

10th International Conference on Marketing and Retailing (INCOMaR 2025)

Abstract Book & Programme Schedule

*“Artificial Intelligence and Service Innovation to Drive Business
Digital Transformation”*

25 November 2025

**Institute of Business Excellence (IBE)
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia**

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PARALLEL SESSION 1

25 NOVEMBER 2025 | TUESDAY





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	Welcoming Remarks by Session Chair			
10.30 am	INCOMaR 2025:013-015: The Role of Prophetic Leadership in Cultivating Trust and Innovation: A Case Study of Open University Malaysia. Nur Bakri Abd Hamid, Hamidah Mat, Norfardilawati Musa, Fatimah Yusoooff, Hazrul Hizam Karim, Muhammad Izzul Syahmi Zulkepli	INCOMaR 2025:023-042: Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI): Reliability, Validity, and Mediation Evidence from Hospitality Higher Education Nur Azah Farhana Mohamed Fadzil, Mohd Raziff Jamaluddin, Faradewi Bee A. Rahman and Koe Wei Loon	INCOMaR 2025:083-072: Leadership Role in Promoting Employee Resilience within Innovative AI-Powered Workplaces: A Systematic Literature Review of Theoretical Foundations from 2000 to 2024 Mohd Nur Azrul Hafiz Mohd Norizan and Tey Lian Seng	INCOMaR 2025:021-030: Smart Personalization: A Review of AI's Role in Shaping Sustainable Hospitality Experiences Zhang Xiaowei, Mohd Raziff Jamaluddin, Anderson Ngelambong
	INCOMaR 2025:JIM-25-0342: Exploring Luxury Tourism as a Branding Destination Image for Malang City San Rudiyanto, Sovia Rosalin, A. Faidlal Rahman, Arif Widyatama and Mohd Raziff Jamaluddin	INCOMaR 2025:047-039: An Analysis of Factors Influencing High Employee Turnover among Generation Z in Indonesia: Implications for Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) Hengky Setiawan, Jailam Amir and Dr. Dewi Tamara	INCOMaR 2025:010-007: Conceptual Competencies and Work-Life Balance Strategies: Fostering Growth Intentions in Retail Business Hazuana Zulkiflee, Wan Edura Wan Rashid and Norfadzilah Abdul Razak	INCOMaR 2025:038-029: Moderating Effect of Board characteristics On the Relationship between Renewable Energy Investment and Firm performance among Oil & Gas Firms in Sub Saharan Africa

				Shehu Umar, Ahmed Razman Abdul-latiff and Rosalan Bin Ali
	INCOMaR 2025:JIM-25-0331: Whether the Top Hotel Companies Address Stakeholders' Concerns in Their CSR Reporting Dong Linlin, Mohd Raziff Jamaluddin and Anderson Ngelambong	INCOMaR 2025:077-060: Evolving Trust Over Time: Exploring Client Experience with Long-serving Auditors Krystal Joy Q. De Vera, Alliyah May P. Javier, Irish D. Sanchez, Ma. Anna Corina G. Kagaoan, MBA, MA ELS and Christopher Dennis E. Catapang, PhD	INCOMaR 2025:081-064: SERVQUAL Dimensions: Service Quality of Fine Dining Experience in Five Star Hotels in Batam City Oda Ignatius Besar Hariyanto, Hengky Lau and Dame Afrina Sihombing	INCOMaR 2025:085-067: Unpacking the Pressure: The Mediating Role of Work Stress and Emotional Exhaustion in the Workload–Performance Link Syarifah Musyauwalah, Edy Yulianto Putra and Agustinus Setyawan
	INCOMaR 2025:JIM-25- Does Workplace Spirituality Reduce the Impact of Job Insecurity on Turnover Intention? Insights from Millennial and Gen Z Employees I Ketut Johny Pramanda Putra, Putu Ayu Sita Laksmi, AA Made Indra Wijaya Kusuma	INCOMaR 2025:088-074: The Effectiveness of External Shariah Audit Practice for Malaysian Islamic Bank Muhammad Mundzir Mohd Zamri, Nurul Khofifah Abdullah and Ros Syammimi Hamid	INCOMaR 2025:077-057: Online Shopper's Lived Experiences with Non-Celebrity Affiliate Marketers Justin E. Aceña, Fiona Angeli A. Mercado, Mark Joseph S. Oabel, and Ma. Anna Corina G. Kagaoan	INCOMaR 2025:JIM-25-0325: What is the opportunity of joining GSP+ in the Republic of Uzbekistan? Dilshod Soliyev
	INCOMaR 2025:003-002: Multidimensional Authenticity and Tourist Loyalty in Ethnic Heritage Tourism: Mediating Roles of Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Place Attachment in Lijiang Ancient City Haifei Dang, Mohd Raziff	INCOMaR 2025:JIM-25-0338: Impact of Environmental Performance, Firm Characteristics, and Media Exposure on Carbon Emission Disclosure in Indonesia Novi Darmayanti, Duta Mustajab, Ana Fitriyatul	INCOMaR 2025:041-077: Reverse Logistics for Sustainability and Cost optimization in Palm Oil Industry Nordina Qayyen Rosli, S.Sarifah Radiah Shariff, Mohd Rizaimy Shaharudin, Amar Amjad Abdul Wahid and Bernardus Yuliarto Nugroho	INCOMaR 2025:041-078: Stakeholders' Perspectives on Implementing a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) for Road Electrical Assets Amar Amjad Bin Abdul Wahid, S. Sarifah Radiah Shariff, Ilyas

	Jamaluddin, Arni Abdul Gani, Lina Diao	Bilgies, Siti Shoimah and Arneta Mei Vella		Masudin & Nordina Qayyen Rosli
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PARALLEL SESSION 2

25 NOVEMBER 2025 | TUESDAY





TIME	ROOM 1	ROOM 2	ROOM 3	ROOM 4
				
	Welcoming Remarks by Session Chair			
11.30 am	INCOMaR 2025:078-062: AI-Driven Service Innovation and Customer Experience Personalisation in Malaysian Franchises: A Pathway Toward Digital Business Transformation Abdul Razak Yahaya, Syaharizah Abdul Aziz and Sharfika Raime	INCOMaR 2025:024-020: Embracing Digitalisation in Malaysian Hotels: Value Creation or “Hospitality Myopia”? Jason M. S. Lam, Choo Ling Suan, Gan Chin Yee, Siddarsha Siva Kumar	INCOMaR 2025:048-036: Trade in Higher Education Services and Economic Growth: Comparative Evidence from China and Malaysia Jiang Lu, Gu-Feng Wu, Soo-Cheng Chuah and Chai Li Cheam	INCOMaR 2025:064-047: Unravelling the Determinants of Transportation Carbon Emissions in China Zhong Jun, Lim, Zhi Qi, Koay, Cheong Fatt, Ng, Siew Pong, Cheah and Kalai Vani a/p Kalimuthu
	INCOMaR 2025:066-079: Sensory Meets Digital: The Role of Experiential	INCOMaR 2025:006-005: Immersed and Impulsive: Exploring How Live-streaming Interactivity Shapes	INCOMaR 2025:077-055: From Social Trust to Entrepreneurial Participation: Factors Influencing Multilevel	INCOMaR 2025:075-053: Factors Driving Indonesian Travel Agencies' Sales Performance

	<p>Touchpoints in Shaping Brand Love Among Beauty Shoppers</p> <p>May Sim Yun Ping and Yusniza Kamarulzaman</p>	<p>Consumers' Impulse Buying in China"</p> <p>Qin Li, Imelda Albert Gisip and Cynthia Robert Dawayan</p>	<p>Marketing Participation in the Philippines</p> <p>Merlita C. Medallon</p>	<p>Erilia Kesumahati, Vincent Lim and Andina Fasha</p>
	<p>INCOMaR 2025:077-058:</p> <p>From Tips to Top Profits: Leveraging on the Principle of Cost Volume Profit Analysis</p> <p>Virlyn Kaye H. De Grano, Irish Claire V. Espiritu, Ma. Anna Corina G. Kagaoan, and Felizardo M. Marquez</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:074-065:</p> <p>The Influence of Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Enjoyment, and Perceived Ease of Use on Online Purchase Among Students</p> <p>Noorhafizah binti Akup</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:077-056:</p> <p>Cracking the Humor Code in Advertising</p> <p>Pamela Unchalie Adea, Irish Ice Celestino, Jon Anthony Dela Cruz andmMa. Anna Corina G. Kagaoan</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:082-069:</p> <p>A Proposed Theoretical Framework of Human Capital, Financial Literacy and Business Mentoring: Implications for Business Survival of Rural Youth Entrepreneurs</p> <p>Safwan Ahmad Pauzi and Aida Idris</p>
	<p>INCOMaR 2025:005-004:</p> <p>Extending the Theory of Planned Behavior: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Coffee Consumption Trends in Urban Malaysia</p> <p>Rozalin Abdul Rahim and Norasekin Abd Rashid</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:016-014:</p> <p>Enhancing Competency and Performance in Wealth Management Education through Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered Virtual Reality (VR) Learning</p> <p>Muhammad Shodiq</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:070-048:</p> <p>Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Technological Readiness as Drivers of Innovation and Performance in the Restaurant Industry</p> <p>Gamal Khalifa, Aryam Hasan D. H. Alqahtani, Asma Saeed A. S. Al-Saedi, Salama Mubarak A. K. Almansoori, Ghaya Ali H. M. Almesafri and Wadima Helal A. S. Alshamsi</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:077-059:</p> <p>Analyzing The Influence Of E-Payment On Consumer Buying Patterns</p> <p>Rafaella Joy B. Berso, Diana Loraine L. Ramos, Benedict H. Serdon, and Ma. Anna Corina G. Kagaoan*, Christopher Dennis Catapang</p>
	<p>INCOMaR 2025:008-006:</p> <p>The Impact of the Digital Economy on Residents' Consumption Levels: An</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:043-032:</p> <p>Drivers of Continuance Intention to Use Artificial Intelligence-Enabled Mobile</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:022-019:</p> <p>Technology Acceptance in Islamic Fintech: A UTAUT-based Instrument for Shariah-compliant BNPL</p>	<p>INCOMaR 2025:069-046:</p> <p>Natural Language Processing (NLP) in Halal Holistic Hospitality Research: A Review of Customer Experience and Service Quality</p>

	Empirical Analysis Based on Panel Data Li Chenyang and Shamsul Baharin Saihani	Shopping Apps in Malaysia: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective Weng Onn Lee, Hon Tat Huam, Raja Nerina Raja Yusof	Norsyuhada Ismail, Anizah Zainuddin and Amily Fikry	Mohd Sadad Mahmud and Hafiza Anam Masood
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PARALLEL SESSION 3

