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**UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER** 

Tashkent Business & Economics Conference

Embracing Change: The Future
of Business, Economy &
Technology

15 November 2023
Tashkent, Uzbekistan



Conference Book of Abstracts

Edited by **Bakhrom Mirkasimov**

Tashkent Business & Economics Conference (TBEC)

Embracing Change: The Future of Business, Economy & Technology

15 November 2023, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 6 |
| Keynote Speaker 1 | 7 |
| Keynote Speaker 2 | 7 |
| Parallel session A. Microfinance and Banking..... | 8 |
| The Crisis of the Non-Bank Microfinance Sector: What is Impact on Clients and Stakeholders? ... | 8 |
| Explaining the factors affecting the profitability of conventional commercial banks and Islamic Banks: Evidence from GCC countries..... | 9 |
| Consumer Innovation Resistance in Sharia Commercial Banks in Indonesia: Case Study of Home Ownership Credit (KPR) with the Murabaha Profit Sharing System..... | 10 |
| Parallel session B. Economics of Demographics..... | 13 |
| Consequences of Domestic Violence for a Child: Health and Development | 13 |
| An Exploration of Gender Discrimination and Cultural Sexism in the Higher Education institutes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan | 13 |
| Does political connection affect corporate market performance? The moderating role of female directors | 15 |
| Parallel session C. Consumer behavior | 16 |
| A Study on Degree of Children Influence on Parents Buying Decision for Children Food products in Indian Market..... | 16 |
| Forecasting Responsibilities of Artificial Intelligence in Adapting & Escalating Customers Experiences in Near Future | 16 |
| How marketing mix affects herbal product consumption: a developing country perspective..... | 17 |
| Parallel session D. Organizational Management and HRM | 18 |
| The Impact of Work Environment, Role Overload and Organizational Commitment on Work-Family Conflict..... | 18 |
| Organizational Dehumanization and Employee’s Deviant Silence – The Role of Anger and Moral Identity..... | 19 |
| Determinants of financial literacy: The Case of Uzbekistan | 21 |
| Parallel session A. Energy and Environment..... | 22 |
| Social cues and electricity consumption: evidence from a randomized control trial in Armenia | 22 |
| Powering Up Child Growth: The Impact of Electricity Outages on Children’s Anthropometric Outcomes in the Kyrgyz Republic..... | 22 |
| Circular Economy in the Clothing Industry in China: Drivers, Opportunities and Barriers..... | 23 |
| Parallel session B. Economic Policy..... | 24 |
| Stability in Chaos: Unraveling the Impact of Monetary and Fiscal Policy Coordination on Emerging Markets during the Pandemic Financial Crisis | 24 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Capital Constraints for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Facing Global Market Competition: Case Study of Micro and Small Enterprises in Craft Centers and Export Products in Indonesia..... | 24 |
| Impacts of Commitment to Change in Public Sector | 26 |
| Parallel session C. Microfinance and Banking II..... | 28 |
| What are the main causal factors of the crisis of the non-bank microfinance institutions? Empirical qualitative evidence from Uzbekistan | 28 |
| Factors affecting non-performing loans: empirical evidence from commercial banks of Uzbekistan | 29 |
| Bank and Non-Bank Microfinance Institutions: Fierce Competitors or Strategic Partners, and What are Implications for Clients ? | 29 |
| Parallel session D. Culture and Tourism | 31 |
| Happiness and Community in Central Asia - From a Survey of Mahalla in the Andijan Region..... | 31 |
| Exploring cultural barriers to Knowledge Sharing using Theory of Sociocultural Models: An Ethnographic Study of National Institute of Management, Pakistan Academy for Rural Development and Pakistan Provincial Services Academy | 31 |
| Importance of events and festivals in creating destination image..... | 32 |
| Parallel session A. Organizational Management and HRM II | 34 |
| HR Practices in Uzbekistan using CRANET network methodology..... | 34 |
| Linking Illegitimate Tasks with Employee Deviant Silence through Revenge Motives: The Moderating Role of Moral Identity | 35 |
| Linking responsibility leadership to innovative work behavior and organizational commitment: the vital role of hope | 36 |
| Parallel session B. Education Quality in Higher Education | 37 |
| Impact of academic research on teaching quality. A case from WIUT | 37 |
| An individual's perspective of knowledge transfer upon return: the case of public universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan | 37 |
| Does school climate quality effect education quality: evidence from PISA 2018 | 39 |
| Parallel session C. Research Methods in Social Sciences | 40 |
| Customer experience: a sentiment analysis and topic modelling approach from an European bank tweets | 40 |
| Simulation Study on Double Bootstrap Confidence Intervals in Linear Models: Case of Outliers .. | 42 |
| AI Enabled Education Management: Navigating the Opportunities and Challenges | 42 |

Introduction

On November 15, 2023, Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT) in partnership with the University of Westminster (UoW) organized the first Tashkent Business & Economics Conference (TBEC) with a theme “Embracing Change: The Future of Business, Economy & Technology”.

The Tashkent Business & Economics Conference (TBEC) provided a dynamic platform for discussing recent research advances in Economics and Management. The conference was organized to identify policy strategies and design for embracing change especially in the context of future of business, economy and technology. It aimed to develop strong research links across the region and nurture early career researchers. The conference exchanged knowledge and experiences on regional and global socio-economic developments, promoted evidence-based policy making, and stimulated intellectual interest in the Central Asian region.

In four parallel sessions, the conference covered a wide range of topics on business and socio-economics developments, including micro finance and banking, organizational management and HRM, energy and environment, economies of demographics, economic policy, culture and tourism, artificial intelligence, education quality in higher education, research methods in social science. The keynote speakers of the conference were Prof. Randall K. Filler from the City University of New York, USA, and Dr. Alisher Aldashev, Kazakh-British Technical University (KBTU), Almaty, Kazakhstan. Professor filler presented his research on the topic ‘Uzbekistan at a Cross Roads’. Professor Alisher shared his research findings on Festivity spending, rat race, and under development: Theory and evidence from Central Asia.



Keynote Speaker 1

Dr. Randall K. Filer, Professor of Economics at Hunter College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Since 1993, Prof. Randall K. Filer has been a Senior Scholar and Visiting Professor of Economics at CERGE-EI, a joint workplace of Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences. Professor Filer served as President of the CERGE-EI Foundation, the largest supporter of economics education in the post-communist transition economies from 1999 until 2021. Professor Filer is also the President of the Economic Fundamentals Initiative (EFI), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting economic literacy among the public in post-communist countries. Under his direction, EFI is engaged in adapting, translating and distributing the book Common Sense Economics (CSE) in multiple regional languages.



He also serves as the Central and Eastern European Coordinator of the World-Bank sponsored Global Development Network. He is a member of the Academic and Governing Boards of the International School of Economics in Tbilisi, Georgia (ISET) and the Scientific Committee of the Croatian National Bank. He is a Research Fellow of IZA (Bonn), CESifo (Munich), and the Manhattan Institute (NYC). Professor Filer received his Ph.D. from Princeton University where he was affiliated with the Industrial Relations Section and the Office of Population Research.

Keynote Speaker 2

Dr. Alisher Aldashev is a professor of Economics at KBTU specializing in development and labor economics. He has published in internationally refereed journals like the Economic Journal, Labour Economics, Journal of Development Studies and others. He has advanced experience working at the University of Regensburg, the Center of European Economic Research (ZEW) in Mannheim and also at Satbayev University. His research interests include the economics of language, values and informal institutions, immigrant workers.



He has vast experience in research projects including projects conducted for the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Security (Germany), German Science Foundation, Volkswagen Foundation, Kazakhtelecom JSC, where he was responsible for econometric modeling. Dr. Alisher studied his PhD in Economics from the University of Regensburg, Germany

Parallel session A. Microfinance and Banking

The Crisis of the Non-Bank Microfinance Sector: What is Impact on Clients and Stakeholders?

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Microfinance emerged in the 1970s as an important development tool to promote access to low-income households in support of their private enterprises. During the past five decades, microfinance programs became very popular globally and many developing and developed countries adopted the microfinance model.

During the past period of 2008 – 2014, the number of microfinance crises hit national economies. These crises include Nicaragua (2008 farmers' protest), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2009 over-indebtedness), India, Kolar (2009 religious issues), India, Andhra Pradesh (2010 suicides), Pakistan (2010 floods), and Nigeria (2010 liquidity crisis).

In this project, we provide a novel contribution to the literature by characterizing the effect of the 2011 closure of the entire non-bank MFI sector in Uzbekistan. In October 2011, the Central Bank of Uzbekistan revoked the licenses of all credit unions (121) and some of the 34 microcredit organizations. Measuring the consequences of closing the MFI sector gives rise to an important policy agenda, as the loss due to terminating MFI activities may be devastating and may far outweigh the positive effects of introducing a new MFI. Most of the impact studies on microfinance focus predominantly on measuring the opening effect, i.e. what would happen if microfinance programs were opened. The most prominent impact studies are based on an experimental design that exploits the causal impact of the closure (Coleman, 1999 JDE; Ashraf and Karlan, 2006 QJE; Banerjee, Karlan, and Zinman, 2015 AEJ, AE; Banerjee, Duflo, Glennerster, and Kinnan, 2015 AEJ; Crépon et al., 2015 AEJ; Attanasio et al., 2015 AEJ; Tarozzi et al., 2015 AEJ).

In contrast, empirical evidence on measuring the reverse effect, i.e., what might occur if microfinance institutions (MFIs) exit an economy, is rather scarce, with impact evaluation studies primarily focusing on microfinance closure in India (Breza and Kinnan, 2021 QJE; Banerjee, Breza, Duflo, and Kinnan 2017). The lack of evidence is mainly due to the difficulty in implementing a special experimental study and the insufficiency of reliable data for robust measures of the impact. The main objective of our research is to empirically explore the effects of NB MFI closure in Uzbekistan.

Our specific research questions are the following:

RQ1: what are the steps of the process of the closure itself?

RQ2: what are the impacts of NB MFI closure on borrowers,

RQ3: : what are the impacts of NB MFI closure on Impact of closure on non-borrowers ,

Contributions: Our study contributes to the scarce impact studies of the microfinance crisis. Our novel contribution is based on using qualitative inquiry and unpacking how exactly closure affected the lives of borrowers and non-borrowers. Most of the facts are known on how microfinance opening could affect the life of borrowers. The closure is rather challenging as it affects the lives of many and could be devastating.

Given that most of the impact of the closure happens in unobservable outcome variables, we, therefore, rely on building qualitative insights which generate rich evidence and understanding the exact emotions, live experiences of victims. While microfinance crises happen suddenly, i.e. in one week or month, various factors contribute toward it. In this paper, we focus on disentangling these factors and establishing their proper sequence.

