



"Fan S. Noli" University in cooperation
with the Regional Council of Korçë,

organizes

THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
"Regional Development in Times of Change:
Integrating Challenges and Opportunities for a Sustainable Future"

(BOOK OF ABSTRACTS)

(November 21-22, 2025)



International Scientific Conference
“Regional Development in Times of Change: Integrating Challenges and Opportunities for a
Sustainable Future”
Korçë, Albania | November 21–22, 2025



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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
Regional Development in Times of Change: Integrating Challenges and Opportunities for a Sustainable Future
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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Session Link :Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/84530348895?pwd=a3QnRZSypdweTO9dD5gApG8VaseI5L1>

1

Meeting ID: 845 3034 8895

Passcode: 6Sv3tZ

Friday, November 21, 2025

Amphitheatre “Teodor Laço”, Faculty of Education and Philology

15:30 – 16:00	Registration of Participants
Moderator: Dr. Aida MOSKO, Vice-Rector, University “Fan S. Noli”	
16:00 – 17:30	Welcome Speech • Prof. dr. Lorenc Ekonomi, Rector, University “Fan S. Noli” • Z. Petrika Tollkuçi, Head of Korça Regional Council • Guests Prof. dr. Nurten Deva, Rector, University “Isa Boletini”, Mitrovocë Prof. Mihaela Culea, Prof. Brîndușa-Mariana Amălăncei –Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau, Romania Making a “fundamental change in the global equation on migration”: the Rwanda bill and media storytelling (Online) (10 min) Prof. dr. Irena Nikaj – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Collaborative Governance in Cross-Border Regions and Higher Education Institutions (In person) (10min) Prof. dr. Gjergji Pendavinji – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Social Innovation: Social Innovation, an Important Factor for Sustainable Regional Development (In person) (10min)
17:30- 18:00	Coffee Break

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Saturday, November 22, 2025

FIRST SESSION – Agriculture/Natural Sciences/ Environmental science

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/89763900554?pwd=hfD3g2Gb7eabPrd3HYLP4vdaLIHD66.1>

Meeting ID: 897 6390 0554

Passcode: 2DwBDh

Room 031, Rectorate of University “Fan S. Noli”

08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Participants
Moderator: Gjergji Mero	
9:00- 9:10	Adrian Maho, Sulltane Ajçe, Gjergji Mero, Besnik Skenderasi – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Climate Change in Korça Region: Challenges and Opportunities for a Sustainable Future for Agricultural Production
9:10- 9:20	Dafina Llugaxhiu Krasniqi, Bahtir Hyseni, Alush Musaj – University “Isa Boletini”, Mitrovicë Influence of Aging Vessel Type on the Chemical, Microbial, and Sensory Characteristics of Wine
9:20- 9:30	Malësore Pllana-Zeqiri; Peter Krajnc; Ramiz Hoti; Kozeta Vaso University “Isa Boletini”- Mitrovica, University of Maribor, Slovenia, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, University of Tirana, Organic Design and Synthesis of Hierarchically Porous PolyHIPEs Polymers through Emulsion Templating and Hypercrosslinking
9:30- 9:40	Besire Cena- University “Isa Boletini”, Mitrovicë Risk and safety management of hazardous waste in Kosovo and Albania in the conservation of the Albanian marine ecosystem
9:40- 10:00	Closing remarks
11:30	Coffee Break

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SESSION II – Education / Philology
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/88523456737?pwd=ah77V831e3IT6E9Sm3v681QiGwIBUw.1>

Meeting ID: 885 2345 6737

Passcode: 0Y0r8Q

Room - Quadric, Rectorate of University “Fan S. Noli”

08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Participants
Moderator: Eriola Qafzezi	
9:00- 9:10	Denisa Kafazi, Eljona Tasho, Lorena Zeqo – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë A Survey of Teacher Perspectives on the Integration of Mathematical Concepts into STEM Education in the Korçë Region (In person)
9:10- 9:20	Erinda Papa - University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Higher Education: Universal Design for Learning as a Driver for Regional Equity (In person)
9:20- 9:30	Eriola Qafzezi - University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë The Grammar of Repression: Agent Suppression and the Passive Voice in the Language of Pain in “Never Let Me Go” and its Albanian Translation (In person)
9:30- 9:40	Samire Bllaca Balaj, Merita Shala - University “Isa Boletini”, Mitrovocë Challenges at Work and Professional Burnout among Primary Teachers: The Kosovo Case Study
9:40- 9:50	Daniela-Carmen Stoica, Cristian Beşleagă– University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë; University of Bucharest, Romania Teaching Romanian as a Balkan Language to Students from Albania (In person)
9:50- 10:00	Ilir Shyta, Jonela Spaho - University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Skënder Rusi, a Representative Voice of Contemporan Albanian Lyricism (In person)
10:00- 10:10	Francesco Casciaro – University of Salento, Italy & Anyla Saraçi Robert Damo – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë On a Semantic-Structural Approach to Plant Labelling (The Case of Albanian Language) (In person)

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10:10-10:20	Evjonda Pylli, Arjan Kamburi- University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Teaching Practicum and its Contribution to Building Pedagogical and Classroom Management Competences in Pre-Service Teachers (In person)
10:20-10:30	Merita Shala, Samire Bllaca Balaj, Genta Shala – University “Isa Boletini”, Mitrovicë Stability of Mental Health Symptoms Among University Students and Early Career Educators: Evidence from a Three Wave Longitudinal Study (Online)
10:30-11:00	Closing remarks
11:30	Coffee Break

SESSION III – EKONOMY

Room - Academic Senate, Rectorate of University “Fan S. Noli”

08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Participants
Moderator: Mamica Nene	
9:00-9:10	Arbina Hakushi – University “Aleksandër Xhuvani”, Elbasan Foreign Direct Investment in Albania (FDI) (In person)
9:10-9:20	Izet Ibrahim, Faruk Hajrizi – University “Isa Boletini”, Mitrovicë Application of New Constructive Methods and Options in the Metallurgical Industry, a Possibility for Sustainable Economic Development and Integration into the Eu Single Market
9:20-9:30	Junada Sulillari, Brikena Leka – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Navigating the Green Transition: Challenges, Opportunities, and Financial Implications for Albanian Firms (In person)
9:30-9:40	Mamica Nene, Alketa Pasholli, Junada Sulillari– University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Digital Transformation and Tourism: Driving Sustainable Regional Development in the Digital Age
9:40-9:50	Qazim Tmava – University “Isa Boletini”, Mitrovicë Nonperforming loans in Western Balkan Countries.
9:50-10:00	Alma Zhilla, Danja Belortaja- University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë The Impact of Smart Tourism Technologies on Tourist Experience Satisfaction (In person)

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10:00- 10:10	Ajtene Avdullahi University “Isa Boletini”, Mitrovicë Access to finance for women entrepreneurs: A systematic literature review
10:10- 10:20	Marsida Harremi, Zarife Hasanllari – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë The Impact of Remittances on Albania's Economic Growth (In person)
10:20- 10:30	Klaudia Lipi, Ledia Lilo – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Property Insurance and Real Estate Insurance Trends in Albania (In person)
10:30- 10:40	Emil Frashëri – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Determining the Minimum Optimal Sample Size for Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling: A Monte Carlo Simulation Study (In person)
10:40- 10:50	Marinela Teneqexhi, Iljana Furxhi, Krisula Koça - University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Innovation and Digitalization in Human Resource Management: The Case of Shell Albania (In person)
10:50- 11:00	Eleni Vangjeli, Besjada Neziri - University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Remittances and their Roli in Poverty Reduction (In person)
11:00- 11:30	Closing remarks
11:30	Coffee Break

SESSION IV – History/Geography
Scientific Library, Rectorate of University “Fan S. Noli”

08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Participants
Moderator: Orjon Ago	
9:00- 9:10	Metin Venxha – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë The Establishment of Communism in Albania: Ideological Interpretations and Historiographical Reassessments of Albanian-Yugoslav Relations (1945–1948) (In person)
9:10- 9:20	Orjon Ago – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë The tradition of celebrating November 28th in Korça during the 1920s, according to the press of the time (In person)

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9:20-9:30	Xhensila Lazi – Nine-Year Basic School, Ersekë Cultural Heritage as a Driving Force for Sustainable Regional Development: The Case of the Vlach Community in Kolonjë (In person)
9:30-9:40	Lonora Hysolli – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë The Renaissance people of Kolonja and their connection to their homeland as a historical-cultural system (In person)
9:40-9:50	Edlira Menkshi, Fjoralba Prifti, Nevila Cinaj, Ermiona Braholli- University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Religious Heritage, Regional Identity, and Use as a Resource for Tourism Development in the Korça Country (In person)
9:50-10:00	Dajana Saraçi – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Decentralization and Local Autonomy: The Role of Local Self-Government in Enhancing Institutional Efficiency and Regional Development (In person)
10:00-10:10	Ermira Jashiku, Dhorë Beta, Elena Haxhia, Mateo Elezi – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Youth Perceptions of Climate Change: A Case Study in Korça County (In person)
10:10-10:20	Enxhi Beka, Myrteza Sharra – University of Tirana The Role of the Archive in Shaping Collective Memory.
10:20-10:30	Brajan Matraku, Alba Osman – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë The civil war in Albania and its representation in pre-university school textbooks (In person)
10:30-11:00	Closing remarks
11:30	Coffee Break

