



# SCIENCES AND INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

2<sup>ND</sup> and 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2026  
GJIROKASTËR, ALBANIA

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



HAUTE ÉCOLE DE GESTION  
HOCHSCHULE FÜR WIRTSCHAFT  
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Fribourg  
Freiburg



ION CREANGĂ  
STATE PEDAGOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY  
OF CHIȘINĂU





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# GUEST SPEAKERS

## DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW

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### **Abstract**

*This issue has attracted the attention of scholars since antiquity, beginning with the philosophical thought of Aristotle and continuing with the thinkers of subsequent eras. Politicians and rulers have not stood aloof either. However, viewed in its dynamics, within temporal and spatial dimensions, as well as the results achieved, it can by no means be considered exhausted. On the contrary, it has remained one of the fundamental axes of political, social, economic, and legal developments, among others.*

*Usually, the legal principle and concept of the Rule of Law is summarized in the formula "no one is above the law," taking into account not only individuals or various forms of their communities, but also the state itself. It aims to achieve its objective through a set of legal principles and norms that protect citizens from potential arbitrary actions of power. For the Rule of Law to genuinely exist and guarantee the fulfillment of its purposes, the obligations originating from state organs must be, among other things, official, binding, and accompanied by sanctions.*

*On the international level, this field counts a pleiad of the most prominent researchers who have clarified and refined its theoretical boundaries. Although the Albanian legal doctrine in this field remains relatively modest in volume, it is worthily represented by a highly influential figure, such as Academician Luan Omari,*

*who has established important milestones in its theoretical-legal treatment within our scientific domain.*

*This paper does not claim to address all the aspects encompassed by the concept of the Rule of Law. However, viewed through the lens of public law, administrative law, and international law, and supported by some of the results of domestic and foreign scientific research, we have focused on the analysis and description of one of those complex symbioses that remain ever-current, vital, and of primary importance for society: the close relationship and constructive tensions between democracy - as the expression of the will of the majority - and the rule of law - as a form of limiting power through law.*

**Key words:** *state, authority, law, democracy, law, principles, equality, legal doctrine*

## **NEW CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALBANIAN BILINGUAL LEXICOGRAPHY: THE CASE OF THE ALBANIAN- CHINESE AND CHINESE-ALBANIAN DICTIONARY, BEIJING, 2015**

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### **Abstract**

*Albanian lexicography, with a 400-year history, has about 500 monolingual, bilingual and multilingual dictionaries in its fund. It was born as a bilingual lexicography and the largest number of dictionaries belong to this category.*

*Albanian language has bilingual dictionaries with all Indo-*

European languages. But in the last ten years it has been completing the spectrum of such dictionaries with non-Indo-European languages. We mention the Turkish – Albanian and Albanian-Turkish, Finnish-Albanian, Hungarian – Albanian, Arabic-Albanian, Persian-Albanian, and other dictionaries.

A special place in the bilingual Albanian lexicography is also occupied by Chinese-Albanian and Albanian-Chinese dictionaries. One of these is the Albanian-Chinese and Chinese-Albanian Dictionary, Beijing, 2015.

*Core values reflected in his work:*

1. The work consists of two parts: the Albanian-Chinese Dictionary with twenty thousand words and the Chinese-Albanian Dictionary with over 20, 000 words. It reflects a professional and careful work in finding equivalents in both languages.

2. The lexical and semantic richness well reflects the material and spiritual world of the Albanian.

3. The dictionary adopts a systematic approach to different layers of vocabulary, including native Albanian words, loanwords, terminology, and other lexical categories. It is based on the most authoritative dictionaries currently available in the Albanian language.

4. The dictionary satisfactorily increases the lexical competence of a Chinese person learning Albanian and also of an Albanian person learning Chinese.

5. The dictionary, with the subject matter in Albanian as a synthetic-analytic language, provides complete grapheme, phoneme, grammatical, orthographic and stylistic information, compared to Chinese as an isolating language and with ideographic writing with hieroglyphs.

**Key words:** *Lexicography, dictionary, Albanian, Chinese*

# FROM X-RAY CRYSTALLOGRAPHY TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE JOURNEY OF STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY

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## **Abstract**

*Modern imaging equipment, researches always investigated life also by observing its form in all living organisms with particular emphasis to humans, and referring to both physiological and pathological conditions. However, we shall focus on the structural biology used to investigate biological macromolecules. In this respect, from the description of the three dimensional structure of DNA and of the first protein, to the development of artificial intelligence algorithms capable of predicting the 3D structure of proteins, the last seven decades have seen an incredibly fascinating scientific and technological journey. Understanding in details, at the molecular level, DNA replication and transcription, protein synthesis, oxygen transportation by red cells, nerve functioning, ATP synthesis, plant photosynthesis, G-protein mediated cell signal transduction and many other key process for living organisms, would have never been possible without looking at the structure-function relationships in biological macromolecules. Such an approach brought a revolution in the way we look and understand life. Moreover, it heavily contributed to the development of several medicines, from antineoplastic to anti-infective agents to vaccines. Examples that show such an extraordinary impact in biology and medicine, will be presented.*

**Key words:** *imaging equipment, structural biology, artificial intelligence algorithms*

# **CROSSING KNOWLEDGE BOUNDARIES: TOWARD TRANSFORMATIVE INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Abstract**

*Sustainable development poses complex, systemic challenges that no single discipline can address in isolation.*

*This paper argues that the crossing of knowledge—the deliberate integration of scientific, technological, economic, social, and indigenous forms of understanding—constitutes a critical lever for meaningful innovation. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, we examine how the convergence of diverse epistemologies generates novel solutions that purely sectoral approaches fail to produce. We contend that innovation for sustainability must move beyond technological efficiency alone to embrace new economic models and sustainable management practices that reconcile economic performance with environmental and societal value. The study highlights several priority avenues: the circular economy, frugal and inclusive business models, corporate social responsibility, green governance, and the redesign of value chains toward resource efficiency. By mobilizing the synergy between actors—researchers, firms, public institutions, and citizens—knowledge hybridization fosters organizational resilience and accelerates the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The paper proposes an integrative framework linking knowledge crossing to sustainable innovation outcomes, emphasizing co-creation, open knowledge sharing, and ethical responsibility. We conclude that cultivating cultures of collaboration and epistemic openness is essential for*

*designing innovations that are efficient, equitable, durable, and contextually rooted.*

**Key words:** *sustainable development, knowledge crossing, sustainable innovation, sustainable management, circular economy, corporate social responsibility, transdisciplinarity, co-creation.*

## **THE POWER OF INTEGRITY IN THE ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE'S "BLACK BOXES"**

**Prof. Dr. Arben Malaj**

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*Today, our academic world faces the profound challenges of coexisting with Artificial Intelligence (AI). We are actively benefiting from the massive productivity gains driven by AI, and it is our responsibility to maximize these advantages. Conversely, we are increasingly threatened by "Black Box" algorithms, which present a growing risk to our society. The processes through which these systems analyze Big Data and generate algorithmic decisions remain opaque, uncontrollable, and entirely stripped of any sense of moral responsibility. The very founders and visionaries of the AI era have warned of these potential societal risks—risks that can only be mitigated by strict ethical codes, and more importantly, by deep professional and human integrity: **Sam Altman (OpenAI)** emphasizes that the biggest mistake people make is assuming AI possesses consciousness, when it merely operates on data correlations. AI remains a massive statistical calculator rather than a moral being. Consequently, mitigating the risk of extinction from AI must become a global priority alongside pandemics and nuclear*

warfare. **Marc Andreessen (a16z)** clarifies that the greatest challenges do not stem from the underlying code, but from systemic "hallucinations" and the fact that we still do not fully comprehend the "black box" through which a model arrives at a specific conclusion. **Elon Musk** warns that AI possesses the potential for catastrophic societal destruction, arguing that we cannot afford to wait for a major disaster to occur before implementing robust regulatory frameworks. **Demis Hassabis (DeepMind)** notes that these systems lack even a single shred of basic human common sense. In the face of this pervasive automation and technological coldness, a critical question emerges: What is our most vital challenge for the future? The answer is clear: Universities must invest far more substantially and permanently in developing "Soft Skills"—our uniquely human capabilities. In the realm of "hard skills" (technical proficiency), we are engaged in a losing battle; AI is replacing them at a staggering pace. Today, approximately 60% of code is generated directly by AI. However, when it comes to soft skills, we are competing only with ourselves. This fundamental distinction must dictate the dynamics of our university curricula, pivoting their focus squarely toward these essential soft skills:

**The Power of Integrity** -In a world where algorithms can seamlessly generate text, analyze markets, and simulate strategic decision-making, human integrity serves as our ultimate anchor amidst the turbulent waves of the AI revolution. Integrity in scientific research and leadership functions as an internal moral compass. When technology offers tempting shortcuts, integrity demands that we choose the correct path, scientific truth, and the public interest. Intelligence devoid of integrity is inherently dangerous. As Warren Buffett famously clarified, when looking for a partner, one must evaluate three core qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. But if they lack the first, the other two will ruin you. The mission of our universities must be centered on producing researchers, scientists, and individuals anchored in high integrity and inspiring credibility.

**Soft Skills as a Human Shield** - What remains ours, and what renders us irreplaceable by machines, are our core human values and faculties: **Critical Judgment:** The capacity to challenge and

*refuse to blindly accept the outputs of a "black box. **Empathy and Emotional Intelligence:** As evidenced concretely during challenging periods of crisis management (such as the Ministry of Finance in 1997), technological logic can never substitute for compassionate human leadership.*

**Communication and Collaboration:** *The power to inspire and build bridges of solidarity across cultures and nations, precisely as this network of universities achieves today.*

*We must not fear technology, nor should we surrender to it. Use Artificial Intelligence as a tool, but never allow AI to replace your critical thinking and your unique voice. We can produce almost anything with AI, but it can never possess—at least for now—a human heart and soul.*

*Scientific research is a fundamental public good; its purpose is to improve the lives of our citizens, protect the environment, and guarantee sustainable development. As Apple CEO Tim Cook articulated before the graduating class at MIT in 2017: "I am not worried about artificial intelligence giving computers the ability to think like humans. I'm more concerned about people thinking like computers—without values or compassion, without concern for consequence. "If science is a search in the dark, then the humanities are the candle that shows us where we have been and warns us of the dangers that lie ahead. At this historical crossroads, humanity's victory over algorithmic "black boxes" will be determined by the purity of our character. Let technology do its work, but leadership—that leadership anchored in morality, integrity, and human values—must remain firmly in our hands. Use your minds, your hands, and your hearts to build something greater than yourselves.*

# HERITAGIZATION AND EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL PACKAGING IN APULIA

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## **Abstract**

*This article analyses the packaging of two oil-producing companies from the Italian region of Apulia. Using the tools of Multimodal Analysis, the paper argues that these companies' packaging design shows a tendency to emphasize the commodity's close connection to a certain territory and its 'traditional' way of production, implicitly valorized as markers of high quality and as signs of distinction for consumers, although the actual production chain is much more technologized and the labour involved is provided mostly by foreign seasonal workers. Such valorization is inscribed within a food discourse that sees extra-virgin olive oil as a key component of a healthy diet and the consumption of terroir-produced foodstuff as a way to achieve health. This discourse in turn aligns with the neoliberal view which sees health not as dependent on social factors, but as the outcome of individual choices. The heritagization of olive oil is also put into relation to the wider process of heritagization of Apulian food.*

**Keywords:** *extravirginolive oil, Mediterranean diet, heritagization, packaging, multimodal critical discourse analysi*

# INTERNATIONALIZATION, QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE ACADEMIC ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH INNOVATION AND CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION

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## **Abstract**

*Higher education is entering a phase in which quality can no longer be reduced to compliance, internationalization to mobility, or strategic projects to administrative reporting. Universities are increasingly expected to demonstrate learning relevance, institutional trust, digital responsibility, sustainable impact and capacity for cross-border cooperation. This keynote article proposes a comparative strategic policy synthesis of internationalization, quality management and project-based development as interdependent dimensions of sustainable academic ecosystems. The analysis draws on global and European frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 4, UNESCO's Education 2030 agenda, the European Strategy for Universities, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the Tirana Communiqué, Erasmus+ priorities and European guidance on ethical AI and data in teaching and learning. The conference network, connecting partner institutions from Albania, Latvia,*

*Portugal, Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic, China, Romania, Switzerland and the Republic of Moldova, is used as an analytical lens for examining how diverse institutional profiles can generate shared academic value. The central argument is that the university of the future will be increasingly digital and AI-mediated, but its legitimacy will depend on its ability to humanize digitalization through quality, ethics, international cooperation and measurable improvement.*

**Key words:** *higher education, quality management, internationalization, strategic projects, sustainable development, artificial intelligence, academic ecosystems, cross-border collaboration, institutional intelligence, digital transformation*

## **THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LINGUA FRANCA IN 2026. A REASSESSMENT OF ITS STATUS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

*Since the publication of early 21st century assessments on English as a global lingua franca, in particular Christiansen (2015), rapid recent advances in technology, and anomalous events such as the COVID-19 outbreak, and the war in Ukraine, have had notable effects on the world economy and geopolitical order and consequently on humankind and its societies. While English retains a uniquely dominant position across inter-national communication, academia, and digital infrastructure, recent trends have left their mark on the global linguistic landscape: most notably, the*

*rise of Mandarin Chinese; the expansion of multilingual internet ecosystems; and the proliferation of AI driven translation. In this paper, we evaluate developments from 2013 to 2026, drawing on contemporary research to consider whether English's status remains assured, which languages have gained prominence, and how emerging technologies may alter the need for a single global lingua franca, as predicted by Ostler (2010).*

*The paper will conclude with the discussion of the result of a survey of businesses in Gjirokastër in May and June 2026 regarding the use of different International languages and various technological tools for communication.*

**Key words:** *English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Multilingualism, Plurilingualism, Language Globalisation, AI tools, Linguistic Diversity, Linguistic Ecosystems, Global Presence*

# ABSTRACTS

## ASSEMBLY AS AN INSTITUTION OF LAB CUSTOMARY LAW

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### **Abstract**

*The province of Labëria is one of the largest ethnographic provinces of our country. It has a relatively large geographical area and occupies most of Southwestern Albania. This province, among others, enjoyed some self-governing rights for centuries during the Turkish occupation. For this reason, it had to have some self-governing institutions. Of these institutions, the most important were the assemblies. The assemblies, according to the canon of Labëria, were a kind of parliament where the most important decisions were made to regulate the daily life of the inhabitants of this region.*

*These assemblies were distinguished primarily for the correctness of their organization. These assemblies, depending on the problems they dealt with, were divided in this way: neighborhood assemblies, village assemblies, and provincial assemblies. These assemblies held their work in designated places that were well protected from any possible danger that could come from outside or from within; only men who had reached the appropriate age had the right to participate in these assemblies. Even the seating of men in the assembly had its rules; the oldest men and those with experience in decision-making sat at the top. All assembly members had the right to speak. Their decisions were clear and left no room for misinterpretation.*

*These assemblies have played an extraordinary role in the self-government of the province of Labëria.*

**Keywords:** *labëri, assembly, governance, tradition, organization, etc.*

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE STANDARD IN THE MASS MEDIA**

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### **Abstract**

*In various articles, problems of implementing the Albanian language standard have been continuously addressed, but language scholars must observe it step by step, firstly, because language has a social character and, like everything else, it is subject to the general law of change over time; secondly, language, as a means of communication, is an agreement between members of a society, based on clearly defined rules for each of its subsystems in a given period of time. Precisely, the implementation of these rules also determines the stability of a language, through which it realizes its main function, that of communication.*

*The norm of the literary language in the language of the press appears stable until the 1990s, but this stability did not continue. In the following years, numerous deviations were noted in the implementation of the standard norm, now codified in all subsystems of the language, numerous lexical, grammatical and spelling deviations. For this reason, numerous scientific conferences were organized, materials, various articles were published,*

*meetings, conversations were held where these shortcomings were addressed, drawing the attention of media, education and culture workers.*

*Today, with the development of technology, the use of electronic correction programs, the use of electronic dictionaries, the placement of editors in television and newspapers, we can say that a noticeable change is observed, but that there is always room for improvement.*

**Keywords:** *Language, norm, standard, press, culture, error*

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN PROVIDING KNOWLEDGE, ENTERTAINMENT, AND EDUCATION FOR THE HEALTHY PSYCHO- PEDAGOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN**

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### **Abstract**

*Although children's literature is one of the oldest and most widespread forms of cultural communication, it remains an undervalued field, often perceived as simple, instinctive, and open to interpretation by anyone.*

*Children's literature cannot be created, interpreted, or analyzed from a single perspective. It is a field where literature, pedagogy, developmental psychology, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies intersect. Children's literature is neither a simple genre nor an innocent field. It shapes imagination, identity, and worldview during the most vulnerable years of life. Therefore, writing for*

*children cannot be an intuitive or spontaneous act based solely on personal experience as a parent or on nostalgia. It requires scientific competence, ethical sensitivity, and structured theoretical knowledge in order to serve as an emancipatory, aesthetic, and formative tool for growing generations.*

*For teachers, children's literature should be both a passion and a mission. For writers of children's literature, it is a matter of knowledge and artistic craftsmanship expressed through several essential features, such as well-developed characters and adaptation to the child's age and psycho-physical abilities.*

*Children's literature should be rich in fantasy, gentle humor, adventure, imagination, and surprises, making reading more enjoyable and stimulating children's curiosity, while also inspiring them to read. Children are not satisfied with little. Their expectations have grown, and their world has become much richer. Although they tend to think in figurative, concrete, and practical ways, they are also capable of logical thinking.*

**Keywords:** *Children's Literature, Entertainment, Education, Pedagogy, Psychology.*

## **ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE AND ARTISTIC DISCOURSE IN THE NOVEL “VDEKJA MË VJEN PREJ SYVE TË TILLË”**

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### ***Abstract***

*The novel Vdekja më vjen prej syve të tillë by academician Rexhep Qosja is one of the most accomplished works in Albanian literature*

*and remains highly valued within Albanian culture. This recognition stems not only from its rich thematic content, refined artistic structure, profound philosophical depth, and sophisticated artistic discourse, but also from its language, which attains a remarkable level of richness, refinement, and expressive power.*

*This paper focuses on several aspects of the language and artistic discourse of the novel, examining the distinctive use of syntactic structures and expressive devices that contribute to its linguistic sophistication and to the author's unique creative individuality.*

*In terms of structure and content, the novel consists of thirteen interconnected chapters, whose titles are generally ambiguous and symbolic. These chapters demonstrate structural coherence, thematic depth, and dynamic narrative harmony, supported by a refined, rich, and diverse language that effectively characterizes both the settings and the characters of the work.*

*A remarkable richness of intellectual aphorisms permeates the novel. The author employs them with great skill through refined linguistic structures and expressive language. Through these aphorisms, he formulates broader reflections within the narrative, dialogues, and philosophical passages that often take the form of advice or messages, encouraging readers to engage more deeply with their meaning.*

*Of particular importance is the author's use of various syntactic features that reflect the development of modern Albanian literary language. Syntax is the linguistic level most directly connected to the expression of thought and the communicative function of language within society.*

*In this novel, the author's discourse reflects diverse tendencies in the evolution of the Albanian language while demonstrating its rich expressive potential. This expressive power is enhanced through the author's careful use of syntactic organization and stylistic techniques.*

**Keywords:** *tendency, language, artistic discourse, expressiveness, structure, refinement.*

# HOW METHODS ARE COMBINED IN A SCIENTIFIC PAPER, THEIR IMPORTANCE, THE METHOD OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF CRITICAL THINKING, VARIOUS EXAMPLES

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## **Abstract**

*Methods are numerous and diverse at the same time, such as: Methodical progress, discussion as a teaching method, critical thinking, Err Structure, etc.*

*We know that the educational and teaching work of teaching is an organized process that has a specific goal. The goal of teaching, the content (i. e. the system of knowledge about literature and habits), the forms of organization, the methods and paths, are closely related to each other.*

*Artistic literature has a figurative-emotional character in reflecting reality and possesses extraordinary power. This is also the reason that literature lessons in school give students truths about man and his social connections. The reflection and knowledge of life in artistic literature, as one of the forms of art, is achieved through a special figurative form. There are also figurative and emotional elements in scientific and logical knowledge. Therefore, literature as one of the forms of art is closer to science than any other form of art. Then we move on to a deep understanding of the essence and importance of literary works and even to the elaboration of different points of view. As a means of moral education, literature in school is closely related to personal life and social life of man, reflecting all the spiritual wealth and posing various problems. Reading and*

*analyzing literary-artistic works in which various themes are raised, also reveals the role of the history of mankind. We recall here that we have said that literature is related to history. Such works that are studied are powerful artistic tools that enable the literature teacher to deeply instill in students the education of labor.*

*- Acquisition of scientific-logical, figurative and emotional habits of speech, both written and oral.*

**Key words:** *Methods, combination, importance, illustration-examples*

## **SEMANTIC AND STYLISTIC CONNOTATION AS A MEANS OF EXPRESSIVENESS IN THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE**

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### **Abstract**

*Connotation, or emotive meaning, is a semantic phenomenon that expresses the speaker's subjective attitude and evaluation toward someone or something. For this reason, it is employed by creators to make discourse more expressive. This paper aims to demonstrate the features and functions of Albanian words that have emotional coloring as part of their semantic structure, the meanings they may acquire, as well as the means that lead to semantic layering. The methodology applied is based on a linguistic semantic and stylistic approach, combining the analysis of words extracted from the Dictionary of Albanian Language (FGJSSH) with practical examples from everyday discourse, Albanian folklore, and literary creations. This analysis includes discursive texts in which word*

*meaning is dynamic and dependent on usage, while intonation and contextual connotation pave the way for figurative meanings, making the language livelier and richer.*

*In conclusion, the study seeks to show that the Albanian language, like any natural language, is not merely a referential system, but a dynamic, expressive, and artistic system, where the interplay of semantics, pragmatics, and stylistics serves to generate new meanings and enrich communication. Moreover, this dynamic interaction highlights the creative potential of language, which not only conveys information but also shapes cultural identity and aesthetic values.*

**Key words:** *connotation, meaning, discourse, intonation, semantics, stylistics*

## **THE PRESERVATION OF ALBANIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH LITERATURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

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### **Abstract**

*Throughout the centuries, literature has served as a carrier of collective memory, national identity, and Albanian cultural values. This paper aims to examine the role of literature in preserving and transmitting Albanian cultural heritage within the context of the digital age. Through the analysis of the works of representative authors from two significant periods of Albanian literature, Jeronim De Rada and Naim Frashëri, we will seek to highlight the distinctive features of each author’s literary creativity, as well as the ways in*

*which they contributed to the preservation and strengthening of Albanian cultural identity. The paper also focuses on the impact of technology and digitalization on the preservation, promotion, and circulation of literary works in contemporary times. Digital libraries, electronic archives, and online platforms have created new opportunities for the global accessibility of Albanian literature, thereby contributing to its preservation for future generations. At the same time, the study addresses the challenges brought about by the digital age, such as the risk of losing the traditional reading experience and the effects of cultural globalization. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the role of Albanian literature in preserving cultural heritage in the digital era and to emphasize the ways in which literature continues to remain a connecting bridge between tradition, national identity, and technological innovation.*

**Keywords:** *Albanian literature, digitalization, cultural identity, globalization*

## **FEATURES OF PUBLICISTIC DISCOURSE IN ERNEST KOLIQI'S "DRITA E SHËJZAVE"**

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### **Abstract**

*Ernest Koliqi's publicistic writings represent one of the most prominent models of modern Albanian prose, in which informative and cultural functions are closely intertwined with the aesthetic values of literary discourse. They combine journalistic discourse with a pronounced essayistic style, rich figurative language, the*

*rhythmic organization of syntactic structures, and a cultivated lexicon rooted primarily in the tradition of literary Gheg. These features confer a distinct stylistic individuality upon Koliqi's publicistic prose, distinguishing it from conventional forms of informative discourse and from the work of many contemporary publicists.*

*Language constitutes one of the central themes of his work, which Koliqi conceives not merely as an expression of national consciousness, but also as a repository of historical memory and Albanian cultural heritage. From this perspective, the present study focuses on the journalistic collection *Drita e Shëjzave*, in which language emerges not simply as a means of communication but as a fundamental instrument for preserving and affirming national identity.*

*The analysis reveals that Koliqi is distinguished by a carefully selected lexicon enriched with aesthetic and philosophical nuances, in which archaic and regional words are naturally combined with elements of poetic expression. At the same time, his expanded syntactic constructions and the internal rhythm of the sentence lend the discourse a solemn and harmonious tone, elevating his journalism beyond its informative function and transforming it into a form of expression endowed with significant literary and cultural value. These characteristics bring Koliqi's publicistic prose closer to the traditions of poetic prose and modern European essay writing. Through a stylistic and linguistic analysis of selected texts, the study highlights the distinctive features of Koliqi's discourse and its contribution to Albanian literary and cultural thought.*

**Keywords:** Ernest Koliqi, *Drita e Shëjzave*, publicistic discourse, lexical richness, figurative language, national identity.

# ALBANIAN LANGUAGE AND ITS TRENDS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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## **Abstract**

*Nowadays, the sector of new digital technologies constitutes the main axis of communication and human interaction. The environment through which we receive information passes from printing, to computer screens and to smartphones. This evolution, with new tools and forms, directly affects the formatting, quality and correct use of the Albanian language. The emergence of new codes or neologisms in the conditions of global development cannot be stopped or overestimated, but slowly, they become part of the general lexicon of our language.*

*These trends necessarily create the urgent need for curricular updates and integration of new words into the Albanian language system. As a result, the inclusion of some technical terms from the field of Tik and social networks in the "Great Dictionary of the Albanian Language" occupies the main place in this work. Also, of particular importance remains the revision of the Albanian language curriculum, which focuses on improving linguistic content and the inclusion of several elements related to the use of language in digital environments.*

*Under these conditions, the preservation of linguistic identity cannot be achieved by rejecting foreign influences, but by accepting new innovations in a new linguistic environment that is in line with the nature and physiognomy of our language. By reviewing this perception, in a broader framework of language development, we come to the conclusion that language is not a given product, formed once and for all, but a living activity that is constantly created and renewed.*

**Keywords:** trend, digital age, vocabulary, curriculum, updating, globalization.

## LITERATURE AS A PATRIOTIC ACT DURING THE ALBANIAN NATIONAL RENAISSANCE ERA

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### **Abstrakt**

*The literature of the Albanian National Renaissance constitutes not only an artistic creation, but also a genuine patriotic and cultural act in service of the national cause. During a period when Albania was under Ottoman rule and national identity was at risk of fading, Albanian Renaissance figures used literature as a means of raising awareness, education, and national unification. Through poetry, journalism, and works of a philosophical and patriotic character, authors such as Naim Frashëri, Sami Frashëri, Andon Zako Çajupi, and Jeronim De Rada promoted the ideals of freedom, love for the homeland, and the importance of the Albanian language.*

*This paper aims to analyze the ways in which literature was transformed into a form of spiritual and political resistance, influencing the formation of Albanian national consciousness. The study will focus on the treatment of patriotic motifs, the symbolism of the homeland, the figure of the national hero, and the role of language as an element of identity.*

*Furthermore, the paper will highlight the connection between literary art and the national mission of the Renaissance figures, who considered writing not only as an aesthetic creation, but also as a duty toward the nation.*

*Through an analytical and comparative approach, the study aims*

*to demonstrate that Renaissance literature remains one of the most important pillars of Albanian cultural and historical identity.*

**Keywords:** *Renaissance, national identity, national consciousness, literary art, nation.*

## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION BY CHILDREN NOWADAYS

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### **Abstract**

*Nowadays, the acquisition and initial modeling of the Albanian language by children is not a very easy process. There are many different factors that influence and play an important role in the development and acquisition of their linguistic competence.*

*The purpose of our paper is to extensively address some of the sociolinguistic indicators, such as: family, environment, the role of grandmother or grandfather, age, social group, etc. that play a primary role in the development of children's linguistic skills. In addition to the elements that help in the formation of children's communicative competence, the respective social and linguistic community, we also have obstructive elements that delay their linguistic acquisition, such as: the influence of English, contacts with this language from an early age. From the study and review of theoretical material, from surveys conducted on this issue, it is seen that the linguistic "shaping" of children, their speech as an aspect of social behavior, becomes more difficult in the era of the "digital" time and the globalization of English.*

**Keywords:** *Language acquisition, children's language, initial modeling, influence of English*

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTOMATION: FROM THE TRADITIONAL SCHOOL MODEL TO INTELLIGENT LEARNING

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## **Abstract**

*The Fourth Industrial Revolution has introduced unprecedented transformations that are reshaping contemporary societies through the convergence of physical, digital, and biological systems. At the core of this transformation lies digitalization, a process that extends beyond the mere adoption of technological tools and entails a fundamental reconfiguration of institutional structures, practices, and modes of operation. Within this context, educational systems are confronted with significant challenges as they seek to adapt to rapidly evolving technological and social realities.*

*Historically, schools have been characterized by a relatively slow pace of innovation and technological integration. However, the accelerating development of digital technologies, the exponential growth of online data, the widespread availability of internet connectivity, and the ubiquity of mobile devices have profoundly altered the ways in which learners access, process, and share information. As a result, students have transitioned from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants in dynamic and interconnected learning environments.*

*These developments call into question the effectiveness of traditional educational models, which are increasingly inadequate in preparing learners for a complex, technology-driven labor market characterized by continuous change and evolving skill*

*requirements. In response, educational institutions must embrace innovative approaches that integrate artificial intelligence, automation, and intelligent learning systems. Such transformations have the potential to personalize learning experiences, enhance educational outcomes, and equip future generations with the digital competencies necessary to thrive in the knowledge-based economy.*

**Key words:** *Artificial Intelligence, Automation, Digital Transformation, Intelligent Learning, Education, Fourth Industrial Revolution, Educational Innovation.*

## **LIBRARIES - PILLARS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND AT SERVICE OF SUSTAINABLE LIFELONG LEARNING**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines libraries, which have always been gateways to free and equal knowledge for all its users. The purpose of librarians' work is constantly focused on sustainable education and lifelong learning through appropriate tools, such as: books, journals, shared databases, digital collections, reliable Internet browsers, open access academic resources, multimedia resources, archives, technological tools, activities of various kinds, interlibrary cooperation, networking, etc.*

*Library and information services today have changed the concept*

*of a library as a static and traditional institution, increasing the quality of service through the development of library collections, changes in management and information training. Libraries, of every typology, cannot function separately from the educational system, and we can even confidently assert that through their work they are the main supporters of the system that ensure equality in knowledge and promote inclusive education.*

*Public libraries are also transforming every day into community centres by expanding and improving the range of services for its users of all ages. Meanwhile, school and university libraries, through appropriate policies, should be considered as extensions of the learning process, where scholars, students and researchers can obtain the right information for free and independently, thus becoming active centres of innovation, development and social transformation.*

**Keywords:** *library, inclusive education, equality in knowledge, information literacy*

## **THE CONSTRUCTION OF TIME REFERENCE: FROM TIME RELATIONS TO TEMPORAL METAPHORS IN ALBANIAN**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper explores temporal reference in various examples of literary texts in the Albanian language through an analysis which focuses on the interaction of deixis (as a mechanism that sees into*

*the real world), anaphora (which guides us within the sentence), and calendar time in isolation or in conjunction with them. This paper combines Stephen Levinson's approach with his contribution on temporal deixis and how the central point of the utterance (Origo) is shifted within the context of the situation. Based on this pragmatic approach, the paper also includes Pier Marco Bertinetto's approach on aspect and visualization where the verb chosen to be used in the sentence plays a key role because it also determines the observer's point of view as inside or outside the sentence. These two layers of analysis are synthesized in Wolfgang Klein's time model, which sees chronological relations as an interaction between three intervals, the time of the message, the time of the situation and the time of the topic. The paper presents and studies expressions such as "today", "yesterday", "later", dates, years and temporal references including seasons, first seen in terms of how they are seen from the temporal position of the narrator, referring to a point that precedes the action in the text in the past or anchors the event within calendar time. Through this approach, the paper aims to clarify somewhat how the Albanian language constructs temporal relations as an interaction between grammatical time and discourse mechanisms.*