Qualitative interviews were collected during 2019 – 2022 with key stakeholders and individuals affected by the microfinance crisis: Central Bank, regulatory and supervisory bodies; borrowers and depositors of non-bank MFIs; employees of closed non-bank MFIs; representatives of commercial banks and other formal institutions; communities and family members of borrowers from non-bank MFIs. For qualitative data collection, we used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which enables us to re-create the puzzle of the closure and thus to trace micro-level impact stories of borrowers and non-borrowers. We thus also measure the impact on communities and a set of unobservable yet highly important outcomes, including trust in MFIs, informal borrowing and lending, bargaining power in the family, and gender roles. Overall results indicate that microfinance programs influence societies and regional economies as they are deeply rooted in the life of borrowers and influence non-borrowers.

Shocks on the supply side of microfinance provision could shatter the well-being of middle-income entrepreneurs who boost local economies the most. More importantly, dramatic shocks on the market also lead to changes in institutional and behavioral aspects, such as trust in MFIs and financial literacy, which may be difficult to restore. We, therefore, suggest that microfinance program development and further promotion should be maintained with prudent regulatory and sector stability to avoid nationwide shocks. We also identify a set of MFI and microfinance sector indicators that could warn of a potential crisis, thus enabling the prevention of shocks, rather than coping with the repercussions.

Keywords: microfinance, microfinance institutions, crisis, impact evaluation

Explaining the factors affecting the profitability of conventional commercial banks and Islamic Banks: Evidence from GCC countries

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This study looks at the main influencing factors in terms of bank profitability in both conventional and Islamic banks in the Gulf cooperation council (GCC) region. We have also examined how both categories of banks are different in terms of profitability among the countries in the region. The study adopts the random effect of the GLS model by using the 26 largest banks with four members in the GCC block. The empirical results show that both non-performing loans (NPLs) and capital adequacy (CR) ratio have a negative effect on the ROE of both typologies of the bank in the region. Also, banks' sizes had a negative effect on the commercial banks group however had no effect on its counterpart. Also, the annual growth of GDP was found to be very important to the ROE ratio of Islamic banks, but it wasn't as important for commercial banks over the same period. Our findings have at least two significances. First it shows that capital adequacy ratio and NPL have a negative relationship with the ROE of both types of banks. Second, the GDP growth rate in the GCC region has a positive impact on banks' return on equity regardless of their banking business model (i.e. either conventional or Islamic).

Key words: Conventional bank, Islamic bank, ROA, ROE, GCC countries.

Consumer Innovation Resistance in Sharia Commercial Banks in Indonesia: Case Study of Home Ownership Credit (KPR) with the Murabaha Profit Sharing System

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Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world with 231.06 million people or 86.7% of the total population in 2022. Even though the majority of the population is Muslim, the number of Sharia banking customers is still low. The number of Sharia bank savings accounts was 37.3 million accounts (10.5%) while the number of conventional bank savings accounts was 318.02 million accounts (89.5%). This number shows that it is very different from conventional bank customers. The concept of Islamic banking is relatively new and is developing in the banking industry in Indonesia. The first Sharia bank to become a pioneer of Islamic banking in Indonesia was *Bank Muamalat Indonesia* (BMI), which was founded in 1991. BMI continues to innovate by issuing Sharia financial products such as *Sukuk* (securities/financial certificates) subordinated to *Mudharabah*, Sharia Insurance (*Takaful* Insurance), *Muamalat* Financial Institution Pension Fund, and Sharia multifinance (*Al-Ijarah* Indonesia Finance). Sharia multifinance company (*Al-Ijarah* Indonesia Finance). The advantage of the *Muamalat* Financial Institution Pension Fund is that it is income tax free. These products are considered new breakthroughs in Indonesian Sharia banking. In addition, BMI launched the Shar-e product, which was the first instant savings in Indonesia in 2004. This shows that Sharia banking is innovating its products to be able to compete with conventional banks. Based on the March 2021 report on the distribution of deposits from commercial banks issued by the Deposit Insurance Agency (LPS) the nominal value of Sharia bank deposits is IDR. 468 trillion (6.8%) while the nominal value of conventional bank deposits is IDR. 6.421 trillion (93.2%). This data shows that conventional banks still dominate Indonesian banking. Therefore, Sharia banks need to improve various aspects, especially competitive interest rates.

Indonesia has two types of banking operational systems, namely conventional banks and Sharia banks. In accordance with Law Number 21 of 2008 concerning Sharia Banking, it is stated that a Sharia bank is a bank that carries out business activities based on Sharia principles, or the principles of Islamic law as regulated in the *fatwa* of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). These principles are regarding justice and balance (*'Adl wa tawazun*), benefit (*Maslahah*), universalism (*Alamiyah*). Apart from that, it must not contain obscurity (*Gharar*), gambling (*Maysir*), usury (*Riba*), and *Haram* objects. One of the advantages of Sharia banking is that it is *Riba* free because it is not in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic religion. Sharia bank makes a profit through profit sharing because it becomes an intermediary between sellers and buyers.

Based on its activities, Sharia banking is divided into: 1. Sharia Commercial Banks (BUS); 2. Sharia Business Units (UUS); 3. Sharia People's Financing Banks (BPRS). There are types of BUS in the form of full-fledged Islamic banks and Sharia Business Units (UUS) from conventional commercial banks. BUS and UUS are obliged to carry out the function of collecting and distributing public funds. BUS is a Sharia bank which in its activities provides services in payment traffic, among other things, distributing profit sharing financing based on *Mudharabah* contracts, *Musyarakah* contracts, or other contracts that do not conflict with Sharia principles.

The role of UUS is a work unit at the head office of a conventional commercial bank which functions as a business unit that carries out business activities based on Sharia principles. The aim of UUS is none other than to accommodate conventional bank customers who want to make transactions using Sharia principles. The UUS business activities include distributing profit sharing financing based on *Mudharabah* contracts, *Musyarakah* contracts, or other contracts that do not conflict with Sharia principles. While BPRS activities to distribute funds to the community in the form of profit sharing financing based on *Mudharabah* or *Musyarakah* agreements. *Murabahah*, *Mudharabah*, *Ijarah*, and *Musyarakah* agreements have been produced by Islamic banks (Aziz and Afaq, 2018). *Mudharabah* is a contract where the customer provides capital to a Sharia bank. Capital owners (*Shahibul Maal*) and business actors (*Mudharib*) run businesses productively and *halal*. The exception of BPRS, they are prohibited from accepting deposits in the form of current accounts and participating in payment system traffic.

Currently there are 12 BUS, 21 UUS, and 165 BPRS. The number of BUS and UUS offices is 2,451 units and the number of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) is 4,500 units as of January 2023. The number of employees in all Islamic banks is 56,298 people. The total assets of BUS are IDR 520.89 trillion and UUS are IDR 244.47 trillion. The total assets of Sharia banks were IDR 765.36 trillion in January 2023. This amount decreased by 2.14% compared to the previous month, which was IDR. 782.1 trillion. Many factors make Islamic banks less attractive to Muslims, including the high interest rates of *Murabahah* compared to conventional banks. Another factor is the general symptom of resistance to innovation by consumers for various subjective reasons.

In order to develop Sharia banking and increase assets, the government has carried out a merger of government-owned banks, namely BNI Syariah, BRI Syariah, and Bank Syariah Mandiri in 2021. The bank resulting from the merger is Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) whose assets are ranked seventh in Indonesia. BSI is the largest in the world based on the number of customers, namely 18.7 million as of May 2023. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, BSI is the bank with the fifth largest number of customers. In fact, even though it has a large number of customers, it does not guarantee that it has a large market capitalization. There are several factors that cause consumers to refuse to become BSI customers.

One of the superior products of Sharia banks is Home Ownership Credit (KPR) which uses a *Murabahah* contract. The definition of *Murabahah* is the delivery of goods or objects of the contract at the beginning of the agreement, such as a house or vehicle. The mortgage market segment is large because housing is everyone's primary need. In general, lower middle class people in Indonesia purchase houses through bank loans, both conventional and Sharia banks. The *Murabahah* contracts use fixed interest which is higher than conventional bank interest. If calculated cumulatively, the *Murabahah* contract system is more expensive than conventional bank mortgage rates. There are those who consider that the *Murabahah* profit sharing system is no different from the conventional bank interest system. However, the main reason customers use *Murabahah* is to avoid *Riba* because it is prohibited in Islamic teachings. Thus, debtors who use Sharia bank mortgages are consumers who adhere to Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, most Muslim consumers choose to use conventional bank mortgages that use floating rates with more economical considerations. In addition, there is consumer resistance to product innovation and Islamic bank services. Even though the product quality and performance of Sharia banks are the same as conventional banks, but the number of customers is small. Resistance and inertia are manifestations

of consumer behaviour but consumer resistance is conceptualized more broadly. Some people are described as lacking a willingness to accept innovation because of the threat to the status quo. Resistance and inertia are manifestations of consumer behaviour but consumer resistance is conceptualized more broadly. Some people are described as lacking a willingness to accept innovation because of the threat to the status quo. According to Ram and Sheth (1989) there are functional and psychological barriers that cause resistance to innovation.

This study uses a descriptive method that explains the phenomena that occur in Sharia banking in Indonesia. The research object is Sharia bank mortgages because this is a product that is quite popular among Muslim consumers. Data obtained from secondary data, namely the results of research and journal articles. The results of the study show that the customers of Sharia banks are very minimal compared to conventional bank customers. There are many factors, both internal and external, subjectivity, psychological, economic that cause Sharia bank products and services to be less attractive to consumers. Most importantly is the consideration of higher profit-sharing costs which are called *Murabahah* compared to conventional bank interest rates. This seems to have caused resistance to product innovation and Islamic bank services among potential Muslim customers. Therefore, Indonesian Sharia banking, including the government, needs to carry out various innovations that can be accepted by potential consumers, especially potential consumers who are not loyal to conventional banks.

Keywords: Innovation, Islamic Banking, Muslim, *Murabahah*, Profit Sharing, Resistance, Sharia.

Parallel session B. Economics of Demographics

Consequences of Domestic Violence for a Child: Health and Development

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As gender equality and women's empowerment are often associated with improved maternal and child nutritional outcomes, latest systematic reviews provide inconclusive evidence. This research examines a comparable methodology to data from the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, an internationally validated indicator according to surveys of gender in the same household, from Central Asian countries to determine what aspects of women's empowerment are associated with diet and nutrition outcomes at the household, women and children level. We check out associations between women's dietary diversity and empowerment at the household level, women's dietary diversity and BMI, and child-related outcomes with children's, women's, and household characteristics. Also, we examine different associations between women's empowerment and dietary outcomes for girls and boys. We identified few significant associations between nutritional outcomes and aggregate measures of empowerment.

Women's empowerment score was positively associated only with children's HAZ, and lower intrafamilial inequality was associated with greater likelihood of exclusive breastfeeding and higher HAZ but lower BMI. However, analysis of sub-domain scores revealed more significant associations, suggesting that tradeoffs exist between the different dimensions of empowerment. Women's empowerment accounted for a small proportion of variation in nutritional outcomes, whereas the largest proportion of variation in factors at the household and country level accounted for variation in household and women's nutrition. In contrast, most of the variation in children's nutritional outcomes is due to their age. Improving nutritional outcomes requires addressing the underlying determinants of poor nutrition as well as empowering women and improving gender equality.