25 NOVEMBER 2025 | TUESDAY

TIME	ROOM 1	ROOM 2	ROOM 3	ROOM 4
				
	Welcoming Remarks by Session Chair			
2.30 pm	INCOMaR 2025:089-076: Food Tourism and Social Media: Leveraging Instagram for Effective Destination Marketing in Malaysia Siti Nor Fadillah Ahmad Shariff, Muhamad Shah Kamal Ideris, Massyittah Omar and Siti Noraisah Dolah @ Abdullah	INCOMaR 2025:073-070: Digital Hospitality: The Role of Self-Service Technology Engagement and Trust on Brand Loyalty in Malaysian Luxury Hotels Syahrul Zuhara S.A. Kamal and Yusniza Kamarulzaman	INCOMaR 2025:086-071: Assessing the Adoption Intention of Computational Intelligence Technologies in the E-Commerce Industry Figo Fernando and Renny Christiarini	INCOMaR 2025:080-063: An Analysis of The Determinants That Influence the Purchase Intention of Frozen Food Products Amongst Millenials in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia Kanesh Gopal, Siti Noor Aishah Mohd Sidik

	INCOMaR 2025:071-050: Embracing Biophilic Design in Campus Spaces for Enhancing Student Well Being and Learning Environment Nurin Afrina Tarmizi and Nor Hanisah Binti Mohd Hashim	INCOMaR 2025:JIM-25-0350 Learning Beyond Borders in a Monocultural Classroom: An NGT-Driven Exploration of Experiential Cultural Events and Intercultural Competence Dr Shamsul Baharin Saihani	INCOMaR 2025:093-080: Resilience in the Digital Trenches: A Systematic Review of Psychosocial Influences on IT Professionals Siti Nursyuhada Sheikh Ghadzi, Wan Edura Wan Rashid, Abdul Kadir Othman and Shereen Noranee	INCOMaR 2025:057-041: Business Simulation as Experiential Learning: Assessing its Impact on Students' Employability Readiness and Learning Outcomes in Retail Management Education Nurul Ashikin Binti Md Taib, Ruzimas Ayu Binti Razali, and Nor Alwani Binti Abd Wahab
	INCOMaR 2025:JIM 25-0322: Enhancing Customer Experience Quality: Integrating the Peace of Mind Scale with the PAD Model Noreldzaihan Mohd Rais, Rosidah Musa and Mazzini Muda	JIM-25-0323 Traditional And Electronic Word-Of-Mouth and Destination Image in Heritage Tourism: Evidence from Uzbekistan in A Post-Pandemic Context Khusniddin Egamnazarov	INCOMaR 2025:071-049: Travel Cost Assesment Study on the Value of Nature Based Tourism in Sungai Bil Recreation and Camping Area, Tanjung Malim, Perak Nor Hanisah Mohd. Hashim, Nurul Akmaniza Mohd Nasir, Nik Jaswiri Johannis, Abdul Latiff Mohamed	JIM-25-0349 A Sustainable Framework of Supply Value Chain: A Case Study of Malaysian Agriculture Based Entrepreneurs Mohd Ali Bahari
	JIM-25-0324 Integration of rural tourism and agro tourism. Case of study Tashkent region, Uzbekistan Alisher Eshtaev, Nargiza Joraeva and Mokhinur Nurfayzieva	INCOMaR 2025:033-033: Trends And Research Sustainable Warehouse A Bibliometric Analysis Thiban Krishnamoorthi and Norhidayah Azman	INCOMaR 2025:087-073: The Interplay of Risk Management on Firm Performance: Exploring the Roles of Green Innovation Sari Dewi, Charles, Teddy Jurnal, Hendi, Budi Chandra	INCOMaR 2025:077-061: Smart Inventory Management and Business Performance in a Manufacturing Industry using Structural Equation Modeling Jayzzel Rivera and Dr. Joy Comia-Ashipaoloye
			INCOMaR 2025:JIM 25-0328:	

			<p>The Impact of Artificial Intelligence in Hotel Services on Guest Loyalty in China</p> <p>Zhang Xiaowei, Mohd Raziff Jamaluddin, Anderson Ngelambong</p>	
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Theme: Trust, Ethics & Leadership in Sustainable Business

Conceptual Competencies and Work–Life Balance Strategies: Fostering Growth Intentions in Retail Business

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Abstract

Growth intentions are vital for women entrepreneurs to sustain competitiveness and ensure long-term business success. However, many struggle to transform aspirations into actual growth due to a lack of conceptual competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and strategic decision-making. These elements are essential for recognizing opportunities, managing challenges, and navigating complex business environments. Addressing this gap, this paper aims to predict the role of conceptual competencies as a mediator in the relationship between work-family enrichment (WFE) and family-work enrichment (FWE) on women entrepreneurs' growth intentions. Four hundred women entrepreneurs participated in the survey, and data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Smart PLS. The findings reveal that WFE and FWE have a significant positive relationship with growth intentions. Importantly, conceptual competencies were found to facilitate the relationship between enrichment and growth intentions, underscoring their role in enhancing women entrepreneurs' ability to expand into new markets and adopt technological advancements. This study contributes to understanding how work-family and family-work interact with conceptual competencies to influence growth intentions. The findings highlight the need to strengthen conceptual competencies among women entrepreneurs through training, mentorship, and capacity-building initiatives. Such efforts enhance personal and professional development and support the broader agenda of women's entrepreneurial growth and sustainability in today's competitive business environment.

Keywords: Work-Family Enrichment, Family-Work Enrichment, Growth Intentions, Conceptual Competencies, Market Expansions.

The Role of Prophetic Leadership in Cultivating Trust and Innovation: A Case Study of Open University Malaysia

**Nur Bakri Abd Hamid¹, Hamidah Mat², Norfardilawati Musa³, Fatimah Yusooff⁴,
Hazrul Hizam Karim⁵ and Muhammad Izzul Syahmi Zulkepli⁶**

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Abstract

Prophetic leadership, grounded in integrity, trustworthiness and wisdom, provides a timeless framework for guiding institutions. In higher education, fostering trust and innovation is vital to sustaining effective academic environments, yet leadership practices often struggle to balance ethical values with institutional demands. This study explores the role of Prophetic leadership in cultivating trust and innovation within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Open University Malaysia. The problem addressed centres on challenges faced by academicians in meeting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), where conventional managerial approaches may emphasize efficiency and output at the expense of ethical and trust-based leadership values. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with faculty members. The findings show that Prophetic leadership attributes such as honesty, empathy and accountability nurture a culture of trust that strengthens collaboration among staff and builds confidence in leadership decisions. These values also stimulate innovation by encouraging creativity, open dialogue and adaptability in responding to new challenges. The discussion highlights the relevance of Prophetic leadership in aligning ethical values with institutional performance, demonstrating how trust can enhance professional relationships while providing fertile ground for innovative practices. The study finds that embedding Prophetic leadership principles offers a viable pathway for integrating ethics, trust and innovation, contributing both to academic and admin excellence and to the wider discourse on Islamic leadership in contemporary contexts.

Keywords: Faculty leadership, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Open University Malaysia, Prophetic leadership, Trust and innovation

Reliability and Validity of Entrepreneurial Intention and Psychological Capital Instruments: Evidence from Hospitality Higher Education

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the reliability and validity of measurement instruments for entrepreneurial intention and psychological capital within the context of hospitality higher education. Ensuring reliable and valid measurement tools is crucial for accurately evaluating students' entrepreneurial intention and psychological capital. Data were collected from hospitality students enrolled in higher education institutions in Malaysia using a structured questionnaire. The measurement model was tested using statistical techniques, including reliability analyses and validity assessments. The results confirm that the instruments demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency and validity, indicating their suitability for measuring entrepreneurial intention and psychological capital among hospitality students. The study provides empirical support for the applicability of these constructs in the hospitality education context. Educators and researchers can use validated instruments to understand hospitality students' entrepreneurial mindset better. Reliable measures will allow higher education institutions to design more effective entrepreneurship education programs and interventions. This study contributes by validating measurement instruments that capture both entrepreneurial intention and psychological capital in the hospitality domain. By providing robust evidence of their reliability and validity, the study enhances future empirical research in entrepreneurship and hospitality education.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention, HEIs, Hospitality students, Measurement validation, Psychological capital, Reliability and validity

Moderating Effect of Board characteristics On the Relationship Between Renewable Energy Investment and Firm performance among Oil & Gas Firms in Sub Saharan Africa

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Abstract

Introduction: This empirical study examines the moderating role of board characteristics on the relationship between renewable energy investment and firm financial performance, measured by return on assets (ROA) and net profit margin (NPM), among oil and gas firms in sub-Saharan Africa. The study employs panel data and conducts a moderation analysis.

Methodology: The sample population of fifty (50) oil and gas firms was selected using the purposive sampling method. Data were collected from secondary sources comprising an audited financial statement of sampled firms and the LSEG data stream. The period of the study was ten (10) years (2014–2023). Data were analysed using a linear multiple regression technique in the STATA software package.

Findings: The result of the study reveals a significant negative effect of renewable energy investment (REI) on ROA and a significant positive effect on NPM. The finding also indicates that board independence has a positive relationship with ROA but an insignificant effect on NPM, and board tenure has a positive and insignificant effect on ROA and NPM. Board expertise has a significant negative effect on ROA and significant positive effect on NPM, while gender diversity has a positive but insignificant effect on ROA and significant positive effect on NPM of oil and gas firms of sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, board expertise moderates positively the relationship between renewable energy investment and NPM and Gender diversity moderate positively the relationship between renewable energy investment and ROA of oil and firms of sub Saharan Africa.

Conclusion: The study indicates that while renewable energy investments may temporarily decrease return on assets, the investments yield a long-term profitability benefit, especially when complemented by effective board governance mechanisms, specifically boards with expert members and more female directors,] are in better positioned to guide, evaluate and contribute to, good oversight and innovative investment decisions in renewable energy projects with sustainability and financial objectives. Therefore, this study suggests effective corporate governance compliance and effective renewable energy investment policies for improved firm financial performance among oil and gas firms in sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: Firm performance, Investment, Renewable energy, Board Independence. Board Tenure, Board Expertise, Board Gender, Board characteristics.

An Analysis of Factors Influencing High Employee Turnover among Generation Z in Indonesia: Implications for Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)

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Abstract

Turnover is a critical issue affecting organizations worldwide, this is notably present among Generation Z in comparison to other generational cohorts. Generation Z is known for its distinctive behavior and needs, given its obsession with mental health and the digital world, which are said to often collide with the real world. The main aim of the study is to provide an analysis of factors influencing turnover among Generation Z. The study was based on a quantitative survey which consisted of 204 Generation Z respondents who had left their employment in the past 24 months. The study revealed that major causes for high turnover among Generation Zs were low opportunities for career growth, insufficient monetary & non-monetary remuneration and lack of work-life balance. These factors negatively influenced their attitudes, leading them to resign. The limitation of the study stems from generalizability and its geographical scope. The paper, strategies to support youth employment and organizational retention practices are identified for SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Keywords: Generation Z, career growth, reward system, work-life balance, attitude to work, and perception.