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SESSION V – Human Sciences / Social Sciences

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/83907111125?pwd=AkLxszhFsqH7mPpP2hMkGkimNWRvRW.1>

Meeting ID: 839 0711 1125

Passcode: 2eT8UH

Room - Valeu-X, Rectorate of University “Fan S. Noli”

08:30 – 09:00	Registration of Participants
Moderator: Denisa Titili	
9:00- 9:10	Suela Ibrahimllari (Dinellari), University “Fan S. Noli” Responsibility in the Digital Age: interpreting Herbert Hart’s concept in the context of social networks, violence and regional developments (The case of the Korçë Region) (In person)
9:10- 9:20	Krisela Pllaha, Genc Burazeri, Eda Stasa – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë & University of Tirana Youth Health Behaviors as a Pathway to Sustainable Community Development: Insights from a Thematic Review of International Literature
9:20- 9:30	Denisa Titili, Viola Dolani, Maria Dojce, Eljona Milo, Irena Nikaj – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Socio-economic drivers of potential migration from Korça region and implications for future regional development (In person)
9:30- 9:40	Silvana Ago, University of Tirana Effects of Integration of the Second-Generation Immigrants in the United States (On Line)
9:40- 9:50	Ferit Baça, University of Tirana International Organizations as Natural Allies of Peace (On Line)
9:50- 10:00	Eriseld Kalemaj, University “Fan S. Noli”, Regional Development in Times of change: Integrating Challenges and opportunities for a Sustainable Future (In person)
10:00- 10:10	Stefan Faber – Spitali Rajonal, Korçë Exploring Henias: Pathological Anatomy, Classifications, Mechanisms, Histological Perspectives, and Clinical Implications (On Line)

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10:10-10:20	Adelina Nicoleta Galica, Eda Stasa -University “Fan S. Noli” The Role of Artificial Intelligence for Human- Centered Healthcare Services (In person)
10:20-11:00	Closing remarks
11:30	Coffee Break

POSTER SESSION

Klaudeta Merollari, Kristi Merollari – University “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Factors influencing non-performing loans
Robert Damo; Pirro Icka, Ermelinda Gjeta, Anyla Saraçi – University “Fan. S. Noli” Korçë An ethnobotanical survey in Kolonja Municipality (Albania): Wild plants used for medicinal purposes
Ervin Karić, Ivan Petric, Edina Ibrić, Maida Smajlović, Marijana Marković, Maida Kuduzović, Emir Suljaković, Ermin Mujkić – B&H Optimizing Industrial Maleic Anhydride Synthesis for Environmental Sustainability
Magdalini Vampa- University “Fan. S. Noli” Korçë Artificial Intelligence and School Leadership: Evidence, Challenges and Implications for the Albanian Context
Aida Mosko- Universiteti “Fan S. Noli”, Korçë Towards an Evaluation Model for Municipal Budget Allocation Efficiency: A Literature Review with Reference to the Korçë Region
Rriollza Agolli, Eftiona Bylykbashi - University “Fan S. Noli”, Folklore and Innovation: A Conceptual Proposal for Designing Creative Steam Projects through Fairy Tales in Primary Education

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN CROSS-BORDER REGIONS AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Prof.dr.Irena Nikaj¹

¹Department of Education, “Fan S. Noli”, University, Korçë, Albania

[email: inikaj@unkorce.edu.al](mailto:inikaj@unkorce.edu.al)

Abstract

This article examines the concept of collaborative governance in cross-border regions, focusing on how diverse stakeholders—governmental, non-governmental, and private—engage in joint decision-making to address shared challenges and opportunities. It explores theoretical frameworks such as multi-level governance, collaborative regimes, and vernacular borderwork, highlighting the importance of trust, flexibility, and inclusivity. The article also identifies key challenges, including political tensions, legal barriers, and resource asymmetries, while outlining opportunities for innovation, funding, and regional integration. Case examples illustrate how context-sensitive approaches can foster sustainable cooperation. The study concludes with recommendations for future research and policy development aimed at strengthening collaborative governance across borders.

Keywords: *Collaborative governance, Cross-border cooperation, Regional integration, Public-private partnerships, Institutional frameworks, Stakeholder engagement*

SOCIAL INNOVATION: A CRITICAL FACTOR FOR SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Prof. dr. Gjergji Pendavinji¹

¹“Fan S. Noli”, University, Korçë, Albania

Abstract

Social innovation is a dynamic process aimed at creating and executing effective ideas, tactics, or interventions that address social issues and promote positive, transformative change within a region's developmental framework.

The social innovation requires the active involvement of regional stakeholders in developing and implementing creative strategies, models, and approaches to tackle address complex and difficult societal issues such as poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, and access to healthcare and education. This requires collaboration with diverse stakeholders—including individuals, organizations, communities, and governmental entities—to identify cooperative solutions that redefine the parameters of growth in a specific region.

Social innovation manifests in various forms, including advanced technologies, innovative business models, policies, programs, and services, all of which are crucial for effecting a significant impact on individual lives and community welfare. The objective is to endorse and

promote efforts that cultivate constructive ideas. These programs seek to transcend temporary solutions to achieve enduring, systemic transformation within the region.

The objective of social innovation is to connect social, economic, and environmental elements, thereby fostering a comprehensive and unified strategy for addressing intricate societal issues. This strategy emphasizes enhancing social outcomes, fostering inclusivity, and supporting sustainable innovation.

Social innovation serves as a crucial element in sustainable regional development, providing numerous advantages such as social impact, collaboration and co-creation, systems thinking, innovative strategies, empathy and user-centric focus, creativity and innovation, scalability and replicability, measurable outcomes, and empowerment and inclusion.

There are numerous notable examples of social innovation existing across diverse regional development domains and sectors, alongside established best practices that can improve the efficacy and impact of the projects and initiatives of this innovation.

Keywords: *social innovation, complex social challenges, sustainable regional development, best practices of social innovation.*

MAKING A “FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE GLOBAL EQUATION ON MIGRATION”: THE RWANDA BILL AND MEDIA STORYTELLING

Mihaela Culea¹, Brîndușa-Mariana Amălăncei²

¹²Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacău, Romania

Abstract

After the media frenzy over Brexit abated, media reporting in the UK concerning the topic of immigration continued to hit the headlines. A subject that led to intensive media coverage was, in 2023 and 2024, the so-called “Rwanda Bill”, under Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. The solution of sending asylum seekers to Africa received public criticism, despite the Prime Minister’s statement in April 2024, according to which the bill was meant to make “a fundamental change in the global equation on migration” (BBC News).

The article discusses such concepts as narrative journalism and media storytelling, which involve the use of literary techniques in their transmission of information, as well as their relation to the concept of hyper-narratology. In its applicative part, it aims to identify and analyse a range of media stories surrounding the Rwanda scheme in the months preceding the general election of 2024 in the UK, sourced from English and Romanian online news providers. The comparative analysis starts from the premise that the discursive strategies at work in the Romanian and English media differ on multiple levels.

Keywords: *media storytelling, migration, asylum seeker, Rwanda bill, Romanian and English media*

***FIRST SESSION – AGRICULTURE/NATURAL SCIENCES/
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE***
**CLIMATE CHANGE IN KORÇA REGION: CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

Adrian Maho¹, Sulltane Ajçe², Gjergji Mero³, Besnik Skenderasi⁴

^{1 2 3 4} Faculty of Agriculture "Fan S. Noli" University, Korce, Albania.
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Abstract

Agriculture is the main economic sector of Korça Region. It contributes 43.2% to the regional economy's GDP and is the main source of employment. Climate change is a significant threat to agriculture, reducing crop yields, thermal and water soil quality, water resources, and regional food security. This study holistically analyzes climate change in the Korça region and its impact on agricultural crops, highlighting the urgent need for innovation and adaptation. Significant changes were identified in agroclimatic indicators such as changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, extreme weather events, and changes in the dynamics of pests and diseases. These changes have profound implications for agricultural production, the rural economy, and the sustainability of ecosystems. Climate change presents a challenge for finding better ways including crop diversification, water management, application of new agricultural practices, technological innovation, and eco-compatible agriculture. They are essential for increasing the resilience of agricultural systems to climate change. Data collected from hydrometeorological stations in the Korça region, Albania, were processed and compared with the corresponding data indicators from the previous 30-year periods. The increase in temperature represents a trend without significant fluctuations from one year to the next. The annual amount of precipitation does not show any significant changes, while a greater concern is the amount of rain falling on fewer days but in larger quantities, affecting the increase in the drought period. Changes in agroclimatic indicators present a challenge for producers in the field of agriculture, for remodeling agricultural areas and determining the most appropriate technologies for cultivating agricultural crops.

