



**10th Annual Conference of the
EuroMed Academy of Business**

**Global and national business theories and practice:
bridging the past with the future**

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FOREWORD

The Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business aims to provide a unique international forum to facilitate the exchange of cutting-edge information through multidisciplinary presentations on examining and building new theory and business models for success through management innovation.

It is acknowledged that the conference has established itself as one of the major conferences of its kind in the EuroMed region, in terms of size, quality of content, and standing of attendees. Many of the papers presented contribute significantly to the business knowledge base.

The conference attracts hundreds of leading scholars from leading universities and principal executives and politicians from all over the world with the participation or intervention of Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Company CEOs, Presidents of Chambers, and other leading figures.

This year the conference attracted over 270 people from over 50 different countries. Academics, practitioners, researchers and Doctoral students throughout the world submitted original papers for conference presentation and for publication in this Book. All papers and abstracts were double blind reviewed. The result of these efforts produced empirical, conceptual and methodological papers and abstracts involving all functional areas of business.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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It is acknowledged that a successful conference could not be possible without the special co-operation and care of the Track Chairs and Reviewers for reviewing the many papers that were submitted to this conference. Special thanks to the Session Chairs and Paper Discussants for taking the extra time to make this conference a real success.

The last but not the least important acknowledgment goes to all those who submitted and presented their work at the conference. Their valuable research has highly contributed to the continuous success of the conference.

TABLE OF PAPERS

| | |
|--|-----|
| INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL AND ENABLING FACTORS FOR STARTUPS IN A BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM PERSPECTIVE | 37 |
| <i>Abbate, Tindara¹; Accordino, Patrizia²; La Rocca, Eloira Tiziana¹; Rupo, Daniela¹</i> | 37 |
| A SUGGESTED NEW METHOD OF INNOVATION: INTRODUCING THE INTEGRATED QUALITY FUNCTION DEPLOYMENT FOR PRODUCTS & SERVICES | 53 |
| <i>Abu-Assab, Samah</i> | 53 |
| PERCEIVED VALUE OF BRANDS: THE EFFECTS OF BRAND ATTRACTIVENESS AND BRAND TRUSTWORTHINESS | 64 |
| <i>Akturan, Ulun</i> | 64 |
| ADVANCING THE PRIVATE HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN LEBANON AND THE MIDDLE EAST - INTRODUCING NEW MEDICAL BENEFITS BY THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATORS | 73 |
| <i>Al Khoury, Wissam¹; Bekhazi, Helene¹; Al Khoury, Grace²</i> | 73 |
| INTERLINKING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IN THE LEBANESE RETAIL BANKING SECTOR..... | 92 |
| <i>Al Khoury, Grace; Thrassou, Alkis; Kaufmann, Hans Ruediger</i> | 92 |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AS DRIVERS OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: A FRAMEWORK | 107 |
| <i>Andreottola, Francesco¹; Massaro, Maria Rita²</i> | 107 |
| THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC RESEARCH ON INDUSTRY INNOVATION: A TECHNOLOGY-LEVEL PERSPECTIVE IN THE GREEN ENERGY FIELD..... | 113 |
| <i>Ardito, Lorenzo; Messeni Petruzzelli, Antonio; Albino, Vito</i> | 113 |
| THE EFFECTS OF PAY DISPERSION BETWEEN EXECUTIVES AND EMPLOYEES OF AN ORGANIZATION ON FIRM PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM TURKEY | 119 |
| <i>Ataay, Aylin</i> | 119 |
| THE EFFECTS OF PAY DISPERSION BETWEEN EXECUTIVES AND EMPLOYEES OF AN ORGANIZATION ON FIRM PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM TURKEY | 131 |
| <i>Aylin Ataay</i> | 131 |
| INVOLVING CUSTOMERS IN NEW SERVICE DEVELOPMENT: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE | 143 |
| <i>Athanasopoulou, P.¹; Giovanis, A.N.²; Karounis, V.¹; Tsoukatos, E.³</i> | 143 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| RE-AFFIRMING THE NEED FOR SYSTEMS THINKING IN SOCIAL SCIENCES: A VIABLE SYSTEMS VIEW OF SMART CITY | 152 |
| <i>Barile, Sergio¹; Saviano, Marialuisa²; Caputo, Francesco³</i> | <i>152</i> |
| SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON NPO BRAND EQUITY: CONCEPTUALIZING THE TRENDS AND PROSPECTS | 168 |
| <i>Belenioti, Zoe- Charis¹; Vassiliadis, Chris A.²</i> | <i>168</i> |
| SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN BANKING: A BIBLIOGRAPHIC REVIEW | 179 |
| <i>Bellomo, Mario; La Rosa, Fabio</i> | <i>179</i> |
| FOR LOVE AND MONEY! EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCES IN USA NONPROFIT ART ORGANIZATIONS..... | 193 |
| <i>Besana, Angela; Esposito, Annamaria.....</i> | <i>193</i> |
| CAN A HIGH WOMEN QUOTA IN SUPERVISORY BOARDS INFLUENCE ENTERPRISE SUCCESS? | 206 |
| <i>Binder, B.C.K.</i> | <i>206</i> |
| THE POWER OF NARRATION (STORY) FOR LEARNING AND FOR LIFE: BRIDGING PAST AND FUTURE..... | 220 |
| <i>Bombelli, M. Cristina¹; Jirkovska, Blanka²; Sawyer, Carol H.³; Wallace, Annika E.⁴; Walling, Barbara⁵.....</i> | <i>220</i> |
| REDUCING COSTS OR INCREASING MARKETING: STRATEGIC SUGGESTIONS FOR TOURISM FIRMS IN CRISIS SITUATIONS | 225 |
| <i>Bremser, Kerstin¹; Alonso-Almeida, María del Mar²; Llach, Josep³</i> | <i>225</i> |
| FEATURES AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES OF PIEDMONT AGRITOURISMS | 237 |
| <i>Broccardo, Laura; Culasso, Francesca; Giacosa, Elisa; Truant, Elisa.....</i> | <i>237</i> |
| FRAMING THE TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS OF A BRAND | 247 |
| <i>Brunetti, Federico¹; Confente, Ilenia¹; Kucharska, Wioleta²; Kaufmann, Hans Ruediger³.....</i> | <i>247</i> |
| HOW FOUNDERS VIEW THE DEVELOPMENT OF CUSTOMER- AND BRAND-ORIENTED CAPABILITIES OF THEIR YOUNG FIRM..... | 257 |
| <i>Buttenberg, Katharina.....</i> | <i>257</i> |
| TOWARDS A LIFE-CYCLE MODEL OF INTER-FIRM NETWORKS: PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL PATHWAYS OF EVOLUTION | 274 |
| <i>Cantele, Silvia; Vernizzi, Silvia.....</i> | <i>274</i> |

| | |
|--|------------|
| THE ROLE OF BIG DATA IN VALUE CO-CREATION FOR THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY | 287 |
| <i>Caputo, Francesco¹; Evangelista, Federica²; Perko, Igor³; Russo, Giuseppe².....</i> | <i>287</i> |
| CAN BRAND ENTERTAINMENT STRENGTHEN A BRAND?..... | 298 |
| <i>Caratù, Myriam; Sfodera, Fabiola</i> | <i>298</i> |
| TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AS DRIVER OF SMART GROWTH: A QUADRUPLE / QUINTUPLE INNOVATION FRAMEWORK APPROACH..... | 313 |
| <i>Carayannis, Elias¹; Caputo, Francesco²; Del Giudice, Manlio³</i> | <i>313</i> |
| RECENT ISSUES ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE: THE EFFECTS OF THE “PRECAUTIONARY RECAPITALISATION” | 334 |
| <i>Cardi, Mavie.....</i> | <i>334</i> |
| ENHANCING TOURISM DURING 2007-2013 PROGRAMMING PERIOD IN ROMANIA: THE CASE OF BRASOV GROWTH POLE | 345 |
| <i>Catana, Aida; Manea, Daniela; Titan, Emilia</i> | <i>345</i> |
| POLITICAL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE TURKISH BUSINESS CONTEXT ... | 352 |
| <i>Cemek, Elif.....</i> | <i>352</i> |
| THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE | 365 |
| <i>Chatzoglou, Prodromos¹; Dimitrellos, Georgios²; Chatzoudes, Dimitrios¹; Aggelidis, Vasileios¹</i> | <i>365</i> |
| MARKETING AND PR ACTIVITIES OF THE LEADING WORLD UNIVERSITIES: MODERN TOOLS AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS | 380 |
| <i>Chernysheva, Anna; Kalygina, Valentina; Zobov, Alexander.....</i> | <i>380</i> |
| THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF CVDS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF BANGALORE..... | 391 |
| <i>Chinnaswamy, Anitha K.¹; Garcia-Perez, Alexeis¹; Marshall, Ian M.¹; Naguib, Raouf²</i> | <i>391</i> |
| CROWD-FOODING. THE ROLE OF CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS IN THE FOOD INDUSTRIES OPEN INNOVATION | 405 |
| <i>Cillo, Valentina¹; Cardinali, Silvio²; Dell'Anno, Davide³; Bertoldi, Bernardo⁴</i> | <i>405</i> |
| GOVERNANCE OF NON-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS: A MANAGERIAL ISSUE?..... | 423 |
| <i>Civitillo, Renato</i> | <i>423</i> |