**Keywords:** *Levinson, Bertineto, Klein, deixis, anaphora, calendar time, deictic shift, time metaphor*

# THE THERAPEUTIC STRUCTURE OF RITUALIZED MOURNING: HOW RITUALS PROTECT THE SOUL AND BIND THE COMMUNITY

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## **Abstract**

*This paper analyzes the traditional death rituals of southern Albania, focusing on the vocal lament practices of vajtim as complex social mechanisms for processing collective grief and trauma. In the context of modernization and demographic shifts that increasingly isolate individuals, traditional collective mourning serves as a structural framework for communal psychological sustainability. Employing ethnographic methods, textual and musical analysis of different lamentations, this study explores how the polyphonic, call-and-response structure and specialized linguistic features of laments facilitate the distribution of emotional trauma across the community. These structured laments provide a safe, socially sanctioned context for emotional catharsis, which mitigates long-term psychological distress and strengthens community bonding. When we save an ancient community ritual, such as lamentation, we are not just archiving history but uncovering a blueprint for human survival. This research reveals that by studying how traditional customs healed families and villages in the past, we can identify proven, practical strategies for addressing contemporary mental health challenges from the ground up.*

**Key words:** *ritualized mourning, vajtim, collective grief, emotional catharsis, traditional healing practices, southern Albania, community resilience, cultural heritage, trauma processing, mental health*

# DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN GJIROKASTRA

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## **Abstract**

*The rapid growth of social media has transformed the way destinations communicate their identity and engage with audiences. For historic cities such as Gjirokastra, a UNESCO World Heritage site, digital platforms have created new opportunities to share stories, traditions and cultural experiences with wider audiences. At the same time, they raise an important question: how can cultural heritage be communicated in the digital age without losing its authenticity?*

*This paper explores the role of digital storytelling in promoting cultural heritage and sustainable tourism in Gjirokastra. The study examines how photographs, short-form videos, social media posts, and other digital narratives help shape the image of the city and create connections among heritage, local communities, and visitors. Particular attention is given to the representation of architecture, folklore, gastronomy, traditions and everyday life as elements of cultural identity.*

*Using Gjirokastra as a case study, the research analyses examples of digital content produced by institutions, tourism stakeholders and content creators. The paper argues that digital storytelling can serve not only as a promotional tool but also as a means of preserving cultural memory, strengthening local identity and encouraging more sustainable forms of tourism. The findings highlight the importance of authentic narratives in communicating heritage values and demonstrate how digital media can help historic destinations remain visible and relevant in a rapidly changing communication environment.*

**Keywords:** *digital storytelling, cultural heritage, sustainable tourism, social media, Gjirokastra*

## **THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING THROUGH THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS**

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### **Abstract**

*Today, a school is considered successful not only if it ensures high student achievement, but also if it provides quality teaching through qualified and well-trained teachers who are able to adapt to the changes of the times.*

*It is a legal obligation for teachers to earn at least 10 credits, equivalent to 18 hours of training, during an academic year. Teachers are continuously informed by the school administration about the training programs organized by training centers licensed by the Ministry of Education, and they select the modules they consider necessary for their professional development and effective for the specific needs of the school. Teachers are also encouraged to regularly attend meetings within professional networks established by the Local Education Directorate (ZVA).*

*Since the school includes students coming from families with social and economic difficulties, which are often reflected in their behavior toward one another and toward teachers, there is a need for teachers to be trained not only in the scientific aspects of their subjects, but also in methods of working with this category of students in order to integrate them into society and prevent school dropout.*

*A contemporary school leader, in order to effectively manage the educational institution, should distribute tasks and responsibilities fairly and impartially, with the aim of avoiding conflicts and creating a spirit of cooperation within the institution. Their role is decisive in the progress of the school. Proper motivation from the leader and the transmission of this motivation to all levels of the school contribute significantly to leading the school toward success.*

**Keywords:** principal, teacher, training, professional development, quality, achievement, students

## **LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION**

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### **Abstract**

*Digital communication has become a central environment for social interaction, emotional expression, and identity construction in contemporary society. Social media platforms and online communities increasingly shape the ways individuals communicate, express emotions, and negotiate belonging in digital environments. This article explores the relationship between language, identity, and emotional expression in digital communication from a sociolinguistic perspective. Particular attention is devoted to online self-representation, emotional language, multilingual practices, and the role of social media*

*in shaping contemporary forms of interaction and belonging. The discussion demonstrates that digital communication functions not only as a technological practice, but also as a socially and emotionally mediated linguistic space where identity is continuously negotiated through interaction. Emojis, internet slang, multilingual discourse, and code-switching increasingly contribute to new forms of emotional communication characteristic of digital culture. The study also highlights the influence of globalization and multilingual online discourse, particularly among younger generations exposed to transnational digital interaction. Overall, the article argues that digital communication should be understood as a dynamic sociolinguistic environment where language, emotion, and identity intersect in contemporary online communication.*

**Keywords:** *digital communication, linguistic identity, emotional expression, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, social media discourse, online interaction, digital belonging*

## **FROM SUBJECTIVITY TO SIMULATION: AUTHORSHIP AND CREATIVE PRODUCTION IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the transformations that artificial intelligence (AI) is bringing to the concepts of authorship and literary creativity in the digital age. Drawing on the theories of poststructuralism, posthumanism, and the digital humanities, this study questions the*

*traditional model of the author as the sole and conscious source of textual meaning. Particular attention is devoted to the reconsideration of intellectual property and academic practices; the paper argues that algorithmic authorship necessitates an urgent reconceptualization of existing legal and ethical frameworks, as the boundary between human contribution and machine-generated production is becoming increasingly blurred. Building on this analysis, the paper focuses on the distinction between stylistic imitation and genuine literary creation. Through a comparison of AI-generated texts with canonical literary models, it argues that although AI technology is capable of reproducing linguistic structures with remarkable accuracy, it remains constrained by its lack of lived experience, intentionality, and ideological depth. The paper concludes that, without these human elements, literature risks becoming a standardized product, losing its power as a medium for the transmission of values, cultural memory, and identity.*

**Keywords:** authorship, literary creativity, poststructuralism, posthumanism, tradition, artificial intelligence, digital humanities, algorithmic authorship.

## **PUBLIC DISCOURSE AS IDEOLOGICAL MEMORY: LINGUISTIC HERITAGE FROM COMMUNIST ALBANIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines public discourse from communist Albania as a form of linguistic heritage and ideological memory. Focusing on political speeches and publicist texts from the period 1960–1990,*

*the study explores how official language functioned not only as a medium of political communication, but also as a mechanism for shaping collective consciousness, preserving ideological narratives, and transmitting state-approved interpretations of history, identity, and social order. The paper argues that communist-era discourse constitutes an important linguistic archive through which the ideological worldview of the period can be reconstructed and critically examined.*

*Drawing on principles of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis, the study investigates how recurring lexical choices, evaluative expressions, collective pronouns, formulaic phrases, and representations of social actors contributed to the construction of ideological memory. Particular attention is given to the representation of the Party, the people, the nation, and the enemy as central categories through which communist ideology was linguistically organized. The Party is presented as a guiding and authoritative force, the people as heroic and morally superior, while ideological opponents are framed through negative and exclusionary labels. These repeated patterns helped naturalize political meanings and reinforce a binary worldview based on loyalty, vigilance, sacrifice, and socialist progress.*

*By approaching communist public discourse as part of Albania's linguistic heritage, the paper highlights the importance of preserving and studying historical forms of institutional language. Such discourse is not treated as a neutral record of the past, but as a powerful site where ideology, memory, and identity intersect. The study contributes to Albanian discourse studies by showing how language participated in the formation of ideological memory and how traces of that memory remain available for critical linguistic analysis today.*

**Key words:** *linguistic heritage, ideological memory, public discourse, communist Albania, discourse analysis, ideology*

# THE RHETORIC OF PERSUASION IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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## **Abstract**

*This paper discusses the rhetoric of persuasion in political discourse from a theoretical perspective. It examines how political language functions not only as a means of communication, but also as a tool for influencing public opinion, shaping interpretation, and creating political support. Drawing on Aristotle’s classical model of ethos, pathos, and logos, the paper shows that persuasion in political discourse depends on the interaction of credibility, emotional appeal, and reasoning. It also considers how political speakers use rhetorical strategies such as metaphor, repetition, contrast, parallelism, rhetorical questions, and slogans to make messages more memorable and persuasive. The discussion is supported by insights from political discourse studies and critical discourse analysis, especially the work of Chilton, Fairclough, Wodak, and van Dijk, which connect political language to ideology, power, and social action. Particular attention is given to the ethical boundary between persuasion and manipulation. While persuasion is a normal part of democratic debate, it may become problematic when language hides complexity, creates fear, or presents one interpretation as the only possible truth. Overall, the paper argues that rhetoric is not merely decorative in political discourse, but central to how political meaning, authority, and public belief are shaped.*

**Key words:** *political discourse, rhetoric, persuasion, manipulation, ideology, power*

# GEOGRAPHY CURRICULA IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: FROM DESCRIPTION TO ANALYTICAL INTERPRETATION

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## **Abstract**

*The evolution of geography as an academic discipline has been characterized by a gradual shift from traditional descriptive approaches toward analytical and interpretative perspectives focused on explaining the processes and interactions that shape geographical space. Within this context, the present study aims to examine the extent to which this conceptual transformation is reflected in geography curricula and textbooks used in pre-university education.*

*The study employs content analysis as its primary methodological approach, examining geography curricula and textbooks. Sentences and paragraphs serve as the units of analysis, enabling the evaluation of content at both micro and macro levels. The material was classified into three main categories: description, analysis, and interpretation. Data were processed through frequency counts and comparative analysis in order to identify the relative weight of different educational and disciplinary approaches.*

*The findings reveal a clear predominance of descriptive content, accounting for approximately 60–70% of the analyzed material. In contrast, analytical and interpretative content remains less represented, reflecting a strong idiographic orientation within geography education. This finding highlights a mismatch between contemporary developments in geography as a discipline and its representation in pre-university education.*

*Considering the major global challenges of the twenty-first*

*century, including climate change, urbanization, migration, and globalization, the study emphasizes the need to reorient geography education toward more analytical and interpretative approaches. Such a transformation would contribute to the development of students' critical thinking, analytical skills, and civic competencies, enabling them to better understand and interpret complex geographical phenomena in an increasingly interconnected world.*

**Key words:** *geography, geography education, curriculum, textbooks, content analysis, idiographic approach, nomothetic approach.*

## **ASSESSING URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL VULNERABILITY THROUGH GIS-BASED SPATIAL ANALYSIS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ROMANIAN MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES**

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### **Abstract**

*Urban environmental vulnerability has become a major challenge for medium-sized cities facing increasing pressures generated by urbanization, transport development, land-use change, and climate-related risks. Despite growing international interest in urban sustainability and resilience, medium-sized cities in Eastern Europe remain insufficiently represented in the scientific literature. This study aims to assess and compare environmental vulnerability patterns in three Romanian medium-sized cities-Târgu Mureș, Alba*

*Iulia, and Bistrița—through an integrated Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-based spatial analysis framework. The research combines demographic, environmental, and spatial indicators, including population density, air quality, traffic intensity, green space availability, land-use characteristics, and waste management infrastructure. A composite Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI) is developed by standardizing and weighting selected indicators to identify areas characterized by low, medium, and high levels of vulnerability. GIS techniques such as spatial overlay analysis, buffer analysis, hotspot detection, and land-use assessment are employed to map and evaluate spatial disparities within and between the selected cities. Statistical analyses are used to examine relationships among demographic, environmental, and infrastructural variables and to support the validation of the proposed index. The results are expected to reveal significant intra-urban and inter-urban differences in environmental vulnerability, highlighting the influence of urban form, infrastructure development, and environmental management practices. By providing a comparative assessment of three representative medium-sized Romanian cities, the study contributes to the growing body of research on urban sustainability and offers practical insights for climate adaptation strategies, urban resilience planning, and evidence-based policymaking. The proposed methodology can be replicated in other medium-sized cities across Eastern Europe, supporting more effective environmental governance and sustainable urban development.*

**Keywords:** *urban environmental vulnerability, GIS spatial analysis, Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI), sustainable cities, urban resilience, medium-sized cities, Romania. spatial planning*

# THE POSITION OF THE NEWSPAPER “DRITA” OF GJIROKASTRA ON THE FIRST PLURALIST ELECTIONS IN ALBANIA

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## **Abstract**

*The first pluralist parliamentary elections in Albania were held during the period March - April 1921. They began on March 5, while the National Council (Parliament) with 78 elected deputies, convened on April 21, 1921. According to articles 2 and 23 of the law on elections, they were held by indirect voting and ended on 13 June. Drita, under the title; Gjirokastra for the Assembly; wrote: Gjirokastra is for the Assembly. . . the people decided. . . . On November 14, 1920, declared the law of elections for the; Constitutional Assembly;*

*The elections were held in two stages. For every 500 voters one voter and for every 12, 000 inhabitants one deputy. Two parties appeared on the political scene; “People’s Party” and “Progressive Party”. Sulejman Luzati declared: “I am impartial”. In its issue no. 26, “Drita” confirms: “We learn... that the parliamentary candidates in Gjirokastër are Myfyt Bey Libohova, Mr. Ali Koka, Ali Bey Këlsyra, S...Abazi, Peto Poga, Vasil Dilo and Bahri Omari”. After the official results were released, Drita wrote: . . . the sum of votes received by the deputies from Gjirokastra is summarized as follows: Koço Tasi 163, D. Kacimba 157, Sulejman Delvina 154, Leonidha Frashëri 152, Mitat Frashëri 151, S. Vinjau 139, M. Maksuti 137, Ali Klisura 137, Bahri Omari 132, Petro Harito 131, Agathi Xhitomi 120;*

**Keywords:** *Parliamentary Elections of 1921; Gjirokastra; National Council (Parliament); Electoral Law; Political Parties; Drita Newspaper*

# THE BEJLER'S SARAIS IN THE VJOSA VALLEY: FROM HISTORICAL HERITAGE TO A RESOURCE FOR TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL TOURISM

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## **Abstract**

*This study examines the sarais of the beys in the Vjosa Valley as a significant component of tangible cultural heritage, and as an untapped asset for territorial development and cultural tourism in southern Albania. The primary objective is to analyze the historical, architectural, and spatial values of these structures, positioning them within an interdisciplinary framework that integrates historical geography, heritage studies, and contemporary spatial planning. The study area encompasses the Vjosa Valley, a natural and historical corridor of strategic importance. This territory represents a space with distinct historical layering, where the beys mansions played a pivotal role in the socio-economic organization of the region across different eras. The methodology employs a combination of historical-documentary analysis, field surveys, and a spatial approach utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map the distribution, typology, and conservation status of these structures. Furthermore, the paper assesses the potential for integrating these heritage elements into cultural tourism itineraries and local sustainable development strategies. The findings indicate that despite ongoing physical degradation and a lack of institutional valorization, these mansions represent a vital resource for territorial identity and local economic growth. In*

*conclusion, the research underscores the imperative for integrated policies that bridge cultural heritage preservation with spatial planning and sustainable tourism.*

**Keywords:** *Economic growth, sarais, Vjosa Valley, cultural heritage, cultural tourism, GIS mapping, spatial planning*

## **HIGHER EDUCATION AND BRAIN MIGRATION: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF BRAIN DRAIN, BRAIN GAIN AND BRAIN CIRCULATION**

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### **Abstract**

*Higher education plays a crucial role in the development of human capital and in preparing individuals for the labor market. This article examines the relationship between higher education and the three main concepts associated with talent migration: Brain Drain, Brain Gain, and Brain Circulation. The aim of the study is to analyze the role of higher education as a factor influencing the formation, mobility, and transfer of knowledge, as well as the consequences these processes have for individuals, educational institutions, and national development.*

*Through a review of contemporary literature, the article explores the factors that drive the migration of highly educated individuals, including access to quality education, professional development opportunities, scientific research, and improved socio-economic conditions. The study highlights that Brain Drain is associated*

*with the loss of human capital and the weakening of the academic and innovative potential of countries of origin, whereas Brain Gain contributes to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and expertise in host countries or in those that successfully attract back their highly qualified professionals. In contrast, Brain Circulation is presented as a more comprehensive and contemporary approach, viewing migration as a dynamic process of exchanging knowledge, experiences, and professional networks, thereby generating mutual benefits for all parties involved.*

*Finally, the article argues that educational policies and development strategies should focus not only on mitigating brain drain but also on promoting knowledge circulation and engaging the academic diaspora. Such efforts can transform the mobility of human capital into an important driver of sustainable development and innovation.*

**Keywords:** *higher education, Brain Drain, Brain Gain, Brain Circulation, human capital, academic mobility, skilled migration, sustainable development, innovation*

## **ARBËRIA IN BYZANTINE SOURCES: 11<sup>TH</sup>–15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines Arbëria in Byzantine sources from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, analyzing how Byzantine authors and chroniclers described its territory, population, and political*

organization during the pre-Ottoman Middle Ages. The aim of the paper is to highlight the evolution of the terms Arbanon, Albanoi, and Arbanitai in Byzantine historiography, while also interpreting the historical and geopolitical significance of Arbëria within the context of the Western Balkans.

The study is based on an examination of Byzantine narrative and chronicle sources, including the works of Michael Attaleiates, Anna Komnene, John Skylitzes, George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, and Laonikos Chalkokondyles. These sources portray Arbëria as a territory with a distinct ethno-political identity, situated between Durrës, Krujë, Ohrid, and the regions of Epirus. Throughout the medieval period, it occupied a strategic position in the Byzantine-Norman and Byzantine-Serbian conflicts and later became an important frontier in the face of Ottoman expansion.

Methodologically, the paper combines a critical analysis of Byzantine chronicles with a historical-geographical approach and an interpretation of the ethnic and territorial terminology employed in the sources. By comparing references to Arbëria across different periods, the study seeks to trace the process of consolidation of Arbëria's territorial identity and its transformation from a province with relative autonomy into a medieval political entity of regional significance.

The findings indicate that Byzantine sources provide the earliest and most authoritative testimony to the historical presence of the Arbër people in the Western Balkans. They depict Arbëria as a strategically significant mountainous region, characterized by locally organized communities that actively participated in the political processes of the medieval Balkans. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the concept of Arbëria underwent a gradual territorial and ethnic expansion, reflecting the emergence and consolidation of Albanian historical identity.

The study contributes to medieval Albanian and Byzantine historiography by offering a comprehensive interpretation of Arbëria in Byzantine sources and highlighting its significance within the political, ethnic, and territorial transformations of the medieval Balkans.

**Keywords:** *Arbëria, Byzantine sources, Byzantine chroniclers, Middle Ages, Western Balkans.*

## **BUILT HERITAGE UNDER PRESSURE: CONFLICT, URBAN TRANSFORMATION, AND CULTURAL LOSS IN AGRA, INDIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Historic Indian cities are increasingly shaped by tensions between heritage conservation, urban development and socio-political contestations. Agra, internationally recognized for its Mughal-era monuments, exemplifies how built heritage is placed under sustained pressure from rapid urbanization, tourism-driven development, infrastructural expansion and regulatory fragmentation. This paper examines the nature and impacts of heritage conflict in Agra and its implications for cultural loss within the urban fabric.*

*Adopting a case-study methodology, the research integrates spatial analysis, planning policy review, field observations, and stakeholder narratives to identify key conflict zones between conservation imperatives and contemporary urban demands. The study reveals that heritage conflict in Agra extends beyond monument precincts to encompass historic neighborhoods, cultural landscapes, and everyday heritage practices, often resulting in incremental erosion of cultural identity rather than overt physical destruction. Planning instruments and conservation regulations, while present, are shown to operate in silos, inadequately addressing lived heritage and community relationships with historic spaces.*

*The findings highlight the limitations of monument-centric preservation approaches and emphasize the need for integrated planning frameworks that reconcile development pressures with heritage values. By situating architectural heritage within broader urban and socio-cultural systems, the paper contributes to ongoing discourse on heritage-led planning in Indian cities. The study argues for context-responsive, participatory, and spatially sensitive strategies to mitigate cultural loss and ensure the sustainable coexistence of heritage and urban transformation.*

**Keywords:** Built heritage, heritage conflict, cultural loss, urban transformation, Agra, India

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF THE SUB-PREFECTURE OF TEPELENA

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### **Abstract**

*The sub-prefecture of Tepelena lies in a convenient geographical position. In this city, several significant roads that connect the South of Albania with Greece pass and intersect. Its strategic geographical location has enabled human life to flourish there since the earliest times. Therefore, today this territory has numerous archaeological treasures. To date, few, if any, of them have been the subject of comprehensive scholarly analysis, with existing research being largely sporadic and superficial.*

*But what are some of the most important objects of the studied area?*

*The Lekli Castle lies just a few kilometers south of the city and belongs to the 4th-2nd centuries BC, the Nivica Castle is*

*located in the Kurvelesh region, also dated to this period, the Matohasanaj Castle, the Qesarat Settlement, the Rabia Castle, the Mezghoran Castle, the fortification of the city of Tepelena, the city of Hora, located near the village of Dukaj, the Zharrëza Castle as well as many early settlements belonging to the period of antiquity.*

*All these archaeological treasures are awaiting in-depth archaeological excavations. With the exception of the settlement of Matohasnaja, where several excavation expeditions have been organized in the last two years, no proper study has been done in all the above-mentioned objects. The studies conducted on these archaeological objects will shed light on all the historical problems that they hide underground, and above all it will be an extraordinary contribution to the enrichment of archaeological, historical, linguistic, ethnographic data, etc. , on the way the society of this period was organized as well as the level of economic and political development of this region.*

**Keywords:** *Tepelenë, archaeology, castle, settlement, wealth, excavation, etc.*

# THE ROLE OF NEUROPLASTICITY IN THE PREPARATION OF STUDENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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## Abstract

*Neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to reorganize structurally and functionally as a response to experience and the environment, constitutes one of the most important findings of contemporary neuroscience with direct implications for the field of education. This theoretical paper examines the role of knowledge about neuroplasticity in the academic and professional formation of students of Special Education, arguing that the integration of the neuroscientific perspective into the university curriculum is necessary for the preparation of competent and reflective teachers. Through a critical analysis of contemporary literature, which includes studies on brain development, mechanisms of learning and pedagogical interventions based on neuroscience, the paper identifies the links between neuroplasticity, didactic strategies and inclusive education. Special attention is devoted to pedagogical practices that support the cognitive, emotional and social development of children with special educational needs.*

*The paper finds that current university formation in Albania does not sufficiently integrate neuroscientific knowledge and proposes concrete recommendations for the modernization of study programs in Special Education.*

**Keywords:** *neuroplasticity, special education, teacher formation, educational neuroscience, inclusive education, pedagogical practices.*

## **THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF EDUCATION IN MITIGATING INEQUALITIES: A CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

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### **Abstract**

*The aim of this paper is to analyze the mechanisms by which the environment of origin influences the educational path of students and to identify the main consequences of these differences on performance and social mobility. The analysis of educational disparities between urban and rural areas highlights the fact that differences in school performance cannot be explained exclusively by individual characteristics of students but are the result of persistent structural conditioning. The environment of origin influences access to material resources, cultural capital, social networks and educational opportunities, decisively shaping the school path. The differences between urban and rural are not limited to infrastructure or facilities but reflect an unequal distribution of opportunities. In the urban environment, institutional diversity, access to information and stability of*

*teaching staff create a favorable context for high educational performance and aspirations. The disparities between urban and rural areas are one of the most persistent forms of educational inequality in Romania. Although almost half of the country's students come from rural communities, these areas benefit from considerably fewer educational resources compared to urban ones, both in terms of infrastructure and the quality of human resources. The differences between the two backgrounds are also reflected in educational outcomes. Data obtained from the international PISA tests indicate that students in rural areas perform significantly less than those in urban areas, the gap being equivalent to about two or three years of schooling. This discrepancy cannot be explained by differences in intellectual capacity, but by unequal access to educational, cultural and technological resources.*

**Keywords:** education, students, urban, rural, mobility

## **PERCEPTIONS OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING EARLY MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS**

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### **Abstract**

*Early mathematics plays an important role in children's cognitive development and in preparing them for formal mathematics learning. The way it is taught in preschool education is significantly influenced*

*by teachers' perceptions and beliefs. In Albanian literature, there is a lack of comprehensive empirical studies examining this relationship. This study explores preschool teachers' perceptions of early mathematics and investigates how these perceptions are reflected in the pedagogical practices used with children aged 3–6 years. The study was conducted in kindergartens in Southern Albania and includes teachers from both public and private kindergartens in urban and rural areas.*

*The methodology used is quantitative, based on a structured questionnaire addressing perceptions, teaching practices, and professional barriers in the teaching of mathematics in preschool education.*

*The findings indicate that teachers consider early mathematics essential for children's development and favor approaches based on play, hands-on activities, and real-life situations. They also identify challenges such as a lack of teaching materials, large class sizes, and insufficient specialized training.*

*The study contributes to filling the research gap within the Albanian context and provides practical recommendations for teachers' professional development and for improving the quality of mathematics education in preschool settings.*

**Keywords:** *early mathematics, preschool education, teachers' perceptions, pedagogical practices, early childhood (3–6 years).*

# THE ROLE OF SENSORY SPACES IN CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

## A case study in the city of Gjirokastra

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### **Abstract**

*Educational environments in preschool education play an important role in the cognitive, emotional, social and motor development of children. In contemporary pedagogical approaches, sensory spaces are considered important elements that support learning through play, exploration and interaction with nature. This paper aims to analyze the role of sensory spaces in the development of children in preschool education, through a case study carried out in a preschool institution in the city of Gjirokastra. The study included 100 children aged 3–6 years, educators, parents and representatives of the community. In its realization, a combined research approach was used, including direct observation, questionnaires with parents, conversations with the pedagogical staff and informal interviews with the children. The project consisted of transforming the kindergarten yard into an educational and sensory space through the creation of play corners, natural areas, creative corners and motor activities, mainly by using natural and recyclable materials. The results showed that sensory spaces positively influenced the increase of children's active participation, creativity, cooperation and interest in outdoor activities. Also, an improvement of social interaction, emotional well-being and motivation to learn was evidenced. Parents and educators positively assessed the impact of the transformed environment on children's development and on the quality of pedagogical practices. In conclusion, the study evidences that the creation of sensory spaces in preschool institutions constitutes a contemporary and inclusive practice that directly affects the all-round development of children and the improvement of the quality of preschool education.*

**Keywords:** *sensory spaces, preschool education, child development, outdoor education, learning through play, inclusive environment*

## **NOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS IN DEVELOPING 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

*In the context of rapid social, technological, and economic transformations, the contemporary education system faces the need to reorient the teaching and learning process toward the development of 21st-century competencies. This paper aims to analyze the role of innovative teaching methods in fostering key skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving in primary education. The study is based on a descriptive-analytical approach and includes a small-scale empirical investigation conducted through a questionnaire administered to primary school teachers. The research questions focus on: (1) the extent of the use of innovative teaching methods in the learning process, (2) their impact on the development of 21st-century skills, and (3) the challenges teachers encounter in implementing these methods in practice. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative interpretation. The findings indicate that innovative teaching methods are used partially and not always systematically, while their effectiveness in developing students' skills depends on teachers' professional preparation and the didactic conditions*

*of the classroom. Furthermore, challenges related to the lack of continuous professional training, curriculum overload, and limited educational resources were identified. The paper highlights the necessity of the sustainable integration of innovative teaching methods into teaching practice in order to enhance the quality of learning and promote the development of competencies required for the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** *innovative teaching methods, primary education, 21st-century skills, critical thinking, collaboration, digital competence.*

## **NEUROPLASTICITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ITS IMPACT ON DIDACTIC PRACTICES IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

*The first years of life represent a critical period for the development of the brain, where neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to reorganize itself through experience and interactions,*

*directly affects the learning, behavior and socio-emotional development of the child. The study focuses on the 3-6 age group and aims to analyze the impact of neuroplasticity on the didactic practices of educators in the institutions of preschool education. The research was piloted in the kindergartens of the city of Gjirokastër, relying on a descriptive approach with observational elements. The empirical part was realized through two instruments: the observation sheet of educator-child interactions and the checklist for the stimulating environment in kindergarten. The instruments evaluated elements such as verbal and nonverbal communication, emotional support, linguistic stimulation, organization of the sensory space and the presence of practices that encourage the exploration and imagination of children. The preliminary findings show that positive interactions and safe emotional environments influence the strengthening of synaptic connections, emotional regulation and holistic development of children. The study contributes to the intertwining of neuroscientific and pedagogical perspectives, highlighting the importance of didactic practices based on the early development of the brain.*

**Keywords:** *neuroplasticity, early childhood, preschool education, didactic practices, stimulating environment, brain development.*

# THE IMPACT OF PLAY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## **Abstract**

*Critical thinking is recognized as one of the core competencies of the new Primary Education curriculum. In the context of contemporary educational transformations, the use of active and interactive methods is considered essential for developing students' key competencies. Play is regarded as one of the most effective strategies for fostering active participation, collaboration, analysis, and problem-solving. This study aims to examine the role of play in promoting critical thinking skills among primary school students.*

*The research employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing questionnaires administered to primary school teachers, students' parents, and fourth-grade students at the “Koto Hoxhi” 9-year school, as well as direct observations conducted during instructional activities. Through play, students engage in real or simulated scenarios in which they are required to compare information, evaluate alternatives, and justify their choices. The paper highlights that integrating play into teaching contributes to creating an active and motivating learning environment, thereby positively influencing the development of critical thinking competencies.*

**Keywords:** *Primary Education, play, critical thinking, students, teaching.*

# TEACHING QUALITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN PISA: EVIDENCE FROM THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF KOSOVO

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## **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the relationship between students' performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the quality of teaching in the education system of Kosovo. The research focuses on identifying pedagogical and contextual factors that influence the development of students' competencies as assessed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). A quantitative research approach is employed, using structured questionnaires administered to students and teachers. The research instruments measure key variables such as teaching practices, teachers' qualifications, the use of technology in instruction, student motivation, and socio-economic factors. A total of 1,000 questionnaires were collected from students in Grades 8 and 9 across four municipalities in Kosovo, ensuring balanced representation of different educational contexts, with 450 responses from rural schools and 550 from urban schools. The collected data will be analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics, applying both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to examine the relationships between teaching quality, student motivation, socio-economic background, and student performance.*

*The findings are expected to show that contemporary teaching practices and higher levels of student motivation positively influence student performance, while socio-economic factors have a significant impact. Based on the results, conclusions will be drawn and evidence-based recommendations will be formulated*

*to support educational policymakers, school leaders, and other stakeholders in improving teaching quality and enhancing student achievement in Kosovo.*

**Keywords:** *PISA, teaching quality, student performance, education in Kosovo.*

## **USING SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING TO DEVELOP APPLIED COMPETENCES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION: A PRACTICE-BASED PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH**

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### **Abstract**

*Sustainability education increasingly requires pedagogical approaches that move beyond conceptual understanding and support the development of applied competences. In this context, sustainability reporting can become an effective learning tool, enabling students and professionals to connect sustainable development principles with organisational practices, measurable indicators and decision-making processes. This paper proposes a practice-based pedagogical approach for using sustainability reports in sustainable development education, with particular attention to ESG indicators, double materiality, stakeholder relevance and the logic of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting*

*Directive and European Sustainability Reporting Standards. The approach is grounded in the design of applied learning activities developed for a postgraduate training programme in sustainable development, where participants analyse real sustainability reports, identify environmental, social and governance topics, interpret material impacts, risks and opportunities, and formulate practical recommendations. The paper argues that sustainability reporting supports interdisciplinary learning by integrating economic, environmental, social and governance dimensions into authentic case-based tasks. It also contributes to sustainability literacy by helping learners understand how reporting frameworks translate broad sustainability goals into organisational responsibilities and evidence-based disclosures. The proposed framework may be adapted for higher education, adult education and professional training programmes aimed at developing competences for sustainable development, sustainability management and responsible organisational decision-making.*

**Keywords:** *sustainability reporting; sustainable development education; ESG literacy; double materiality; applied competences; case-based learning*

# COMPREHENSIVE TEACHING, A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENT TEACHERS

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## **Abstract**

*Comprehensiveness in education remains one of the most complex challenges of the contemporary education system. This study investigates the potential gap between the academic training of future teachers and the real challenges that teachers face during the teaching process. The study uses a comparative approach to investigate the needs of teachers for training and the attitudes of student teachers towards inclusive teaching. The study is based on a quantitative methodology, using a semi-structured instrument distributed to teachers and students of education. The instrument is used to assess the needs of the participants related to the professional development, and their perceptions of students' involvement in the classroom. The instrument measures the self-esteem of the participants regarding the professional competencies, perception of the main barriers and evaluation of the training/academic programs. The data revealed that, although student teachers presented positive attitudes towards inclusive education, they feel uncompleted regarding their practical and methodological implementation. In-service teachers identify the need for training, institutional support and real strategies for their work. While students possess strong theoretical foundations and optimism about comprehensiveness, teachers experience*