Keywords: *bioclimatic indicators; climate change; ecosystems; precipitation; Korça region; temperature.*

**INFLUENCE OF AGING VESSEL TYPE ON THE CHEMICAL, MICROBIAL, AND
SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS OF WINE**

¹Dafina Llugaxhiu Krasniqi, ²Bahtir Hyseni, ³Alush Musaj

^{1,2,3} University “Isa Boletini” Mitrovica, Faculty of Food Technology, Food Engineering and
Technology, Ukshin Kovaçica

Abstract

Wine aging involves a series of complex physical and chemical transformations, including micro-oxygenation and the development of volatile and non-volatile compounds, which enhance the sensory complexity and overall quality of wine. The choice of aging vessel, ranging from stainless steel tanks and cement vats to oak barrels and clay amphorae, plays a critical role in shaping wine attributes. While stainless steel and cement vessels exert minimal influence on sensory properties, wood and clay vessels often impart distinctive aromas and flavours through the release of compounds such as vanillin, lactones, furanic derivatives, and phenolic volatiles.

This study aims to investigate the winemaking and aging processes of wines matured in different vessel types, with a focus on understanding how aging materials influence the chemical, microbial, and sensory characteristics. Chemical analyses, including the quantification of phenolic compounds, tannins, and volatile components, will be performed using High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC). Microbial analyses will assess the activity and dynamics of wine-associated microbiota under varying aging conditions, while spectrophotometric colour stability tests will monitor changes in visual quality over time.

The resulting data will be statistically evaluated to identify significant correlations between vessel type, wine composition, and sensory quality. The findings of this project are expected to provide valuable insights for both academic research and the wine industry, ultimately supporting the development of evidence-based best practices for wine aging.

Keywords: *Wine, Maturation, HPLC, vessel type, chemical and microbial characteristics*

ORGANIC DESIGN AND SYNTHESIS OF HIERARCHICALLY POROUS POLYHIPE POLYMERS THROUGH EMULSION TEMPLATING AND HYPERCROSSLINKING

Malësore Pllana-Zeqiri¹, Peter Krajnc², Ramiz Hoti,³ Kozeta Vaso⁴

¹Faculty of Food Technology, University “Isa Boletini”- Mitrovica, Republic of Kosovo
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²Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, University of Maribor, Maribor, Slovenia

³Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, University of
Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Republic of Kosovo

⁴Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Tirana, Tiranë, Albania

Abstract

Porous polymers with precisely controlled architectures are increasingly important in organic chemistry due to their versatile applications in catalysis, adsorption, and selective separation. In this study, hierarchically porous PolyHIPE-type polymers were prepared using emulsion templating followed by hypercrosslinking. The emulsion templating method generates interconnected macropores, while hypercrosslinking introduces meso- and microporosity, significantly enhancing specific surface area and mass transport properties. This dual approach produces mechanically robust materials with high structural integrity, making them suitable for catalytic systems, separation, adsorption, solid supports in organic synthesis etc. The results highlight that careful control of porosity and intermolecular crosslinking is essential for designing high-performance functional organic polymers.

Keywords: *organic chemistry, PolyHIPEs, hypercrosslinking, porous polymers, emulsion templating.*

RISK AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT OF HAZARDOUS WASTE IN KOSOVO AND ALBANIA IN THE CONSERVATION OF THE ALBANIAN MARINE ECOSYSTEM

Besire Cena¹

¹Faculty of Food Technology, University “Isa Boletini”- Mitrovica, Republic of Kosovo

Abstract

The increasing generation and improper management of hazardous waste in Albania pose significant threats to the marine ecosystem, particularly along the Adriatic and Ionian coastlines. This study aims to assess the current risks associated with hazardous waste disposal and propose effective safety management strategies to mitigate environmental damage. Through a combination of risk assessment models, field data, and policy analysis, the research identifies key sources of hazardous waste, evaluates their impact on marine biodiversity, and highlights weaknesses in existing safety protocols. The findings emphasize the urgent need for preventive measures, investment in waste treatment infrastructure, and strict enforcement of environmental regulations to ensure the sustainable preservation of Albania’s marine environment.

This study investigates the sources, risks, and safety management practices related to hazardous waste affecting the Albanian marine ecosystem. Industrial discharges, untreated urban sewage, agricultural runoff, medical waste, and maritime activities contribute significantly to marine pollution and ecosystem degradation. A comprehensive risk analysis reveals high levels of environmental threats, including bioaccumulation, eutrophication, and direct human health impacts through seafood contamination and recreational exposure. The current waste management system in Albania is characterized by weak infrastructure, fragmented institutional oversight, and limited public engagement. To address these challenges, this paper proposes sustainable, integrated strategies focused on strengthening legal frameworks, improving hazardous waste treatment infrastructure, enhancing marine monitoring, and fostering community awareness. The adoption of these measures is essential to safeguarding the Albanian marine environment and ensuring sustainable coastal development.

Keywords: hazardous waste, marine pollution, Albanian coastline, environmental safety, marine ecosystem preservation, sustainable development.

SESSION II – EDUCATION / PHILOLOGY

**A SURVEY OF TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON THE INTEGRATION
OF MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS INTO STEM EDUCATION IN THE
KORÇË REGION**

Denisa Kafazi¹, Eljona Tasho², Lorena Zeqo³

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Abstract

In recent years, the inclusion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in education has increasingly taken on an important place in the pre-university education curriculum in Albania. This encourages a contemporary educational reform that aims to promote interdisciplinary learning. In this regard, it is necessary to adapt the concepts of each discipline, including mathematics, to the requirements and principles of this innovation in education.

Our study highlights the views of mathematics teachers in the Korça region on integrating mathematical concepts into STEM and the benefits of this approach in teaching.

We conducted our research in two phases. In the first phase, a questionnaire was conducted with mathematics teachers in the Korça region, with the aim of assessing their knowledge of STEM. In the second phase, an experiment was conducted with two ninth-grade classes, where in one class STEM was used to address the concept of function, while in the other the teaching was carried out in accordance with the currently implemented curriculum.

The results of the study show that the premises are very good for the efficiency that the use of STEM has in assimilating mathematical concepts, especially in the practical and interdisciplinary aspect. Also, teachers are willing to integrate STEM into education if the necessary conditions for its effective implementation are met.

Keywords: *STEM, mathematical concepts, Pre-university education, innovative teaching, problem solving.*

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN RURAL HIGHER EDUCATION: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING AS A DRIVER FOR REGIONAL EQUITY

Erinda Papa¹

¹Department of Foreign Languages, “Fan S. Noli” University, Korçë, Albania

Abstract

The digital divide continues to pose a critical barrier to equitable regional development, particularly in the context of higher education in rural and underserved areas. This paper investigates how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can be applied as a strategic framework to address digital inequalities and promote inclusive and sustainable academic practices in regional universities. Drawing on the experience of Fan S. Noli University in Korçë and recent initiatives such as the Erasmus+ HAWKING project, the study highlights the role of UDL in creating flexible, accessible, and learner-centered environments. By embedding UDL principles into curriculum planning, digital course design, and staff training, regional higher education institutions can improve educational equity and student engagement. The findings suggest that UDL offers a transformative opportunity to align digital transformation with regional equity goals. The paper concludes with policy recommendations to support inclusive digital ecosystems, emphasizing the need for investment in infrastructure, teacher capacity-building, and cross-sector collaboration to ensure that all students, regardless of geographical or socio-economic background, benefit from quality higher education. In doing so, the study positions UDL not only as a pedagogical tool but as a driver of smart, inclusive regional development in times of rapid change.

Keywords: *Universal Design for Learning, Digital Inclusion, Regional Higher Education, Educational Equity*

THE GRAMMAR OF REPRESSION: AGENT SUPPRESSION AND THE PASSIVE VOICE IN THE LANGUAGE OF PAIN IN “NEVER LET ME GO” AND ITS ALBANIAN TRANSLATION

Eriola Qafzezi¹

¹Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education and Philology,
“Fan S. Noli” University

Korçë, Albania

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore how grammatical structures, more specifically passive constructions, are used to imply emotional and physical pain in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* and its Albanian variant *Mos më lër të shkoj*. Based on the novel’s central themes of institutional control and lack of free will, the study examines how language expresses the

characters’ repressed agency and inner suffering. Illustrations of instances of passive voice, nominalizations, and impersonal expressions, will help us investigate how these linguistic patterns evade or erase agency, consequently distancing the source of harm.

The study adopts a comparative perspective, examining whether grammatical strategies are preserved in the Albanian translation, with the aim of shedding light on linguistically specific approaches to expressing helplessness and emotional detachment. The paper also argues that the grammar of repression, mirrored through passives and agentless constructions, serves a dual function: it demonstrates the characters’ lack of autonomy while softening the portrayal of institutional violence. By foregrounding concealment of linguistically expressed agency, the paper aims to contribute to broader discussions in translation studies, discourse analysis, and the language of emotion in fiction.

Keywords: *syntax, agency, suffering, suppression, translation*

CHALLENGES AT WORK AND PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT AMONG PRIMARY TEACHERS: THE KOSOVO CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between work-related stressors and professional burnout among primary school teachers in Kosovo. Teachers often face numerous challenges and pressures associated with their daily duties, which can significantly affect their level of professional burnout. The main purpose of this research is to examine how work-related stressors influence burnout and to identify factors that may help mitigate its effects. A quantitative research methodology was employed, involving 500 participants from 10 primary schools in Kosovo. The sample was selected randomly to ensure a representative distribution. The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between work-related stressors and professional burnout among teachers (Spearman's rho = 0.670, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that higher levels of job stressors are associated with increased burnout. Further analysis shows that work experience and professional training have a substantial impact on reducing burnout levels (R Square = 0.721, $p < 0.001$). No statistically significant differences were found between male and female teachers regarding stress levels and burnout.