| | |
|---|-----|
| A WEB OF EMOTIONS –THE EFFECT OF ONLINE BRAND EXPERIENCE ON BRAND LOYALTY | 442 |
| <i>Cleff, Thomas; Walter, Nadine</i> | 442 |
| PRICE-SETTING STRATEGIES FOR PRODUCT INNOVATIONS IN THE MEDTECH INDUSTRY | 459 |
| <i>Cohen, Benjamin; Neubert, Michael</i> | 459 |
| SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY USE AND MANAGERS PERCEPTION. A PRELIMINARY STUDY IN THE ITALIAN WINE INDUSTRY | 474 |
| <i>Crescimanno, Maria; Galati, Antonino; Tulone, Antonio; Tinervia, Salvatore</i> | 474 |
| SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATIONAL MODELS IN THE GREEK WINE INDUSTRY | 486 |
| <i>Crescimanno, Maria¹; Galati, Antonino¹; Tinervia, Salvatore¹; Iliopoulos, Constantine²; Theodorakopoulou, Irini²; Tulone, Antonio¹</i> | 486 |
| NEW PERSPECTIVES IN MANAGING RISKS IN SMES..... | 499 |
| <i>Crovini, Chiara</i> | 499 |
| UNDERSTANDING “CREATING SHARED VALUE” | 513 |
| <i>Daood, Antonio; Menghwar, Prem Sagar</i> | 513 |
| ANALYSING THE TRUMP AND BREXIT VOTERS..... | 526 |
| <i>Dos-Santos, Maria José Palma Lampreia dos Santos¹; Candeias, Teresa²; Diz, Henrique³</i> | 526 |
| THE EFFECTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DECENTRALISATION ON TECHNOLOGICAL DRIVEN CURRICULUM. | 540 |
| <i>Edoun, Emmanuel Innocents; Norris, Valdenisa C</i> | 540 |
| PRICING STRATEGIES IN THE LEBANESE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY | 547 |
| <i>El Nemar, Sam; Mallat, Amani</i> | 547 |
| CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AN EITHER / OR CHOICE? | 562 |
| <i>Eller, Helene</i> | 562 |
| THE URBAN FREE ZONES (UFZ). BETWEEN DISAPPROVAL, MISUNDERSTANDING AND RECOGNITION. AS A SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL FOR LOCAL FINANCE..... | 575 |
| <i>Esposito, Paolo; Ricci, Paolo; Iovino, Felicetta</i> | 575 |
| SWOT ANALYS: FROM BUSINESS ANALYSIS TO SOCIAL DIAGNOSIS..... | 589 |
| <i>Ferreira, Maria Emilia¹; Candeias, Teresa²</i> | 589 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| RESTORING LEGITIMACY IN THE AFTERMATH OF CORPORATE SCANDALS: A MULTIPLE CASE-STUDY ANALYSIS ON CSR INITIATIVES | 600 |
| <i>Florio, Cristina; Sproviero, Alice F.</i> | 600 |
| SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FOOD INDUSTRY | 614 |
| <i>Franceschelli, Maria Vittoria¹; Santoro, Gabriele²</i> | 614 |
| ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEVEL OF KAZAKHSTAN NATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMPLEX | 624 |
| <i>Frolova, Elena¹; Andreeva, Elena²; Abdurahmanova, Zulparuza³</i> | 624 |
| BRAND HATE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE EXTREME NEGATIVE EMOTION TOWARD THE BRAND | 638 |
| <i>Gharbi, Dorra ; Smaoui, Fatma</i> | 638 |
| COST DEPLOYMENT IMPLEMENTATION: A CASE STUDY | 652 |
| <i>Giovando, Guido; Crovini, Chiara; Venturini, Stefano</i> | 652 |
| SUPPLY CHAIN CONNECTIONS AND THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE IN THE GLOBAL WINE INDUSTRY | 665 |
| <i>Golicic, Susan L.¹; Signori, Paola²; Flint, Daniel J.³</i> | 665 |
| DATA DRIVEN MARKETING FOR GROWTH AND PROFITABILITY | 675 |
| <i>Grandhi, Balakrishna; Patwa, Nitin; Saleem, Kashaf</i> | 675 |
| BUILDING BRAND LOYALTY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC CRISIS: A GENDER AND GEN Y PERSPECTIVE OF LUXURY FASHION CONSUMERS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE | 695 |
| <i>Gubatova, Zlatina¹; Kapoulas, Alexandros²; Cheng, Ranis³</i> | 695 |
| EVOLUTION OF FUNDING AND FINANCING IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES FOR PORTUGAL AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES | 706 |
| <i>Guedes, Rui¹; Marta-Costa, Ana²; Ribeiro, Humberto³; Alves, Sandra⁴; Veloso, Cláudia⁵</i> | 706 |
| VALUATING RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENTS WITHIN TRANSACTIONS: A COMPARATIVE REVIEW AMONG PRACTITIONERS | 720 |
| <i>Hürlimann, Christian¹; Bengoa, Dolores S.²</i> | 720 |
| FAMILY VS NO FAMILY BUSINESS IN WINE IDENTITY COMMUNICATION | 740 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Iaia, Lea; Fait, Monica; Scorrano, Paola; Cavallo, Federica; Maizza, Amedeo</i> | 740 |
| DOES EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AFFECT CLIENT LOYALTY IN B2B SERVICES?: A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN THE ADVERTISING INDUSTRY IN SERBIA..... | 750 |
| <i>Josic, Sinisa¹; Petrosyan, Armine²; Dimitriadis, Nikolaos³</i> | 750 |
| ON THE ROAD TO MEANING: A THINKING JOURNEY TO SPIRITUALITY IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE | 762 |
| <i>Kay, Avi</i> | 762 |
| PREDICTING FINANCIAL DISTRESS OF FIRMS. A STUDY ON BANKRUPTCY OF KINGFISHER AIRLINES..... | 770 |
| <i>Kolte, Ashutosh¹; Capasso, Arturo²; Rossi, Matteo²</i> | 770 |
| DETERMINANTS OF SPORT COMMITMENT AND PURCHASE INTENTION OF RUNNERS: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION | 785 |
| <i>Koronios, Konstantinos; Kriemadis, Athanasios; Gkatsis, Georgia; Manousaridou, Genovefa</i> | 785 |
| THE TRADE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN EMERGING MARKET OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION..... | 794 |
| <i>Kovalev, Victor; Falchenko, Oksana; Vyazovskaya, Veronika; Maydanik, Vera</i> | 794 |
| EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT PROVIDED TO MONOTOWNS IN CIS COUNTRIES | 807 |
| <i>Kreidenko, Tatyana¹; Sorokina, Svetlana²; Adashova, Tatyana¹</i> | 807 |
| INTEGRATED REPORTING AND PREPARERS' ACCOUNTABILITY: A MATTER OF CONTEXT | 817 |
| <i>Lai, Alessandro¹; Melloni, Gaia²; Stacchezzini, Riccardo¹</i> | 817 |
| HOW INTEGRATED REPORTING MEETS THE INVESTORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' INFORMATION NEEDS | 823 |
| <i>Lai, Alessandro; Rossignoli, Francesca; Stacchezzini, Riccardo</i> | 823 |
| PRICE AVAILABILITY OF CAR RENTAL AS AN ALTERNATIVE OF CAR OWNERSHIP..... | 830 |
| <i>Leontyeva, Yulia; Mayburov, Igor</i> | 830 |
| HOW CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ATTRIBUTES INFLUENCE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND ONLINE BANK CREDIBILITY | 838 |
| <i>Loureiro, Sandra Maria Correia¹; Sarmiento, Eduardo Moraes²</i> | 838 |

| | |
|--|------|
| THE OLIVE OIL PRICES DETERMINANTS FROM PRODUCTION TO RETAIL: A STUDY OF THE OLIVE OIL SECTOR IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN | 857 |
| <i>Lousas, Carla¹; Ribeiro, Humberto²; Alves, Sandra³; Veloso, Cláudia⁴</i> | 857 |
| ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT SUCCESS RELATED TO THE TRIPLE CONSTRAINTS APPROACH IN MANAGERIAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES | 873 |
| <i>Louters, Exley; Edoun, E. Innocents</i> | 873 |
| TOWARDS THE ADOPTION OF PATIENT GENERATED HEALTH DATA: A TECHNOLOGY READINESS INVESTIGATION OF LAGOS STATE NIGERIA | 891 |
| <i>Maduka, Ikechukwu C.¹; Odetayo, Michael¹; Nkantah, Dianabasi¹; Garcia-Perez, Alexeis²; Cegarra-Navarro, Juan Gabriel³; Olayanju, Lateef O.⁴</i> | 891 |
| CASE STUDIES AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING RESEARCH: EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS | 907 |
| <i>Makrygiannakis, Georgios</i> | 907 |
| AN INTRODUCTION TO BIOETHICAL RIGHTS | 918 |
| <i>Maniatis, Antonios</i> | 918 |
| THE RIGHT TO RECREATION (Ψ, X) WITH EMPHASIS ON TOURISM | 932 |
| <i>Maniatis, Antonios</i> | 932 |
| OPTIONS FOR DIAGNOSTICS OF ECONOMIC EVOLUTION TURNING POINTS | 946 |
| <i>Marek, Luboš¹; Hindls, Richard¹; Hronová, Stanislava²</i> | 946 |
| THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTENTION: AN APPLICATION IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR..... | 960 |
| <i>Marques, Carla Susana¹; Valente, Sandra²; Lages, Marisa¹</i> | 960 |
| PROFILE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN HEALTHCARE SETOR: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY | 974 |
| <i>Marques, Carla Susana¹; Mestre, Marta²; Nascimento, Maria M.³</i> | 974 |
| INFLUENCE OF UPDATING ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE THROUGH LEARNING PROCESSES TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE IN A TOURIST MARKET | 987 |
| <i>Martínez-Martínez, Aurora¹; Cegarra-Navarro, Juan Gabriel²; García-Pérez, Alexeis³</i> | 987 |
| THE SUCCESS OF CROSS BORDER ACQUISITIONS: DOES CULTURAL DISTANCE MATTER FOR CONSUMERS? | 1002 |