From Social Trust to Entrepreneurial Participation: Factors Influencing Multilevel Marketing Participation in the Philippines

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Abstract

Multilevel marketing (MLM) continue to gain popularity in the Philippines where community networks and interpersonal relationships influence participation in small-scale entrepreneurial activities. This study examined the extent to which trust, income, perceptions of MLM and experience in network and direct selling affect an individual's likelihood of joining MLM organizations. Data were collected from 1,310 community-based respondents across various municipalities. Multiple linear regression was used to identify which factors significantly predict involvement in MLM.

Findings show that trust in the individual or group initiating the MLM invitation was the most significant predictor of participation. Income also positively influenced the decision to join, suggesting that financial capacity enables individuals to afford financial costs of membership and product procurement. Prior experience in both network marketing and direct selling likewise increased the probability of participation, indicating that familiarity with persuasive selling and commission-based earnings plays a role in one's readiness to engage in MLM. Meanwhile, perception of MLM as a legitimate business opportunity contributed to participation to a lesser but still statistically meaningful extent.

These results suggest that MLM participation in Filipino communities is shaped by relational networks, economic capability and accumulated informal business experience, rather than purely by economic necessity. The study provides insights relevant to consumer affairs, livelihood training programs, and policy strategies regarding the promotion and regulation of MLM operations. Strengthening financial literacy and transparent communication within MLM recruitment processes is recommended to support informed decision-making.

Keywords: Direct selling, Income, Multilevel marketing (MLM), Network marketing, Perception of MLM, SDG 9, Trust.

Evolving Trust Over Time: Exploring Client Experience with Long-serving Auditors

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Abstract

This study explores the critical role trust plays in the long-term auditor-client relationship, focusing on how clients establish trust, the risks associated with the trust placed, and the consequences of this trust in their long-term external auditor. Utilizing a qualitative research design and employing a phenomenological approach, it captures the lived experiences of clients working with long-serving external auditors. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews and asynchronous email exchanges with six companies in the City of Makati and Taguig that satisfy the criteria—having worked for at least three years with an external auditor and involving direct communication with auditors within the entity's governance structure. The findings reveal the concepts that contribute to the establishment of client trust in long-serving auditors, such as mutual understanding and aligned objectives, expertise and due diligence, transparency and ethical compliance, and accountability and verification. However, risks such as familiarity threats, complacency, and disagreements between the recommendations and opinions of the auditor and the nature of the client's business also arise. The outcome of trusting a long-serving auditor can lead to two possibilities: a positive scenario where the working relationship becomes more collaborative, with clients often appreciating the findings and recommendations, even amid disagreements, and a commitment to integrity from both parties despite longevity. Conversely, the relationship may negatively result in decreased scrutiny of issues and missed opportunities for growth due to the familiarity and complacency of both auditors and clients. This study emphasizes the balance between the trust built in the auditor-client relationship and the need for maintaining professional skepticism throughout the engagement.

Keywords: Client Experience, Long-serving External Auditors, Risks to Auditor-Client Relationships, Trust.

Servqual Dimensions: Service Quality of Fine Dining Experience in Five Star Hotels in Batam City

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Abstract

Fine dining services in five star hotels are an important element in shaping customer satisfaction. However, most previous studies have only discussed service quality in general using a quantitative approach, without exploring aspects of the experience directly felt by guests. This creates a gap related to the lack of exploration of the deeper meaning of service quality, the perspectives of consumers and service providers directly to build customer trust. This study aims to analyze the quality standards of fine dining services in five-star hotels in Batam City based on the five dimensions of SERVQUAL, namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The study was conducted using a phenomenological qualitative approach to understand the meaning of human experiences that are directly experienced and perceived by hotel guests, restaurant staff, and managers. Data collection techniques included observation, online interviews, and literature review. The results showed that all five dimensions of SERVQUAL have been well implemented, particularly in terms of visual aspects and staff professionalism, although there is still room for improvement in service accuracy and product information delivery. The limitations of this study lie in the scope of informants or the limited number of research subjects. Therefore, it is recommended that future research use a quantitative approach to obtain more measurable results by including a larger number of respondents to achieve more accurate outcomes.

Keywords: Service quality, SERVQUAL Dimensions, five-star hotel, Fine Dining, Hospitality

Leadership Role in Promoting Employee Resilience within Innovative AI-Powered Workplaces: A Systematic Literature Review of Theoretical Foundations from 2000 to 2024

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Abstract

This study analyses existing literatures by examined the theoretical foundation and practical frameworks that explain the role of leadership in promoting employee resilience. Employee resilience (ER) refers to individual ability to adapt, cope, recover and thrive amid unexpected challenges. This becomes increasingly critical in contemporary workplaces shaped by the emerging digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) which often evoke fear, job insecurity and resistance to change. The central focus of this study is on how leadership functions as a facilitating resource that enable employees to navigate the innovative AI-powered workplaces characterised by evolving work demands and pressure. Most studies have conceptualised ER primarily as an individual trait rather than as an outcome influenced by leadership processes. Addressing this gap, this study investigates how leadership fosters resilience and identifies additional factors that strengthen employees' adaptive capacities from theoretical foundation perspective. Adopting the widely accepted PRISMA protocol, this study reviewed publications from 2000 to 2024 across accessible databases. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring theoretical foundations and frameworks linking leadership and ER. The results reveal the predominance of Conservation of Resources theory, complemented by emerging frameworks such as the Job Demands-Resources model and contextual dynamic. These findings suggest a paradigmatic evolution from resource preservation to empowerment-oriented approaches that promotes ER. Despite abundant empirical linkages, this study reveals fragmentation and inconsistency in how leadership are theoretically integrated with ER models. This fragmentation presents a research opportunity for a multi-layer study that incorporates cognitive, emotional and contextual dimensions. Such integration could bridge micro-macro perspectives, aligning individual adaptability and leadership with the entire digital transformation imperatives. This paper concludes by discussing the gaps, implications for leadership practice and directions for future research to develop integrative models that capture the role of humanised leadership in fostering AI-driven employee resilience.

Keywords: *leadership; employee resilience; technological advancement; artificial intelligence; innovation*

Unpacking the Pressure: The Mediating Role of Work Stress and Emotional Exhaustion in the Workload–Performance Link

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of workload and job demands on employee performance, with job stress and emotional exhaustion as intervening variables among the Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP) in the Regional Inspectorates throughout the Riau Islands Province. Internal government supervision is a crucial element in realizing transparent, accountable, and efficient governance. However, high job demands and heavy workloads can increase job stress and emotional exhaustion, ultimately contributing to reduced employee performance. This research uses a quantitative approach with the Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 180 respondents, consisting of APIP personnel from various Regional Inspectorates in the Riau Islands Province. The variables in this study include workload and job demands as independent variables, job stress and emotional exhaustion as mediating variables, and employee performance as the dependent variable. The results show that workload and job demands have a significant effect on employee performance. Furthermore, job stress and emotional exhaustion are proven to be mediating variables that strengthen the relationship between workload and job demands on employee performance.

Keywords: Workload, Job Demands, Job Stress, Emotional Exhaustion, Performance, Regional Inspectorate.

The Effectiveness of External Shariah Audit Practice for Malaysian Islamic Bank

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Abstract

The effectiveness of external Shariah audit is vitally important to ensuring that Malaysian Islamic banks conduct business fully aligned with Shariah principles while upholding public trust and regulatory integrity. Despite the fact that Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has develop a Shariah Governance Framework, external Shariah auditing is not as advanced as internal Shariah auditing. This study explores the effectiveness of external Shariah audit practices in Malaysian Islamic banks, focusing on how audit quality, independence, and professional competence influence the assurance of Shariah compliance. While internal Shariah audit is well established, external Shariah audit remains at an early stage and is not yet a mandatory regulatory requirement under Bank Negara Malaysia's Shariah Governance Policy Document (SGPD). Using a qualitative approach through purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews were conducted with external Shariah audit firms, internal Shariah auditors of commercial Islamic banks and development financial institutions (DFIs), and academicians. The findings reveal that effective Shariah audit practice is enhanced through cooperation between internal and external auditors, strong regulatory oversight, and adherence to professional auditing standards. However, the study also identifies challenges such as the limited scope of external Shariah audit often confined to financial reporting rather than operational compliance, insufficient regulatory enforcement, and a shortage of qualified auditors proficient in both financial auditing and *fiqh muamalat*. The study concludes that the effectiveness of external Shariah audit depends on a well-structured governance environment, adequate competency and independence of auditors, and a broadened audit scope that integrates both financial and operational dimensions of Shariah compliance. This study contributes to the growing discourse on strengthening Shariah governance through a credible and transparent external audit framework in Malaysia's Islamic banking industry.

Keyword: Shariah Audit, External Shariah Audit, Malaysian Islamic Bank, Effectiveness

Resilience in the Digital Trenches: A Systematic Review of Psychosocial Influences on IT Professionals

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, workforce resilience has gained significant global recognition, primarily due to rapid technological advancement that has intensified modern work environments' volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). These changes have placed increased pressure on employees, making resilience a critical competency for organizational sustainability and effectiveness. A resilient workforce is characterized by its ability to adapt to, recover from, and overcome workplace stressors and challenges. This capability is particularly vital for organizations operating under high-demand conditions. In this context, psychosocial factors, comprising beneficial psychological and social resources at both individual and team levels, play a pivotal role in enhancing employee resilience. A growing body of literature, including journal articles and online academic sources, has explored the relationship between psychosocial factors and workforce resilience. This systematic literature review adopts the PICO framework to structure the research inquiry and applies the PRISMA methodology for data selection and synthesis. The review analyses 39 studies selected from an initial pool of 111 publications, offering comprehensive insights into multilevel psychosocial dimensions and their influence on resilience. Additionally, the review highlights the benefits and challenges of cultivating a resilient workforce, providing direction for future research and organizational practice.

Keywords: Psychosocial, workforce resilience, systematic literature review.

Exploring Luxury Tourism as a Branding Destination Image for Malang City

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Abstract

The lack of research on luxury tourism in Malang City has prompted the researcher to conduct a primary investigation to understand this niche market. Despite its potential, luxury tourism remains underexplored compared to other Indonesian destinations. A qualitative method is ideal for studying luxury tourism in Malang City because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the subjects through a semi-structured questionnaire. A focus group discussion (FGD) process involves gathering a small group of participants to discuss specific topics related to luxury tourism in Malang City. The findings suggested three themes for the luxury tourism branding for Malang City, comprising premium products and services, personalization, and authenticity.