These results highlight the importance of improving working conditions and providing adequate professional development programs to reduce teacher burnout. The study offers valuable insights for policymakers and school administrators in Kosovo to develop strategies that can alleviate stress and improve the overall working environment for teachers.

Keywords: *burnout, work stressors, teachers, primary school, professional development*

TEACHING ROMANIAN AS A BALKAN LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS FROM ALBANIA

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Abstract

The teaching of the Romanian language in the Balkans, including Albania, comes along with a tradition started by the Romanian state, which developed and sustained a wide network of Romanian schools in the area at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Thus there were Romanian schools located in Korce, Plasë, Voskopoje, Dishnicë, Llëngë, Niçë, Shpëskë and even farther away, in Elbasan, Frashër, Berat, Fier, Përmet, Vithkuq etc. This tradition was interrupted due to adverse and unfortunate historical circumstances, being resumed only after the fall of the communism.

At an academic level, the Romanian language became part of the curriculum of the Bachelor in Albanian language and literature Program at “Fan S. Noli” University. Based on the author’s pedagogical experience, the present article aims to present the main achievements but also challenges faced by several generations of Albanian students from University of Korce and Tirana in learning Romanian as a Balkan language, based on their written and oral tasks. The research has been done over a period of two years, focusing on the teaching and learning of phonetical and morphological aspects of the Romanian language.

Keywords: *Romanian, Albanian, interference, phonology, morphology*

SKËNDER RUSI, A REPRESENTATIVE VOICE OF CONTEMPOREAN ALBANIAN LYRICISM

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Abstract

This paper examines the creative profile of Skënder Rusi, a distinguished voice in contemporary Albanian lyric poetry, by analyzing his contribution to the development of poetics and to the affirmation of a renewed aesthetic identity. Rusi’s work is characterized by a refined and condensed poetic language, built upon symbols that intertwine the everyday with metaphysical dimensions, positioning him among the poets who revitalized literary sensibilities. Through a critical and comparative approach, the study explores the central

themes of his oeuvre, such as love, the search for meaning, the confrontation with time, and the individual's relationship with social reality. Additionally, it examines the stylistic techniques and formal innovations that make Rusi's lyricism a representative example of contemporary aesthetics, where philosophical reflection and inner emotionality merge seamlessly. The paper aims to highlight how Skënder Rusi, through a cultivated and coherent lyric voice, has constructed a creative identity that enriches the Albanian poetic landscape and contributes to the consolidation of a new literary tradition, making him an essential figure for understanding current trends in Albanian poetry.

Keywords: *contemporean, lyric, love, poetry, profile*

ON A SEMANTIC-STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO PLANT LABELLING (THE CASE OF ALBANIAN LANGUAGE)

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Abstract

The labelling and classification of plants in an indigenous community is often based on their cultural view of the plants, embedded in the linguistic expressions in their labelling. Studies on ethnolinguistic classification serves to find out the pre-scientific knowledge system of a community or ethnicity that still holds the principles of local wisdom in their daily behaviour. This means that their linguistic behaviour (speech act — to borrow a pragmatic term) in a certain domain can be used to reveal the knowledge documentation system in language, which in this context is a classification of traditional plants. This paper aims to analyse of linguistic data related to ethnobotanic knowledge used for labelling plants explaining the cultural views (illustrated with examples from Albanian) of language speakers about plants as reflected in the language used to label plants.

Keywords: *plant labelling, ethnolinguistic, ethnobotany, language, traditional knowledge*

TEACHING PRACTICUM AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO BUILDING PEDAGOGICAL AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT COMPETENCES IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the concrete impact of the teaching practicum on the development of competences in pre-service teachers. The multi-week practicum, integrated into the study programs for Primary and Preschool Education, plays a fundamental role in the professional formation of future teachers. It provides student-teachers with opportunities to connect theory with practice, observe authentic classroom environments, and develop pedagogical skills within real teaching situations.

Through this experience, students enhance their ability to manage the learning process, communicate effectively with children, plan and implement instructional activities, and assess pupils' progress.

Moreover, the practicum contributes to the development of key professional competences such as critical reflection, collaboration with mentor teachers, and the integration of contemporary teaching methodologies. In this way, the teaching practicum serves as a crucial component in preparing qualified teachers who are capable of meeting the demands of modern and increasingly challenging learning environments.

Keywords: *teaching practicum, study program, competences, and pedagogical skills.*

**STABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS AMONG UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS AND EARLY- CAREER EDUCATORS: EVIDENCE FROM A THREE-
WAVE LONGITUDINAL STUDY**

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Abstract

This longitudinal study examined trajectories of anxiety and depression symptoms among students from the preschool education department during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and again in 2025. Data were collected in three waves: June 2021 (n = 312), September 2023 (n = 217), and September 2025 (n = 166, now employed as educators). Depression and anxiety symptoms were measured using the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 scales. Logistic regression models (GLM in R) with year of study and socioeconomic status (SES) as predictors estimated adjusted odds ratios (AORs) for symptom recovery or onset across waves.

Results indicated small changes in the prevalence of depression, but anxiety levels varied more substantially and reached statistical significance ($p < .05$). Graduate students and those with lower SES reported higher anxiety scores. Contrary to expectations of post-pandemic recovery, the overall trajectory reflected symptom stability over time.

This persistence may be linked to insufficient mental health support within university systems and broader healthcare services. The findings highlight the need for comprehensive and accessible mental health strategies in higher education to promote early detection, prevention, and long-term support for students and educators.

Keywords: *Anxiety, depression, students, longitudinal, consistency*

SESSION III- ECONOMY

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN ALBANIA (FDI)

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Abstract

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a relatively new phenomenon, which has experienced rapid growth in recent years. Driven by technological change, global competition, and market liberalization, FDI plays a key role in the process of Albania’s economic integration into the global economy. It creates effects both in host and investing countries.

The importance of studying FDIs and of collecting data on their performance worldwide—but especially in a country that has undergone a transition such as Albania—lies in the need to secure internationally comparable information regarding the level of economic integration and market competitiveness, tracking investment trends with the aim of formulating well-informed policies for approaching these investments, and for integrating Albania into the global investment market.

The case of FDI in Albania is deeply analyzed by examining descriptive evidence of FDI in terms of both flow and stock during the past year, as well as analyzing the structure of FDI according to the country of origin. How do these investments impact the well-being of the Albanian state, infrastructure development, and political stability?

The aim of this study is to show the connection between FDI and the economic growth of a country that has undergone political transition, where the opportunity for FDI was previously non-existent. It also examines Albania’s current approach, as of 2024, to FDIs from economic, legal, and social perspectives. The study explains the various factors that determine FDI behavior, as well as the positive and negative effects these investments have for Albania. It also analyzes the challenges that foreign investors face when investing in the Albanian market.

Keywords: FDI, Albania, challenges, economic growth, globalization

APPLICATION OF NEW CONSTRUCTIVE METHODS AND OPTIONS IN THE METALLURGICAL INDUSTRY, A POSSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION INTO THE EU SINGLE MARKET

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Abstract

Following Kosovo’s political independence, expectations emerged for parallel advancement in economic self-reliance, particularly given the country’s significant mineral wealth. However, the transition toward a modern industrial approach remains incomplete, leaving the economy dependent on external development sources and marked by structural imbalances. The metallurgical sector and energy generation are currently in crisis, hindered by outdated industrial practices, environmental pollution, inefficient raw material use, and insecure energy supply. These factors obstruct Kosovo’s integration into the EU single market and deepen long-term developmental constraints. Recent global energy developments, especially after the Ukraine conflict, have shifted debates from COP21 and COP26 commitments toward compromise policies at COP28, emphasizing the gradual phase-out of fossil fuels and the deployment of CO₂-reducing technologies. Within this framework, the EU has reclassified gas and nuclear energy as transitional “clean” sources and is supporting reforms in the Western Balkans to encourage innovative approaches in mineral resource exploitation. Research initiatives, notably the SCHACK project on ferrous waste recycling, highlight the urgent need to integrate circular economy principles and advanced metallurgical methods, such as methane reforming, gasification, and pyrolysis. These approaches could enable sustainable industrial development and strengthen Kosovo’s economic independence.

Keywords: *metallurgical industry, sustainable development, circular economy, energy transition*

NAVIGATING THE GREEN TRANSITION: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ALBANIAN FIRMS

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Abstract

As the urgency of environmental challenges becomes clearer, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and unsustainable resource use, firms and institutions worldwide are accelerating efforts to support the green transition. The private sector can play a crucial role in this. This research aimed to examine the challenges that Albanian firms face in progressing towards green transition, the opportunities that arise from it and the financial implications related to this process. The aim was to assess how Albanian companies are positioned in this process compared to international trends. The research followed a qualitative approach and combined primary and secondary data sources. Various sources were used to collect the data, including reports of financial institutions, the national statistics institution (INSTAT), and the

National Business Centre website. The primary information was collected by interviewing a few selected representatives of firms that have already started their work towards the green transition. Based on this data, several case studies were conducted. They can serve as guidance for other firms that are considering getting involved in these green initiatives. Key findings of the research include growing interest of Albanian companies in adopting green practices, a clear need for financial support due to the high upfront cost, and indications of improved financial performance. Future research can delve deeper into the effect that the green transition has on firms' financial resilience.