Keywords: Gender equality, Women's empowerment, Dietary diversity, BMI

An Exploration of Gender Discrimination and Cultural Sexism in the Higher Education institutes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Gender discrimination and workplace sexism has profoundly impacted the lives of men and women, particularly women. Sexism is “the systematic marginalization of women with regards to men, and involves interpersonal dynamics in which men’s voices, actions and interests are prioritized over women’s”(Pearce, 2019). It is prevalent in all sections of societies and women have to endure it in covert or overt forms. This research explores gender discrimination and cultural sexism at the workplace with a focus on understanding the strategies that women use at the workplace to cope with it. Like other professions, women in academia also often face sexism and discrimination at the workplace. Research shows that academia is inherently patriarchal, and sexism is deeply rooted both in structures and in everyday actions and practices (Gill, 2011) (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2021). Apparently, the structure and processes seem inclusive in academia, but men ignore women and decide policies and procedures themselves when it comes to decision making (Bourabain, 2021).

This is due to the notion that women are weaker and less capable as compared to men mainly in terms of logic, rational reasoning (Wood & Eagly, 2012), brilliance and creativity (Savigny, 2019). The Times Higher Education (2017) shows that women continue to be underrepresented in the leadership positions in the higher education institutes all over the world despite advancement towards gender equality. The report indicates that only 36 universities have female leaders out of the world's top 200 Universities (Bothwell, 2017). In Pakistan, the situation is even more alarming. According to HEC (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan), there is only 36.32% female faculty as compared to 63.68% male faculty in the higher education sector in Pakistan. The patriarchal structures and culture in Pakistan intensify gender discrimination and cultural sexism in academic institutes as well. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the local patriarchal norms have a remarkable influence on the organizations as well. Hence, this study explores the way cultural sexism is deeply rooted, manifested, and practiced in the higher education institutes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, and the way it leads to social exclusion and discrimination of women academics at workplace. This study conceptualizes gender as socially constructed and performative (Gherardi, 1994). It is (re)negotiated and reenacted through local cultural norms and societies (Butler, 1999).

This study takes a qualitative approach to understand the way women academics give meaning to their experiences in relation to cultural sexism at the workplace and the strategies they use to find a way around gender discrimination. It takes a narrative approach to gain access to their lived experiences that are reflected in their narrations. Data is being collected from women faculty who are in senior academic positions, mainly associate professors and above. The stories obtained through in depth semi structured interviews are being analyzed through narrative analysis. Preliminary findings reveal that cultural sexism is always undesirable for women. It marginalizes women in the ways that they feel socially excluded. Hence, it results in a lack of social capital that is desirable for leadership positions and personal growth. Also, women felt that due to gendered policies and non-inclusive practices the capable women are not allowed to compete for leadership positions in universities. They were insulted and were mocked by men as they related their achievement to their sexuality instead of their talent. Thirdly, unmarried women faced more marginalization as compared to married women since tasks were distributed based on marital status. Married women were given less tasks and flexibility in work hours to look after their families. Findings also revealed that cultural sexism led women to silence and women opted to stay low profile or sort of withdrawal by adopting passive social and career progression pathways. Additionally, some women showed their displeasure in person while others preferred to form alliances with other women to combat sexist behaviors and practices collectively.

This study aims to contribute to the current literature by unfolding cultural sexism and gender discrimination in the specific context of higher education institutes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It aims to address the call of researchers to theoretically contribute to the current literature by revealing the hidden complexities in structures, organizational culture and practices that allow sexism to grow and flourish in academia (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Practically, this study intends to help the policy makers and other stakeholders to design and ensure the implementation of policies and practices to create an inclusive environment that would prevent cultural sexism in academia. This is significant to support women in their career progression and in acquiring leadership positions at the workplace.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, Workplace sexism, Marginalization

Does political connection affect corporate market performance? The moderating role of female directors

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Purpose - This study's purpose was twofold. The first objective was to examine the direct influence of political connections on the corporate market performance of non-financial listed companies in Pakistan and the second objective was to determine the moderating effect of female directors on board on the association of political connections with firm market performance.

The design/methodology/approach - A dataset of 221 non-financial companies listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange for ten years (2008–2017) was analyzed using panel-corrected standard error regression. Additionally, we address the endogeneity issue by using Heckman's two-stage estimation.

Findings - The study found that political connections negatively affected the corporate market performance, and female directors on board as a moderator further strengthened this negative relationship. The result is consistent with the political economy theory that maintains that an unstable political system and a weak judicial system will strongly affect investors and their rights.

Practical Implication - This study suggests that policymakers should determine the requirements such as qualification and experience to appoint female directors because some companies take advantage of and misuse the current lenient policy. Therefore, the results of this study can assist all stakeholders to make the right decisions in the presence of political connections.

Originality/value - The study adds to the extant literature in terms of theoretical contribution and uses an integrative approach to combine political economy theory, resource dependence theory, and agency theory to address the moderating role of female directors on board in the association of political connection with company market performance.

Keywords: Female Directors, Political Connections, Market Performance, Political Economy Theory

Parallel session C. Consumer behavior

A Study on Degree of Children Influence on Parents Buying Decision for Children Food products in Indian Market

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Purpose: This paper focuses on identifying the factors which can influence the purchasing behavior of food products for children in context with the Indian market. The contributors have made an effort to understand the degree of influence exercised by the children for parents' purchasing decisions. This study elaborates on various aspects that contribute to purchasing behavior and summarizes the results of the most important factors to consider while marketing the products to children.

Design / Methodology / Approach: The thesis opted for an exploratory study using the open-ended approach of grounded theory. The data were complemented by theoretical analysis and evaluation of journals & articles related, to know the exact impact of children's influence on buying intention.

Findings: The study reveals that Parent's purchasing decisions are influenced by Children's Social Peer groups. Nutritional aspects on the packaging also impacts Parents' buying decisions and instill Trust in the brand. Ultimately, reaching child consumers effectively through all forms of marketing communications requires knowing how they respond to different types of product and product promotions.

Keywords: Pester Power; Children behavior; Children Influence; Food Marketing; Packaging; Nutritional Aspect; Buying Intention; Consumer Buying Behaviour.

Forecasting Responsibilities of Artificial Intelligence in Adapting & Escalating Customers Experiences in Near Future

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In the future, artificial intelligence (AI) is likely to substantially change both marketing strategies and customer behaviors. Building from not only extant research but also extensive interactions with practice, the authors propose a multidimensional framework for understanding the impact of AI involving intelligence levels, task types, and whether AI is embedded in a robot. Ideally, a two-way conversation is supposed to be a good customer interaction and content is the primary tool for brands to facilitate and sustain the conversations. Businesses may communicate with clients on a variety of platforms, such as email, vlogs, social media, community forums and more. With the use of artificial intelligence one can suddenly predict future actions, suggest products and enrich the conversation to deliver something better to consumers than the products and services alone. The convergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and customer experience management has ushered in a new era in which businesses can anticipate and meet customer needs with unprecedented precision. This research

paper explores the evolving responsibilities of AI in forecasting and shaping customer experiences. We examine the current state of AI applications in customer experience, forecast its future roles, and delve into the implications for businesses and consumers. It will also make recommendations for more customized services to the consumers, which can have an effect on their overall interactions under a variety of businesses.

Keywords: AI and customer experience, transforming customer experiences, investigating Customers

How marketing mix affects herbal product consumption: a developing country perspective

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Context/Purpose: The consumption of herbal products, specifically, medicinal herbs, continues to be the alternative medicine or health remedy across the globe, particularly in developing countries. Aside from other numerous benefits, the production of these herbs offers numerous job opportunities in the local economy in many developing countries such as Ghana. While the Ghanaian herbal market is heavily dominated by the influx of foreign herbal products, these dominant products are mainly Chinese and Indian. The relatively cheap prices of these foreign products afford them some form of dominance which portends a threat to the local producers and for that matter, breeding unhealthy competition among the local herbal industries. This research aims to devise a marketing strategy to revamp and sustain the herbal product market competitiveness in Ghana. In other words, the present study would take into consideration the extended marketing mix by (1) examining the antecedents of consumers' taste and preference for the herbal product in the Ghanaian herbal market and (2) assessing the effectiveness of the marketing mix needed to revamp the local herbal industry.

Methods: A partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied to test the research hypotheses. Data was gathered from customers who buy or use domestic herbal products (medicinal plants) through a purposive sampling technique. After successful data collection, 376 responses were valid for data processing and analysis.

Results/Interpretation: Findings revealed that the marketing mix, particularly, product, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence were significant towards consumers' tastes and preferences regarding the patronage of medicinal herbal products. This suggests that traditional herbal medicine companies need to concentrate their efforts on developing brand loyalty given its strategic role in the success of a business. Furthermore, traditional herbal medicine companies need to prioritize the marketing mix (7Ps) to strengthen and improve the taste and preference of their products.

Conclusion: The study concludes that local herbal firm operators could deploy this marketing mix effectively and efficiently for a competitive herbal market. Limitations and future research direction have been indicated in the concluding part of the research.

Keywords: Marketing mix, Market competitiveness, Herbal consumers, Herbal product, Ghana

Parallel session D. Organizational Management and HRM

The Impact of Work Environment, Role Overload and Organizational Commitment on Work-Family Conflict

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Purpose: This study's major objective was to look into the variables that influence on work-family and family-work conflicts for Uzbek employees in the public sector. There has not been any study on employee work-family conflicts and family-work conflict done in Uzbekistan yet. This study analyzes both conflict types and adds value by enlarging related topic fields and contributes new changes in resolving these conflicts.

Study design/methodology/approach: The sample of respondents were 167 public sector employees, and the survey tools used to gather the data were chosen based on secondary data. With the help of linear regression analysis, reliability analysis, and demographic data analysis, the SPSS statistical tool was utilized to evaluate the data in this study. When the reliability of all the secondary data was checked, the findings were all greater than 70%, indicating the accuracy of the measuring tools. In addition, six hypotheses were created in this study about the effects of three independent factors—working environment, role overload, and organizational commitment—on the dependent variables, work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Additionally, the PANA model's negative effect was used as a moderator variable. Linear Regression analysis illustrated significant results for Role Overload and Negative Affect variables in both Work-Family and Family-Work Conflict analysis. The questionnaire of this research contained only 1 section with 56 questions related to demographic data and questionnaires to identify dependent and independent variables. Hypotheses for those analyses also were analyzed. Taking into account that demographic data may have influence on WFC of employees, this questionnaire included employees' demographic data, such as age, gender, marital status, education level, workplace of employees, their designation, income level and work experience as control variables (Hayes 2022).