Keywords: *Luxury tourism, heritage, authenticity, personalization, premium service.*

Whether the Top Hotel Companies Address Stakeholders' Concerns in Their CSR Reporting

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Abstract

This research aims to assess whether top hotel companies address stakeholders' concerns in their internet-based reporting by employing both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, using a content analysis procedure in an interpretive manner. The study adopts a stakeholder theory framework to evaluate the CSR disclosures of five leading global hotel corporations, selected through purposive sampling. Data was systematically collected from corporate websites, including annual reports, dedicated sustainability reports, mission statements, and descriptions of ongoing CSR programs. Through a rigorous qualitative coding process in NVivo, 85 distinct stakeholder concerns were identified from a comprehensive review of CSR-related literature, pressure group publications, and industry guidelines. The findings indicate that the overall CSR reporting of the selected hotel companies is generally satisfactory, addressing an average of 67% of all identified stakeholder concerns. However, a pronounced and statistically significant discrepancy exists in the attention allocated to different stakeholder groups. Shareholders' concerns received the highest level of attention (88% addressed on average), significantly outperforming other groups such as suppliers (48%), competitors (39%), and government (37%). This suggests that the CSR reporting practices of these market leaders are still predominantly anchored in a shareholder model. The study also reveals that newly identified stakeholders — specifically social media and tour operators — command considerable attention, indicating their growing influence. The research concludes that while top hotel companies are actively engaged in CSR reporting, a more balanced and holistic stakeholder approach is needed to align with the broader principles of sustainable development.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility; Hotels; Reporting; Stakeholder; Content Analysis

What is the opportunity of joining GSP+ in the Republic of Uzbekistan?

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Abstract

The current policy study illustrates the general overview of the cooperation EU Community and Uzbekistan and the GSP standards. The acceptance of Uzbekistan GSP+ has high quantities of opportunities for both sides. The policy study determined the role of GSP+ in improving the economy and providing sustainable good governance. Additionally, the possible future opportunities and challenges were analyzed and recommended to unravel them.

The Influence of Environmental Performance, Company Characteristics, and Media Exposure on Carbon Emission Disclosure in Indonesia

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Abstract

Objective: This study examines how media exposure, business characteristics, and environmental performance influence carbon emissions disclosure in Indonesian companies operating in the oil, gas, and coal subsector.

Method: The sample in this study consisted of 31 companies selected using purposive sampling technique. The sample selection criteria included companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange, companies that published sustainability reports, and companies that had annual reports available for the period 2021 to 2023 respectively. The sample included companies from the oil, gas, and coal subsectors in Indonesia.

Findings: The study found that firm size, leverage, profitability, media exposure, and ISO 14001 certification positively influence carbon emission disclosure in Indonesia. ISO 14001-certified firms tend to disclose emissions more transparently to meet environmental standards. Larger, more profitable, and more indebted firms are more likely to report emissions to maintain investor and creditor confidence. Media exposure further motivates firms to increase transparency and protect their public image.

Novelty: To the author's knowledge, this study brings novelty to carbon emission disclosure research in Indonesia's oil, gas, and coal sub-sectors and is the first of its kind in this area. First, it uses ISO 14001 certification as a standardized, internationally recognized measure of environmental performance. Second, it examines company characteristics: leverage, size, and profitability to gain a comprehensive understanding of how internal factors influence carbon emission disclosure practices. Third, the study incorporates media exposure as a critical external factor impacting transparency and accountability in carbon emission disclosure, especially in high-impact environmental industries.

Subjects: Sustainability, Economics, Corporate Governance, Environmental Management.

Keywords: Environmental Performance, Firm Size, Leverage, Profitability, Media Exposure

Learning Beyond Borders in a Monocultural Classroom: An NGT-Driven Exploration of Experiential Cultural Events and Intercultural Competence

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how experiential cultural event assignments foster intercultural competence among business undergraduates in a fully monocultural Malaysian university context, addressing the challenge of cultivating intercultural skills in environments lacking natural cultural diversity. The study adopted a qualitative multi-method design involving reflexive thematic analysis of 199 reflective reports, semi-structured interviews with students, and six Nominal Group Technique (NGT) panels across three campuses over six semesters. The analysis was anchored in Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Cultural Intelligence (CQ). The findings show that aesthetic immersion during cultural events generates concrete experiences that heighten curiosity, reflective interpretation enhances metacognitive CQ, and the application of intercultural theories strengthens cognitive CQ, while behavioural intentions aligned with active experimentation indicate growth in motivational and emerging behavioural CQ. The study contributes original value by demonstrating that structured experiential learning, supported by reflection and theory-based structured guidance, can reliably activate ELT–CQ developmental pathways even in homogeneous learning environments. Limitations include the absence of direct intercultural interaction and the study's focus on a single Malaysian university, suggesting opportunities for future comparative studies across multicultural and international cohorts. Practically, the study offers clear strategies for educators seeking to design experiential assignments that deepen intercultural learning. Socially, the findings reinforce national and institutional goals to nurture globally competent graduates and strengthen intercultural understanding within demographically homogeneous societies.

Keywords: Intercultural competence; Cultural intelligence; Experiential learning; Monocultural classroom; Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

Does Workplace Spirituality Reduce the Impact of Job Insecurity on Turnover Intention? Insights from Millennial and Gen Z Employees

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Abstract

This study examines the link between job insecurity and turnover intention, emphasizing the moderating influence of workplace spirituality and exploring potential differences between Millennial and Generation Z employees. Data were collected via online and offline surveys from employees in Indonesia's service and manufacturing sectors. Using purposive sampling, 338 valid responses were analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and Multi-Group Analysis MGA. Results show that job insecurity increases turnover intention, while workplace spirituality buffers this effect. However, no significant differences were found between Millennials and Gen Z. This study broadens the application of COR theory to explain employee behavior in situations of job uncertainty and highlights workplace spirituality as a crucial buffer against the adverse effects of job insecurity. Practically, it highlights the importance of fostering meaningful work, shared values, and community to reduce turnover intentions across generations.

Keywords: Conservation of Resources theory, Generational comparison, job insecurity, turnover intention, workplace spirituality

Theme: Service Innovation & Sustainable Business Models

Au Multidimensional Authenticity and Tourist Loyalty in Ethnic Heritage Tourism: Mediating Roles of Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Place Attachment in Lijiang Ancient City

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Abstract

This article examines the complex interplay of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism, focusing on Lijiang Ancient Town, a UNESCO World Heritage site celebrated for its vibrant Naxi ethnic heritage, encompassing unique architectural forms, traditional crafts, and layered historical accounts that attract vast numbers of visitors annually. Amidst escalating commercialization, the study probes how tourists' authenticity perceptions shape their encounters, navigating the tensions between enduring traditions and contemporary adaptations. Anchored in frameworks from the experience economy, authenticity scholarship, and semiotics, the analysis delineates the effects of four authenticity facets—objective, construed, existential, and postmodern—upon perceived value, place attachment, satisfaction, and behavioral loyalty. By elucidating these dimensions' distinct contributions—for instance, objective authenticity bolstering site integrity and existential authenticity forging profound personal connections—the research bridges shortcomings in extant literature through a cohesive integration of all authenticity paradigms. It further scrutinizes perceived value's mediatory influence on satisfaction, attachment, and loyalty, alongside the bridging functions of satisfaction and attachment in channeling value toward sustained loyalty, thereby illuminating sequential tourist response mechanisms. Adopting a post-positivist quantitative methodology, empirical data were obtained through structured surveys administered to domestic visitors within six months post-visit, with sampling designed to secure analytical rigor, representativeness, and broad applicability. Employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the inquiry dissects causal interrelations, adeptly managing multifaceted dynamics in nascent investigative contexts. The anticipated outcomes offer strategic directives for sustainable tourism practices, harmonizing cultural safeguarding with economic imperatives, elevating experiential quality, galvanizing community participation, and nurturing enduring allegiance, while enriching cross-disciplinary discourse in heritage stewardship, tourism studies, anthropological inquiry, and market dynamics.

Keywords: Authenticity, Tourist Loyalty, Perceived Value, Place Attachment, Satisfaction, Ethnic Heritage Tourism.

Reverse Logistics for Sustainability and Cost optimization in Palm Oil Industry

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Abstract

Reverse logistics plays a vital role in promoting resource recovery, waste reduction, and sustainable operations, yet its implementation is often constrained by industry-specific factors. This study explores the critical factors influencing the implementation of reverse logistics and the challenges faced by the palm oil industry in achieving sustainability. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with industry experts from palm oil refineries and logistics divisions to obtain in-depth insights into existing practices and barriers. The data were analyzed using content analysis supported by Atlas.ti software, which enabled systematic coding, categorization, and identification of emerging themes. The findings reveal that geographical location and manpower availability are among the most significant factors impacting reverse logistics implementation, particularly in regions such as Sabah and Sarawak, where transportation and logistical challenges are intensified by terrain and distance. Labor-intensive activities such as loading and unloading further increase operational costs through overtime and workforce demands. The results also indicate that organizations adopt collaborative approaches, such as distributing materials to sister companies instead of reprocessing, to minimize losses and enhance efficiency. Furthermore, the establishment of waste management policies, including the sale of sludge oil and the repurposing of outdated machinery, reflects proactive measures to regain opportunities and optimize resources. However, the study identifies major sustainability obstacles, including issues of security and traceability, especially when engaging with smallholder farmers whose diverse practices and limited monitoring hinder verification and compliance with sustainability standards. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of strategic collaboration, effective waste management, and enhanced traceability mechanisms to strengthen reverse logistics performance and support the palm oil industry's sustainability agenda.

Keywords: Reverse Logistics, Palm Oil Sustainability, Implementation and Challenges

Stakeholders' Perspectives on Implementing a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) for Road Electrical Assets

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Abstract

Street lighting is a critical road electrical asset that supports visibility, safety, and overall driving performance. Failures in managing this asset could increase risks and endanger road users. This study examined the operational challenges in Public Work Department's (PWD) road electrical asset management and evaluated the potential contribution of a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS). Data was collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) involving participants across multiple organizational levels. The transcripts were analysed using ATLAS.ti content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. The analysis revealed five key thematic factors: System Integration Needs, CMMS Component Prioritization, Operational Challenges, Desired CMMS Features, and Complaint Management Optimization. Participants consistently highlighted the need for real-time maintenance data, improved coordination, and streamlined complaint handling. Differences in priorities across roles showed that each level had distinct needs that a CMMS could help resolve. Overall, the findings indicate that a well-integrated CMMS would significantly enhance PWD's maintenance efficiency, resource utilization, and system responsiveness.

Keywords: Road electrical asset management, Computerised Maintenance Management System, Implementation and Challenges

Trade in Higher Education Services and Economic Growth: Comparative Evidence from China and Malaysia

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Abstract

Under the Belt and Road Initiative and growing regional education cooperation, the trade in higher education services has become an important driver of economic growth. Based on official panel data for China and Malaysia from 2004 to 2023, this study builds an analytical framework combining higher education services trade, government effectiveness, digital transformation, and innovation capacity. Fixed-effects regression and structural equation modelling with bootstrap tests are used to examine both direct and indirect effects on growth. Results indicate that in China, higher education services trade supports growth mainly through innovation and digital transformation. In Malaysia, the effect works mainly through innovation, and the policy transmission is weaker. The findings suggest that higher education services trade helps improve human capital, spread knowledge, and strengthen institutional performance. These results provide evidence and policy guidance for promoting sustainable economic development through education services trade.

