnaire

(internal contradictions between questions) emphasizes the deficiency in their knowledge. It is therefore recommended deepening of knowledge on IT in accounting profession especially during training or private courses. Nowadays the use of accounting information systems has increased in all sectors where a business operates and with the Covid-19 pandemic situation digitalization of business operations and generation of reports by executives is comprehensive for the situation of the organization. This can be achieved easily through a mutual interaction between professional bodies and universities.

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The Effect of Work from Home on Adaptive Performance and Moderated by Humble Leadership

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the norms of daily life for individuals around the world. This change causes employees to work from home (WFH). This new norm has opened up the landscape for the advantages of WFH and adapting oneself in performing tasks. In addition to the advantages of WFH, and leadership style and work autonomy also have the potential to assist employees to adapt the flexible work environment. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine the effect of WFH on adaptive performance among employees in Malaysia. This study examined the effects of humble leadership, and its moderating effects on the association between WFH and employees' adaptive performance. The field study was conducted in Malaysia among public and private sector employees and total 200 participants were approached. The Partial Least Square (PLS) technique was used to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. The results of this study indicated that the WFH and humble leadership influenced adaptive performance and employees who perceived high humble leadership strengthen the relationship between WFH and adaptive performance. The study sheds new light on the advantages of WFH and humble leadership on adaptive performance. The theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: Work from Home (WFH), Adaptive Performance, Humble Leadership, Public and Private Sector, Malaysia, PLS

Introduction

The Movement Control Order (MCO) following the Covid-19 pandemic has created change in the working environment. Most organisations have launched into the Work from Home concept (WFH) to ensure the sustainability of the organisation's operations. Despite its novelty in Malaysia, it has actually been practised in several countries. In the United States, the population of employees working from home, spending at least 50 percent from the total working hours has increased from 1.8 million in 2005 to 3.9 million in 2017 (Wang et al. 2021). The new norm in the

occupational structure has left an impact on the organisation's operations, management and administration. Initially, there was a series of challenges and problems faced by employers and employees in facing the phase of WFH as the structure of WFH is different from working at the office. Adaptation to the use of the new technology, time and working environment among employees is crucial (Singh et al 2020). However, in time, the concept of WFH has become ordinary to them (Wang et al. 2021).

Malaysia has entered the transition phase of endemic in April 2022 and the working environment has reverted to the culture of working in the office physically (Astro Awani 2022). A study conducted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Talent Corporation Malaysia (TalentCorp) reveals that 80% of workers in Malaysia still go for WFH, with half of them showing preference to do so for at least three days a week (TalentCorp & UNDP 2021). In line with this demand, the Malaysian government has taken some positive steps by including Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA) in the 1955 Work Act (Revised in 2022) effective September 2022. Employees in this country are allowed to apply to their respective employers and refer to them the suitable time, day, and location to work including WFH.

Nonetheless, the application of the Act has to be delayed until January 2023 after taking into account the pleas made by the employers that most of the organisations are still reeling from the economic downturn, and are now in the recovery process (Berita Harian 2022). Additionally, organisations have to make very systematic planning and readiness in terms of the work structure design, infrastructure, as well as employees' mental and physical states when using the technology and their convenience in accessing information (Molino, Ingusci & Signore 2020; Wang et al. 2021). Organisations also lack the preparation and confidence that WFH can increase the overall organisation's performance (Normadia 2020).

Apart from the organisation, employees also have to increase their capability in adapting to the structure of WFH. Employees' excellence in adapting to the new working environment can be measured by the adaptive performance (Park & Park 2019). Adaptive performance is interpreted as an individual's capability to adapt to a dynamic situation at work (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel 2012). They will achieve adaptive performance when they can adapt their behaviour to the requirements from the new working situation. (Pulakos et al. 2000). In support of employees' capabilities to adapt to the WFH structure, it also necessitates a basic mechanism such humble leadership as the moderator. Humble leadership, also termed 'down-up' leadership (Zhou & Wu 2018) is a leadership style that leans support to the employees (Zhu et al. 2019). Thus, the objective of this study is to empirically prove that WFH can increase one's adaptive performance by testing directly the relationship between WFH and the adaptive performance, and the role of humble leaders and work autonomy as the moderator to this relationship.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Work from Home (WFH) and Adaptive Performance

The concept of Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA) in terms of the time, location and the day was first introduced in the 1970s, and known as remote work or telecommuting (Garrett & Danziger 2007). This concept is a new alternative in the execution of work from different locations using technological aid (van Meel 2011). WFH has the potential to stay as the new work structure, despite the transition that takes place from the pandemic to the endemic phase. Thus, employees have to strive to adapt themselves to this work structure. According to Pulakos et al. (2000), employees need to be smart enough to acclimatise themselves to the rapid development of the technology, the affiliation of organisation and the restructuring (Shoss et al. 2011). This is to ensure employees' efficiency in responding to the work change effectively (Griffin & Hesketh 2003; Shoss et al. 2011). Realising the importance of the adaptability and the level of capability of the employees to adapt to the change in the work environment, researcher discussed the issue of employees' adaptive performance in their studies (Hongden 2021). Adaptive performance is a subset to work performance and it is defined as the behaviour that shows the capability to face any change (Allworth & Hesketh 1999).

Past studies have identified several positive impacts of flexible work or WFH. WFH gets to motivate the employees and increase the employees' work-life balance (Bellmann & Hubler 2020; Prasetyaningtyas et al. 2021). Work-life balance on the other hand, is able to increase work performance as employees are able to reduce the conflict between work and life, and they are able to focus on work better (Lingard et al. 2007). Also, WFH gives a positive impact to work satisfaction (Mohite & Kulkarni 2019; Prasad et al. 2020). The flexibility in choosing work hours can also determine employees' work satisfaction. (Davidescu et al., 2020), and further increase work performance (da Cruz Carvalho, Riana

& Soares 2020). The concept of WFH leans on the use of digital technology where most of the work is carried out and completed virtually using digitalisation and the Internet. The digital use during WFH requires employees to adapt to the work change and learn digital skills in carrying out their duties (Okkonen et al. 2019). The excellence of the employees in familiarising themselves to the digital technology in work affairs can be measured using adaptive performance (Park & Park 2019).

Hypothesis 1: Work from home (WFH) is positively related to adaptive performance

Humble Leadership as Moderator

The past literature on the change in organisation tends to emphasise more on leadership style as leaders act as the agent of change and become the role-model to their employees (With & Hongden 2021). The leader does not only give motivation and support to the employees so that they can undergo the process of change effectively (With & Hongden 2021), but he also helps employees grow and give great performance (Daft, 2014). The humble leadership style has attracted the attention of leadership scholars where it is seen as an effective modern leadership style to employees in functioning as an individual and as a team. Humble leadership is conceptualised as the humble attitude of leaders when interacting with their employees (Owens et al., 2013; Rego et al., 2017). Leader's humble attitude reflects his transparent personality, that he appreciates the contribution and expresses openness towards the employees' ideas (Owens et al. 2013). The empirical study outcome stresses on the inculcation and practice of humble leadership that can give some positive impacts and benefits towards the employees' wellbeing (Zhong et al. 2020) and develop employees' positive personal qualities (Rego et al. 2017). Humble leadership can also increase the resilience, work concentration and togetherness among the employees (Zhu et al. 2019). Such an attitude can contribute to improved employees' work performance, work satisfaction, involvement (Owens et al. 2013, Zhong et al. 2020) and influence their innovative behaviour (Zhou & Wu 2018).

Hypothesis 2: Humble leadership is positively related to adaptive performance.

The change in the work structure from traditional to flexible work arrangement or WFH is not an easy process of adaptation to the employees (Ipsen, Kirchner & Hansen (2020). The uncertainty during the change process increases the dependency of the employees with one another and requires the support from the leaders of the organisation (Ye 2019). Thus, leader's capability would be pivotal, as it can convince the employees in facing any changes that happen in the organisation. The importance of the support by humble leaders is proven empirically in several studies as the moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between intrinsic motivation and knowledge sharing (Al-Hawamdeh 2022) and positively moderates the direct relationship between the strength used and self-efficacy, and the indirect relationship between the strength used by thriving through self-efficacy (Ding & Chu 2020). Thus, this study expects that the humble leadership is a mechanism that consolidates the relationship between WFH and adaptive performance.

Hypothesis 3: Humble leadership will moderate the relationship between work from home (WFH) and adaptive performance

The role of humble leadership as the moderator in the relationship between WFH and adaptive performance leans on the self-determination theory. This theory is a human motivation macro theory that has been able to be adopted across various fields including work motivation and management theories (Deci & Ryan

1985). This self-determination theory emphasises on the fact that employee performance is influenced by the motivation they have when they are working. Motivation tends to be in order when employees feel the fun and satisfaction when they are completing their tasks (Ryan et al. 2009). In this study, when employees gain the support from their humble leader, they will have the spirit and energy to do their work although there is a change in the work environment. According to this theory, the motivation is catalytic to the positive work outcome (Deci, Ryan & Olafsen 2017). Thus, the self-determination theory will justify how the humble leadership style motivates employees during WFH and how this can further increase their adaptive performance.

Research Framework

The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between WFH and adaptive performance and moderated by humble leadership. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed research framework.

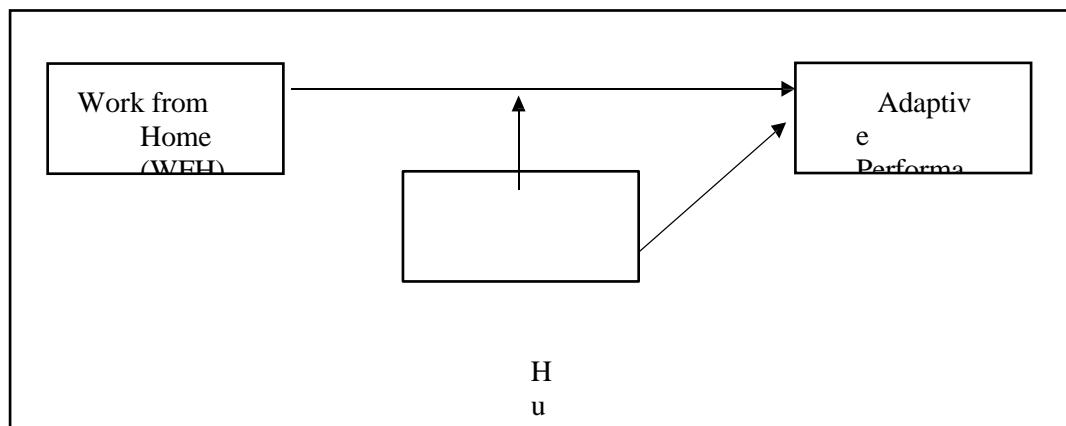


Figure 1. Research Framework

Research Methodology

Sampling and Procedures

This study has employed the quantitative approach to test the hypotheses that have been constructed based on the objectives of the study. The population of the study is employees who are working both in the public and private sectors in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Total sets of 200 questionnaires were distributed and responded. This sample size is also suitable for the use of PLS-SEM in analysing the data (Wolf et al. 2013). This study is survey research which employed self-governed questionnaire method. Questionnaire forms were distributed to employees using the simple sampling technique and the survey were conducted online using a Google Form. Majority of the respondents are female 58.5%. Meanwhile, 49.2% of respondents are

between the ages of 31 to 40 and dominated by Malay (92.5%). In terms of education, the majority of respondents (29.5%) hold their bachelor's degree and most of the respondents working with public sector (67.5%).

Measurement

All the measurement instruments used in this study were adapted from previous research (Table 1) which have been tested and validated by several researchers. The measurement instrument that was originally written in English was translated into Bahasa Malaysia to make it easier for respondents to understand the items included. However, in order to maintain the authenticity of the measurement instrument, this questionnaire has been prepared in two languages so that respondents can refer and check when answering the questionnaire. Respondents answered all the questions using a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 1. Measurement Items

Variables	Source	No. of Questions	Examples
Work from Home (WFH)	Ipsen et al. (2020)	13	I get time to focus on my work without interruptions from other people I get a possibility to do some other work that I would normally not have time to
Humble Leadership	Owens et al. (2013)	9	My supervisor admits it when they do not know how to do something

			My supervisor shows appreciation for the unique contributions of others
Adaptive Performance	Koopmans et al. (2013)	8	I was able to cope well with difficult situations and setbacks at work I easily adjusted to changes in my work

Data Analysis

This study has employed the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) or SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle, Wende & Becker 2015) as the statistical tool to test the measurement model and structural model. This approach is suitable for the study since it has the ability to test a complex model with a modest sample size (Chin et al. 2003). PLS-SEM is able to explain the constructs that are modelled in the abstract manner based on more concrete dimensions (Sarstedt et al. 2019). PLS-SEM requires data analysis to be performed at two stages which are (1) to test the measurement model to examine the relationship between measuring items with independent variables and dependent variables; and (2) to test the structural model

to examine the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables (Tenenhaus, et al. 2005). Hypothesis testing for direct relationship and indirect relationship were based on the findings from the structural model. For both stages, four procedures in SmartPLS 3.0 were applied which were PLS algorithm, bootstrapping, blindfolding and PLS predict.

Results

Measurement Model Assessment

In the assessment of reflective measurement, three main assessment criteria are needed. These are internal consistency, Convergent validity and Discriminant validity. Internal consistency was determined using constructs' composite reliability (CR) values, whilst convergent validity was determined using item loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) values. As shown in Table 2, all loadings met the recommended threshold of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2011); hence, all except the items with low loadings were maintained. Additionally, if the construct met the AVE requirement of 0.5, certain items with loadings less than 0.708 were retained. Following that, all constructs had CR values more than the minimum threshold of 0.7, and all AVEs were greater than 0.5 following item deletion (Hair et al., 2011). Thus, the constructs meet the criteria for reliability and convergent validity. Next, the result indicates that all constructs exhibit sufficient or satisfactory discriminant validity as the HTMT value is below the threshold of 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt 2015).

Table 2. Measurement Model for Reflective Constructs

Constructs	AVE	CR	HTMT
Adaptive Performance	0.622	0.929	< 0.85
Humble Leadership	0.513	0.863	< 0.85
Work from Home	0.563	0.920	< 0.85

Structural Model Assessment

After confirming the reliability and validity, hypotheses are tested through structural model. In the initial stage of accessing the structural model, it is important to address the lateral collinearity issue. To assess the collinearity issue, the VIF value needs to be less than 5.0 (Hair et. al., 2017). The result showed that all the inner values for the independent variables are less than 5, indicating that the collinearity issue is not a concern. (Hair et. al., 2017). Next, this study develops four direct hypotheses between the constructs, with one moderating hypothesis, which all hypotheses supported. In order to test the significance level, t-statistics for all paths are generated using Smart-PLS bootstrapping. Based on the assessment in Table 3, all three hypotheses have a t-value ≥ 1.645 ; thus, the significance is at a 0.05 level of significance.

Table 3. Structural path analysis

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	Std. Error	p value	LL	UL	Decision
H1	WFH → Adaptive Performance	0.205	0.071	0.002	0.079	0.329	Supported
H2	Humble Leadership → Adaptive Performance	0.366	0.065	0.000	0.248	0.487	Supported
H3	WFH*Humble Leadership → Adaptive Performance	0.141	0.074	0.029	0.085	0.262	Supported

The indirect relationship between Figures 2 show the result of simple slope analysis of moderating effects that support the hypothesis. In particular, adaptive performance was higher among respondents who had a high perception of their supervisor's humble leadership style compared to respondents who had a low perception.



Figure 2. Moderating effect of Humble Leadership

To assess the issue of collinearity, the VIF value should be less than 5.0 (Hair et. al., 2017). Based on the analysis carried out, all values in the variable are less than 5 where the highest value is 1.338. It shows that the issue of collinearity does not exist for the study variables (Hair et. al., 2017). Regarding the level coefficient of determination (R^2), according to Hair et al. (2011), R^2 represents the amount of variance in the endogenous construct that all exogenous constructs can explain. As shown in Table 4, the R^2 value is 39% for adaptive performance and more than the 0.26 value suggested by Cohen (1988). In addition, the effect size are also assessed by f^2 . The effect size (f^2) shows that all constructs have a small and medium magnitude effect size on adaptive performance which is the variable of working from home ($f^2=0.031$) and humble leadership ($f^2=0.187$) (Kock, 2014). Lastly, the predictive

relevance assessed by Q^2 shows that all endogenous constructs in this study had a Q^2 value larger than zero, including the adaptive performance with 0.239. This demonstrates the exogenous constructs' ability to predict the endogenous construct.

Table 4. Effect Size, R^2 and Q^2 (*Stone-Geisser*)

	f^2	R^2	Q^2
Work from Home (WFH)	0.031		
Humble Leadership	0.187		
Adaptive Performance		0.392	0.239

Similarly, the relevant prediction value of PLS predict Q^2 for the adaptive performance items. The LM RMSE for all items are higher than PLS RMSE and it shows that this model has a good relevant prediction.

Discussion

The main objective of this study us to test the impact of working from home (WFH) and also the adaptive performance. It also tests the direct relationship between humble leadership style and the adaptive performance, and its role as a moderator to the relationship between WFH and adaptive performance. Based on previous works, adaptive performance can be attained when employees are capable of handling uncertain situations, capable of facing new problems and have the capability to adapt to the ongoing change in the working environment (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel 2012). From this study, it is found that WFH can increase the adaptive performance of employees where Hypothesis 1 is supported. In general, this outcome is consistent with several past studies that offer empirical proof revealing that flexible work arrangement, such as WFH has a direct relationship with the work-family balance and work satisfaction and then increases work performance (Bellmann & Hubler 2020; Davidescu et al., 2020; da Cruz Carvalho, Riana & Soares 2020; Popovici & Popovici 2020; Prasad et al. 2020; Prasetyaningtyas et al. 2021). Also, it can also boost the productivity of the employees (Kazekami 2020) that stems from their performance (Austin-Egole, Iheriohanma & Nwokorie 2020). More specifically, the change in the working environment in the stream of WFH concept can increase the adaptive performance of the employees when they are able to adapt to not only the use of digital technology (Okkonen et al. 2019; Park & Park 2019), but also the work structure that is different from that at the workplace.