| | |
|---|------|
| <i>Matarazzo, Michela</i> ¹ ; <i>Lanzilli, Giulia</i> ² ; <i>Resciniti, Riccardo</i> ² | 1002 |
| THE COST OF CAPITAL IN THE BOND MARKET. WHEN THE FIRMS ALLEGEDLY RESTATED EARNINGS | 1010 |
| <i>Felice Matorazzo</i> ¹ ; <i>Elisabetta Mafrolla</i> ² ; <i>Anna Maria Biscotti</i> ² | 1010 |
| APPLYING SECI MODEL TO TRANSFER ORGANIZATIONAL MEMORY THROUGH CORPORATE MUSEUMS | 1031 |
| <i>Matricano, Diego</i> | 1031 |
| GENDER ASYMMETRY IN BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES OF TRANSPORT FEE PAYERS | 1039 |
| <i>Mayburov, Igor</i> ^{1,2} ; <i>Leontyeva, Yulia</i> ¹ | 1039 |
| IDENTIFICATION OF LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT..... | 1051 |
| <i>Mazánek, Lukáš; Pekárek, Jan; Vraniak, Lukáš; Konečná, Zdenka</i> | 1051 |
| MANDATORY ENTREPRENEURS' CHARACTERISTICS TO NEW VENTURES' INTERNATIONALIZATION..... | 1062 |
| <i>Meneses, Raquel</i> ¹ ; <i>Moutinho, Nuno</i> ¹ ; <i>Azevedo, José</i> ² | 1062 |
| CONSUMER FAD DYNAMIC. THE GIN CASE..... | 1075 |
| <i>Meneses, Raquel; Almeida, Rui</i> | 1075 |
| ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL BALANCE OF ITALIAN PLASTIC MANUFACTURERS DURING THE CRISIS (2008-2015)..... | 1089 |
| <i>Migliaccio, Guido; De Blasio, Veronica</i> | 1089 |
| CITIZEN SATISFACTION IN ITALY: RESULTS FROM AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH | 1104 |
| <i>Migliaccio, Guido</i> ¹ ; <i>Russo, Agostino</i> ² | 1104 |
| CAPITAL STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA STOCK EXCHANGE | 1118 |
| <i>Miglietta, Nicola</i> ¹ ; <i>Battisti, Enrico</i> ¹ ; <i>Monge, Filippo</i> ² | 1118 |
| ENTREPRENEURSHIP UNTAPPED: TESTING TRAINING FOR START-UPS BY PHD STEM GRADUATES | 1128 |
| <i>Mihai-Yiannaki, Simona</i> ¹ ; <i>Varnava-Marouchou, Despina</i> ² ; <i>Konis, Elmos</i> ² ; <i>Hadjichristodoulou, Vassilia</i> ³ | 1128 |
| LOCAL LIABILITIES AND INTERACTION BETWEEN NATIVE AND IMMIGRANT FIRMS | 1140 |
| <i>Milanesi, Matilde; Guercini, Simone</i> | 1140 |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| SERVICE QUALITY, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND CORPORATE IMAGE AS A KEY DRIVER OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN TRADITIONAL RETAIL..... | 1154 |
| <i>Miranda Veloso, Cláudia¹; Magueta, Daniel Margaça²; Fernandes, Paula Odete³; Rito-Ribeiro, Humberto Nuno⁴</i> | <i>1154</i> |
| IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IN INDIAN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION | 1169 |
| <i>Naik, Kasturi¹; Bobade, Anita²</i> | <i>1169</i> |
| RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INDIAN BPO ORGANIZATION | 1186 |
| <i>Naik, Kasturi¹; Bobade, Anita²</i> | <i>1186</i> |
| HOW LEAN GLOBAL START-UPS SELECT THEIR PRICING STRATEGIES, PRACTICES AND MODELS..... | 1200 |
| <i>Neubert, Michael.....</i> | <i>1200</i> |
| LEAN INTERNATIONALIZATION OF BORN GLOBAL FIRMS | 1209 |
| <i>Neubert, Michael¹; Van Der Krogt, Stijn².....</i> | <i>1209</i> |
| THE ROLE OF BUSINESS MODELS IN THE INTERNATIONAL GROWTH PATH OF STARTUPS | 1220 |
| <i>Onetti, Alberto ¹; Pisoni, Alessia ¹; Riva, Giada²</i> | <i>1220</i> |
| NETWORK PERSPECTIVE ON ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS IN TRANSITION ECONOMIES | 1235 |
| <i>Osarenkhoe, Aihie¹; Fjellström, Daniella¹; Abraha, Desalegn²; Awuah, Gabriel Baffour³</i> | <i>1235</i> |
| CLUSTERING AND NETWORKING AS A SINE QUA NON FOR SMES AND REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE..... | 1258 |
| <i>Osarenkhoe, Aihie; Fjellström, Daniella.....</i> | <i>1258</i> |
| CYBER RISK MANAGEMENT IN CREDIT COOPERATIVE BANKS: A CASE STUDY | 1282 |
| <i>Ossola, Giovanni; Giovando, Guido; Crovini, Chiara</i> | <i>1282</i> |
| AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON CONSUMERS ATTITUDES TOWARDS ETHICAL FASHION CONSUMPTION: MOTIVATORS AND BARRIERS | 1294 |
| <i>Öztürk, Selen; Engizek, Nil.....</i> | <i>1294</i> |
| CORPORATE CRISIS IN ITALY: YOMO SPA..... | 1309 |
| <i>Pavone, Pietro¹; Migliaccio, Guido²</i> | <i>1309</i> |
| THE QUALITY OF MISSION STATEMENTS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT..... | 1325 |

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>Penco, Lara; Profumo, Giorgia; Scarsi, Roberta</i> | 1325 |
| VALUE OF LISTED COMPANIES; ABNORMAL EARNINGS AND INNOVATIVENESS..... | 1342 |
| <i>Philipson, Sarah</i> | 1342 |
| U.MAKE.ID – A DIGITAL SOURCING PLATFORM PROJECT FOR THE FASHION BUSINESS: A THEORETICAL STUDY..... | 1349 |
| <i>Pina, Liliana¹; Reis, Benilde²; Rafael, Paulo³; Pereira, Madalena⁴; Miguel, Rui²</i> | 1349 |
| GREEN MARKETING AND ITS PERCEPTION BY YOUNG CONSUMERS OF THE “GENERATION Y” | 1361 |
| <i>Průša, Přemysl; Sadílek, Tomáš</i> | 1361 |
| TEAM PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY PREDICTING TEAM CREATIVITY: A CONDITIONAL INDIRECT EFFECT MODEL..... | 1371 |
| <i>Rego, Arménio¹; Melo, Ana Isabel²; Bluhm, Dustin J.³; Pina e Cunha, Miguel³; Valverde, Camilo⁵</i> | 1371 |
| E-COMMERCE STUDIES REVIEW: IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE AGENDA FOR FIRMS AND CONSUMERS | 1383 |
| <i>Resciniti, Riccardo¹; Matarazzo, Michela²; De Vanna, Federica¹</i> | 1383 |
| VENTURE CAPITALIST’S INTERVENTION AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL NEW VENTURES (INVS) – PORTUGUESE CASE STUDY..... | 1392 |
| <i>Ribeiro, Paulo; Meneses, Raquel</i> | 1392 |
| CONCEPTUALIZING PUBLIC VALUE DESTRUCTION..... | 1406 |
| <i>Ricci, Paolo; Esposito, Paolo</i> | 1406 |
| IS THERE A MEDITERRANEAN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM? EVIDENCE FROM LITERATURE | 1442 |
| <i>Ricci, Paolo; Esposito, Paolo; Fusco, Floriana</i> | 1442 |
| DAVID BOWIE: ARTIST AND ENTREPRENEUR? | 1454 |
| <i>Rivetti, Francesca; Migliaccio, Mirella</i> | 1454 |
| ENERGY MANAGEMENT IN ITALIAN MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS: AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE | 1462 |
| <i>Rizzi, Francesco¹; Annunziata, Eleonora²</i> | 1462 |
| HORIZONTAL ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP: A GENERATIVE APPROACH FOR AN ETHIC DEVELOPMENT IN COMPLEX SYSTEMS..... | 1485 |

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>Rizziato, Erica</i> | 1485 |
| THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE WORLD MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY | 1500 |
| <i>Rodionova, Irina¹; Shuvalova, Olga¹; Kokuytseva, Tatiana²</i> | 1500 |
| ANTECEDENTS TO BRAND HATE AMONG GENERATION Y: A CONSUMER CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY | 1514 |
| <i>Rodrigues, Clarinda¹; Rodrigues, Paula²</i> | 1514 |
| THE MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCE OF TASTE. THE EFFECTS OF SENSES AND BRAND IN WINE CONSUMPTION | 1523 |
| <i>Romanazzi, Salvatore; Petruzzellis, Luca</i> | 1523 |
| A SOUTH AFRICAN INDUSTRY PERCEPTIVE ON MODERN TRANSIT ADVERTISING MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES | 1543 |
| <i>Roux, Thérèse</i> | 1543 |
| UNDERVALUED AND DISORGANIZED? CLASSIFICATION AND APPRAISAL OF CONTEMPORARY OUT-OF-HOME ADVERTISING IN SOUTH AFRICA | 1556 |
| <i>Roux, Thérèse; Babst, Melanie; de Jager, Johan</i> | 1556 |
| EMPLOYEE LEARNING IN INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS - GROUNDED THEORY | 1569 |
| <i>Rozkwitalska, Malgorzata</i> | 1569 |
| THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF INNOVATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTANGIBLE RESOURCES AND EXPORT PERFORMANCE | 1581 |
| <i>Rua, Orlando Lima¹; França, Alexandra²</i> | 1581 |
| THE ADOPTION OF ACCRUAL ACCOUNTING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE WITHIN ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES | 1596 |
| <i>Rupo, Daniela¹; Loprevite, Salvatore²; Sidoti, Salvatore¹</i> | 1596 |
| PROPULSIVE LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS FOR UPGRADING NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS IN TRANSITION SOCIETIES | 1615 |
| <i>Samardžija, Jasminka</i> | 1615 |
| TAYLORISM AND AMAZON: SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT AT THE WORLD'S MOST SUCCESSFUL RETAIL COMPANY | 1629 |
| <i>Schein, Andrew</i> | 1629 |
| WHAT IS SMART LEADERSHIP IN LUXEMBOURG? | 1640 |