Keywords: Higher Education Services Trade; Economic Growth; Digital Transformation; Government Effectiveness; Innovation Capability; China–Malaysia Comparison.

Unravelling the Determinants of Transportation Carbon Emissions in China

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Abstract

This study investigates the determinants of transportation-related carbon emissions in China, focusing on the roles of urbanization, economic growth, and renewable energy consumption from 1985 to 2023. The research further tests the validity of the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) hypothesis within the transport sector. Annual data sourced from the World Bank and Our World in Data are analyzed using the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) bounds testing approach to examine the long-run relationships among the variables. Robustness checks are conducted through Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FMOLS), Dynamic Ordinary Least Squares (DOLS), and Canonical Cointegration Regression (CCR) estimations. The results reveal a significant long-run negative relationship between GDP per capita and transportation carbon emissions, suggesting that the EKC hypothesis does not hold for China's transport sector. Urbanization exerts a positive effect, indicating that rapid urban expansion contributes to higher emissions, while renewable energy consumption demonstrates a negative relationship with emissions, confirming its mitigating role. The findings imply that China's pathway toward its dual-carbon targets of peaking carbon emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 requires a balanced integration of economic development, urban planning, and renewable energy transition. The study provides important policy insights for sustainable transport development in emerging economies experiencing similar structural transformations.

Keywords: Transportation carbon emissions; Urbanization; Renewable energy; Environmental Kuznets Curve; ARDL; China.

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Digital Readiness as Drivers of Service Innovation and Performance in Restaurant Industry

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the extent to which entrepreneurial self-efficacy, digital capability, and digital orientation drive service innovation and organisational performance within the UAE restaurant industry. Based on the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework and entrepreneurial self-efficacy theory, the study proposes and examines a structural model linking organizational, technological, and strategic factors to performance through service innovation. Data were collected from 315 employees and managers of restaurants and analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Results show that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is the strongest predictor of service innovation, underscoring the key role of entrepreneurial confidence and proactive behavior in driving innovative service practices. Digital capability significantly enhances service innovation, indicating that technological readiness and digital skills are crucial for leveraging technology-enabled improvements. The impact of digital orientation on innovation is positive but relatively weak. Service innovation, in turn, has a substantial impact on restaurant performance and mediates the relationships between all three antecedents and performance. These findings call for an integrated view of entrepreneurial and digital competencies in maintaining the competitive edge of hospitality operators in an increasingly digital environment. Implications from the research provide theoretical contributions and practical insights for managers, entrepreneurs, and policy-makers interested in the renewal of innovation and performance in the hospitality sector.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Digital Capability, Digital Orientation, Service Innovation, Restaurant Performance, Hospitality Industry, Digital Transformation

Factors Driving Indonesian Travel Agencies' Sales Performance

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of social media adoption, social media marketing, and sales experience on the sales performance of travel agencies in Indonesia. As digital platforms become increasingly central to global business operations, this research offers a timely perspective on how these factors contribute to competitive advantage in the travel industry. A quantitative method was applied using a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to 111 respondents selected through purposive sampling, with participants holding managerial, supervisory, or ownership positions of travel agencies in Indonesia who manage and obtain information regarding their business's marketing program from their company's social media platforms. Data were analysed using SmartPLS to test the direct relationships between variables. The results reveal that social media adoption and social media marketing significantly and positively impact sales performance, underlining the critical role of digital engagement in reaching and converting customers. In contrast, sales experience does not show a significant effect, suggesting that traditional experience alone may not directly contribute to improved sales outcomes in today's digitally driven environment. These findings encourage travel agencies to focus more on optimizing their digital presence and marketing strategies to enhance performance in the competitive tourism market.

Keywords: Social Media Adoption, Social Media Marketing, Sales Experience, Sales Performance, Indonesian Travel Agencies.

Cracking the Humor Code in Advertising

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Abstract

In today's competitive digital landscape, humorous advertising has become a powerful tool for building customer connections, especially in the Philippines, where humor helps people cope with challenges. This study explores the effectiveness of humor-driven marketing on MAD Kitchen+Café's Facebook presence, specifically examining how customers feel, process, and respond to such advertising. The research utilizes a qualitative single case study approach with 10 participants aged 18 and above, all regular customers and Facebook followers of the café. A pre-survey confirmed their eligibility, followed by a focus group discussion. The discussion was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns in customer responses. Findings show that customers first engage with emotional reactions, making quick impressions. Over time, they transition to the central route, evaluating personal relevance, brand consistency, and humor alignment. This process leads to deeper engagement and stronger brand loyalty. The research highlights humor's role in building lasting customer relationships and enhancing brand perception. Based on these findings, the "Humor Code in Advertising" concept map was developed. Future researchers could refine or validate this concept map by examining its applicability across different contexts, offering further insights into how humor influences customer engagement and brand loyalty in marketing.

Keywords Advertisement, Café, Humor, Humor-driven marketing, Marketing

AI-Driven Service Innovation and Customer Experience Personalisation in Malaysian Franchises: A Pathway Toward Digital Business Transformation

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly redefined the competitive landscape across industries. In the context of franchising, AI offers opportunities to streamline operations, automate tasks, and enhance data-driven decision-making. Despite its global momentum, AI integration within franchise systems remains limited, posing challenges to achieving comprehensive digital transformation. Given this gap, the present study investigates how AI Adoption and Service Innovation contribute to the Digital Transformation of Malaysian franchise operations, with a particular focus on the mediating role of Customer Experience Personalization (CEP). Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), the research employs a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey of 210 top-level managers from food and retail franchise operations across Malaysia. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that both AI Adoption and Service Innovation significantly influence Digital Transformation, underscoring their vital role in advancing technological integration within franchise operations. However, when CEP was introduced as a mediator, the results showed a significant mediating effect between AI Adoption and Digital Transformation, but not between Service Innovation and Digital Transformation. This suggests that AI adoption enhances transformation through personalized experiences, whereas service innovation drives transformation primarily through service improvement rather than experience-driven engagement. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital transformation by integrating technological, service, and experiential perspectives. It further suggests that franchisors should leverage the benefits of AI technologies while proactively and responsibly managing the challenges associated with their integration.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI); Customer Experience; Digital Transformation; Malaysian Franchise Industry; Service Innovation.

A Proposed Theoretical Framework of Human Capital, Financial Literacy and Business Mentoring: Implications for Business Survival of Rural Youth Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

Youth entrepreneurship is a cornerstone of Malaysia's inclusive growth agenda, yet rural youth entrepreneurs continue to face structural and capability-related barriers that undermine business survival. Drawing on the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Ecological Systems Theory (EST), this conceptual paper develops an integrative framework explaining how internal resources and environmental supports interact to sustain rural enterprises. Human capital is conceptualised as a core resource driving entrepreneurial competence, while financial literacy mediates its effect by transforming knowledge and skills into sound financial decision-making. Business mentoring is positioned as an external moderator that enhances these relationships through experiential guidance, resource access, and network development within the rural ecosystem. The framework advances RBV by embedding environmental contingencies from EST, offering a holistic explanation of business survival in resource-constrained contexts. This paper contributes theoretically by linking internal capability and ecological perspectives, and practically by informing Malaysia's National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 (DKN2030) and rural development strategies to strengthen youth resilience, financial empowerment, and long-term enterprise sustainability.

Keywords: Human Capital, Financial Literacy, Business Mentoring, Business Survival, Rural Youth Entrepreneurship

Enhancing Customer Experience Quality: Integrating the Peace of Mind Scale with the PAD Model

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Abstract

In the contemporary world, technological advances have increased customer awareness, contributing to a highly competitive market. As a result, every brand strives to build a loyal customer base for sustainability, which is associated with higher profit margins. Customer satisfaction alone does not ensure loyalty in today's brand environment. Companies need to go beyond satisfaction scores and build stronger emotional connections with their customers. Customer experience, which defines the interactions between customers and brands through personal, emotional, and memorable values, is also an essential part of the process that leads to brand loyalty. The purpose of this study is to expand the customer experience quality scale by merging the proposed peace of mind (PoM) scale with the PAD model developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) to form the PADPoM Model. In this study, the target population of car consumers who are the urban millennials, aged between 20 and 40 years, living in the state of Selangor and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya are chosen. This led to three pretests and two focus group discussions used to finalise the Peace of Mind scale. After that, three more pretests for the PADPoM Model, including one with other participants, the pilot study, and the main study, were conducted. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and nomological analysis were conducted, and it was determined that the model provided an adequate fit.

Keywords: Customer Experience Quality, Brand Loyalty and Peace of Mind.

The Interplay of Risk Management on Firm Performance: Exploring the Roles of Green Innovation

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of risk management (RM) on firm performance (FP) and to explore the moderating role of green innovation (GI) and uses data from companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) for the period 2019–2023. Unfortunately for Green Innovation (GI) Insignificantly moderated which almost successfully linked them. It offers new insights into how firms in emerging markets can align financial performance and invest with environmental and social responsibilities. The results will help to inform researchers on the importance of including risk management within financial disclosures, in particular for listed companies. Through the combination of risk management and green innovation, businesses can establish performance curtails that optimize financial natural resource use trade-off. Such integration could bring about environmentally friendly business activities, generate green jobs and improve community well-being, all of which could contribute to sustainable economic development.

Keywords: Green Innovation, Risk Management, Sustainability, Firm Performance

Theme: AI, Technology & Smart Retail Systems

The Impact of the Digital Economy on Residents' Consumption Levels: An Empirical Analysis Based on Panel Data

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Abstract

Background: The digital economy, as a new engine for global economic growth, is profoundly transforming consumption patterns. Accurately assessing its impact on residents' consumption is vital for formulating policies to expand domestic demand and achieve high-quality economic development.

Methods: This study employs panel data from 30 China provinces spanning 2011 to 2020. Using Eviews for econometric analysis, a composite index measures digital economy development, while per capita consumption expenditure gauges consumption levels. The methodology centers on a two-way fixed effects model to effectively control for unobserved province-specific and time-specific heterogeneity, with robustness checks performed to validate the findings.

Results: The panel regression results demonstrate that the digital economy significantly boosts residents' consumption levels. This positive effect is facilitated by reduced information search costs, enhanced market efficiency, and diversified consumption options.

Implication: Theoretically, this research provides robust empirical evidence from a panel data framework, enriching the understanding of digital economy's consumption effect. Practically, it offers policymakers insights to promote digital infrastructure and inclusive digital finance, thereby unleashing consumption potential across different regions.