This study outcome also gives a significant support to Hypothesis 2 and empirically proves that the employees' perception on humble leadership influences the adaptive performance of the employees. This study outcome is consistent with the works by Rego et al. (2019) and Lu (2020) which establish that humble leadership can

influence employees' adaptive performance by way of stimulating their motivation to get involved proactively in improving their work performance. Under the influence of humble leadership, employees will strive to improve themselves and increase their work performance (Lu 2020; Zhong et al. 2020). It is worth adding that the past literature also showed that the humble leadership style forms a significant relationship with several positive work outcomes such as work satisfaction, commitment towards the organisation, employees' involvement and innovative behaviour (Owens et al. 2013; Zhong et al. 2020; Zhou & Wu 2018). Humble leadership also plays a significant role as a moderator towards the relationship between WFH and adaptive performance whereby the higher the perception of the employees on the humble leadership style adopted by their supervisor, the higher the adaptive performance of the employees, automatically in support of Hypothesis 3. In this WFH situation, even though employees are not able to be physically present, or to be face-to-face with their supervisor, with the motivation and support that the humble leader offers, it will motivate them to acclimatise to any sorts of changes that take place in the working environment (Owens et al. 2013, Zhong et al. 2020). In the past literature, humble leadership also plays its part as a moderator by solidifying the direct relationships among variables (Al-Hawamdeh 2022; Ding & Chu 2020).

Conclusion

The repercussions from Covid-19 have ignited a new phenomenon in the occupational sector in Malaysia namely WFH. WFH is an increasingly accepted concept among employees and there has been a rising demand to retain WFH although the shift to endemic is taking place. The government has also given the green light on the 1955 Work Act (Revised in 2022), consenting employees to apply for flexible working arrangement from their respective organisation. However, most organisations in Malaysia are not yet ready to continue with the concept of WFH and still lack the confidence that this new working arrangement will produce positive outcomes. However, the outcome of this study has gone to show empirically that WFH can increase work performance through adaptive performance and humble leadership can strengthen the influence of WFH on adaptive performance.

This study has contributed to the wealth of knowledge by giving several implications theoretically and practically. A more flexible work structure in terms of the working location and hours also the use of digital technology in the concept of WFH has been able to increase the adaptive performance of the employees. This discovery also serves as a testament to the importance of the humble leadership style in strengthening the relationship between WFH and adaptive performance. Past studies have shown that humble leadership can increase work performance when employees are at the office physically. Nonetheless, this study proves that the humble leadership style also increases work performance when employees work from home. This is in tandem with the self-determination theory where the perception

about humble leadership can motivate the employees to adapt to the new work environment. Other than that, the study outcome can help organisations to prepare for the execution of the flexible working arrangement, or WFH. Organisations have to make some detailed planning encompassing work structure design, mental and physical preparation of the employees with regard to the skills of technology use and the facility of accessing information in the organisation. It also needs to instil the humble leadership style that can support the employees during WFH and further boost their work performance.

That said, our study here is not deprived of its limitations. First of all, this study deploys a non-probability sampling method with a small sample size, which is 200 respondents. Thus, generalising the study outcome for the entire study population would be imprecise. Future studies need to pay more attention to certain sectors that stress more on practicing WFH and on using the random sampling method with a larger sample size. Secondly, this study uses questions based on the respondents' own perceptions and feelings, so it would be difficult to evaluate if they are not answered by the respondents themselves. However, future studies can obtain data from multiple sources by using multi-tiered analysis such as getting feedback from the employers. Next, this study only uses basic mechanism in the form of moderator. Future works may need to expand the basic mechanism by testing the role of various variables that can serve as the mediator and the moderator so that greater practical contributions can be offered, so that organisations can make better preparation when dealing with new work structure demands, such as flexible working arrangement and gig economy.

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SWOT Analysis of Diaspora Engagement as An Influencing Factor in Albanian Economy

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Abstract

Emigration is constantly considered by Albanians as one of the main opportunities to improve their economic situation. Since in early times, history knows periods of massive immigration. In the last 30 years, there has been continuous emigration, but the period of massive departures was in the beginning and end of the 90s. There is a great interest and attention on immigrants and mainly long-term ones and their role in economic development, but there is still a gap of knowledge, data and indicators for quality policy-making, related to programs and tools that can facilitate participation and strengthen ties with immigrant communities. Why should an immigrant invest in his country? Their emigration has always been closely related to economic conditions, but not only. Economic emigration has influenced the continuous monetary flows to the other part of the family remaining in a country. The cultivation of this factor must be related to legal aspects, with dedicated strategies and other initiatives that institutionalize and facilitate the investment potential of the diaspora. However, there are many hindering factors, such as the political climate, frequent tax changes, differences in development between regions, etc. that prevent the connection of the diaspora with the country. This paper presents a detailed overview of favorable and hindering factors, strong and weak points that affect the absorption of investments from the diaspora in our country. The literature and studies review identify the main positive and negative factors that influence the economic decisions of emigrants or diaspora to invest in their homeland. The second part of the paper is dedicated to structured interviews directed to the main public institutions that implement strategies and policies for migration and diaspora, as well as being part of the plan of their measures. The factors identified through the interviews and the factors driven by literature and studies review are divided in strengths, weak, opportunities and threats in a SWOT analysis.

Keywords: SWOT, Diaspora Engagement, Albanian Economy

Introduction

Studies and literature review

Albania and the Balkan countries have faced many times the movement of the population toward the developed countries for better economic conditions during their history of development. Immigrants' connections to the homeland have been strong and this is evident from the high and continuous level of remittances. Meyer and Shera (2017) have studied the impact of remittances on economic growth by conducting a fixed effects analysis of panel data for 6 Balkan countries. They concluded that remittances are positively related and significantly affect the economic growth of these countries. In 2021, Jushi et al with a VAR analysis with panel data for 8 Balkan countries found evidence for the impact of remittances and foreign direct investments on economic growth. According to them, the use of remittances only for consumption has weakened the positive effect on economic growth, therefore they suggest to create a suitable environment for new and successful investments and the best possible use of remittances. Jaupllari (2020) analyzes the efforts to establish structures such as the Subcommittee for Diaspora and Migration (part of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Policy) that support the diaspora and the engagement of this structure in the economic life of the country. According to the author, Diaspora policies developed in recent years have paid considerable attention to Diaspora Entrepreneurship. The Business Chamber of the Albanian Diaspora, established in November 2019 in Tirana under the assistance of the Albanian Diaspora Development Fund, is a private non-profit organization that supports the promotion, development and encouragement of capital investment from the Diaspora in Albania.

In an analysis made by Gëdeshi and King (2018), the new trends of potential to emigrate and the migration of Albanians were highlighted. In their study, they had a sub-sample of immigrants who returned to the country where about 80% were immigrants who returned from Greece and Italy. Only 8.1% of them defined the reason for investing in Albania as important. Meanwhile, 17.1% of the returnees were self-employed and about 55% of them wanted to emigrate again, citing the low level of income and poor working conditions in Albania as the reason.

According to an IOM (2020) study, the possibilities of immigrants to invest in their country were analyzed in 5 regions of Italy. Although 60% of the respondents have a higher education and more than 50% of them have obtained the highest qualification in Italy, they are not informed about Albania, and have not joined any formal or non-formal Albanian association as they think that the associations are not powerful in Albania. They transfer ideas, information and capital to Albania and about 23% of them want to increase business contacts in Albania, but very few of them want to move their business to Albania. The main reason they mention is the good quality of life in Italy and the low level of confidence in the development opportunities offered

by the country of origin. Finally, 24% are interested in investing in Albania in their field of education, mainly in the cultural sector and in a potential group of investors.

Those who were not interested in investing in Albania mentioned the same factors as problems or barriers to investment that were mentioned by those who had invested. Thus mentioned: bureaucratic efforts or costs from bureaucracy; unfavorable business environment; deficiencies in quality, efficiency and transparency of public administration, lack of coordination/cooperation with other actors; lack of management skills.

The countries of the Western Balkans, despite the positive developments, must create the appropriate mechanisms to include the diaspora in the country's economic life. (OECD 2022). According to this study, some of the recommendations are related to creating trust and strengthening the connection with the diaspora, encouraging the transfer of knowledge, formalizing remittances and more strategically attracting diaspora investments. Lack of trust in financial institutions and high costs of transferring money leads migrants to use informal transfer channels. In addition to the reasons directly related to the factors affecting business, there are other, more general reasons for not encouraging investments from the diaspora. Thus, one factor is the immigrant's lack of accurate information about what happens in Albania, lack of experience as an entrepreneur. Corruption and lack of meritocracy, lack of trust in public institutions and the political class are mentioned mostly as the factors that explain why doing business in Albania is difficult. Factors that are mentioned less, but that play their role are: the difficulty to get accurate information about the procedures of managing a business in Albania, poor infrastructure, declining population and emigration of talents.

Measuring the perception of focus groups in Albania through dedicated interviews

The strategic analysis related to the evaluation of the factors and dynamics that accompany migration is expanded and finalized in conducting several in-depth interviews mainly with institutions and organizations in order to measure their perception as well as to highlight obstacles related to the impact and effectiveness of policies, institutional engagement, or programs undertaken for emigration. The structured interviews are addressed to:

1. Representatives of line institutions at the central and local level in order to collect information on the characteristics of immigration, programs that stimulate the engagement of the Diaspora in Albania, the identification of gaps, obstacles in the available data as well as the identification of priorities for successful implementation of national strategies and action plans. In these populations, the main public institutions that implement strategies and policies for migration and diaspora, as well as being part of the plan of their measures, have been selected. Specifically, the institutions where the

interviews were officially conducted are: - Ministry of Internal Affairs - Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs - Institute of Statistics - Bank of Albania - National Agency of Diaspora - Council of Investments

2. Diaspora organizations - which were identified during the first phase of the development of the activity and which cooperate intensively with the institutions of the line. The selected organizations are Diaspora Business Chamber (Albania) and Germin Organization (Kosovo)
3. International organizations, which implement programs that stimulate the engagement of the Diaspora in Albania. Specifically: International Organization for Migration (IOM), Albania

And GIZ Albania, with the Migration and Diaspora program.

4. Academic networks - interviews with which will help identify concerns about scientific research issues in this field. The selected target group is the Faculty of Economy and the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana.

11 interviews were distributed in the institutions and organizations mentioned above.

In the first and second part of the interview, general information about the institution or organization is requested. In the third part of the interview, the opinion of the representatives of the institutions on the national policies in the field of Migration and Diaspora is discussed and requested. The fourth part of the interview is about networks and relations between civil society organizations, government institutions and international organizations. The institutions, except for the Bank of Albania, have identified a framework made up by mainly the same institutions and can be taken as a basis to increase cooperation between them.

Each of the institutions has cooperated with other institutions/organizations in its area of responsibility, i.e. INSTAT for data collection and data publication, the Ministry of the Interior in improving policies, legal framework and strategic documents related to the field and thus with queue. Most institutions cooperate with international organizations in building capacities and organizing awareness campaigns or different activities.

Technical SWOT Analysis

The answers given by the institutions above create a complete picture of all the factors that favor, hinder, should be improved or should be taken into consideration to further promote the inclusion of migrants in the economic life of the country. Taking into account all the factors that have been identified by different researchers, the opinions given by representatives of institutions that have a role in the drafting of policies for the attraction of immigrant investments (through structured interviews) and discussions with representatives of the diaspora at the Women's Summit in the

Diaspora, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to migration and engagement of the diaspora in the economic sphere can be defined as follows

SWOT Analyses			
	STRENGTH		WEAK
1	Economic Patriotism	1	Low quality of education level and extent in rural areas
2	Strategies dedicated to Diaspora and Migration, in line with international agendas	2	Higher concentration of young people in the city and relatively aging population in rural areas
3	Sectors with high development potential such as tourism, energy, transport, port infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture	3	Disparity in the local development of different municipalities and the difficulty of identifying and involving the main actors in local development
4	Advantages in providing access to free economic zones	4	Difficulties in the distribution of services in rural areas, reducing interest in investment
5	New diaspora, still connected to the mother country and at a low level of assimilation	5	Unsupportive political climate and lack of voting rights for immigrants
6	More institutions present, governmental and non-governmental, dedicated to immigrants and the Diaspora	6	Consequences and challenges created by the crises of recent years (earthquake, Pandemic, current economic crisis)
7	The Law on Diaspora provides for local Diaspora offices in each municipality	7	The lack of a special statute for the Diaspora Investor and the lack of formal channeling of remittances
8	Procedures for registering a business are quick and low-cost; One-stop business registration and licensing procedures administration	8	Lack of statistical evaluations. Lack of annual statistics on diaspora, emigration and their impact, ineffectively influencing policy making. Lack of reliable data and statistics.
9	As a candidate country to join the EU, there is an opportunity for businesses operating in Albania to use EU support instruments, such as COSME and EU Pre-Accession Assistance Instrument (IPA) funds	9	Low level of financial education for both the immigrant and relatives in Albania Lack of information on access to financial support schemes for Diaspora entrepreneurs and Lack of support services for Diaspora businesses
10	Small business taxes are low, flat-based;	10	Lack of industrial parks, business infrastructure, business incubators and clusters
11	Digitization of services	11	Little standardization and low level of certification for businesses in Albania/Low level of use of e-commerce in Albania/Lack of efficient trade partnerships, export alliances, trade and commercial unions and cooperatives, etc

1	Equal treatment of businesses, whether foreign or domestic	1	Lack of reliance on a satisfactory level of scientific research, inventions and technology/Unsatisfactory use of industrial property mechanisms, brands, logos, patents and trademarks.
2		1 3	High level Informality of the domestic economy and corruption/Property rights and related conflicts
OPORTUNITIES		THREATS	
1	Development of sectors with development potential, in particular tourism in all its dimensions (mountainous, traditional cultural, river, etc.), as well as natural resources such as water, energy and mining	1	Mass population departures, and difficulties in re-integration for those who return
2	Stimulating employment in tourism and other priority sectors/living standards and services will be improved.	2	Little participation of young people in entrepreneurial decision-making / Unfavorable political climate
3	The opening of negotiations with the EU will bring new reform standards	3	Continuation and extension of the crisis and the war in Ukraine
4	Albania has a lower employment cost compared to the EU average.	4	Insufficient budgets from public institutions to promote the support of programs for the Diaspora
5	Various trade agreements to which Albania is a part / Opportunities that may come from regional agendas such as OPEN BALKAN,	5	Lack of sustainability/guarantees in investments
6	Development of the MADE BY ALBANIANS brand, based on ECONOMIC PATRIOTISM, with potential to develop	6	The distribution of unfair commercial practices is considered a risk for competition and the conviction of the Investor from the Diaspora
7	E-commerce is a very good opportunity to enter the market and to avoid the traditional treatment of the products that are sold.	7	The tax legal framework in Albania has been unstable and subject to several modifications and changes;
8	Albanian companies in the Diaspora convey innovation and know-how	8	Negative economic trends in international markets as a result of the last financial crisis have also affected the Albanian economy
9	Albania is considered a developing country and the market is not fully filled by operators and economic activities	9	Demographic difficulties are concentrated especially in rural areas, which have deficiencies in infrastructure, information and technology, should also be taken into account as very difficult challenges for the conduct of Investments

Conclusion

As a country that has a lot of emigrants, Albania is trying to benefit the most from this situation. Attracting diaspora to invest in their homeland is one of the main crucial issues of the policies in the recent years. As part of the international organizations, Albania has created new institutions in order to promote and stimulate the diaspora investing but still there is a gap between the policy and its implementation. The SWOT analysis present the opportunities and the strength of investing in Albania, but it also identifies many factors that weaken the performance of diaspora investing. The main factors are related to disparities in economic level in different municipalities, low level of financial education, little standardization and low level of certification for businesses in Albania, Low level of use of e-commerce in Albania, Lack of efficient trade partnerships, etc.

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Core Model of Accountancy Education and Initial Professional Development in University - Level Programs in Albania

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Abstract

Factors affecting accounting education Accounting is not developed uniformly around the world because it is influenced by factors such as social, cultural, political, economic and legal development, which are different in different countries. Although, there is still a large-scale diversification, in the second decade of our century there is an increasing trend towards convergence between different accounting systems in the world. University-level programs may be recognized by statute or law, but they may not be recognized and evaluated by market demands or other bodies. Recognition and evaluation of undergraduate programs can focus on their content, duration, and quality. Analyzing the data collection in Albania.

Keywords: International education standards, business organizations, study programs, Initial professional development

Introduction

Globalization, international trade, and legislation have greatly influenced the convergence of IESs to regulate the profession by regulatory bodies and consequently to the creation of an adapted set of generally accepted ethical norms, which are internationally recognized.

The study conducted by the Institute of Global Accounting Development and by the research group of the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands has identified the main characteristics of accounting education, based on the characteristics of countries that regulate the profession through the acceptance and implementation of IESs. Factors that have been considered as influential in a successful and unified accounting education in those countries where they are applied are:

- **General characteristics of the country** - determine the context in which accounting education takes place, such as legal system, economy, location, and region where included, culture and traditions, etc.