*practical difficulties related to the lack of specific training, flexible planning according to students' needs, learning through real-life situations, the large number of students in the classroom, and the lack of infrastructure or didactic tools. This study may be used by institutions of future teachers' education, the developers of politics of professional training in order to reassess their curricula and ongoing development education, in order to lessen the gap between university preparation and professional development of the teachers, especially in the field of comprehensiveness.*

**Keywords:** *Training of teachers, student teachers, comprehensive teaching, professional development*

## **DEVELOPING SUSTAINABILITY COMPETENCES THROUGH INNOVATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES**

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### **Abstract**

*Higher education institutions need to provide students with the information, skills, values and attitudes to confront current environmental, social and economic concerns in order to transition to sustainable societies. Green education here is an important strategy to developing sustainability competences and educating future professionals to contribute to sustainable development. The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of innovative teaching strategies in developing sustainability skills in university students.*

*The study, drawing on recent literature in Education for Sustainable*

*Development (ESD), examines pedagogical techniques that foster the incorporation of sustainability principles into higher education curricula. Particular focus is on active learning, project-based learning, collaborative problem-solving, experiential learning, and use of digital technology to promote students' engagement with environmental issues. These strategies stimulate critical thinking, systems thinking, ethical responsibility and informed decision-making, all of which are key competences for addressing complex global situations.*

*The report also covers important issues in the implementation of green education including curriculum revision, faculty preparedness, institutional commitment and resource availability. The paper proposes that creative and learner-centred pedagogies can contribute greatly to the efficacy of sustainability education. By integrating sustainability in teaching and learning processes, universities can be in a vital role in educating responsible citizens and future leaders who are capable of achieving a more sustainable world. The investigation is carried out within the research project Integrating and promoting green education in the initial training of English language teachers, strategic priorities: societal challenges, strategic direction: Innovative Educational Technologies and Products, with the code 25. 80012. 0807. 56SE, which studies integrated approaches to green education in English language learning contexts.*

**Keywords:** *green education, higher education, sustainability competences, innovative teaching practices, sustainable development*

# **PEDAGOGICAL INTEGRATION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN INCLUSIVE AND VISUAL ARTS TEACHING: TEACHING ASSISTANTS' EXPERIENCES IN ALBANIA**

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## **Abstract**

*This study examines the pedagogical integration of assistive technologies, digital tools, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching students with special educational needs, with particular attention to their role in inclusive and individualized instruction, including the teaching of visual arts. In visual arts education, digital platforms, interactive applications, AI-based creative tools, and multimedia resources can support students' artistic expression, creativity, communication, and participation through differentiated and accessible learning experiences. AI applications such as adaptive learning systems, speech-to-text tools, and personalized feedback mechanisms also facilitate real-time instructional adjustments and learner support.*

*The study explores teaching assistants' experiences through two research questions: (1) How are technology and AI integrated and experienced in teaching students with special educational needs? and (2) Which factors influence their effective implementation? A qualitative methodology was employed, based on nineteen semi-structured interviews conducted with teaching assistants from different Albanian school contexts. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and influencing factors.*

*Findings indicate that the integration of technology and AI remains fragmented and dependent on individual initiative rather than systematically embedded within educational practice. Major barriers include insufficient infrastructure, limited professional training, unclear institutional responsibilities, and inadequate policy frameworks. The study emphasizes the importance of revising teacher education curricula to strengthen competencies related to AI-supported inclusive pedagogy and technology-enhanced visual arts education.*

**Keywords:** Assistive Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Inclusive Education, Visual Arts Education, Differentiated Instruction, Special Educational Needs

## THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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### Abstract

*The rapid advancement of technology, as well as the invention of artificial intelligence (AI), has affected not only industry and the economy, but also education. Artificial Intelligence is*

*being successfully applied by some teachers, contributing to the improvement of the teaching and learning process. Integrating artificial intelligence in teaching can personalize the learning process for each student. AI in education can also increase the effectiveness of teaching by adapting to the individual needs of students (Tang, Kai-Yu; Chang, Ching-Yi; Hwang, Gwo-Jen. 2021). The use of artificial intelligence in education can also contribute to the development of critical thinking skills in students, encouraging them to analyze and interpret information in a more in-depth way. This suggests that AI can be a valuable tool to foster analytical and critical skills in students (Dida, Agron S. 2023).*

*The purpose of this article is to emphasize that: AI enables teaching and learning in a more flexible and interactive way (VanLehn 2011), (Zawacki-Richter (2015). Through a questionnaire, this study aims to collect quantitative data on the perspectives of 170 elementary and middle school teachers and to highlight the importance of AI. The results of this paper will help teachers become familiar with the importance of using AI in the teaching and learning process, as well as its use at all stages of the learning process.*

**Keywords:** *Artificial intelligence, teaching and learning, learning process, personalization, teacher*

# DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF TEACHERS' SKILLS IN INVOLVING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

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## **Abstract**

*Contemporary educational policies emphasize the importance of active citizenship, civic participation, and social responsibility as essential components of students' global development and lifelong learning. In this context, primary school education plays a fundamental role in developing students' civic competencies, social engagement, and collaborative attitudes. Community projects and volunteering activities provide valuable opportunities for primary school students to develop empathy, responsibility, communication skills, and democratic values through direct participation in real-life social contexts. In this regard, teachers become key actors in facilitating students' involvement in community projects and volunteering activities. Their professional competencies, pedagogical approaches, and ability to create participatory learning environments significantly influence the development of pupils' civic awareness, empathy, cooperation, and responsibility. The present study highlights the importance of developing teachers' professional skills for engaging primary school students in community-based and volunteering activities. The paper emphasizes that civic education begins in primary school through the formation of participatory behaviors, cooperation, empathy, and social responsibility. Teachers play a decisive role in facilitating pupils' active participation by creating democratic learning environments and implementing interactive, student-centered teaching strategies. Particular attention is paid to the role of formal and non-formal education in developing social and*

*civic competencies, in accordance with European educational recommendations and the national curriculum.*

**Keywords:** *Active citizenship, civic participation, social responsibility, students global development, lifelong learning*

## **UPDATED CURRICULUM AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHERS**

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### **Abstract**

*Contemporary educational reforms increasingly emphasize the development of competencies, critical thinking, creativity, the use of technology, and the meaningful connection of learning with real-life contexts.*

*In response to these global trends, the Ministry of Education of Albania initiated a curriculum update process in 2024, aiming to align the pre-university education curriculum with recent international developments in curriculum design and implementation. The updated curriculum is scheduled to be implemented in Grades 1, 6, and 10 beginning in September 2026. Within this context, the Quality Assurance Agency for Pre-*

*University Education (ASCAP) conducted a nationwide study in 2025 to investigate primary education teachers' perceptions of their professional development needs, their views on various forms of professional learning, and the training approaches they consider most effective for supporting curriculum planning and implementation. The study involved 5,273 primary school teachers from all Regional Directorates of Pre-University Education in Albania. Data were collected through a structured self-assessment questionnaire designed to identify teachers' training needs.*

*The findings reveal substantial professional development needs in areas such as curriculum-related legislation and policy guidelines, the use of interactive digital platforms, recent scientific developments within primary education subjects, student-centered planning, the implementation of key competencies, and the establishment of coherence among curriculum documents. The results further indicate that teachers perceive training programs, seminars, professional learning networks, and school-based professional development activities as the most effective forms of professional learning.*

*A particularly significant finding is teachers' strong preference for blended learning approaches, which combine face-to-face professional development activities with online interactive training platforms. The results of this study informed the design and delivery of nationwide teacher training programs implemented by Higher Education Institutions, with a specific focus on supporting the successful implementation of the updated curriculum.*

**Keywords:** *Curriculum reform, curriculum update, professional development, primary education, competency-based curriculum.*

# THE ROLE OF THE THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS AND PARENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' SKILLS AND POTENTIAL

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## **Abstract**

*The mission of the school is to ensure social well-being and to guarantee equal conditions and opportunities for all students by creating a safe and friendly environment. To bring together and guarantee quality teaching.*

*In order to successfully fulfill the mission of the school, a culture must be created that promotes continuous professional development and learning among all members of the school, as well as to create mechanisms for cooperation between school personnel, students and its wider community.*

*The main strategy of pedagogical work to achieve this goal is the development of the child's personality in all dimensions of human existence, which are particularly manifested in the multicultural environment of students.*

*This process is supported by many projects and activities that are included in the curriculum or will be developed during everyday life at school.*

*To encourage children towards independence and responsibility, but also to encourage them to cooperate and integrate in groups, in addition to face-to-face teaching, different forms of teaching should be applied, such as project work, learning at stations, weekly and daily school schedules, etc. These will be organized in small work groups, or in individual work, in order to motivate and promote students individually. (213 words)*

**Keywords:** *Leaders, teachers, parents, development, potential, skills, achievements, students*

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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## **Abstract**

*Artificial intelligence (AI) is being introduced slowly in primary education, and schools are looking for new ways to improve the teaching and learning processs. These technologies are mainly introduced to support teachers in their work, make learning more engaging for students, and adapt education to the individual needs of young learners. AI tools can help teachers in primary classrooms identify learning difficulties at an early stage, adapt learning materials to individual needs, and improve communication between teachers, students, and parents. This paper addresses opportunities and challenges of Artificial Intelligence applications in primary education highlights how AI can support the development of basic skills, help teachers manage the classroom more effectively, and create more personalized learning experiences in early education. . At the same time, it points to several important concerns, including data privacy, ethical use of technology, unequal access to digital resources, and the potential overuse of automated systems in children's learning process.*

*This study is based on a review of the recent academic literature and research on AI in early childhood education. The results show that, if used correctly, AI is a helpful tool for teachers, not a substitute for human instruction. However, its successful use will demand careful planning to ensure that interaction, creativity and emotional development remain central to the learning experience. Overall, AI should be integrated in a way that supports teachers while preserving the essential human role in education.*

**Keywords:** *Artificial Intelligence, Primary Education, Educational Technology, Personalized Learning, Teachers, Early Childhood Education.*

## **TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH HUMAN SCIENCES: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF TEACHING, LEARNING, WELL-BEING, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

*Rapid technological advancement, globalization, shifting learner expectations, growing student population diversity, and growing awareness of the significance of mental health and holistic development are all contributing factors to the current state of higher education. More inclusive, learner-centered, and development-oriented methods are replacing traditional educational institutions, which have traditionally placed a strong emphasis on academic achievement and content transfer. Understanding the cognitive, emotional, social, cultural, and behavioral aspects of human learning and development is made possible by the Human Sciences, an essential interdisciplinary field. Psychology, sociology, anthropology, cognitive science, neuroscience, educational studies, and learning sciences are all included in the human sciences. Together, these disciplines offer theoretical and practical frameworks for comprehending how students learn, create meaning, form identities, participate in educational processes, and interact with one another. Higher education institutions can transcend traditional instructional approaches and establish educational ecosystems that support*

*academic achievement in addition to emotional well-being, social responsibility, and lifelong learning by incorporating ideas from the human sciences.*

*Through an interdisciplinary perspective, the current study investigates how the human sciences are changing teaching and learning methods in higher education. The study looks into how integrating learner engagement techniques, inclusive pedagogical methods, well-being initiatives, and human development concepts might improve educational experiences. It also looks at how educational efficacy, student involvement, institutional atmosphere, psychological health, and general human development are all interrelated.*

*In order to produce a thorough understanding of educational reform, the study uses a mixed-method research strategy that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques. Higher education teachers and students are the target demographic for the proposed study, which uses stratified random sampling to guarantee representation among participant groups. It is suggested that focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations be used to gather data. Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and correlation are used to evaluate quantitative data, whereas theme analysis is used to interpret qualitative data in order to find participant experiences and developing patterns.*

*According to the conceptual framework this study produced, student well-being, learner-centered environments, institutional support systems, and interdisciplinary teaching techniques all have an impact on educational outcomes and human development. According to the paradigm, transformational outcomes in higher education are mediated by student engagement and well-being.*

**Keywords:** *Human Sciences, Higher Education, Teaching and Learning, Student Well-Being, Human Development, Interdisciplinary Education, Learner Engagement, Educational Transformation.*

# PROMOTING HERITAGE ON ZERO BUDGET: AN AI WORKFLOW TEST IN GJIROKASTËR, ALBANIA

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## **Abstract**

*Most cultural heritage institutions in developing regions cannot afford professional photography or graphic design. This paper describes a four-stage workflow — Prompt to Publication — built entirely on free AI tools, designed for non-technical staff to produce promotional images, short videos, and social media content for heritage sites. The workflow was tested on two monuments in Gjirokastrë, Albania, and extended through a structured user study with eight participants ranging in age from 20 to 73, with diverse professional backgrounds and digital literacy levels. Mean completion time across participants was 137.5 minutes at zero cost. Aggregate pass rate on a structured three-criterion image quality checklist reached 42.7%, with substantial variation across participant profiles and monument types. A second independent rater evaluated all 132 images using the same checklist. Cohen's Kappa reached  $\kappa = 0.89$  — almost perfect agreement. The study also found that six of eight participants omitted the mandatory AI disclosure label without prompting — a finding with direct implications for institutional deployment of AI-generated content in heritage promotion contexts.*

**Keywords:** AI image generation, cultural heritage, multimedia workflow, tourism promotion, Gjirokastrë, prompt engineering, ChatGPT / DALL-E 3, free tools, user study, inter-rater reliability

# GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

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## **Abstract**

*The rapid advancement of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) is reshaping higher education by transforming teaching, learning, research, and academic administration. Recent developments in text-based generative AI tools and related applications have created new opportunities for personalised learning, content creation, academic support, and improved educational efficiency. While the use of these technologies is expanding globally, limited research has examined their impact, opportunities, and challenges within the context of higher education institutions in Albania. Furthermore, universities are facing growing pressure to balance technological innovation with concerns related to academic integrity, ethical use, data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the development of critical thinking skills.*

*This paper investigates the role of Generative Artificial Intelligence in higher education and explores its implications for sustainable educational practices, with particular attention to the national academic context. The study aims to address the need for a better understanding of how students and academic staff perceive and utilise Generative AI technologies and how these tools may contribute to more effective, inclusive, and sustainable learning environments.*

*The research is based on a review of recent literature and an exploratory survey conducted among university students and academic staff. The findings suggest that Generative AI has significant potential to support flexible, accessible, and student-centred learning while improving teaching effectiveness and*

*research productivity. However, the results also highlight the necessity of institutional policies, ethical guidelines, and digital literacy initiatives to ensure the responsible use of these technologies.*

*The paper concludes that the successful integration of Generative AI can contribute to more innovative and sustainable higher education systems in Albania when supported by appropriate pedagogical strategies, governance frameworks, and stakeholder engagement.*

**Keywords:** *Generative Artificial Intelligence, Higher Education, Sustainable Education, Digital Innovation, Educational Technology, Academic Integrity, Digital Literacy*

## **EMPATHY AS A PREDICTIVE FACTOR OF PROSOCIAL AND PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOR AMONG PRIMARY EDUCATION STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

*Empathy represents one of the most important components of children's social and emotional development, as it directly influences the way they build interpersonal relationships, cooperate with others, and manage emotional and social situations. In the school context, the development of empathy is associated with*

*the manifestation of prosocial behaviors, whereas low levels of empathy are often linked to problematic behaviors, communication difficulties, and problems of social adjustment.*

*The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between empathy and behavioral characteristics among children in Primary Education, with a focus on prosocial and problematic behavior. The study includes students of primary school age, an important period for the development of socio-emotional competencies and social interaction.*

*The study methodology is based on a quantitative approach and uses a structured questionnaire adapted to the school-age population. The instrument is based on two well-known scales in psychological and educational literature: the Basic Empathy Scale (BES) by Jolliffe and Farrington for the assessment of empathy, and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) by Robert Goodman for the assessment of behavioral characteristics.*

*The study is expected to contribute to the understanding of the role of empathy in children's social and emotional development and to highlight its importance as a protective factor against problematic behaviors. Furthermore, the findings may serve as a basis for the development of psycho-educational interventions and school practices that promote emotional well-being, cooperation, and students' social adjustment.*

**Keywords:** *empathy, prosocial behavior, problematic behavior, Primary Education, socio-emotional development, children*

# **PARENTAL ANXIETY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR MENTAL WELL-BEING**

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigates parental anxiety and the digital behavior of students in the context of rapid contemporary technological development. The main objective is to identify levels of parental anxiety related to children's use of digital technology and to explore students' online behavior and safety. Grounded in social work and family psychology, the study assesses the impact of technology on parent-child dynamics. A quantitative method was employed, using two structured questionnaires administered to 200 parents and 195 students from a high school and a lower secondary school in Gjirokëstr, Albania, totaling 395 participants. Results show that 88% of parents express high levels of concern regarding their children's excessive online time, while 94.5% of students access the internet via smartphone.*

*TikTok is the most used platform among students (50.5%), and 8.8% report having received threatening or offensive messages on social media. Only 0.5% of parents have sought professional help, revealing a significant gap in access to psychosocial services. The findings highlight the urgent need for parental awareness and training in digital competencies. The study recommends integrated school- and institutional-level interventions to reduce parental anxiety and promote digital safety and family mental well-being.*

**Keywords:** *parental anxiety, digital technology, online safety, cyberbullying, students, mental well-being.*

# RESPONSIBLE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN STUDENT LEARNING: AN INTERNATIONAL MIXED-METHODS STUDY ON ACADEMIC USE, EMOTIONAL RESPONSES, INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENT THINKING

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## Abstract

*Artificial intelligence is becoming an increasingly intimate presence in student learning: it explains, translates, organises, reformulates and accompanies learners through moments of academic uncertainty. This study investigates students' use*

*of artificial intelligence in higher education, with particular attention to academic practices, emotional responses, integrity concerns and the preservation of independent thinking. An international mixed-methods survey design was used, based on 429 valid responses collected from students in Romania, Albania, Turkey and the Republic of Moldova. The questionnaire combined Likert-type items with open-ended questions addressing AI use, emotions, perceived learning support, autonomy, ethical responsibility and institutional regulation. Quantitative findings indicated a moderate level of AI use in academic activities, with the highest reported use for understanding difficult concepts, general academic support, translation, idea generation and checking or reformulating personal ideas. Ethical responsibility emerged as a strong dimension, particularly regarding the need to use AI as a support tool rather than as a replacement for personal thinking, the importance of student training and the need for clear university rules. Correlational analyses showed that AI use was positively associated with positive academic emotions, perceived learning support and ethical responsibility, but also with concerns regarding autonomy and dependence. The qualitative responses revealed four major themes: AI as a learning assistant, AI as a source of efficiency and accessibility, AI as ethical ambiguity, and AI as a potential threat to independent thinking when used uncritically. The findings suggest that students do not reject AI; rather, they need clear institutional guidance, ethical training and pedagogical strategies that preserve personal judgement, transparency and academic integrity.*

**Keywords:** *artificial intelligence, higher education, student learning, academic integrity, independent thinking, academic emotions, responsible AI, AI ethics, mixed-methods research*

# RESPONSIBLE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF UNIVERSITY TEACHING STAFF'S USE, EMOTIONS, AUTONOMY AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

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## Abstract

*Artificial intelligence is no longer a peripheral innovation in higher education, but an increasingly embedded component of teaching, research, academic communication and institutional practice. This study investigates university teaching staff's*

*use of AI tools, professional emotions, perceived autonomy, motivation for pedagogical innovation and ethical responsibility in an international academic context. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 55 university teaching staff and researchers from Albania, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Turkey. The questionnaire included sections on professional background, frequency of AI use in academic activities, affective responses to AI, motivation and professional autonomy, and ethics, academic integrity and institutional responsibility. The findings indicate a moderate level of AI use in academic practice, particularly for translation, organising information, academic writing support, generating examples and preparing teaching materials. Respondents reported both positive professional emotions, such as curiosity, perceived support and motivation for innovation, and concerns related to dependence, authenticity, ethical ambiguity and possible misinterpretation of AI use. The strongest agreement was found in relation to ethical and institutional responsibility, especially the need for clear university policies, staff training and student guidance on acceptable AI use. The study suggests that responsible AI integration in higher education requires not only technological adoption, but also transparent regulation, ethical literacy, professional development and the preservation of academic judgement.*

**Keywords:** *artificial intelligence, responsible AI, higher education, university teaching staff, academic ethics, professional autonomy, academic integrity, teaching innovation, institutional responsibility*

# INTERSECTIONAL WORK INCLUSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE DISABILITY & DIVERSITY MANAGER FOR MIGRANT WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

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## **Abstract**

*Migrant women with disabilities are exposed to multiple and intersecting forms of exclusion related to gender, disability, migration status, language barriers, socioeconomic vulnerability, and limited access to employment and welfare systems. Despite the growing relevance of diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, institutional and organizational responses often remain fragmented, sector- based, and insufficiently adapted to complex life trajectories.*

*This paper proposes an interdisciplinary and intersectional framework for promoting sustainable work inclusion among migrant women with disabilities. Drawing on intersectionality theory, disability studies, occupational justice, diversity management, and inclusive governance perspectives, the contribution aims to shift the focus from a merely compensatory approach to disability toward a proactive model of social participation, empowerment, and organizational responsibility.*

*The paper highlights the strategic role of the Disability & Diversity Manager as a mediator between workers, employers, health and social services, public institutions, and local communities. Within this framework, personalized pathways for inclusion and work, reasonable accommodations, cultural mediation,*

*multidimensional assessment, and long-term monitoring are identified as key components of an integrated inclusion process.*

*The proposed model is aligned with the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to gender equality, decent work, reduced inequalities, and inclusive institutions. By integrating occupational, social, cultural, and organizational dimensions, the framework contributes to the development of more equitable and sustainable employment policies.*

*The paper argues that intersectionality should not be understood only as an analytical category, but also as an operational tool for inclusive governance. In this perspective, the Disability & Diversity Manager can support organizations and territories in designing work environments that are accessible, culturally responsive, and capable of addressing complex forms of vulnerability without reducing individuals to a single identity category.*

**Keywords:** *Intersectionality, Work Inclusion, Migrant Women with Disabilities, Disability & Diversity Manager, Sustainable Development, Occupational Justice, Inclusive Governance, Reasonable Accommodation, Diversity Management, Employment Inclusion*

# **HUMAN BEHAVIOUR AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN SMART WORKPLACES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONS 5. 0**

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## **Abstract**

*The rapid adoption of digital technologies in workplaces is reshaping organizational processes as well as employee behaviour, attitudes, and workplace interactions. In the era of Sustainable Organizations 5. 0, where human-centric innovation and smart workplaces are emerging as key priorities, understanding the behavioural impact of digital transformation has become increasingly important. This empirical study examines the relationship between human behaviour and digital transformation in smart workplaces and its contribution to sustainable organizational development. The study focuses on behavioural dimensions such as employee adaptability, digital readiness, emotional acceptance of technological change, collaboration, work flexibility, and well-being in technology-driven environments. It further explores how organizations can create sustainable and inclusive workplaces through intelligent systems and employee-oriented digital practices. The research is based on data collected from employees across different sectors to identify the behavioural factors influencing the successful implementation of digital transformation initiatives.*

*The findings highlight that sustainable organizational growth depends not only on technological advancement but also on positive employee behaviour, psychological acceptance, and adaptability toward change. The study emphasizes the need for organizations*

*to balance innovation with human values while developing smart workplace strategies. The research contributes to the growing literature on sustainable organizations by offering practical insights for managers, HR professionals, and policymakers in designing human-focused digital transformation practices for the future workplace.*

**Keywords:** *Human Behaviour, Digital Transformation, Smart Workplaces, Sustainable Organizations 5. 0, Employee Adaptability*

## **SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND SELF-PERCEPTION IN ADOLESCENTS: THE ROLE OF ADDICTION, SOCIAL COMPARISON, AND ONLINE FEEDBACK**

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### **Abstract**

*The present study examined the relationship between social media use and self-esteem among adolescents, investigating the influence of social media addiction, online social comparison, and the importance attributed to feedback received in the virtual environment. The study was conducted on a sample of 88 adolescents aged between 14 and 19 years, high school students from Mureș County, Romania, using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale, and a questionnaire on social media use.*

*The results revealed a predominantly moderate level of self-esteem*

*and a moderate to high level of social media use. No significant relationships were found between social media addiction and self-esteem, nor between the importance attributed to online feedback and self-esteem. However, a significant association was observed between social comparison and self-esteem, as well as between the amount of time spent on social media and the level of social media addiction. Gender differences were also identified regarding self-esteem, but not in relation to social media addiction.*

*The study findings indicate that, within the analyzed sample, the general hypothesis regarding the existence of a significant relationship between social media addiction, online social comparison, and self-esteem was not confirmed. The results suggest that the relationship between social media use and adolescent self-esteem is complex and may be influenced by additional factors that were not investigated in the present research.*

**Keywords:** *self-esteem, adolescents, social media, social media addiction, social comparison, online feedback, social validation*

## **THE INFLUENCE OF COLLEGIAL COMMUNICATION ON WORKPLACE STRESS**

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### **Abstract**

*The objective of the paper aims to investigate the relationship between collegial communication style and the level of stress in the workplace. Dong Yoon Yoo, conducting a study in 2023, highlights a significant positive relationship between interpersonal conflict*

*and occupational stress, indicating that it contributes to an increase in stress levels. The study was conducted on 30 employees in the Horeca sector in Fresca restaurants in Târgu Mureș and Sfântu Gheorghe. For investigating the communication style, the Communication Questionnaire developed by Gibb, 1961 (Horizontal Communication in the Organization) was used, and for studying the level of stress experienced by employees, the Perceived Stress Scale developed by S. Levenstein, 1993 (S. P. S. ) was utilized. The research results highlighted that employees who use a moderately defensive communication style have a higher level of stress, while those with a moderately supportive communication style showed a lower level of stress. The research results are useful for organizations and managers in developing strategies to improve internal communication and, consequently, employee well-being and reduce the level of stress experienced at the workplace.*

**Keywords:** *collegial communication, defensive /supportive communication style, stress*

## **USE OF SMART DEVICES AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS**

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### **Abstract**

*Mental health professionals reveal important changes in perceptions of social problems, frustration tolerance, and levels*

*of suffering that lead to specific patterns of behaviour in young people's lives.*

*Our theoretical starting points are the use of smart devices and emotion regulation, as well as other factors determining the mental health of young people, such as psychological fatigue, device-related „self-medicating“ tendencies, self-esteem, and health anxiety.*

*Our goal is to understand these increasingly frequent individual behavioral patterns and explore treatment options.*

*The survey has 250 respondents, aged 15 to 60 years. Participants' responses relate to demographic data (gender, age, smartphone usage habits) and psychological metrics. Tools selected for the analysis are the Smartphone Application-Based Addiction Scale (SABAS), the Mental Health Continuum Scale (MHC), the Assessing Emotions Scale (AES), and the Fear of Negative Perception Questionnaire (FNPQ).*

*Our hypotheses:*

*Emotional regulation disorders are associated with altered perception of emotional needs, isolation, and social distancing. Lifestyle fragmentation, time crisis, family disorders, and mental suffering are linked to the characteristics of social behavior determined by virtual experiences, which manifest themselves in emotional distancing, avoidance, and often impulsive reactions. Participants' motivation and sensitivity to psychological experiences increase distancing emotions, alertness, and psychological fatigue.*

*Our findings reveal characteristics of social behavior influenced by online experiences, such as loneliness, feelings of separation, avoidance of people, and impulsive responses to problems and suffering. Psychological experiences, their social and emotional sensitivity, and behavioral changes in response to more intense stimuli determine the appearance of distancing, emotional intensity, alertness, and fatigue.*

**Keywords:** *emotion regulation, online experiences, smart devices use, social behavior*

# ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AMONG BACHELOR STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA: THE ROLE OF NEUROTICISM AND PARENTING STYLES

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## **Abstract**

*Academic procrastination is a common self-regulation difficulty among university students and has been associated with individual and family-related factors. The present study examined the relationship between neuroticism, parenting styles, and academic procrastination among bachelor students at the University of Tirana. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational design was employed. The sample consisted of 300 undergraduate students from five faculties selected through proportional probability sampling procedures. Data were collected using the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10), the General Procrastination Scale, and the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ). Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted. The findings revealed a significant positive association between neuroticism and academic procrastination ( $r = .318, p < .001$ ). Significant positive relationships were also found between paternal authoritarian parenting and academic procrastination ( $r = .195, p < .001$ ), maternal authoritarian parenting ( $r = .141, p = .014$ ), and maternal permissive parenting ( $r = .147, p = .011$ ). In contrast, authoritative parenting styles were not significantly associated with procrastination. The findings suggest that emotional instability, excessive parental control, and insufficient behavioral structure may contribute to difficulties in academic self-*

*regulation. The study contributes to the literature on psychological and family-related factors associated with procrastination among university students within the Albanian context.*

**Keywords:** *academic procrastination, neuroticism, parenting styles, authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting, university students.*

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLES AND THE LEVEL OF ALEXITHYMIA IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD (18–30 YEARS)**

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### **Abstract**

*Attachment represents the pattern through which individuals establish and develop emotional bonds with others, whereas alexithymia refers to difficulties in identifying, describing, and processing emotional experiences. Given the significance of these constructs for psychological well-being and interpersonal functioning, the present study aimed to explore the relationship between attachment styles and the level of alexithymia among young adults. The primary objective of the study was to examine the influence of different attachment styles on the manifestation of alexithymia among individuals aged 18-30 years. The study sample consisted of 175 participants, of whom 104 were female*

and 71 were male. Data were collected using two standardized instruments: the Attachment Style Questionnaire - Short Form (ASQ-SF) for assessing attachment styles and the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) for measuring the level of alexithymia. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and linear regression analysis. The findings revealed that secure attachment was negatively associated with alexithymia, suggesting a protective role against difficulties in emotional processing. In contrast, insecure attachment styles, particularly anxious and avoidant attachment, were positively and significantly associated with higher levels of alexithymia, indicating their role as potential risk factors. Regression analysis demonstrated that attachment-related variables accounted for 33.7% of the variance in alexithymia, confirming their importance in predicting emotional difficulties. The results are consistent with the existing international literature and provide a valuable contribution to the Albanian context, where research on the relationship between attachment and alexithymia remains limited. The study highlights the importance of developing psychoeducational interventions and support programs aimed at promoting secure attachment and strengthening young adults' abilities to recognize, express, and regulate emotions.

**Keywords:** attachment, attachment styles, alexithymia, emotional regulation, emerging adulthood

# THE STUDENT WHO DOESN'T ASK: FEAR, CLASSROOM CULTURE, AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF QUESTIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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## **Abstract**

*This article begins with a simple but troubling observation: most students stay silent in class. They listen, they take notes, and they leave - without asking a single question. The central argument here is that this silence is not a sign of ignorance, but of something deeper and more dangerous: the fear of appearing ignorant in an age that promises instant answers. Drawing on the Socratic tradition of questioning as an act of courage, Paulo Freire's concept of "the self-censorship of the oppressed," and Immanuel Kant's notion of intellectual maturity as a bold exercise of independent thought, this article argues that the absence of questions is not an individual failure on the student's part, but a symptom of an educational culture that punishes uncertainty and rewards false confidence. The rise of artificial intelligence sharpens this dynamic further: students lose both the opportunity and the habit of asking openly. The article is grounded in qualitative inquiry through autoethnographic reflection drawn from seminars at Barleti University, and carries practical implications for redefining classroom culture - one where not knowing is a starting point, not a source of shame.*

**Keywords:** pedagogical questioning; classroom culture; fear of ignorance; Socrates; Freire; Kant; Artificial Intelligence; autoethnography; higher education.

# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE LEVEL OF PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## **Abstract**

*First-year university students are particularly affected by psychological challenges due to the transitional nature that characterizes this stage of life. In this context, social support is considered a protective factor against academic, social, and emotional difficulties, which may increase the level of stress experienced by students. This research aims to examine the role of social support in the perceived stress experienced by this group of students.*

*With the help of two standardized questionnaires related to Perceived Stress (Perceived Stress Scale; PSS-10) and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), both organized into a single survey, the study aims to identify the correlation between the level of social support and the stress experienced by students during their first year of university studies. It is expected that a negative relationship will exist between social support and stress levels, raising the hypothesis that the higher the level of social support provided to students, the lower and more manageable the level of perceived stress will be.*

*Furthermore, the study aims to highlight the importance of support networks, such as family, friends, and the university environment, in the process of students' adaptation to the academic and social demands of university life. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the factors influencing students' psychological well-being and to serve as a basis for the*

*development of supportive programs and preventive interventions in higher education institutions.*

**Keywords:** *first-year university students, perceived stress, psychological well-being, social support, university students*

## **WHEN EMOTIONS HAVE NO WORDS: SOMATIZATION AS A LANGUAGE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS**

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### **Abstract**

*In clinical and counseling practice, a considerable number of individuals seek help for persistent physical symptoms for which medical examinations fail to identify a clear organic cause. Chronic pain, muscle tension, gastrointestinal disturbances, fatigue, dizziness, and cardiovascular complaints often represent ways through which unprocessed emotional experiences are expressed through the body. This phenomenon, known as somatization, reflects the complex interaction between psychological processes and physical manifestations.*

*This paper aims to explore somatization as a form of communication of psychological distress, examining how unexpressed emotions, traumatic experiences, internal conflicts, and chronic stress may manifest through bodily symptoms. Through a review of contemporary literature in clinical psychology, psychotherapy, and neuroscience, the study discusses the psychological and neurobiological mechanisms that connect emotional experiences with physiological responses.*

*Particular attention is given to the role of emotional awareness, trauma history, emotional regulation abilities, and early attachment experiences in the development and maintenance of somatic symptoms. Furthermore, the paper highlights the importance of a holistic understanding of the individual and emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary collaboration between mental health professionals and healthcare providers in the assessment and treatment of somatization.*

*The discussion argues that somatization should not be viewed merely as the absence of a medical diagnosis, but rather as a meaningful expression of psychological suffering. Recognizing bodily symptoms as potential carriers of emotional meaning may contribute to more effective therapeutic interventions and improved overall well-being. Understanding the body as a medium through which emotional distress can be communicated offers valuable insights for both clinical practice and the advancement of integrative approaches to mental health care.*

**Keywords:** *somatization, psychological distress, emotional regulation, trauma, bodily symptoms, psychotherapy, mental health*

# **FACTORS INFLUENCING PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY AMONG PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: A NARRATIVE REVIEW**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the main factors influencing psychological security among parents of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The aim of the study is to identify the possible conditions that contribute to maintaining or reducing parents' psychological security, with particular emphasis on social and family support, access to specialised services, parental stress, level of information about the diagnosis, family relationships, stigma, and coping strategies. Raising and caring for a child with autism spectrum disorder may involve significant emotional, social, and financial challenges, which can affect parents' psychological well-being and adaptive capacity. The research methodology is based on a narrative literature review focused on psychological security, parental stress, social support, coping strategies, and the experiences of parents raising children with autism spectrum disorder. The findings highlight that emotional support, psychological counselling, access to professional services, and the existence of a stable support network are essential protective factors that strengthen parents' sense of security and psychological well-being. The paper also emphasises the negative impact of social stigmatisation and community integration difficulties on the emotional state of parents. The conclusions underline the need to*

*develop psychological and social support programmes specifically addressed to families of children with autism spectrum disorder, as well as the importance of collaboration between specialists, educational institutions, and families in improving quality of life.*

**Keywords:** *psychological security, autism spectrum disorder, parental stress, social support, quality of life*

## **PRACTICAL TRAINING IN HUMANITIES HIGHER EDUCATION: BRIDGING CRITICAL INQUIRY AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE IN THE CONTEMPORARY UNIVERSITY**

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### **Abstract**

*Practical training in the humanities has long occupied a peripheral position within higher education curricula, often overshadowed by the theoretical and interpretive nature of the disciplines involved. However, in an era marked by increasing pressure on graduates to demonstrate tangible professional competencies, the integration of structured internship experiences into humanities programs has emerged as a matter of considerable academic and policy interest. This paper examines the role and significance of practical training within humanities higher education today, with particular focus on fields such as history, philosophy, linguistics, literature, and cultural studies. Through a systematic review of current literature and comparative analysis of internship frameworks across European universities, the study argues that practical training in the humanities carries a distinct pedagogical value that extends*

*beyond mere vocational preparation. It cultivates critical thinking, intercultural communication, adaptability, and ethical reasoning - competencies that are increasingly recognized as essential in contemporary professional environments.*

*The paper further identifies key challenges specific to humanities disciplines, including the limited availability of field-relevant placements, the difficulty of translating theoretical knowledge into workplace contexts, and the persistent undervaluation of humanities graduates by employers. Particular attention is given to the role of digital humanities and cultural institutions - such as archives, museums, publishing houses, and NGOs - as emerging spaces for meaningful practical engagement.*

*The findings suggest that the effective incorporation of practical training into humanities programs requires a fundamental rethinking of curriculum design, stronger institutional partnerships with cultural and civil society organizations, and the development of reflective assessment frameworks that honor the epistemological complexity of humanistic inquiry. Rather than adapting the humanities to market demands, the paper advocates for a model of practical training that allows students to bring humanistic values and critical perspectives into professional life.*

**Keywords:** *practical training, humanities education, higher education, employability, critical thinking, curriculum design, cultural institutions*

# A CROSS-LINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE SUBSTANTIVIZATION OF ADJECTIVES IN ALBANIAN AND ENGLISH

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## **Abstract**

*This paper presents a comparative, cross-linguistic analysis of the substantivization of adjectives in Albanian and English: the syntactic and morphological process by which an adjective acquires the functional and distributional properties of a noun. While both languages employ this mechanism to optimize economy of expression, they deploy fundamentally different morpho-syntactic strategies. English primarily relies on conversion (zero-derivation), using the definite article ‘the’ and syntactic positioning to assign nominal status to adjectives that remain morphologically inert. Albanian, by contrast, operates within a richly inflective framework in which substantivized adjectives absorb full nominal paradigms, including gender, number, case, and the distinctive prepositive article. Drawing on a compiled list of substantivized adjectives in both languages lifted from standard reference grammars, historical-linguistic research, and recent descriptive studies, this paper examines the structural mechanics, semantic classifications, and syntactic behaviors of adjectival substantivization in both systems. The analysis reveals that the Albanian-English contrast*

*reflects a broader typological distinction between analytic and synthetic strategies for category-shifting phenomena in natural language.*

**Keywords:** *contrastive linguistics, substantivization, adjective nominalization, morphology, syntax, zero-derivation, prepositive article, cross-linguistic typology*

## **TRANSLATION, EDUCATION, AND CULTURAL IDENTITY: ITALIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN ALBANIA BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS**

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### **Abstract**

*This article examines the role of Italian children's literature translated into Albanian during the period 1923–1944, focusing on the works and authors that most significantly influenced the formation of reading culture for children in Albania. Through a bibliographical, historical-literary, and translation-based analysis, the study highlights the presence of Italian authors in Albanian publications of the period, with particular attention to Edmondo De Amicis and Carlo Collodi, two of the most important figures in Italian children's literature.*

*The article analyses the reception of the works Cuore (Heart) and Pinocchio in Albanian culture, tracing the history of their*

*publication, re-publication, and critical interpretation. Special attention is given to the role of Albanian translators, particularly Karl Gurakuqi and Cuk Simoni, who not only mediated Italian texts for Albanian readers but also contributed to their linguistic and cultural adaptation.*

*At the core of the study lies the analysis of the relationship between translation and cultural identity. Translations of Italian children's literature performed multiple functions: educational, by transmitting civic and moral values; linguistic, by enriching written Albanian; aesthetic, by expanding the literary horizon of young readers; and identity-forming, by facilitating Albania's alignment with European models of modernity. In this sense, translation appears not only as a linguistic act but also as an important process of cultural construction.*

*The study concludes that Italian children's literature translated into Albanian during the years 1923–1944 constitutes a significant chapter in the history of translation and Albanian culture, playing an important role in educating younger generations, developing the Albanian literary language, and shaping modern Albanian cultural identity.*

**Key words:** *Italian children's literature, literary translation, Edmondo De Amicis, Carlo Collodi, Cuk Simoni, Karl Gurakuqi, cultural identity, literary reception, translated literature, Albania*

# **CAREER COUNSELLING IN ALBANIA: ALIGNING EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE WITH EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES**

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## **Abstract**

*Career counselling has emerged as an essential pillar of lifelong learning, helping individuals make informed educational, professional, and personal decisions throughout different stages of life. Its importance is particularly evident during secondary and upper-secondary education, when students are required to make critical choices regarding academic pathways, higher education, vocational training, and future careers. As Albania continues its path toward European Union integration, there is an increasing need to align educational policies, curricula, and guidance services with European standards and best practices.*

*This study examines the current state of career orientation and counselling in Albania, using the Gjirokastrë region as a case study for surveys and questionnaires conducted among students, teachers, and educational stakeholders. It highlights recent positive developments, including the introduction of career*

*counselling as an optional subject and the appointment of trained teachers selected through competitive procedures and supported by national guidelines. The research also explores international and European models, including practices implemented in comprehensive schools and International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes, where dedicated counsellors play a central role in supporting students' educational and career choices.*

*Using interviews and data, this paper compares Albanian career guidance with European and global models. It focuses on how teachers, families, and universities work together, identifying gaps and showing the need for better teamwork among all stakeholders. The study concludes that aligning Albanian education with European standards requires a comprehensive and integrated approach. Expanding counselling services, formalizing the role of trained career coordinators, and strengthening institutional networks can enhance youth employability, support informed decision-making, and contribute to the sustainable development of human capital.*

**Keywords:** *career counselling, lifelong learning, EU integration, curriculum alignment, employability*

# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AGGLUTINATED ADVERBS IN ALBANIAN AND ENGLISH

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## **Abstract**

*This paper presents a corpus-based comparative study of agglutinated adverbs in Albanian and English. Agglutinated adverbs are understood here as adverbial forms produced through the structural fusion of two or more lexical or grammatical elements into a single fixed unit. Two corpora of comparable size were analyzed: a text of approximately 14, 860 words drawn from Albanian dailies and a text of 14, 856 words from CNN News. The two corpora differ not only in density but in formation patterns, semantic distribution, and degree of lexicalization. Albanian relies heavily on derivational suffixation with -isht, which accounts for 45. 1% of all agglutinated adverbs, alongside compound forms and prepositional fusions. English draws on a smaller set of historically fused forms, many of which are now fully grammaticalized. Semantically, Albanian prioritizes temporal organization and discourse cohesion, while English foregrounds additive discourse marking and spatial reference. A controlled sample of 40 items - 20 from each language - reveals that compound formation is the most common structural pattern in both languages, while Albanian shows a higher rate of semantic opacity and English preserves*

*more formally marked, register-specific fossilized forms. The paper also discusses pedagogical implications for teaching these structures to L2 learners of both languages.*

**Keywords:** *agglutinated adverbs, corpus linguistics, morphology, grammaticalization, contrastive analysis, lexicalization*

## **A COMPARATIVE VIEW BETWEEN THE WORD FORMATION SYSTEMS OF THE ALBANIAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES**

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### **Abstract**

*This study deals with the comparison of the word formation systems of the Albanian and English languages, with the aim of highlighting the similarities and differences in the creation of new lexical units. Word formation constitutes an important process in the enrichment of vocabulary and in the continuous development of the language. In this paper, the main word formation mechanisms, such as derivation, composition, conversion and abbreviation, are analyzed, relying on the comparative and descriptive method. The analysis includes representative examples from both languages, with the aim of highlighting the different ways of word formation. It also examines the impact of social and technological developments on the creation of new lexical units. The results*

*show that both Albanian and English widely use derivation and composition to expand the lexical fund. However, Albanian is characterized by a richer use of prefixes and suffixes, which play an important role in the formation of new words and in the expression of semantic nuances. In contrast, English is distinguished by its high productivity of conversion, a process in which a word can pass from one grammatical category to another without formal changes. The study concludes that, despite typological differences, both languages follow similar principles in the enrichment of the lexicon, reflecting the communicative needs and social and cultural developments of their speakers.*

**Keywords:** word formation, Albanian language, English language, derivation, composition, conversion

## **THE TREATMENT OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ALBANIAN AND ITALIAN DICTIONARIES: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

*Phraseological expressions represent an important component of linguistic and cultural heritage, preserving collective experience,*

values, and patterns of thought. Their semantic complexity and figurative nature make their lexicographic treatment particularly challenging. The way dictionaries record, define, and illustrate phraseological units is therefore of considerable interest for both phraseological and lexicographic studies.

*This paper investigates the representation of phraseological expressions in Albanian and Italian lexicographic practice. The study examines the principles and methods employed in the inclusion, classification, and description of phraseological units, with particular attention to the presentation of meaning, usage, and contextual information. A comparative approach is adopted to identify common tendencies and distinctive features in the treatment of phraseological material across the two linguistic traditions.*

*The analysis highlights a range of lexicographic solutions for dealing with idiomatic and fixed expressions, revealing differences in their structural organization, semantic interpretation, and degree of contextualization. At the same time, the study points to several shared practices that reflect broader developments in contemporary lexicography. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between phraseology and dictionary-making and emphasize the importance of systematic and consistent representation of phraseological units in lexicographic resources.*

**Keywords:** *phraseology, phraseological expressions, lexicography, dictionary representation, Albanian, Italian, comparative analysis*

# ASSESSING WRITING DIFFICULTIES AND PRESENTING LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN A BILINGUAL CONTEXT

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## **Abstract**

*This article examines the writing production strategies and challenges encountered by bilingual students, Albanian and Greek, in the fifth and sixth grades of Primary and Secondary School in Dervician. The main objective is to identify students' bilingual profiles, the cognitive and metacognitive strategies they employ while writing in both languages, as well as their perceptions of their strengths and their weaknesses in the writing process. The data were collected by participants in the respective grades through a bilingual questionnaire consisting of both open-ended and close-ended questions. The findings reveal that students employ a variety of strategies for planning, organizing and revising their written texts, including brainstorming ideas, using dictionaries, discussing tasks with peers, mentally translating from their first language and rereading texts to correct errors. The results indicated that writing strategies are used more frequently in Albanian than in*

*Greek. The main difficulties encountered in Greek were related to grammar, spelling and formulation of ideas, whereas in Albanian they were associated with vocabulary development and text composition. Students emphasized the need for more writing practice, greater support from teachers and an increased exposure to extracurricular reading materials. The findings highlight the need of fostering metacognitive awareness and explicitly teaching writing strategies in order to enhance the linguistic and literacy competences of bilingual learners.*

**Keywords:** *Writing, bilingualism, strategies, Greek language, Albanian language*

## **HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IN PRE-UNIVERSITY SECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the importance of human resources and financial management in pre-university secondary education institutions, considering these areas as key determinants of a high school's success or failure. The study draws upon contemporary literature on educational leadership and analyzes several influential management models, including transformational leadership, total quality management, servant leadership, situational leadership, and instructional leadership. Through an examination of these theoretical approaches, the paper argues that effective school leaders must adapt their leadership style to the institutional, cultural, and human context in which they operate.*

*The study further explores the legal and professional instruments available to school principals for the effective management of human resources, including teacher recruitment and appointment procedures, classroom observation, professional development, performance evaluation, and staff motivation and reward systems. Particular attention is also devoted to financial management, emphasizing the identification of priority investment needs, the transparent administration of funds, and the role of cooperation between school leadership, governing boards, and the wider school community.*

*The findings suggest that effective management of human and financial resources requires professionalism, transparency, meritocracy, and sustained collaboration among all stakeholders involved in school life. The paper concludes that the success of an educational institution is not the achievement of a single individual but rather the outcome of coordinated teamwork, shared responsibility, and a collective commitment to continuous improvement and educational quality enhancement.*

**Keywords:** *Human resource management, financial management, educational leadership, school administration, pre-university education, quality in education.*

# COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL METHODS WITH AI-SUPPORTED LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

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## **Abstract**

*As technological advancements are happening at a rapid pace, modern educational environments around the world are revisiting their approaches to education by incorporating technology into their learning environments. As a result, many teachers, policy makers and curriculum designers in education are exploring the implications of such a fusion of technology and learning for students. Meanwhile, traditional classroom environments continue to hold much value, as these settings are ideal for students to acquire much needed social skills and to further hone their oral communication skills by means of classroom interactions, which as yet have not been replicable by the vast array of technology being utilized in education today.*

*In the final version of this thesis, the contraries of so-called traditional versus technology-based education of the past will be transcended by the teachers and by the institutions of education. The most probable models for future education will probably be of a kind that, in so far as humanly possible, and that by means of technology the teaching and learning process will be facilitated as much as possible. In this way, learning can be individualized, time and efforts can be saved and a very large number of learning facilities can be provided.*

**Keywords:** *Learning environments, traditional teaching methods, comparative pedagogy, educational technology*

# CHALLENGES FACED BY INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND EUROPEAN APPROACH IN MULTIETHNIC CLASSROOMS

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## **Abstract**

*This article discusses the difficulties the intercultural education is encountering in the present multicultural societies taking into consideration the Albanian and the Greek communities. The modern classroom is full of students with diverse ethnic, language and cultural backgrounds, which provides teaching opportunities and institutional challenges. The article examines the implementation of the European policies for intercultural education in the Albanian and Greek educational environment as well as the lack of its implementation, comparing national policies towards cultural diversity, tolerance and minority linguistic identity. The article, based on international comparative approaches, highlights the discrepancies between policy implementation and pedagogy, especially in the context of the maintenance of national linguistic and cultural identity and intercultural understanding. The classroom context is explored as a place that either promotes or hinders the development of intercultural competence, based on the teachers' preparation, institutional scaffolding, and curriculum design. The article also examines the potential of schools as socialisation and collaborative learning spaces that are able to respond positively and sensitively to ethnic, cultural, gender and linguistic differences. The conclusions indicate a need for coherent intercultural education policies that combine the goals of European integration with those of maintaining the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Albanian and Greek minority communities.*

**Keywords:** *cultural diversity, tolerance to diversity, international comparative approaches, new intercultural education policies, preserving national linguistic & cultural identities*

## **A DEGREE OR AN EDUCATIONAL PASSPORT? RETHINKING STUDENT PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE**

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### **Abstract**

*In an era where academic qualifications no longer guarantee professional success, an important question emerges: Is a degree enough? While higher education continues to prioritize disciplinary knowledge, students are increasingly expected to demonstrate communication skills, leadership, adaptability, and the ability to position themselves effectively in competitive educational and professional environments. This paper argues that preparing students for the future requires the development of an educational passport—a combination of competencies, experiences, values, and professional identity that transforms academic achievement into future opportunity. While the diploma certifies what students know, the educational passport demonstrates who they are and what they can become.*

*Within this framework, personal branding is reinterpreted not as a marketing strategy but as an educational competence. The paper presents a case study of a ten-week programme designed and implemented by the authors at American Corner Vlora to address*

*skills often underrepresented in formal education. Through workshops on personal branding, public speaking, argumentation, leadership, university applications, networking, and professional self-presentation, participants were encouraged to consciously shape their educational and professional identities. The study proposes the educational passport as a framework through which students transform knowledge into professional visibility, potential into opportunity, and educational experiences into a coherent professional identity.*

**Keywords:** *Personal Branding; Educational Passport; Higher Education; Professional Identity; Employability Skills*

## **TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION: DEVELOPING ADAPTIVE DIGITAL COMPETENCES FOR FUTURE TEACHERS**

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### **Abstract**

*In response to the ongoing digital transformation of education and the growing emphasis on sustainable development, this paper explores a model of sustainable innovation in initial foreign language teacher education. The study draws on the implementation of a course conducted throughout an academic year, designed to foster future teachers' capacity to use digital*

*technologies critically, reflectively, and adaptively in educational contexts.*

*The research adopts a qualitative approach, grounded in the analysis of student portfolios (n=52) and pedagogical observations conducted during the course. The findings highlight the relevance of a training model built on three complementary dimensions: the development of adaptive digital competences, the consolidation of reflective digital pedagogy, and the promotion of sustainable technology practices. The analysis demonstrates that integrating these dimensions contributes to shaping future teachers who are able to critically select digital resources, adapt to technological changes, and maintain their professional autonomy in a continuously evolving educational environment.*

*Based on these findings, the paper proposes a conceptual framework for the sustainable integration of digital technologies into initial foreign language teacher education programmes, in alignment with the goals of quality education and sustainable development.*

*The conclusions emphasize that authentic educational innovation does not depend on using the newest digital tools, but rather on developing teachers' capacity to use technology in a critical, responsible, and adaptive manner.*

*Keywords: sustainable innovation, adaptive digital competences, reflective digital pedagogy, sustainable technology practices, foreign language teacher education*

# HOW TO TEACH STUDENTS WRITING SKILLS WITH THE AI SUPPORT

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## **Abstract**

*The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has significantly transformed the teaching and learning of writing skills. This article explores how AI tools can enhance students' writing development by supporting key stages of the writing process, including brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing. Rather than replacing human creativity, AI functions as an interactive assistant that provides immediate feedback, language suggestions, and structural guidance tailored to individual learner needs. The study highlights the benefits of using AI to promote personalized learning, increase student engagement, and improve writing accuracy and coherence. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance of fostering critical thinking, ensuring students evaluate and refine AI-generated suggestions rather than relying on them passively. The paper also addresses ethical considerations, including academic integrity and responsible AI use. Overall, the findings suggest that when implemented thoughtfully, AI can serve as a powerful pedagogical tool that complements traditional instruction and enhances students' writing proficiency.*

**Keywords:** *AI, Writing skills, ESP teaching, specialized writing*

# **EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES REGARDING THE INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION INTO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

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## **Abstract**

*Environmental education has become an important component of contemporary educational systems due to its contribution to sustainable development and the formation of environmentally responsible citizens. Within this context, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction offers valuable opportunities to integrate environmental topics while simultaneously developing learners' linguistic and communicative competences. This study explores EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the integration of environmental education into English language teaching. Conducted within the framework of the research project *Integrating and Promoting Green Education in the Initial Training of English Language Teachers* (code 25. 80012. 0807. 56SE), implemented under the strategic priority *Societal Challenges* and the strategic direction *Innovative Educational Technologies and Products*, the study aims to examine teachers' attitudes toward environmental education, the extent to which environmental topics are incorporated into EFL classrooms, and the challenges associated with their implementation. Data will be collected through a questionnaire administered to EFL teachers from various educational institutions. The study is expected to reveal the level of teachers' readiness to integrate environmental education into language instruction, identify existing pedagogical practices, and highlight professional development needs. The findings are anticipated to contribute to the promotion of environmental literacy and sustainability-oriented teaching approaches in*

*EFL contexts while supporting the objectives of green education initiatives in teacher training. The study also provides practical recommendations for strengthening the integration of environmental education into English language teaching and fostering interdisciplinary learning environments that address contemporary environmental challenges.*

**Key words:** *Green Education, Environmental Literacy, Teachers' Perceptions, Teaching Practices, Sustainability Education*

## **TEACHING SPEAKING AT THE B1 LEVEL THROUGH ECO-ORIENTED CONTENT: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Abstract**

*Effective English communication is becoming a necessary skill for social, professional, and academic interactions in today's globalized world. As a result, in addition to gaining linguistic knowledge, English language learners are expected to build excellent speaking abilities that allow them to communicate effectively and confidently. At the same time, environmental literacy is emphasized in modern education as a crucial element of sustainable development. In order to help B1-level learners develop both communicative competence and ecological awareness, this study investigates the*

*incorporation of environmental topics into speaking training. The study tackles issues that EFL/ESL learners frequently face, such as limited vocabulary, minimal exposure to real-world communication, grammar issues, and a fear of making mistakes. The study's objective is to create and assess a methodological framework that uses environmentally focused content to enhance speaking proficiency. The objectives include examining existing literature on speaking instruction and environmental literacy, identifying and exploring effective teaching strategies and interactive techniques. It is anticipated that the results will show how incorporating environmental literacy into speaking activities improves students' fluency, critical thinking, engagement, and communication confidence while also encouraging sustainable values and responsible environmental attitudes. This article is meant to provide practical advice for English language teachers who want to combine language instruction and education for sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** *English communication, environmental literacy, speaking skills, sustainable development*

# DIGITAL HUMANITIES APPROACH TO CHINESE TRANSLATION DISCOURSE PRODUCED IN PEOPLE'S DAILY (1949—1966)

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## **Abstract**

*This study adopts a digital humanities approach, integrating quantitative methods such as corpus analysis and topic modelling with qualitative close reading, in order to systematically examine Chinese translation discourse produced by People's Daily between 1949 and 1966. It aims to address the limitations of traditional studies of translation discourse, which have often relied excessively on a small number of representative texts and paid insufficient attention to the role of state-level mainstream media.*

*Through topic modelling and diachronic analysis, the study identifies three stages in the evolution of translation discourse. From 1949 to 1954, translation discourse mainly centered on the translation and adaptation of Soviet films. From 1955 to 1957, translation discourse was primarily concerned with identity of translators, including both translation groups and individual translators. From 1958 to 1966, translation discourse became more focused on individual figures associated with the translation of Soviet and Russian works, such as Qu Qiubai, as well as on machine translation in the field of science and technology.*

*Through concordance analysis, the study finds that most of the translated films between 1949 and 1954 came from the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist countries. At that time, the translation and introduction of Soviet films formed part of the broader nationwide movement to "learn from the Soviet Union," and translated Soviet films played an important role in educating the masses and disseminating knowledge. During the period from*

1955 to 1957, increasing attention was given to the identity of translators, particularly Zhang Yousong, who was represented in a predominantly negative light.

Through N-grams analysis, the study finds that the phrase “translating the Soviet Union” showed a stepwise downward trend and the phrase pattern “translation criticism” appears to have disappeared from 1958 onwards. By contrast, the phrase pattern “translation and publication” appears many times, reflecting the close political solidarity and cultural exchanges between China and countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The study further argues that Chinese translation discourse as represented in People’s Daily during the Seventeen-Year Period formed a deep structure composed of two dimensions: “faith” and “technology.” “Faith” refers to the purpose of translation, emphasizing its social functions, while “technology” concerns the question of how translation should be conducted. The fundamental task of contemporary Chinese translation is therefore to realize the faith of translation through translation technology. This is highly consistent with China’s advocacy of building “a community with a shared future for mankind.”

**Keywords:** Digital Humanities, Chinese Translation Discourse, Corpus, Topic Modelling, People’s Daily

# ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES: FROM POSTWAR *LINGUA FRANCA* TO THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ERA

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## **Abstract**

*English for Medical Purposes (EMP) is a well-established branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that has undergone significant transformation over the past six decades. Born from the post-World War II demand for an international language of science and medicine, EMP evolved through successive methodological phases — from register analysis and rhetorical investigation to needs analysis, genre studies, digital integration, and, most recently, the emergence of artificial intelligence. This article traces EMP's historical arc from its conceptual roots in the 1960s through its theoretical consolidation in the 1980s–1990s, its digital turn in the 2000s–2010s, and its current encounter with AI tools. Drawing on foundational ESP scholarship and recent empirical research, the article examines how each developmental phase responded to broader social, technological, and pedagogical forces, and reflects on what the rise of AI means for EMP teaching, needs analysis, and professional healthcare communication.*

**Keywords:** *EMP, ESP, needs analysis, genre theory, corpus linguistics, AI*

# **GREEN DIGITAL PEDAGOGY IN EFL TEACHING: AI, SUSTAINABILITY, AND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN ELBASAN, ALBANIA**

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## **Abstract**

*In this study, we investigate how green digital pedagogy can be implemented in English as a Foreign Language in high school in Elbasan, Albania. It is about artificial intelligence, technology, and sustainability-oriented language teaching as an integrated tool to enhance the environment learning and environmental awareness. The research is based on an empirical case study with 240 students in high school in Elbasan. It reviews AI-driven feedback, online quizzes, cooperative learning platforms, digital storytelling and eco-green project-based activities. It aims to assess the impact on students' motivation, language development and knowledge of sustainable development.*

*EFL classrooms can teach more than language education. They can also assist students with digital literacy, environmental awareness, critical thinking and responsible citizenship. In the case study, students wrote short essays on green schools, prepared digital presentations on environmental challenges in Elbasan, completed online vocabulary quizzes on sustainability, and used AI tools to receive formative feedback on writing tasks. These activities encouraged students to use English to communicate in their everyday lives and to raise local and global ecological issues. The results suggest green digital pedagogy may improve classroom engagement, vocabulary development and writing skills, and increase participation in speaking and collaborative activities. The study also cites issues of unequal access to devices, different levels of digital competence, ethical use of AI, and the need for clear assessment rubrics.*

*The paper argues that AI, digital tools and sustainability topics can be used to make EFL learning more interactive, inclusive, and future-oriented.*

**Keywords:** *Green digital pedagogy, EFL teaching, artificial intelligence and sustainability*

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF BURIED GUILT: EUGENE O'NEILL'S LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT AND SAM SHEPARD'S BURIED CHILD

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** *This article compares Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night (1956) and Sam Shepard's Buried Child (1978) as dramatizations of the American family's collapse under buried guilt and damaged inheritance, arguing that the two plays define the poles of the American family play as a genre.*

**Design/methodology/approach:** *The article employs close comparative reading organized around three analytical axes: the architecture of guilt (how each family conceals and processes its traumatic history), the mechanism of inheritance (what each family transmits to the next generation), and domestic decay (how each household's physical space registers its inward collapse). The analysis draws on established O'Neill and Shepard criticism (Schvey, Robinson, Hinden, Nash, Orbison, Bottoms) and on Raymond Williams's theory of modern tragedy as a domesticated form.*

**Findings:** *O'Neill works within a confessional realism in which guilt*

*is spoken, recognized, and rendered morally intelligible; his play produces genuine Aristotelian anagnorisis. Shepard works within an ironic dramaturgy in which guilt is disclosed but not processed, and the buried truth deepens ambiguity rather than resolving it. The article reframes this distinction as one between explanation (O'Neill's mode, which seeks to make suffering legible through confession) and exposure (Shepard's mode, which brings the buried to light without offering the consolation of understanding).*

**Originality/value:** *The article contributes a focused two-play comparative reading that moves beyond the established "tragedy versus irony" binary. By grounding the comparison in Williams's account of tragedy's domestication and introducing the explanation/exposure distinction, it argues that O'Neill and Shepard together map the full arc of the American family play from tragic humanism to its postmodern undoing.*

**Keywords:** *American drama, family play, inheritance, tragedy, postmodernism*

## **PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO YOUNG LEARNERS**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines pedagogical strategies and methodologies for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to young learners, with particular emphasis on age-appropriate instructional practices and their impact on language acquisition. Grounded*

*in contemporary theories of second language acquisition, child development, and educational psychology, the research explores how young learners acquire English through interactive, communicative, and play-based approaches that align with their cognitive, social, and emotional development.*

*The study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining classroom-based observations, teacher interviews, and learner performance assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of various teaching methodologies. These include communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based language teaching (TBLT), total physical response (TPR), and game-based and storytelling approaches. Particular attention is given to the role of multimodal input, scaffolding, repetition, and meaningful interaction in fostering vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and early speaking skills.*

*Findings indicate that learner-centered and activity-based methodologies significantly enhance engagement, motivation, and language retention among young learners. The integration of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements is shown to support diverse learning styles and facilitate deeper cognitive processing. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of creating a supportive and low-anxiety classroom environment to encourage participation and confidence in language use.*

*The study concludes that effective ESL instruction for young learners requires a flexible and integrative pedagogical framework that combines multiple methodologies. Such an approach not only promotes linguistic competence but also supports holistic development and positive attitudes toward language learning.*

**Keywords:** *English as a second language; young learners; pedagogical strategies; language teaching methodologies; communicative language teaching; task-based learning; multimodal learning; language acquisition*

# COLLABORATIVE DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR SUSTAINABLE TEACHER EDUCATION: A STUDY OF FUTURE FRENCH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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## **Abstract**

*Sustainable education requires teaching approaches that encourage collaboration, creativity, digital competence, and lifelong learning. In teacher education, digital platforms can support these goals by creating opportunities for interaction, resource sharing, and active participation. This paper explores the role of collaborative digital platforms in the training of future French language teachers and their contribution to sustainable educational practices.*

*The study was carried out within a university course on the design and development of teaching resources for French language teaching. Seventeen undergraduate students preparing for a teaching career participated in collaborative activities using Google Workspace, Canva, Miro, Klaxoon, and Padlet. Through individual and group projects, students created teaching materials, exchanged feedback, and worked together to solve pedagogical tasks.*

*The research is based on the analysis of students' projects, reflective assignments, and questionnaire responses. It examines how collaborative digital tools support the development of professional, digital, and communication skills that are important for future teachers. The study also investigates students' perceptions of collaboration, autonomy, and engagement during the learning process.*

*The results show that digital collaboration encourages active participation, facilitates the sharing of ideas, and supports the*