Keywords: Digital Economy, Residents' Consumption, Panel Data, Eviews.

Enhancing Competency and Performance in Wealth Management Education through Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered Virtual Reality (VR) Learning

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Abstract:

The rapid evolution of financial markets demands a corresponding advancement in wealth management education, particularly in developing competencies that align with real-world performance expectations. This study explores the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies to enhance learning outcomes in wealth management training especially on the Market Linked Deposit Product. By leveraging AI-driven personalization and immersive VR simulations, learners engage in realistic financial advisory scenarios that foster critical thinking, decision-making, and client interaction skills. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative performance assessments with qualitative feedback from participants for the Relationship Manager at CIMB Niaga. Results indicate significant improvements in learner engagement, competency acquisition, and practical application of wealth management principles as well as the improvements of business outcome. The findings suggest that AI-powered VR learning environments offer a scalable and effective solution for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and professional readiness in financial education. Implications for curriculum design, instructional strategies, and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: AI in education, Virtual

Smart Personalization: A Review of AI's Role in Shaping Sustainable Hospitality Experiences

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Abstract

Positioned within the discourse of integrating “high-tech” with “high-touch” service, this paper proposes a three-generational AI innovation framework, encompassing automation, cognitive, and affective technologies, to achieve smart personalization in hospitality. While prior research confirms the strategic value of technology, a critical gap remains in understanding how these layered AI capabilities collectively shape sustainable consumer experiences by harmonizing operational efficiency with deeply personalized guest engagement. Grounded in the UTAUT2 and ACSI models, this study develops a research model to examine how components of AI-driven personalization influence guest pleasure, satisfaction, and loyalty. The findings highlight that the synergy of high-tech and high-touch is paramount; it is not merely a service strategy but the foundation for fostering long-term guest relationships and commitment. Consequently, this review contends that smart personalization is essential for translating technological innovation into sustainable hospitality experiences, offering managers a strategic roadmap for leveraging AI to strengthen loyalty through enhanced guest experiences.

Keywords: Smart Personalization, Artificial Intelligence, Sustainable Hospitality Experiences, High-Tech and High-Touch.

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence in Hotel Services on Guest Loyalty in China

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Abstract

This research examines the influence of two critical AI-driven service qualities, AI Service Quality and AI-Powered Personalization, on visitor loyalty within the hotel sector. Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm, a model was suggested in which guest satisfaction functions as a mediating mechanism, while customer segmentation acts as a moderating element. Data were gathered using a standardized online questionnaire administered to 300 recent hotel patrons. The findings, derived from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and multi-group analysis, demonstrate that both AI Service Quality and AI-Powered Personalization significantly enhance visitor pleasure, which subsequently has a considerable impact on guest loyalty. Moreover, visitor pleasure completely mediates the association between AI characteristics and loyalty. The impact of consumer segmentation as a moderator was substantial. The results provide substantial theoretical advancements in the literature about AI in marketing and furnish practical guidance for hotel managers to customize their AI deployment tactics for various client groups.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Hospitality Marketing; Guest Loyalty; Guest Satisfaction; Customer Segmentation

Embracing Digitalisation in Malaysian Hotels: Value Creation or “Hospitality Myopia”?

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of hotel digitalisation from the hotel practitioners and customer perspectives, focusing on how emerging technological changes influence hotel operations, guest experiences and future behavioural intentions. While most of the digitalisation studies focusing on the advanced countries or popular destinations, limited studies concentrated into the Malaysian hospitality context. If yes, the existing models in hospitality research predominantly emphasize service quality and technology acceptance, they often neglect ‘realised’ experiential concerns voiced by customers—such as the perceived loss of human interaction and frustrations with poorly implemented digital systems. Drawing on qualitative analysis with three experienced marketers in this industry, this study proposes a new conceptual framework that links digitalisation constructs to customer experience and subsequently to satisfaction and future behavioural outcomes. The framework also considers ‘voices from the customers’ acted as moderating variables which may influence the relationship between digitalisation and its perceived benefits. The findings suggest that digital tools, if not implemented thoughtfully, can detract from the emotional and relational dimensions of hospitality that many guests value. This study underscores the need for a balanced approach that integrates technological efficiency with human-centered service to ensure guest satisfaction and long-term loyalty in the evolving digital hospitality landscape.

Keywords: Digitalisation, Malaysia, Hospitality Industry, Customer Experience, Future Behaviour, Visit Malaysia 2026

Trends And Research Sustainable Warehouse A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

As businesses implement green supply-chain strategies, warehouses become focus sites for lowering logistics emissions, enhancing resource usage, and promoting circular material flows. This place lies at the nexus of environmental social responsibility and logistics efficiency. This study report may provide readers with additional information on the topic. The study includes a comprehensive examination of 452 publications collected between 2000 and 2026. This essay will focus on the findings of significant writers, publications, nations/regions, and fields of study. This article also attempted to discover many themes that evolved and evolved during the active years through the use of co-citation and co-occurrence networks. Because of the growing number of research articles and the widespread adoption of Sustainable warehousing in many countries, bibliometric analysis must be used to provide a comprehensive set of data that can help researchers find the most relevant work to date. This can be achieved by utilizing the VOS Viewer and Biblioshiny tools to explore different facets of the Sustainable warehousing research topic and discover potential future study directions.

Keywords: Warehousing, Sustainable, Sustainable warehouse, Inventory, Environmental, Bibilometric analysis, and VOSviewer.

Drivers of Continuance Intention to Use Artificial Intelligence-Enabled Mobile Shopping Apps in Malaysia: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective

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Abstract

The extensive use of mobile devices in daily life has led to a notable increase in the growth of mobile shopping apps worldwide. Furthermore, the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has drastically changed the mobile shopping market, especially when it comes to the integration of AI features in mobile shopping apps. Nevertheless, the rapid growth of AI-enabled mobile shopping apps has presented both opportunities and challenges for online retailers and service providers. For online businesses, retaining existing users is essential for achieving a competitive advantage. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to predict the key drivers of AI-enabled mobile shopping apps continuance intention in Malaysia. This research has developed and validated a multi-dimensional model to investigate the continuance intention to use AI-enabled mobile shopping apps. Based on the well-known Expectation-Confirmation Model (ECM), Information Systems Success Model (ISSM), and Theory of Consumption Values (TCV), the multi-dimensional model included key constructs such as perceived usefulness, satisfaction, information quality, system quality, service quality, price value, emotional value, and social value. Data were collected via online survey conducted among Malaysian users of AI-enabled mobile shopping apps. The data was subsequently analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that continuance intention is strongly influenced directly by satisfaction, perceived usefulness, price value, and emotional value. In addition, information quality, system quality, and service quality influence continuance intention indirectly via satisfaction. Overall, the multi-dimensional model of this research was found to have moderate explanatory power and high predictive power. Therefore, this research has offered theoretical contributions by incorporating multi-dimensional constructs in the context of AI-enabled mobile shopping apps continuance intention. Additionally, it has given useful recommendations to marketers, online retailers, app developers, and mobile shopping platforms providers aiming to increase user retention of AI-enabled mobile shopping apps.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Mobile shopping apps, Continuance intention, Malaysia.

Sensory Meets Digital: The Role of Experiential Touchpoints in Shaping Brand Love Among Beauty Shoppers

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital commerce has intensified competition within the beauty retail sector, compelling brick-and-mortar retailers to design experiences that go beyond functional transactions. As Generation Z consumers increasingly seek immersive and emotionally engaging encounters, beauty retailers are integrating sensory design with digital technologies to create hybrid experiential environments. This study advances contemporary retail and consumer research by examining how retailtainment, phygital

features, and store atmosphere act as experiential touchpoints that evoke emotional engagement, which in turn drives brand love and WOM advocacy.

Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 252 Malaysian Gen Z consumers who frequently visit beauty and cosmetic stores and analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that all three experiential stimuli significantly enhance emotional engagement, with phygital features exerting the strongest effect. Emotional engagement positively predicts both brand love and WOM, serving as a mediating mechanism that connects sensory-digital experiences with behavioural outcomes.

This research offers an innovative contribution through the conceptualisation of the phygital-sensory nexus, which captures how technology-enabled multisensory environments transform retail interactions into affective brand relationships. The study enriches experiential marketing theory by integrating digital interactivity, aesthetic appeal, and emotional response into a cohesive framework of consumer engagement. Practically, it provides strategic direction for beauty retailers navigating digital transformation, illustrating how harmonising technology, sensory cues, and entertainment value can strengthen emotional attachment and stimulate consumer advocacy.

In an era defined by artificial intelligence and experiential innovation, the findings underscore the strategic importance of creating emotionally intelligent retail spaces that combine technological sophistication with human experience to sustain competitiveness in the evolving beauty marketplace.

Keywords: Retailtainment, Phygital Features, Store Atmosphere, Emotional Engagement, Brand Love, Word-of-Mouth.

Online Shopper's Lived Experiences with Non-Celebrity Affiliate Marketers

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Abstract

This study explores the lived experiences of online shoppers with non-celebrity TikTok affiliate marketers, focusing on how credibility, authenticity, and parasocial connections influence consumer trust and engagement. As social media increasingly shapes purchasing decisions, everyday creators, rather than celebrities, play a vital role in digital marketing through relatable and transparent content. Guided by Source Credibility Theory and Parasocial Interaction Theory, this research employed a qualitative phenomenological design using Moustakas' Modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. Eight Gen Z TikTok users from CALABARZON, Philippines, who regularly purchase from non-celebrity affiliate marketers, participated in a focus group discussion. Data were analysed thematically and validated through triangulation involving Artificial Intelligence (AI) Validation, Marketing Communications Expert Validation, and Qualitative Research Expert Validation. Findings revealed that trust was established when affiliate marketers demonstrated strong product knowledge, transparency, and consistent authenticity in their reviews. Relatability and unscripted delivery further enhanced credibility, while interactive and entertaining presentation styles encouraged user engagement. Participants described their engagement actions, such as liking, sharing, following, and purchasing, as expressions of both personal identity and social connection. Emotional closeness and parasocial relationships emerged as significant factors, with users perceiving marketers as peers or friends whose recommendations carried strong persuasive power. However, the results also caution against "blind trust", where emotional bonds reduce critical evaluation of promotional content, particularly among younger audiences. Overall, the study highlights how non-celebrity affiliate marketers shape consumer perceptions and behaviour through authenticity, expertise, and relational bonds. These insights provide practical implications for affiliate marketers, brands, and digital marketers, while raising ethical considerations about transparency and consumer vulnerability in influencer-driven commerce.