Findings: The linear regression analysis illustrated statistically significant results which means that this model can be further analyzed. According to the Work-Family Conflict (WFC) analysis, the first significant variable is Work Environment (WE). In this research, this constant is positively correlated with WFC, which means that the higher the bad WE, the higher the WFC. Next positively significant variable is Role Overload (ROL). The higher the ROL, the higher the WFC. This result is similar with previously reviewed scholarly articles, which stated that performing in personal life roles makes it complicated to participating in work roles. As a result, ROL causes WFC by disturbing people both in work and family roles (Anand and Vohra, 2020). According to analysis, there was no significant result between Organizational Commitment (OC) and WFC. Another linearly regression analysis also has shown that there was statistically significant result between independent variables, WE, ROL and OC, and Family-Work Conflict. WE variable did not show significant result in this study which means that WE had no influence on FWC. Second variable, ROL had positive impact on FWC as it has with WFC. It can be defined as the higher the level of ROL, the higher would be the FWC. Likewise to WFC analysis, the influence of OC did not show significant result. Additionally, this research also examines the moderating role of Negative Affect (NA) of PANA model on correlation of variables with WFC and FWC. According to the analysis, NA scale has a significant moderating role on influence of both WE and ROL apart from OC. Similar to NA and WFC analysis, moderating role of NA was also significant for FWC, which means that there is a moderating effect of NA between some of the independent variables. In this regression analysis there was no moderating role of NA on WE and OC. It only moderates the influence of ROL on FWC.

Originality/contribution: This work can serve as the starting point for more research since there hasn't been any WFC research in Uzbekistan. The work-family balance of employees must be taken into account if you want to hire high-performing, productive personnel. Organizations must therefore look into employees' attitudes about work and family and ask, "Can they balance their work and family lives or not?" This study paper also makes a contribution by investigating the relationships between WFC or FWC and the independent factors (poor working conditions, role overload, and organizational commitment). The majority of the research, as noted in the section on the literature review, investigated the connection between workplace environments that support families and WFC (Krishnan, Alias, and Omar 2020). Other factors that affect WFC have also been investigated in earlier literature and include time management, supervisor support, good time commitment, work categories, and expectations placed on and support from families (Krishnan, Alias, and Omar 2020; Gamor et al. 2017). This paper can enhance the variety of the topic as well as it increases the number of literature related to WFC in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Work-Family Conflict, Family-Work Conflict, Working Environment, Role Overload, Organizational Commitment

Organizational Dehumanization and Employee's Deviant Silence – The Role of Anger and Moral Identity

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During the past few decades, there has been a dramatic increase of interest in the concept of employee silence as it adversely affects organizational members. Employee silence not only hurts innovation but also limits the identification of organizational goals (IESE, 2014). This phenomenon remains so prevalent that a survey showed around 72% of employees were unable to speak about matters at work and kept silent due to factors like punishment, humiliation, etc. (Chakrabarty, 2021). Various dimensions of employee silence, such as diffident, defensive, relational, ineffectual, etc., have been explored in the work context (Dedahanov, Lee, & Rhee, 2016; Duan, Bao, Huang, & Brinsfield, 2018; Qi & Ramayah, 2022). But one such form of silence, i.e., deviant silence, remains largely neglected in the previous literature. Few management studies have explored such employee behavior at work (Brinsfield, 2013; Khan, Murtaza, Neveu, & Newman, 2022; Teo & Caspersz, 2011). Deviant silence is defined as an employee withholding some useful information to harm the organization and its members (Brinsfield, 2013). Previous research has confirmed the significant role of employee silence in impacting performance outcomes such as task performance, innovative work behavior, etc., in addition to influencing employee attitudes such as organizational commitment, turnover intention, engagement, etc. (Hao et al., 2022; John & Manikandan, 2019). These findings confirm the prevalence of this phenomenon in organizations, so it remains critical to identify the reasons behind such employee behavior.

For that purpose, organizational research has explored several possible antecedents of employee silence behavior like workplace ostracism, abusive supervision, top management openness, etc. (Gkorezis, Panagiotou, & Theodorou, 2016; Vakola & Bouradas, 2015; Xu, Loi, & Lam, 2015). But most of this research remained focused on the silence associated with the risk employees may experience when speaking about anything in their organizations.

Very few studies have explored the intentional use of silence as retaliation against the organization and its members (Kashif, Gürce, Tosun, & Wijenayake, 2020; Khan et al., 2022). Specifically, to our

knowledge, none of the previous studies has explored how a particular workplace mistreatment, i.e., organizational dehumanization, can motivate employees to show such retaliation against the organization by remaining silent at work. To fill this gap, we explore how corporate dehumanization can be a possible antecedent of employee's deviant silence at work.

ODH has recently become a matter of interest in management research. It has been found to be significantly related to various employee attitudes and behaviors such as affective commitment, employee's voice, etc. (Lagios, Caesens, Nguyen, & Stinglhamber, 2022; Stinglhamber et al., 2021). More importantly, it has also been significantly related to employees' deviant behavior, such as organizational deviance, time theft, etc. (Muhammad & Sarwar, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022). As perceptions of ODH can motivate employees to engage in deviant behavior, we propose that employees may show deviant silence on experiencing such toxic work environments. Specifically, we argue that employees may withhold useful information to harm the organization in response to such mistreatment at work. Exploring this relationship will help us to understand why individuals with valuable information to contribute still choose to keep silent in their organizations. It aligns with previous research exploring the role of such negative work conditions in motivating employees to engage in certain unacceptable behavior at work (Morrison, 2011).

When proposing the linkage between ODH and deviant silence, we build our argument based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) which suggests positive exchanges between employees and their organizations. Specifically, we argue that when employees experience a violation of positive exchanges from their organizations in the form of dehumanization, they reciprocate in the same way by showing deviant silence at work. By exploring the relationship between ODH and deviant silence we explore certain work environments in which employees are compelled to stay silent even if they have something to say. To explain how ODH relates to deviant silence, this research also presents a mediating mechanism through anger emotion. Previous research has found the significant role of several mediators, such as emotional labor, surface and deep acting, job stress, etc. in the relationship between ODH and employee outcomes (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019;

Nguyen et al., 2022; Sarwar et al., 2021). Based on the social exchange perspective, the current study tests how experiencing dehumanization at work can evoke anger emotion which in turn leads to deviant silence behavior. Emotions can play a significant role in social exchanges. Specifically, social exchange perspective suggests emotions can originate from the exchange of valued outcomes such as rewards, etc. between two parties (e.g., employee and organization). These emotions will determine future exchanges between them and experiencing negative emotions such as anger can motivate employees to decrease these future exchanges with organization (Lawler & Thye, 2006). It has been suggested that employees experience anger emotion when they face ODH (Christoff, 2014). Such anger thoughts resulting from mistreatment faced at work motivate employees to take revenge and reciprocate by showing deviant behavior (Oh & Connolly, 2019). As research suggests that individual differences in terms of morality remain critical in ethical decision-making (Keem et al., 2018; Van Gils et al., 2015) so we propose individual's moral identity as a possible moderator of the relationship between ODH and deviant silence. Moral identity is defined as the accessibility of moral traits in one's self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002).

Previous research has confirmed that individuals having high moral identity show less unethical behavior and suppress immoral acts (Aquino et al., 2009; Mingzheng, Xiaoling, Xubo, & Youshan, 2014). They make decisions, act according to moral beliefs, and avoid any behavior inconsistent with their core identity (Kim, Son, & Kang, 2021). Specifically, such individuals are less likely to show deviant behavior and take revenge from their organization or its members (Kong & Yuan, 2018). Being an essential individual characteristic, we argue that moral identity helps individuals make better decisions in stressful work conditions. Specifically, such individuals are in a better position to activate moral-related traits when get mistreated at work (Mingzheng et al., 2014). Accordingly, we suggest that individuals with high moral identity will be showing less deviant silence at work when experiencing organizational dehumanization. Results of an experimental study (Study 1) confirmed

that ODH significantly impacts deviant silence. Similarly, survey data from a three-wave time-lagged study (Study 2) confirmed the direct and indirect roles of ODH in predicting deviant silence through anger. Additionally, moderation results showed that moral identity significantly buffered the impact of ODH on deviant silence behavior. We further discuss the managerial implications of these findings.

Key word: ODH, Moral identity, Dehumanization, Silence behavior

Determinants of financial literacy: The Case of Uzbekistan

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We examine the level of financial literacy in Uzbekistan using the most recent Financial Literacy Survey developed specifically for this study, containing the most up-to-date, comprehensive data on this topic. We construct a regression model to analyze the impact of demographic factors such as education level, age, geographical location, and gender on the level of financial literacy in Uzbekistan. We show that the level of financial literacy in Uzbekistan is low; almost a quarter of the population (around 25%) possess basic knowledge of interest rates, inflation, and risk diversification. We further find that education level and gender have a significant impact on the level of financial literacy in Uzbekistan, while the geographical location and age are found to have no impact. Our research findings will support interested stakeholders and policymakers while developing their outreach plans to improve the level of financial literacy in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: financial literacy; demographic variables; Uzbekistan.

Parallel session A. Energy and Environment

Social cues and electricity consumption: evidence from a randomized control trial in Armenia

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This study investigates the effectiveness of "nudges" in the form of peer comparison reports on household energy consumption in Yerevan, Armenia. We collected the data from 300 households for a total of 8 months. We document the overall relationship between receiving monthly peer comparison reports and reduced energy consumption. Moreover, we also find strong and statistically significant heterogeneous treatment effects for female respondents, particularly those with higher education. The findings suggest that providing households with peer comparison reports can be an effective nudge to encourage them to reduce their energy consumption, and policymakers may need to tailor their energy conservation programs to different demographic groups. This study highlights the potential of peer comparison programs as a cost-effective, and efficient approach to reducing household energy consumption and carbon emissions in the context of developing countries.

Keywords: demand side management, nudges, household energy consumption, peer comparison, developing country, heterogeneous treatment effects.

Powering Up Child Growth: The Impact of Electricity Outages on Children's Anthropometric Outcomes in the Kyrgyz Republic

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Using household-level panel data and a coarsened exact matching procedure, this paper investigates the relationship between frequent electricity outages and the anthropometric outcomes of children. Specifically, we study the differences in the anthropometric outcomes of children aged under 5 in the Kyrgyz Republic. We find that children living in households with frequent outages have z-scores of height-for-age (HAZ) that are 0.37 units lower compared to the children living in similar

households but without frequent outages. We also document that HAZ values of girls are more sensitive toward frequent outages, which indicates a possible presence of gender bias among Kyrgyz households.