Keywords: *climate change, green transition, financial performance, sustainability*

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND TOURISM: DRIVING SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract

The digital transformation of the tourism sector plays a critical role in fostering sustainable regional development, particularly in emerging destinations such as Korçë and other areas across Albania. This paper examines how digital technologies—ranging from online booking platforms and mobile applications to social media and data analytics—are reshaping travel behavior, enhancing destination visibility, and improving tourism management. With smart tools enabling more efficient resource allocation, personalized visitor experiences, and real-time safety monitoring, digital innovation is not only optimizing service delivery but also contributing to the broader objectives of regional resilience and competitiveness. The study explores the intersection of smart tourism and regional planning, highlighting how digital infrastructure and strategic coordination among public and private actors can transform local economies while preserving cultural and environmental assets. By reflecting on global trends and local potentials, this contribution underscores the importance of embracing digital change to integrate challenges and opportunities for a more inclusive and sustainable future in regional tourism development.

Keywords: *Digital transformation, sustainable regional development, global trends, smart tourism, tourism sector.*

NONPERFORMING LOANS IN WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The health of the financial sector and banking stability presents highly controversial issues today. This paper analyses and compares Non-performing Loans (NPLs) in Six Western Balkans Countries (WB6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia as a critical indicator of the health of the financial sector and banking stability in this region. The average of the NPL for the WB6, for the period 2008-2015 was 12.96%, with highest rate in Serbia from 18.40%, and the lowest rate in Kosovo with 6.25%. Results for the last decade in WB6 has fallen shortly from double-digit levels to single-digit level. Along with the period 2008-2015, Kosovo also had the lowest NPL rate in the last decade, which represents a good performance. The main roots of this are the extremely conservative policies of the banks that do business in the Kosovo market as well as the high nominal value of the pledged collateral, which is typically greater than twice the amount of the applied loans.

Keywords: *banking; bank loans, credit quality, credit risk, NPLs*

THE IMPACT OF SMART TOURISM TECHNOLOGIES ON TOURIST EXPERIENCE SATISFACTION.

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Abstract

Digital transformation has significantly reshaped the global tourism industry, positioning smart technologies as key drivers in enhancing service quality and tourist satisfaction. This study examines the impact of Smart Tourism Technologies (STT) on tourist experience and satisfaction, focusing on core dimensions such as travel efficiency, service personalization, safety, communication, and destination interaction. The research adopts a combined theoretical and empirical approach. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to clients of “Dion Travel & Tours,” where 150 tourists participated and 123 provided valid responses.

The analysis aims to identify the key factors influencing tourist satisfaction and assess tourist perceptions regarding the use of smart technologies during their travel experience. Preliminary

findings indicate that ease of use, information quality, and the level of personalization emerges as significant determinants of tourist satisfaction.

The study contributes to both academic literature and managerial practice by offering insights and recommendations for enhancing tourist experiences within smart destinations and promoting the effective adoption of innovative technologies in the tourism sector.

Keywords: *smart tourism, Smart Tourism Technologies (STT), digital innovation, tourist satisfaction, tourist experience, digital transformation.*

ACCESS TO FINANCE FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurs face numerous barriers. One of the barriers that women entrepreneurs face worldwide is access to finance. The lack of finance negatively hinders women entrepreneurs from bringing their business ideas into reality, affecting business growth and penetration in new markets. Therefore, it remains difficult for them to achieve economic independence. This qualitative paper aims to systematically review the literature to identify financing opportunities and difficulties in accessing financing for women entrepreneurs. The Web of Science Core Collection database was used to systematically review peer-reviewed literature limited to the period 2015-2025, in the English language, in the Research Area of Business and Economics, and in the field of Economics, Business, Management, and Business Finance. The reviewed literature allows the identification of the main factors that influence the opportunities and difficulties of access to finance, including socio-cultural factors, as well as the way in which financial institutions promote inclusive policies.

Keywords: *women entrepreneurs; access to finance; leasing; prizma; systematic literature review.*

THE IMPACT OF REMITTANCES ON ALBANIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of remittances on Albania's economic growth. Beginning with the recognition of emigration as an inseparable socioeconomic reality since the 1990s, the paper explores the role of remittances as both a vital source of income for households and a key macroeconomic factor. The study employs a mixed-methods approach: on one hand, a theoretical analysis of existing literature identifying the mechanisms through which remittances influence consumption, investment, savings, and economic stability; on the other, the construction of an econometric model to test the relationship between remittances and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the period 1992–2023. The findings reveal a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between remittances and GDP growth, confirming their substantial contribution to the country's economic development. However, the study emphasizes that this impact is not uniform. When remittances are used primarily for short-term consumption needs, their effect on long-term development remains limited. Conversely, when channeled toward productive investments, education, and entrepreneurial initiatives, they can become a powerful tool for sustainable development. In this context, particular attention is given to the role of public policies in directing remittances toward sectors with high economic and social impact. The study is based on the development of an econometric model implemented using the E-Views software.

Keywords: Emigration, Remittances, Economic Growth, GDP, Labor Force

PROPERTY INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE INSURANCE TRENDS IN ALBANIA

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Abstract

Property insurance represents one of the most important instruments for managing economic risk, especially in the context of recent social, economic, and climatic developments. In developing countries such as Albania, the insurance market has experienced gradual growth; however, it still lags behind the standards of European Union countries in terms of market penetration and public awareness.

Insuring immovable property is not only a protective mechanism against unforeseen losses, but also serves as an indicator of a country’s economic and financial development. The primary objective of this study is to analyze the trends in real estate insurance in Albania during the period 2004–2024 by constructing a regression model to assess the evolution of key indicators such as premiums paid and revenues generated from property insurance.

The study suggests targeted policy interventions and improved financial education as essential measures for fostering further development in this segment of the insurance market. The findings contribute to the existing body of literature and provide a foundation for future research on the role of insurance in managing economic risk.

Keywords: *property insurance, Albanian real estate insurance market, insurance premiums*

DETERMINING THE MINIMUM OPTIMAL SAMPLE SIZE FOR EXPLORATORY STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING: A MONTE CARLO SIMULATION STUDY

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Abstract

Researchers often, when they have at their disposal a psychometrically sound measurement instrument, resulting from a previous study, which they intend to use in other studies, need to

make an evaluation of the sample size, regarding the number of individuals to be included in the study. It may be that the measurement instrument continues to maintain its unbiasedness, or exhibits non-significant bias, even for a smaller sample size than that used in the original study. This could help researchers save costs, time, or address other potential difficulties that can commonly occur during data collection. For the study of phenomena that require the use of complex models such as Structural Equation Modeling, researchers in determining sample size should not focus only on specific guidelines regarding anticipated effect size or desired statistical power level, but should examine the phenomenon in a more holistic way. This study, based on Monte Carlo simulations, testing different sample sizes systematically, aims to determine the minimum sample size required to achieve reliable model estimates of factor loadings, standard errors, factor correlations, residual variances, in addition to statistical predictive power, assessing how these indicators behave under various conditions. These simulations, for population parameter values, for data generation and coverage, used parameter estimates saved from a real data analysis with 603 students of the University of Korça, assessing their digital skills through Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling. The model showed satisfactory unbiasedness even for smaller sample sizes.

Keywords: *minimum sample size, model unbiasedness, Monte Carlo simulations, Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling, students’ digital skills assessment*

INNOVATION AND DIGITALIZATION IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF SHELL ALBANIA

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Abstract

The digital era has fundamentally transformed how organizations manage human resources. This study examines the digital transformation of HR functions at Shell Albania, focusing on the implementation of technologies such as SAP Success Factors, Workday, and workforce analytics systems. Data were collected through interviews with HR managers and employees, highlighting benefits, challenges, and impacts on organizational culture. Findings indicate that HR digitalization has accelerated recruitment processes, increased employee access to personal information and online training, and improved data-driven decision-making. Nevertheless, challenges include resistance to change, the need for training, and data security concerns. This

case study demonstrates that strategic adoption of digital technologies not only enhances operational efficiency but also elevates HR to a strategic business partner. The study provides valuable insights for other companies seeking to implement similar digital practices in human capital management.

Keywords: *Digital transformation, human resources, interviews, organizational culture*

REMITTANCES AND THEIR ROLE IN POVERTY REDUCTION

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Abstract

Remittances—money sent by migrants to their home country—have a significant impact on the economy of the receiving nation and on the lives of the individuals who benefit from them. In countries with high levels of poverty, remittances often serve as a major source of household income and an important driver of economic development.

The Korça region was chosen as a case study, and a questionnaire was conducted to assess the current situation of respondents, their household economic conditions, and the impact of remittances on their livelihoods. The results revealed certain shortcomings related to the methods of sending and using remittances. The ease and security of remittance transfers remain among the most important challenges facing the remittance market today.

Based on the analysis of the survey responses, it was found that remittances have a positive impact on household economies by reducing poverty. However, most remittances are used for consumption, with only a small portion directed toward investment. Therefore, increasing the share of remittances used for productive investment could enhance their positive impact on the long-term development of the country’s economy.