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>Schinzel, Ursula</i> | 1640 |
| WHAT IS SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN M&AS? A STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES | 1673 |
| <i>Schriber, Svante¹; Meglio, Olimpia²</i> | 1673 |
| OVERCOMING “IMPERFECTIONS” OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE: THE BORDERLESS NATURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN OPEN INNOVATION MODEL | 1685 |
| <i>Scuotto, Veronica¹; Usai, Antonio²; Murray, Alan³; Fiano, Fabio⁴</i> | 1685 |
| ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A PROCESS..... | 1694 |
| <i>Sepe, Enrica¹; Castaldi, Laura²; Iscaro, Valentina²; Turi, Claudio²</i> | 1694 |
| CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA AROUND VARSITY CUP RUGBY: A TRADITIONAL SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY | 1706 |
| <i>Serra, Pamela</i> | 1706 |
| THE AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INDUSTRY: BACKGROUND OF A RESEARCH PROBLEM..... | 1717 |
| <i>Shams, S. M. Riad</i> | 1717 |
| OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF COMPANIES IN THE FRENCH STOCK MARKET INDEX CAC 40: IS THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT A PERFORMING SHAREHOLDER? | 1727 |
| <i>Spurr, Michael¹; Goehlich, Veronique¹; Fournier, Guy²</i> | 1727 |
| BIG DATA IN SME - FINDINGS OF AN EMPIRICAL STUDY..... | 1742 |
| <i>Sterk, Matthias; Graue, Carolin; Britzelmaier, Bernd</i> | 1742 |
| PROMOTING INTERNET USAGE: AN ANALYSIS OF NONUSERS..... | 1761 |
| <i>Teerakapibal, Surat</i> | 1761 |
| MANDATORY DISCLOSURE OF NON-FINANCIAL INFORMATION: A STRUCTURED LITERATURE REVIEW | 1767 |
| <i>Testarmata, Silvia; Sergiacomi, Silvia; Fortuna, Fabio</i> | 1767 |
| LINKING MOTIVATION WITH CREATIVITY IN GREECE..... | 1787 |
| <i>Thrassou, Alkis¹; Orfanos, Dimosthenis²; Tsoukatos, Evangelos³</i> | 1787 |
| EXAMINING THE ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE TECHNICAL EFFICIENCY IN GOAT FARMS IN GREECE..... | 1801 |
| <i>Tsiouni, Maria¹; Aggelopoulos, Stamatis²; Papanagiotou, Evangelos¹; Chioteris, Cpyridon²</i> | 1801 |

| | |
|--|------|
| EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE VIEWS ON CLUTCHES OF UKUTHWALA IN THE PATRIARCHAL CULTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA: BALANCING OF HUMAN RIGHTS..... | 1811 |
| <i>Van der, Bank; Christiena, Maria</i> | 1811 |
| SHAREHOLDER DILEMMA: WHAT STAKE TO OFFER TO FINANCIAL INVESTORS? PROPOSALS BASED ON FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES..... | 1824 |
| <i>Vashakmadze, T.; Martirosyan, E.; Sergeeva, A.</i> | 1824 |
| SCREENING AND SCORING PROCESS IN M&A DEALS OF SERIAL ACQUIRERS. EVIDENCE FROM THE RUSSIAN AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS..... | 1833 |
| <i>Vashakmadze, Teimuraz; Martirosyan, Emil; Sergeeva, Anastasia; Krechun Margarita</i> | 1833 |
| WHEN THINGS GO WRONG: UNTANGLING THE ORIGINS OF INTER-FIRM NETWORK TERMINATION | 1853 |
| <i>Vernizzi, Silvia;Cantele, Silvia</i> | 1853 |
| DIGITISATION AND BRANDING EVOLUTION: AN INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK | 1865 |
| <i>Vernuccio, Maria</i> | 1865 |
| EFFSAMWMIX : AN EFFICIENT STOCHASTIC MULTI-ARMED BANDIT ALGORITHM BASED ON A SIMULATED ANNEALING WITH MULTIPLICATIVE WEIGHTS | 1876 |
| <i>Villari, Boby Chaitanya; Abdulla, Mohammed Shahid</i> | 1876 |
| PORTFOLIO CHOICE DECISION MAKING WITH <i>NBP-EFFSAMWMIX</i> : A STOCHASTIC MULTI-ARMED BANDIT ALGORITHM USING NAÏVE BANDIT PORTFOLIO APPROACH..... | 1891 |
| <i>Villari, Boby Chaitanya; Abdulla, Mohammed Shahid FPM Student, IT & Systems Area</i> | 1891 |
| WHAT COMES FIRST, THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG: THE UNDERPINNING TECHNOLOGY OR BUSINESS MODEL? | 1906 |
| <i>Vinaik, Rubal; Zubac, Angelina</i> | 1906 |
| LEGITIMACY THEORY AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING. EVIDENCE FROM ITALY. | 1918 |
| <i>Vitolla, Filippo; Rubino, Michele</i> | 1918 |
| THE SOLAR PV SECTOR. EVOLUTION AND GROWTH OF INNOVATION IN THE SECTORAL SYSTEM | 1932 |
| <i>Xue, Han¹; Jorge, Niosi²</i> | 1932 |

TABLE OF ABSTRACTS

| | |
|--|------|
| MARKET DOCTRINE (MD), CREATIVITY, AND NEW PRODUCT PERFORMANCE IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS..... | 1948 |
| <i>Abboud, Amer; Shoham, Aviv</i> | 1948 |
| DEROGATION EFFECT OF USING SUCCESSFUL VERSUS ATTRACTIVE SPOKESPERSON IN ADVERTISING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS AND BRAZIL | 1951 |
| <i>Adıgüzel, Feray¹; Buranello, Renata²</i> | 1951 |
| INTERNATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN SPORT EVENT SPONSORSHIP EFFECTIVENESS..... | 1954 |
| <i>Adıgüzel, Feray¹; Kennett, Christopher²</i> | 1954 |
| IMPULSIVE BUYING AND SHOPPING MOTIVATIONS IN EMERGENT AND MATURE MARKETS | 1957 |
| <i>Adıgüzel, Feray</i> | 1957 |
| THE IMPACT OF EXISTENTIAL GUILT APPEAL ON CONSUMER INTENTION TO PURCHASE CAUSE-RELATED PRODUCT OR TO DONATE TO CHARITY | 1960 |
| <i>Adomaviciute, Karina; Urbonavicius, Sigitas; Urbutyte, Ieva</i> | 1960 |
| IMPACT OF STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION ON MENTAL WELL BEING OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS | 1962 |
| <i>Aggarwal - Gupta, Meenakshi¹; Vatharkar, Poonam²</i> | 1962 |
| FAMILY BUSINESS EFFICACY AND PERFORMANCE | 1967 |
| <i>AL Kayid, Wejdan Saeed; Zhongqi, Jin; Ramakrishnan, Sumeetra; Priporas, Costas</i> | 1967 |
| ESTIMATION OF MANAGERIAL DISCRETION IN ACCRUALS USING FIRM LIFE CYCLE | 1969 |
| <i>Almand, Andrew¹; Cantrell, Brett²; Dickinson, Victoria²</i> | 1969 |
| EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF BRAND COMMUNITY CENTRIC MODEL ON FANDOM AND BRANDOM OF FOOTBALL FANS..... | 1972 |
| <i>Alon, Anat Toder; Shuv-Ami, Avichai</i> | 1972 |
| AN ASSESSMENT OF CUSTOMER RETENTION WITH SELF-SERVICE TECHNOLOGY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN INTERNET BANKING AND MOBILE BANKING IN SAUDI ARABIA..... | 1975 |
| <i>Alsiehemy, Ali; Battor, Moustafa; Pantano, Eleonora; Dennis, Charles</i> | 1975 |