Keywords: Non-celebrity affiliate marketers, TikTok, credibility, parasocial connection, consumer trust

From Tips to Top Profits: Leveraging on the Principle of Cost Volume Profit Analysis

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Abstract

In today's competitive beauty industry, effective financial management is crucial for the sustainability of micro and small businesses, including nail salons. Cost-Volume-Profit (CVP) analysis is a managerial accounting tool that helps business owners understand the relationship between costs, sales volume, and profitability. Many small business owners, however, face challenges in financial forecasting due to fluctuating costs, market demand changes, and limited financial planning tools. This study employs a qualitative case study approach to assess the effectiveness of CVP analysis in financial forecasting for nail salons. Three nail salons in Calamba City, Laguna, are selected as case studies. Data are collected through in-depth interviews with salon owners, focusing on pricing, cost management, and financial decision-making. The thematic analysis reveals three key themes: (1) optimizing financial management to respond to market demand, (2) use of accounting tools for monitoring costs due to high investment and cost fluctuations, and (3) data-driven decisions to improve financial planning. Findings indicate that CVP analysis assists nail salon owners in refining pricing strategies, allocating costs efficiently, and optimizing profitability. Additionally, salon owners report that CVP analysis helps them identify break-even points, set competitive service prices, and adjust cost structures based on market trends. Despite its advantages, challenges such as limited financial literacy and reliance on traditional accounting methods hinder the full application. The results highlight the importance of structured financial monitoring and enhanced financial literacy in improving financial stability. By leveraging CVP analysis, small business owners can develop effective budgeting strategies, improve cost control, and enhance financial forecasting. Implementing structured financial systems and increasing financial knowledge can contribute to long-term business sustainability.

Keywords: Cost management, profitability, financial forecasting, financial management

Analyzing the influence of e-payment on consumer buying patterns

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Abstract

The growth of the internet and technology encouraged the digitization of payment procedures by offering a range of electronic payment methods, such as contactless payment methods, digital and mobile wallets, electronic currency. Compared to traditional cash transactions, electronic payments are more efficient and usually prioritize convenience, speed, and security. Mobile payment services are currently going through a transitional phase and are expected in the future filled with both technological progresses. Hence, this highlights more its prevalence and importance of conducting a study. In this paper, it aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perceptions of consumers who frequently use electronic payments and its influence on their purchasing habits. The researchers utilize a non-probability purposive sampling to determine the participants which are specifically characterized by age, gender, and place of residency. In addition, the researchers utilize a one-on-one interview approach, understanding the perceptions and insights of residence of Calamba City, Laguna, with ages ranging from 20 to 30 years old. Continues monitoring through surveys and feedback mechanisms is emphasized to ensure the reliability of electronic payment platforms involving consumer purchasing decision. The findings were structured by Theory of Planned Behavior to analyze the impact of the increased use of electronic payments on consumer purchasing patterns. The result, focused on intention and behavior, encompassed the essential factors influencing the adoption of electronic payments, such as convenience, security, attitudes toward the behavior, social influences, and users' perceived control. Collectively, these elements led to a significant change in purchasing patterns, characterized by increased spending and impulsive spending behavior. The significance of the study corresponds in providing valuable insights for business, even consumers, and policymakers seeking to facilitate the implementation and efficient utilization of mobile payment systems.

Keywords: influence, electronic payment, consumer, buying pattern

Smart Inventory Management and Business Performance in a Manufacturing Industry using Structural Equation Modeling

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of smart inventory management on business performance in the manufacturing sector, emphasizing its role in enhancing operational efficiency and sustainability. Effective inventory management is recognized as essential for cost control, service quality, financial stability, and supply chain optimization. Aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), the research underscores how advanced inventory strategies contribute to sustainable and resilient manufacturing systems. Using a causal research design and descriptive survey method, data were gathered from 206 employees of a manufacturing firm in Batangas, Philippines. The study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through WarpPLS 8.0, following statistical parameters with a significance level of 0.05 and power of 0.99. Respondents were primarily college-educated employees born between 1986 and 1995, working mostly in supply chain roles with 1–3 years of tenure. The study evaluated five key inventory management practices: inventory monitoring, demand forecasting, warehousing, customer order processing, and purchase order management and examined business performance from financial, customer, internal process, and innovation perspectives. Findings revealed that respondents strongly agreed on the effectiveness of these practices and the value of smart inventory tools such as analytics and multichannel systems. Smart inventory management was found to significantly moderate the relationship between purchase orders, forecasting, and customer orders with overall business performance, thereby improving efficiency, competitiveness, and innovation.

Recommendations include expanding demographic variables (e.g., salary, gender, work shift), enlarging the sample size, and incorporating other departments for future studies. The development of a centralized, real-time inventory monitoring system and initiatives like mentorship, innovation rewards, and process digitalization were also advised. Future research should explore technologies such as AI-driven forecasting, automation, and cloud-based inventory systems, alongside advanced practices like Just-in-Time, Supplier Managed Inventory, and warehouse optimization.

Keywords: Smart Inventory management, Business Performance, Manufacturing Industry, Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling.

Embracing Biophilic Design in Campus Spaces for Enhancing Students Well Being and Learning Environment

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Abstract

This study explores the role of biophilic design in enhancing student well-being at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam. With growing mental health concerns linked to academic stress, Malaysian campuses often lack nature-integrated spaces that support emotional and cognitive health. This research investigates the influence of natural design elements across 20 selected campus locations, including academic, residential, and recreational areas. A combination of quantitative and visual aid surveys was used to assess six biophilic design elements: environmental features, natural shapes and forms, natural patterns and processes, light and space, place-based relationships, and evolved human nature relationships. These were evaluated against four well-being dimensions such as physical, psychological, cognitive, and social or spiritual. Findings show that areas incorporating greenery, natural light, and cultural identity foster better focus, emotional balance, and social interaction are well accepted by the students. However, some areas remain underutilized due to the functional design preferences and limited awareness among the students. The study emphasizes the alignment of biophilic design with several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Goal 13 (Climate Action), and Goal 15 (Life on Land). It concludes with recommendations to strengthen nature-based strategies in campus planning to support a healthier, more resilient student community and promote sustainable learning environments.

Keywords: Biophilic design, campus spaces, learning environment, student wellbeing, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Theme: Circular Economy & Sustainable Consumer Engagement

Extending the Theory of Planned Behavior: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Coffee Consumption Trends in Urban Malaysia

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Abstract

The coffee culture in Malaysia, particularly in urban regions such as the Klang Valley, has evolved rapidly, mirroring changing consumer lifestyles and preferences. However, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to theoretically explaining coffee consumption behavior within the Malaysian context. This conceptual paper proposes an extended framework based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to examine coffee consumption by integrating personal factors such as age, lifestyle, and personal economics characteristics. The model posits that these personal attributes influence attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, thereby shaping consumers' purchase intentions and consumption behavior. By incorporating these variables, the proposed framework advances the understanding of how generational and socioeconomic differences contribute to coffee consumption patterns in Malaysia. Theoretically, this paper enriches the TPB by highlighting the moderating roles of personal factors in predicting consumption behavior. From a practical perspective, the conceptual model provides insights for café operators and coffee brands in developing more targeted and behaviorally informed marketing strategies. Future research directions are outlined, emphasizing the need for empirical validation and the inclusion of psychological constructs such as habit and anticipated regret in future models.

Keywords: Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Personal Factors, Intention, Actual Purchase Behavior.

Immersed and Impulsive: Exploring How Live-streaming Interactivity Shapes Consumers' Impulse Buying in China”

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of live interaction components on consumers' flow experience and impulse purchase intention within China's live-streaming commerce context. The Stimulus–Organism–Reaction (S-O-R) framework identifies personalization, responsiveness, and entertainment as stimuli; flow experience as the organism; and impulsive purchase intention as the reaction, with product involvement potentially acting as a moderator. Data from 211 Chinese consumers were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results demonstrate that all three interaction dimensions significantly enhance flow experience, which in turn positively influences impulse buy intention. Responsiveness and entertainment have both direct and indirect influences on impulse purchase, but personalization shows smaller impacts with minimal mediation. These findings augment the S-O-R paradigm by clarifying the role of flow and distinguishing interaction elements in live-streaming commerce. The study also offers practical insights, suggesting that personalization and responsiveness can strengthen immersion and trust, whereas entertainment acts as the strongest catalyst for impulsive purchases, helping platforms and anchors optimize strategies in competitive markets.

Keywords: Live-streaming e-commerce, Interactivity, Flow experience, Product involvement, Impulse buying intention, S-O-R model

Technology Acceptance in Islamic Fintech: A UTAUT-based Instrument for Shariah-compliant BNPL

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Abstract

Quantitative instrument development is imperative in social science research, particularly when exploring behavioural constructs in emerging domains such as Islamic financial technology (fintech). As Islamic fintech gains traction in Muslim-majority markets, Shariah-compliant Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services are emerging as a pivotal innovation, offering ethical and flexible payment solutions. However, limited research has examined the determinants of user adoption from an Islamic perspective. This study introduces the Faith-Oriented Technology Acceptance in Islamic Fintech (FATIIF) scale, a new measurement tool developed to operationalize an extended Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) framework by incorporating religiosity. The FATIIF scale is specifically designed to capture the interplay between technological and religious factors influencing user acceptance in Islamic fintech. A pre-pilot test was conducted and SmartPLS was employed to evaluate the measurement model. The analysis included assessments of indicator loadings, internal consistency, as well as convergent and discriminant validity. Findings indicate that all constructs meet acceptable thresholds for reliability and validity, confirming the scale's robustness. By integrating religiosity as a core dimension, the study strengthens the theoretical foundation of UTAUT within the Islamic fintech context. The validated FATIIF scale provides a holistic and contextually relevant framework for future large-scale empirical research and offers practical guidance for fintech providers in designing Shariah-compliant solutions aligned with the values of Muslim consumers.

Keywords: Shariah-compliant, BNPL, UTAUT, Islamic Fintech

Business Simulation as Experiential Learning: Assessing its Impact on Students' Employability Readiness and Learning Outcomes in Retail Management Education

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of business simulation participation on students' employability and learning outcomes in the Diploma in Retail Management programme. The research applies a quantitative descriptive design involving 70 students from two cohorts who actively participated in a semester-long retail simulation practical. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of five key constructs: knowledge, practical skills, soft skills, values and professionalism, and employability readiness. Descriptive and inferential analysis were conducted using SPSS to examine the relationships between simulation engagement and student outcomes. Findings reveal that simulation-based learning significantly enhances students' practical understanding, problem-solving ability, teamwork, and confidence in retail operations. Regression results showed that Values & Professionalism ($\beta = 0.672$, $p < .001$) and Soft Skills ($\beta = 0.317$, $p < .05$) were the strongest predictors of employability readiness. The study provides evidence that simulation activities serve as an effective experiential learning tool, aligning academic outcomes with industry expectations.