- ***Professional characteristics***, such as professional regulation and recognition of a country's qualifications affect the application of international accounting standards.
- ***The competencies of accountants and auditors are considered factors that affect the qualification of professionals*** (rights and obligations of each professional accountant and auditor, international recognition of qualifications).

IESs and regulatory framework

Universities and professional accounting bodies play an important role in the global convergence of accounting regulation. Global convergence requires the design by international accounting bodies of high quality and internationally accepted standards, their consistent adaptation and implementation by governments, institutions and regulatory bodies, as well as the establishment of regulatory criteria globally and based on cooperation and mutual recognition.

The regulation of the accounting profession includes a number of issues such as the requirements for entry into the profession, for licensing and education, for the monitoring of the professional conduct of accountants, as well as for the drafting of standards to be applied. Like other professions, the sustainability and strength of the accounting profession depends on the quality of services provided by professionals and the capacity of the profession to respond effectively to the demands of the economy and society. The regulation of the profession aims to ensure a high quality and consistency in the quality of services.

Full package of IESs, Final Version

The mission of the Board of International Accounting Education Standards is to strengthen the accounting profession in all countries of the world through the development and improvement of education. Improving education through the development and implementation of International Standards for Education (IES) is expected to increase the competence of accounting professionals globally, contributing to increasing public confidence in the profession. IESs are standards designed and set for IFAC member bodies for initial professional development and continuing professional accounting development. The development and implementation of IESs can contribute to other desirable outcomes, such as: reducing the international differences that exist regarding the requirements to qualify and work as a professional accountant, facilitating the global movement of professional accountants. There are currently a total of 8 international standards, which are summarized below:

Accountancy Education	Standards and Implementation Guidance
<i>Conceptual Framework</i>	IAESB Framework for IES
<i>Pre-Qualification</i>	
<i>Entry Requirements</i>	IES 1 – Entry Requirements Professional Accountancy Education
<i>Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes</i>	IES 2 – Content of Professional Accountancy Education IES 3 – Professional Skills & General Education IES 4 – Professional Values, Ethics & Attitudes
<i>Practical Experience</i>	IES 5 – Practical Experience Requirements
<i>Assessment</i>	IES 6 – Assessment of Professional Capabilities & Competence
<i>Post-Qualification</i>	
<i>Life-Long Learning</i>	IES 7 – Continuing Professional Development
<i>Specialization</i>	IES 8 – Competence Requirements for Audit Professionals

IES 1: Entry Requirements Professional Accountancy Education

This standard sets out the requirements to enter an accounting education program of an IFAC member body. The standard suggests how qualifications are assessed and practical experience at the entry level of the program.

It is important that candidates, ranging from secondary to higher education, achieve a comparable level of knowledge of professional competence and qualification.

IES 2: Content of Professional Accountancy Education

This standard describes the knowledge content of accounting profession education programs that candidates must acquire to qualify as professional accountants. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that candidates for IFAC membership have sufficient professional accounting knowledge to enable them to competently perform their duties as a professional accountant in an increasingly complex and changing environment. The content of the university program of the profile "Accounting" should consist of the following subjects:

- Financial accounting, finance and similar knowledge;
- Knowledge of business organizations;
- Knowledge and competencies for information technology. In the following, their contents are treated in more detail.

Financial accountant, finance and related knowledge should include the following areas: accounting and financial reporting; management accounting and control; taxation; law on accounting and companies; audit and security services; financial management; professional values and ethics.

The organizational and business knowledge component should include the following areas: economics; business; corporate governance; business ethics; financial markets; quantitative methods; organizational behavior; strategic management and decision making; marketing; international Business.

The information technology component should include the following areas and competencies: general knowledge of IT.

- IT controls knowledge;
- IT controls competencies;
- Competencies of IT users;
- Or a combination of competencies, such as the role of information systems manager, evaluator, or designer.

IES 3: Professional Skills & General Education

Intellectual skills include: the ability to make decisions, the ability to use, understand and organize information from human resources, the ability to record information electronically, the ability to search for data, to study and think logically and analytically, mastery of reasoning and critical analysis competencies and the ability to identify unstructured problems and provide solutions in case they occur in unfamiliar environments.

Technical and functional skills include: arithmetic skills (mathematical and statistical applications) and IT skills, decision modeling and risk analysis; measurement; reporting and compliance with legal requirements and rules.

Personal skills include: self-government; initiative, independent study, ability to select and prioritize within limited resources and to organize work within set deadlines, ability to anticipate, adapt and change, taking into account professional ethics and values, decision-making attitudes and professional skepticism.

Interpersonal and communication skills include the ability to work in groups, to deal with and resolve potential conflicts, interacting with people of different cultural and intellectual levels; the ability to discuss acceptable solutions and agreements in certain professional situations; the ability to work effectively in a complex environment, to present, discuss, report and defend views effectively through formal, informal, written and spoken communication, to listen and read effectively, including an empathy to cultural and linguistic differences.

Organizational and business management skills include strategic planning, project management, human resource management and decision making, the ability to organize and delegate tasks, motivate and develop staff; sharp professional guidance and judgment.

IES 4: Professional Values, Ethics and Attitudes

This standard describes the professional and ethical values as well as the professional attitudes that accountants should acquire during the study program that lead the latter towards qualification. The approach of any program leading to the learning of

professional values, ethics and attitude will reflect on the respective national and cultural objectives and environment. Minimally all programs should include the nature of ethics, details based on rules, their advantages and disadvantages, compliance with basic principles of ethics, integrity, objectivity, commitment to professional skills, confidentiality, professional conduct, compliance with technical standards, concepts of independence, skepticism, credibility and public expectation, ethics and profession, social responsibility, ethics and law including relations between laws, rules and public interest, consequences of unethical behavior towards the individual, profession and society in general, ethics related to business and good governance, individual professional credibility, alerting to violations, conflict of interest, ethical dilemmas and their solutions.

Basic models of implementation and enforcement of accounting education standards Currently, the role of accounting professionals has been strengthened; collaborations have further increased, better realizing their purpose in the development of the accounting profession. In this part of the chapter, after giving an overview of the development of international standards of accounting education, their evolution through the study of literature, are shown the efforts made for the implementation of IESs and the basic models of their implementation. The final model of accounting education, which has gone through several stages being finalized with a global model designed to be adapted and applied, serves as a starting point in the relevant guidelines to be followed by different countries for the regulation of accounting education. The Global Accounting Education model is considered a useful tool which describes the basic components of accounting education systems worldwide. This stage is called Initial Professional Development and also contains professional practice, which helps students to get acquainted with supporting documents, registration of economic transactions and the accounting system. The model has evolved and every researcher follows strict guidelines for implementing the model in order to ensure consistency and compatibility with the specific national requirements of the country.

Core Model of Accountancy Education

Global Financial Infrastructure	Accountancy Profession	Standard Setters and Regulators
Professional expertise of accountants and auditors is a necessary condition for the functioning of the global financial infrastructure	IAESB IES for Qualifications of Professional Accountants and Auditors and IFAC Compliance Program for Professional Accountancy Organizations	International, regional and country standard setters are responsible for IFRS, ISAs and comparable standards that regulate the functioning of the global financial infrastructure

Accounting in the public interest	Characteristics of accountancy education	International cooperation
<p>Stakeholder approach to accountancy education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard setters • Professional accounting and auditing bodies • Government agencies • Regulators • Donors • Educators • Investors <p>Cooperation between stakeholders is a necessary condition for accountancy education that is relevant on the country level and compliant with international standards</p>	<p>Certification requirements: professional accountancy education, practical experience, final assessment, CPD</p> <p>Providers: professional accountancy organizations, universities and education institutes, government</p> <p>Responsibility: government, government with the profession, professional accountancy organization, universities</p> <p>Licensing: academic study, practical experience, licensing examination, CPD and/or re-examination</p>	<p>Global and regional initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAAER academic and professional partnership • UNCTAD capacity building initiative • Regional academic associations • Global accountancy firms and professional associations • Twinning <p>International networks play an important role in achieving comparability and progress</p>

Figure: The first version of the model

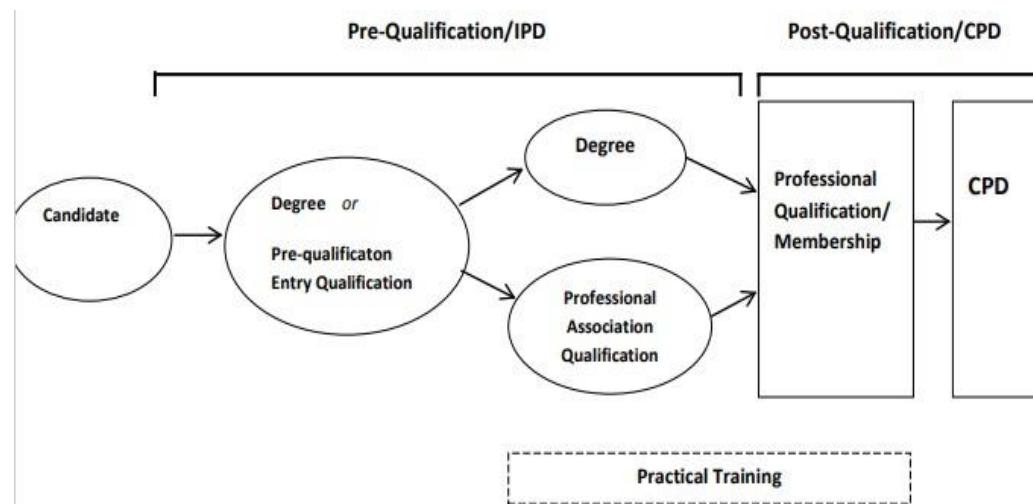
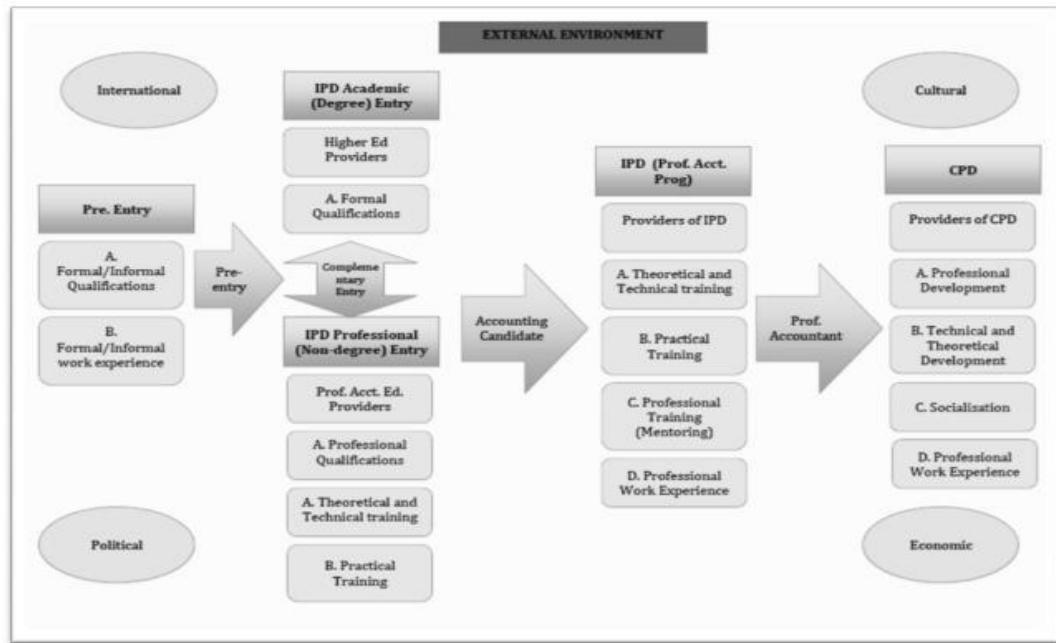
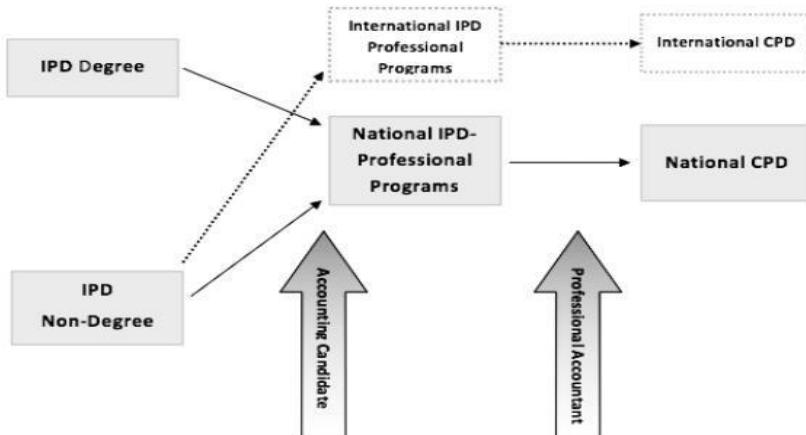


Figure: Second version of the model



The following figure presents the final version of the global model of accounting education. The final version of the model comes as a combination of the two initial versions making the adaptation of external environmental factors such as political, cultural, economic and international ones. This is the basic model addressed by Institute of Global Accounting Development and IFAC for regulating the accounting profession in developed and developing countries. Also, countries that are full members of IFAC must regulate the accounting profession through IESs. The eighth directive of the European Union in the fourth component requires the implementation of IESs for countries which accede to being members of the EU.

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In studies conducted by different authors several models of accounting education are presented, one of the basic models is described below.

Country Characteristics	Accountancy Education	International Developments
Differences between countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural background • Legal system • Economic position • Higher education 	Core elements of accountancy education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional qualification objective and standards • Final examination of professional competence • Professional education • Practical experience • General education 	Codification based on international developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards • Guidelines • Directives
Country characteristics define the regulatory environment and the structure of accountancy education in a country		IES of the IAESB can be used as benchmarks for international comparability and recognition of qualifications

The model places the essential elements of accounting education in the context of relevant country characteristics, basic elements of education and international standards. The model describes each characteristic, such as the country's cultural environment, applicable legislation, and economic development.

Accounting education consists of several basic elements, which are combined with International Education Standards, guidelines and guidelines by regulating the accounting profession and enhancing the competencies of professionals.

The competencies of professionals benefiting from accountants are described in the IES package. Prequalification knowledge is treated in IES-1, IES-2, IES-3 and IES-4 standards. Experience and practical skills are dealt with in IES 6 and IES 7. Continuing professional development (postgraduate) is dealt with in IES 7 and IES 8.

The case of Albania

The implementation of IESs aims to strengthen the educational process in order to ensure an effective distribution of resources throughout the university and professional sector and to encourage links with the education system as a whole. Measuring, understanding and evaluating a country's progress towards international best accounting practices is important as this progress can increase the effectiveness of the flow of economic flows between countries, as well as the ability of management and investment to identify sources for projects successful.

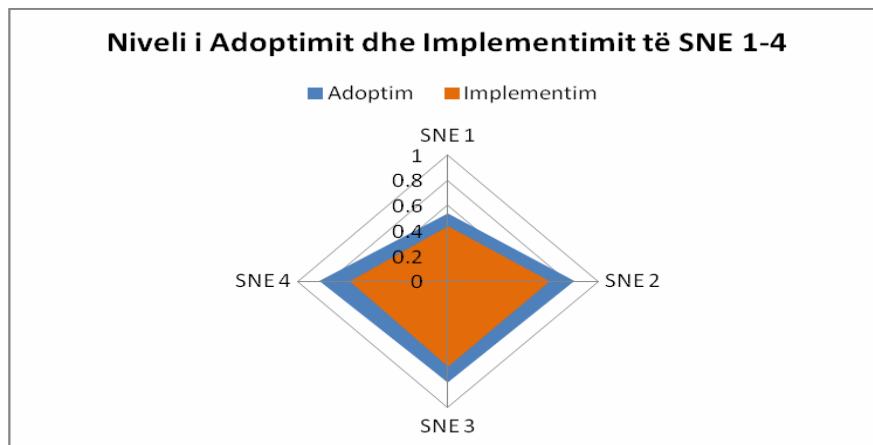
Statistical testing was also applied to the question of how they were informed or respondents have heard about SNEs. Test results showed no connection between the university whose staff the respondents are part of and how they are informed or have heard about SNEs (p - value > 0.05, in all tests).

The test results show that there is no connection between the university he is a part of academic staff the respondent and the fact whether he has heard, seen or read before SNEs, whether or not you know the content of SNEs (in all cases p - value > 0.05).

Adoption and implementation of IES1-4

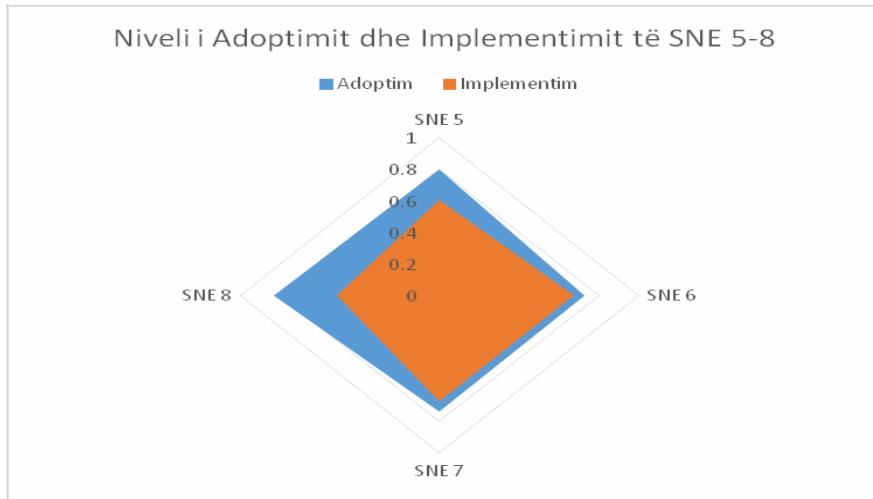
Adoption and Implementation after analyzing the collected data we conclude in a graphical representation of the Adoption and Implementation of IES 1-4.