*creation of teaching resources that can be reused and adapted in different educational contexts. The use of digital platforms also promotes more sustainable practices by reducing the need for printed materials and by providing flexible access to learning resources. In addition, students reported positive experiences related to teamwork, creativity, and the practical application of digital tools.*

*The paper argues that collaborative digital platforms can make an important contribution to the education of future French language teachers and can support the development of more sustainable and innovative learning environments in higher education.*

**Keywords:** *sustainable education; teacher education; collaborative digital platforms; future French language teachers; digital competencies; collaborative learning; educational innovation.*

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE VS. TRADITIONAL FEEDBACK IN ACADEMIC WRITING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EFFECTIVENESS, ENGAGEMENT, AND LEARNER AUTONOMY IN EFL CLASSROOM**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the comparative effectiveness of artificial intelligence (AI)-generated feedback and traditional teacher feedback in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing*

*instruction, with particular attention to writing performance, learner engagement, and autonomy. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study involved 80 undergraduate EFL learners who received both AI-assisted feedback and teacher-provided feedback during a semester-long writing course. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-writing tests, while qualitative data were gathered through student questionnaires. The purpose of this study is to investigate how AI-generated feedback and traditional teacher feedback may contribute to EFL Learner's technical accuracy, independent revision, and immediate access to feedback, while also exploring the extent to which teacher feedback may provide contextual understanding, personalized guidance, encouragement, and interactive support. Rather than treating AI feedback and teacher feedback as competing approaches, the study seeks to explore their potential complementary roles in EFL writing instruction. By comparing students' experiences and writing development across the two feedback conditions, the study aims to provide insight into how both forms of feedback may be used to enhance writing instruction, promote learner autonomy, and increase student engagement in EFL classrooms.*

**Keywords:** *artificial intelligence, EFL writing, teacher feedback, Ai-generated feedback, learner autonomy, learner engagement*

# DEVELOPING MOTIVATION FOR SELF-DIRECTED ENGLISH LEARNING (AGES 13-15) ON A NATIONAL OER PLATFORM: A DIGITAL INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

*This qualitative case study investigates the development of learning motivation among 13–15 year-old adolescents engaging in teacher-independent English learning on a national Open Educational Resources (OER) platform, which represents a vital digital innovation for sustainable education. The adopted platform is China's National Smart Education Platform. Its 2025 updated version is equipped with AI-driven learning tools including reading assistance, voice assessment and intelligent tutoring. Currently, there is a lack of in-depth research on adolescents' motivational dynamics in technology-supported self-directed learning, as well as its connection to sustainable education goals.*

*Guided by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), this study explores three research questions concerning the evolution of students' motivation, the influence of platform functions on psychological needs, and factors affecting motivation internalization during OER-based independent learning. We conduct an 8-week case study with 4–6 teenage participants. Data are gathered from interviews, usage logs, AI interaction diaries and screen recordings, and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).*

*Findings reveal that AI feedback relieves learning anxiety and builds*

*learners' competence, yet over-reliance on technology may cause reduced learning effort. Flexible learning modes support learner autonomy, but most students struggle with self-management without teacher guidance. In addition, social connection and peer interaction significantly enhance sustained learning motivation. This research complements existing studies on OER and sustainable education. It extends Self-Determination Theory to AI-powered national education platforms, and delivers practical strategies for educators and platform designers. Furthermore, it contributes to global research on digital innovation, AI language teaching and sustainable youth education, sharing experience of OER application for international academic communities.*

**Keywords:** OER, artificial intelligence, learning motivation, self-directed learning, sustainable education

## **ESG-ORIENTED PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING: DRIVING TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY**

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### **Abstract**

*This study explores the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into public sector accounting as a means to enhance transparency, accountability, and sustainable*

*development. In the face of growing environmental and social challenges, traditional public financial management systems are increasingly insufficient to capture the broader impact of public expenditures.*

*The research aims to analyze how ESG-oriented accounting frameworks can transform public sector reporting from a compliance-based approach to a value-driven system that reflects environmental and social outcomes. A qualitative methodology is employed, combining a review of relevant literature with an examination of emerging practices in sustainable public finance.*

*The findings indicate that incorporating ESG indicators into public sector accounting improves the clarity and relevance of financial reporting, strengthens institutional accountability, and supports more informed policymaking. In addition, digital tools play a key role in enabling efficient data collection and ESG performance monitoring.*

*The study contributes by proposing a conceptual approach to ESG-oriented public sector accounting and identifying key implementation challenges, including regulatory and institutional constraints. It offers practical insights for policymakers and public institutions seeking to advance transparency, accountability, and sustainability in governance.*

**Keywords:** *ESG, public sector accounting, transparency, accountability, sustainability*

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKING: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

*Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming accounting and financial management by automating routine tasks, improving data accuracy, and enhancing decision-making processes. The increasing adoption of AI technologies has significantly influenced the way organizations collect, analyze, and interpret financial information. This study examines the role of AI in modern accounting and finance, focusing on its benefits, challenges, and implications for sustainable development. Through a review of recent academic literature and industry reports, the research explores how AI contributes to financial forecasting, fraud detection, risk assessment, regulatory compliance, and strategic planning. The findings suggest that AI has the potential to improve operational efficiency, reduce human errors, lower administrative costs, and provide real-time insights that support more effective financial decision-making. Furthermore, AI-driven analytical tools enable organizations to identify trends, evaluate risks, and respond more quickly to changing market conditions. However, challenges related to cybersecurity, data privacy, ethical considerations, implementation costs, and workforce adaptation remain significant barriers to widespread adoption. The study concludes that the integration of Artificial Intelligence into accounting and finance is not merely a technological trend but a strategic necessity for organizations seeking long-term sustainability, innovation, and competitiveness in an increasingly digital business environment.*

**Keywords:** *Artificial Intelligence; Accounting; Finance; Financial Decision-Making; Digital Transformation; Sustainable Development*

## **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS OF ENTERPRISES IN ALBANIA (2016–2023): AN ANALYSIS BASED ON ENTERPRISE SIZE**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the financial and structural dynamics of Albanian enterprises during the period 2016–2023, focusing on the relationship between enterprise size and key economic indicators. The analysis is based on Structural Business Survey data and evaluates five principal indicators: number of enterprises, employment, turnover, investments, and value added. The study categorizes enterprises into micro, small, medium, and large enterprises in order to assess their relative contribution to the Albanian economy.*

*The findings demonstrate the dominant role of micro-enterprises in terms of enterprise number and employment, while large enterprises generate disproportionately higher turnover and value added. The study also highlights the effects of the COVID-19*

*crisis during 2020 and the subsequent recovery period observed in 2021–2023. Investments and turnover show significant growth after the pandemic period, especially among medium and large enterprises.*

*The paper contributes to the literature on financial analysis and enterprise sustainability in developing economies by providing empirical evidence from Albania. The results may assist policymakers, researchers, and business managers in designing strategies for sustainable economic development and enterprise competitiveness.*

**Keywords:** *financial analysis, enterprise performance, SMEs, Albania, turnover, investments, value added*

## **ESG, NEUROMARKETING, AND UNIVERSITY FINANCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is divided into two distinct components. Part I is a concept paper that develops a framework combining neuromarketing-based behavioral evidence with traditional quantitative indicators to measure ESG impact. This framework serves as the theoretical*

*foundation for a proposed public-private partnership (PPP) model designed to finance the digital transformation of research universities in the Western Balkans.*

*Part II evaluates a boundary condition of this framework via an exploratory pilot study (N = 34, conventional sample). The study tests whether social impact incentives generate higher affective engagement than environmental or governance incentives among ESG finance professionals. While a composite emotional resonance index (ERI)—derived from eye-tracking metrics like fixation duration, pupil dilation, and face-on-face dwell time—showed a statistically significant difference favoring social impact (M = 67.4 vs. 53.9;  $t(33) = 4.82$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.98$ ), this finding cannot be attributed to content. The study design confounded social impact content with the low-level perceptual salience of human faces, which appeared systematically only in the social impact stimuli. Consequently, the ERI difference represents a methodologically conditioned exploratory signal rather than substantive emotional resonance. Interpretive scope is further constrained by the unvalidated index and conventional sampling.*

*Additionally, the proposed PPP model remains purely theoretical; its legal and commercial viability within Western Balkan jurisdictions has not been evaluated and demands a separate feasibility analysis. Ultimately, the paper's contribution lies in identifying a novel interdisciplinary intersection and formulating specific, testable hypotheses to guide future confirmatory research.*

*Key words: Behavioral evidence, digital transformation, emotional resonance index, ESG investing, eye tracking, neuromarketing, public-private partnership, research universities, social impact measurement, Western Balkans.*

# INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT AS DRIVERS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ALBANIA

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## **Abstract**

*The insurance sector constitutes a foundational pillar of market-based financial systems and exercises a determinative influence on the conditions underpinning sustainable economic development. Through the institutionalised transfer of risk from individual economic agents to specialised intermediaries, insurance augments financial stability, sustains business continuity, facilitates capital formation, and reinforces the social protection architecture of modern economies. In Albania, notwithstanding a decade of continuous market growth, insurance penetration remains at approximately 1.2 percent of GDP — a figure that stands in marked contrast to the European Union average of 7.2 percent and reflects the persistence of structural impediments to voluntary insurance adoption. The present paper examines the mechanisms through which insurance development and risk management contribute to sustainable economic growth in Albania, with particular attention to market performance trajectories, climate risk exposure, digital transformation dynamics, and the integration of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles into insurance business models. The study employs a qualitative and descriptive-analytical methodology grounded in secondary data derived from the Albanian Financial Supervisory Authority (AMF), the World Bank, OECD Insurance Outlook Reports, EIOPA publications, and peer-reviewed academic literature. The findings indicate that enhanced insurance penetration generates measurable improvements*

*in economic resilience, investment facilitation, post-disaster recovery capacity, and alignment with sustainable development objectives. The paper concludes with a set of evidence-based policy recommendations directed at regulators, insurance undertakings, and public authorities, addressing financial literacy, climate-risk product development, digital innovation, cyber insurance expansion, and regulatory harmonisation with EU standards.*

**Keywords:** *Insurance, Risk Management, Sustainable Development, Financial Stability, Albania, Digital Transformation*

## **SUSTAINABLE EVALUATION OF INVESTMENT PROJECTS: FINANCIAL APPROACHES AND ESG CRITERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper aims to analyze how investment decisions can be substantiated by integrating traditional financial indicators with environmental, social, and governance criteria. The methodology used is based on documentary research and conceptual analysis, considering indicators such as net present value, internal rate of return, investment payback period, and profitability index, correlated with ESG factors relevant to the assessment of long-term impact. The contribution of the paper consists in highlighting the need for an integrated approach that goes beyond a strictly financial evaluation and supports a more responsible selection of investment projects. Its relevance to sustainability lies in directing capital toward projects that generate not only economic*

*profitability, but also positive effects on the environment, society, and corporate governance.*

*Thus, the paper supports the importance of evaluating investments from both a financial and sustainable perspective, adapted to the requirements of the current economy.*

**Keywords:** *investment evaluation, investment projects, sustainability, ESG criteria, sustainable finance, net present value, internal rate of return, capital budgeting, financial performance*

## **ESG INTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE VALUE CREATION: THE ROLE OF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING PRACTICES IN EUROPEAN COMPANIES**

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### **Abstract**

*The transition toward a more sustainable economy has significantly reshaped the role of finance and accounting within European companies. The introduction of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) has established new requirements for the disclosure, measurement, and assurance of sustainability-related information, placing increased responsibilities on finance and accounting functions. Against the backdrop of recent European regulatory developments, including the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), the study investigates how ESG considerations are incorporated into financial decision-making,*

*risk management, and corporate reporting. The findings highlight the growing strategic role of finance and accounting functions in supporting long-term sustainability objectives and enhancing corporate value creation.*

**Keywords:** *ESG integration, sustainable value creation, sustainability accounting, sustainable finance, corporate sustainability, ESG reporting*

## **GREEN MARKETING AND CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE: COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE FROM EUROPEAN LISTED COMPANIES**

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### **Abstract**

*The increasing focus on sustainable development has encouraged companies to adopt green marketing strategies as part of their business practices. This study investigates the relationship between green marketing initiatives and corporate sustainability performance among European listed companies. Using a comparative analysis based on sustainability reports and ESG indicators, the research examines how environmentally oriented marketing activities contribute to environmental performance, stakeholder engagement, and long-term value creation. The study aims to identify best practices and assess whether companies with stronger green marketing strategies achieve higher sustainability outcomes. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights*

*for managers, investors, and policymakers seeking to enhance corporate sustainability and support sustainable development goals.*

**Keywords:** *green marketing, corporate sustainability, ESG performance, sustainable development, listed companies, stakeholder engagement, sustainability reporting, European companies*

## **ALTERNATIVE CREDIT SCORING BASED ON E-COMMERCE DATA: EVIDENCE FROM ONLINE MARKETPLACE SELLERS**

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### **Abstract**

*Access to finance remains a significant challenge for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly online merchants with limited credit histories. Traditional credit assessment models often fail to capture the economic potential of digital businesses, resulting in information asymmetries and restricted access to financing. This study examines whether e-commerce transaction data can improve credit risk assessment and serve as an alternative to conventional credit scoring methods.*

*Using data from online marketplace sellers, the research investigates the predictive value of transactional indicators such as sales volume, revenue growth, customer ratings, order fulfillment rates, return frequency, and platform engagement.*

*Logistic regression and machine learning techniques are employed to compare the performance of traditional credit scoring models with models incorporating e-commerce-generated data.*

*The findings show that transaction-based indicators significantly improve the prediction of creditworthiness and repayment behavior. Customer satisfaction measures and sales consistency emerge as particularly important predictors. The results suggest that integrating e-commerce data into credit assessment frameworks can reduce information asymmetries, enhance lending decisions, and expand access to finance for underserved merchants.*

*This study contributes to the fintech and financial inclusion literature by demonstrating the value of alternative data in credit evaluation and offering implications for lenders, marketplace operators, and policymakers seeking to support data-driven and inclusive financing solutions.*

**Keywords:** *Access to finance, SMEs, e-commerce transaction data, credit risk assessment, alternative credit scoring, financial inclusion*

## **THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE LABOR MARKET IN THE BANKING SECTOR**

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### **Abstract**

*The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the banking sector has fundamentally transformed financial services, significantly impacting the structural dynamics of the labor market. This paper explores how AI technologies, such as machine learning,*

*natural language processing, and robotic process automation, influence employment trends within financial institutions. By examining both the displacement of traditional, routine-based roles and the creation of novel, technology-centric positions, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving skill requirements in the banking industry. The transition from human-led operations to algorithm-driven processes necessitates a workforce paradigm shift towards continuous upskilling and cross-disciplinary expertise. While automation presents challenges regarding job security for certain administrative and operational roles, it simultaneously enhances productivity and opens new avenues in data analysis, cybersecurity, and AI ethics. Through a qualitative methodology encompassing a literature review and analysis of recent industry reports, this research highlights the dual nature of AI as both a disruptor and an enabler of human capital. The findings suggest that to mitigate negative labor impacts, proactive strategies from educational institutions, policymakers, and banking management are essential. Ultimately, the successful integration of AI depends on augmenting human capabilities rather than pure substitution.*

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, banking sector, labor market transformation, automation, workforce upskilling, financial institutions

## INDUSTRY 4. 0 TECHNOLOGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

*The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4. 0) is transforming production systems through the integration of advanced digital technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data analytics, cloud computing, robotics, and cyber-physical systems. These technologies enable smarter, more efficient, and more sustainable industrial processes by optimizing resource utilization, reducing waste, improving energy efficiency, and enhancing productivity.*

*Industry 4. 0 contributes significantly to sustainable development by supporting environmentally responsible manufacturing, fostering economic competitiveness, and promoting innovation-driven growth. Smart factories can monitor and control production processes in real time, reducing operational costs and minimizing environmental impacts. Furthermore, predictive maintenance and data-driven decision-making help organizations improve resource efficiency and extend equipment life cycles.*

*This paper examines the contribution of Industry 4. 0 technologies to sustainable development, highlighting their benefits, challenges, and potential role in achieving long-term economic, environmental, and social sustainability.*

**Keywords:** *Industry 4. 0, sustainable development, digital transformation, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, smart manufacturing, sustainability*

# INFORMATION TRANSPARENCY AND RETURN POLICIES ON CONSUMER TRUST: AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH IN EMERGING MARKETS

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## **Abstrakt**

*This study examines the impact of information transparency and return policies on consumer trust. Drawing on the literature on consumer behavior and organization–consumer relationships, the research analyzes the role of these factors in shaping consumers' perceptions and decision-making processes during purchasing. The study was conducted using a quantitative approach, while data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The sample consists of 79 participants selected through the convenience sampling method. For data analysis, linear regression (OLS) and Pearson correlation analysis were used to test the research hypotheses. The empirical results indicate that information transparency has a positive and statistically significant impact on consumer trust, where the regression model explains 79.9% of the variation in the dependent variable ( $R^2 = 0.799$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, return policies were found to have a positive and statistically significant impact on consumer trust, explaining 80.4% of its variation ( $R^2 = 0.804$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The findings of the study emphasize the importance of information transparency and effective return policies as essential mechanisms for building and strengthening consumer trust. In practical terms, the results suggest that organizations that promote transparent communication and flexible return policies can contribute to reducing perceived uncertainty and improving long-term relationships with consumers.*

**Key words:** *Information transparency, Return policies, Consumer trust, emerging market*

## **THE DICTATE OF NUMBERS AND THE EROSION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESOURCES: PERFORMANCE CULTURE AND EXECUTIVE BURNOUT**

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### **Abstract**

*This scientific paper analyzes and evaluates the phenomenon of performance-oriented organizational culture and its impact on the psychological integrity of managers, with particular emphasis on executive burnout. While modern systems of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) promise efficiency, transparency, and fair evaluation, in practice they often function as a normative instrument of power that reduces a manager's identity to measurable outcomes. This systemic pressure, interpreted through the theoretical framework of the Job Demands–Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), leads managers toward the erosion of psychological resources, emotional exhaustion, and a gradual loss of meaning in their work.*

*Among leaders in managerial positions, the burden intensifies through the combination of constant accountability, the dual responsibility for both results and subordinates, and escalating demands for technological adaptability—particularly during the digital and green transformation of European industry. The paper argues that the strict dictate of numbers becomes a specific*

*psychological burden that may result either in defensive rigidity or in chronic burnout, with the risk of premature departure from leadership roles. The aim of this paper is to redefine the parameters of organizational success and to open space for a dialogue grounded in scientific knowledge. It proposes a shift toward a model of sustainable leadership, in which managerial well-being and psychohygiene are perceived not as a soft constraint but as a key stabilizing element and a strategic asset for the organization.*

**Key words:** *executive burnout, performance culture, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Job Demands–Resources model, emotional exhaustion, sustainable leadership, managerial well-being, psychohygiene, organizational psychology, digital transformation*

## **“FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF ALBANIAN-MAJORITY MUNICIPALITIES IN NORTH MACEDONIA”**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the role of fiscal decentralization in local economic development, with a particular focus on municipalities with an Albanian majority in North Macedonia during the period 2005–2025. The aim of the study is to analyze the level of fiscal autonomy of municipalities, their dependence on central*

*government transfers, and the impact of capital investments on local economic development. The study is based on a comparative analysis between Albanian-majority municipalities and Macedonian-majority municipalities using indicators such as own-source revenues, central government grants, capital investments per capita, implementation of capital expenditures, and fiscal efficiency.*

*Within the methodological framework, descriptive analysis, per capita analysis, statistical regression, and the Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) method were employed to measure the efficiency of public expenditures. The results indicate that Albanian-majority municipalities are characterized by a lower level of fiscal autonomy, greater dependence on central government grants, and lower levels of capital investment compared to Macedonian-majority municipalities. The study finds that unbalanced regional development is associated with economic, institutional, and political factors, including fiscal centralization, limited administrative capacities, and the disproportionate allocation of public investments.*

*The paper contributes to the literature on fiscal decentralization and local development by providing empirical evidence on the structural challenges faced by Albanian-majority municipalities and by proposing measures aimed at strengthening fiscal autonomy and promoting sustainable local development.*

**Keywords:** *Fiscal decentralization, local economic development, fiscal autonomy, capital investments, Albanian-majority municipalities, North Macedonia*

# RESISTING ORGANIC COSMETICS PURCHASE: IDENTIFYING THE PRICE PREMIUM THRESHOLD AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF TRUST IN THE LABEL

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## **Abstract**

*Although consumers often express favorable attitudes toward organic products, actual purchase remains vulnerable to perceived price premiums. This study examines resistance to buying organic cosmetics by identifying the price premium threshold at which consumers abandon purchase and by testing the moderating role of trust in organic labels or brands. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Attitude-Behavior-Context Theory and Signaling Theory, the proposed model positions perceived price premium as the central explanatory variable, purchase resistance as the outcome, and trust in the label or brand as a boundary condition. A quantitative cross-sectional survey will be conducted among adult consumers concerned with organic cosmetics, using quota sampling. The empirical design combines two pricing research procedures, the Price Sensitivity Meter and progressive price-premium scenarios, with structural modelling through PLS-SEM. Expected contributions are threefold. Theoretically, the study shifts the focus from purchase intention to resistance and clarifies how a credible signal may attenuate, without cancelling, the negative effect of price premium. Methodologically, it operationalizes a monetary renunciation threshold. Managerially, it offers organic cosmetics brands actionable guidance on acceptable premium levels, label credibility, and communication strategies for price-sensitive consumer segments. The study thereby supports sustainable consumption and innovation in responsible marketing practice today.*

**Keywords:** *organic consumption; organic cosmetics; perceived price premium; purchase resistance; label trust; price threshold; signaling theory; PLS-SEM.*

## **THE LABOR MARKET IN TOURISM AND UNIVERSITY CURRICULA (CASE STUDY IN GJIROKASTRA DISTRICT)**

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### **Abstract**

*In Gjirokastra district, as in other areas of the country, the development of the tourism sector has progressed at a satisfactory pace and has shown a continuous upward trend, contributing to the growth of revenues as well as the increase in the number of people employed in this sector.*

*According to various analyses conducted by experts, in order to achieve sustainability in the development of this sector, one very important element, among others, is increasing the quality of service. This can undoubtedly be achieved only through qualified human resources (HR). Preparing these qualified HR necessitates the continuous adaptation of higher education course offerings for tourism to match the demands of the labor market in this sector.*

*From this perspective, this study aims to analyze the extent to which the curriculum of tourism programs at the University of Gjirokastra is adapted to the current and near-future needs of the tourism sector in this region. The study was conducted through surveys and interviews with representatives of various stakeholders in the*

*tourism sector, including those providing accommodation/food services, travel agencies, destination management organizations (DMOs), and local institutions in Gjirokastra County.*

*The results show that this sector is facing a shortage and is in need of competent HR, primarily in the management of hospitality structures, customer service, communication, knowledge of foreign languages, the use of technology, and sustainable destination management through careful resource management. Furthermore, a gap is highlighted between the knowledge acquired by students and the practical skills demanded by the market, despite the fact that university-business cooperation has not been lacking.*

*In its conclusions and recommendations, this study identifies the need to improve the current curriculum of study programs in tourism departments through the integration of modules oriented towards communication, digital transformation, environmental education, and professional practices, while also increasing cooperation with the tourism sector.*

**Keywords:** *Competent HR, tourism, university curriculum, labor market, University of Gjirokastra.*

# A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN HOTELS OF THE VLORA REGION: CUSTOMERS' AND EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS

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## **Abstract**

*The aim of this study is to analyze perceived service quality in the hotel sector in the Vlora region by applying the Internal SERVQUAL model and comparing employees' perceptions with customers' evaluations. The study is based on primary data collected from hotel employees (N = 209) through a questionnaire adapted for the hospitality industry, as well as customer ratings obtained from online booking platforms. The SERVQUAL dimensions analyzed include tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The results show that employees rate service quality at high levels, with assurance and responsiveness emerging as the strongest dimensions. On the other hand, customer evaluations indicate a high level of overall satisfaction, with an average rating of 8.75/10 for the analyzed hotels. The comparative analysis reveals a moderate gap between employees' perceptions and customers' evaluations, particularly in the tangibles dimension, where customers place greater importance on the visual appearance and infrastructure of the hotel. The findings suggest that the hotel sector in the Vlora region provides a good level of service quality; however, improvements in physical aspects and greater consistency in customer experience could further enhance customer satisfaction. This article is part of a research project funded by AKKSHI.*

**Keywords:** Service quality, Internal SERVQUAL, hotel sector, customer satisfaction.

# SUSTAINABLE VISITATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES OF POGONI, IOANNINA – GREECE

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## **Abstract**

*This study attempts to map the field of sustainable local development and outline the path that it could follow in the mountain communities of Pogoni, Ioannina, in relation to sustainable visitation in the area. The paper raises questions concerning the epistemological dimensions of sustainable local development, in connection with nature, landscape, and ecotourism, factors that could constitute the main axis of sustainable development for the mountain communities of Pogoni under investigation.*

*Furthermore, folklore, cultural memory, intangible cultural heritage, as well as traditional architecture and the preservation of the settlement landscape, constitute fundamental elements for the sustainable future of mountain communities. At the same time, traditional arts and local professions could also become a key pillar of sustainable local development.*

*Waste management and the implementation of circular economy principles, energy policies, and the green transition may represent another major axis of sustainable local development, while also enhancing the touristic attractiveness of mountain communities. Finally, local nutrition and gastronomic identity, together with authentic traditional cuisine, may serve as a fundamental pillar for a sustainable developmental model of visitation in Pogoni.*

*The above factors include the essential elements for structuring sustainable local development in mountain communities, as well as sustainable visitation. Through all these dimensions, it becomes possible to initiate the recording of the interdisciplinary nature of this field of knowledge and to document sustainable visitation and sustainable local development in mountain communities, with the support of a mathematical model proposed by the authors.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Local Development; Sustainable Visitation; Mathematical Model; Conclusions.

## **AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY OF DRINO REGION**

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### **Abstract**

*Agricultural development is widely recognized as a fundamental component of sustainable development, contributing to economic growth, social inclusion, food security, and environmental sustainability. In the context of regional development, agriculture plays a crucial role in enhancing local economic performance and improving the quality of life of rural communities. Drino’*

*region, characterized by significant agricultural potential and rich natural resources, offers an important case for examining the relationship between agricultural development and sustainable regional growth.*

*This paper aims to analyze the contribution of agricultural development to sustainable development and assess its impact on the economic performance of the southern region.*

*The study adopts a qualitative and quantitative approach, relying on secondary data analysis, relevant literature, and regional development indicators. Particular attention is given to agricultural productivity, employment generation, rural income, and the integration of agriculture with other sectors, especially tourism and agro-processing activities.*

*The findings indicate that agricultural development has a positive effect on regional economic growth through increased production, job creation, and the promotion of local value chains. Furthermore, the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, technological innovation, and effective rural development policies can significantly enhance the competitiveness and resilience of the agricultural sector. However, challenges such as land fragmentation, demographic decline in rural areas, limited investment, and climate change impacts continue to hinder the sector's full potential.*

*The study concludes that strengthening sustainable agricultural development represents a strategic pathway for fostering long-term economic development in the southern region. It highlights the importance of coordinated policies, institutional support, and stakeholder collaboration in achieving sustainable regional development objectives and improving socio-economic outcomes for rural populations.*

**Keywords:** *Agricultural Development, Sustainable Development, Regional Economy, Rural Development, Economic Growth*

# FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: EVIDENCE FROM TOURISM ENTERPRISES

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## **Abstract**

*Sustainable tourism has become a central priority for tourism enterprises and policy-makers seeking to balance economic growth, environmental protection, and social responsibility. In this context, financial analysis plays an increasingly important role in evaluating the long-term viability and sustainability performance of tourism businesses. This study examines the relationship between financial analysis indicators and sustainable tourism development, focusing on how financial performance can support strategic decision-making in tourism enterprises.*

*The paper explores key financial indicators such as profitability, liquidity, solvency, operational efficiency, and investment capacity, and analyzes their contribution to sustainable tourism practices. Particular attention is given to the ability of tourism enterprises to maintain financial stability while investing in environmentally and socially responsible initiatives. The study also discusses how financial analysis can assist managers, investors, and stakeholders in identifying risks, improving resource allocation, and enhancing competitiveness within the tourism sector.*

*Using a qualitative and comparative approach based on secondary data and existing literature, the research highlights the growing*

*importance of integrating financial evaluation with sustainability objectives in tourism management. The findings suggest that financially stable tourism enterprises are more capable of adopting sustainable strategies, improving service quality, and responding effectively to market and environmental challenges.*

*The paper contributes to the academic discussion on sustainable tourism by emphasizing the role of financial analysis as a practical and strategic instrument for supporting sustainable growth in tourism enterprises. It also provides useful insights for tourism managers, researchers, and policy-makers interested in achieving a balance between financial performance and sustainability goals*

**Keywords:** *Financial Analysis, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Enterprises, Financial Performance, Sustainability, Tourism Management*

## **CHALLENGES OF PENSION SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY IN ALBANIA: POLICY REFORMS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES**

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### **Abstract**

*The sustainability of pension systems has become one of the most significant socioeconomic challenges facing many countries,*

*particularly those experiencing demographic changes and population ageing. Albania is no exception, as its public pension system continues to face financial and structural pressures related to low contribution rates, informal employment, increasing life expectancy, and a growing dependency ratio.*

*This paper examines the development of the Albanian pension system, focusing on the challenges that have emerged throughout the years and the reforms undertaken to improve its financial sustainability. The study analyzes the functioning of the Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) scheme, the relationship between contributors and beneficiaries, and the impact of public policies on the long-term viability of pension financing. Particular attention is paid to the role of pension reforms in promoting social protection while ensuring fiscal sustainability.*

*The research is based on a review of national legislation, institutional reports, and relevant academic literature. Findings indicate that although several reforms have contributed to improving system performance, significant challenges remain. The increasing burden on public finances and demographic trends highlight the need for complementary pension mechanisms and policies that strengthen economic sustainability.*

*The paper concludes that future pension reforms should balance social welfare objectives with economic efficiency, while supporting sustainable development goals through enhanced financial stability and social inclusion.*

**Keywords:** *Pension system, sustainability, pension reform, public policy, social protection, Albania*

# **ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR MARKET POLICIES FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH: CASE STUDY GJIROKASTËR, ALBANIA**

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## **Abstract**

*Employment, beyond the mere concept of holding the job for which a wage is paid or the operating of one's own business, signifies the state of individuals performing physical, mental and emotional labour under various circumstances. There are several groups in a society that are more vulnerable to challenges related to employment, particularly women and youth, especially in developing countries such as Albania. Employment policies play a very significant role in creating job opportunities and minimizing risks and challenges for these groups. This study aims to analyse the critical interplay between employment and labour market policies. It investigates how diverse policy interventions, ranging from skills development programmes to anti-discrimination measures, influence the participation and success of women and youth in the workforce. The analysis seeks to identify effective strategies for fostering equitable labour market outcomes for these demographic groups, taking into consideration economic dynamics and the development of tourism in Gjirokastër, Albania. How can these policies help bridge the skills gap in the labour market? In conclusion, this study identifies the challenges and opportunities faced by marginalized groups in Gjirokastër, Albania,*

*and examines the role of labour market policies in reducing risks, for successful labour market integration.*

**Keywords:** *employment, labour market policies, women, youth, unemployment, skills, risks, opportunities, Gjirokastra, Albania*

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND SMART CITIES – EXAMPLES**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper attempts to map the field of sustainable development and sustainability, while outlining the concept, content, and evolution of smart cities in Greece. It briefly presents the economic and social conditions of countries where the term “level of development” is frequently used.*

*The study then raises questions concerning epistemological issues and the relationship between development, sustainable development, sustainability, and the smart city. This is particularly important because one of the most significant challenges facing contemporary society is the impact of human activities on both the natural and socio-economic environment.*

*At the same time, the paper examines the activities, regulations,*

*and tools employed in the establishment and operation of smart cities. It highlights the interdisciplinary nature and research interests associated with smart cities, tracing their fundamental components, actions, and technological instruments, all of which aim to improve the quality of life that all urban residents are entitled to enjoy.*

*Furthermore, the study explores the continuous pursuit of the smart city model, emphasizing the use of digital technologies, more efficient resource management, environmental protection, and, above all, the enhancement of everyday life for citizens and businesses.*

*Finally, the paper provides a brief overview of examples of smart cities from Greece and abroad, illustrating how innovative urban practices can contribute to sustainable and resilient urban development.*