Keywords: *remittances, migration, household economy, poverty, economic development*

SESSION IV – HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNISM IN ALBANIA: IDEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REASSESSMENTS OF ALBANIAN-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS (1945–1948)

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Abstract

This study examines a critical period in the post-World War II relations between Albania and Yugoslavia, focusing on the establishment of communism in Albania. Both countries' leaderships aimed to overcome historical obstacles and foster close economic, political, and military cooperation. Historical interpretations of this period have often been shaped by the ideology of the Albanian Communist Party and by the policies of Enver Hoxha, who frequently deflected personal responsibility onto so-called “internal” and “external enemies.” This research seeks to provide an objective analysis by reassessing contested historiographical narratives and grounding its conclusions in robust documentary evidence.

Keywords: *Albania, Yugoslavia, economy, agreements, international relations, historiography, Albanian Communist Party*

THE TRADITION OF CELEBRATING NOVEMBER 28TH IN KORÇA DURING THE 1920S, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS OF THE TIME

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Abstract

The Independence Day, also known as Flag Day, began to be officially celebrated in Albania following November 28, 1912. Gradually, this day evolved into a symbolic occasion, serving as a collective national celebration for all Albanians. Immediately after the declaration of independence, the city of Korça was occupied, and for an extended period, the territorial status of the region remained unresolved. The decision rendered on March 22, 1913, by the London Conference of Ambassadors established Korca as part of Albania. However, the outbreak of the First World War and various related events challenged this determination. Ultimately, the

concerted efforts of the Albanian elite and the local population convinced the Great Powers to affirm Korça's incorporation into Albania.

Despite these complexities, November 28th became a firmly established national holiday, celebrated annually irrespective of prevailing circumstances. This study aims to explore the tradition of commemorating this pivotal event as reflected in contemporary press accounts, including preparations, modes of celebration, speeches, and the symbols employed during the festivities in those days.

Keywords: *November 28, holiday, press, Korça, flag.*

CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A DRIVING FORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE VLACH COMMUNITY IN KOLONJË

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Abstract

The cultural heritage of a region can act as a driving force for sustainable regional development. It includes both tangible and intangible aspects, reflecting the traditions, language, and practices of local and minority communities that have historically coexisted in harmony. This paper analyzes how the preservation of language, traditional crafts, music, and cultural practices can strengthen regional identity, social cohesion, and rural revitalization.

Kolonjë, a mountainous area with a rich multicultural history shaped by centuries of interaction between Albanians, Aromanians, and other communities, faces challenges such as demographic decline, emigration, and cultural assimilation, which threaten social balance and intangible heritage. Based on historical, ethnographic, and sociocultural perspectives, this study highlights how the Vlach (Aromanian) community's cultural assets can be leveraged for sustainable development.

Initiatives such as cultural tourism, educational programs, festivals, and community-based projects can promote local identity while generating economic opportunities. Emphasizing the integration of cultural preservation with environmental sustainability, the paper argues that thoughtful regional policies can transform heritage into a resource for both social resilience and economic revitalization, ensuring that Kolonjë's unique cultural landscape is preserved for future generations.

Keywords: *cultural heritage, Aromanian community, Kolonjë, sustainable development, regional identity*

THE CIVIL WAR IN ALBANIA AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN PRE- UNIVERSITY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

The Second World War is one of the major events in world history of the twentieth century. The Italian and German occupation of Albania placed the country in an extremely difficult situation, giving rise to various currents within the Albanian resistance.

This paper focuses on the civil war that took place in Albania between 1943 and 1945. It presents the views and interpretations of different authors on this issue. During the period of the dictatorial regime, communist historiography portrayed the Second World War in Albania as a struggle undertaken solely by the National Liberation Front, minimizing or denying the role of other movements with a nationalist character such as *Balli Kombëtar*, *Legaliteti*, and northern nationalist groups. Moreover, these nationalist factions were accused of being direct collaborators with the German forces. Consequently, the communist struggle was also directed against these so-called “collaborators.” Based on this argument, communist historiography and several authors did not acknowledge the existence of a civil war. Through the examination of facts and scholarly arguments from various researchers, this study aims to present evidence that contributes to the ongoing debate concerning the civil war in Albania.

Furthermore, the paper seeks to highlight the way and extent to which this topic is addressed in pre-university education textbooks, analyzing both the content and the pedagogical approach applied. Through this analysis, the study aims to assess the importance attributed to the topic and its impact on students’ education.

Keywords: *Civil War, Communist Party of Albania, Balli Kombëtar, Legaliteti, National Liberation War.*

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE, REGIONAL IDENTITY, AND USE AS A RESOURCE FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE KORÇA COUNTY.

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Abstract

Religious heritage consists of a series of objects and sites that represent the diversity of history, traditions, and cultures in the world. In addition to religious buildings, which include churches, mosques, synagogues, monasteries, holy places, and artifacts, the typology of religious heritage also includes pilgrimages and religious celebrations.

Local communities in Albania support religious heritage as an important part of their cultural heritage, identity, and belonging, but also as a source of tourism potential. In the Korça region, historical circumstances have enabled the cultivation and coexistence of three main religious communities: Christians, Muslims, and Bektashis, whose cultural traces are reflected in the existence of various cult objects. Given the values they carry as national cultural heritage, 32 of them have been declared “Cultural Monuments” of the first category.

This study aims to identify the religious heritage in the communities of the Korça region, analyzing at the same time the current situation and their construction, artistic, and spiritual values. The study also evaluates the opportunities for developing tourism by increasing visitors' interest in the region's religious sites, as well as the challenges of maintenance and management.

Using GIS technology, some tourist itineraries have been identified for the development of religious heritage.

Keywords: Religious sites, artistic values, local community, religious tourism, management.

DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL AUTONOMY: THE ROLE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL EFFICIENCY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In the context of rapid social, economic, and political changes, decentralization and local autonomy have become essential tools for improving governance and promoting sustainable regional development. This study aims to examine the impact of decentralization and local self-government on increasing institutional efficiency and fostering inclusive regional growth. A key aspect of decentralization is the delegation of financial, administrative, and political competencies from central governments to regional and local authorities. This process allows decision-making to be closer to the specific needs and priorities of local communities, thereby enhancing accountability and transparency in public institutions.

The study presents successful decentralization models from European countries such as Italy, Germany, Spain, and Poland. These examples demonstrate different approaches to regional governance, ranging from federal systems characterized by high regional autonomy to asymmetric autonomy models where some regions enjoy greater powers than others. The benefits of decentralized governance highlighted include improved public service delivery, optimized resource allocation, and increased civic participation in decision-making processes. Special emphasis is placed on the role of local self-government in establishing effective and transparent institutions and promoting social equity and cohesion at the regional level. To achieve these goals, the importance of a clear legal framework, fiscal autonomy enabling independent financial management, and the enhancement of administrative capacities at the local level are underlined.

Finally, the study addresses the challenges and opportunities related to decentralization reforms in the Balkan region, with particular focus on Albania, where decentralization processes are ongoing. Drawing on experiences from other countries and analyzing the local context, policy recommendations are provided to strengthen local autonomy and build a more flexible, effective, and responsive system of regional governance. This study aims to contribute to the academic and policy debate on decentralization as a cornerstone for sustainable and equitable regional development.

Keywords: *Decentralization, Local Autonomy, Local Self-Government, Institutional Efficiency, Regional Development, Delegation of Competencies, Fiscal Autonomy*

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE: A CASE STUDY IN KORÇA COUNTY

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes of young people in Korçë County regarding climate change, as well as their level of engagement in environmental actions. Using a structured questionnaire, data were collected from a random sample of youth aged 15–24 living in both urban and rural areas of the county. The questionnaire included demographic variables, knowledge about climate change, perceptions of its consequences, and behaviors related to environmental protection. The data were analyzed using SPSS software, applying descriptive and inferential statistics. The study suggests the need for educational interventions and awareness campaigns that promote active youth involvement in addressing climate challenges. The findings may serve as a foundation for local policies and youth-oriented environmental projects.

Keywords: *youth perception, climate change, Korça County, local policies, awareness.*

THE ROLE OF THE ARCHIVES IN SHAPING HISTORICAL MEMORY

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Abstract

Thucydides analyzes memory as a human, personal, and fallible faculty, but at the same time sees it as necessary for constructing the past.

In this context, memory is presented as a necessity for narrating the facts that come to us from the past; as a result of recollection, what is called the “machinery of memory” is born. Research shows that studies on memory date back to the early decades of the 20th century, primarily the

1920s, when the term “collective memory” first appears. Scholars such as Aby Warburg, Maurice Halbwachs, Marc Bloch, Jacques Le Goff, Pierre Nora, and others have made very important contributions through their studies. Essentially, memory produces its own derivatives, such as “collective memory,” “cultural memory,” “public memory,” “collective commemorations,” or “communities of memory.” Equally important are the producers of memory — those who recount the past as contemporaries of a given historical period — and the consumers of memory, those who choose to refer to collective memory in various ways. Consumers may choose to be skeptical, to believe, or to transform memory; however, without historical documentation, a narrative based on memory would remain only a “legend.”