Keywords: Anthropometric outcomes, child health, electricity outages, Kyrgyz republic, transition economies

Circular Economy in the Clothing Industry in China: Drivers, Opportunities and Barriers

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Under the increasingly urgent and universal requirement of shifting from an unsustainable traditional linear business model to a closed-looped circular one, China is promoting Circular Economy initiatives proactively to gain high-quality and sustainable economic development. In particular, the clothing industry, as one of the most compelling yet polluting industries contemporarily in China, is where the efforts to promote and implement the circular economy should be put. This research is developed to analyze China's current situation in implementing circular economy strategies in the clothing industry to identify some drivers, opportunities, and barriers. By reviewing the Circular Economy practices in China's clothing industry and related literature, this research adopted the approach of conducting a systematic literature review. Through a systematic literature review, this research successfully identified three internal drivers of promoting circular economy initiatives in China's clothing industry: (1) profitability, (2) internal stakeholders' awareness, and (3) technical factors; four external drivers of promoting circular economy initiatives in China's clothing industry: (1) profitability, (2) governmental factors, (3) social factors, and (4) environmental factors; four possible opportunities for carrying out circular economy practices in China's clothing industry: (1) rental, (2) resale, (3) repair, and (4) remaking; and four barriers of promoting circular economy initiatives in China's clothing industry: (1) organizational, (2) governmental, (3) social, and (4) technological. With a systematic and comprehensive analysis of these factors, this research could provide firms that want to develop sustainably in the clothing industry in China with a set of circular economy knowledge to assist their transition. This research is the first to systematically explain the development possibilities in rental, resale, repair, and remaking opportunities of circular economy initiatives in the clothing industry in China simultaneously. Combining with analyzing drivers and barriers from proper segments, this research provided the audiences with a holistic view of implementing a circular economy in the clothing industry in China.

Keywords: China, Circular Economy, Clothing Industry, Fast Fashion, Sustainable Development

Parallel session B. Economic Policy

Stability in Chaos: Unraveling the Impact of Monetary and Fiscal Policy Coordination on Emerging Markets during the Pandemic Financial Crisis

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This study investigates the impact of monetary and fiscal policy coordination on the GDP growth rate and inflation rate in six emerging markets (China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia) during the pre-COVID-19 and pandemic financial crises. Using panel data regression and pooled OLS, the findings reveal that lowering interest rates effectively stimulates GDP growth in emerging markets before and during the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, increasing the money supply has a positive impact on economic performance. Higher government expenditure relative to GDP and larger fiscal stimulus packages significantly increased GDP growth during the pandemic but not before the crisis. Tax revenue had an insignificant effect on GDP and inflation. Nonetheless, lowering interest rates and expanding the money supply contribute to higher inflation rates. The government expenditure-to-GDP ratio significantly increased inflation during the pandemic, and larger fiscal stimulus packages had a positive and significant correlation with inflation in both periods. Changes in tax revenue have an insignificant impact on inflation. Furthermore, this study shows that monetary and fiscal coordination was stronger during the pandemic than during the pre-COVID-19 period. These findings highlight the importance of implementing appropriate monetary and fiscal policies to ensure economic stability in emerging markets, particularly during a financial crisis. Policymakers should carefully consider the potential impact of interest rate changes on inflation and manage money supply growth to maintain economic stability through well-targeted monetary and fiscal policies.

Keywords: Monetary Policy, Fiscal Policy, Emerging Markets, Pandemic Financial Crisis, Economic Stability

Capital Constraints for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Facing Global Market Competition: Case Study of Micro and Small Enterprises in Craft Centers and Export Products in Indonesia

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Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of Indonesia's national economy. In Indonesia there will be 64.1 million (99%) business units in 2023. In 2018 MSMEs contributed

57.8 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with a value of IDR 8,573.9 trillion. In 2019 it contributed 60 percent of GDP and 14 percent of total national exports. In 2021, MSMEs contributed around 61.97 percent to the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbed 97 percent of the total workforce. The main aim of developing MSMEs is to encourage Indonesia's economic growth even higher. In 2022 Indonesia's economic growth was 5.31 percent and 3.70 percent in 2021. In 2023 Bank Indonesia projects economic growth of 4.5-5.3%. However, MSMEs are the main pillars for Indonesia's economic development which are able to contribute to the national economy and provide informal employment opportunities.

So far, the Indonesian government has tried to increase the competitiveness of MSME export products on the global market, including by facilitating digital innovation. As of June 2022, as many as 19.5 million (30.4%) MSMEs out of the total number of MSMEs have an e-commerce platform. By using an e-commerce platform, it is hoped that MSME entrepreneurs can more easily market their products to buyers and exporters. So far, several export products produced by micro and small businesses such as rattan furniture in Cirebon Regency and wooden crafts in Sumedang Regency are exported by second parties such as buyers and exporters. Meanwhile, micro and small entrepreneurs only act as subcontractors or suppliers because production costs and export costs are large. Minimum export of rattan furniture is one container. In semester 1 of 2023, exports of Cirebon rattan furniture reached USD 14.6 million (IDR 219 billion). Indonesian MSME categories as follows: 1). Micro businesses are companies that have a maximum net worth of IDR 50 million; 2). Small businesses have capital of IDR 50 million to IDR 500 million; and 3). Medium businesses have capital of IDR 500 million to a maximum of IDR 100 billion. This capital does not include land and building ownership. Micro businesses have a workforce of at most 10 people, small businesses have more than 10 to 49 employees, and medium businesses have a workforce of at least 50 to 150 employees. On average, micro businesses are managed by the owner himself with the help of family members.

Their business category is home industry, working as sub-contractors for medium-sized companies. For example, a wooden sculpture craft business in Sumedang Regency as a supplier to buyers or exporters. Most of the Songket craftsmen in Pande Sikek, Tanah Datar and Tanggo Buntung in Palembang City work for collectors. Generally, the sales system for micro and small business products is not directly to consumers or shop/gallery/exporter owners but through collectors. Furthermore, collectors resell these products to shop and gallery owners or exporters. This sales system has caused the craftsmen's profit margins to be minimal because the selling price has been determined by the collectors.

The majority of Indonesian MSMEs are in the form of home industry or family-owned businesses with the type of livelihood activities whose efforts are aimed at earning a living for the family. Home industry is run with simple management and semi-manual production processes. The number of workers is limited with self-taught skills so that production volume is limited. Some examples of micro businesses are the production of Sasirangan cloth in Banjarmasin City, Songket woven cloth in Pande Sikek, Tanah Datar and Tanggo Buntung, Palembang City, rattan furniture products in Tegal Wangi District, Cirebon Regency, and wooden sculptures in craft centers in Sumedang Regency. In general, craftsmen or micro-entrepreneurs act as subcontractors or suppliers to collectors, foreign buyers or exporters. Some of the types of businesses mentioned above can be categorized as small businesses because they require greater capital than micro entrepreneurs. Besides that, several small entrepreneurs are also collectors who collect products from several craftsmen. They do not have workers unless they have a big capital, shops or galleries as a place of sale. The collectors provide down payments or production capital loans or raw materials to the craftsmen. The capital for raw materials for Songket woven fabrics, such as silk thread, is expensive and have to buy materials in large quantities. This factor makes it difficult for micro-entrepreneurs to develop.

The production of these craftsmen must be sold to collectors at a price determined by the collectors or capital owners. In general, the constraints faced by micro and small entrepreneurs are minimal

capital and do not have access to banks to borrow working capital. Another difficulty in getting a bank capital loan is having to have collateral such as buildings, land certificates or cars. This has caused many micro and small entrepreneurs to borrow capital from non-bank financial institutions such as peer to peer (P2P) lending because the process is fast. However, P2P lending rates are very high, which causes production costs to increase. Basically, that capital is the main and classic obstacle for most MSMEs in Indonesia. So that many micro and small companies find it difficult to develop and compete in the domestic and global markets.

In fact, since 2007 the Indonesian government has had a People's Business Credit (KUR) program which aims to strengthen the capital capabilities of MSMEs. This program is in the context of implementing policies to accelerate the development of the real sector and empower MSMEs in an effort to increase Indonesia's economic growth. The micro KUR program can provide a maximum capital loan of IDR. 25 million with interest of 7%/year. The loan term is between 1 year and 5 years. The micro KUR program comes from banking funds provided for working capital and investment for MSMEs. There are 8 banks that distribute the KUR program, one of the distributors of the KUR program is Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI). The BRI KUR program is budgeted at IDR 415 trillion in 2023. This amount has increased compared to the previous year, which was IDR 372. However, the BRI KUR program is unable to meet the loans of many micro and small companies because there are so many of them. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The object of research is micro and small entrepreneurs who produce various handicraft products such as Sasirangan and Songket woven fabrics, rattan furniture, and wood crafts. The research objects for micro and small businesses are spread across 5 locations, namely: 1). Banjarmasin City; 2) Tanah Datar Regency; 3. Palembang City; 4. Cirebon Regency; and 5). Sumedang Regency. The results of the study show that the average micro and small entrepreneur has difficulty obtaining business capital, cannot afford to buy new production machines, and has difficulty obtaining skilled craftsmen. Another factor is obstacles to product sales, especially products for the export market which require large capital. The local market segment is small and the selling price is very low compared to the export market. This causes most of the production of rattan handicraft centers in Cirebon Regency and wood crafts in Sumedang Regency prefer to be sold to exporters.

The research results explain that although micro KUR borrowers do not need to provide collateral, the requirement to include financial report documents or bank accounts can cause difficulties for micro and small entrepreneurs. In general, these businesses are run with traditional management and their income is unstable, so many micro entrepreneurs do not have financial reports. Therefore, the government and banks need to make concrete and optimal efforts to develop micro and small businesses with the KUR program. The aim is for micro and small businesses to be able to compete in the global market.

Keywords: Capital; Craft product; Global Market, Export product; People's Business Credit; Small and Medium Enterprises

Impacts of Commitment to Change in Public Sector

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Purpose – This study aims to examine the purchase manager's contribution when implementing sustainable procurement initiatives, although existing literature indicates low level of support of procurement managers for such endeavors.

Design/methodology/approach – This conceptual paper investigated the potential behavioral influences on the managers and constraints faced by them while having procurement.

Findings – The relation and effect of three forms of commitment, affective (ACC), normative (NCC) and continuance (CCC) was studied. Study suggests that managers ACC and NCC positively influence the behavior that supports the change in sustainable procurement.

Practical implications – This study contributes to the emerging literature of sustainable behavior of managers, highlighting the role that affective (ACC), normative (NCC) and continuance (CCC) commitment plays in sustainable procurement by the managers.

Originality/value – This study provides a better understanding of sustainable behavior of managers by using the theory of reasoned action.

Keywords : Sustainable procurement behavior, Affective commitment to change, Continuance commitment to change and Normative commitment to change.

Parallel session C. Microfinance and Banking II

What are the main causal factors of the crisis of the non-bank microfinance institutions? Empirical qualitative evidence from Uzbekistan

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For almost four decades, microfinance has been recognized as an important development tool providing access to credit for low-income households and creating new jobs by supporting small entrepreneurship. Over the recent decade, however, ten microfinance crises around the world shattered developing economies. A microfinance crisis happened in Uzbekistan in 2011 when the activities of all non-bank microfinance institutions (NBMFIs) were suspended by the Central Bank. In most of the cases, the microfinance crisis took place very rapidly, and the crisis brought many devastating outcomes to borrowers and non-borrowers. We identified two major research gaps in literature. First, there is a lack of research on the causal factors that lead to the microfinance crisis. Second, there is a lack of research on the microfinance crisis in Central Asia, former CIS countries. There is no research so far on the microfinance crisis in Uzbekistan.