**Key words:** Sustainable Development; Sustainability; Smart Cities; Urban Innovation; Digital Technologies; Environmental Protection; Quality of Life

# HUMAN CAPITAL MEETS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF AI GOVERNANCE CAPABILITY IN PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE

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## **Abstract**

*The growing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming public administration and creating new opportunities for enhancing institutional performance. While digital transformation has become a strategic priority within Albania’s public sector modernization agenda, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the mechanisms through which digital competencies contribute to AI governance capability and public sector performance in transitional governance contexts.*

*Building on Human Capital Theory and contemporary AI Governance literature, this paper develops a conceptual framework that explains how digital skills, as a strategic dimension of public-sector human capital, may strengthen AI governance capability and, consequently, support institutional performance. The proposed framework positions AI governance capability as a critical link between workforce competencies and key public-sector outcomes, including administrative efficiency, service quality, transparency, and organizational effectiveness.*

*The study advances two research propositions: (1) digital skills positively influence AI governance capability, and (2) AI governance capability positively contributes to institutional performance.*

*By integrating human capital and AI governance perspectives, the paper proposes an integrated conceptual framework for understanding AI-enabled public sector transformation in transitional governance contexts.*

*The proposed framework contributes to the emerging debate on responsible AI adoption in public administration and provides a foundation for future empirical investigation of governance capacity and institutional performance in Albania.*

**Key words:** *Digital Skills, Human Capital, AI Governance Capability, Institutional Performance, Public Administration*

## **FROM PROTECTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CURRENT PROJECTS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF VJOSA RIVER NATIONAL PARK**

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### **Abstract**

*The designation of the Vjosa River as a National Park in 2023 represents a historic milestone for nature conservation in Albania and Europe, safeguarding one of the continent's last wild rivers. Following this decision, a new governance and management framework has been progressively established, based on the Integrated Management Plan 2024–2034 and the creation of the Administration Office of Vjosa River National Park as an*

*autonomous institution responsible for its implementation. This paper presents the major projects currently under implementation and the planned initiatives aimed at strengthening ecosystem protection and promoting the sustainable socio-economic development of the region. These include the development of visitor infrastructure in Tepelena, Përmet, and Vlora, the ongoing process towards achieving the IUCN Green List Standard, and the recognition of the Vjosa Valley as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Furthermore, the paper highlights strategic investments supporting the long-term conservation of the park, including the World Bank's Care for Blue Sea project focused on wastewater and solid waste management, the EU for Circular Economy programme, the German-funded Green Vjosa project, and GEF-8 funded initiatives implemented in cooperation with UNDP and UNIDO, which are aimed at biodiversity conservation and the promotion of green mobility.*

*At the local level, the paper presents several concrete actions undertaken by the Administration Office of Vjosa River National Park, including biodiversity and water quality monitoring, habitat restoration, staff capacity building, sustainable tourism management, cooperation with local communities and academic institutions, and the development of mechanisms to improve management effectiveness.*

*The paper argues that the protection of the Vjosa is not a completed act but rather a dynamic and long-term process grounded in science, partnerships, and strategic investments. By integrating biodiversity conservation with sustainable development, Vjosa River National Park is evolving into an innovative model of protected area management and a living laboratory for cooperation among institutions, local communities, and scientific research.*

**Key words:** *Vjosa River National Park, protected area management, biodiversity, sustainable development, IUCN Green List, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, ecosystem restoration, environmental governance*

# THE IMPACT OF TOURISM INVESTMENTS ON NATURAL CAPITAL IN ALBANIA: BETWEEN ECONOMIC “CROWDING OUT” AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this paper is to show the impact that investments in the coastal tourism sector have on Albania’s natural capital as well as the macroeconomic consequences of this development model. Based on various data collected, the paper shows how: the coastline in Albania has suffered environmental degradation over the last ten years as a result of uncontrolled construction; how a significant portion of bank loans are focused on real estate, causing a Crowding Out effect in the productive sectors of the Albanian economy; how the continuous strengthening of the Lek against the Euro in the last five years confirms the presence of the “Dutch Disease” in the Albanian economy. The current model of economic growth in Albania, which is centered on massive and uncontrolled construction on the coast, causes classic market failures. Some of these failures are negative uninternalized externalities, the consumption of natural capital and structural displacement of resources. The use of natural capital as a “free resource” jeopardizes the future of the Albanian economy in the long term. The main contribution of this paper is the use of environmental and public economics in the specific reality of the Albanian economic transition, proposing a package of fiscal, regulatory and institutional reforms as a necessary condition for sustainable development.*

**Key words:** *Investments, Natural Capital, Crowding Out Effect, Negative Externalities, Economic Monoculture, Dutch Disease*

# GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN A RAMSAR WETLAND: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES AND LIVELIHOOD IMPLICATIONS FROM LOKTAK LAKE, INDIA

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## **Abstract**

*Wetlands are ecologically fragile but economically important ecosystems that support global biodiversity; they help to regulate regional climates, and sustain the livelihoods of native communities. Loktak Lake located in Northeast India, recognized as a Ramsar site of international importance This beauty stands out as a vital socio-ecological system. It is distinguished by its unique floating phumdis (organic masses) and is home to the Sangai deer. In recent years, sustainable tourism has become a key strategy for balancing the need for economic development while conserving the ecological balance . This study explores how the government plays a crucial role in the frameworks, institutional mechanism, and the perspective of various stakeholders to influence sustainable tourism at Loktak Lake.*

*The study uses a stakeholder-based approach, collecting primary data from a diverse group that included government officials from the Loktak Development Authority (LDA), private tour operators, environmentalists, and the local community members from the Thanga and Karang islands. Mean score analysis and correlation methods were used to assess the links between governance effectiveness, tourism infrastructure, livelihood improvement, and biodiversity conservation. The research also examines how the Manipur Loktak Lake (Protection) Act has affected traditional*

*fishing rights and shifted priorities toward tourism-focused zoning. The findings of the study indicates that participatory governance and policy alignment are the primary drivers of sustainable tourism success in this area where communities are integrated into the value chain such as through eco-homestays and guided nature treks support the conservation initiatives significantly. Conversely, the study identifies a “perception gap” where the top-down regulatory measures are often viewed by locals as exclusionary, leading to a shocking socio-political friction. While livelihood diversification through tourism reduces the community’s over-reliance on intensive fishing and biomass extraction, the study warns of mounting pressures from plastic pollution, untreated sewage, and habitat fragmentation caused by unplanned infrastructure. The research gives a preview to the broader social–ecological systems (SES) discourse by providing a localized framework for wetland sustainability within the Ramsar context. Policy implications emphasize the transition from rigid, top-down management to adaptive governance models, Such models must prioritize inclusive decision-making, transparent benefit-sharing, and strategic “low-impact” investment to balance the lake’s ecological resilience with the economic aspirations of its residents. Ultimately, the study suggests that the survival of Loktak Lake depends not only on an isolating ecosystem from human activity, but also on fostering a symbiotic relationship where tourism acts as both a conservation tool and a catalyst for community resilience.*

**Key words:** Sustainable tourism, Wetland governance, Ramsar wetland, Livelihood sustainability, Stakeholder perception, Wetland conservation, Social–ecological systems, Loktak Lake

# FROM LIVING HUMAN TREASURES TO CIRCULAR ECONOMY: TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP AS A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ASSET IN THE HÂRTIBACIU PLATEAU

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## **Abstract**

*The concept of Tezaure Umane Vii (TUV - Living Human Treasures), promoted by UNESCO and institutionalized in Romania through the Ministry of Culture, designates bearers of traditional knowledge whose practices represent irreplaceable intangible cultural heritage. This article investigates the role of TUV bearers - with a focus on women artisans - as active agents of circular economy within the rural tourism ecosystem of the Hârtibaciu Plateau (Sibiu and Mureș counties), a region characterized by accelerated demographic decline and a rich Saxon, Romanian, and Roma cultural heritage. Building on a previous study examining women TUV bearers in Sibiu County (Oroian, Pascu & Moldovan, 2024), the current research extends the geographical scope and introduces a circular economy analytical framework. The study employs a mixed methodology combining documentary inventory, qualitative semi-structured interviews, field observations, and GIS-based spatial analysis to examine how traditional craftsmanship transmitted by TUV bearers can generate economic value, support rural tourism supply chains, and contribute to community resilience. Preliminary findings indicate that TUV bearers function as nodes in informal circular value chains - producing, transmitting, and regenerating cultural assets - yet remain largely invisible in formal rural development strategies, with an average TUV-Tourism Circularity Index (TTCI) of 1.85/5 across five knowledge categories. The article proposes the Knowledge Circularity in*

*Rural Tourism (KCRT) Framework as a model for integrating TUV expertise into sustainable rural tourism planning, with practical recommendations for local authorities, heritage institutions, and tourism operators.*

**Key words:** *Living Human Treasures, TUV, circular economy, rural tourism, Hârtibaciu Plateau, intangible cultural heritage, sustainable development, regenerative tourism*

## **AGROTOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the role of agrotourism as a driver of sustainable rural development, drawing on successful practices and innovations from the Czech Republic. The study examines how farm diversification, local food systems, landscape stewardship, and community-based tourism contribute to economic resilience and environmental sustainability. By comparing Czech experience with the current context of Albania and the Western Balkans, the paper identifies transferable strategies that support rural revitalization, strengthen small-scale agriculture, and promote sustainable tourism. The aim is to offer practical, evidence-based recommendations that can inspire regional development policies and innovation pathways relevant to Albania's rural areas.*

**Key words:** *Agrotourism, Sustainable Development, Food Systems*

# DIGITALIZATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA: ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF O.U.G. NO. 57/2019 REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

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## **Abstract**

*Digitalization is no longer just a trend, but a necessity for a modern and efficient public administration. We propose that in this paper we analyze the provisions contained in Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code regarding digitalization and, where appropriate, formulate proposals de lege ferenda. We consider, in particular, the provisions relating to the use of electronic means in the activity of public administration and the Local Official Gazette in electronic format*

**Key words:** *digitalization, public administration, electronic means, communication*

# ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION THROUGH CRIMINAL LEGISLATION AND RELEVANT JUDICIAL PRACTICE: CRIMINAL OFFENCES AGAINST THE ENVIRONMENT, EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND THE ROLE OF ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE

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## **Abstract**

*Environmental protection constitutes one of the most important challenges of contemporary law, due to the serious consequences brought about by the degradation of ecosystems and natural resources. This paper analyzes the role of criminal legislation and judicial practice in environmental protection, with a particular focus on environmental criminal offenses and their implementation in the Gjirokastra region, a region with important natural resources and protected areas such as the Vjosa River National Park and the Bredhi i Hotovës-Dangëlli National Park.*

*The study addresses the legal meaning of the environment, the basic principles of environmental legislation, as well as the methodological features of the investigation and prosecution of environmental offenses. Special attention is paid to the issues related to the predictability and clarity of criminal norms, as well as the relationship between criminal and administrative legislation in dealing with environmental violations.*

*Through a methodology that combines doctrinal and legal analysis with the examination of concrete cases of judicial practice, the paper assesses the compatibility of the Albanian framework*

*with European standards. It also analyses the role of the *acquis communautaire*, the best practices of the European Union and the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union in strengthening environmental protection through criminal law.*

*The conclusions highlight the need to strengthen the professional capacities of law enforcement bodies and to increase inter-institutional cooperation, in order to guarantee more effective environmental protection and further harmonization with European standards.*

**Key words:** *environmental protection, criminal legislation, judicial practice, criminal offences against the environment, *acquis communautaire*, European Union*

## **PREEMPTIVE MEASURES CRIMINAL JUSTICE FOR MINORS: PROSECUTORS' ROLE IN PROTECTING JUVENILE RIGHTS**

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### **Abstract**

*The juvenile criminal justice system aims not only to punish illegal acts, but above all strives for rehabilitation, social reintegration and the protection of children's best interests. In this context, diversion programs are an important procedural mechanism which*

*give opportunities for prosecutors to avoid criminal penalizations or stigmatization of the minor, favoring alternate solutions such as mediation and restorative justice.*

*This paper will analyze the role of the prosecutor in applying diversion programs as a legal instrument to protect children's rights, focusing on the legal basis, the conditions of application and the effects of these programs on juvenile recipients.*

*This study is based on an analysis of Albanian legislation regarding juvenile criminal justice, international standards and criminal mediation practices. The findings show that diversion contributes to a reduction of criminal stigmatization for juveniles, increases the possibility of rehabilitation and promotes the social responsibility of the juvenile recipient through dialogue and reparation of consequences.*

*In conclusion, it is evident that effective use of diversion programs by prosecutors are an essential element of protecting children's rights and strengthening the justice system with a focus on education and reintegration, in accordance with the principles of restorative justice.*

**Key words:** *diversion, juvenile criminal justice, protection of children's rights, mediation, Albanian legislation on juvenile criminal justice*

# JUVENILE RIGHTS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

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## **Abstract**

*The rights of minors in the criminal justice system is an issue of particular importance for criminal prosecution bodies, due to the need to guarantee legal and procedural protections for children during criminal investigation and prosecution. The treatment of minors requires a specialized approach from the prosecutor in accordance with national legislation and international standards for the protection of children's rights.*

*This paper aims to analyze the role of the prosecutor in guaranteeing the rights of minors during the criminal process, focusing on respecting procedural guarantees, protecting the rights and dignity of the child and implementing the principle of the juvenile's best interests.*

*This study is based on a qualitative analysis of Albanian legislation on juvenile criminal justice, international acts and legal literature on the procedural treatment of minors in conflict with the law. It also analyzes elements of procedural practice related to criminal investigation, interrogation and protecting children's rights during the criminal process.*

*The findings show that the prosecutor has an important role in*

*guaranteeing procedural standards and protecting the minor from violation of their rights during the criminal proceedings. However, challenges related to the practical implementation of these standards and the need for continued institutional specialization are highlighted.*

*In conclusion, this study emphasizes that effective respect for the rights of minors constitutes a legal and institutional obligation for criminal justice bodies, with a direct impact on child protection and guaranteeing due process.*

**Key words:** *juvenile rights, juvenile criminal justice, criminal proceedings, procedural guarantees, best interests of the child*

## **POSITIVE OBLIGATIONS OF THE STATE IN CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ANALYSIS OF LEGISLATION AND CONSTITUTIONAL JURISPRUDENCE**

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### **Abstract**

*Domestic violence and violence against women are serious violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms which impose positive obligations on the state to take effective measures to protect victims. This paper discusses the nature and content of the positive obligations of the state in cases of domestic violence, with a particular focus on the constitutional and legal framework of the Republic of Kosovo, the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights and the relevant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo. Through the legal-dogmatic method, the method of analysis, and the comparative method, the constitutional*

*and legal provisions that regulate protection from domestic violence, as well as the legal standards developed in national and international judicial practice, are examined. The analysis includes the treatment of key ECHR cases, such as Opuz v. Turkey, Eremia v. Moldova, Talpis v. Italy, Volodina v. Russia, and Kurt v. Austria, as well as the judgments KI41/12 and KI129/21 of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo. The findings indicate that the legal framework of the Republic of Kosovo is to a considerable extent harmonized with international standards for the protection of victims of domestic violence, but that the main challenges continue to be related to the practical implementation of positive obligations by competent institutions, especially in risk assessment, inter-institutional coordination, and the adoption of effective preventive measures. The paper concludes that effective protection of victims requires not only the existence of an advanced normative framework but also the efficient and proactive functioning of institutional mechanisms responsible for its implementation.*

**Key Words:** *Domestic violence, positive obligations of the state, human rights*

## **THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ON THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM**

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### **Abstract**

*Digital transformation has changed the way public institutions, including the judicial system, function. The use of digital*

*technologies in the administration of justice has contributed to increasing transparency, efficiency and citizens' access to judicial services. This paper analyses the impact of digital technology on the transparency of the judicial system, focusing on electronic case management systems, online publication of judicial decisions, electronic communication and the of artificial intelligence. The study is based on the analysis of Kosovo legislation, European Union and Council of Europe standards, as well as contemporary literature. The results show that digitalization contributes to increasing institutional accountability, reducing procedural delays and strengthening citizens' trust in justice. However, significant challenges remain in the protection of personal data, cybersecurity and ensuring due process. In conclusion, it is concluded that digital technology constitutes a key element in building a more transparent, efficient and accessible judicial system.*

**Key words:** *digital technology, judicial transparency, digital justice, judicial system, artificial intelligence.*

## **THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

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### **Abstract:**

*The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have significantly influenced numerous sectors, including the administration of justice. The use of AI in judicial proceedings*

*has emerged as a subject of growing academic, legal, and social interest, raising both opportunities and challenges for modern legal systems. This article examines the integration of AI-driven tools into judicial processes, focusing on their potential to enhance efficiency, consistency, and access to justice while also addressing the ethical, legal, and procedural concerns associated with their use.*

*AI applications in judicial proceedings include legal research platforms, predictive analytics, case management systems, document review technologies, and decision-support tools designed to assist judges and legal practitioners. These technologies can reduce administrative burdens, accelerate case processing, and improve the analysis of large volumes of legal information. At the same time, their implementation raises fundamental questions regarding transparency, accountability, fairness, and the protection of fundamental rights. Concerns related to algorithmic bias, explainability, data quality, and the risk of excessive reliance on automated systems have prompted calls for robust regulatory frameworks and judicial oversight.*

*The article explores the evolving legal standards governing the use of AI in judicial contexts, with particular attention to principles such as due process, judicial independence, equality before the law, and the right to a fair trial. It also considers recent international and regional initiatives aimed at establishing ethical guidelines and regulatory safeguards for trustworthy AI in the justice sector. Through a critical analysis of existing literature, policy documents, and emerging practices, the study evaluates the extent to which AI can contribute to more effective and accessible judicial systems without undermining the core values of the rule of law.*

*The findings suggest that AI should be viewed as a supportive instrument rather than a substitute for human judicial decision-making. Its responsible integration requires transparency, human oversight, and continuous evaluation to ensure that technological innovation strengthens, rather than compromises, the legitimacy and integrity of judicial proceedings.*

**Key words:** artificial intelligence, legal system, judicial proceeding.

# CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the important role of cross-border cooperation as a strategic tool to promote sustainable development and face global challenges. Today, environmental crises, climate change, and socio-economic shifts do not respect political borders. Therefore, managing natural resources together and coordinating regional policies has become a vital necessity.*

*The main goal of this study is to analyze how effective bilateral and multilateral agreements are between neighboring states. It focuses on protecting shared ecosystems, developing sustainable tourism, and promoting a circular economy (reducing waste and reusing resources) in border areas.*

*Using a method based on comparing case studies, reviewing academic literature, and evaluating policy documents, this paper identifies the main barriers in this process. The biggest obstacles include a lack of matching legal frameworks, differences in institutional capacities, and bureaucratic delays. The findings show that although important financial tools exist (such as European Union assistance programs), the long-term success of these initiatives depends heavily on decentralizing the process. This means actively involving civil society, local businesses, and communities in decision-making.*

*In conclusion, the study argues that cross-border cooperation should not be seen just as an administrative or diplomatic tool, but as a central pillar for building strong and sustainable regions. The recommendations provide a practical guide for policymakers, suggesting new models of multi-level governance for faster and more effective regional integration.*

**Key words:** *Cross-border cooperation, sustainable development, environmental protection, regional policies, local communities, climate change, legal harmonization, multi-level governance.*

## **CHALLENGES OF PENSION SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY IN ALBANIA: POLICY REFORMS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES**

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### **Abstract**

*The sustainability of pension systems has become one of the most significant socioeconomic challenges facing many countries, particularly those experiencing demographic changes and population ageing. Albania is no exception, as its public pension system continues to face financial and structural pressures related to low contribution rates, informal employment, increasing life expectancy, and a growing dependency ratio.*

*This paper examines the development of the Albanian pension system, focusing on the challenges that have emerged throughout the years and the reforms undertaken to improve its financial sustainability. The study analyzes the functioning of the Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) scheme, the relationship between contributors and beneficiaries, and the impact of public policies on the long-*

*term viability of pension financing. Particular attention is paid to the role of pension reforms in promoting social protection while ensuring fiscal sustainability.*

*The research is based on a review of national legislation, institutional reports, and relevant academic literature. Findings indicate that although several reforms have contributed to improving system performance, significant challenges remain. The increasing burden on public finances and demographic trends highlight the need for complementary pension mechanisms and policies that strengthen economic sustainability.*

*The paper concludes that future pension reforms should balance social welfare objectives with economic efficiency, while supporting sustainable development goals through enhanced financial stability and social inclusion.*

**Key words:** *Pension system, sustainability, pension reform, public policy, social protection, Albania*

## **OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE AGAINST AI-AMPLIFIED CYBER THREATS: A CASE-BASED ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

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### **Abstract**

*his paper examines the impact of artificial intelligence on the operational resilience of modern digital infrastructure. The study is based on the assumption that AI does not necessarily create new categories of cyber threats but acts as a multiplier of existing*

*attack techniques by reducing the entry barrier, accelerating automation, and increasing the scale of malicious activities. The aim of the research is to analyze how AI-amplified cyber threats affect organizational resilience and to identify practical measures that strengthen the continuity and security of digital services.*

*The research applies an anonymized case-based approach using two operational cybersecurity cases from IT, DevOps, and monitoring environments. The first case concerns bot-like reconnaissance targeting a production e-commerce platform, while the second focuses on a container supply chain risk involving an internal service image and suspicious runtime behavior. Due to confidentiality requirements, all identifying information has been removed, and AI attribution is treated as a forensic hypothesis rather than a confirmed fact.*

*The findings demonstrate that effective operational resilience depends on timely monitoring, trust-boundary validation, artifact integrity verification, incident containment, and recovery readiness. The study identifies a set of resilience-oriented controls that support the continuity, integrity, and sustainability of digital infrastructure exposed to AI-amplified cyber threats.*

**Key words:** *artificial intelligence; cybersecurity; operational resilience; digital infrastructure; bot reconnaissance; container supply chain; CI/CD; sustainable digital services.*

# TESTAMENTARY FREEDOM IN ALBANIAN LAW: LIMITS AND LEGAL PROTECTION

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## **Abstract**

*Testamentary freedom represents one of the most important manifestations of private autonomy and property rights in civil law, recognizing the individual's right to dispose of their property mortis causa. However, this freedom is not absolute in nature, as it is limited by the mandatory provisions of the Civil Code and, in particular, by the institution of the legal reserve, which aims to protect compulsory heirs and preserve the social and familial function of inheritance.*

*This paper aims to analyze the legal limits of testamentary freedom under civil law, focusing on the doctrinal and jurisprudential interpretation of the provisions governing testamentary succession in the Civil Code. At the center of the analysis is the practice of the Albanian judicial system regarding the invalidity of wills, violations of the legal reserve, the formal validity of holographic and notarial wills, as well as the relationship between testamentary autonomy and the protection of heirs benefiting from the legal reserve.*

*Through analytical, interpretative, and jurisprudential methods, the paper highlights the evolution of judicial approaches from a traditional and restrictive interpretation of testamentary freedom toward a broader analysis connected with proportionality, legal certainty, and the constitutional protection of property rights. In this context, the paper also addresses the legal and constitutional debate surrounding Article 377 of the Civil Code, considered one of the most debated provisions of civil law in relation to inheritance. The paper seeks to contribute to identifying the balance between*

*the autonomy of the testator's will and the legal protection of compulsory heirs, in the context of the contemporary development of inheritance law in Albania.*

**Key words:** Will, Inheritance, Legal reserve, Jurisprudence, Private autonomy, Judicial decision, Law

## **DISINFORMATION AS A THREAT TO STATE SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Abstract**

*Disinformation has become one of the most significant contemporary threats to both state security and sustainable development. The rapid growth of digital technologies, social media platforms, and artificial intelligence has increased the scale and effectiveness of information manipulation campaigns conducted by state and non-state actors. These activities can undermine public trust in institutions, intensify social polarization, influence political processes, and weaken a state's ability to respond effectively to crises. The aim of this paper is to examine*

*the impact of disinformation on state security and sustainable development. The analysis indicates that disinformation is an important element of hybrid threats, capable of destabilizing political and social systems while hindering the achievement of sustainable development objectives. Effective countermeasures require strengthening societal resilience, promoting media literacy, improving strategic communication, and enhancing cooperation among public institutions and international partners. Addressing disinformation is therefore essential for ensuring national security, social stability, and long-term sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** *disinformation, state security, sustainable development, hybrid threats, information warfare, societal resilience*

## **THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA AFTER THE “PRESPA AGREEMENT”, ISSUES, CHALLENGES OF EURO- ATLANTIC INTEGRATION**

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### **Abstract**

*The importance of the neighborhood has been and remains a historical effort and strategic goal of each state due to the weight and importance of trust and bilateral relations for domestic and foreign policy and economic development of each state.*

*Since the early 1990's, North Macedonia has been risking possible international isolation at a very sensitive time when Serbia easily ignited wars with its neighbors.*

*The position of the Republic of North Macedonia on regional policy is quite delicate. Macedonia can be a stimulator of European values towards the east, as well as towards the approximation of eastern*

*values to western values. It is a barometer of tolerance between communities and religions. Therefore, the challenge of building the unique identity of the Macedonian people, but also maintaining good interethnic relations in the state, as a precondition for the stability of the Region, can be a good example of the new paradigm. In my perception, this is possible if all three factors and guarantors of stability are equally involved: Macedonians, Albanians, and the international community.*

**Key words:** Republic of Macedonia, identity, foreign policy

## **THE RIGHT TO LIFE BETWEEN THE IDEALISM OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND THEIR PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper argues that the universality of the right to life is, to a large extent, a legal illusion. There exists a profound and structural gap between the normative idealism of international treaties and their practical applicability on the ground. This divide is caused by the lack of genuine coercive enforcement mechanisms and by the subordination of international law to geopolitical interests.*

*The study examines cases, in which the judgments of international courts, have not been enforced, as well as the difficulties encountered in the implementation of international legal norms. For the right to life to evolve from an abstract ideal into a genuinely protected reality, the global institutional framework requires profound reform.*

*One proposed solution, is the limitation or elimination of the veto power within the United Nations Security Council in situations where there is clear evidence of mass atrocities, war crimes, or genocide. Furthermore, it is imperative to strengthen the independence and operational capacity of the International Criminal Court (ICC) by expanding its universal jurisdiction and by establishing mandatory mechanisms of cooperation for all states in the execution of arrest warrants.*

*Another effective tool, for ensuring compliance with international norms, is the use of economic sanctions.*

**Key words:** *human rights, right to life, United Nations (UN), International Criminal Court (ICC), European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), Gaza, Ukraine*

## **EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL ASSISTED SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT: IMPACT ON DEVELOPER PRODUCTIVITY AND CODE QUALITY**

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### **Abstract**

*The rapid adoption of Large Language Models (LLMs) in software engineering has introduced new paradigms in code generation, debugging, and software maintenance. This study presents a controlled empirical investigation of LLM-assisted software development, with a focus on quantifying its impact on developer productivity and code quality using widely adopted tools such as ChatGPT and GitHub Copilot.*

*A quasi-experimental design was implemented involving*

*participants performing standardized programming tasks under two conditions: with and without LLM assistance. Performance was assessed using multiple quantitative metrics, including task completion time, lines of code, defect density, and number of debugging iterations. Statistical analysis of the results indicates that LLM assistance yields a significant reduction in task completion time and debugging effort, demonstrating measurable gains in development efficiency. The findings also reveal that improvements in code quality are not uniform across conditions. Variability in outcomes is significantly associated with developer experience level and task complexity, suggesting that LLM effectiveness is context-dependent rather than absolute. Moreover, evidence of cognitive offloading behavior was observed, indicating potential risks related to reduced critical verification and increased reliance on model-generated outputs.*

*The study provides empirical evidence that LLMs enhance software development productivity while introducing non-trivial challenges concerning reliability, skill dependency, and verification practices. These results underscore the necessity for standardized evaluation frameworks and governance mechanisms to support the responsible integration of LLM-based tools in professional software engineering environments.*

**Key words:** *Large Language Models, AI-assisted Software Development, Developer Productivity, Code Quality, Empirical Evaluation*

# INFOSPHERE, NETWORK SOCIETY, AND GLOBAL DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

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## **Abstract**

*The article, written within the project Digitalization of the Initial Training Process of Teachers to Ensure an Efficient Teaching Approach, in the Context of Labor Market Demands (Code 040102), describes how the digital revolution has transformed society through the emergence of the infosphere. The infosphere is a space in which information is created, shared, processed, and used through digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and global communication networks. Drawing on the theories of Floridi, Castells, Cowan and Arsenault, Crawford, Nye, Hofstede, Miller et al., Mitchell, Appiah, and Ribble, this article examines the relationship between globalization, the network society, public diplomacy, artificial intelligence, cultural identity, and global digital citizenship. Digital networks facilitate global connectivity, dialogue, collaboration, and participation across geographical and cultural boundaries, while also generating challenges related to privacy, surveillance, bias, manipulation, and digital inequalities. The article argues that digital technologies are not merely instruments of global communication but spaces where cultural identities are continuously constructed, transformed, and negotiated. Consequently, the development of global digital citizenship requires digital literacy, intercultural awareness, ethical responsibility, critical thinking, and active participation in digital environments.*

**Key words:** *infosphere, globalization, network society, artificial intelligence, cultural identity, global digital citizenship*

# COMPUTER SIMULATIONS FOR TEACHING PHYSICS CONCEPTS IN THE ALBANIAN PRE- UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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## **Abstract**

*The integration of technology has introduced innovative approaches in education, particularly in science subjects such as physics. Interactive Computer Simulations (ICS) represent an effective pedagogical tool for improving students' understanding of abstract and complex physical concepts through visualization and interactive exploration. This study aims to investigate the role of ICS in physics instruction within the Albanian pre-university educational system. It highlights that integration of ICS into physics curricula represents a significant shift from teacher-centered to student-centered educational setup. Various global contexts investigated in recent studies are reviewed to demonstrate that simulations enhance conceptual understanding of physics, motivation in learning, and critical thinking skills. Benefits of using ICS in physics teaching are summarized, and the example of “teaching optics with simulations” is discussed. Furthermore, this study examines the main barriers to effective implementation, including technological infrastructure, teacher readiness, and access to digital resources. The findings are expected to provide insights into how ICS can enhance physics learning in Albania and support more effective integration of digital tools in teaching practices. It is concluded that simulations do not replace real laboratories but supplement and extend them to bridge the gap between theory and practice, providing a “safe access” to trials that build student confidence. For educational systems like Albania's,*

*this helps to enhance scientific literacy and reduce the prevalence of rote memorization.*

**Key words:** *Computer simulations, physics education, information technology, Albanian education system, digital learning*

## **INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARDS IN MATH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION: USES, BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS**

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### **Abstract**

*As ICT continues to reshape educational frameworks, the Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) has become a foundational element of modern teaching infrastructure. This paper presents an evaluation of integration of IWB within science education. It summarizes a thorough analysis of recent research published between 2015 and 2025, examining how the IWB can improve students' engagement in science learning. Papers, retrieved from various databases, are screened through inclusion and exclusion criteria focused on science instruction using PRISMA-guided procedures. The analysis outlines a number of IWB applications, ranging from basic multimedia presentation to advanced modalities. The study identifies also the advantages associated with IWB utilization revealing that IWB-mediated instruction correlates with increases in student motivation and active participation. The findings are interpreted through the framework of TPACK, offering a multidimensional perspective on how IWBs enhance engagement in science learning. On the other hand, this paper addresses persistent logistical and*

*pedagogical limitations like the “interactivity paradox”, in which the IWB is (under)utilized as an expensive projection screen for traditional, teacher-centered didactic delivery. The study comes to the conclusion that good IWB integration contributes significantly to science education when pedagogical design, TPACK, and institutional support are properly linked. To expand the IWB from a smart writing touch-screen into a meaningful aid for scientific inquiry, professional development must change from mechanical operational training toward student-centered teaching setup. The existing gap, by the absence of research in the Albanian setting, requires that future studies should examine how contextual factors, such as teacher digital competence, school infrastructure, and learner backgrounds mediate the sustained impact of IWBs on student motivation and participation.*

**Key words:** *ICT in Education, Interactive Whiteboard, Science Teaching, TPACK*

## **EVALUATION OF DISTANCE PROTECTION BEHAVIOR DURING POWER SWINGS AND LOSS OF SYNCHRONISM IN POWER TRANSMISSION LINES**

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### **Abstract**

*Power system stability is often challenged by oscillations and loss of synchronism, which can significantly affect the performance of distance protection relays. This paper evaluates the behavior of distance protection during simulated power swings and out-of-step conditions in transmission lines. The analysis is based on numerical relay data obtained from detailed simulations,*

*including impedance trajectories, harmonic content, and binary signal activation. Results show that under certain conditions, the relay may misinterpret power swings as three-phase short-circuits, leading to unintended tripping actions. The impedance trajectory demonstrates oscillatory movement across protection zones, while harmonic distortion and transient DC components further complicate relay decision-making. The study highlights the practical challenges of configuring distance protection to ensure sensitivity and selectivity, emphasizing the need for careful parameter adjustment to avoid false operations during dynamic system disturbances*

**Key words:** *distance protection, power swings, out-of-step conditions, impedance trajectory, numerical relay, transmission line*

## USING A QUANTUM LINEAR ALGORITHM TO SUPPORT A DECISION-MAKING SYSTEM

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### **Abstract**

*A hybrid quantum–classical approach to solving the load balancing problem in real-time computer systems is proposed, with a focus on reliability assessment and control. The approach is based on the use of a Variational Quantum Linear Solver (VQLS) to process large sparse linear systems arising from the spatio-temporal discretization of load distribution models and task flows among computational nodes.*

*An algorithmic scheme is presented for transforming an engineering model of a real-time system into a quantum-realizable problem formulation. This scheme includes decomposing the system matrix into a linear combination of Pauli operators, preparing a quantum state corresponding to the right-hand side, and optimizing a variational ansatz. It is shown that the resulting quantum solution state is most effective when used not for full reconstruction of the load vector, but for direct estimation of aggregated and local metrics, such as peak load, slack to deadline violations, and integral stability indicators, which are directly related to system failures and performance degradation.*

*The proposed approach is considered as a tool for quantum benchmarking of classical load balancing algorithms, as well as a potential foundation for building reliability management systems for computer systems operating in a near-real-time regime.*

**Key words:** *Reliability of computer systems, Bayesian neural networks, ensemble methods, artificial intelligence, hybrid models, risk assessment, fault tolerance, uncertainty modeling, failure prediction, software security, system stability, neural networks, fault tree, machine learning, quantum systems, quantum algorithms, quantum machine learning, hybrid models.*

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR DETECTING PAIN IN NEONATES IN THE NICU: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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## **Abstract**

*Background: Neonates admitted to Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) are frequently exposed to painful procedures, while pain assessment remains largely dependent on intermittent clinical observation. Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a promising approach for enabling more objective and continuous pain detection.*

*Objective: To synthesize the available evidence on AI applications for neonatal pain detection and assessment in NICUs and to explore their implications for nursing practice.*

*Methods: A structured literature review was conducted following PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Searches were performed in PubMed, Google Scholar, and IEEE Xplore for studies published between 2015 and 2025 in English. Search terms included combinations of “artificial intelligence,” “pain,” “newborn,” “neonate,” and “NICU.” Studies were screened using predefined eligibility criteria, and reasons for exclusion were documented.*

*Results: Twenty-one records were identified through database searches and 21 additional records through other sources. After removing two duplicates, 19 studies were screened. Thirteen full-text articles were retrieved from database searches, of which six met the eligibility criteria. Three additional studies were identified through other sources, resulting in a total of nine included studies. Reasons for exclusion included non-neonatal populations*

(n=2), studies in which AI was not the primary pain detection or assessment method (n=2), and publications outside the predefined time frame (n=1). The included studies applied machine learning, deep learning, and computer vision techniques for neonatal pain detection and assessment. Considerable heterogeneity was observed across datasets, outcome measures, and analytical approaches.

