

MYKOLAS ROMERIS UNIVERSITY
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The 11th International Scientific Conference for Young Researchers

**SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS
IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY
2023**

Abstract book

2 June 2023, Vilnius-Net

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A NEW APPROACH TO THE SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION OF LUXURY GOODS IN THE POST-COVID ERA – CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Purpose – This is a conceptual paper that relates to the behavioural changes of the symbolic consumers amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The author is seeking to find out a new conceptual framework for the existing theory of symbolic consumeristic attitudes and behavioural transformations that affected luxury purchasing habits after the pandemic time. This theoretical study is known for the purchase intentions of luxury brands also by comparing the influences of perceived values and social influence.

Design/methodology/approach – the study will use the relevant literature on behavioural changes but since COVID-19 is a new pandemic, an absence of approach related to the pandemic is expected. Nevertheless, the conceptual framework developed in this study which was carefully considered by the authors will be tested in the future to ensure that it can become a theory. The methodology used by the study is based on the literature search and secondary data to come out with the suggested framework. The expected findings of the study of the consumers are based on their behavioural reactions in the post-pandemic era.

Finding – The results indicate that self-dissidence boosts consumers' propensity to commit to symbolic consumption of branded luxuries (fake or unique) that can serve the social function of self-expression to relieve distress. The study also proposes different purposes of status and apparent consumption as there is often a theoretical overlap of these constructs in literature. The results show that luxury symbolism positively influences self-consistency, social approval, and self-esteem as more has an impact on self-affirmation and customer loyalty.

Research limitations/implications – Luxury marketers should focus on bind elements of their brands, such as their popularity, and how they enhance social connectedness when tailoring their brand communication to isolated consumers. No data have been found about symbolic consumers recently also as about their self-esteem and personal value in Europe (the just USA and China).

Practical implications – A conceptual review may leave uncertainties due to the lack of an appropriate number of research clarifying theoretically relevant referees. The author illuminates these unclarities, as well as study limitations.

Originality/Value — The findings provide beneficial perspicuity for marketing practitioners to design effective positioning and marketing strategies; also for the academics to have a constructive view of the consumers' cognitive structures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: symbolic consumers, consumer behaviour, luxury, pandemic.

Research type: general overview.

WORKING STUDENTS' INTENTIONS TO DROPOUT: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF WORK COMMITMENT AND UNIVERSITY SOCIAL CAPITAL DEFICIT

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Abstract

Purpose – This study delves into the factors influencing working students' intentions to drop out of university, particularly in three European countries: Estonia, Lithuania, and Poland.

Design/methodology/approach – Using data from the Eurostudent-VII survey, the study employed cross-tabulation and Chi-square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID) analysis to examine the relationship between dropout intent, weekly work duration, and university social capital.

Findings – The results reveal that students who feel connected to their teachers and peers are less likely to drop out of university, while issues with academic programmes increase the likelihood of dropout. The study also found that there is no significant difference in dropout intent between working students who work more than 20 hours per week and those who work less in Estonia and Lithuania. However, in Poland, working hours interact with other social capital factors to explain dropout intent.

Research limitations/implications – These findings highlight the importance of social connections in preventing dropout and renew the focus on the role of university social capital. Moreover, the study sparked a debate on the impact of combining work and university on dropout intent.

Practical implications – This study serves as a wake-up call for individuals who are interested in the critical significance of university social capital. Specifically, it might encourage a reconsideration of the calibre of educators capable of strengthening meaningful connections with their students, a reevaluation of the amenities designed to facilitate interaction among student employees, and a reevaluation of the viability of balancing work and study harmoniously in the face of inapt academic programmes.

Originality/Value – In addition to its findings, this study offers insights from three unique education markets regarding a particular demographic—working students.

Keywords: working students; university social capital; work commitment; inapt academic programme.

Research type: research paper.

THE ROLE OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Abstract

Purpose. The purpose of this article is to reveal the role of conflict management in organizational public relations management in managing relationships with its public groups and stakeholders.

Design/methodology/approach. In this article, the conflict management role in the public relations management field is analyzed, and a systematic and logical analysis of scientific literature is performed.

Finding. Conflict management skills can help public relations managers to develop trust among the organization and its stakeholders. Ineffective conflict management negatively affects an organization by generating more conflict. There are five types of causes of conflicts: interests, structural, value, data, and relationship. Public relations practitioners can use these conflict resolution styles: collaborating, accommodating, avoiding, compromising, and competing. For conflict management, also, game theory is used. Organizations should create a positive conflict climate, to encourage transparency, frequent communication, and empathy. Understanding the theory of conflict management and implementing it in an organization is key to managing disagreements successfully.

Research limitations/implications. The scope of the present paper is limited because it is only a primary attempt to develop an understanding of the role of conflict management in public relations. Also, empirical investigations are needed to prove the literature review findings.

Practical implications. The results of this study can be useful for public relations managers, marketing and communication strategists, communication and marketing scientists in making decisions that would help public relations managers to manage conflicts.

Originality/Value. This article can be useful for public relations managers, marketing and communication specialists, the academic researchers, who specialize in the field of public relations management and communication. This article could help policymakers manage public relations using conflict resolution strategies. Successfully applying conflict resolution theory social changes could be done, encouraging finding a



constructive resolution of conflicts and creating a more diplomatic environment, enhancing cooperation not only in Lithuania but also in the world.

Research type. A literature review.

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION OF SOCIETY – IS IT WELCOME BY BUSINESS?

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Abstract

Purpose – to review the attitude of business about the activity on responsible consumption of society. The main question – do the business companies encourage society to be more responsible and support the responsible consumption while this could mean the decrease of profit in short term?

Design/methodology/approach – scientific literature review, content analysis of annual reports, analysis and synthesis of statistical data.