Graph below: Presentation of the level of adoption and implementation for initial professional development



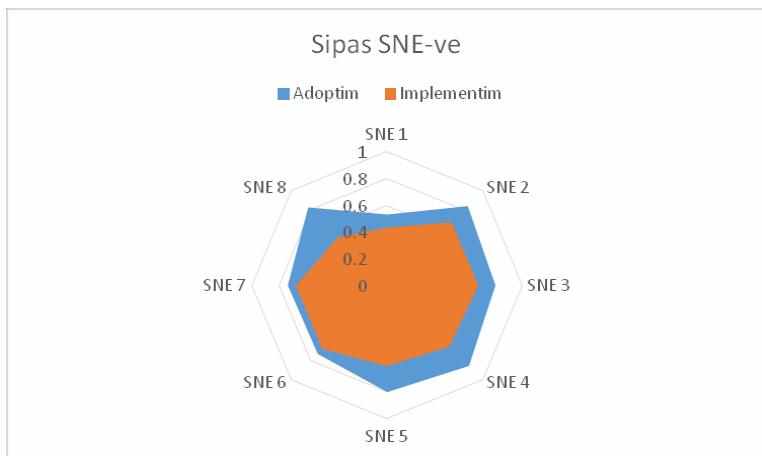
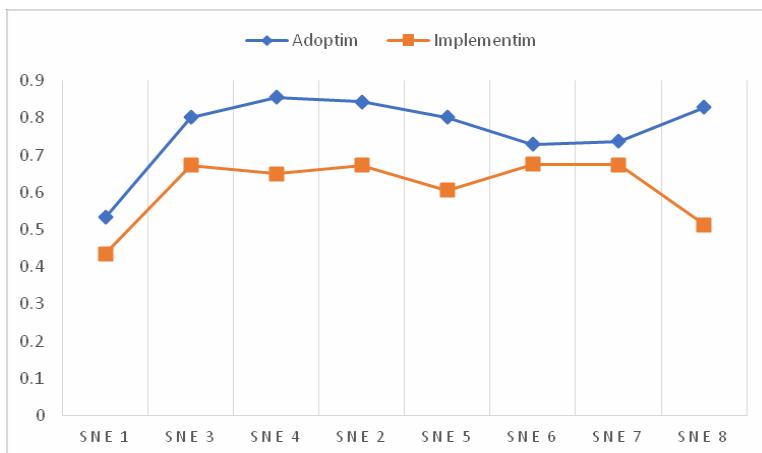
Adoption and implementation of IES 5-8

After analyzing the collected data we conclude in a graphical presentation of the adoption and implementation of IES5-IES8.



Conclusions of adoption and implementation according to the 4 main pillars

The following is a summary of the adoption and implementation of IESs divided into 4 main pillars. A table summarizes the characteristics of accounting education, which defines the initial, continuing development programs and the authorities that provide them.



In the graphs above we note that from the data collected from both questionnaires the level of adoption and the level of implementation for IESs 2, 3, 6, 7 is the same and the difference between them is not high. For IESs 1, 4, 5, 8 there are high differences between the two levels which indicate that a greater commitment from regulators is needed to fill this difference so that the difference is as small as possible. A low level of adoption of IES-1 is observed.

The analysis conducted in this material shows that the level of adoption and implementation of each IES in Albania is as follows:

For professional development, which includes IES 1, 3 and 4, the level of adoption is at an average level while the level of implementation is at a low level. The difference between them shows that a greater commitment from universities is needed to increase the level of implementation.

Vocational accounting education is the second pillar where accounting education is supported and addressed in IES 2. The analysis shows that this pillar has a high level of adoption and an average level of implementation. These results reflect the work done by universities to implement the standards so that universities are given value and student results are recognized abroad.

Professional development is addressed in IES 5-7 and presents the requirements related to continuing professional development for accounting professionals. The level of adoption and implementation for this set of standards is average and there are no significant differences between them. These results show the good work and responsibility of professional associations in the country.

Competencies for professional auditors constitute the last pillar addressed in this paper. They are treated in IES-8. For this standard, there is a high difference between the level of adoption which is high and the level of implementation which is low. This difference indicates that training programs provide advanced knowledge, while the competencies and skills of auditors and accountants acquired through training are not high. This conclusion was reached from the assessments and data collected by respondents in the IES-8 analysis.

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The Contribution of Various Training Program Models to Improve the Athletic Performance

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Abstract

In many sporting disciplines, a person's ability to jump is an excellent measure of their physical characteristics. Trainers are constantly searching for the greatest training techniques or methods that significantly expand the vertical jump's possibilities. The quest for techniques that can help boost one's vertical jump capacity is linked to the hope of succeeding, and as a result, success in many sports is linked to having a high vertical jump. The study's objective was to assess the indicators of vertical jump by classifying them according to the utilization of exercises using various strength-building techniques. This material was chosen by several research fields that rely on books and the internet. The randomly subjects's from the Tirana Sports University are the center of our investigation. The Leonardo Mechanograph® GRFP standard variant of STD was used to gather data for contact time and vertical jump height. In comparison to the control group for 12 weeks, the findings of the jump indicators have changed as a result of the training programs implemented. Changes in the indicators of vertical jump height and ground contact time reaction values were discovered through our study case. The three training models all had an impact on jumping ability, but the maximum strength and plyometric exercise approach had the biggest effect in our study based on the significance of the collected data.

Keywords: intervention program, vertical jump height, ground contact time, jumping ability, athletes

Introduction

In many sports disciplines, jumping skills are strong indicators of an athlete's physical parameters. Trainers are always searching for better methods that have a strong impact on increasing vertical jump parameters. The search for methods that will affect the Vertical Jump Capacity (VJC) relates to expectations to succeed in vertical jump performance, this success is associated with success in many sports. (Bobbert MF, 1990)

To increase the jump ability should be improved muscular contraction where the jump has to do with the "stretch-shortening cycle (SSC)" which is defined as a combination of eccentric and concentric muscle actions. According to the literature, the effect of the stretch-shortening cycle is an enhancement in performance (concentric muscle action) during the final phase of the cycle. (Tudor O. Bompa, G. Gregory Haff. 2009).

Many studies and research have suggested that one of the most efficient methods is the training of maximum strength as a skill that affects the activation of stretch-shortening cycles. (Komi, P. V, 1984).

But to understand vertical jump, the literature divides it into two different:

Standing Vertical Jump: This refers to a vertical jump done from a standstill with no steps being involved at all.

Running vertical jump: This refers to a vertical jump after a run-up: the last step of the run is used to launch into the jump. This may help to add additional energy to the jump and improve the standing vertical jump result. (J. PEREZ-GOMEZ, J. A. L. CALBET, 2013).

In general, the standing vertical jump is the one that is used as an official measurement for athletes. (Young W, et al 1999).

Plyometrics exercises are effective in training for power output and include different types of vertical jumps. Studies show that the Plyometrics exercises, as a method of training, is an effective method of increasing the height of the jump, also plyometric exercises reduce the ground reaction contact time. (Beneka, A. G., et al. 2012). (Ebben, W. P., et al (2011).

The vertical jump depends in part on the lower extremities' muscle power and has been used as a standard test of power performance and to estimate the composition of the muscular fibers (Bosco C., et al 1983).

Studies claim that the ability to jump depends on achieving maximum and rapid muscle contraction or maximum force of the extensor muscles of the trunk, hip, and lower extremities (Arabatzis F., et al 2010).

Based on these data and our study relates to the evaluation of the impacts of different strength training methods on vertical jump height and ground contact time.

Aim: Evaluation of vertical jump indicators by differentiating them according to the use of exercises with different methods of strength.

Methodology

Literature review: The selections of literature focused more on the training process, maintaining the right balance between all elements that affect vertical jump results. This literature was selected by different research sectors that are based on the internet like "Jab Ref" "PubMed" "google scholar" "Medline" and "Sports Discuss" taking into consideration stated data on foreign and Albanian books or scientific research articles published in different conferences and particularly on "Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research".

Selection of the subjects: Our study is focused on 80 subjects, students of the "Sports University of Tirana". Students were separated into 4 groups, with 20 students in each group. The average age of participants was 19-20 years. Three of these were an experimental group and one was the control group (T1). In our study participated only those who weren't involved in other physical activities or sports to exclude the impact of other training loads impact.

Naming with 1 was for the control group (CG)

Naming with 2 was for the experimental group that was trained with a maximal strength exercise. (MSE)

Naming with 3 was for the experimental group that was trained with exercises that generate power, Power exercise (PE)

Naming with 4 was for the experimental group that was trained with exercises plyometrics exercises. (PE)

Measuring Instruments: To collect data for jumping skills is used measuring instruments: Leonardo Mechanograph® GRFP standard variant of STD is an instrument that measures the weight, strength, power, speed of response from the platform, and the height of the jump considering the center of gravity displacement for the lower limb movements.

The methodology of tests performed: The study is conducted for 12 weeks. First tests and second tests were performed in the same ways and under conditions.

The four groups developed tests to measure the indicators:

Vertical jumping test with and without arms swing, (S2LJ: single two Leg Jump)

DJ (drop Jump) from H= 40 and 60 cm.

Training program: T2 - First experimental group (MSE) conducted 2 (two) training sessions a week. The exercises that we used with this group were: squat; deadlifting; bench press; calf press.

T3 - The second experimental group (PE), conducted 2 (two) training sessions per week. The volume of the loads is calculated in percentage (%) based on the body

weight of the subjects. The intensity of performing exercises was asked at 100%, which was measured with the speed of the exercise. The exercises that we used with this group were:

Exercise 1.

Resisted running weights with 20% of the weight. Training loads 8 x 40m.

Exercise 2. Smith machine squats in 90°, training loads 6 x 8 x 60% of body weight. It was requested that the exercise should be executed as fast as they can. (Explosive movement).

Exercise 3. Vertical jumping with training loads 6 x 8x 50% of bodyweight loads.

T4 - The third experimental group (PE) was trained twice a week, with two exercises per session. To implement this program were applied 40-60-80- cm platform. The intensity of performing these exercises was required in maximum value, which was measured by movement speed, where the 1-st exercise intensity was measured by contact time, while the 2-nd exercise intensity was measured by distance. These exercises were:

Depth jumping with two legs. Training loads of exercise 3 x 10 x 60 / 80cm.

Repeated jumps on one leg starting over a 40cm platform. Training loads of exercise:15 x 3 with the right and left leg each.

Results

All statistical analyses were computed using the Statistics Package for Social Sciences with the One-Way ANOVA Calculator for Independent Measures.

The results of the retests were evaluated by comparing the control group and the experimental groups to see the significance values of the training program used for the indicators of the vertical jumping ability and to verify which training program had the most effect on increasing the capacity of the vertical jump.

Below are the tables derived from the One-Way ANOVA statistical system.

Analyzing the indicators of height in Vertical jumping without arms swing, (S2LJ: single two Leg Jump)

Tab 1. Summary of Data

	Treatments				
	1	2	3	4	Total
N	20	20	20	20	80
ΣX	7.7	7.54	7.65	7.29	30.18
Mean	0.385	0.377	0.3825	0.3645	0.377
ΣX^2	3.0296	2.9144	2.9849	2.8029	11.7318
Std.Dev.	0.0585	0.0615	0.0556	0.0876	0.0662

Tab 2. Result Details				
Source	SS	df	MS	
Between-treatments	0.005	3	0.0017	F = 0.3714
Within-treatments	0.3414	76	0.0045	
Total	0.3464	79		

Results of tables 1 and 2 show the value of the f-ratio value is 0.3714. The p-value is 0.773852. The result is not significant at $p < .05$

Tab 3. pairwise Comparisons		HSD _{.05} = 0.0557	Q _{.05} = 3.7149
		HSD _{.01} = 0.0682	Q _{.01} = 4.5530
$T_1:T_2$	M ₁ = 0.39 M ₂ = 0.38	0.01	Q = 0.53 (p = .98154)
$T_1:T_3$	M ₁ = 0.39 M ₃ = 0.38	0.00	Q = 0.17 (p = .99941)
$T_1:T_4$	M ₁ = 0.39 M ₄ = 0.36	0.02	Q = 1.37 (p = .76839)
$T_2:T_3$	M ₂ = 0.38 M ₃ = 0.38	0.01	Q = 0.37 (p = .99383)
$T_2:T_4$	M ₂ = 0.38 M ₄ = 0.36	0.01	Q = 0.83 (p = .93488)
$T_3:T_4$	M ₃ = 0.38 M ₄ = 0.36	0.02	Q = 1.20 (p = .83066)

Based on table 3, the results showed non-significant values in improving the height of the vertical jump without the help of the arms from the three exercise methods used.

Analyzing the indicators of height in Vertical jumping with arms swing, (S2LJ: single two Leg Jump)

Tab 4. Summary of Data						
	Treatments					
	1	2	3	4	Total	
	20	20	20	20	80	
	9	10.78	9.87	11.47	41.12	
	0.45	0.539	0.4935	0.5735	0.514	
	4.1658	6.0004	4.9745	6.9305	22.0712	
	0.0781	0.1	0.0739	0.1362	0.1088	

Tab 5. Result Details				
Source	SS	df	MS	
Between-treatments	0.1736	3	0.0579	F = 5.77331

<i>Within-treatments</i>	0.7619	76	0.01	
<i>Total</i>	0.9355	79		

Results of tables 4 and 5 show the value of the f-ratio value is 5.77331. The p-value is 0.001304. The result is significant at $p < .05$.

Tab 6. Pairwise Comparisons		HSD_{.05} = 0.0832	Q_{.05} = 3.7149
		HSD_{.01} = 0.1019	Q_{.01} = 4.5530
$T_1:T_2$	M ₁ = 0.45 M ₂ = 0.54	0.09	Q = 3.98 ($p = .03125$)
$T_1:T_3$	M ₁ = 0.45 M ₃ = 0.49	0.04	Q = 1.94 ($p = .51948$)
$T_1:T_4$	M ₁ = 0.45 M ₄ = 0.57	0.12	Q = 5.52 ($p = .00116$)
$T_2:T_3$	M ₂ = 0.54 M ₃ = 0.49	0.05	Q = 2.03 ($p = .48050$)
$T_2:T_4$	M ₂ = 0.54 M ₄ = 0.57	0.03	Q = 1.54 ($p = .69691$)
$T_3:T_4$	M ₃ = 0.49 M ₄ = 0.57	0.08	Q = 3.57 ($p = .06378$)

Based on table 6, the results show that the group that was trained with maximum strength exercises and plyometric exercises showed more effectiveness in improving the height of the vertical jump.

Data evaluation for contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop Jump) from H= 60 cm.

Tab 7. Summary of Data					
N ΣX Mean $\sum X^2$ Std.Dev.	Treatments				
	1	2	3	4	Total
	20	20	20	20	80
	3.98	3.93	3.84	3.67	15.42
	0.199	0.1965	0.192	0.1835	0.193
	0.8296	0.8003	0.7572	0.6855	3.0726
	0.0445	0.0384	0.0324	0.0252	0.0356

Tab 8. Result Details				
Source	SS	df	MS	
	Between-treatments	0.0028	3	0.0009
	Within-treatments	0.0976	76	0.0013
	Total	0.1004	79	

Referring to tables 7 and 8, results have shown that the f-ratio value is 0.72281. The p-value is 0.54146. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

Tab 9. pairwise Comparisons		HSD_{.05} = 0.0298	Q_{.05} = 3.7149
		HSD_{.01} = 0.0365	Q_{.01} = 4.5530
<i>T₁:T₂</i>	M ₁ = 0.20	0.00	Q = 0.31 (p = .99618)
	M ₂ = 0.20		
<i>T₁:T₃</i>	M ₁ = 0.20	0.01	Q = 0.87 (p = .92614)
	M ₃ = 0.19		
<i>T₁:T₄</i>	M ₁ = 0.20	0.02	Q = 1.93 (p = .52333)
	M ₄ = 0.18		
<i>T₂:T₃</i>	M ₂ = 0.20	0.00	Q = 0.56 (p = .97864)
	M ₃ = 0.19		
<i>T₂:T₄</i>	M ₂ = 0.20	0.01	Q = 1.62 (p = .66170)
	M ₄ = 0.18		
<i>T₃:T₄</i>	M ₃ = 0.19	0.01	Q = 1.06 (p = .87638)
	M ₄ = 0.18		

The results of table 9, in which the data between the control group and the experimental group are compared, show that none of the methods had a strong impact on improving the contact time ground reaction from H=60cm.

Data evaluation for contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop jump) from H= 40 cm.