Our research objectives are: 1) to qualitatively identify and describe the main causal factors of the microfinance crisis in Uzbekistan, and 2) to identify early warning indicators that would be helpful in preventing future crises. To do this, we used an inductive, qualitative research design, based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 20 respondents (borrowers, bank and non-bank microfinance institutions' employees and managers, Central Bank employees and experts in microfinance). First, using thematic analysis, we identified, in total, more than 15 causal factors that lead to NBMFI closure, which we organized into three categories: demand, supply, and environment causal factors. Second, we propose early warning indicators (EWIs) that could be helpful in preventing future crises. The contributions of this research are: 1) the identification and description of the main causal factors of the microfinance crisis, 2) in the underexplored context of Uzbekistan, a Central Asia Country, and 3) the identification of early warning indicators of microfinance crisis. This paper will allow a better understanding of the alarming factors in the microcredit market that should potentially help prevent new crises in the future. These findings are relevant to a group of early (Eastern and Central European) and late transition countries (CIS and Central Asia).

Keywords: crisis, microfinance, non-bank microfinance institutions, causes, factors, Uzbekistan

Factors affecting non-performing loans: empirical evidence from commercial banks of Uzbekistan

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This paper applies a dynamic panel data approach to examine the main factors affecting non-performing loans (NPL) of commercial banks in Uzbekistan. The paper utilizes both bank-specific factors such as loan-to-deposit ratio, size, leverage, and type of ownership as well as macroeconomic factors, such as GDP growth rate and exchange rate to determine their significance in credit risk of commercial banks. The results indicate that loan-to-deposit ratio and leverage have a positive impact on NPL ratio while higher GDP growth rate is associated with lower rate of NPL. Size, bank ownership type and exchange rate have not shown significant impact on NPL.

Keywords: Banking, credit risk management, Central Asia, Uzbekistan, non-performing loans

Bank and Non-Bank Microfinance Institutions: Fierce Competitors or Strategic Partners, and What are Implications for Clients?

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Understanding the complexity of bank and non-bank MFIs interaction is vitally important, and the question if they will end up competing for the same type of consumers remains open. In this context, the issue of their co-existence has received considerable critical attention. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between bank and non-bank MFIs and identify the most important factors influencing their interaction. Our novel contribution is that we focus on the theory of change and analyze how exactly bank and non-bank MFIs co-exist. In particular, we focus on both client and financial institution perspectives. We also develop a theory of change. The main objective of this paper is to illustrate the relationship between bank and non-bank MFIs.

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of bank and non-bank microfinance institutions' relationship. There is evidence that MFIs could develop and produce their services jointly with commercial banks, and they could develop their cooperation under 'linkage' (Soyibo, 1996 and Reinke, 2001). More recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings which have suggested that the microfinance-bank relationship is not always a friendly partnership but can also be quite competitive (Rhyne and Lopez, 2003; Armendariz and Szafarz, 2011; De Quidt et al. 2018; Baraton and Léon, 2021). An environment for severe competition between banks and MFIs could be created due to two parallel processes such as commercialization or "mission drift" of MFIs and the "downscaling" of commercial banks through their ventures into microfinance (Delfiner and Peron, 2007).

According to the market failure hypothesis – when the banking sector is weak, microfinance flourishes as an alternative source of access to finance, focusing predominantly on low-income borrowers, and entrepreneurs. Microfinance providers could be of eight main types (Mix Market,

Microfinance Informational Exchange global platform) depending on whether they could issue a credit, deposits, or both.

In most countries, providers of microfinance and microcredits are divided into 2 types: bank and non-bank. The relationship between the bank and non-bank MFIs could be of two main types: (i) Strategic partners (Delfiner & Peron, 2007) or (ii) Competitors (Rhyne & Lopez, 2003) The literature on analyzing the relationship between bank and non-bank MFIs is rather thin.

We aim to contribute to this new strand of literature using novel evidence from Uzbekistan. The research context is very topical and the future of banking and microfinance is concerned. Both types of institutions have to search for their clientele to address the pressure of competition.

So, the question remains will they end up competing for the same type of consumers? Should they focus on building the focus on new markets (i.e. low income but very risky)? What should be the nature of their co-existence? These are specific research questions that we address in our paper.

This paper focuses on understanding the relationship between bank and non-bank MFIs and will attempt to answer the research questions by reviewing interviews conducted with various stakeholders.

The study utilized qualitative data to explore new themes and gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations behind the interaction of bank and non-bank MFIs. Also, by employing qualitative modes of inquiry, we attempt to illuminate the rich details shared by the individuals who interacted with the bank and non-bank MFIs.

The present results suggest that both banks' and non-bank MFIs' interaction display the characteristics of partnership, however, the strategic aspect of their cooperation was not strengthened formally. These findings have important implications for developing the microfinance sector and reinforcing collaboration between bank and non-bank MFIs.

Keywords: Non-bank MFIs, Strategic partners, Banking

Parallel session D. Culture and Tourism

Happiness and Community in Central Asia - From a Survey of Mahalla in the Andijan Region

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This study investigates the concept of well-being and its predictors specific to Uzbekistan. Previous transition happiness studies employing cross-country analysis have overlooked variations in the definition or meaning of well-being among transition countries and thus not considered cultural differences in conceptions of well-being. More importantly, the predictors of subjective well-being (SWB) can differ depending on the concept of well-being. Central Asia, characterized by unique SWB determinants compared to other transition countries, presents an intriguing case for study. Transition happiness studies show that the level of SWB is lower, and it strongly correlates with economic situations. In contrast, the SWB level in Central Asia is higher despite its poorer economic conditions. These distinctions in SWB between the two regions remain a puzzle. This research fills existing gaps by exploring the concept of well-being through a qualitative case study in Uzbekistan.

The findings suggest that relationship-oriented notions and Islamic values might serve as the foundations of well-being concepts. Therefore, social capital, such as connections and harmony among family or neighbors, as well as Islamic practices like experiencing the pilgrimage to Mecca and life rituals, can be crucial predictors of happiness. However, because of strong ties between parent-child relationships, social capital enhances SWB on the condition that the living conditions of their children and grandchildren have no concerns or problems. These results imply that variations in SWB determinants between Central Asia and other transition countries may be explained by well-being concept differences.

Key Words: Subjective well-being, Central Asia, Islamic values, Mahalla

Exploring cultural barriers to Knowledge Sharing using Theory of Sociocultural Models: An Ethnographic Study of National Institute of Management, Pakistan Academy for Rural Development and Pakistan Provincial Services Academy

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Knowledge Sharing (KS) is one the most important processes of Knowledge Management (KM) contributing directly to the competitive advantage of an organization. KS includes sharing of explicit and tacit knowledge for collaborative problem solving and innovation (Silva de Garcia et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2014). Cultural barriers constitute a significant challenge to knowledge sharing in general and tacit knowledge in particular in the public sector. Association with power, promotions, time allocation, trust, reciprocal benefits, lack of social capital, strict adherence to hierarchies and legally assigned organizational jurisdictions are some of the factors contributing to cultural barriers to knowledge sharing in public sector organizations (Ahrend et al., 2014; Al-Kurdi et al., 2020; Al Shraah et al., 2022; Titi Amayah, 2013). Voluminous literature has now established that knowledge sharing or transfer is required to be nurtured in a specific cultural environment which generally encourages socialization, openness, sharing, team work, innovation etc. (Dalkir, 2013; Goswami et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2018; Scarbrough, 1999). However, “despite the large amount of literature on organizational learning and knowledge management, the nature of the relationship between

individual motivation and knowledge sharing in organizations remains mostly unexplored and poorly understood” (Anshari et al., 2022, p. 3).

National Institute of Management (NIM) Peshawar, Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD) and Pakistan Provincial Services Academy (PPSA) are three public sector organizations that demonstrate the typical siloed approach regarding knowledge sharing. The aforementioned three organizations are housed within one campus, led by one Director General and share the various facilities of the campus. Despite this apparently conducive environment for knowledge sharing, there is a significant dearth of knowledge sharing culture amongst the three organizations. The employees of NIM, PARD and PPSA have developed their respective cultural communities which are alienated from one another despite having similar mandates of training and research. Theory of Sociocultural Models (TSCM) can be used to explore the Sociocultural Models (SCMs) developed by the employees of the three organization and identify the cultural attributes which are hampering knowledge sharing amongst the three organizations. “SCMs are a structured set of prescriptions for people to interpret the world, communities, other people, and themselves; they are a set of scripts for acting in accord with these interpretations. These models are developed by people’s cultural communities, and they are learned and internalized by their members as validated recipes for their lives and actions” (Chirkov, 2020, p. 1).

TSCM offers a robust philosophical paradigm and research mechanism to explore SCMs through the analysis of public internalized aspects of SCMs and human agency (Chirkov, 2020). This study explores the way employees of NIM, PARD and PPSA can overcome the cultural barriers to inter institutional knowledge sharing. This study has used a combination of autoethnography and person-centered ethnography to explore the public and internalized SCMs of the employees of NIM, PARD and PPSA. Purposive sampling has been used to select 3 faculty members each of NIM, PARD and PPSA as participants in this research. Faculty members have been selected because their job description is closest to that of a knowledge worker and most relevant to the practice of knowledge sharing. Data has been collected through semi-structured interviews and non-obtrusive participant observation. The entire data set will be analyzed through thematic analysis. Open coding followed by axial coding of the data will be applied to detect the pattern in the data. This study will contribute to the current literature on cultural barriers to knowledge sharing in public sector organizations.

Key words: Knowledge sharing, Cultural barriers, Sociocultural models, Sociocultural models

Importance of events and festivals in creating destination image

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The tourism industry is developing more dynamically with the expanding accessibility of information together with the advances in technology. In the light of these developments, the destination image created by tourism stakeholders paves the way for the proliferation of alternative tourism types. Destination image refers to the sum of impressions and perceptions an individual has about a particular region or city (Ilgın and Uruç, 2018: 2). Today, tourism marketers have turned their attention to event and festival tourism in order to reveal perceptions and impressions towards destinations. At this point, event and festival tourism, which is within the scope of cultural tourism,

increases the employment rate and welfare level by contributing to countries economically, and it is of great significance in terms of shaping the future by transferring cultural values to future generations without disruption, sustainable growth and development, gaining competitive advantage and creating a destination image. In addition, tourist destinations contribute to the formation of the destination image by creating alternative tourism products for countries, regions or cities and play an important role in creating added value to natural, historical and cultural values by increasing the number of tourist visits. Thus, as soon as the destination image is formed, the touristic demand is directed to the sports or cultural events and festivals organized at local, national and international level. In this study, a conceptual research of event and festival tourism has been conducted allowing for evaluating natural, historical and cultural riches and ensuring their sustainability and creating a destination image. In addition, the possible effects of event and festival alternative tourism forms on the formation of destination image are emphasized.