The archive remains a very important institution tasked with processing, managing, preserving, and providing documentation, playing a primary role in transmitting the past. Specifically, the General Directorate of Archives plays a primary role in ensuring the availability of the documentary wealth it holds. This article aims to analyze the role of the archive and of historical documentation in shaping collective memory.

How do we remember? Is memory a selective process? Is history built on memory or on forgetting? These are some of the questions that this article aims to answer by analyzing the role that the Archive plays in the collective memory of a past regime, such as the communist one in Albania. Research and study of historical documentation in various archival collections not only help shape collective memory, but also contribute to the objectivity of historical analysis.

Keywords: *archives, documents, archival fund, memory, totalitarianism, forgetfulness*

THE RENAISSANCE PEOPLE OF KOLONJA AND THEIR CONNECTION TO THEIR HOMELAND AS A HISTORICAL- CULTURAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

Kolonja and Leskovik are historical and cultural regions in southeastern Albania that have contributed significantly to the Albanian National Renaissance. The recognition of their cultural and linguistic heritage serves as a foundation not only for local identity but also for regional and national identity. The patriots of Kolonja emerged from a local environment that influenced their education, culture, and patriotic activity. Renaissance figures such as Shahin Kolonja, Themistokli Gërmenji, Papa Kristo Negovani, Petro Nini Luarasi, and Kristo Luarasi bear the name of their birthplace as a surname (macrotoponym).

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The aim of this paper is to highlight the connection between these patriots and their homeland as a historical-cultural system. This will be achieved by analyzing the impact of the birthplace on their educational, patriotic, and cultural contributions; assessing how the Kolonja community supported notable individuals; and documenting traditions, narratives, and collective memory that reinforce local identity. The study applies a historical-analytical and ethnographic approach, combining two main methods: documentary analysis and findings from semi-structured interviews, alongside comparative approaches that connect the activity of Renaissance figures with the region’s social and cultural events.

Keywords: *Kolonja, Leskovik, macrotoponym, Renaissance figures, historical-cultural system*

SESSION V – HUMAN SCIENCES / SOCIAL SCIENCES

**EXPLORING HERNIAS: PATHOLOGICAL ANATOMY,
CLASSIFICATIONS, MECHANISMS, HISTOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVES, AND CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS**

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Abstract

The anatomical pathology of hernias requires a deep understanding of their classification, which is essential for effective diagnosis and treatment. Hernias can be classified based on their anatomical position and underlying physiology, the most common categories being inguinal, femoral, umbilical, and incisional hernias. Each type has unique characteristics concerning incidence, demographic predisposition, and potential complications, which significantly influence the clinical decision-making process.

Based on a large and up to date bibliography, the present article aims to make a comprehensive analysis of the different types of hernias, the mechanisms underlying them and their histological characteristics. This analysis not only aids in the accurate diagnosis but also informs treatment strategies, which may include conservative management or surgical correction tailored to the type and severity of the hernia. Therefore, a comprehensive approach to the anatomical pathology of hernias is crucial for optimizing patients’ results.

Keywords: *hernia, diagnosis, surgical correction, treatment*

**YOUTH HEALTH BEHAVIORS AS A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM A THEMATIC REVIEW OF
INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE**

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Abstract

Youth health is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of sustainable development, not only from a public health perspective but also as a driver of long-term community resilience and productivity. This paper presents the findings of a thematic literature review that explores the key behavioral factors influencing youth health and their implications for sustainable

community development. Drawing on evidence from international frameworks such as HBSC, YRBSS, ESPAD, SDQ, and EU Kids Online, the review identifies major themes including lifestyle habits (diet, sleep, physical activity), risk behaviors (substance use, peer pressure), and the psychosocial impact of digital environments. The synthesis highlights how complex interactions between individual, family, school, and societal factors shape youth health behaviors. The paper also reflects on the contextual relevance of these findings for countries like Albania, where community-based interventions are still limited. It concludes by emphasizing the need for integrated, evidence-informed strategies that engage schools, families, and local institutions in promoting health literacy and resilience among youth. These efforts can make a meaningful contribution to building healthier, more inclusive, and sustainable communities.

Keywords: *youth health, sustainable development, behavior, community resilience, literature review*

SOCIOECONOMIC DRIVERS OF POTENTIAL MIGRATION FROM KORÇA REGION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper examines the socioeconomic factors driving potential migration from southeastern Albania, with a specific focus on the Korça region, and analyses its implications for future regional development. The study is based on a structured survey conducted with 486 participants across urban and rural areas of the region. It explores both internal (within Albania) and international migration intentions, emphasising the factors that influence individuals’ decisions to consider leaving their homes. The aim is to identify key push factors behind migration intentions and analyse the expected economic, social, and cultural impacts of migration flows on future development.

The study revealed that the main reasons for potential migration from the Korça region include limited employment opportunities, dissatisfaction with public services, the quality of education and healthcare, and family reunification. Findings indicate that potential migration is particularly high among young people and skilled individuals, raising concerns about future demographic imbalances and the erosion of human capital. These dynamics pose significant challenges to sustainable development in the region, including the labour market, reduced local economic activity, and increased dependence on remittances. The study emphasises the need for comprehensive regional development strategies that address structural socioeconomic inequalities, improve local livelihoods, and create conditions that encourage people—especially the youth—to stay and invest in their communities.

Keywords: *youth migration, regional development, human capital, rural depopulation*

EFFECTS OF INTEGRATION OF THE SECOND-GENERATION IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Abstract

This study investigates the integration experiences of second-generation immigrants in the United States, emphasizing cultural, social, and identity-related dimensions. Second-generation immigrants occupy a unique position, navigating between the traditions and expectations of their parents' communities and the norms and values of American society. Drawing on anthropological and sociological perspectives, this research examines how these individuals develop hybrid identities, blending elements of their heritage culture with mainstream American practices in language, social behavior, and lifestyle. The findings suggest that, although the second generation generally benefits from greater access to education, employment opportunities, and upward social mobility compared to the first generation, they also encounter significant challenges. These include identity tensions, feelings of cultural alienation, and experiences of stereotyping or discrimination, which can influence psychological well-being and social integration. The study further highlights the crucial role of social networks, inclusive policies, and community-based support in facilitating successful integration and promoting a sense of belonging. By exploring the nuanced interplay between heritage culture and societal expectations, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the second-generation immigrant experience and the broader dynamics of integration in multicultural societies. The findings have implications for policymakers, educators, and community organizations seeking to support inclusive integration strategies and foster social cohesion.

Keywords: *second-generation immigrants, integration, hybrid identity, cultural adaptation, social mobility, discrimination, multiculturalism*

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS NATURAL ALLIES OF PEACE

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Abstract

The structure and scope of international organizations resemble a giant tree, whose roots can be traced back to the Greek city-states, to their alliances, coalitions, and cooperation among them, formed to confront the aggression of opposing forces and even to respond to natural disasters. Although their contemporary landscape currently is represented by the United Nations, we cannot overlook the role and influence of the industrial and democratic revolutions, as well as the philosophical thought of Kant, Rousseau, and Habermas in shaping their social and democratic foundations. All these factors nourish the philosophy and mission of these organizations. Figuratively speaking, they constitute the rails along which their journey continues in the face of contemporary challenges, in defense of life, nature, and peace. The history of states and international relations demonstrates that no sphere of life remains untouched by the influence and cooperation with International Organizations in fulfilling their mission, which includes: the interests of society in the fields of education, politics, economics, military affairs, law, social issues, culture, and the protection of nature and the environment, among others. This paper examines the historical, philosophical, and political development of international organizations as instruments for maintaining peace and fostering global cooperation.

Keywords: International organizations, cooperation, states, society, communication, globalism, etc.

ECOPHILOSOPHY AS A RELATIONAL ONTOLOGY: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HUMAN WELL-BEING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Amidst numerous challenges, humanity today faces an ecological crisis, which at first glance appears to be an environmental and economic issue, but at its core is a moral and human crisis. As such, social sciences in general, and philosophy in particular, view it as a fundamental topic for raising discourse, as well as an effort to act and change the current situation. In this context, philosophy is positioned in relation to ecology.

Based on Arne Naess's concept of *ecophilosophy*, which treats humans and nature in a symbiotic relationship, this article reflects on the ways in which human well-being and sustainable development are interconnected. Ecophilosophy, by viewing humans and nature as intertwined and interdependent subjects, offers a new ontological framework that emphasizes the deep and inseparable relationship between human existence and natural ecosystems.

This paper discusses ecophilosophy as a relational ontology in motivating both eco-consciousness and ecosociology alongside sustainable economic development. Referring to the paradigm of ecophilosophy, the article analyzes practices of economic development, well-being, and environmental preservation in a harmonious and inclusive framework. Furthermore, the paper addresses how philosophy can contribute to the creation of policies and practices that integrate the preservation of natural resources with the improvement of living conditions, emphasizing the need for an ecologically sustainable development model

Keywords: Ecophilosophy, Relational Ontology, Human Well-being, Sustainable Development.

RESPONSIBILITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: INTERPRETING HERBERT HART’S CONCEPT IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS, VIOLENCE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. (THE CASE OF THE KORÇË REGION)

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Abstract

This paper examines the evolving notion of responsibility within the digital era through the theoretical framework of Herbert L. A. Hart’s philosophy of legal and moral responsibility. It seeks to explore how Hart’s distinction between primary and secondary rules can illuminate the dynamics of accountability in contemporary social networks, where digital communication often generates symbolic and verbal forms of violence.