| | |
|--|------|
| INTENSIFYING THE POWER OF THE PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE: COMMUNICATING ON SCIENCE | 1978 |
| <i>Alves, Gisela; Martins, Moisés de Lemos</i> | 1978 |
| HOW TRUST AND COOPERATION HAVE AN IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: A CASE STUDY | 1980 |
| <i>Alves, Gisela</i> | 1980 |
| MULTI-CHANNEL AND OMNICHANNEL MARKETING: THE NEW TRENDS IN DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS | 1982 |
| <i>Amirkhanpour, Monaliz¹; Vrontis, Demetris²</i> | 1982 |
| MEASURING THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF TOURISM: THE CASE STUDY OF ITALY | 1985 |
| <i>Andreottola, Francesco; Massaro, Maria Rita</i> | 1985 |
| THE STATE OF UNIVERSITY – BUSINESS COOPERATION IN GREECE | 1988 |
| <i>Angelopoulou, Konstantina¹; Tsoukatos, Evangelos²</i> | 1988 |
| AUTONOMY, INNOVATION MATURITY AND INTRAPRENEURSHIP AS DRIVERS OF INNOVATION MANAGEMENT PROCESSES: EVIDENCE FROM THE WATER SECTOR | 1992 |
| <i>Annunziata, Eleonora¹; Pellegrini, Chiara¹; Rizzi, Francesco²; Frey, Marco¹</i> | 1992 |
| MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES IN M&A DECISIONS: A DEPARTURE FROM RATIONALITY? ... | 1994 |
| <i>Arnold, Nicole¹; Bengoa, S. D.²</i> | 1994 |
| COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF ENTRY-LEVEL ACCOUNTANTS IN GREECE | 1999 |
| <i>Asonitou, Sofia¹; Tourna, Eleni¹; Koukouletsos, Kostas²; Touloumis, Konstantinos¹</i> | 1999 |
| IMPACT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MECHANISM ON FIRM PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM AN EMERGING MARKET | 2001 |
| <i>Ataay, Aylin</i> | 2001 |
| WOMENOMICS: IS THE WORKFORCE READY? | 2004 |
| <i>Averianova, Irina¹; Nae, Niculina²</i> | 2004 |
| LINKING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR, VIRAL MARKETING AND CINEMATOGRAPHY: A PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR NGOS | 2005 |
| <i>Avgeropoulou, Katerina; Melanthiou, Yioula; Papasolomou, Ioanna</i> | 2005 |
| ESCAPE EXPERIENCES IN LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM: A PHOTO ELICITATION PERSPECTIVE | 2007 |
| <i>Azevedo, António J. A.</i> | 2007 |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| DO COUNTRY-SPECIFIC FACTORS AFFECT THE VALUE RELEVANCE OF BRAND VALUE? AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS | 2010 |
| <i>Bagna, Emanuel¹; Dicuonzo, Grazia²; Perrone, Andrea²; Dell'Atti, Vittorio²</i> | <i>2010</i> |
| A COMPARATIVE CROSS COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF BANK MARKETING STRATEGIES DURING THE CURRENT GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS | 2012 |
| <i>Balomenou, Chrysanthi; Akriviadi, Amalia</i> | <i>2012</i> |
| THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LENDER OF LAST RESORT AS ONE OF THE MAJOR MEANS OF THE BANKING SAFETY NET, ESPECIALLY IN CRISIS AND RECESSION PERIODS | 2018 |
| <i>Balomenou, Chrysanthi</i> | <i>2018</i> |
| SMES, SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNATIONALIZATION: AN EXPLORATIVE RESEARCH | 2023 |
| <i>Bartoloni, Sara; Pascucci, Federica</i> | <i>2023</i> |
| THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN BANKING: REVIEW AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES..... | 2026 |
| <i>Bellomo, Mario Filippo Paolo; La Rosa, Fabio</i> | <i>2026</i> |
| A CHOICE OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INSTRUMENTS: SME STUDY IN 6 COUNTRIES | 2028 |
| <i>Belyaeva, Zhanna¹; Lopatkova, Yana¹; Kislyak, Nadezhda¹; Rudawska, Edyta²</i> | <i>2028</i> |
| CONSUMER-BRAND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH WEBSITE STIMULI..... | 2031 |
| <i>Bilro, Ricardo; Loureiro, Sandra Maria Correia</i> | <i>2031</i> |
| DOES THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN SUPERVISORY BOARDS INFLUENCE FIRM PERFORMANCE? | 2035 |
| <i>Binder, B.C.K.</i> | <i>2035</i> |
| MARKETING DOCTRINE AS A PRECURSOR TO NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE: TOWARDS A TESTABLE THEORETICAL MODEL | 2038 |
| <i>Boulos, Jumana Shukri; Shoham, Aviv</i> | <i>2038</i> |
| DOES MONEY BUY YOU HAPPINESS? | 2041 |
| <i>Bozcuk, Aslihan.....</i> | <i>2041</i> |
| HRM-PATIENT ORIENTATION AND TEAMWORK CLIMATE LINKAGE IN HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS: THE ROLE OF CALLING AND PROSOCIAL MOTIVATION | 2044 |
| <i>Bučiūnienė, Ilona¹; Goštautaitė, Bernadeta¹; Žemyna Milašauskienė².....</i> | <i>2044</i> |
| HRM-PATIENT ORIENTATION AND TEAMWORK CLIMATE LINKAGE IN HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS: THE ROLE OF CALLING AND PROSOCIAL MOTIVATION | 2048 |

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>Bučiuėnienė, Ilona¹; Goštautaitė, Bernadeta¹; Žemyna Milašauskienė²</i> | 2048 |
| INNOVATION NETWORK DYNAMICS IN THE AEROSPACE CLUSTER IN TUSCANY..... | 2052 |
| <i>Capone, Francesco; Zampi Vincenzo</i> | 2052 |
| MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL AND BRAND IDENTITY IN FAMILY FIRM: PRELIMINARY EVIDENCES FROM AN ITALIAN CASE | 2055 |
| <i>Casprini, Elena¹; Ticci, Camilla²; Zanni, Lorenzo²</i> | 2055 |
| CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF THE MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS PERFORMANCE: INTERRELATIONSHIP OF PLANNING STAGE (PRE-MERGER) AND INTEGRATION PROCESS (POST-MERGER) | 2058 |
| <i>Chew, Grace</i> | 2058 |
| FOOD WASTE REDUCTION AND SHELF LIFE EXTENSION: THE CASE STUDY OF OLIVE PATE | 2061 |
| <i>Chiara, Filomena¹; Pellegrini, Giustina^{1*}; Contò, Francesco¹</i> | 2061 |
| A MODEL ON ANTECEDENTS OF DIGITAL PIRACY BEHAVIOUR..... | 2063 |
| <i>Christofi, Anna-Maria¹; Coudounaris, Dafnis N.²</i> | 2063 |
| DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: DISTRIBUTION OF PROFIT OR NON-DISTRIBUTION CONSTRAINT? | 2064 |
| <i>Cosentino, Antonietta¹; Di Stefano, Cristina²; Magistro, Angela¹</i> | 2064 |
| A NEW PERSPECTIVE IN BUSINESS EVALUATION: MEASURING SOCIAL IMPACT VALUE. A CASE STUDY ON ITALIAN WORK INTEGRATION COOPERATIVES..... | 2070 |
| <i>Cosentino, Antonietta¹; Bongiovanni, Laura²; Cesari, Alberto²; Di Stefano, Cristina³</i> | 2070 |
| ANTECEDENTS OF BRAND EQUITY OF NORDIC UNIVERSITIES AND MODERATING EFFECTS | 2073 |
| <i>Coudounaris, Dafnis N.¹; Kvasova, Olga²</i> | 2073 |
| IS PUBLIC SUPPORT A BAD FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF CROWDFUNDING AMONG INNOVATIVE START UP FIRMS? | 2074 |
| <i>Cucari, Nicola; Ghi, Alessandra; Orlando, Beatrice; Renzi, Antonio</i> | 2074 |
| SHARING KNOWLEDGE TO INCREASE FOOD VALUE CHAIN: THE INTRODUCTION OF DSS BY SUPPLY CHAIN LEADER DRIVING FARMER'S MANAGERIAL CULTURAL CHANGE..... | 2078 |
| <i>Cupertino, Sebastiano; Vitale, Gianluca; Riccaboni Angelo</i> | 2078 |

| | |
|---|------|
| ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A CONTEXTUAL PHENOMENA | 2081 |
| <i>Czarczynska, Anna¹; Mosquera, José Luis Naya²</i> | 2081 |
| THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AS A LINK BETWEEN EXPORTER'S ORIENTATIONS AND CAPABILITIES AND BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES . | 2085 |
| <i>Dahan, Gavriel¹; Shoham, Aviv²</i> | 2085 |
| THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL ORIENTATIONS ON FIRM PERFORMANCE..... | 2087 |
| <i>Dahan, Gavriel¹; Shoham, Aviv²; Asseraf, Yoel³</i> | 2087 |
| ECONOMIC ANIMOSITY, NATIONALISM, AND COUNTRY IMAGE: "US VS. OTHERS" IN TIMES OF CRISIS..... | 2090 |
| <i>De Nisco, Alessandro¹; Papadopoulos, Nicolas²; Napolitano, Maria Rosaria³; Mainolfi, Giada¹</i> | 2090 |
| THE VALUE RELEVANCE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE EUROPEAN STOCK MARKETS: THE INFLUENCE OF STANDARD ETHICS RATING | 2093 |
| <i>Dicuonzo, Grazia; Ricciardi, Francesca; Dell'Atti, Vittorio</i> | 2093 |
| PREDICTING THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF AQUAPONICS WITH GOOGLE TRENDS..... | 2095 |
| <i>Dos Santos, Maria José Palma Lampreia</i> | 2095 |
| COMMUNITY BASED BUSINESS MODEL PROPOSITION | 2100 |
| <i>Drummond, Damon</i> | 2100 |
| EFFECT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT ON WELL-BEING OF EXPATRIATES AND HOST COUNTRY NATIONALS..... | 2101 |
| <i>Duyar, Veli Deniz; Erkuş, Ahmet</i> | 2101 |
| "DELIBERATED INTUITION" IN STOCK PRICE FORECASTING | 2102 |
| <i>Endress, Tobias; Gear, Tony</i> | 2102 |
| THE IMPACT OF STUDYING IN A SOCIOECONOMICALLY DIFFERENT SOCIETY COMPARED TO THE HOME COUNTRY ON WORK RELATED VALUES: EVIDENCE FROM CYPRIOT WORKERS WHO WERE EDUCATED IN THE UK..... | 2104 |
| <i>Epaminonda, Epaminondas</i> | 2104 |
| INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN PERCEIVED ATTRIBUTES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PREFERENCE OF USER INTERFACES | 2106 |
| <i>Eytam, Eleanor</i> | 2106 |