Tab 10. Summary of Data						
	Treatments					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
<i>N</i>	20	20	20	20	80	
$\sum X$	4.33	3.79	4.33	4.04	16.49	
Mean	0.2165	0.1895	0.2165	0.202	0.206	
$\sum X^2$	1.0047	0.7855	0.9675	0.836	3.5937	
Std.Dev.	0.0595	0.0595	0.0398	0.0324	0.0496	

Tab. 11 Result Details				
Source	SS	df	MS	
<i>Between-treatments</i>	0.0102	3	0.0034	F = 1.39675
<i>Within-treatments</i>	0.1845	76	0.0024	
<i>Total</i>	0.1947	79		

Referring to table 10 and 11, show that the values of f-ratio value are 1.39675. The p-value is 0.250308. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

Tab 12. Pairwise Comparisons		HSD_{.05} = 0.0409	Q_{.05} = 3.7149
		HSD_{.01} = 0.0502	Q_{.01} = 4.5530
<i>T₁:T₂</i>	M ₁ = 0.22 M ₂ = 0.19	0.03	Q = 2.45 (p = .31410)

$T_1:T_3$	M ₁ = 0.22 M ₃ = 0.22	0.00	Q = 0.00 (p = .00000)
$T_1:T_4$	M ₁ = 0.22 M ₄ = 0.20	0.01	Q = 1.32 (p = .78856)
$T_2:T_3$	M ₂ = 0.19 M ₃ = 0.22	0.03	Q = 2.45 (p = .31410)
$T_2:T_4$	M ₂ = 0.19 M ₄ = 0.20	0.01	Q = 1.13 (p = .85318)
$T_3:T_4$	M ₃ = 0.22 M ₄ = 0.20	0.01	Q = 1.32 (p = .78856)

According to the results of table 12. In which the data between the control group and the experimental group are compared, it shows that none of the methods had a strong impact on improving the contact time ground reaction from H=40cm.

The tables below express the percentage of the result change in the average value in the group from the first test to the second test after 12 weeks of training.

Tab 13. Result of changes from the first test to the second test in percentages value.

		T 1	% Of result s chang es in the mean value	T2	% Of result s chang es in the mean value	T 3	% Of result s chang es in the mean value	T4	% Of result s chang es in the mean value
S2LJ: single two Leg Jump without arms swing (results are measured in meter unit)	Pre-test	0. 39	2.5	0.3 7	+24.3	0. 38	+10.5	0. 36	+11.1
	Post -test	0. 38		0.4 6		0. 42		0. 40	
S2LJ: single two Leg Jump with arms swing (results are measured in meter unit)	Pre-test	0. 45	0	0.4 3	+25.6	0. 49	+6.1	0. 47	+21.7
	Post -test	0. 45		0.5 4		0. 52		0. 57	
contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop Jump) from H= 40 cm. (results are measured in the second unit)	Pre-test	0. 19	0	0.2 2	-13.6	0. 22	-13.6	0. 2	-10
	Post -test	0. 19		0.1 9		0. 19		0. 18	
contact time ground reaction from DJ	Pre-test	0. 2	+5	0.2 0	-10	0. 21	-4.7	0. 2	-5

(drop Jump) from H= 60 cm. (results are measured in the second unit)	Post -test	0. 21		0.1 8		0. 2		0. 19	
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Referring to the results of table 13. It is shown that regardless of the above tables for the significance of the "p" values, the results of the performance indicators have changed under the effect of the exercise programs used compared to the control group for 12 weeks. The groups have shown changes in the values calculated in the mean value. The second (2) group for tests: S2LJ: single two Leg Jump without arms swing showed that the height of the vertical jump has improved in average values for the group by 24.3%; S2LJ: single two Leg Jump with arms swing showed that the vertical jump height improved by 25.6%; contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop jump) from H= 40 cm, showed that contact time ground reaction decreased by 13.6%; contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop jump) from H= 60 cm, showed that contact time ground reaction decreased by 10%.

The third (3) group for tests: S2LJ: single two Leg Jump without arms swing showed that the height of the vertical jump has improved in average values for the group by 10.5%; S2LJ: single two Leg Jump with arms swing(m) showed that the vertical jump height improved by 6.1%; contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop jump) from H= 40 cm, showed that contact time ground reaction decreased by 13.6%; contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop jump) from H= 60 cm, showed that contact time ground reaction decreased by 4.7 %.

The fourth (4) group for tests: S2LJ: single two Leg Jump without arms swing, showed that the height of the vertical jump has improved in average values for the group by 11.1%; S2LJ: single two Leg Jump with arms swing, showed that the vertical jump height improved by 21.7%; contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop jump) from H= 40 cm, showed that contact time ground reaction decreased by 10%; contact time ground reaction from DJ (drop jump) from H= 60 cm, showed that contact time ground reaction decreased by 5%.

Discussion

The study focused on the evaluation of three methods of strength training in the influence of the ability to jump, this factor for increasing the athletic performance of athletes in different sports (Komi, P. V, 1984). The three methods included in the study such as maximum strength, power, and plyometrics have shown that they have a significant impact on improving jumping skills. But in order to make a differentiation between the methods, we must highlight the effects of each method used in the study (Beneka, A. G., et al. 2012). (Ebben, W. P., et al (2011). The human body is built to have control of its physiological systems during physical exercise and

sports performance, where as a result the reactions from these systems will optimize the result for an improvement in performance.

It is known that strength is the ability of the neuromuscular system to generate force. In every sports discipline, the athlete is required as a mobile task to produce a high level of force in a limited amount of time; for example, swinging a bat or jumping for a rebound. Especially in agility skills, this indicator of strength is dominant in increasing performance. Thus, proving the importance of applying maximum strength exercises to increase the performance of vertical jump height (Arabatzi F., et al 2010). Also, exercises that generate power have a strong impact, which in practice, power appears by performing greater work in the same amount of time or by performing the same work in less time.

Conclusions

The exercises applied in the study have influenced the neuromuscular excitations by maximizing muscle strength, where these influences promote the rate of force development, muscular strength at slow and fast contraction velocities, stretch-shortening cycle performance, and coordination of movement pattern and skill.

In conclusion, we support the fact that all three training models have strong neuromuscular effects that affect the improvement of the ability to jump, but based on the significance of the results shown, the method of maximal strength and plyometric exercise showed a greater impact in our study.

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The Structural and Optical Properties of Perovskite Thin Films

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Abstract

Perovskite materials have many interesting properties such as modulation of the optical band gap and the properties of quantum wells. In addition, they have a stable structure. For these reasons, perovskites have attractive properties for optoelectronic devices. Additionally, the structural and optical properties can be changed by means of different halide atoms doped into materials. In this study, the effect of iodine on the structural, and optical properties of perovskite thin films was investigated. $KCaCl_2$ I and $KCaCl_3$ perovskite were prepared by chemical bath deposition on a glass substrate. The crystal structures of the films were determined by X-ray diffraction. X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) analysis revealed that the films had a crystalline structure. In addition, $KCaCl_2$ I perovskite thin film has better crystalline than $KCaCl_3$ perovskite thin films. Linear optical parameters were determined using transmittance and absorbance measurements. And then, the optical band gap values, extinction coefficient, refractive index, and dielectric constants were determined as linear optical properties. It was understood that these properties were affected by iodine.

Keywords: perovskite, thin films, chemical bath deposition, optical properties, structural properties.

Introduction

A perovskite structure has the form ABX_3 , where A, and B are cations, and X is the anion (Wiley, et al. 2019; Korkmaz and Ozpozan-Kalaycioglu, 2012). Perovskites can have interesting a lot of properties because of the molecules in their structure (Kangning, et al. 1998). Therefore, studies on perovskite structures, in other words, perovskite thin films have increased in the last few years to improve the performance of devices such as optoelectronic devices. At end of the 19th century, perovskite structures were formed in an aqueous solution by researchers (Mitzi, 1999; Soto-

Montero, et al. 2020). However, these structures contained lead which is so dangerous for the environment (Katsanoulas, 1999). Hence, the research groups have tried to find materials that can be not dangerous to environmental and human health (Daskeviciute-Geguziene, et al. 2022).

Different deposition techniques such as ink-jet printing (Xie, 2018), co-evaporation (Park, 2019), and spin coating (Fong, 2021) have been used to form perovskite thin films.

In this work, the chemical bath deposition technique was used to obtain the perovskite thin films. The technique involves controlled precipitation of a solution of the compound on the substrate. With this technique, the structural and optical properties of the film can be changed by variables, such as solution temperature and precursor concentration. In the CBD method, a film can be formed on any substrate (Güneri, 2019). The aim of this study is to obtain $\text{KC}\text{a}\text{Cl}_2\text{I}$ and $\text{KC}\text{a}\text{Cl}_3$ perovskite thin films using the CBD technique. Additionally, it is to show how iodine affects the structural and optical properties of perovskite thin films.

Experimental Details

The chemicals calcium chloride (CaCl_2 , Sigma Aldrich 99%), potassium iodide (KI, Sigma Aldrich 99%), dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), and dimethylformamide (DMF) were used in this study. The deposition of perovskite films was carried out using chemical bath deposition (CBD). Prior to the deposition of the thin films by CBD, the glass substrates were cleaned with detergent, deionized water, acetone, ethanol, isopropyl alcohol, and deionized water, respectively. To obtain $\text{KC}\text{a}\text{Cl}_2\text{I}$ perovskite thin films, CaCl_2 , KI, DMSO, and DMF were used in the bath. First of all, the stoichiometric ratio with CaCl_2 and KI was separately mixed in DMSO: DMF (3:7). The solvent mixture DMSO: DMF was used to boost the morphology control. To obtain a clear and homogenous solution, these mixes were continuously blended at room temperature for 24 hours. After obtaining homogenous solutions, the solutions were poured into the beaker, where the substrate cleaned was put. The deposition temperature and time were fixed at room temperature and 48h, respectively, to fabricate the film. The chemical reaction of the composition is given as follows:



To obtain $\text{KC}\text{a}\text{Cl}_3$ perovskite thin films, $\text{KC}\text{a}\text{Cl}_2$, KCl, DMSO, and DMF, were used in the bath. The aforementioned process was repeated for $\text{KC}\text{a}\text{Cl}_2\text{I}$ perovskite thin film as well. The chemical reaction of the composition is given as follows:



The phase and orientation of the films were determined by XRD using a Panalytical Empyrean Model diffractometer. SHIMADZU & UV-2700 spectrophotometer were

used to determine the optical properties of films. All measurements were made at room temperature.

Results and Discussion

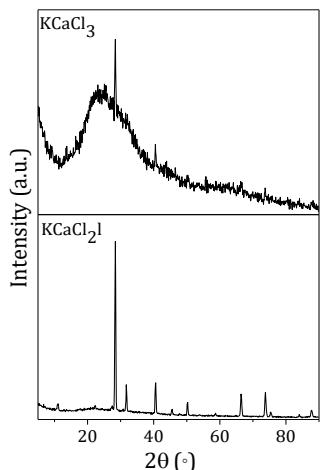


Fig. 1. XRD diffractograms pattern of KCaCl_2I perovskite thin film and KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film.

Fig.1 shows the XRD diffractograms of $\text{KCaCl}_2\text{I}/\text{glass}$ and $\text{KCaCl}_3/\text{glass}$, which have crystalline structures. The XRD diffractogram of KCaCl_2I perovskite thin film has four strong diffraction peaks, which are located at the angles 2θ : 28.39° , 40.56° , 66.4639° , and 73.7692° . These peaks didn't index the other materials. In this context, the new perovskite structure was fabricated in this work. The XRD diffractogram of KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film has a background due to dirtiness on the glass. Furthermore, there are just two peaks in its spectrum at the angles 2θ : 28.29° , and 40.29° .

Fig. 2 shows the transmission, reflection, and absorption spectra of the KCaCl_2I and KCaCl_3 perovskite thin films. The transmission ratio of the KCaCl_2I perovskite thin film was lower than that of the KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film despite depositing time the same. There can be a lot of reasons. One of them is deposition velocity. The deposition velocity of the KCaCl_2I perovskite thin film can be faster than that of the KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film. When the refractive spectrum of both films was investigated, the refractive spectrum of KCaCl_2I perovskite thin films is higher than that of the KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film (Fig. 2). The origin of this difference can be iodine. The KCaCl_2I perovskite thin films have two maximum absorption peaks at 307 nm and 362 nm. These values show that there are two transmissions in the films. One of them can be connected from the lower valence band (VB2) to the minimum conduction band (CB), and the other can be fatigued to the transition from the higher valence band (VB1) to the CB (Al-Asbahi, et al. 2020). The KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film absorbed most light below 350 nm.

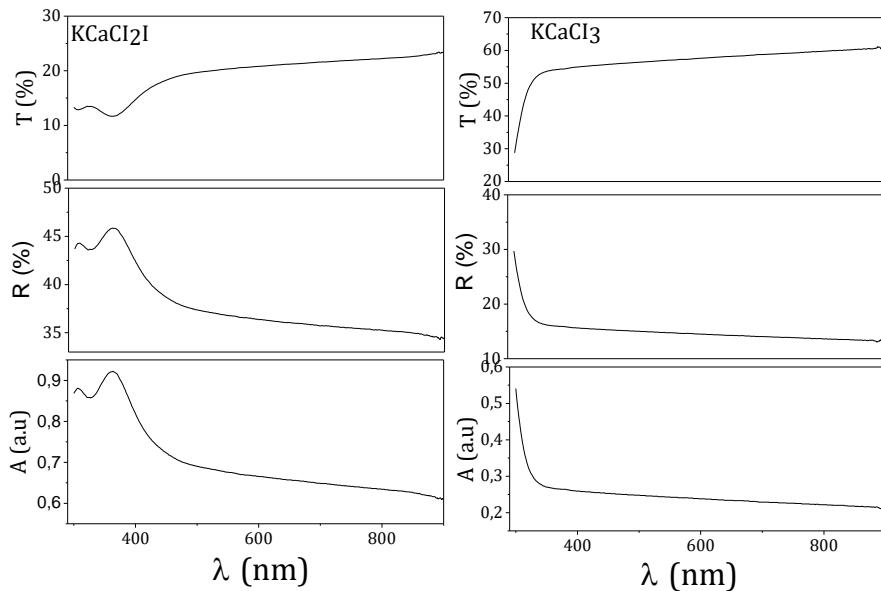


Fig. 2 The transmission, reflection, and absorption spectra of the KCaCl_2I and KCaCl_3 perovskite thin films.

The values of the direct energy band gaps of perovskite thin films were estimated from the Tauc plot of the absorption spectrum (Tauc, 1974). As seen in Fig. 3, the band gap values of the KCaCl_2I perovskite thin film are 2.45 eV ($\text{VB1} \rightarrow \text{CB}$) and 2.65 eV ($\text{VB2} \rightarrow \text{CB}$) while that of the KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film is 3.85 eV. These band gap values show that these films can be used as a window layer of a solar cell (Sharmin, et al. 2019).

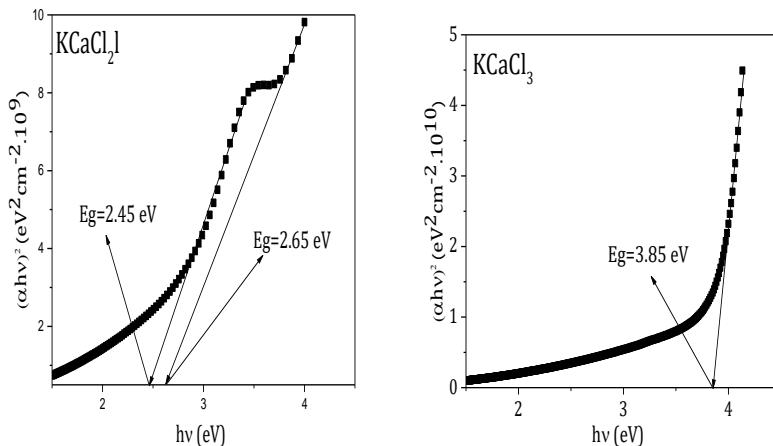


Fig. 3 $(\alpha h\nu)^2$ versus photon energy for the KCaCl_2I and KCaCl_3 perovskite thin films.

The refractive index and extinction coefficient of the films were determined using equations (Benramdane, et al. 1997). The non-linear dependence of the refractive index (n) and extinction coefficient (k) on the wavelength at room temperature can be seen in Fig. 4. Fig. 4 shows that KCaCl_2I and KCaCl_3 have different behavior for both parameters. The extinction coefficient of KCaCl_2I perovskite thin film increased from 425 nm. The refractive index of this film has also a reverse situation after 362 nm. The extinction coefficient of KCaCl_3 perovskite thin films increased from 325 nm. Additionally, the refractive index of KCaCl_3 perovskite thin films is almost constant and approximately 2.24–2.18. These values show that this film can be used for antireflection coating (Al-Asbahi, 2020).

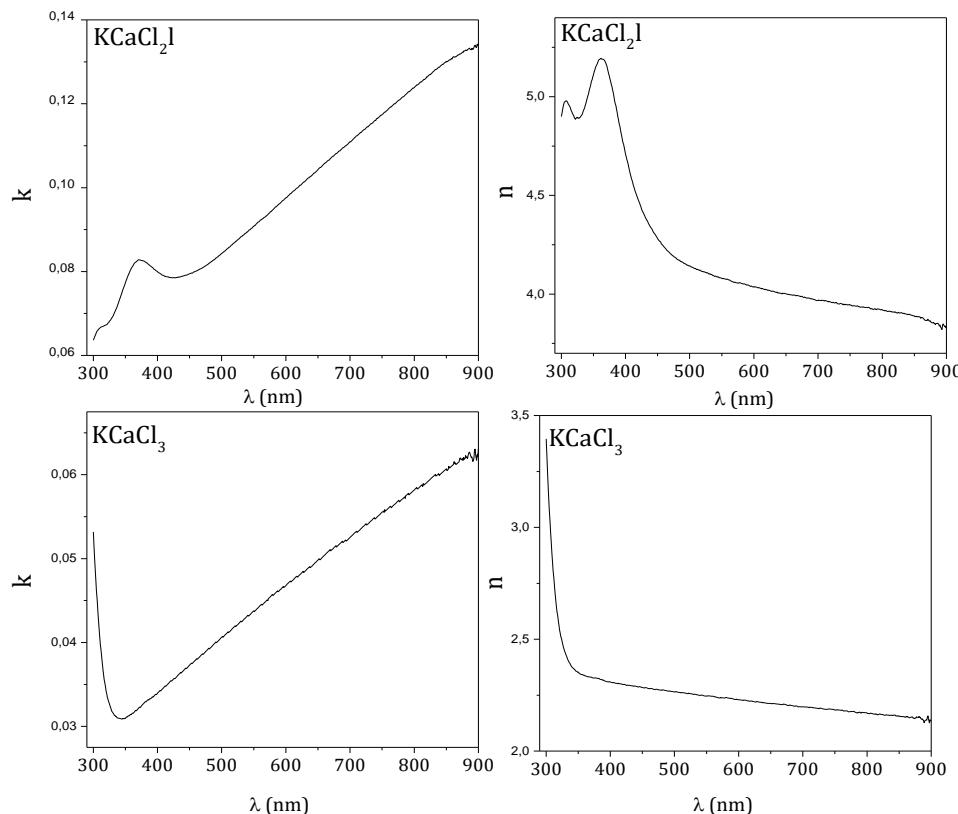


Fig. 4 The refractive index and extinction coefficient on wavelength in KCaCl_2I and KCaCl_3 perovskite films.