Key words: Tourism, Touristic demand, Destination image

Parallel session A. Organizational Management and HRM II

HR Practices in Uzbekistan using CRANET network methodology

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The purpose of the research is to collect information pertaining to the best HRM practices in Uzbekistan and then in the long run, in future similar research to compare patterns of HRM practices and policies within and across countries and to explore how HRM changes over time. The obtained results demonstrate valuable information and can be used by HRM practitioners, academics and policymakers. Similarly, the research helps to explore the HRM practices in Uzbekistan that will contribute to the knowledge and put Uzbekistan on the map of the CRANET research and its dashboard.

Human Resource Management (HRM) is the domain that is under extensive research in developed and developing countries all over the world. However, there is a limited number of publications and research in the field of HRM practices in Uzbekistan. Observations suggested that human resource management at Uzbek companies are still implemented in the views of traditional personnel management (Inoyatova and Smagina, 2019). However, “during the last 5-7 years in Uzbekistan we are observing that the perception about the role of Human Resources is beginning to change” (AmCham Uzbekistan, 2018). The labour market is becoming more competitive, and organisations need to adapt and develop HRM practices to fit these changes. There is a substantial part of the literature devoted to the understanding of various roles and activities of the HR function that are expected to take place, incorporated into various HR role typologies (e.g. Storey, 1992; Caldwell, 2003; Ulrich et al., 2008 cited in Björkman et al, 2014).

The research project was conducted as part of the CRANET Research Network. The CRANET project aims to collect evidence of how HRM practices vary across the world on best practices and comparative performance in HRM. WIUT became the 1st member to represent Uzbekistan within the Cranfield Network on International Human Resource Management (CRANET) since 2021 and collaborate with over 40 Universities and business schools in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia, and Australia. CRANET is the world’s largest HRM research network and the only one that has been collecting comparative data on HRM in different countries for more than three (3) decades.

Data and methods. CRANET stipulates a meticulous methodology to operate within the complex functional areas of HRM to conduct its international comparative survey. The network provides its validated tool in the form of a questionnaire to collect data about HRM practices in each country. Country researchers must translate the tool into the local languages and then do back translation to ensure the correctness of the translation of the tool. Some questions could be adapted considering the context and regulatory framework of the country. The tool is a 66 items questionnaire (which has been translated into Uzbek and Russian languages) was sent by the researchers via the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and by approaching employers in the Career Fairs. The questionnaire was anonymous, and no incentives were used to encourage the response from the HR representatives. Data collection method was online and in hard copy with the random sampling method. Data was collected and entered manually onto SurveyMonkey. The period of data collection was October 2021 – April 2022. Data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

Main results. One hundred (100) companies participated in the survey. Main results reveal information on the number of companies with the existing HR department; background information about the HR such as their previous workplace, gender, education etc. Interesting information has been found pertaining to the involvement of the HR departments in the business strategy development of the organizations; various HRM activities used by organizations; and common

recruitment methods used for various positions. Information on the number of organizations that implemented the formal appraisal system has been revealed along with implementation and systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of employee training in the organizations. Results also include information on how the nature of the HR practitioners had changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and more.

Keywords: CRANET, HR practices, recruitment, performance appraisal, training, and development

Linking Illegitimate Tasks with Employee Deviant Silence through Revenge Motives: The Moderating Role of Moral Identity

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Over the past two decades, employee silence has remained a matter of academic and corporate interest due to its high prevalence in the workplace (Detert et al., 2010; Knoll & Van Dick, 2013). Defined as a conscious decision to withhold important information concerning organizational matters, employee silence has been suggested to be detrimental to employee and organizational effectiveness (Hao et al., 2022; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). Evidence confirms that 90% of employees are not speaking up in organizations and that an average cost of \$7500 for each failed conversation at work; it remains high time to know about all possible reasons behind such employee behavior (Maxfield, 2016). Although management researchers have highlighted a few possible motives behind employee silence, such as low self-efficacy, feeling afraid or personally at risk, etc. (Dyne et al., 2003), one particular type of silence, i.e., deviant silence, remains largely under-explored.

Deviant silence differs from other types of silence because, in this particular type, the employee withholds information to harm the organization and its members (Brinsfield, 2013). Some empirical evidence confirms its possible antecedents, such as workplace incivility, supervisor's mistreatment, etc. (Kashif et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2022), but it certainly requires further investigation that how certain work characteristics can promote such harmful behavior at work. To fill this gap, this research explores how employee perceptions of illegitimate tasks can predict deviant silence. In addition, we investigate a possible mechanism in the form of revenge motive and moral identity as a boundary condition for this possible linkage. Illegitimate tasks "violate norms about what an employee can properly be expected to do because they are perceived as unnecessary or unreasonable; they imply a threat to one's professional identity" (Semmer et al., 2015). When expected from individuals, such roles can undermine their well-being by posing a threat to self-esteem (Eatough et al., 2016). For example, asking a software developer to clean the office floor would be considered illegitimate. Based on the social exchange perspective (Blau, 1964), we expect that illegitimate tasks can violate the positive exchanges between the employee and organization and promote negative reciprocity. These unnecessary and unreasonable tasks mainly convey disrespect to individuals (Sonnentag & Lischetzke, 2018). It has been evident that such perceptions of injustice as an outcome of illegitimate tasks have been evident in previous literature (Semmer et al., 2015). We suggest that employees with illegitimate tasks may engage in unfavorable exchanges and show deviant silence to get even with their organization. Similar employee response in the form of deviant silence has been confirmed as a response to adverse work conditions (Khalid & Ahmed, 2016; Khan et al., 2022).

This study also presents a mechanism to link illegitimate tasks with deviant silence. Specifically, we propose that violations of norms may invoke negative emotions, and individuals may get motivated

to get revenge on the organization. These revenge motives will thus lead to deviant silence behavior at work. Previous research confirms the role of illegitimate tasks in predicting feelings of resentment, threats to social self-esteem, and desire for revenge (Semmer et al., 2021). Such desire for revenge comes from feelings of unfairness and being devaluated by the organization. In turn, such revenge motives predict employee outcomes such as CWB, turnover intentions, and reduced in-role performance, which remain detrimental to the organization (Afshan et al., 2022; Hung et al., 2009; Nguyen et al., 2022). Accordingly, based on the social exchange perspective, we suggest that illegitimate tasks motivate employees to get into negative reciprocity and thus foster revenge by blaming the organization and its members for the unfair treatment at work. As an outcome of these revenge motives, individuals will withhold crucial information to harm the organization and its members. Furthermore, this research also explores the boundary condition for the relationship between illegitimate tasks and deviant silence behavior. Specifically, an individual characteristic, i.e., moral identity, has been tested as a moderator on this linkage. Moral identity refers to the extent to which individuals value moral self-images and regard themselves as a moral person (Aquino & Reed, 2002, p. 1424). Individuals with high moral identity act according to their moral standards and behave ethically (Detert et al., 2008).

Previous research confirms the significant role of moral identity in promoting self-regulation and buffering the impact of unfavorable conditions on employee behavior (Greenbaum et al., 2013; Skarlicki et al., 2016). Based on this, we argue that individuals with high moral identity are less likely to show deviant silence as a response to illegitimate tasks because engaging in such deviant behavior may not comply with their internal moral standards and vice versa. Two studies have been conducted on different samples to test the hypothesized relationships. An experimental study using a vignette design (Study 1) confirmed that illegitimate tasks have a significant relationship with deviant silence. Data from a time-lagged study (Study 2) collected at three-time points confirmed the direct relationship between illegitimate tasks and deviant silence and the indirect relationship through the mediation of revenge motive. Findings also showed the significant moderating role of moral identity on the relationship between illegitimate tasks and deviant silence. These findings have important implications in terms of industry.

Key words: Moral identity, Deviant silence, Adverse work conditions

Linking responsibility leadership to innovative work behavior and organizational commitment: the vital role of hope

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The present study addresses the growing imperative faced by leaders in higher education to foster academic innovative work behavior and organizational commitment in a responsible manner. However, the precise nature of the relationship between responsible leadership and academic innovative work behavior, as well as organizational commitment, remains inadequately understood. To bridge this gap in knowledge, this research aims to investigate the mediating role of hope in the responsible leadership–academic innovative work behavior and responsible leadership–organizational commitment relationships.

Key words: Higher education, Afghanistan, Responsible leadership

Parallel session B. Education Quality in Higher Education

Impact of academic research on teaching quality. A case from WIUT

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This study investigates the mutual relationship between teaching quality and academic research at Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT). The main question explores whether increased research participation by instructors enhances instruction as a whole. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collects data from lecturers and professors at WIUT through qualitative interviews about their experiences and difficulties incorporating research into their lesson plans. In parallel, students are given standardized questionnaires to complete in order to collect quantifiable data regarding how they perceive the influence of professorial research on the caliber of education they receive. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) will be used to examine the quantitative data, enabling a detailed investigation of the connections between teaching quality and research output. Initial predictions point to a possible positive association. Overall, the paper aims at adding important new information to the continuing discussion over how effective research contributions are at improving the quality of instruction. It aims to provide guidance for tactics that can favorably affect and raise the general standard of education at WIUT by highlighting the possible effects of increasing research activity on instructional techniques.

Keywords: Teaching quality, Academic research, Instructional techniques

An individual's perspective of knowledge transfer upon return: the case of public universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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The fundamental purpose of international assignments for employees is to acquire new knowledge in the host country and transfer it upon return. This objective can be achieved when the home organization is able to successfully reintegrate its repatriates (Furuya et al., 2009). In the conventional literature, researchers have paid more attention to the expatriate experience and less to what happens to repatriates when they return home (Herman & Tetrick, 2009; Knocke & Schuster, 2017; Pritchard, 2011). This was due to the assumption that both processes share similarities (Hammer et al., 1998; Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992), and because repatriates return to familiar territory; therefore, re-entry was 'easier' and not even considered worthy of investigation (Black et al., 1992; Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, & Valk, 2010). However, it is now well established that the dynamics of repatriation can turn out to be even more critical and unexpectedly more challenging (Sharon, 2013). The significance of knowledge transfer during international transitions is also

reflected from Berthoin Antal's (2001) introduction of another stage to expatriation-repatriation process, that is, knowledge sharing, which is a complex, multilevel, and multidisciplinary phenomenon. Furthermore, the literature on repatriates' knowledge transfer mainly concentrates on the antecedents and consequences of repatriates' knowledge transfer and substantially ignores the microprocesses involved during the process (Burmeister et al., 2015; Osland et al., 2020). This study, therefore, addresses the call by exploring the relational dynamics involved during the process of knowledge transfer that either facilitates or inhibits repatriates' knowledge transfer. A small stream of research in knowledge management has considered knowledge transfer as a type of change (Guzman & Wilson, 2005). Knowledge transfer can result in changes in the five main elements in organizations as identified by Argote and Ingram (2000). These are: individual members, organizational structures, organizational procedures and practices, organizational culture, and physical structure of the workplace. Hence, a change in any of these repositories can ultimately affect the acceptance, process, and outcomes of knowledge transfer. Hence, this study knowledge transfer is studied through the lens of change, which is often met with resistance.