By employing the Korçë region as a case study, the research investigates how local socio-economic transformation, migration, and online interaction reshape civic participation and moral awareness.

Drawing on qualitative analysis of digital discourse and regional social initiatives, the paper argues that the digital sphere requires a reconfiguration of Hart’s analytic concept of responsibility -one that integrates legal rationality with ethical reflection in the public domain. The findings emphasize the necessity of fostering digital ethics and legal literacy as foundations for inclusive, participatory and sustainable regional development.

Keywords: *responsibility, digital ethics, Herbert L. A. Hart, social networks, legal literacy*

THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR HUMAN – CENTRED HEALTHCARE SERVICES

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Abstract

In the 21-st century the digital transformation of the healthcare systems has been a goal and became a reality in many public health systems. AI involvement in healthcare has transformed data collection, analysis, diagnosis process and enhanced prevention in multiple medical specialities. Despite the technological advances, the core of healthcare remains human. Doctors, nurses and caregivers are not replaceable by algorithms. As many studies show, the most sustainable investments are in professional training through continuous education, critical thinking and AI literacy. Systems that invest in people achieve more resilient outcomes.

AI should be used as a tool to enforce the strength of clinical judgement and not a substitute of that. The integration of AI presents also ethical and technical challenges, as bias may exist because of lack of data diversity for training. The future of medicine and healthcare systems can be tailored according to the national or regional needs. Recent studies suggest that digitalisation and AI should be used as valuable resources, particularly in regions with limited resources. By educating competent and digitally skilled medical professionals, countries can transform digitalisation into a tool of excellence rather than a dependency.

Keywords: *AI literacy, screening, AI hospital, sustainable healthcare.*

POSTER SESSION

FACTORS INFLUENCING NON-PERFORMING LOANS

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Abstract

The Albanian banking system represents the most important sector of the Albanian financial system. Over the past few years, the banking sector has faced numerous challenges, including significant transformations resulting from technological advancements and fluctuations in the level of non-performing loans. Naturally, factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia–Ukraine war, as well as various macroeconomic and microeconomic conditions, have had an impact. Macroeconomic and microeconomic factors play a crucial role in determining the level of non-performing loans. This paper focuses on the impact of several macroeconomic factors—such as interest rates, exchange rates, inflation rates, unemployment, and financial crises—on the level of non-performing loans.

The level of non-performing loans affects banking efficiency, which in turn influences financial stability and the real economy. An increasing ratio of non-performing loans indicates a vulnerable financial system, whereas a lower ratio reflects a healthy and stable one. Furthermore, non-performing loans reduce banks’ profitability, which translates into a contraction of credit supply to businesses and individuals in the real economy. For this study, secondary data were obtained from the Bank of Albania and INSTAT, while primary data were collected through a questionnaire conducted with borrowers. The findings indicate that all the macroeconomic factors analyzed have a direct impact on the level of non-performing loans.

Keywords: banking system, non-performing loans, macroeconomic factors, financial crises, credit risk

AN ETHNOBOTANICAL SURVEY IN KOLONJA MUNICIPALITY (ALBANIA): WILD PLANTS USED FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSE

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Abstract

Local natural resources play an important role in securing human health in the Albania, particularly as a source of medicine. An ethnobotanical field study focused on traditional uses of medicinal plants was conducted in the Kolonja Municipality in the southeastern region of Albania. The aim of the study was to document traditional environmental knowledge concerning the use of medicinal plants. The field study was conducted from September 2024 to June 2025. The methodology employed involved semi-structured interviews and

observation. The names of the local plants, their utilized parts and preparation methods were investigated and recorded. The plant species were collected within the scope of the study and herbarium materials were prepared. A total of about 65 plant taxa have been identified, while 4 plants were found to have no Albanian ethnobotanical literature records. Data obtained confirmed the richness of the bio-cultural heritage and showed that in the studied area the folk use of plants is alive and still derives from daily practice.

Keywords: *ethnobotany, medicinal plants, traditional knowledge, Kolonja*

OPTIMIZING INDUSTRIAL MALEIC ANHYDRIDE SYNTHESIS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

This study focuses on minimizing the environmental impact of maleic anhydride synthesis by reducing the formation and emission of by-products generated during the partial oxidation of n-butane in an industrial fixed-bed reactor **using industrial data**. Numerical simulations were conducted using a validated mathematical model to analyze the influence of inlet temperature and pressure on the generation of CO, CO₂, and acrylic acid. The results show that increasing the inlet temperature from 325.6 °C to 488.4 °C leads to a slight decrease, with CO₂ molar flow reducing by 0.18%, CO by 0.15%, and acrylic acid by 0.23%. Conversely, increasing the pressure from 1.304 bar to 1.956 bar results in a significant rise, with CO₂ molar flow increasing by 1.32%, CO by 1.19%, and acrylic acid by 2.22%. These findings indicate that higher pressure promotes oxidation side reactions, while elevated temperature slightly suppresses by-product formation. The presented approach provides a valuable foundation for improving reactor design and operational control in large-scale production systems. The application of process optimization based on these insights can enhance yield efficiency and reduce environmental emissions, contributing to a more sustainable industrial operation.

Keywords: *maleic anhydride, n-butane oxidation, by-product minimization, fixed-bed reactor, sustainable process optimization*

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: EVIDENCE, CHALLENGES, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALBANIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

The model of Education 4.0 is increasingly emerging from developed countries as a labour-market demand and is now appearing on the agendas of schools in developing contexts. Every societal transformation is also lived within the school, highlighting the critical role of the school leader. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education is transforming school leadership worldwide. Although AI has the potential to enhance decision-making, administrative efficiency, and pedagogical leadership, in Albania there is very limited, almost no research on how school leaders actually use AI in their daily professional practice. This qualitative study, based on in-depth interviews and a three-step thematic content analysis, aims to provide a clear understanding of school leaders’ practices and perceptions regarding AI integration. Interviews were conducted with 25 school leaders from pre-university schools across Korçë and its surrounding areas. Findings indicate that AI supports data-informed decision-making, resource management, and creativity in teaching methods and ideas; however, significant challenges remain, including limited digital infrastructure, insufficient AI-related competencies, ethical concerns, and the absence of national guidelines. The study concludes with recommendations for capacity-building, infrastructural investment, and the development of ethical and policy frameworks to support the responsible and context-sensitive adoption of AI in Albanian school leadership.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Chat GPT, School Leadership, Digital Transformation, Education 4.0*

TOWARDS AN EVALUATION MODEL FOR MUNICIPAL BUDGET ALLOCATION EFFICIENCY: A LITERATURE REVIEW WITH REFERENCE TO THE KORÇË REGION

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Abstract

This paper provides a comprehensive literature review on municipal finance, fiscal decentralization, and budget allocation efficiency with the aim of identifying an appropriate analytical model for future empirical research in the Korçë region of Albania. Drawing on academic studies, official Albanian government documents, and international research on local government performance, the review synthesizes existing approaches used to assess municipal budget efficiency, including ratio-based financial analysis, performance-based budgeting

frameworks, benchmarking methods, and data envelopment–type models. Special attention is given to the Albanian legal and institutional context—particularly the framework established by Law 139/2015 on Local Self-Government and Law 68/2017 on the Finances of Local Self-Government—as well as evidence from territorial reform assessments and regional development reports.

The study concludes by outlining a set of criteria for selecting a suitable evaluation model for the municipalities of the Korçë region and proposes a conceptual framework that integrates financial capacity, capital investment prioritization, and development outcomes. This literature-driven approach provides the groundwork for a subsequent empirical study tailored to the Korçë regional context.

Keywords: fiscal decentralization, municipal budget efficiency, regional development, local public finance, evaluation models, Korçë region municipalities.

FOLKLORE AND INNOVATION: A CONCEPTUAL PROPOSAL FOR DESIGNING CREATIVE STEAM PROJECTS THROUGH FAIRY TALES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

The contemporary educational context requires teaching methods that connect cultural heritage with technological innovation. This conceptual paper emphasizes the importance of Albanian Folk Tales as a rich narrative resource for fostering critical and creative thinking. The aim is to provide a detailed theoretical and methodological framework for the functional integration of folk tales into STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematic) projects at the primary education level.

The paper explores the synergy between the components of the narrative (conflict, resolution, magical elements) and the Engineering Design Process (EDP), which forms the basis of STEAM methodology. It argues that folk tales, by offering complex challenges, serve as an ideal starting point for creative tasks that include building engineering models, scientific analysis of problem situations, and artistic design.

This paper presents a Proposed Curricular Model, illustrating with concrete examples how specific narrative elements (e.g., building a bridge for the hero etc.) can be converted into cross-curricular STEAM projects. Furthermore, it discusses the assessment framework necessary to measure students’ creative ability in this context.

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The paper aims to serve as a guide for teachers and curriculum designers, demonstrating that oral heritage is not simply cultural material, but an essential didactic tool for the development of 21st-century skills.

Keywords: *Oral heritage, primary education, folk tales, 21st-century skills, STEAM.*

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