| | |
|--|------|
| STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON SMART CITY INITIATIVES: EVIDENCES FROM ITALY AND RUSSIA | 2108 |
| <i>Ferraris, Alberto¹; Belyaeva, Zhanna²</i> | 2108 |
| ADOPTION OF RISK MANAGEMENT IN SMES: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW | 2111 |
| <i>Ferreira de Araújo Lima, Priscila; Verbano, Chiara; Crema, Maria</i> | 2111 |
| TOWARD DEVELOPING A PRACTICAL MODEL FOR SUCCESSFUL GENERATIONAL TRANSITION IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS | 2115 |
| <i>Flynn, JoAnn; Duesing, Robert J.</i> | 2115 |
| THE COST OF EQUITY OF <i>TOO BIG TO FAIL</i> BANKS (TBTF). A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN CAPM, THE METHOD BASED ON THE RECIPROCAL OF P/E MULTIPLE AND ACTUARIAL METHOD | 2118 |
| <i>Fontana, Stefano; Coluccia, Daniela; Solimene, Silvia; Rosati, Serena</i> | 2118 |
| RETAILERS' INVENTORY STRATEGY ON PURCHASING-CONSUMPTION CYCLE MODEL OF CONSUMERS | 2121 |
| <i>Fujimoto, Hisao</i> | 2121 |
| THE CHOICE OF CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE | 2124 |
| <i>Gambardella, Massimiliano</i> | 2124 |
| THE ROLE OF CENTRAL BANKS IN THE RECENT FINANCIAL CRISIS. CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS AND COUNTERMEASURES TAKEN..... | 2126 |
| <i>Georgakoulias, Athanasios; Koulakiotis, Athanasios</i> | 2126 |
| BANK COMPANY RELATIONSHIPS FOR STRENGTHENING AN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION. ANALYSIS OF ITALIAN CONTEXT | 2129 |
| <i>Giacosa, Elisa¹; Mazzoleni, Alberto²</i> | 2129 |
| GLOBAL BANNING OF A DIFFUSED CONTROVERSIAL PRACTICE: DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION IN THE SOCCER INDUSTRY | 2130 |
| <i>Gurses, Kerem¹; Giones, Ferran²; Mehtakumar, Kandarp³</i> | 2130 |
| EMERGING-MARKET FIRMS' CROSS-BORDER ACQUISITION COMPLETION: INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE AND STRATEGIES | 2133 |
| <i>He, Xinming¹; Zhang, Jianhong²</i> | 2133 |
| CROSS-BORDER MERGER AMONG NORDIC BANKS – A LONGITUDINAL STUDY | 2134 |

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>Hyder, S. Akmal; Osarenkhoe, Aihie</i> | 2134 |
| CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY USE OF SALESPEOPLE..... | 2137 |
| <i>Itani, Omar S.</i> | 2137 |
| TOURIST EXPERIENCE AND VIRTUAL REALITY: THE CASE OF NURAGICA PROJECT..... | 2138 |
| <i>Izzo, Filomena¹; Solinas, Maria Carmela²; Pinna, Paolo Alberto²</i> | 2138 |
| PROJECTIFICATION OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR IN POLAND | 2140 |
| <i>Jalocha, Beata; Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Ewa</i> | 2140 |
| EMERGING MARKET MULTINATIONALS FROM LATIN AMERICA: ANALYZING THE INTERNATIONALIZATION PATTERNS AND M&AS CORPORATE STRATEGIES OF MEXICO'S LARGEST COMPANIES. | 2143 |
| <i>Jarque, Eduardo</i> | 2143 |
| AN INVESTIGATION OF WAITERS' OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY (WOI): A LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK | 2147 |
| <i>Jerez, M.J. ; Melewar, TC; Foroudi, P.; Stylidis, D.</i> | 2147 |
| CYPRUS AND THE U.K.: DELIVERING NUTRITIONAL ADVICE SERVICES THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY..... | 2151 |
| <i>Kakouri, Stella K.¹, Scott, Peter² and Scott, Tamsin³</i> | 2151 |
| THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND COMMUNICATION ON BRAND EQUITY FOR YOUNG CONSUMERS: INTERNATIONAL HIGH STREET FASHION BRANDING IN CHINA | 2156 |
| <i>Kan, Yuna; Dennis, Charles; Melewar, TC; Foroudi, Pantea</i> | 2156 |
| NATIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEM IN SMALLER NATIONS; THE CASE OF MONTENEGRO | 2158 |
| <i>Karadzic, Vesna¹; Manijeh, Reyhani²</i> | 2158 |
| IDENTIFYING SUCCESS FACTORS IN FOOD EXPORTS: AN APPLICATION OF THE BEST-WORST SCALING METHOD | 2161 |
| <i>Karipidis, Philippos¹; Chrysochou, Polymeros²; Karypidou, Ioanna³</i> | 2161 |
| TITLE- DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A SCALE FOR TEAM TASK ROLES, TEAM TASK TYPES AND TASK INTERDEPENDENCIES | 2163 |
| <i>Karve, Shailaja¹; Pandey, Aparna²; Malankar, Shweta³</i> | 2163 |
| SPONTANEOUS VS. INDUCED CLUSTERS: NETWORKS AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE . | 2166 |
| <i>Kavadarlı, Altın; Öz, Özlem²</i> | 2166 |

| | |
|--|------|
| THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL NETWORKS ON MANAGERIAL DECISION MAKING: PRACTICALITIES AND PARADOXES..... | 2168 |
| <i>Kay, Avi</i> | 2168 |
| EMERGENCE OF COMPLEX NEW ARRANGEMENTS: THE STATE RESPONSES TO GLOBAL BUSINESS DIVERSITY | 2171 |
| <i>Kayasan, Oskar; Saghir, Nadine</i> | 2171 |
| MARGINAL REVOLUTION: ROLE OF INTERMEDIARY IN INTEGRATION OF STREET VENDORS IN FORMAL ECONOMY | 2172 |
| <i>Kella, Chintan; Rimac, Tomislav; Gurses, Kerem; Turner, Karynne</i> | 2172 |
| POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF MANAGER'S POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR..... | 2175 |
| <i>Kidron, Aviv¹; Vinarski –Peretz, Hedva²</i> | 2175 |
| SUPERVISOR COMMITMENT VERSUS ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT | 2176 |
| <i>Kidron, Aviv</i> | 2176 |
| THE BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS AS THE KEY TO A COMPANY'S SUCCESS..... | 2177 |
| <i>Klimova, Olena</i> | 2177 |
| ROLE OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS IN SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS IN CROATIA | 2179 |
| <i>Knezevic, Blazenka; Skrobot, Petra; Delic, Mia</i> | 2179 |
| CUSTOMER ORIENTED STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY | 2181 |
| <i>Kriemadis, Thanos; Papaioannou, Alkistis; Rizos John; Koronios, Konstantinos</i> | 2181 |
| REMITTANCE BEHAVIOR OF PERMANENT MIGRANTS..... | 2184 |
| <i>Kushnirovich Nonna</i> | 2184 |
| INNOVATIVE SKILLS MANAGEMENT FOR THE AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEUR | 2188 |
| <i>Lachapelle, Nathalie</i> | 2188 |
| FOR THE STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT GOVERNMENTAL STRATEGY TO SUPPORT THE ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION IN GEORGIA | 2190 |
| <i>Lekashvili, Eka</i> | 2190 |
| AVAILABILITY OF CAR RENTAL AS AN ALTERNATIVE OF CAR OWNERSHIP | 2193 |
| <i>Leontyeva, Yulia¹; Mayburov, Igor²</i> | 2193 |