The real and imaginary parts of the dielectric constant of the films were calculated using the equations (Hodgson, 1970). According to Fig. 5, while the real and imaginary parts of the dielectric constant for KCaCl_2I perovskite films were found to be 16.23 and 0.78 at 600 nm, respectively, the real and imaginary parts of the dielectric

constant for KCaCl_3 perovskite films were determined to be 4.99 and 20.21 at 600 nm, respectively.

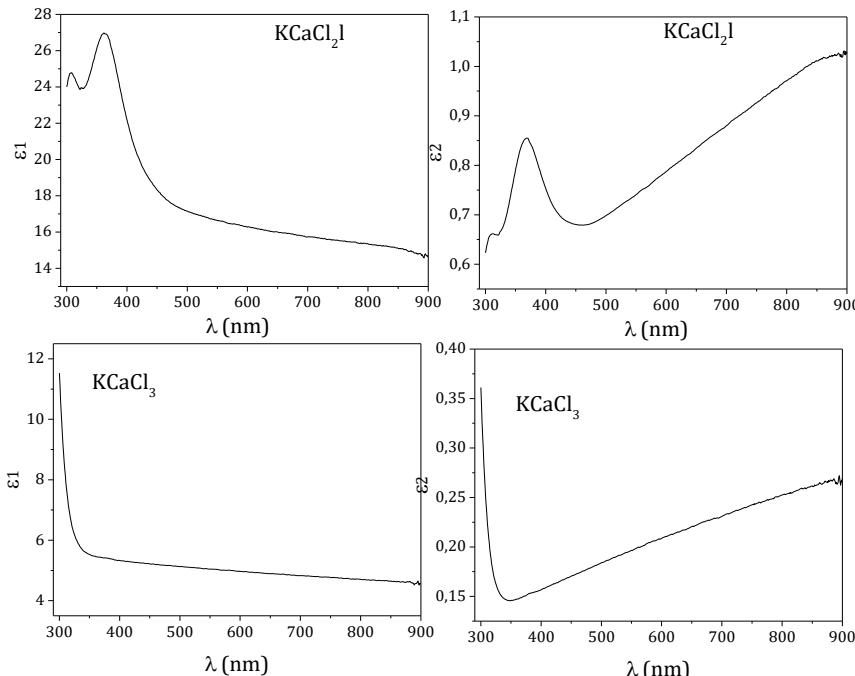


Fig. 5 The dependence of dielectric constants on wavelength in KCaCl_2I and KCaCl_3 perovskite films.

Conclusions

In this study, we successfully obtained KCaCl_2I and KCaCl_3 perovskite films via the CBD technique and compared the effect of iodine on the structural and optical properties of films by using characterization methods. According to XRD patterns, KCaCl_2I perovskite films have better crystalline structures than KCaCl_3 perovskite films. The band gap values of the KCaCl_2I perovskite thin film are 2.45 eV and 2.65 eV. The band gap value of the KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film is 3.85 eV. These band gap values show that both films can be used as a window layer of a solar cell. However, the KCaCl_3 perovskite thin film can be a better performance than the KCaCl_2I perovskite thin film as a window layer. To understand the effect of iodine on the properties of thin films, we plan to fabricate new films which will include different perovskite. Additionally, we will try using water instead of DMF: DMFO for green

chemistry. In addition to all these, obtaining new perovskites using the solid state method and their differences can be investigated.

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Effectiveness of Daily 5000 Mg Hydrolyzed Collagen Intake for Osteoarthritis Treatment in Elderly Patients

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Abstract

Background: There is currently no disease-modifying drug for osteoarthritis (OA), and some safety concerns have been identified about the leading traditional drugs. Therefore, research efforts have focused on alternatives such as supplementation with collagen derivatives. *Objectives:* To evaluate effectiveness of daily 5000 mg Hydrolyzed Collagen intake for treatment of osteoarthritis elderly patients. *Methods:* This prospective study consisted of 5000 mg Hydrolyzed Collagen (liquid form in combination with 500 mg Glucosamine Hydrochloride and 500 mg MSM (Methyl sulfonyl methane) intake for 30 days in 36 osteoarthritis patients previously diagnosed by medical examination. We collected data of joint stiffness, function measurement and intensity of pain data (WOMAC questionnaire) at baseline, day 5, 15, and 30, of collagen intake. The pain rate at beginning of the study (12.6/36) was classified as "acute". There is a 40% significant improvement in overall joint at the end of the study. *Results:* Patients were male (25%) and female (75%) with a mean age of 67.5 ± 1.12 years (mean \pm standard error). The daily intake of 5000 mg Hydrolysed Collagen (liquid form in combination with 500 mg Glucosamine Hydrochloride and 500 mg MSM caused a rapid and statistically significant reduction in pain and stiffness intensity and improved the functional capacity since the early days of the study. At the end of the treatment, most of the patients (83% and 90%) had an improvement in pain and functionality levels equal to or more than 30%. *Conclusions:* The daily intake of 5000 mg Hydrolysed Collagen (liquid form in combination with 500 mg Glucosamine Hydrochloride and 500 mg MSM for osteoarthritic treatment has been effective since the beginning, making up a big step in life quality of elderly people.

Keywords: osteoarthritis, treatment, hydrolyzed collagen

Children's Rights: Mental Health Problems of Children and Young People in Albania

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Abstract

"Mental health is an important part of the overall health of the child. In fact, it has a significant impact on physical health and the ability of the child to be successful in school, work and society..." The mental health reform in Albania was based on the Political Document for Mental Health in Albania in 2003, which provided the vision, principles and objectives to be achieved, through the development of services, and was followed by the Action Plan 2005-2010, of which proposed activities divided into: urgent, short-term and medium-term, in accordance with all international acts ratified by the Albanian state, including the Convention for the Protection of Children's Rights. The evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan 2005-2010 conveyed the necessity for the drafting of a new legal framework, concretized with the approval of Law No.44/2012 "On Mental Health" and the by-laws in its implementation. The approval of this law constitutes a further step in the implementation of the mental health reform in Albania. Also, the Action Plan for the Development of Mental Health Services, 2013-2022, has been approved, which defines the concrete steps that must be taken to fulfill two major strategic objectives: that of decentralizing mental health services, through the extension and enriching the existing network with services as close as possible to the community and deinstitutionalization, through reducing the number of psychiatric beds and increasing and strengthening community mental health services. Covid-19 and the lockdown applied in every country strengthen out a lot of problems concerning the protection of the human's rights, especially the Children's Rights in every field of life: economic, social, cultural life, wellbeing, mental health, etc. The most vulnerable group were children because of their age. In fulfilling the respect of human rights in general and persons with disabilities, as well as many marginalized groups such as LGBTI, drug users, etc., the reform in the field of mental health is combined at the same time with other reforms of undertaken in our country, such as: the reform of the new administrative territorial division, the reform of social services, etc. All these reforms enabled the complete improvement of the legal framework in accordance with the respect of human rights and marginalized groups.

Keywords: mental health, Children's Rights, strategy, action plan, specialized services, health services

Constructing Post Pandemic Learning: Designing the New Norm for Knowledge Management for Post-Pandemic Worlds of Business and Education

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Abstract

After this historical pandemic period of hysteria, chaos, and crisis, the Global Workforce has started to come back together to assemble, rethink, rebrand, and reconstruct their various approaches to operating in their own environments, as well as trying to do understand what Wieck (1995) labeled as sensemaking. According to Dougherty (20202), sensemaking is “how organizational members come to understand and move forward when faced with unexpected or unanticipated information”. On the other side of the spectrum from the process-oriented lens, some people may view this movement forward is how the creation of best practices are developed and formed. In any event, this paper will look at how events leading up to the pandemic realization of a crisis helped to create now only forms of hysteria and chaos, but also brought about some forms of unity on the local, national, and global levels. Further, this forward movement is viewed as more of new social order movement referred to as the “new norm” in which people and organizations accepted that change was not only a form of social responsibility, but also a linkage between reality and an internal need to survive and succeed during the periods before, during, and arising out of the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic pandemonium segueing into other types of variants which either confused, angered or empowered others to make radical differences in the worlds of business and education. Consequently, this paper will look at how individuals, groups, and organizations in the field of business and education learn to operate differently during this type in global history, as well as learn from their mistakes and best practices towards understanding why some felt it a social, moral, scientific, educational, and business need to design a new form of knowledge management to capture and memorialize the events during the pandemic rain of fury on the global community from 2019 onward in order to create a new form of both knowledge management and genre of literature that future generations may learn from the social, business, educational, political, medical, and philosophical accomplishments of those who survived this epic period and sojourner onward to better understanding.

Keywords: Post Pandemic, Learning, Business, Education

Economic Benefit of Strengthening the 50 Years Old Building of National Art Gallery in Tirana with Concrete Jacket Layers and Steel Rebars - Against It's Strengthening with Carbon Fiber (Frp) Coating, Maintaining the Same Level of Anti-Seismic Safety

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Abstract

Although not damaged by the powerful earthquakes of 2019, the existing building of the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana, will undergo a strengthen of its structural elements, to make it a building with high seismic safety, in accordance with Eurocode's Guidelines. The strengthen of the structure consists mainly in the reinforcement of the existing foundations and columns with concrete jacket layer, applying vertical-horizontal reinforcement, and the construction from scratch of 5 reinforced concrete walls. The beams and slabs which have optimal existing reinforcement and dimensions, do not need concrete jacket layers and additional reinforcement, but will be repaired with high strength structural mortar. The technique of strengthen structural elements with carbon fiber coating (FRP) could have been chosen, but according to the analysis carried out with empirical calculations and with finite element calculation programs, the technique of strengthening with a concrete jacket layer, resulted more effective in economic terms and not only. In this paper, an analysis of economic benefit of strengthen the structure with concrete layers and steel reinforcement will be presented.

Keywords: Economic benefit, strengthen, concrete jacket layer, reinforcement

Use of Narratives as a Pedagogical Tool for Students to Realize that Humanities Education Will Help Them Make Better Decisions in Life and the Profession

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Abstract

Traditionally, education was considered a process in which the main protagonist was the teacher, the only bearer and guarantor of knowledge, where the communicative relationship established was unidirectional, the students neither said anything nor expressed their opinion. The purpose of this work is to share a didactic experience in the application of narrative diaries as a pedagogical tool in the subject of Television, Culture and New Customs, held in the first semester of 2022. Through the narrative diaries, students are expected to reflect critically on their past, that of their immediate surroundings and society so that, with this background, their present can be explained in a clearer way. The narrative diary used in this experience is made up of three questions (Testimonial Perspective: what happened and what happened to you?) How did they experience it in class? How did other people experience it? / Personal Perspective: Why Was this situation relevant and/or meaningful to you? / Professional Perspective: How has the experience transformed the view of the profession?). The subject is developed using collaborative techniques forming small groups of work that show the direction to follow in the subject, around which are structured a series of more limited problematic situations, which allow addressing the different contents of it during the semester. Students are motivated and think favorably about its implementation.

Keywords: humanities, education, narratives, profession, engineering

Study of the Way People Behave in Commercial Streets in Athens, Greece

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Abstract

No matter what we do and where we go, when we are in public spaces, we try to satisfy our needs, although there is always a reason for the practice of good etiquette. Such needs derive from both our ideas and from our social and living environment, which are influential factors. In that context, a successful place serves peoples' needs and that is the reason why this topic consists of one of the most significant ones in urban design theory and practice. Indeed, during the previous decades, a series of researches like the ones of Jan Gehl's and William Whyte's, have tried to study the degree in which urban environment is related to peoples' behavior in public spaces, in various cities, worldwide. In Greece, such researches were not common. During the last years, an increased interest about this topic is observed. This is probably related to the growing interest of local authorities to implement Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) and change Greek cities into more functional ones. In that context, this research paper tries to give a survey on how people behave in commercial streets in neighborhoods in Athens. In that way, it evaluates the existing knowledge with regard to attitudes and behavior in public spaces. Finally, the physical characteristics of commercial streets and the way in which they urge or discourage people to behave is another topic studied in this paper.

Keywords: urban spaces, commercial streets, human behavior, observation, Athens

"Only We Committed Genocide? We Are Not that Kind of People": Failed Transitional Justice and Sociopolitical Reconciliation in Former Yugoslavia

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Abstract

In genocidal war crimes cases, failed transitional justice, ethnonational and socially defensive collective confutation, and generated victimization narratives lead societies into a "new state of conflict." These adverse processes influence the perspective of "positive peace," i.e., unlock the structural factors of "negative peace" and decrease state-building potentials in some former Yugoslavia countries. Consequently, such social and political circumstances prolong the suffering of victims (war survivors, detainees in concentration camps, raped women) and families of deceased and missing victims. Moreover, these methods contain non-violent social-psychological dimensions and are active mechanisms that constitute various social and political agencies. Consequently, such occurrences affect peaceful coexistence and integral assimilation into the EU of Western Balkan nations. Accordingly, raising social awareness and stricter legislation related to the dominant mainstream sociopolitical approach to denying internationally sentenced crimes against humanity and genocide is required. Moreover, the rational and pragmatic approach to collective defensive "victimization" and denial narratives (with periodical ideological-mythological elements) is vital. Additionally, the EU and USA's sincere objectives and support for "democratization, the rule of law and political ethics" in the Western Balkans are required and significant. Furthermore, regionally, how to make universal transitional justice a means of positive peace shift and Reconciliation is imperative. It is a fundamental open question that must achieve global implication and visibility after the lethal 1990s. Thirty years of disputable sociopolitical, legal, and human security progress in the Balkans demonstrate it.

Keywords: former Yugoslavia, Crimes against humanity, Genocide denial, Ethnopolitics, Confutation & denial agency, Reconciliation

Symbolic Loss and Grief

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Abstract

Although much research, clinical, and academic focus exist on grief and tangible loss (death), little emphasis has been given on grief reactions to symbolic losses or non-death losses. Symbolic loss includes divorce, unemployment, retirement, diagnosis of a disabling or health related conditions, life transitions, loss of custody of a child, foster care placement, loss of country, culture, home, identity, social support, and so on. Symbolic loss is not always identified as a loss, therefore, individuals who experience a symbolic loss might not be able to identify their reactions and feelings as grief. As a result, individuals are not able to take the time that is needed to process their grief as well as to receive the amount and kind of support they would have otherwise received if they were experiencing a tangible loss. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss symbolic loss and grief and to identify ways that mental health professionals and interdisciplinary teams can provide the necessary support and services needed for those who are experiencing grief due to symbolic loss.

Keywords: symbolic loss, grief, loss, bereavement, tangible loss

Social Evolution in Sociology

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Abstract

In this reflection, the aim is to critically analyse how Sociology, as a Social Science, can consider social evolution without applying and mobilising this concept in a simply ideological way.

Keywords: Sociology, social evolution, ideology, progress

Population Dynamics and Infestation Rate of Peach Twig Borer - (*Anarsia Lineatella* Zell.) in Almond Orchards of Southeastern Anatolia, Türkiye ¹

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Abstract

Almond (*Prunus amygdalus* Batsch, 1801) is the most frequently planted tree in southeastern Anatolia, Türkiye after pistachio and pomegranate. Almond orchards are infested by several pests that reduce production and quality. Peach twig borer [(*Anarsia lineatella* Zell. (Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae)] is one of these pests causing significant yield and quality losses in almonds. This study determined population dynamics and infestation rate of peach twig borer in almond orchards located in Eyyübiye, Haliliye and Karaköprü districts of Şanlıurfa province. Adult population development was monitored by using sexually attractive pheromone traps. The traps were monitored weekly. The first adult flight of the pest was recorded during the last week of April forming four peaks in the season. The last flight took place in the second week of November. Regarding different months of monitoring period, 26% adults (3737 adults/traps) was trapped in May, 21% (3071 adults/traps) in September and 18% (2616 adults/trap) in August. The highest number of adults (246.6 adults/traps) was trapped on May 18 in Eyyübiye, August 29 in Haliliye (294.3 adults/traps) and May 11 in Karaköprü district (192.6 adults/traps). The results revealed that the pest is actively flying in nature for 8 months and can theoretically produce four generations per year. The infestation rate of the pest on almond fruits in Eyyübiye, Haliliye and Karaköprü was 21.33%, 31.21% and 8.96%, while it was 8.40%, 3.00% and 1.00% on shoots, respectively. It is concluded that Peach twig borer poses significant damages to almond shoots and fruits in southeastern Anatolia region, Türkiye. It is recommended to cut infested shoots periodically together with removing the infested fruits fallen to the ground or hung on the trees.