*Conclusions:* AI-based approaches show potential to enhance neonatal pain assessment by supporting more objective and continuous monitoring in NICUs. However, the limited number of studies and methodological heterogeneity highlight the need for standardized datasets, multicenter validation, and integration of AI systems into nursing workflows before widespread clinical implementation.

**Key words:** artificial intelligence; neonatal pain; neonatal intensive care unit; machine learning; deep learning; nursing

## **THE IMPACT OF ISO CERTIFICATION ON PATIENT SAFETY CULTURE, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE, AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG NURSES: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

*Background:* ISO certification is widely implemented in healthcare organizations as a quality management strategy

*aimed at enhancing patient safety and improving organizational performance. However, evidence regarding its impact on healthcare professionals' perceptions of patient safety culture, resilience, and job satisfaction remains limited.*

*Objective: To investigate the impact of ISO certification on nurses' perceptions of patient safety culture, psychological resilience, and job satisfaction.*

*Methods: A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted among 265 nurses and nursing assistants working in a tertiary university hospital. Of the participants, 62.7% were employed in ISO-certified departments. Data were collected using the Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture (HSOPSC), the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale, and the Job Satisfaction Index. Descriptive statistics and comparative analyses were performed to examine differences between professionals working in certified and non-certified departments.*

*Results: Nurses working in ISO-certified departments reported significantly higher scores in the patient safety culture dimensions of Staffing and Work Pace ( $p = 0.001$ ) and Patient Safety Event Reporting ( $p = 0.004$ ) compared with those working in non-certified departments. In contrast, significantly lower scores were observed in the dimension Handoffs and Information Exchange ( $p < 0.001$ ). No statistically significant differences were identified in the remaining patient safety culture dimensions. Furthermore, no significant differences were found between certified and non-certified departments regarding psychological resilience ( $p = 0.874$ ) or job satisfaction ( $p = 0.189$ ).*

*Conclusions: ISO certification appears to be associated with specific positive aspects of patient safety culture, particularly in relation to event reporting and workload management. However, it does not appear to significantly influence nurses' psychological resilience or job satisfaction. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms through which quality management systems affect healthcare professionals and organizational outcomes.*

**Key words:** *ISO certification, patient safety culture, nurses, psychological resilience, job satisfaction, quality management*

# **PRIVACY AND PERSONAL DATA IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETIES OF THE BALKANS: AN ANALYSIS OF CITIZEN AWARENESS AND PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION POLICIES**

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## **Abstract**

*The rapid development of digital technologies has significantly transformed the relationship between citizens, institutions and public services in the Western Balkans. While countries in the region have undertaken considerable efforts to harmonise their legal frameworks with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), challenges related to the practical implementation of data protection standards remain evident. This study examines privacy and personal data protection in the digital societies of the Balkans, with particular emphasis on citizens' awareness and institutional communication practices. Using a qualitative methodology based on literature review and document analysis, the study explores the relationship between regulatory frameworks, institutional capacities and citizens' understanding of their digital rights. The findings suggest that legal harmonisation alone is insufficient to ensure effective protection of personal data. Limited institutional capacities, unclear communication practices and inadequate digital literacy contribute to a gap between formal rights and their practical exercise. The study further highlights that privacy should be understood not only as a legal concept but also as a communication process that requires transparency, accessibility and meaningful citizen engagement. Strengthening institutional accountability, promoting privacy-by-design approaches and investing in digital education are essential for fostering trust in digital services and supporting sustainable digital transformation in the region.*

**Key words:** *digital privacy, personal data protection, GDPR, Western Balkans, institutional communication, citizen awareness*

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS: INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE ALBANIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

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### **Abstract**

*The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is gaining increasing attention in education as well. Contemporary AI tools can assist teachers in designing lesson plans, in developing educational resources, in creating assessment instruments, and in analyzing student achievements. Published international research suggests that AI has the capability to improve the efficiency of instructional processes, support personalized professional development, and enhance teaching quality. At the same time, significant challenges remain regarding ethical use, data privacy, digital security, the credibility of AI-generated content, and the development of new professional competencies among teachers. In Albania, during the recent years, the process of digital transformation of education has been in the center of attention through national strategies and modernization of educational infrastructure, aiming at the strengthening of digital competencies, particularly with regard to teachers' professional development. The aim of this study is to examine the role of AI in teachers' professional development, as well as to identify the benefits and the opportunities of its use in pedagogical practice in the Albanian educational context. This research is based on the review of contemporary literature,*

*international policy documents, and examples of best practice related to the implementation of AI in education. The study seeks to contribute in ongoing academic discussions on how the AI may be used in an effective, ethical, and sustainable way for improving the quality of education in Albania.*

**Key words:** Artificial Intelligence (AI); Education; Digital competence; Professional development

## **DIDACTIC EXPERIMENTATION ON A HYBRID GRID-TIED INVERTER: ACTIVE POWER GENERATION AND ABSORPTION**

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### **Abstract**

*This study presents laboratory testing of a single-phase hybrid grid-connected inverter developed for renewable energy applications. By employing PWM control, the inverter achieves synchronization with the grid and enables regulated power exchange. The experimental setup provides students with the opportunity to examine essential aspects such as voltage synchronization, current regulation, and waveform quality. Performance evaluations under varied operating conditions confirm reliable functionality and satisfactory efficiency. Beyond technical results, the work highlights the educational value of hands-on experimentation in understanding power electronics and renewable energy integration. The case study demonstrates the inverter's dual capability: operating as a generator that supplies active power to the grid and as a load that absorbs energy from it. This dual-mode*

*operation enhances the learning experience, offering practical insights into the adaptable nature of renewable energy systems.*

**Key words:** *Renewable Energy Integration, Power Electronic Education, Grid-Connected Systems, PWM-Based Inverter, Energy Conversion Technology*

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN NURSING EDUCATION: A UNIVERSITY-BASED PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

*Mental health is a fundamental component of well-being during university studies, particularly for nursing students, who face considerable academic and emotional demands.*

*At the global level, youth mental health has become a priority for healthcare and educational systems. According to the World Health Organization, mental disorders are among the leading causes of disability among young people, directly affecting quality of life and academic performance. Studies published in The Lancet report that over 60% of students feel emotionally overwhelmed, while approximately 10–15% experience severe symptoms that*

*require professional intervention.*

*This study aims to assess levels of stress, anxiety, and depression through the use of the standardized DASS-21 questionnaire. The results indicate that a significant proportion of respondents experience these conditions at varying levels, reflecting the impact of factors such as academic pressure, lack of rest, and practical workload.*

*The findings of this study highlight the need to strengthen psychological support and implement structured interventions within the university environment, in order to improve students' mental well-being.*

**Key words:** *students, mental health, depression, anxiety, stress*

## **A NEW ERA IN THE NON-INVASIVE DIAGNOSIS OF INFLAMMATORY SKIN DISEASES: A SYSTEMIC REVIEW**

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### **Abstract**

*Background: Although traditionally utilized for skin malignancy screening, dermoscopy is increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for diagnosing inflammatory dermatoses (inflammascopy) and differentiating complex rashes.*

*Objective: To systematically review the published literature regarding the diagnostic utility and clinical application of dermoscopy in inflammatory skin conditions.*

*Methods: Utilizing a systematic approach, a comprehensive literature search was conducted in the PubMed database using the*

search terms “dermoscopy” and “dermatoses.”

*Results:* Out of 7135 initially identified studies, the majority consisted of case reports and series. Psoriasis, lupus, and lichen planus emerged as the most frequently investigated conditions. Strong congruence was observed across the literature regarding the pathognomonic dermoscopic findings for each disease:

*Psoriasis:* Characterized by a light red background with uniformly distributed dotted vessels, glomerular vessels, and diffuse white-silver scales.

*Lichen Planus:* Characterized by a violaceous backdrop featuring pathognomonic polymorphic pearly-white structures (Wickham striae) and peripheral radial capillaries.

*Lupus Discoid:* Characterized by prominent follicular changes, including yellow follicular keratotic plugs, peri-follicular scaling, and blue-gray granules.

*Conclusions:* Dermoscopy represents a highly promising, non-invasive diagnostic modality for the evaluation of inflammatory dermatoses. By providing real-time microscopic visualization, it holds the potential to significantly reduce or eliminate the need for invasive procedures such as skin biopsies. Nevertheless, further robust and rigorous studies are warranted to establish the definitive sensitivity and specificity of specific dermoscopic criteria across various rashes.

**Key words:** Dermoscopy, Inflammascopy, Inflammatory dermatoses

# **PARAMEDIAN FOREHEAD FLAP COMBINED WITH AURICULAR CONCHAL CARTILAGE GRAFT FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF A 4 × 3.5 CM NASAL ALAR DEFECT FOLLOWING EXCISION OF INFILTRATIVE BASAL CELL CARCINOMA: A CASE REPORT**

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## **Abstract**

*Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is the most common cutaneous malignancy and frequently involves the nose, where surgical treatment may result in complex defects with significant functional and aesthetic implications. Reconstruction of large nasal alar defects remains particularly challenging due to the need to restore contour, structural support, and airway patency. We report the case of a patient treated in Gjirokastra Regional Hospital for an infiltrative lesion involving the nasal ala. Clinical examination and preoperative computed tomography demonstrated local tissue infiltration, raising suspicion for malignancy. Following complete surgical excision, a full-thickness nasal alar defect measuring 4 × 3.5 cm was created. Immediate reconstruction was performed using a paramedian forehead flap combined with an auricular conchal cartilage graft harvested from the contralateral ear to provide structural support and prevent alar collapse. Histopathological examination confirmed infiltrative basal cell carcinoma with negative surgical margins. The postoperative course was uneventful, with complete flap viability and satisfactory donor-site healing. Functional assessment demonstrated preservation of nasal airway patency, while aesthetic evaluation revealed good contour restoration, symmetry, and color match. No major complications or evidence of local recurrence were observed during follow-up. This case demonstrates that the combination of a paramedian forehead flap and auricular conchal cartilage*

*graft is a reliable reconstructive option for large nasal alar defects following oncologic resection.*

**Key words:** Basal cell carcinoma, cutaneous malignancy, complex defects

## **CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS THAT HAVE AFFECTED PRETERM BIRTHS IN THE DISTRICT OF GJIROKASTRA**

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### **Abstract**

*Introduction: Preterm birth remains one of the most important challenges of modern obstetrics, due to its impact on neonatal mortality and morbidity. Identification of obstetric conditions that contribute to preterm birth is of great importance for preventive and prenatal care.*

*Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify obstetric causes and maternal characteristics associated with preterm birth in the Gjirokastra Maternity Hospital during the years 2023–2024.*

*Material and Methods: A retrospective descriptive study was conducted on 103 cases with a diagnosis of preterm birth registered*

*at the Gjirokastra Maternity Hospital during the years 2023–2024. Data were obtained from clinical medical records and the hospital obstetric registry. 503 term births were also used for comparison. Socio-demographic characteristics, maternal age, education, gestational age, parity and obstetric characteristics of preterm birth were analyzed.*

*Results: The group most affected by preterm birth was the 25-34 year old age group (55.3%), while women 35-44 years old presented a higher percentage of preterm birth compared to term births. Most women with preterm birth lived in the city (78.6%). The most common obstetric causes were: spontaneous uterine activity, premature rupture of membranes, urinary tract infections and obstetric hemorrhages. A portion of the cases presented with uterine contractions associated with shortening and dilation of the cervix.*

*Conclusions: Preterm birth at the Gjirokastra Maternity Hospital was mainly associated with preventable or treatable obstetric factors. Strengthening prenatal care and early identification of women at risk remain key elements in reducing preterm birth.*

**Key words:** *Preterm birth, obstetric factors, maternal age, urinary tract infections, preterm rupture of membranes*

# ACUTE PAIN EVALUATION BY NURSING STAFF IN HOSPITALS OF SOUTH ALBANIA

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## **Abstract:**

*The overall prevalence of acute postoperative pain in Albania is found to be 79.3% within 6-24 h following a surgical procedure. Accurate evaluation of acute pain in health institutions ensures timely, appropriate treatment that reduces suffering and prevents complications. It also guides clinical decisions, and improves patient outcomes. Despite being such an important topic in clinical practice, in Albania we do not have a protocol for acute pain evaluation in healthcare institutions yet. This is an observational study aiming to analyze how acute postoperative pain evaluation is done by the nurses in the Surgery and OB Units of the regional hospitals of south Albania. The sample consisted of 73 nurses and 453 patients. In 93.6% of the patients a subjective evaluation of pain was performed, and in 55% of them objective evaluation of pain was performed. The elements used by the nurses to perform objective evaluation of pain were facial expressions/mimics in 2.4% of the patients, moans in 7.7% of the patients, body contractions in 2.2 % of the patients, and all the above mentioned in 1.1 % of the patients. In conclusion, the acute pain evaluation by nurses is done based on clinical experience, not in a formal nor standardized way, which possibly leads to patient's pain being not detected or underestimated, thus impacting quality of healthcare and patient's satisfaction.*

**Key Words:** acute pain, pain evaluation, nurse, quality of healthcare, patients satisfaction

# **PAIN ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN BACHELOR AND PROFESSIONAL MASTER IN NURSING STUDENTS**

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## **Abstract:**

*Introduction: This study aims to evaluate and compare the level of knowledge, attitudes, and competencies regarding pain assessment and management among third-year Bachelor students and Professional Master in Nursing students at "Eqrem Çabej" University in Gjirokastrë. The variation in academic levels serves as a benchmark to determine whether advanced postgraduate education yields a significant improvement in patient pain management.*

*Methodology: A convergent, comparative study design was employed. The sample comprised 57 third-year Bachelor students and 44 Professional Master in Nursing students, selected during the 2025–2026 academic year. Data collection was carried out through a structured, self-administered questionnaire designed to measure knowledge of pain scales, pharmacology, non-pharmacological methods, and perceived barriers to effective pain management.*

*Results: The data analysis revealed an average age range of 21–27 years, with a predominant female representation of 79%. The findings indicated a statistically significant difference between the two groups: Professional Master in Nursing students demonstrated deeper knowledge and greater confidence in selecting combined (pharmacological and non-pharmacological) methods compared to Bachelor students. Regarding knowledge acquisition, 43% of the students acquired information on pain through theoretical*

instruction, while 52% obtained it through clinical practice. Nevertheless, both groups encountered similar difficulties in accurately identifying opioid ceiling doses and addressing misconceptions regarding medication addiction.

*Conclusions:* While the Master's program offers higher professional and theoretical maturity in pain management, this study highlights a critical need to revise the practical curricula across both educational tiers at "Eqrem Çabej" University. It is recommended to integrate more clinical case studies and simulations to ensure that future nurses are fully equipped to deliver compassionate and pain-free patient care. Despite various academic advancements, the study revealed that more than half of the students possessed very limited knowledge regarding non-pharmacological pain management methods. Conversely, satisfactory results were observed in the students' ability to recognize pain by assessing the patient's body language and individual response to pain.

**Key words:** Pain, management, nursing, comparative study, pharmacological methods

## STRATEGIES, INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND TO REDUCE BURNOUT

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### **Abstract**

*Introduction:* The well-being of health care professionals has received significant attention in recent years, especially due to the increase in stress and negative impacts that have arisen from various factors, workload, difficult conditions and in emergency

*situations such as the covid-19 pandemic. The high level of burnout in this sector leads to high emotional and physical insecurity.*

*Objectives:*

*To identify the current strategies and interventions implemented to improve the well-being of health care professionals. To assess the effectiveness of strategies in reducing burnout and improving mental and physical health. To explore the factors that contribute to health professionals Evidence-based recommendations for the development and implementation of sustainable programs.*

*Methodology:*

*This study uses a systematic review of the literature to analyze existing research on strategies and interventions for the well-being of health care professionals towards reducing burnout. The selection of studies was based on clearly defined criteria to identify trends, gaps and contemporary practices*

*Results:*

*This work shows that interventions based on mindfulness, peer support programs and organizational strategies, improvement and flexibility of schedules, reductions in burnout levels in psychological and physical well-being of professionals. It was identified that lack of resources, high workload and insufficient institutional support remain the main obstacles to the functioning of the health service.*

*Conclusions:*

*By mentioning the most contemporary and global practices, burnout in the health system in Albania can be reduced so that it does not remain an obstacle for the future and is attributed to the new generation in the health service in modern medicine.*

**Key words:** *Burnout, Mindfulness, Peer support, Strategy, Covid-19*

# SEROLOGICAL STUDY OF BOVINE BRUCELLOSIS IN SMALL-SCALE DAIRY HERDS IN LUSHNJA DISTRICT, ALBANIA

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## **Abstract**

*Bovine brucellosis is a zoonotic disease of considerable importance for both public health and livestock productivity. The aim of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of brucellosis in small dairy cattle herds (3–9 animals) in Lushnja district, Albania, and to provide scientific evidence for strengthening disease control strategies. A cross-sectional survey was conducted between March and April 2019. A total of 120 herds were randomly selected from 1955 herds registered in the RUDA system, and all cattle over 12 months of age within these herds ( $n = 368$ ) were sampled. Blood samples were analyzed using Rose Bengal Plate Test (RBPT), Fluorescence Polarization Assay (FPA), and competitive ELISA (c-ELISA). In addition, milk samples and vaginal swabs were collected for supplementary analyses.*

*The results revealed that none of the tested animals were positive for brucellosis. One sample was classified as suspicious in FPA but tested negative in confirmatory RBPT and c-ELISA. At a 95% confidence level, findings suggest that *Brucella* spp. is not circulating in this cattle subpopulation, with disease prevalence estimated between 0% and 4%. These results indicate a favorable epidemiological situation in Lushnja district and support the expansion of the “test-and-slaughter” control strategy to small dairy herds. Furthermore, strengthening passive surveillance and animal movement control*

*is recommended to maintain the favorable epidemiological status. The approach described here may serve as a model for application in other regions.*

**Key words:** *brucellosis, serum, prevalence, RBPT, FPA, c-ELISA*

## **THE CHALLENGES OF THE NURSING CARE SERVICES FOR THE HAEMODIALYSIS PATIENTS**

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### **Abstract**

*Dialysis is a treatment that consists in a blood's filtration process that removes harmful substances and excess water from the body in cases where the kidneys are not functioning adequately. There are two types of dialysis methods: hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. All the patients diagnosed with end stage of renal failure are obliged to take haemodialysis sessions. In our region, it is carried out at the Regional Hemodialysis Center near the American Hospital in Gjirokastër, where there are 30 patients who receive approximately 100 haemodialysis sessions per month. This is an observational study that aims to analyze the haemodialysis service and identifies its main challenges. The population consisted of all the patients that received this service in the Haemodialysis Center*

*near the American Hospital in Gjirokastër during November 2025-April 2026. This study found out that 51% of patients needed trust in the nursing staff, 60% of patients felt better when they had communication with nurses during the hemodialysis session, 49% of patients needed technical clarification regarding the procedure, and 65% of patients needed health education regarding their diet. The results confirmed the significant role of the nursing professionalism and nursing care plan's adjustments that should be done by being more patient oriented, which should also be properly integrated in the whole medical care.*

**Key words:** *Haemodialysis, nursing procedures, trust, health education*

## **THE BASIC HEALTH CONTROL**

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### **Abstract**

*The basic health control is a national free-charge program for its recipients. It intends the screening of population for risk factors and the most prevalent diseases and the purpose is:*

*Health care*

*Prevention of diseases and their complications*

*Early detection of health disorders*

*Treatment in the early stages of the diseases*

*Improving the health culture*

*This service is available to all 35-70 years old people, permanently*

*resident in the Republic of Albania.*

*Every person, however healthy he is, at a certain stage of his life is endangered by diseases such as heart diseases and blood vessels diseases, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, some forms of dementia, depression etc.*

*Health control for the ages of 35-70 is intended to help early diagnosis and reduce the risk of developing these common and dangerous diseases, but now a days it is possible to prevent them.*

*The study data was taken at the Health Center No.1, "18 Shtatori" Gjirokastra, during the period june 2020 - june 2022. A total of 2000 individuals were examined, of which 1270 females (63,5%) and 730 males (36,5%).*

*The prevalence of type2 Diabetes Mellitus during the period in wich the data were collected was 60 / 1000. The prevalence of hypochromic anemia during the period in wich the data were collected was 35/1000.*

*Key Words: Basic health control, prevention, examination, diseases*

# CHALLENGES, EXPERIENCES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC PAIN IN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

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## **Abstract**

*Introduction: Chronic pain represents a significant challenge for the healthcare system, significantly affecting the quality of life of patients and the efficiency of healthcare services.*

*The aim of study: To explore the experiences of patients and healthcare professionals in the management of chronic non-cancer pain within primary healthcare services in the city of Vlora.*

*Materials and methods: A qualitative study employing in-depth interviews with 20 patients and 10 healthcare professionals.*

*Results: Among the patients interviewed, 55% demonstrated limited knowledge regarding chronic pain management, while 65% reported having utilized primary healthcare services for pain management. Regarding healthcare professionals, only 10% had received training in chronic pain management, whereas 90% reported no specialized training in the management of chronic pain.*

*Conclusions: The study highlights the need for an integrated and personalized approach to chronic pain management, incorporating both pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments,*

psychological support, and enhanced patient education.

*Discussion:* Consistent with the findings reported by Robert J. Gatchel, chronic pain is recognized as one of the leading causes of long-term disability, and patients' negative experiences often involve a deterioration in quality of life, encompassing physical, social, and psychological dimensions. Similarly, the findings of the present study indicate that patients experience a significant loss of control over their lives, accompanied by a pronounced sense of helplessness in coping with chronic pain. These experiences highlight the substantial burden of chronic pain and its far-reaching impact on individuals' overall well-being and daily functioning. *Recommendations:* Advanced training programs should be implemented for healthcare professionals focusing on the management of chronic pain, with an emphasis on integrated and multidisciplinary approaches. In addition, improvements in healthcare infrastructure are recommended to facilitate easier access to alternative and non-pharmacological treatment options for patients experiencing chronic pain.

**Keywords:** Chronic pain, management, primary care, psychological support, multidisciplinary treatment

# ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS THROUGH DIGITAL INNOVATION AND PATIENT- CENTERED NURSING APPROACHES

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## **Abstract**

*Aim:* This review examined the contribution of digital health technologies and patient-centered nursing approaches to sustainable healthcare systems, focusing on healthcare accessibility, quality of care, patient outcomes, and chronic disease management.

*Methods:* A narrative literature review was conducted using PubMed, Medline, Cochrane Library, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Peer-reviewed studies published between 2020-2025 were screened. Of 62 initially identified studies, 38 met the inclusion criteria and were included in the review. The analysis focused on telemedicine, artificial intelligence, electronic health records, remote patient monitoring, mobile health applications, wearable technologies, and patient-centered nursing interventions.

*Results:* The findings showed that digital health innovations improve health care accessibility, continuity of care, patient engagement, and healthcare efficiency. Telehealth services, remote monitoring systems, wearable devices, and artificial intelligence-supported interventions were associated with better chronic disease management, improved treatment adherence, and fewer hospital admissions. Patient-centered nursing approaches promoted individualized care, shared decision – making, holistic healthcare delivery, and stronger nurse-patient communication. These strategies also supported more efficient use of healthcare

*resources and long-term system sustainability. Challenges included digital inequality, limited digital literacy, ethical and privacy concerns, and the need for continuous professional education.*

*Conclusions: Digital innovation and patient-centered nursing are essential for sustainable healthcare systems. Their integration into nursing practice can improve healthcare outcomes, strengthen chronic disease management, and support equitable healthcare delivery. Future policies and nursing education programs should prioritize digital competencies, and interdisciplinary collaboration, to enhance healthcare sustainability and resilience.*

**Key words:** *Sustainable Healthcare, Digital Innovation, Patient-Centered Nursing, Telehealth, Chronic Disease Management*

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NEWLY DIAGNOSED CANCER PATIENT: AFFECTIVE DISORDERS – ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS. CASE STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

*Cancer diagnosis is a traumatic event with a profound impact on the patient's mental health, triggering a complex existential crisis of a biological, psychosocial and spiritual nature. At the national level, Romania records approximately 100,000 new cases of cancer*

*annually, with a prevalence of clinically significant cancer distress of approximately 50% among cancer patients. Depression and anxiety are the most common comorbid psychiatric disorders, with prevalence rates between 15–59% for anxiety and 1.5–60% for depression, depending on the stage of the disease and the measurement tools used. The underdiagnosis and undertreatment of these disorders in clinical oncology practice in Romania remain major systemic problems, with direct consequences on quality of life, adherence to treatment and the risk of relapse.*

*The present work aims to: (1) identify and assess the level of distress, anxiety and depression in newly diagnosed oncological patients; (2) assess coping mechanisms and the level of somatization; (3) development and application of an individualized psycho-oncological therapeutic intervention protocol, with an emphasis on reducing affective symptoms and increasing quality of life.*

*The results confirm the high prevalence of affective disorders in recently diagnosed oncology patients. Early psychological assessment and systematic integration of psycho-oncological intervention into the multidisciplinary oncological protocol represent a clinical necessity with a direct impact on prognosis and quality of life. The research emphasizes the importance of addressing oncological distress as the sixth vital sign and advocates for increasing access of oncological patients in Romania to specialized psychological services.*

**Key words:** *psycho-oncology, oncological distress, anxiety, depression, coping strategies*

# **SPEECH THERAPY IN PATIENTS WITH ISCHEMIC STROKE. CASE STUDY**

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## **Abstract**

*In the context of a ischemic stroke it is essential that speech therapy be started as soon as possible, after the brain injury has occurred. It is essential that speech therapy is carried out gradually, and in terms of its results, these are conditioned by the severity of the injury, the patient's will to recover, the support of the family. In some situations, the patient's family represents an important support in the patient's partial or total recovery. Slow and objective discussions, carried out in as few words as possible, are suggested and evidence of active listening.*

*Failure to treat this type of disease in time, its implications in the sphere of speech as well as the triggering pathology, risks aggravating the symptoms and the disease. Therefore, it is necessary to diagnose and intervene as quickly as possible, serving the most promising recovery.*

**Key word:** *speech therapy, ischemic stroke*

# ANALYSES OF PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS AMONG NURSES AND HEALTH CARE STAFF AS AN IMPACTFUL FACTOR IN THE QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN THE CONTEXT OF SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

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## **Abstract**

*The success of the nursing profession is closely linked to effective patient care and collaboration between nurses and medical staff [1,2]. The assessment of professional relationships and collaborative behavior in clinical settings is important for improving the quality of healthcare services and the sustainable development of the healthcare system through science and innovation.*

*Aim: To evaluate the professional relationships of nurses with medical staff and to identify the factors influencing them, with the aim of improving the quality of healthcare and promoting sustainable development.*

*Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted at the Vlorë Regional Hospital during the period 09.06.2025–01.09.2025, involving 116 nurses and 44 doctors selected randomly. Professional relationships and interdisciplinary collaboration were assessed as factors influencing the quality of healthcare services.*

*Results: Nurse–nurse ( $M = 6.53$ ;  $SD = 1.88$ ) and nurse–physician ( $M = 6.32$ ) relationships were rated at a moderate level. 61.21% of participants indicated a need for improvement in professional relationships, while 70.69% rated nurse–physician relationships as*

*moderate. The main contributing factors were hierarchy (43.1%), communication (37.1%), and non-compliance with professional ethics (21.6%).*

*Discussion and Conclusion: Professional relationships are at a moderate level, influenced by limited communication and hierarchical structures. Strengthening communication, professional ethics, and interdisciplinary collaboration is essential for improving the quality of healthcare services and promoting the sustainable development of the healthcare system.*

*Recommendations: Professional relationships between nurses and medical staff should be strengthened to improve collaboration in clinical settings. Communication and professional ethics should be enhanced through the use of standardized medical language to reduce misunderstandings and increase efficiency. Additionally, interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork should be strengthened to improve the quality of healthcare services and ensure the effective functioning of healthcare services.*

**Key words:** *professional relationships, nurse, physician, communication, professional ethics, collaboration, performance*

## **THE ADVANCED ROLE OF CEREBRAL PERFUSION SPECT AND SISCOM IN THE PRE-SURGICAL LOCALIZATION OF DRUG-RESISTANT FOCAL EPILEPSY: EVIDENCE-BASED FUNCTIONAL IMAGING AND CLINICAL CORRELATION**

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### **Abstract**

*Drug-resistant focal epilepsy accounts for approximately one-third of all epilepsy cases and represents a major indication for surgical*

*intervention when pharmacological therapy fails. However, accurate localization of the epileptogenic zone remains challenging, particularly in MRI-negative epilepsy, which represents up to 30–40% of focal epilepsy cases. Conventional imaging modalities such as MRI and EEG often lack sufficient spatial or functional resolution to define the seizure onset zone.*

*Cerebral perfusion SPECT, particularly ictal SPECT, has demonstrated high sensitivity for localizing epileptogenic foci, with reported sensitivity exceeding 80% in non-lesional epilepsy. SISCOM (Subtraction Ictal SPECT Co-registered to MRI) further improves localization accuracy by enabling voxel-wise comparison between ictal and interictal perfusion states.*