| | |
|--|------|
| THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL VARIABLES ON PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY IN AN ETHNIC MINORITY AND HEGEMONIC GROUP..... | 2194 |
| <i>Lissitsa, Sabina¹; Chachashvili-Bolotin, Svetlana²</i> | 2194 |
| EXPOSURE TO BULLYING AND JOB BURNOUT: THE PROTECTIVE ROLE OF JOB RESOURCES | 2197 |
| <i>Livne, Yael; Goussinsky, Ruhama</i> | 2197 |
| LOVE AND RESPECT IN THE SOCCER INDUSTRY..... | 2200 |
| <i>Loureiro, Sandra Maria Correia¹; Kaufmann, Hans Ruediger²</i> | 2200 |
| EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE THRIVING ON INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR | 2206 |
| <i>Lyndon, Shiji¹; Rawat, Preeti¹; Varghese, Billy Sam²</i> | 2206 |
| LOCAL COMMUNITY AND TOURISTS - PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN THE HISTORIC ZONE OF PORTO..... | 2208 |
| <i>Magalhães, Carla; Marques, Isabel; Candeias, Maria Teresa</i> | 2208 |
| STAKEHOLDER'S PERCEIVED REPUTATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA | 2210 |
| <i>Maleho, Lazarus Mohapi</i> | 2210 |
| SMES FARMING SUSTAINABILITY: THE ROLE OF AGRIFOOD HUBS | 2211 |
| <i>Malindretos, George ¹; Moschouris Socratis², Kinanlis Panagiotis¹</i> | 2211 |
| THE RIGHT TO CONTAINING CLIMATE CHANGE (CCC)..... | 2214 |
| <i>Maniatis, Antonios</i> | 2214 |
| ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING AND ACTING IN GERMAN HOTELS – AN ANALYSIS FROM AN INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL POINT OF VIEW | 2217 |
| <i>Männicke, Jörg¹; Baierl, Ronny²; Freyer, Walter³</i> ; | 2217 |
| FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POST-COMMUNIST NATIONS | 2224 |
| <i>Mardanov, Ismatilla</i> | 2224 |
| BRAND EQUITY: A PROBABILISTIC APPROACH ON BRAND PREFERENCE | 2227 |
| <i>Martins, Marta; Brandão, Amélia; Santos, Luís Delfim</i> | 2227 |
| INSTITUTIONAL PILLARS IN CSR IN THE RUSSIAN OIL INDUSTRY | 2230 |
| <i>Mathews, Martin; Benyaminova, Alina</i> | 2230 |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| VERNACCIA DI SAN GIMIGNANO: A BUSINESS-CASE ANALYSIS TO RE-POSITION AN ITALIAN ORIGIN LABELLED WHITE WINE..... | 2235 |
| <i>Mattiacci, Alberto¹; Caratù, Myriam¹; Fisichella, Chiara².....</i> | <i>2235</i> |
| TOWARDS A ROUTE TO MARKET FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPE WIDE AMBIENT ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS..... | 2238 |
| <i>McConalogue, Eoghan; Davis, Paul.....</i> | <i>2238</i> |
| HEDGE FUNDS PERFORMANCE TRACKING FOR CYPRUS, U.K. AND IRELAND..... | 2240 |
| <i>Mihai Yiannaki, Simona</i> | <i>2240</i> |
| BORN GLOBAL FAMILY FIRMS..... | 2242 |
| <i>Musso, Fabio; Francioni, Barbara; Masili, Giorgia</i> | <i>2242</i> |
| THE EFFECT OF NEPOTISM / WASTA ON HR PRACTICES IN LEBANESE AND TUNISIAN COMPANIES | 2244 |
| <i>Nakhle, Samer F.¹; Yahiaoui, Dorra²; Vrontis, Demetris³; Naddour, Fadi⁴.....</i> | <i>2244</i> |
| DOES FUND RAISING TRIGGER THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF STARTUPS?..... | 2249 |
| <i>Onetti, Alberto; Pisoni, Alessia.....</i> | <i>2249</i> |
| THE VISITOR EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE AT A HERITAGE SITE: A CASE STUDY – THE AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU DEATH CAMP | 2252 |
| <i>Oren Gila¹; Poria Yaniv²; Reichel Arie²</i> | <i>2252</i> |
| THE ROLE OF SELF AWARENESS AND SELF EFFICACY ON CAREER DECISION MAKING OF THE STUDENTS | 2255 |
| <i>Özek, Hande¹; Ferraris, Alberto²</i> | <i>2255</i> |
| ORGANIZATION STUDIES MEET FILM STUDIES: THE CASE OF ISTANBUL’S FILM CLUSTERS | 2258 |
| <i>Özlem, Öz¹; Kaya, Özkaracalar²</i> | <i>2258</i> |
| EXPLORING ATTITUDES AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR TOWARDS THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GREECE..... | 2260 |
| <i>Melanthiou, Yioula¹; Pappasolomou, Ioanna¹; Kountouros, Haris².....</i> | <i>2260</i> |
| THE EFFECTS OF DOWNWARD LINE EXTENSIONS ON CONSUMER BRAND ATTITUDE: THE CASE OF THE EUROPEAN PREMIUM AUTOMOTIVE MARKET | 2264 |
| <i>Pedrosa, Gabriel; Nobre, Helena.....</i> | <i>2264</i> |

| | |
|--|------|
| FAMILY BUSINESS' RESPONSES TO CONSUMER DEMANDS CONSIDERING ALL THE SUPPLY CHAIN OF THE FOOD MARKET | 2267 |
| <i>Pellicelli, Anna Claudia¹; Bollani, Luigi²</i> | 2267 |
| COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN AIRLINE MANAGEMENT | 2269 |
| <i>Pellicelli, Anna Claudia</i> | 2269 |
| VERMOUTH: THE REVENGE OF THE KING OF APERITIF WINES IN THE NEW MIXOLOGY ERA | 2270 |
| <i>Pellicelli, Anna Claudia</i> | 2270 |
| THE DETECTION OF FALSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS USING ACCOUNTING RATIOS: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION | 2271 |
| <i>Pisciotta, Raffaella; Dicuonzo, Grazia</i> | 2271 |
| THE TREND OF HEALTH CARE TOURISM: LITERATURE REVIEW | 2273 |
| <i>Pjero (Beqiraj), Elenica¹; Kamberi, Fatjona²; Mechili, Enkeleint Aggelos³</i> | 2273 |
| ONLINE BUYING INTENTIONS OF WINE CONSUMERS: THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA | 2278 |
| <i>Pucci, Tommaso¹; Casprini, Elena²; Nosi, Costanza³; Zanni, Lorenzo¹</i> | 2278 |
| RELIGIOSITY AND ORGANIC FOOD CONSUMPTION. TOWARDS A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING | 2282 |
| <i>Raggiotto, Francesco¹; Mason, Michela Cesarina¹; Moretti, Andrea¹; Cardinali, Silvio²</i> | 2282 |
| DETERMINANTS OF CREDIT TO SMES - EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM SUPPLY SIDE PERSPECTIVE IN MUMBAI REGION | 2285 |
| <i>Raghu, Kumari P.S; Pankaj, Trivedi</i> | 2285 |
| REDEPLOYMENT OF BRAND ASSETS FOLLOWING M&A BY EMERGING MARKET FIRMS ... | 2287 |
| <i>Rahman, Mahabubur</i> | 2287 |
| WHY WE CONSUME FINANCIAL SELF-HELP? A THICK EXPLANATION USING CONSUMER TALES | 2289 |
| <i>Rahman, Kaleel</i> | 2289 |
| A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL FOR THE ROLES OF TEAM LEARNING IN PROMOTING TEAM INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION AND PREFORMANCE..... | 2291 |
| <i>Rashkovits, Sarit¹; Livne, Yael²</i> | 2291 |

| | |
|--|------|
| WHO BENEFITS MORE FROM TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP? THE CASE OF TEACHERS' BURNOUT UNDER NORMAL VERSUS EXTREME WORK DEMANDS | 2294 |
| <i>Rashkovits, Sarit¹; Livne, Yael²</i> | 2294 |
| ANTECEDENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL FIELD REGULATORY CHANGE: LINKING INDIVIDUAL PROFILES OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS WITH THEIR REGULATORY NEEDS AND PRIORITIES? | 2297 |
| <i>Rimac, Tomislav; Gurses, Kerem</i> | 2297 |
| LUXURY CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS – THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF IN BRAND LOVE | 2300 |
| <i>Rodrigues, Paula¹; Rodrigues, Clarinda²; Brandão, Amélia³; Costa, Paula¹</i> | 2300 |
| CORPORATE GOVERNANCE INDEXES: A PRACTICAL APPLICATION ON ITALIAN SME'S.. | 2305 |
| <i>Roffia, Paolo</i> | 2305 |
| FROM EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION TO CUSTOMER TRUST: A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL IN THE ITALIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE | 2307 |
| <i>Romanazzi, Salvatore¹; Ambrosino, Gabriella²</i> | 2307 |
| AN EXAMINATION OF RESIDENTS' SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY IN THE CITY OF YOGYAKARTA | 2312 |
| <i>Roostika, Ratna</i> | 2312 |
| NETWORKING SMES FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING: PRELIMINARY EVIDENCES FROM A SURVEY | 2315 |
| <i>Rossignoli, Francesca</i> | 2315 |
| KINDNESS, FRED VERSUS NIC: MACHIAVELLIAN LEADERSHIP IN THE 21 ST CENTURY..... | 2319 |
| <i>Rowland, Caroline¹; Thomas, Mike²</i> | 2319 |
| PERCEIVING DESTINATION QUALITY ON THE LEVEL OF THE ORGANIZATION/TOURISM SERVICE PROVIDER | 2322 |
| <i>Ryglova, Katerina¹; Rasovska, Ida²; Králiková, Andrea¹; Stojarova, Sarka¹; Sacha, Jakub³</i> ; | 2322 |
| EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON EMPLOYEE WORD OF MOUTH: THE ROLE OF BONDING SOCIAL TIES | 2327 |
| <i>Sakka, Georgia</i> | 2327 |
| HOW QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS CAN DEFINE CARE PROCESSES PERFORMANCE? | 2330 |