Keywords: *Anarsia lineatella*, Almond, Population, Infestation rate, Pheromone

¹ This study produced from the second author MSc Thesis and funded by Harran University Project Support Commission (HÜBAK) through project number 19250.

Culture in Story-Telling: the Case of American and Pakistani Story Pals

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Abstract

In 2016, a Colorado-based non-profit organization, Marshall Direct Fund working on providing free education to children living in the slum areas of Sheikhupura, Pakistan initiated a PenPal program between middle-schoolers in their headquarter town, Aspen, one of the most affluent areas of the U.S. being the most expensive ski-town in the country and middle-schoolers at the Sheikhupura Moqah Foundation non-profit school for slum children. Volunteering with the organizations, I initiated a co-construct story program between each PenPal pair at the two schools. This paper examines the cultural themes in the story-telling styles, topics, milestones, events and imagery co-constructed by the paired students in the two countries. Cultural anthropology analysis of storytelling is focused on not only the storytellers and listeners, in this case, readers, but also on the entities that take the role of characters in the story, who may be real persons or representations of real persons and stories are transformed based on the interest of the audience. In co-constructing stories, as students at the two schools wrote in drastically different socio-economic and cultural environments, there were points when the cultural relevance of the stories became unrelated for one side or the other and a common ground of imagining, recounting and co-creating needed to be renegotiated. I will highlight the ways in which the social patterns and functioning of the paired students' stories demonstrate their social positioning and their respective relational, class and gender identity conditioning as part of their home cultures.

Keywords: Culture, Story-Telling, America, Pakistan, Story Pals

Study of the Degree of Integration of Refugees in Greece in Relation to Socio-Spatial Aspects

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Abstract

The paper examines the situation of refugees settled in Greece. It focuses on the examination of how refugees themselves perceive their social condition and how they develop activities to achieve their integration, in case they wish. To approach this subject, an empirical study took place in Karditsa, a medium size Greek city which was selected as a case study. Semi-structured interviews played a focal role in the methodology applied. Narratives of refugees document that integration is related not only to functional and social intercourse but also to housing quality aspects. Such an empirical finding was confirmed by an ordinal regression analysis model. That is crucial as it forces to the admission that housing opportunities may be integrated in the official policy which is usually focuses on serving mainly the vital needs. It is argued that policy may acknowledge refugees as social actors instead of policy objects to facilitate integration in the Greek society. The complexity of the integration process should also be underlined and the role of the various aspects should be clarified and prioritized. Future research can contribute to that topic in order for overall conclusions to be derived, so as for a rational policy to be presented.

Keywords: integration of refugees, aspects of integration, refugee policy, housing policy, local community, medium-size city, Greece

Audit Committee Effectiveness and Audit Quality: An Empirical Evidence

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the effectiveness of audit committee (AC) of capital goods firms listed on TASI, Saudi Arabia, and audit quality for the period 2010-2019. Employing logistic regression analysis, the results reveal that audit committee meetings and committee size contribute to higher audit quality (Defined as the company is audited by Big4 auditing firms) while audit committee independence is not associated with audit quality. The findings of this study are relevant to investors and policy makers in Saudi Arabia regarding the reliability of audit committees and its implication on the quality of the audit function in today's competitive markets.

Keywords: Audit Committee, Audit quality, Corporate Governance

ECG Tools for Cancer Screening

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Abstract

Introduction: New tools for cancer screening covers a broad spectrum of innovations including optical sensors, nanotechnology, affinity agents, imaging contrast agents, nanofluidics and cell-based assays. Detection of cancers by non-invasive methods such as X-Ray, CT scan, and MRI & PET scan are non-invasive and quick but very expensive. *Objectives:* Objectives of this study are to develop new non-invasive, safe, quick and economical method of detecting cancers by ECGs. *Materials and Methods:* Data were statistically processed using variation and regression analyses. Evaluation of statistical reliability for the groups studied was made according to the p-value for the meaning of chi-square, and differences were considered significant at $p<0.05$. *Results and Discussion:* In the group was included 31 individuals without cancer and 67 persons with different types of cancer. p-wave may be used with an insignificantly degree of probability as a predictor of cancer for women. QRS complex may be used as an additional indicator of cancer for men. Dividing the groups by sex showed the presence of statistically significant difference between the mathematical expectations for the groups. *Conclusion:* The results showed that obtained logistic regression model possessed good abilities for cancer prediction among men, based on the ESGs.

Keywords: ECG, Cancer Screening, Tools

From the past to the Present: The Modernity of the “Stimulus-Means” Approach in Education

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Abstract

In the cultural-historical perspective, the creation and use of “stimuli-means/tools” have enhanced the natural skills and abilities of human beings, whether manual or sensory. An example is that related to quantification: we humans have a natural ability to measure the quantity of groups of similar items “by eye”, an innate, perceptually-based ability which we share with other animal species. This ability of ours was greatly enhanced when, as human beings, we invented the first calculating tool, beginning, perhaps, with the use of our fingers, so that we could move from the immediate perception of quantity to its calculation. The development of computational systems has, over time, led to an amplification of the process, following the different cultural-historical paths which have characterized humankind, eventually enabling the invention of current technologies. In the cultural-historical perspective, the concept of “stimulus-means/tool” is linked to that of “zone of proximal development”, i.e., that area of mental activity which the learner can produce under the guidance of an adult or in collaboration with a more able companion and which comes in addition to the mental activity that he or she could produce independently. In other words, the zone of proximal development can be understood as the area between spontaneous performance and performance enhanced by the introduction of stimuli-means/tools. Be they ancient, such as the abacus and the compass, or modern, such as computers, tablets, in general any digital device, with software, programs and apps, platforms, social media, etc., which, in daily life, now more than ever in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, have become irreplaceable, also and especially at the level of use for educational purposes.

Keywords: stimulus-means, zone of proximal development, cultural-historical school, education, mathematics education, history of mathematics education, teacher training

Analyzing the Tax Contribution on Price Changes In the Food Sector in Eurozone. Implications for the Efficiency of Tax Measures Against the Rising Inflation on Food Products

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Extended Abstract

The current paper explores the impact of the tax measures on food prices as this is reflected in the harmonized index of consumer prices (HICP). The paper draws on the consumer price index changes to identify the tax incidence, as well as its pass-through characteristics. Since the last quarter of 2021, the rapidly rising production costs, also in the food industry, inflated drastically the food prices both directly (immediate pass-through), as well as indirectly via the reduction of the weight of food packages sold for the same price ('shrinkflation'). The paper deals with the direct impact of the tax changes and sheds light on particularities of the tax incidence on food prices across the eurozone countries in comparison to other products (e.g., energy products). In the relevant literature, the tax incidence is found to differentiate according to the products' nature, the market and macroeconomic conditions, the type of tax reform (i.e., value added taxes, excise duties, etc.), the efficiency of the tax collection mechanism, etc. Methodology and data: The paper uses an appropriate set of euro area countries' monthly HICP and HICP-CT series for food products in the period: January 2015-April 2022. The focus of the analysis rests mainly on the Special Aggregate Food of the ECOICOP classification system of the HICP. The HICP-CT is treated as an analysis proxy for the potential tax incidence. Due to existing methodological constraints, the HICP-CT is seen as an approximation of the upper bound of the tax incidence, rather than an accurate measure of actual contributions. Within such an analysis framework, the HICP-CT corresponds to the theoretical contribution of tax changes to overall inflation, assuming an instantaneous and complete pass-through of tax rate changes on the prices paid by the consumers. *Possible conclusions:* The study findings aim to feed into the literature of fiscal policy, indirect taxes, food market and inflation. Insights might be extracted for responses to the following questions: How impactful are the VAT measures on food products' HICP?; Why is the tax incidence on food prices in National HICP

not homogenous across the euro area countries and other sectors?; To what extent potential reductions of VAT on food products combat the rising inflation?

Keywords: Tax incidence, food prices, pass-through, harmonized index of consumer prices (HICP).

JEL Classification: H20,H22,H31

The Importance of Analyzing Protective Mechanisms Using TAT in the Psychodiagnostic Process

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Abstract

The Thematic Apperception Test, or TAT, is a type of projective test that involves describing ambiguous scenes to learn more about a person's emotions, motivations, and personality. Popularly known as the "picture interpretation technique".(Henry A. Murray, Oxford 2008). The psychodiagnostic report is a communication between the tester and the referring person and plays a vital role in the final treatment or intervention plan for the patient. Because personality analysis is vitally related to report writing, the uniqueness of each person tested is emphasized. The last aspect of the subject of personality analysis is important for the psychodiagnostic report.(Henry Kellerman and Anthony Burry,2007) In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association 2000), obsessive-compulsive disorder is placed within the class of psychiatric disorders known as anxiety disorders.Obsessions are persistent, unwanted thoughts, images, or urges that interfere with a person's thinking and cause excessive worry and anxiety. (Bruce M. Hyman PhD LCSW, Cherlene Pedrick RN:2010). The aim of this study is to demonstrate the efficiency of the TAT instrument in analyzing the protective mechanisms during the psychodiagnostic process. TAT was used in this study and 2 case studies were considered into consideration. The results showed perceptual and cognitive process views. From the conceptual perspective, it is shown that the TAT test in OCD showed us details, detailed descriptions, the fragmentation of stories, multiple alternatives for the same story, and the relationships between the characters, that is, the perception of the relationships, the difficulty of the relationships between them. While from the viewpoint of Cognitive it gives us data about the flow of thought, rationalism, and intellectualism, showing us that TAT gives us essential data for the diagnostic process of OCD. As recommendations regarding the test, we affirm that TAT is a very streamlined, instrument that we can use extensively in the condition of clinical utility, enabling us to be accurate for the client during the diagnostic process.

Keywords: TAT, (Therapeutic Appreciation Test) Psychodiagnostics process, Defense mechanisms, Case study, OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)

Cooperation Between Teachers as a Key Point in School Performance

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Abstract

To implement successful educational programs, school reforms are increasingly addressing the collaboration that occurs among teachers at multiple levels (Howden & Kopiec, 2002; Inger, 1993a). Also, it is thought that this type of cooperation has its impact not only on the teacher's performance, but also on the performance and results of the students. In all reforms in education or in all the recommendations given, emphasis is placed on the structural side of the system and the way the process works, but without considering the human and social elements, such as culture, school climate and human relations. In our schools, today we talk about teacher-pupil, teacher-parent and vice versa relationships in both cases, as well as the school-community relationship. Of course, these relationships are very important and significant for the school, but it seems clear that an equally important element has been forgotten, the teacher-teacher relationship, the creation of a good climate of cooperation and the exchange of experiences between them. This article is part of a more in-depth study. The article is based on the review of the literature, as well as its evaluation, bringing contemporary studies as well as different viewpoints regarding these relationships. The article interweaves the researcher's point of view regarding teacher relations, as well as gives some recommendations for improving these relations and strengthening cooperation between teachers in the school, seeing the teacher more as a human and social being surrounded by many problems, concerns, and other positive and negative relationships in his life.

Keywords: teacher collaboration, cooperation, school performance, teacher performance, director's role

Critical Discourse Analysis of News Headlines in *the New York Times* and *the Times*

Natasa Stojan

Abstract

Health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine have affected countries all over the world in the last couple of years. Dramatical changes have occurred in many countries which have been faced with various crises: health, energy, economic, financial, political. This study analyses news headlines published in September 2022 in two established online newspapers, *The New York Times* and *The Times*. The aim of the paper is to analyse a sample of headlines that deal with various aspects of the global economic, financial and energy crisis, that are framed in two different social and cultural contexts, in the USA and the UK. The methodological procedure applied in this qualitative- quantitative study comprises two levels of analysis, linguistic and intertextual, based on the model of Critical Discourse Analysis, developed by Norman Fairclough. The role of the media is to provide true, unbiased and reliable facts, which should be respected particularly during a severe crisis, so that people could critically evaluate available information. Particular prominence is given to newspaper headlines in this study since their function is to summarize the main content of the newspaper text, to indicate the topic, attract readers' attention and evoke particular cultural context. Our analysis is based partly on lexicogrammatical structures used in the headlines and partly on discourse practices of the newspapers in different cultural contexts, with the aim of finding out how certain linguistic features are used as discursive enactment of sociocultural practices.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, sociocultural practices, news headlines, financial crisis, energy crisis

Population Dynamics of *Lygus* Species in Cotton (*Gossypium Hirsutum L.*) Fields Cultivated in Southeastern Anatolia, Turkey

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Abstract

Cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum* L.) is an important industrial plant in Turkey and Southeastern Anatolia region is the top cotton producing region in the country. Several diseases and pests infest cotton crop, incurring significant quantitative and qualitative losses. Among these pests, *Lygus* spp. cause significant losses starting from vegetative period of cotton. This study determined the relationship between population dynamics of *Lygus* spp. and phenology of cotton in Diyarbakır province during 2020 and 2021. For determining *Lygus* species, samples were collected from 244 fields in 7 districts of Diyarbakır province by using either D-vac or sweep net based on the phenological period of cotton. Population dynamics studies were carried out weekly in two different fields in Sur and Çınar districts in each year, starting from 3-5 leaf growth stage of cotton. Two species, i.e., *L. gemellatus* (H.-S.) and *L. pratensis* (L.), were identified during the study. Among these species, *L. gemellatus* was the most dense and widespread, found in 91.2% and 74.7% of the surveyed fields during 2020 and 2021, respectively. The pests were recorded in cotton fields at the end of May (before the flowering period) in both years of study. It was observed that population increased after this period and *L. gemellatus* population reached the highest-level during boll setting period of cotton. On the other hand, population of *L. pratensis* peaked during boll maturation period. It is concluded that population density of both pests can change from year to year depending on biotic and abiotic factors. It is suggested that surveys to detect these pests must be conducted at the start of vegetative period of cotton.

Keywords: Survey, pests, population dynamics, *Lygus* species, cotton

Determination of Components of Smart Economy Model

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Abstract

Cities play a paramount role in the social and economic aspects of life around the world and have an enormous impact on the environment. According to the United Nations Population Fund, about 68% of people will live in the urban areas by 2050. McKinsey & Company state that 600 largest cities around the world will collectively generate 60% of global GDP by 2025. Cities consume 60 to 80 percent of the world's energy, and are responsible for a large percentage of greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, the concepts of a sustainable, green, compact, creative, and smart city have attracted considerable academic interest. Nevertheless, the distribution of scientific articles by areas of study is uneven. The research is devoted to the economic basis of smart solutions presented in the scientific publications indexed in Scopus database. The time span was from 1993 to June 2020. In total 927 publications meet the requirements: full-text articles in English having "cost" or "cost-benefit analysis" and "smart city" as keywords. The analysis demonstrated that 33% of articles were in Computing, 21% in Engineering, and only 3% in Business areas. It is not surprising since smart city first of all referred to technologies. However, to construct the model of smart city we need to know the economic model of each dimension of smart city. After reading the abstracts only 159 articles were selected for full-text reading, and only 22 of them present the real analysis. 13 of these 22 articles were in energy area, the energy area can be subjected to cost-benefit analysis quite easily. Other areas are covered insufficiently. The model of smart economy should contain the analysis of all dimensions of smart city. It is not possible to consider all the components of each dimension since they present different levels of development in different cities; nevertheless, each dimension should be presented in the analysis. *Acknowledgements:* This work was supported by the European Regional Development Fund. Research project No.1.1.1.2/VIAA/3/19/458 "Development of Model of Smart Economy in Smart City". The specific support objective activity of the Republic of Latvia Project id. N. 1.1.1.2/16/I/001

Keywords: smart city, model of smart economy, smart city dimensions, literature analysis

Archaeo-Oriental Studies: Filling a Gap in Knowledge and Research

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Abstract

Obviously, the past of a culture has an impact on its current situation. Archaeo-Oriental Studies is a project aimed at understanding of thinking and behaviour in non-European societies intercultural dialogue with which – and between which – is difficult or even impossible: the reasons for this lie in tradition, preserved in signs and texts. The axis of the project is conceptualising power in ancient and contemporary non-European cultures. The ways of understanding power and its functions in selected African and Asian countries is studied in bi-directionally: up-down and down-up (authority – subjects and subjects – authority). The primary source are non-verbal signs (archaeological artifacts and other non-linguistic signs, both objects and human behaviour) and texts. The implementation of the project follows a two-track approach, in terms of the time of creation of the sources studied – ancient and contemporary. An interdisciplinary approach allows to understand the cultural determinants of the concept of power and its social expressions, as well as the continuity in certain forms of thought and culture. The implementation of both of these tasks is possible through collaborative interdisciplinary analysis of artefacts and texts. The research adopts a perspective which accounts for the rooting of contemporary power systems in cultural paradigms and explores the possibilities of applying the apparatus and theory of contemporary political science to the analysis of non-European cultures. Outstanding scholars at the University of Warsaw (representing as diverse fields of research as archeology, oriental studies, cognitive linguistics, history, art history, religious studies, sociology, political science, and non-verbal communication systems and neuroscience) work together with colleagues abroad, combining various methodologies along with field research supplemented by the use of new technologies.