Originality/Value – there were analyzed 28 annual reports of Lithuanian companies (not including academic institutions) listed in Global Compact participant list.

Finding – despite the increased amounts of wastes every year (because of increased number of population) there are more and more responsible customers who little by little change their behavior of consumption. But this is not enough, the consumerism level is still too high. Only truly socially responsible companies support society to be more responsible and consume responsibly: to buy more environmentally friendly production, to buy the amounts that are really needed to escape wastes, what even helps to minimize the expenditures, and etc. To sum up, responsible consumption could be beneficial for all parties: producers and consumers, and the environment would win.

Research limitations – the content analysis of annual reports could be broader in the future exploring not only one country's companies.

Research implications – the results of content analysis could be taken into account by business companies in encouraging responsible consumption of society and to improve the communication on this important issue by providing the recommendations for society.

Keywords: consumerism, consumption, responsible consumption (of society), social responsibility of business,

Research type: general review/viewpoint.

**THE PHENOMENON OF THE HIERARCHY PRINCIPLE
IN THE MILITARY:
ANALYSIS FROM TRADITIONAL BUREAUCRACY MODEL
TO META-GOVERNANCE**

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Abstract

While analyzing the principle of hierarchy the military is usually given as an example, where everything is standardized, clear control mechanisms are provided and clear subordination prevails. However, at the same time, it is usually described as "remnant". What is more, it is as an example of organizational management that is inflexible and does not adapt to changes. However, if the traditional model of bureaucracy is no longer fashionable, why does the phenomenon of the principle of hierarchy persist in modern concepts of management?

Purpose – is to analyze theoretical context of hierarchy principle from Meta-governance, traditional bureaucratic model and Neo-Weberianism theories and to discuss the manifestation of this principle in the military as a case study.

Design/methodology/approach. In order to achieve the set goal, the systematic analysis of scientific literature was done. The origin and concept of hierarchy principle is analyzed in the framework of traditional bureaucracy model and Neo-Weberian theory, including the analysis of Meta-governance concept through its main aspects. The case study method was chosen in discussion about hierarchy principle in military, which allows to thoroughly analyze the situation in the real context, to describe and explain the phenomenon under study.

Finding. Although management is becoming more liberal, the principle of hierarchy still remains at its core. Though the management of modern organizations is based on the principle of networking, hierarchy helps to ensure proper implementation of procedures and rules. The management of processes in military are more characterized by Neo-Weberian theoretical assumptions than Meta-governance. For this specific bureaucratic organization, moving away from the original idea can even be dangerous. The principle of hierarchy is even desirable in the modern context and ensures stability.

Research limitations/implications. The principle of hierarchy was analyzed only in the context of three theories - Meta-governance, traditional bureaucracy model and Neo-Weberianism.

Practical implications. This paper applies a systematic literature review method trying to find an answer what is the importance of the principle of hierarchy in the context of the concept of Meta-governance and how the principle of hierarchy has changed in the transformation from the traditional model of bureaucracy to Neo-Weberianism. The practical relevance of the article is substantiated by analyzing the phenomenon of the principle in the military.

Keywords: Hierarchy, Bureaucracy, Neo-Weberianism, Meta-governance, Military.

Research type: case study.

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND TERRORISM FINANCING ISSUES IN THE PROVISION OF REMOTE FINANCIAL SERVICES

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Abstract

Purpose – to determine and theoretically individualize the modern means of money laundering and terrorist financing using modern technologies, in particular, remotely.

Design/methodology/approach – research is based on the system approach, modern methods of cognition of money laundering in the sphere of remote financial services and features of legalization of these criminal incomes, features of social life phenomena and the accompanying criminal processes that facilitate legalization. Instrumentation to achieve these goals were the methods of criminological and legal research, historical research, system-structural analysis, formal logic, a comparative legal method.

Finding – innovations in financial services, such as new methods of identification, electronic signatures, various platforms for uploading identification and "know your client" documents, give fraudsters the opportunity to find new ways to launder money and new opportunities to commit other types of fraud, such as cyberfraud, and identity theft as examples, thus technologies provide new opportunities not only for financial institutions, but for criminals as well.

Research limitations/implications – this analysis will allow to consider the development of trends in a more detailed version, since various external factors have influenced them over the past 5 years. This research will help to predict future trends and develop crisis options in the financial sector and various money laundering prevention methods.

Practical implications – this paper consists of integrated approach to the scientific and theoretical understanding of the problems associated with the manifestations of criminal activity in the laundering of money and terrorism financing in the remote financial sector. The analysis of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the application of the norms of the current "anti-laundering" legislation and the lack of adequate law enforcement practice.

Originality/Value – The results of the research can be applied in educational and pedagogical activities, in particular, in teaching and studying courses in banking and finance law, in conducting seminars with students of law and economic faculties of higher educational institutions, as well as in conducting research on relevant issues. This

research can generate interest in both - the general public, as well as professionals in the field of law, economics, political science and business. Additionally, this research could demonstrate that European institutions initiatives are still having a vague idea of what the consequences might be if new technologies trends are not thought through in advance.

Keywords: anti money laundering; fraud; remote financial services.

Research type: research paper.

“Social Transformations in Contemporary Society 2023” (STICS 2023),
The 11th International Scientific Conference for Young Researchers,
Abstract book. 2 June 2023, Vilnius-Net, p. 15.

ISSN 2424-5631 (online)

Is world really changing as fast as we think? Or is it event changing at all? Social transformations is a delicate topic for researchers. We invited young researchers to look at processes which cause social transformations (or prove the static of societal tradition) in their country and share their findings.



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Texts are not edited

Prepared for publishing – Dalia Karlaitė

Published by – Mykolas Romeris University,
Ateities g. 20, LT-08303 Vilnius