| | |
|---|------|
| <i>Salvatore, Fiorella Pia¹; Crema, Maria²; Contò, Francesco¹; Fiore, Mariantonietta¹</i> | 2330 |
| THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR INBOUND OPEN INNOVATION..... | 2334 |
| <i>Santoro, Gabriele</i> | 2334 |
| MORAL REASONING AND CORPORATE PLANNING..... | 2337 |
| <i>Santosuosso, Pierluigi</i> | 2337 |
| INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESS OF FAMILY SMES: EVIDENCE FROM ITALY | 2340 |
| <i>Schiesari, Roberto; Bollani, Luigi; Battisti, Enrico</i> | 2340 |
| THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME | 2342 |
| <i>Schipani, Cindy¹; Dworkin, Terry²</i> | 2342 |
| WORKING IN VIRTUAL TEAMS: THE ROLE OF TEAM CONNECTEDNESS, KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND TEAM DIVERSITY..... | 2345 |
| <i>Schreiber, Ezolda; Van Dijk, Dina; Drory, Amos</i> | 2345 |
| DESTINATION MARKETING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ORGANIZATIONAL AMBIDEXTERITY: EXPLOITATIVE DILEMMAS AND EXPLORATIVE PROSPECTS? | 2351 |
| <i>Scott, Peter¹; Stokes, Peter²; Rowland, Caroline³; Gordon, David²</i> | 2351 |
| EXPLORATORY TEST OF A NEW FOOTBALL CLUB AGGRESSION SCALE | 2354 |
| <i>Shuv-Ami, Avichai; Alon, Anat Toder</i> | 2354 |
| EXPLORATORY TEST OF A NEW SCALE FOR SPORT FANS SOCIAL AND PERSONAL IDENTITIES | 2358 |
| <i>Shuv-Ami, Avichai; Alon, Anat Toder</i> | 2358 |
| DISCLOSURE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKET REACTION WITHIN THE STAKEHOLDER THEORY..... | 2363 |
| <i>Solimene, Silvia; Coluccia, Daniela; Fontana, Stefano</i> | 2363 |
| A GENERALISED PROPENSITY SCORE ANALYSIS TO INVESTIGATE INFLUENCE OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS ON GHGS EMISSIONS..... | 2371 |
| <i>Spada, Alessia; Fiore, Mariantonietta; Contò, Francesco</i> | 2371 |
| SUBSIDIARY'S DUAL RELATIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS IN EUROPEAN MULTINATIONAL FIRMS..... | 2374 |
| <i>Tardivo, Giuseppe¹; Ferraris, Alberto²; Bresciani, Stefano¹</i> | 2374 |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH SELF-SERVICE TECHNOLOGIES IN SERVICE ENCOUNTERS..... | 2378 |
| <i>Teixeira, Antonio Samuel¹; Nobre, Helena²; Simões, Cláudia³.....</i> | <i>2378</i> |
| EXPLORING INTERVAL-VALUED SCALES: A COMPARISON OF SCALE ATTRIBUTES BETWEEN INTERVAL VALUED AND SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCALES | 2381 |
| <i>Themistocleous, Christos¹; Pagiaslis, Anastasios¹; Smith, Andrew¹; Christian Wagner²</i> | <i>2381</i> |
| MONTREAL'S MULTIMEDIA AND VIDEOGAME INDUSTRY: THE SOURCES OF ITS COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION CAPACITY | 2384 |
| <i>Tremblay, Diane-Gabrielle</i> | <i>2384</i> |
| FARM BUSINESS RESOURCES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCELERATING THE CERTIFICATION | 2387 |
| <i>Tselempis, Dimitrios; Karipidis, Philippos; Pavloudi Alexandra</i> | <i>2387</i> |
| THE EFFECTS OF CEO NARCISSISM AND CORPORATE BRAND REPUTATION ON FIRM PERFORMANCE..... | 2389 |
| <i>Turner, Karynne</i> | <i>2389</i> |
| CONSUMER MOTIVES IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC RECESSION: ADOPTION OF THE MEANS END THEORY..... | 2392 |
| <i>Tzimas Dionysios¹, Karipidis Philippos², Kontogeorgos Achilles³.....</i> | <i>2392</i> |
| RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HYDROCARBON ENERGY MARKETS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN | 2394 |
| <i>Vasilopoulou, Panagiota.....</i> | <i>2394</i> |
| FEAR OF TERRORISM AND THE COSMOPOLITAN VALUE SYSTEM REFLECTED IN THE TOURISTS' PERCEPTION OF COUNTRY IMAGE AND TRAVEL DECISION | 2397 |
| <i>Vereb, Vanda¹; Nobre, Helena²; Farhangmehr, Minoo¹.....</i> | <i>2397</i> |
| CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CORPORATE SOCIAL PERFORMANCE..... | 2400 |
| <i>Vinarski -Peretz Hedva</i> | <i>2400</i> |
| DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH'S TRUST IN THE RETAIL BANKING SECTOR IN TURBULENT TIMES | 2403 |
| <i>Viterbo, Marília Ribeiro; Azevedo, António J. A.</i> | <i>2403</i> |

| | |
|--|------|
| THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND IN THE GAMING AREA OF A CASINO | 2406 |
| <i>Wannenburg, Elizma; Drotsky, Tonie; De Jager, Johan</i> | 2406 |
| THE IMPACT OF THE SUBSIDIARY'S INTRAPRENEURIAL CAPACITY ON THE EVOLUTION OF MNC'S STRATEGIC ORIENTATION IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION | 2409 |
| <i>Yahiaoui, Dorra¹; Chebbi, Hela²</i> | 2409 |
| AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC BRAND LOVE ON BRAND LOYALTY, WORD OF MOUTH AND PURCHASE INTENTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN SAUDI ARABIA | 2415 |
| <i>Yousef, Waleed; Melewar, T.C.;Dennis, Charles; Forouidi, Pantea</i> | 2415 |
| STYLES OF GOVERNANCE AND COMPANY PERFORMANCE. NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY MODEL APPLIED TO BEST PERFORMING AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY GIANTS | 2417 |
| <i>Zanda, Stefania</i> | 2417 |
| ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS: STRUCTURAL COMPARISON .. | 2418 |
| <i>Zvereva, Olga M.; Kondratyev, Andrey; Zverev, Fedor</i> | 2418 |

ONLINE BUYING INTENTIONS OF WINE CONSUMERS: THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The influence of *social media* in buying behaviour is attracting increasing interest from marketing scholars (Berthon et al., 2012; Hajli, 2014; Heinonen, 2008; Krishnamurthy e Dou, 2008). This influence is particularly important for complex products, such as wine. For these products, whose quality cannot be assessed before consumption, social media may represent an important external clue in driving consumers buying behaviour (Laverie et al., 2011; Szolnoki et al., 2014; Wilson and Quinton, 2012).

Extant research notes that social media may affect the several phases of the buying process, such as need recognition, information research, evaluation, buying and post-buying phases (Gatautis & Kazakevičiūtė, 2012), but scant attention has been deserved to the *online* buying intention. On the contrary, being able to depict if and to what extent social media may influence consumers *online* buying intention is crucial in developing new marketing strategies.

The aim of this study is to understand if and how using social media influences *online* buying intention of wine consumers. In particular, the study focuses on the moderating role of consumers' knowledge. Knowledge is particularly important in consumer behaviour literature. Previous studies distinguish between objective and subjective knowledge (Aurier and N'gobo, 1999; Brucks, 1985; Dodd et al., 2005; Johnson and Bastian, 2007; Perrouy et al., 2008); objective knowledge refers to what a consumer actually knows, while subjective knowledge refers to "*how much an individual thinks he knows about a product*" (Johnson and Bastian, 2007: 186). We advance two hypotheses. First, *the use of social media in information searching positively influences online buying intention (HP1)*. Second, *objective and subjective knowledge moderates the social media-buying intention behaviour (HP2)*.

METHODOLOGY, DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A total sample of 2597 wine consumers is used: 2202 responses are collected via an online survey (administered between January and June 2016) and 395 responses are collected offline (control

sample).

The *dependent variable* (Wine_online_buying_intention) refers to online wine buying behaviour and it assumes 5 values (never; less than once/month; occasionally: 3-4 times/months; regularly: more than once/week; all days). The *independent variable* refers to the use of social media and it is represented by a 4-items construct that look at the degree of use of social media (on a Likert scale) for searching wine information. The items are drawn from Bruwer e Wood (2005), Chen et al. (2011), Quinton e Harridge-March (2008), Thach (2009), Reyneke et al. (2011), Wilson e Quinton (2012). The *moderating variable* refers to the objective and subjective knowledge and they are measured by multi-items (Likert scale) based on Dodd et al. (2005) and Vigar-Ellis et al. (2015). On the basis of objective and subjective knowledge we identify 4 clusters of respondents: "Experts" (high subjective and high objective knowledge - HH), "Self-overevaluated" (high subjective and low objective knowledge - HL), "Modest" (low subjective and high objective knowledge - LH) and "Aware" (low subjective and low objective knowledge - LL). *Control variables* (age, gender, salary, educational level, frequency of online sales, wine consumption frequency, wine buying frequency, wine average price) are considered in the final model. Convergent and discriminant validities are performed for all multi-items constructs.

A *multinomial logistic model* is used. This model is preferred to the ordinal logistic regression since the parallel regression assumption is violated. Table 1 presents the results.

From the analysis, both hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 are supported. Consequently, the use of social media in information searching positively influences online buying intention. (Objective and subjective) knowledge moderates the social media-buying intention behaviour. The higher effect is for "Experts" consumers, i.e. those with high subjective and high objective knowledge, while the lowest effect is for "Aware" consumers, i.e. low subjective and low objective knowledge. The analysis shows that when knowledge grows, the influence of social media on buying intention grows. The *post-hoc analysis* also shows that the social media-buying intention relationship is influenced by socio-demographic factors (age and gender) and consumption-related factors (eg. average price).

CONCLUSIONS

This study advances extant research on the influence of social media on online buying intentions, showing how social media use positively influences the online buying intentions. In particular, it extends previous studies in analysing the moderating role of subjective and objective knowledge. Managerial implications are threefold. First, despite e-commerce still does not represent the main acquiring channel according to the sampled respondents, social media may influence this choice. Second, from the data collected it seems that consumers who tend to acquire online are Experts, who are looking for medium-high or high wine quality. Consequently, wine marketing strategies could aim

at increasing knowledge levels through information sharing on social media. Lastly, the study suggests that age has a quadratic effects and it is particularly important for those consumers who use social media. Future studies should further investigate the relationship between age, social media and use of online channels.

Keywords: online, wine, buying intentions, social media

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