Keywords: Archaeo-Oriental Studies, project, cultural paradigms, research

Analysis of Ship Hull Panels Produced with Sandwich Composite Material

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Abstract

The recent development in the marine industry with larger ships built in sandwich construction and the use of more advanced materials has enforced improvements of design criteria based on advantages that this typology of constructions brings as an added value. A structural sandwich comprises of two stiff face sheets on a thick lightweight core. One of the benefits is that the sandwich has a very high bending stiffness compared to its weight and it is therefore often used within the aeronautical, vehicle and marine industry where low weight and high load carrying capabilities immediately allow for higher payload. In this study, through simulations in Solid Work, the analysis of the data will be aimed based on the primary indicators related to the performance of the vessel, respectively: the mass of the last panels of the ship, the board, the deck / the mass of the vessel, the displacement in mm of the material due to the action of the maximum pressure, the bending stress of the panels respectively for the bottom, the board and the deck, the ratio of the load to the extension (stress & strain) as well as the degree of deformation for the most loaded panel. The study helps the production sector of small marine vehicles that develop their activity in Albania to choose the most suitable composite material that provides them with a vessel with the lowest mass, being accompanied at the same time with the lowest value of tension in bending as well as the lowest value of panel deformation

Keywords: sandwich composite materials, structure weight, Solid Work, best performance, stress and strain

Evaluation of Polymer-Ceramic Composites as Potential Drug Delivery Systems

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Abstract

The term drug delivery systems appertain to materials that release therapeutic agents to the specific body site or transport of active substances to the spot of action through the biological membranes. Delivering of the drug to a specific site of the patient's body can influence the efficacy and safety of the drug by controlling the rate, dose, and time of its release. Moreover, due to the local action of a drug the negative systemic effects of the drug administered orally may be limited. The delivery of drugs can be adjusted and controlled by numerous variables including the physicochemical properties of the carrier of the active substance. In this study, we focused on the preparation of ceramic-polymer composites by a fast and facile method based on photo-crosslinking under a UV lamp. Such materials were modified with natural origin substances i.e. protein. The chemical structure of such-obtained materials was investigated with FT-IR spectroscopy. In order to evaluate materials' behavior in biological fluids in vitro tests with phosphate buffer solution were carried out. During incubation changes in pH and conductivity of the immersion fluids were monitored. Additionally, studies of the swelling ability of materials were performed to determine the rate parameters and equilibrium swelling of tested materials. The "Multifunctional biologically active composites for applications in bone regenerative medicine" project is carried out within the TEAM-NET program of the Foundation for Polish Science financed by the European Union under the European Regional Development Fund. The authors gratefully acknowledge financial support. POIR.04.04.00-00-16D7/18.

Keywords: drug delivery systems, polymers, composites, calcium phosphates, bioactivity

Characterization of the Carbon-Based Material by DFT Method

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Abstract

Carbon-based materials (CBM) have been widely used in industry and our surroundings, however, most practical materials have disordered structures and amorphous portions, and it hampers the further improvement of their performances. Graphene mesospponge (GMS) is one of the CBM synthesized by a hard-templating method using Al₂O₃ or MgO nanoparticles via precisely controlled chemical-vapor deposition in which the average stacking number of graphene sheets is adjusted to 1 (one-atom-thick). After template removal, the resulting mesoporous carbon is annealed at 1800 °C to form GMS. By such a high-temperature treatment, most carbon edge sites that cause corrosion of batteries can be removed, and GMS exhibits ultra-high stability against chemical oxidation as well as electrochemical oxidation. GMS has a high electric conductivity which is superior to carbon blacks. Furthermore, GMS is mechanically flexible and tough. GMS shows reversible deformation and recovery upon applying mechanical force and its removal. For characterization of this CBM was also used a Density functional theory (DFT) method applied to model structure with topological defects (5,7 membered rings in the graphene sheet). Calculated vibrations were compared with experimentally measured Raman spectra of CBM and GMS materials. The excellent agreement was revealed. *Acknowledgments:* It is funded by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST SICORP Grant No. JPMJSC2112 (Japan) and Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia (V4-Japan/ JRP/ 2021/96/AtomDeC), within the frame of the Visegrad Group-Japan 2021 2nd Joint Call on Advanced Materials.

Keywords: carbon-based material, DFT, Raman spectrum, graphene mesosponge, battery

Black Awakening in Obama's America: The End of An Illusion

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Abstract

In America, African Americans were, and are, locked in a racial prison. As Blacks, their identities were defined in opposition to whites and whiteness. Of course, Blacks could free themselves by changing their names, reframing their identities, and discharging their culture and heritage. To do so, as Malcolm X pointed out, required some kind of radical action, a kind of suspension of judgement that would permit Blacks to see themselves in tension with the normative white gaze. As long as African Americans place their faith in political rightness and correctness of American democracy, they would never know what it feels like to be equal. The hope and optimism that coursed through Black America in anticipation of Obama's victory as the first Black president in 2008 seemed a million miles away. It seems like slavery was never abolished, it was only redesigned.

Keywords: racial politics, Barack Obama, police brutality, #BlackLivesMatter, transition

Crossing the Plenary Borders: Comparative Cultural Studies in the Looking Glass

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Abstract

In the wake of 21st-century upsurge of interests in multiculturalism, the genuine pluralism of literature became visibly globetrotting. Thus, dissenting voices pressed for what Gayatri Spivak (2003) had called 'a sea change' in the epistemological perception of actual teaching methods and paraphernalia in comparative literature pedagogies. While other scholars dreamt, in Goethe's words, of a 'world literature'. This persistent appealing had ultimately hastened the enthusiastic rush towards the adoption of comparative cultural studies, which considered the activity of comparison not only as a natural mode of thinking inherent in the reading process of literature, but also an inspirational stimulus that impressed itself on -to borrow the paraphrased version of Rosenblatt- "how to respond to 'Art'" in its multiplicity and its striking diversity. In line with this, the current presentation will shed light on the vast realm of comparative literature as a scholarly cultural practice. It first showcases the importance of integrating some socio-cultural approaches in literature, like visual culture and film studies, deemed as a food-for-thought spur for the learners to urge them identify with the symbiotic relations of cultures across texts and media. It also explores how *Cultural Literacy* plays a pivotal role in the study of world literature inside academia by stimulating the students' openness to the world cultures through a set of integrative and dialogic techniques of teaching, which target basically at raising their intercultural awareness of the texts and fostering knowledge related to the culture of the foreign language.

Keywords: comparative cultural studies, comparative literature, *cultural literacy*, visual culture, world literature

Consumption of Famotidine Versus Omeprazole in Albania in Last 5 Years

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Abstract

To describe trends in out-of-hospital utilization and prescribing of Famotidine and Omeprazole in Albania using the Anatomic Therapeutic Chemical Classification-Defined Daily Dose (ATC/DDD methodology). The study was retrospective and we analyzed the prescription and consumption of this two drugs in the primary health care. Omeprazole is included in reimbursement list, while Famotidine is not. The data were assembled from Health Insurance Institute in Tirana (HII), Albania and also Import data which were analyzed for the period 2015-2020. The data about the consumption of drugs were expressed as a number of Defined Daily Dose (DDDs) /1000inhabitants/day. The consumption of omeprazole from reimbursement scheme was 3.09-3.86 DDD/1000 inhabitants/day respectively in 2015-2020. Meanwhile its real consumption from import data is 7.34-8.89 DDD/1000 inhabitants/day. The consumption of Famotidine is between 0.95-1.46 DDD/1000 inhabitants/day respectively in 2015-2020. The highest values of consumption are achieved in Tirana, with a substantial difference compared to other regions of Albania. The consumption values of these drugs in Albania are comparatively low. An important part of them flows out from the reimbursement scheme.

Keywords: drug utilization, DDD, omeprazole, famotidine

Challenges for the Bulgarian Companies in the Implementation of Sustainability Practices

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PhD

Abstract

The topic of sustainability, and in particular the sustainability practices of companies, is especially relevant nowadays. The introduction of such practices is very important for Eastern European countries, including Bulgaria. This study is part of a large-scale university project (UNWE, Sofia) that focuses precisely on sustainability practices in international business. The aim is to find out if Bulgarian companies are familiar with sustainable practices and whether they apply them correctly in their daily operations. This is achieved via analysis and synthesis of results from a survey. The summarized data of the aforementioned survey is part of the whole project and represents the policies for sustainable development in specially selected Bulgarian private companies. Each of the companies included in the survey is ISO 14000 certified (the international standards for environmental management) and this condition determines the scope of the study. The research could serve as a basis for better understanding of the integration process of sustainability practices in Bulgarian companies.

Keywords: sustainable development, Bulgarian companies, business practices for sustainability, international business

JEL Classifications : Q01, Q56, F23

Code of Ethics in the Context of Possible Misuse and Content

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to reflect on the question to what extent a situation may arise in which codes of ethics are not needed or even inappropriately applied. The possible advantages of codes of ethics are relatively well known, and there is ample literature on them. Literature on the conditions for the adoption of ethical codes is also quite common. There are far fewer articles about the uselessness of ethical codes in a certain context of reality. Even less is said about the detrimental consequences of the use of codes of ethics in their partial use. Our contribution is an attempt to show in what situations a code of ethics can act as a useless institution with no real influence, and also that certain elements of a code of ethics can lead to detrimental consequences if they are adopted and implemented.

Keywords: code of ethics, adoption of the code of ethics, content of the code of ethics

How Feeling Influences Corrupt Behaviour: Exploring Dominant Emotional Drivers of Corruption

Kemi Ogunyemi

Abstract

Similar to other economies, emerging ones face the challenges posed by corruption. There are many factors that drive corrupt practices, and studies show that emotions such as greed, fear, etc. (Kirchgässner, 2014 & Brierly, 2022) are important factors that increase the incidence of corruption in developed countries and developing countries as well. Few studies however have clearly demonstrated the involvement of emotions in an African setting (Boamah, Watson, Amoako, Osei, Kwadwo, Nyamekye, Adamu & Appiah, 2021). It is also known that the economies vary around the continent. Yet, Nigeria as an emerging economy is one of the largest in Africa and could give an insight into its sub-Saharan context. It would be interesting to explore drivers of corruption in Nigeria, especially the emotional factors which scholars have paid limited attention to thus far. This research explores the perceptions of the emotions as drivers of corrupt behaviour among individuals who have undergone anticorruption training in Nigeria. The objectives therefore are 1) to explore the dominant emotional drivers of corrupt practices; 2) to gain insight into how such drivers influence individuals to behave in corrupt ways, and 3) to suggest ways in which these can be taken into account to enhance anti-corruption efforts in the country studied as well as in other contexts.

Keywords: Feeling, Corrupt Behaviour, Emotional Drivers

Results in Education of the First Albanian Government

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Abstract

The aim of the paper named **Results in Education of the First Albanian Government** is to reflect the efforts and results of Vlora's government in the area of education, as seen from the perspective of archive historic documents, press of that time and different monographies of Albanian and foreign authors. This paper clearly details the phases whereby learning Albanian process passes into, that starts with opening of schools and their expansion in many areas of the country, but also with legal, administrative and educational measures in assisting a normal educational process, in the context of that historic period. In the research work conducted for this paper, preliminary research is used. It needs to be highlighted that the collected facts and evidences are based qualitative and quantitative methods. The question if *Vlora's government was able to achieve progress in education in about a 14 months period* is answered in the Results section, where there are treated some of the most important matters of the Albanian national education. In a final analysis, the achievements of Vlora's government in the national education area, must be considered having in mind the political situation, financial means and educational heritage in Albania.

Keywords: Albania's Independence, Vlora's Government, educational policy, school, textbooks

Albania and China: A Historical Observation of the World Press - *The Beginnig of The'70s in 20th Century*

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Abstract

The Cold War years presented a variety of dynamics not only in the relationships between the two fronts, but even in the relationships within the socialist front. Albania rolled in close alliances from Yugoslavia, Soviet Union to China. This paper focuses on the beginning of the '70s in the 20th century, on the "fraternal" Albanian-Chinese relationship seen from the political, social and economical aspects. This period would be the beginning of the cold era of the " love" between two countries, and the foreign press would have in observation this relationship, where mainly the left oriented newspapers and magazines and not only presented very interesting articles. From this perspective, the Albanian-Chinese relationship was presented in the Austrian, Italian, French, Turkish, West German, American, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Soviet, East German, Chinese press. The pages of these newspapers and magazines reflected the great support that China had accorded to Albania, the industrial developments which the latest one had realised thanks to this support. It is noted the presence of the Chinese human resources in Albania and the social influence, the Albanian diplomatic war for the acceptance of China in the United Nation Organisation etc. Some objective articles, chronicles and reportages were continuously evaluating some truths on the beginnings of divergencies between Tirana and Bejing. Associating the China approach to USA with the Albanian scepticism, the Albanian discontent started to come to light in this aspect. In the press of the time, the Albanian-Chinese relationship started to be reflected as a friendly correct relationship, in the social and economic plan, but with some discrepancies in the ideological plan.

Keywords: Albanian-Chinese relationship, world press, economy, ideological divergencies

Why Blood-Let Out Cupping Therapy is a Highly Biological Clinical Procedure and Why the Modern Medicine Does Not Employ Its Biological Talents to Improve the Outcomes of Medical Therapy!

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Abstract

Aim: Demonstration of the high biological value of blood-let out (BLO) cupping therapy. **Review:** BLO cupping therapy is defined as withdrawal of blood trapped within the tissues together with the inflammatory toxic mediators which are believed to be functionally obliged to this blood via superficial skin scratching and suction for the purpose of cure and prophylaxis. A fundamental fact in cupping therapy that has been constantly documented is the source of the removed blood during cupping procedures which is the interstitial space not the circulation meaning that it is functionless as the blood functions inside the circulation; in turn cupping therapy should include no harm, it is mandatory even for a healthy individual and that the healthy benefit of cupping therapy is definite. The principal biological benefits of cupping are sero-clearance or clearance of circulation from its undesired elements with protection towards vascular events and withdrawal of the toxic mediators thus guarding against chronic illness; both sero-clearance and withdrawal of toxic mediators are challenges which could not be achieved via any clinical measure. The mechanism in cupping is basically mediated via histamine release due to skin scratching attracting the circulation towards the cupping area and nitric oxide liberation via a shear stress effect due to repeated suction leading both to a highly selective pooling of the whole circulation within a localized sector of the capillary bed over a limited interval. **Conclusion:** BLO cupping therapy is a clinical procedure with huge biological benefits that could assist the outcomes of medical therapy.

Keywords: blood-let out cupping therapy, cupping therapy, histamine release, nitric oxide, pooling of circulation, sero-clearance, skin scratching, skin suction, toxic mediators

The Effectiveness of Online Learning in Pre-University Education During the Pandemic - The Case of Albania

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Abstract

Online learning was a challenge for education in general. The covid-19 pandemic forced the general closure of the population and made it difficult for learning to take place. Some developed countries had more opportunities and experience to practice online learning. Many other countries, particularly developing countries, encountered extraordinary difficulties during this process. The lack of experience, digital infrastructure and investments in online learning face the Albanian education system with many problems. During the pandemic, there was a commitment of teachers to overcome these problems, but the results were low. In order to understand what was the level of online learning in Albania, we will present, through data collected from online questionnaires, the degree of effectiveness. Using direct interviews with students, teachers and parents we will explain the difficulties encountered as well as their reflections on this way of learning. We will also compare the official documents with the data extracted from the study to bring some recommendations that will help in the development of this way of teaching in the future. The analysis of the collected data will be developed in a narrative way to elaborate the most complete understanding of the reality of online learning in Albania during the pandemic.

Keywords: Education, online learning, covid-19 pandemic, education system, Albania

Intergenerational Discourse: Its Essence and Features

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Abstract

Generations, their values and preferences, generational gap, generational conflicts are among the most urgent topics in modern society. They are studied by marketers, sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists as generational differences affect the purchasing ability and consumer behaviour, communication in the workplace, involve the issues of ageism and appropriate and fair treatment of various age groups. However, the phenomenon of verbal interaction of representatives of different generations as represented in written texts has not deserved proper attention and, therefore, has not been studied thoroughly. The study of intergenerational discourse may serve this purpose and fill in the existing gaps determining the scope of this research.

Keywords: generation, intergenerational, verbal interaction, discourse, communication

When Philosophy is Disparaged

Rongqing Dai

Abstract

Human beings are paying a dire price for disparaging philosophy in all facets of life, especially in the field of natural science where the most intelligent explorations of nature for the survival and advance of Homo sapiens species are supposed to be conducted. This writing will demonstrate through examples how philosophically erroneous mistakes in mathematics and physics that were made at the turn of 20th century could last for more than a century without being identified, as well as an issue that has lingered for several centuries and still confuses the whole world with its philosophical complexity. In those examples, we could see that scientists with the aura of the smartest people on earth could easily be convinced by "simple, straight, and brilliant ideas", which could bring aesthetically attractive convenience but would lead to various kinds of false knowledge and wrong practices, and then defend those ideas with all their lives for a long time, simply because the scientific community has not been prepared with strong philosophical capacity of reasoning.

Keywords: Philosophy, Hilbert First Problem, Special Relativity, Energy Conservation, Metaphysics

The Opinions of Teachers and School Leaders on the Improvement of the Evaluation Process and the Influencing Factors in the Teacher Evaluation Process!

Klodiana Leka

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the opinions of teachers and principals and to bring valuable facts on the perception of teachers regarding the evaluation that is given to them from the professional side, as well as on the perceptions of school principals on how this evaluation affects the improvement of teacher performance and increasing the quality of education in schools. This study aims to reflect the way teachers and school leaders perceive the evaluation policy towards them, the quality of this process, as well as the influencing factors in the teacher evaluation process. The purpose of this study is to discover and analyze the perceptions of teachers and school leaders about the teacher evaluation process, as well as to determine how this process can be improved. In order to give a more complete overview of the perceptions that teachers and leaders have about evaluation as well as the factors that influence this process, as well as to reach the most realistic findings and conclusions that serve the achievement of the research objectives, quantitative methods were used, as well as the analysis of primary and secondary data. The survey with teachers and leaders was carried out in some of the main and largest districts of the country such as Tirana, Durrës, Korçë, Elbasan, Shkodër, Lushnje, Vlore and Fier, which make up the study population.

Keywords: teacher, evaluation, performance, teaching quality, school leaders