*Recent evidence indicates that SISCOM improves localization concordance with surgical resection sites in up to 82% of cases and significantly contributes to post-operative seizure freedom, with Engel Class I outcomes reported in more than 60–70% of patients with concordant multimodal imaging findings. This review synthesizes current evidence regarding the physiological basis, imaging methodology, and clinical utility of SPECT and SISCOM in epilepsy surgery planning.*

*The integration of SPECT with MRI and EEG provides a robust multimodal framework that enhances diagnostic accuracy, particularly in complex MRI-negative and extratemporal epilepsy cases.*

**Key words:** *Drug-resistant focal epilepsy, localization, Cerebral perfusion, SPECT, SISCOM*

# RESEARCH ETHICS IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: BALANCING INNOVATION, DATA GOVERNANCE, AND PATIENT RIGHTS IN HEALTHCARE

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## **Abstract**

*The rapid integration of AI into healthcare is transforming scientific research, clinical decision-making, and public health practice. AI-driven technologies offer significant opportunities to enhance disease prediction, diagnostic accuracy, treatment personalization, and overall healthcare efficiency. The growing reliance on large-scale health datasets has introduced complex ethical challenges that extend beyond traditional biomedical research principles. As healthcare systems become increasingly data-driven, robust ethical governance of research and innovation is essential.*

*Research ethics has traditionally been guided by the principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and respect for human dignity. In the context of AI-based research, new concerns have emerged regarding informed consent, data privacy, confidentiality, algorithmic bias, transparency, and accountability. The extensive use of electronic health records, genomic data, wearable devices, and digital health applications enables secondary data use at scale, often without direct interaction with participants, thereby challenging established ethical frameworks and necessitating new approaches to data governance and participant protection.*

*AI systems trained on incomplete or non-representative datasets may reinforce existing health disparities and generate biased*

*outcomes, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations. Issues related to responsibility for AI-assisted decisions, ownership of health data, and explainability of machine-learning models remain insufficiently addressed within current regulatory systems. These challenges underscore the need for strengthened ethical oversight, transparency, and interdisciplinary collaboration among stakeholders.*

*This review examines the intersection of research ethics, artificial intelligence, and health data utilization, highlighting emerging ethical risks and strategies for responsible innovation. Ensuring strong ethical governance is essential to guarantee that AI contributes to equitable, transparent, and sustainable healthcare systems.*

**Key words:** Artificial Intelligence, Research Ethics, Health Data, Algorithmic Bias, Data Governance, Healthcare Innovation

## QUALITY OF LIFE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ANXIETY

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### Abstract

*Anxiety is considered one of the most common and complex mental health problems in contemporary society, significantly affecting the psychological, emotional and social well-being of the individual. The accelerated pace of modern life, academic and professional pressures, economic difficulties, interpersonal conflicts and*

*constant exposure to stressful situations have contributed to the increase in anxiety levels in different age groups. This paper aims to analyze the impact of anxiety on the quality of life and overall functioning of the individual, focusing on the factors that influence its development and deterioration, as well as the importance of psychological interventions for symptom management.*

*Anxiety is defined as an emotional, cognitive, and physiological response to the perception of a threat or uncertainty. At moderate levels, it can serve as a protective and motivating mechanism, however, when it becomes persistent and intense, it negatively affects the individual's daily life. The most common symptoms include constant worry, a sense of uncertainty, emotional tension, difficulty concentrating, irritability, insomnia, fatigue, and various physiological reactions, such as increased heart rate or muscle tension. These symptoms affect not only the emotional state, but also the social, academic, and professional functioning of the individual.*

*Through the analysis of scientific literature, the study highlights that anxiety is closely related to a decrease in the quality of life and difficulties in maintaining interpersonal relationships, performance and emotional stability. Factors such as trauma, negative experiences, lack of social support and chronic stress appear as important elements in the development of anxiety disorders. It is also emphasized that early identification of symptoms and psychological interventions, including cognitive-behavioral therapy and stress management techniques, have an important role in reducing symptoms and improving psychological well-being.*

*In conclusion, this paper emphasizes the importance of awareness of the impact of anxiety on the individual's life and the need to develop preventive and therapeutic strategies, with the aim of improving the quality of life and promoting mental health in society.*

**Key words:** *anxiety, problem, situation, management, feelings, disorder.*

# ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF SHIFT AND NIGHT WORK AMONG NURSES

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## **Abstract**

*Introduction: Shift and night work is an inherent part of nursing practice; however, it is associated with numerous biological, health and psychosocial consequences.*

*Aim: The aim of the study was to assess the effects of shift and night work among nurses.*

*Material and methods: The study was conducted among 105 nurses employed at the University Children's Hospital in Krakow between February and March 2024. A diagnostic survey method was used. The research tools included an original questionnaire and the standardized Athens Insomnia Scale (AIS).*

*Results: According to 95.2% of respondents, shift work leads to disturbances in the functioning of the body. The most frequently reported complaints were back pain (55.2%), headaches (43.8%), general fatigue (40.0%), leg swelling (39.0%) and nervousness (36.2%). Nearly half of the participants indicated a negative impact of shift work on family and personal life. The majority of nurses believed that shift work contributes to emotional exhaustion.*

*Conclusions: Shift and night work significantly worsen sleep quality and negatively affect health status, eating habits and physical activity of nurses. Long-term employment in a shift system increases the risk of health problems.*

**Key words:** nurses, shift work, night work, insomnia, occupational health

# ACCIDENTAL METHANOL POISONING: TOXICOKINETICS, CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS, AND CURRENT THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES – A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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## **Abstract**

*Methanol poisoning remains one of the most serious forms of toxic alcohol intoxication and continues to represent a significant global public health challenge. Although methanol is widely used in industrial processes, accidental or intentional ingestion remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality, particularly in regions where illicit alcohol production and consumption are prevalent. The toxicity of methanol is not primarily attributable to the parent compound itself but rather to its metabolites, especially formic acid, which induces severe metabolic acidosis, optic nerve damage, neurological impairment, and multi-organ dysfunction.*

*This review provides a comprehensive analysis of methanol toxicokinetics, biochemical mechanisms of toxicity, clinical manifestations, diagnostic approaches, epidemiological trends, and current therapeutic interventions. Particular attention is given to the role of alcohol dehydrogenase-mediated metabolism, the pathophysiological consequences of formate accumulation, and recent advances in antidotal therapy and extracorporeal elimination techniques.*

*Evidence from clinical studies, toxicological investigations, and major poisoning outbreaks demonstrates that early diagnosis and prompt treatment are critical determinants of patient outcomes. Current therapeutic strategies, including fomepizole administration, ethanol therapy, correction of metabolic acidosis, folinic acid supplementation, and hemodialysis, have significantly improved survival rates when implemented rapidly.*

*The findings emphasize the necessity of strengthening public health surveillance, enhancing regulatory control of methanol-containing products, and increasing public awareness regarding the dangers of toxic alcohol exposure.*

**Key words:** *methanol poisoning, toxic alcohols, formic acid, metabolic acidosis, optic neuropathy, fomepizole, hemodialysis, toxicology*

**STATISTICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF  
PHENOTYPIC VARIABILITY OF LEAF LENGTH IN  
WILD AND CULTIVATED STRAWBERRY SPECIES  
(FRAGARIA VESCA L. AND FRAGARIA ANANASSA)  
USING DESCRIPTIVE AND INFERENTIAL  
STATISTICAL APPROACHES**

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**Abstract**

*Strawberries represent one of the most important economic and nutritional berry crops worldwide. The genus *Fragaria* includes wild and cultivated species, characterized by considerable morphological and agronomic variability. Understanding the statistical distribution and variability of these traits is essential for improving breeding programs, crop management strategies,*

and productivity. The study aims to analyze the role of epigenetic factors in the inheritance of a trait, specifically leaf size (length) (the laboratory for processing all plant components) of two strawberry species, *Fragaria vesca* L. and *Fragaria ananassa*, using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, a study that follows the identification of modifying inheritance changes for the same strawberry species. [Hasani L., Mano M. (2024). "Differences on the modifying inheritance between the species; *Fragaria vesca* L. and *Fragaria ananassa*." - EUREKA-1]. The article sheds light on the large role of the environment in shaping the inheritance of organisms. A dataset consisting of 300 observations for each species was analyzed. Descriptive statistics, including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, and percentages, were calculated to assess central tendency and leaf length distribution for these species, while inferential statistical tests, including one-sample t-test [2], Kolmogorov-Smirnov test [3], Chi-Square [4], Kruskal-Wallis [5], etc., were applied to determine statistical significance and normality. These findings highlight the influence of genetic selection and cultivation practices on trait variability in strawberries and provide valuable insights for future research in horticulture (berry culture), plant breeding, and agricultural data analysis.

**Key words:** *Fragaria vesca*, *Fragaria ananassa*, statistical analysis, leaf length, agronomic variability, horticultural crops (berry culture)

# TAXONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY OF THE GENERA CROCUS AND CENTAUREA IN THE ÇAJUP AND NEMËRÇKA MOUNTAINS OF THE GJIROKASTËR REGION

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## Abstract

*In the material in question, we have studied the plant diversity of the Crocus and Centaurea genera on Mount Çajup and that of Nemerçka. We have aimed to resolve some of the outstanding issues regarding several species of the Crocus genus, such as the phylogenetic relationships between Crocus novicae found on the Mount Nemërçka and C. tomoricus found on the Tomorri Mauntin, as well as assessing the distribution of other saffrons such as Crocus boryi, Crocus mazzaricus (in the south of the country). The species assessment and taxonomic position of the species of the genus Crocus as well as the species Crocus novicae itself, recently reported by Serbian botanists (in collaboration with German researcher D. Harpke) - 6th Congress of Balkan Botanists, has been made. In the study area we have made a species assessment for the genus Centaurea and we have found the following species: Centaurea alba L., Centaurea calcitrapa L., Centaurea cyanus L., Centaurea deustiformis Adamović, Centaurea epirota Halácsy, Centaurea napulifera Rochel, Centaurea rupestris L., Centaurea salonitana Vis., Centaurea solstitialis L., Centaurea spruneri Boiss. & Heldr. subsp. guicciardii (Boiss.) Hayek, and Centaurea zuccariniana DC. The study of the species diversity of the above genera is of not only scientific but also medical importance due to the properties exhibited by some of the species of these genera.*

**Key words:** Centaurea, Crocus, Çajup, Nemerçke, Species

# **WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR AGRICULTURAL INSURANCE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS: EVIDENCE FROM PEPPER PRODUCERS IN KOSOVO**

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## **Abstract**

*Climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, creating significant challenges for agricultural production and farm income stability. Agricultural insurance is widely recognized as an important risk-management tool that can help farmers cope with climate-related losses and enhance the resilience of rural communities. However, the successful implementation of insurance schemes depends largely on farmers’ willingness to participate and pay for such services.*

*This study investigates the willingness to pay (WTP) for agricultural insurance among pepper producers in Kosovo. The analysis is based on survey data collected from 300 pepper farmers in the municipalities of Rahovec, Prizren, and Mamushë, which represent some of the country’s most important vegetable-producing regions. The study examines how socio-economic characteristics, farm structure, farming experience, and exposure to climate-related risks influence farmers’ willingness to purchase insurance coverage.*

*Descriptive and econometric methods are employed to identify the*

*key determinants of insurance demand. The findings are expected to show that farmers who have experienced weather-related losses and those operating larger commercial farms exhibit a greater willingness to pay for insurance protection. The results provide valuable insights for policymakers and insurance providers seeking to promote climate adaptation strategies and strengthen the sustainability of Kosovo's agricultural sector.*

**Key words:** *Climate Change, Willingness to Pay, Agricultural Insurance, Risk Management, Pepper Producers, Kosovo, Sustainable Agriculture*

## **WATERLESS DYEING TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

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### **Abstract**

*The textile dyeing industry is one of the largest users of water and significant contributor to environmental pollution through the discharge of dye-containing wastewater. Due to increasing environmental concerns regarding water scarcity and promotion of sustainable industrial practices, waterless dyeing technologies have emerged as innovative alternatives to conventional dyeing methods. The aim of this paper is to examine the scientific advancements in waterless dyeing processes, including supercritical carbon dioxide dyeing, air-dye technology, and foam dyeing. These technologies claim to significantly reduce water consumption, minimizing chemical usage, lower energy requirements, and decreasing wastewater generation.*

*The study evaluates the environmental impacts, economic feasibility and industrial applications of these emerging technologies. Furthermore, it highlights the challenges associated with large-scale implementation, such as high initial investment and technological limitations.*

*The findings suggest that waterless dyeing technologies offer a promising pathway toward sustainable textile manufacturing by enhancing resource efficiency and reducing the ecological footprint of the textile industry. The adoption of these innovations can contribute significantly to globally sustainable development goals and support the transition toward a greener and more environmentally responsible textile sector.*

**Key words:** *Waterless Dyeing, Sustainable Textiles, Supercritical Carbon Dioxide, Eco-Friendly Textile Processing, Environmental Sustainability*

## **MANDATED TRANSPARENCY, STRATEGIC SILENCE: GREENHUSHING RESPONSES TO THE DIGITAL PRODUCT PASSPORT**

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### **Abstract**

*For decades, business-to-business (B2B) corporate sustainability communication has been policed for greenwashing, the deceptive exaggeration of environmental claims. Recently, however, a powerful counter-trend has emerged: greenhushing. Greenhushing is the calculated, strategic under-reporting or non-disclosure of an organization's genuine, positive sustainability performance. Driven*

*by intense consumer scepticism, regulatory risks, and the high cost of third-party verification, many B2B firms, particularly in high-impact sectors like textiles and clothing, have adopted a defensive posture of strategic silence to safeguard corporate legitimacy.*

*This keynote addresses a critical, uncharted frontier in corporate governance: Does mandatory sustainability disclosure eliminate greenhushing, or does it merely displace it?*

*Using the upcoming enforcement of the European Union's Digital Product Passport (DPP) under the Eco-design for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) as a major regulatory shock, this keynote integrates theory and practice to explore 1) why B2B firms choose to "walk the walk" but refuse to "talk the talk," 2) how the EU's Digital Product Passport acts as an institutional shock to traditional supply chain communication.*

**Key words:** *greenhushing; B2B sustainability communication; strategic silence; mandatory sustainability disclosure; Digital Product Passport (DPP); Eco-design for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR); corporate legitimacy; greenwashing; supply chain transparency; textile and clothing sector.*

## **PHOSPHODIESTERASE INHIBITORS AS NEUROPROTECTIVE AGENTS AGAINST ARSENIC- INDUCED BRAIN DAMAGE: BEHAVIOURAL AND MOLECULAR EVIDENCE**

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### **Abstract**

*The present study evaluated the therapeutic potential of phosphodiesterase inhibitors, rolipram (PDE4 inhibitor), against*

*sodium arsenite-induced neurotoxicity in Sprague-Dawley rats. The behaviour phenotype was evaluated short, long, and spatial memory, motor coordination, and reflexes. The exposure to sodium arsenite exhibited a significant decline in the brain and body weights in addition to increased oxidative stress-, reduced GSH, SOD, CAT, and an increased MDA, and decreased CREB and p-CREB expression in the hippocampal and cortex region. Rolipram improved remarkably different behavioural phenotyping, antioxidant enzyme activities, and inflammation reduction. Immunohistochemical analysis has shown a significant increase in CREB and p-CREB expression within the cortex region, correlating with increased learning, memory, and motor coordination. Additionally, also rolipram significantly increased the CREB & p-CREB expression in the hippocampi of rat brain. These findings show that rolipram, through PDE4 and PDE1 inhibition respectively, hold a stressing possibility against arsenic neurotoxicity through redressing of antioxidant balance and enhancing upregulation of CREB & p-CREB in the brain.*

**Key words:** Phosphodiesterase inhibitors, Rolipram, Neurotoxicity, Arsenic

## **DPPH FREE RADICAL AND HYDROGEN PEROXIDE ASSAY OF BIOLOGICALLY ACTIVE HETEROCYCLIC COMPOUNDS**

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### **Abstract**

*Phthalimide derivatives have been synthesized through the condensation reactions of phthalic anhydride and substituted amines. Progress of the reaction has been monitored through TLC in 1:1 molar ratio (Methanol: Chloroform). All the synthesized derivatives have been characterized through UV-Visible, IR and <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy. Antioxidant activities of synthesized*

*phthalimide derivatives have been also evaluated against DPPH (2,2-Diphenyl-1-picryl hydrazyl) free radical and Hydrogen peroxide. Results revealed that Phthalimide Derivative R1 showed significant activity with IC<sub>50</sub> value  $0.063 \pm 0.007$  against DPPH and  $0.375 \pm 0.009$  mg/mL against H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>.*

**Key words:** *Heterocyclic, Schiff Base, Antioxidant, Phthalic anhydride, DPPH*

## **RAPID AND NON-DESTRUCTIVE DETECTION OF FORMALIN ADULTERATION IN MILK USING FTIR-ATR SPECTROSCOPY AND CHEMOMETRIC ANALYSIS**

**Fatos Rexhepi<sup>1</sup>, Fahrie Brahimi<sup>2</sup>,  
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### **Abstract**

*Formalin adulteration of milk remains a significant food safety concern because formalin is an aqueous solution of formaldehyde, a toxic and potentially carcinogenic compound. This study evaluated FTIR-ATR spectroscopy coupled with chemometric analysis as a rapid, non-destructive, and environmentally friendly approach for the detection and quantification of formalin in milk. A total of 54 milk samples, including unadulterated controls and samples adulterated with 0.1–5.0% (v/v) formalin, were analyzed. Formaldehyde concentrations were determined using a matrix-matched UV-Vis reference method based on the chromotropic*

*acid reaction. Principal component analysis (PCA) was applied to identify informative spectral regions, while partial least squares regression (PLSR) was used for quantitative modeling. All models were developed using raw FTIR spectra without spectral pretreatment. Pure formalin spectra were recorded only for spectral characterization and were excluded from calibration and external validation. The spectral region 831–1180 cm<sup>-1</sup> provided the best predictive performance, yielding R<sup>2</sup><sub>cal</sub> and R<sup>2</sup><sub>pred</sub> values of 0.9999, RMSEC and RMSEP values of 0.0587 and 0.1903% (v/v), respectively, and LOD and LOQ values of 0.0378 and 0.1148% (v/v). Model selection was based on external validation performance, prediction error, and model simplicity to minimize overfitting. The results demonstrate that FTIR-ATR spectroscopy combined with PLSR provides a reliable, rapid, and cost-effective tool for screening and quantifying formalin adulteration in milk.*

**Key words:** Formalin adulteration, Formaldehyde, Milk, FTIR-ATR, PCA, PLSR, Chemometrics

## SCENARIO FORECASTING OF EXTREME WIND AND STORM RISKS ON THE COASTS OF THE BLACK AND AZOV SEAS

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### **Abstract**

*Climate change significantly increases the frequency of extreme meteorological events, threatening coastal and port infrastructure*

*along the Black and Azov Seas. This study presents a machine learning approach for the scenario forecasting of extreme wind and storm risks in five key Ukrainian port cities. Utilizing 44 years (1980–2023) of historical daily meteorological data from the Open-Meteo API, including maximum wind speed and mean sea-level pressure, the research aggregates observations into multivariate annual profiles. To classify climatic conditions, two spatial clustering algorithms—K-Means and Hierarchical Agglomerative Clustering (using Ward’s method)—were applied and evaluated for their ability to isolate severe meteorological anomalies. The analysis successfully categorized annual profiles into stable, transitional, and extreme storm scenarios. Comparative evaluation demonstrated that Hierarchical Clustering consistently outperformed the heuristic K-Means algorithm by reliably isolating singular extreme years without blending them into adjacent transitional periods. The findings provide a robust data-driven foundation for port authorities, ecologists, and infrastructure engineers to improve climate risk management and develop effective adaptation strategies for coastal zones.*

**Key words:** *EcoMinds, Scenario Forecasting, Data Mining, Clustering, K-Means, Hierarchical Clustering, Extreme Meteorological Risks*

# AUTOMATIC DETECTION OF PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THE BLACK SEA AND ESTUARIES

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## **Abstract**

*Detecting plastic pollution in semi-closed marine ecosystems is a serious challenge due to the circulation of microplastics and the accumulation in water areas, especially in the Black Sea basin. The situation is complicated by the limitations of traditional observation methods, which cannot provide consistent control across all spaces. This work presents a pipeline to improve the accuracy of pixel-by-pixel classification and semantic segmentation of floating plastic. Using multispectral satellite data from Sentinel-2, a comparative analysis was made between the ensemble classifier Random Forest and deep learning models: U-Net, Attention U-Net, and LinkNet. Due to class imbalance, where target objects occupy less than 0.1% of the image area, a loss function combining BCE and Dice Loss was applied. As a result, pixel-level analysis based on the calculated spectral indices NDWI and NDVI has limited spatial accuracy. Instead, the Attention U-Net convolutional architecture achieved the highest IoU (50.99%) and precision (70.09%). Built-in Attention Gates dynamically filter feature maps, suppressing background optical noise such as sun glare and waves. The model was tested on Google Earth Engine using images of the Danube Delta and Kinburn Spit, where it demonstrated high robustness under varying water turbidity conditions, enabling its use for environmental decision-making.*

**Key words:** *Plastic Pollution, Semantic Segmentation, Sentinel-2, Deep Learning, Attention U-Net, LinkNet*

# PREDICTING CHLOROPHYLL-A CONCENTRATIONS IN THE BLACK SEA: ADVANCED ENSEMBLE LEARNING FOR ECOLOGICAL MONITORING AND MITIGATION

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## **Abstract**

*Eutrophication in the Black Sea, primarily driven by nutrient runoff, presents a significant threat to marine ecosystems. This study presents a robust environmental monitoring system to forecast chlorophyll-a concentrations, developed within the piloting phase of the Erasmus+ EcoMinds project, utilizing an expanded dataset of satellite-derived biogeochemical and meteorological data from Copernicus. To address the complex, non-linear dynamics of phytoplankton blooms, a comprehensive comparative analysis of advanced machine learning architectures was conducted. Specifically, a diverse set of tree-based ensemble methods, selected for their efficacy in handling large-scale, high-dimensional ecological data, were evaluated and compared against each other. The evaluation incorporates extensive visual and statistical comparisons to identify the most optimal architecture for capturing threshold-dependent biological processes. Furthermore, this research places a strong emphasis on the in-depth analysis of predictive results to mathematically isolate the primary anthropogenic drivers of eutrophication. Crucially, to transition from reactive observation to proactive anticipation, this study implements a time-lagged forecasting methodology. By shifting the target variable, the models successfully predict future chlorophyll levels based on current environmental predictors, effectively capturing natural ecosystem reaction delays. Finally, by combining these predictive capabilities with precise spatial error*

*mapping, the resulting pipeline offers a scalable, highly accurate tool to prevent marine ecosystem degradation in advance.*

**Key words:** *Chlorophyll-a, Eutrophication, Ensemble Learning, Machine Learning, Ecological Monitoring, Time-lagged forecasting.*

## **DYNAMIC FOREST FIRE RISK PREDICTION SYSTEM FOR UKRAINIAN POLISSIA USING BIDIRECTIONAL LSTM AND MULTI-SOURCE REMOTE SENSING DATA**

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### **Abstract:**

*Forest fires represent a critical environmental threat in the Ukrainian Polissia region, causing extensive ecosystem damage, biodiversity loss, and significant socio-economic impacts. This paper presents a dynamic, data-driven system for predicting significant forest fire risk, developed within the piloting phase of the Erasmus+ EcoMinds project, using multi-source geospatial and meteorological data and deep learning techniques. The proposed methodology integrates three independent data sources: forest polygon layers from OpenStreetMap, daily historical weather reanalysis data from Open-Meteo (ERA5), and active fire detections from NASA FIRMS (VIIRS and MODIS sensors). A structured feature engineering pipeline produces physically meaningful predictors,*

*including the Canadian Fire Weather Index (FWI) hierarchy, Vapour Pressure Deficit (VPD), rolling meteorological statistics, and cyclic calendar encodings. A chronologically stratified dataset covering 2016–2025 is used to train and evaluate four machine learning models: Logistic Regression, Random Forest, CatBoost, and a Bidirectional Long Short-Term Memory (BiLSTM) neural network. Experimental results demonstrate that the BiLSTM model, processing 14-day sequential input windows, achieves the highest discriminative performance. The system produces probabilistic daily fire risk forecasts mapped to a three-tier alert protocol applicable to forest management decision-making. This work contributes to the intersection of environmental science, remote sensing, and artificial intelligence for sustainable ecosystem protection.*

**Key words:** forest fire prediction, BiLSTM, deep learning, Fire Weather Index, NASA FIRMS, ERA5, Ukrainian Polissia

## **AUTOMATED DETECTION OF WAR-RELATED DAMAGE ON AEROSPACE IMAGERY OF SOUTHERN UKRAINE USING DEEP LEARNING**

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### **Abstract**

*Armed conflict creates long-term environmental and humanitarian risks by damaging infrastructure, contaminating soils and water,*

*and leaving hazardous areas that must be assessed before recovery can safely begin. Developed within the piloting phase of the Erasmus+ EcoMinds project, this study presents an automated approach for detecting war-related building damage in remote-sensing imagery of southern Ukraine, focusing on Mariupol, Kherson, and Mykolaiv. Open Sentinel-2 satellite imagery, UNOSAT damage annotations, and aerial images were integrated into a unified object-detection dataset. The workflow includes image validation, annotation conversion to YOLO format, metadata warehouse construction, and a geographic train-validation-test split designed to prevent spatial data leakage. Three deep learning detectors, YOLOv8n, YOLOv8s, and RT-DETR, were trained and compared using mAP@0.5, precision, recall, F2-score, false negative rate, and inference speed. YOLOv8s provided the best performance, achieving mAP@0.5 of 0.137 and F2-score of 0.192. The results show that deep learning can support scalable preliminary damage mapping for early recovery planning. At the same time, the mismatch between annotation and image resolution limits fully automated reliability. Therefore, the workflow should be used as a decision-support tool for analysts, not as a substitute for expert field inspection or official damage assessment.*

**Key words:** *object detection, remote-sensing imagery, deep learning, YOLOv8, RT-DETR, damage assessment, geospatial monitoring, Southern Ukraine*

# DETECTION SYSTEM FOR NO<sub>2</sub> LIMIT EXCEEDANCE IN THE INDUSTRIAL CITIES OF ZAPORIZHZHIA, DNIPRO AND KRYVYI RIH

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## **Abstract**

*Nitrogen dioxide is released into the air due to factory activities, so the threat of NO<sub>2</sub> emissions in industrial cities like: Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro and Kryvyi Rih, which are heavy-industry and energy hubs in Ukraine, is a commonplace. Our goal was to find the optimal model classification for the prediction of NO<sub>2</sub> emission threats under class imbalance conditions. For the research we took the raw data from Sentinel-5P satellite imagery and the meteorological data from the ERA5 database. Four classification models were selected for the analysis: Logistic Regression, Random Forest, XGBoost, and SVM, with the Precision, Recall, F1-score, and PR-AUC metrics used. Estimates of models were obtained. The Logistic Regression and SVM models showed low Precision values – 0.43 and 0.48. Random Forest showed a low Recall level – 0.55. This indicates that the models have many false positive errors or low sensitivity to anomalies. The XGBoost model achieved high scores in all metrics. The values for metrics ranged from 0.69 to 0.76. We selected this model as the optimal model for the task of predicting NO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In the future, the model selection based on our research will help in developing a system to alert people to the threat of NO<sub>2</sub> emissions.*

**Key words:** *NO<sub>2</sub> emissions, metrics, prediction, class imbalance, classification model, Precision, Recall, XGBoost model*

# ENGINEERING APPLICATIONS OF SPENT MUSHROOM SUBSTRATE (SMS) IN SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES

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## **Abstract**

*The increasing demand for sustainable technologies, renewable resources, and environmentally responsible industrial systems has intensified research on biomass valorization and waste-to-resource engineering approaches. Among the various agricultural residues generated globally, Spent Mushroom Substrate (SMS) has emerged as a promising renewable bioresource with substantial engineering applications. SMS is the residual lignocellulosic biomass left after mushroom cultivation and contains partially degraded organic matter, fungal mycelium, nutrients, and microbial communities. Traditionally regarded as agricultural waste, SMS is now increasingly recognized for its potential in renewable energy systems, biodegradable composite materials, environmental remediation, sustainable construction, and green manufacturing technologies.*

*This research paper investigates the engineering applications of SMS from the perspective of sustainable mechanical engineering and circular economy principles. The study examines the physical, chemical, thermal, and mechanical characteristics of SMS and explores its utilization in bio-composites, biomass energy generation, acoustic insulation materials, biochar production, wastewater treatment, and sustainable packaging systems. Advanced engineering technologies such as anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis, biomass densification, and mycelium-based material fabrication are analyzed to evaluate the feasibility of transforming SMS into value-added industrial products.*

*The research also discusses the role of mechanical engineering in developing efficient processing systems for SMS conversion and*

*utilization. Sustainability assessment, environmental benefits, carbon footprint reduction, and life cycle considerations are critically analyzed to understand the long-term potential of SMS-based technologies. The findings indicate that SMS possesses excellent potential as a low-cost, biodegradable, renewable, and eco-friendly engineering material capable of supporting sustainable industrial development and green technological innovation.*

*The paper concludes that the integration of SMS into engineering systems can significantly contribute toward waste valorization, renewable energy production, resource efficiency, and circular bioeconomy development. Future research directions include AI-based biomass processing, 3D printing with mycelium composites, smart sustainable materials, and industrial-scale commercialization of SMS-derived technologies.*

**Key words:** *Spent Mushroom Substrate, Sustainable Technologies, Mechanical Engineering, Renewable Energy, Bio-Composites, Biomass Utilization, Green Manufacturing, Circular Economy, Waste Valorization, Sustainable Engineering*

## **DROUGHT CLIMATE RISK SCENARIO FORECASTING FOR ODESA AND MYKOLAIV REGIONS (2010–2024)**

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### **Abstract**

*Climate change is intensifying drought risks across southern Ukraine, with the Odesa and Mykolaiv regions among the most*

*vulnerable due to their steppe climate and agricultural dependence. This study presents a data-driven approach to scenario forecasting of drought climate risks based on meteorological observations spanning 2010 to 2024. Daily weather data were retrieved from the Open-Meteo API (CC BY 4.0) and aggregated into annual climate profiles using key indicators: total precipitation, mean and maximum air temperature, mean soil moisture, evapotranspiration, and annual moisture balance. Two unsupervised machine learning algorithms – K-Means clustering and Agglomerative Hierarchical Clustering (Ward method) – were applied to identify recurring climate scenarios. Three distinct scenarios were identified: Stable, Transitional, and Extreme (drought). Both algorithms achieved 86.7% agreement across 30 annual profiles, with discrepancies limited to four boundary cases between Transitional and Extreme scenarios. Mykolaiv exhibited significantly more severe drought dynamics, remaining in the Extreme scenario for 9 of 15 years, while Odesa transitioned to this scenario only from 2023 onward. Mean maximum temperature rose from 15.6°C in 2010 to 18.6°C in 2024, with annual moisture deficit reaching -658 mm. The findings highlight an accelerating drying trend and provide a replicable framework for regional drought early warning systems.*

**Key words:** *drought risk forecasting, climate scenario analysis, K-Means clustering, hierarchical clustering, soil moisture, southern Ukraine, Open-Meteo*

# THE IMPACT OF WILD EDIBLE PLANTS ON ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

**Dr. Cand. Eva Ceka<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Ida Kruti<sup>2</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

*Wild edible plants are used because of their nutritional value, but mostly for their anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antidiabetic, and antibacterial activities, attributed to compounds such as flavonoids, phenolic acids and lectins. Due to environmental changes, lifestyle changes and diet people of different ages don't use wild plants, they tend to use more fast foods and readymade foods causing more problems with overweight, high LDL and deficiencies in nutrients. Mostly adolescents don't have enough information about wild plants because of loss of knowledge and traditions don't go from elderly to new generations. Wild plants were used because of their low cost and are called "foods of poverty".*

*Wild plants are used in most countries as teas and foods, but their use go beyond, they are used for medicinal properties, aromatherapy, essential oils, condiments and more, because of their composition supports mood regulation, against stress, anxiety, control diabetes and other symptoms. Adolescents these days are facing rising rates of mental health issues. This paper investigates the relationship between wild plants foraging and psychological wellbeing of adolescents. Studying how the consumption of wild plants, connection with nature impact the mental health in adolescents.*

**Key words:** *nutrition, mental health, wild plants, adolescents.*





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## SCIENCES AND INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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