This study has been conducted in the public universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Public universities are characterized by traditional hierarchies, bureaucratic structures and culture that creates organizational inertia towards change (Ashok, Al Badi Al Dhaheri, Madan, & Dzandu, 2021). This study has sparked the first author's interest as she is a repatriate herself and has experienced several challenges in knowledge transfer upon return. In 2002, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan offered various scholarships to the faculty of higher education institutes to attain higher research qualifications in the developed countries. The aim was to foster the research culture of the universities and to be at par with the international standards. In exchange, the faculty had to sign a contract with their respective universities to serve them for five years or to return the entire scholarship amount. The universities with the help of HEC had planned a repatriation program by giving promotions and better salaries to faculty who have successfully completed their PhD and have returned home. However, the universities failed to understand that acceptance of repatriates' knowledge transfer was also significant for their successful reintegration as it was the main purpose of sending them abroad.

To conduct this study, a combination of autoethnography of the first author and narrative interviews of fifteen faculty were conducted from different public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The co-authors helped to critically reflect and analyze the experiences of the first author. A snowball sampling technique was used to gain access to the participants. The interviews ranged from 40 minutes to more than an hour. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by using the aid of Express Scribe. The software NVIVO assisted in data management. Data was analyzed through thematic narrative analysis to identify the patterns in the data. Findings reveal that repatriates found it difficult in transferring knowledge to improve work procedures and practices due to hierarchical structures, bureaucratic culture, and rigidity in policies, procedures, and processes in the public universities. Also, most of the procedures were defined by the HEC that the universities had to follow. Secondly, repatriates believed that the universities lacked understanding of their knowledge and its effectiveness. This shows that the universities lacked the necessary mechanism that could help the repatriates to implement what they had learned abroad. The universities expected improvements without providing the necessary infrastructure and fundamental resources to introduce new teaching methods and to improve the research culture. Also, repatriates' knowledge was underutilized as they were engaged in unnecessary administrative tasks that distracted them from their teaching and research. Thirdly, repatriates experienced relational tensions with their colleagues and the administration. They felt that their knowledge was denied due to rigidity in behaviors and workplace jealousies. However, repatriates were able to bring change where they had the freedom to do so. For instance, they were able to improve their teaching methods, introduce research degree programs, develop curriculum, and so forth. This was achieved through the support of their other colleagues who were also repatriates. Several reported their intentions to leave after the completion of their bonds since they felt that the hindrance to knowledge transferred was jeopardizing their career.

This study, therefore, contributes theoretically to the current literature by exploring the employee perspective regarding knowledge transfer through the lens of change instead of the organizational perspective. It adds to our understanding of a non-western country that has a different socio-cultural context and lacks resources to facilitate repatriates' knowledge transfer. In future, the perspective of administrative staff can be taken into consideration to understand their perspective and expectations regarding repatriates' knowledge transfer. Also, a longitudinal study would be helpful to understand if repatriates have continued with their jobs or have left their universities. The findings of this study also indicate additional challenges faced by women repatriates in readjusting to the culture of their home country both in their families and workplace. This is yet another significant area of future research.

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Key words: Knowledge transfer, Higher Education Commission, Repatriation, Pakistan

Does school climate quality effect education quality: evidence from PISA 2018

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The core objective of this paper is to assess the effect of school climate quality on education quality in Kazakhstan. The literature review explores the elements of school climate quality effecting quality of education in secondary schools. The school climate consists of at least three dimensions, specifically, safety environment, teaching and learning, and school community. The empirical analysis covers more than 50 000 observations from sample schools of Singapore schools. Using Structural Education Modelling (SEM) estimation outcomes, it is expected to achieve following outcomes: conducive school culture have a positive impact on pupil's achievement. In Kazakhstan, students who perceive greater support from their teachers and consider their teachers will be scored higher in cognitive assessment.

Keywords: education quality, quality of teaching, Secondary education, school climate

Parallel session C. Research Methods in Social Sciences

Customer experience: a sentiment analysis and topic modelling approach from an European bank tweets

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In financial decision making, information seeking (perfect market) is very essential for a successful investment. Thus, knowledge in any business transaction (pre-and-post-financial transactions) particularly among customers is a strategic management tool for stakeholders of banking institutions and other financial outlets in general. Undoubtedly, this acquired information from the digital world not only helps customers but admonish banks to effectively and efficiently allocate resources in the markets in which decisions are made under uncertainty. Today, customers' reviews are readily accessible on the virtual space (usually the online platforms) across several product and service categories. Yet the positive and negative expressions describe individual's perceived 'satisfied and unsatisfied' of the said product/service respectively. While the usually assigned product or service ratings on these social networks present the overall valuation ranging from product type to product satisfaction, and this development (intelligent) has drawn attention to contemporary scholars and other industry players within the spheres of electronic commerce like banks, telecoms, and other service-based organizations. However, the fundamental question at this point is how to convert this chunk of customers' expressions into a collective customers' preference model which can be useful for instance, a product redevelopment or service improvement and knowledge management through the application of sentiment analytic and topic modeling. Again, the rapid increase in the quantity of customer data has promoted the necessity and the interest into analyzing such data (mixed- opinion) for managerial decision-making regarding product or service performance (Vinodhini and Chandrasekaran, 2012; Pontiki et al., 2015). Notwithstanding, the consumption of these Apps (social media channels) by individuals and business organizations have created a correlation between them. For example, a bank, typically a commercial organization, connected to these platforms aimed at drawing closer to its customers for easier exchange or dissemination of information across. Owing to this, the operator bank of this App has the opportunity to market its products to a prospective customer (Jiang et al., 2014). This interaction over the internet has been deemed important since the marketing trends has become a norm given the fact that the customer is regarded as a core element of product design and development. The research question(s) that arise and guide this study are:

- 1) What pattern of customer's expression can be found from the UniCredit groups Twitter site?
 - 2) How do customers' Hashtags speak about products or brands initiated by the UniCredit group?
- Against this notion, the present study seeks to evaluate customers' preference and experience regarding the bank's products and services with the aid of sentiment analysis and topic modeling approach. It is imperative to understand that for online-based-service organizations to survive in this technological era, social media usage as a driver to enhance competitive strategy, sentiments associated with textual data of customers must be explored and analyzed. This will assist in unearthing consumer opinions, frustrations, satisfaction which culminates to have a positive consequence for the businesses(banks).

With respect to the research strategy of the study, like several other social media research (opinion mining), our data collection step precedes the implementation of our method and analysis phase. Data pre-processing helps to filter out and remove noise in our dataset. After data cleaning, sentiment analysis is performed on the collection of tweets using four different lexicons namely: Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasonor—VADER (Hutto & Gilbert, 2014), AFINN (Nielson, 2011), SentiWordNet (Baccianella, Esuli, and Sebastiani, 2010) and Text Blob (Loria, 2018). To execute this research aim, we retrieve large volumes of user-generated content from the Twitter API handle of UniCredit group in Europe (a large-scale bank) with a focus on the banks' portfolio of products. Thus, Loan acquisition, signing payments with fingerprint or Face ID, Mobile Phone top up with few clicks, Credit card repayment, Debit card activation, and e-banking flexibility among others. The results of the sentiment analysis using each lexicon are compared against a human-labeled sample drawn from the dataset and then trained using the naive Bayes classifier to determine the best lexicon based on the accuracy score. We subsequently discuss the potential reasons for the results obtained. Finally, we construct word clouds using the tweets from all the two sentiment classes namely: positive and negative to understand the pain points expressed by customers and look for opportunities to connect with the From the sentiment analysis part of the study, the findings show that Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner (VADER) outperforms all the other three lexicons based on accuracy and computational efficiency.

Again, we generated a word cloud to visually examine the terms in the positive and negative sentiment categories based on VADER. This suggests that in today's globalized empowered customers, firms need to focus on customer engagement to enhance customer experience via social media channels (e.g., Twitter) since the meaning of competitive advantage has shifted from purely competing over price and product to building customer loyalty, trust, and delight. We model themes from the topic and keywords extracted using the MALLET LDA toolkit based on the combined judgement and reference to other scholarly works on electronic business/ banking. Given that many topics can return junk topics and unstable outputs, we limited our topic extraction to twenty (20) topics (Nikolenko, Koltcov, and Koltsova, 2017). Again, the works of (Kim, Jeong, et al., 2016; Ibrahim, & Wang 2019) justifies our selection of 20 optimal topics used in this study. We subsequently label the topics using five themes namely: online brand and product experience, reliability, timely delivery, customer focus and satisfaction. Conclusively, the study adds up to broaden the scope of electronic business (e-business) given the interplay of consumer sentiments via social media channels. Financial practitioners can use this to investigate public opinions of their company's products, or to analyze customer behavioral patterns in terms of service satisfaction given the range of their products. Organizations can also use this to gather critical feedback about problems associated with newly released products. Additionally, the topic models are very useful for the purpose for document clustering, organizing large blocks of textual data, information retrieval from unstructured text and feature selection.

Keywords: e-banking, Twitter, Sentiment Analysis, topic modeling, customers' product experience, UniCredit Group, Europe

Simulation Study on Double Bootstrap Confidence Intervals in Linear Models: Case of Outliers

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The marginal effects in linear models have been of considerable interest in social science. Inferences about marginal effects have relied largely on asymptotic methods which have an assumption that the limiting distribution of the estimator is normal. We introduce the bootstrap approach as an alternative way to construct confidence intervals and to estimate the sampling distributions of estimators of marginal effect in a linear model. We illustrate the performance of traditional methods and bootstrap procedures in case of bad outliers. We make use of the double bootstrap procedure for confidence interval estimation. Results indicate that double bootstrap confidence intervals outperform traditional OLS intervals in presence of severe outliers in small samples.

Key words: Linear models, Double Bootstrap, OLS intervals, Confidence intervals

AI Enabled Education Management: Navigating the Opportunities and Challenges

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An overview of the advantages and disadvantages of using artificial intelligence (AI) in education management is provided in this study. The application of AI to improve teaching and learning, boost educational data analysis, streamline assessment, and offer individualized learning experiences are all covered in this article. It also highlights the moral and societal issues with AI in education, such as privacy worries, algorithmic bias, and the possibility that AI could take the role of human teachers. Students can get individualized guidance and support that fits their unique learning preferences and styles with the aid of AI. Teachers can focus more on creating creative lesson plans and forming relationships with their students by using AI-powered technologies to automate grading and feedback. The need of ethical frameworks and policies that support the responsible use of AI in education is emphasized in the paper's conclusion, along with the necessity of careful thought and planning in the integration of AI into education management.

Keywords - Education management, personalized learning, analysis of educational data, assessment, privacy issues, bias in AI, and human teachers are some of the terms used in this section.