Keywords: *Business simulation, employability, experiential learning, retail management, student outcomes.*

Natural Language Processing (NLP) in Halal Holistic Hospitality Research: A Review of Customer Experience and Service Quality

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Abstract

This study aimed to provide a comprehensive review of the halal industry literature, with a focus on customer experience and service quality. This is a dual-method approach for research review, including scoping review analysis and topic modelling. Natural language processing (NLP) builds a probabilistic framework that extracts latent themes from large textual datasets through domain evaluation. Focusing on customer experience and service quality, this study provides a comprehensive historical overview of halal holistic hospitality.

A dual-method approach was employed, including scoping review analysis and theme identification. A total of 3463 research papers were identified through systematic searches in Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, Open Alex, and ProQuest. To find latent themes from enormous textual datasets, the review utilised topic modelling, a natural language processing framework, with an evaluation of the domain.

Apart from the scoping review findings, this analysis uncovered ten main theme domains that influence the Halal Holistic Hospitality research setting. These include customer satisfaction and brand perception, tourism trends and social media influence, halal tourism and Muslim traveller experiences, technology adoption and online trust, AI-driven decision-making and chatbots, Sharia compliance in hospitality, religious and cultural tourism motivations, economic and social issues in travel, halal food supply chains and blockchain applications, and ethnic gastronomy with community engagement. While mapping AI-driven insights in the halal sector, presenting an efficient research approach, and causing further research on customer experience and service quality in halal-oriented online marketplaces, this study incorporates the growing corpus of literature that is already in use.

Keywords: Halal Holistic Hospitality (3H), natural language processing (NLP), Customer Experience, Service Quality.

Travel Cost Assessment Study on the Value of Nature Based Tourism in Sungai Bil Recreation and Camping Area, Tanjung Malim, Perak

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Abstract

Despite the growing popularity of nature-based tourism in Malaysia, there are limited empirical evidence on the economic value of natural tourism and its contribution to the local community. The aim of this study is to investigate the visitors' preferences and assess the economic value of nature-based tourism using the Travel Cost Method (TCM) at the Sungai Bil Recreation and Camping Site, located in Tanjung Malim, Perak. A total of 385 respondents were involved in the study using structured questionnaires that were distributed online using Google Form and face-to-face surveys. The findings of this study revealed that the majority of visitors were young adults aged between 21 and 25, who were primarily interested in the adventure activities opportunities and the scenic beauty of the area. Entrance fees charged to visitors are believed to contribute to the income generation among the local community as well as covering costs for maintaining the facilities and amenities including gazebos, prayer hall, parking area and camping sites. This study also found that visitors' satisfaction with the facilities, services and accommodation provided in the area positively correlated with the higher willingness to pay. Most respondents reported that they are willing to spend less than RM50 per visit and be able to pay for affordable tour packages that are priced between RM1 until RM100. Few suggestions were recorded during the data collection process such as the provision of food and beverage stalls, barbeque equipment rental services and the implementation of guided nature walks for environmental education programs. By quantifying the recreational value of the site, this study offers management strategies for the local authority in supporting the sustainable development of nature-based tourism, especially in rural areas setting and promoting greater community involvement in nature tourism management.

Keywords: Travel Cost Method (TCM), Nature-Based Tourism, Economic Valuation, Rural Ecotourism

Digital Hospitality: The Role of Self-Service Technology Engagement and Trust on Brand Loyalty in Malaysian Luxury Hotels

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Abstract

The rapid digitalisation of hospitality services has transformed how guests interact with hotels, with Self-Service Technology (SST) becoming central to service delivery and customer experience. This study examines the impact of SST engagement, conceptualised through affective, behavioural and cognitive dimensions; on brand loyalty in the context of Malaysian luxury hotels. Building on customer engagement literature, the study further investigates the moderating role of trust, recognising its importance in reducing uncertainty and strengthening the customer–brand relationship in high-touch service environments. Data were collected from guests of five-star hotels in Malaysia and analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Findings reveal that all three engagement dimensions positively influence brand loyalty, with behavioural engagement emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by affective and cognitive engagement. Trust exerted a significant moderating effect, amplifying the strength of these relationships. The study contributes to digital hospitality research by demonstrating how multidimensional engagement with technology can foster enduring loyalty, provided trust is established. Practical implications are offered for hotel managers seeking to design SST that are not only functional but also emotionally engaging, habit-forming and trust-enhancing.

Keywords: Hotel Digitalisation; Self-Service Technology (SST), Customer Engagement, Brand Loyalty, Trust

Students' Online Purchase Frequency: Investigating Perceived Enjoyment as a Bridge between Usefulness, Ease of Use and Behavior

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and perceived enjoyment (PE) on students' online purchase frequency, with perceived enjoyment acting as a mediating variable. With the rapid growth of e-commerce, understanding the factors that drive students' online purchasing behavior is essential for both marketers and educators. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 279 students from the Commerce Department. The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM via SmartPLS 4. The findings reveal that perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment have significant positive effects on online purchase behavior, indicating that students tend to shop online more frequently when they perceive the activity as both beneficial and enjoyable. In contrast, perceived ease of use showed no significant direct effect on online purchase behavior, suggesting that students are already familiar with using online shopping platforms. However, perceived ease of use demonstrated that a strong positive effect on perceived enjoyment. Mediation analysis confirmed that perceived enjoyment partially mediated the relationships between both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use with online purchase behavior. The model explained 41.8% of the variance in online purchase behavior and 60.2% in perceived enjoyment, indicating moderate explanatory power. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing perceived enjoyment and usefulness to foster more engaging and satisfying online shopping experiences for students. This study contributes to the growing literature on digital consumer behavior and offers practical insights for e-commerce marketers targeting student populations.

Keywords: Perceived usefulness, Perceived ease of use, Perceived enjoyment, Online purchase, Student consumers, PLS-SEM.

An Analysis of the Determinants That Influence the Purchase Intention of Frozen Food Products Amongst Millenials in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

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Abstract

Frozen food products have traditionally been used as a line of products that are utilized for fast and effective consumption among consumers of various age groups. In this fast-paced lifestyle of consumers all over the world, frozen food is commonly used by adults of all ages as a quick meal alternative. In the fast-paced lifestyle of younger adults in Kuala Lumpur, frozen food products are an imminent alternative to fresh food, as it is often faster to prepare than traditional food products. Frozen food products are convenient, as it is often microwaveable and quick to prepare. Rather than making a mess from scratch, it becomes an easy method to prepare the meal as it is fast in its preparation. Consumers who are mainly in the city often are seen to have less time for themselves, as they often lead a very hectic life. It is only common that these groups of consumers will prefer a quick meal, rather than an alternative home-cooked meal, where the meal is cooked from scratch. As young millennials are often lacking in their ability to cook, they are often seeking convenient alternatives to prepare their meals. Various elements interplay here, with various factors that influence the buyers to make a decision in their buying pattern. This research proposes three main factors that act as independent variables, namely Perceived Benefit, Product Packaging, and Price, that seem to affect the purchase intention of millennials. Purposive sampling was implemented to capture data from respondents using a 5-item Likert scale, while the validity of the questionnaire items was further verified using statistical techniques such as Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha. Hypothesis testing was tabulated using Structural Equation Modelling in the AMOS SPSS (v.24) program. The results showed a positive impact of Price, Product Packaging, and Perceived Benefit on the purchase intention of millennials towards these frozen food products. This research showed that millennials are more influenced by the frozen food products' perceived benefit to make their purchases, as many tend to be intrigued by the beneficial aspects of frozen food products for their health. Additionally, the price of the products tends to guide the buying intention of millennials, as many of these buyers are still young and use social media to often gauge their price ranges.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-2: Zero Hunger), Millennials, Frozen Food Products, Perceived Benefit, Price, Product Packaging

Assessing the Adoption Intention of Computational Intelligence Technologies in the E-Commerce Industry

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Abstract

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Keywords: Author Guide, Article, Camera -Ready Format, Paper Specifications, Paper Submission.

Food Tourism and Social Media: Leveraging Instagram for Effective Destination Marketing in Malaysia

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Abstract

The convergence of food tourism and social media platforms has fundamentally transformed destination marketing strategies, with Instagram emerging as a critical tool for promoting culinary heritage and gastronomic experiences. This study explores the relationships between food tourism of local food heritage and Instagram social media platforms to understand how local food heritage enhances destination marketing effectiveness, specifically examining Tourism Malaysia's digital marketing strategies. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing content analysis of Tourism Malaysia's official Instagram account. Data collection focused on food tourism related posts from January 2024 to December 2024, examining visual content. Content analysis was conducted to identify recurring patterns in destination marketing approaches. The findings reveal significant reliance on Instagram for food tourism information dissemination, with the platform serving as the primary medium for destination marketing strategies and trend identification. Content analysis shows that while food consumption remains central to promotional experiences, emphasis is placed on preserving local heritage and traditions through culinary representation. The study identifies cultural representation, and heritage preservation through digital storytelling. This research contributes to advanced understanding of food tourism and social media relationships by demonstrating how Instagram leverages gastronomic experiences for effective destination promotion. The findings offer practical insights for destination marketing organizations seeking to enhance competitiveness through culturally food tourism destination marketing.

Keywords: Food tourism, Local food heritage, social media, Destination marketing, Digital tourism

Integration of rural tourism and agro tourism. Case of study Tashkent region, Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This article highlights the opportunities related to rural tourism and agrotourism on a Uzbekistan national scale. It presents promising ways to develop rural tourism in the regions of the country. Sustainable tourism is discussed.

Keywords: Agrotourism, services, agro-business, Sustainable development, rural tourism, green tourism, Tashkent region.

Traditional and Electronic Word-of-Mouth and Destination Image in Heritage Tourism: Evidence from Uzbekistan in a Post-Pandemic Context

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of traditional and electronic word-of-mouth (WOM) on the destination image of Uzbekistan's UNESCO World Heritage sites, with a particular focus on the mediating role of perceived quality and the moderating influence of COVID-19 safety concerns. Data were collected from 210 international tourists through the Pollfish survey platform during the pandemic period and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in SPSS and AMOS. The findings reveal that traditional WOM exerts a direct and significant effect on destination image, while electronic WOM influences destination image indirectly. Furthermore, destination image was found to positively affect destination loyalty. Although COVID-19 safety threats significantly shaped tourists' perceptions of destination image, they did not exert a notable impact on destination loyalty. By situating these findings within the context of heritage tourism recovery, this research highlights how different WOM channels continue to shape post-pandemic tourist behavior and loyalty. The study contributes to heritage tourism literature by offering empirical insights for destination managers and policymakers seeking to enhance image and loyalty in a rapidly evolving global tourism environment.

Keywords: Traditional Word-of-Mouth (WOM), Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Perceived Quality, Destination Image, Destination Loyalty, COVID-19 Safety Threat, Post-Pandemic Tourism, Heritage Tourism

A Sustainable Framework of Supply Value Chain: A Case Study of Malaysian Agriculture-based Entrepreneurs.

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Abstract

Agriculture-based Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are pivotal to Malaysia's food security and economic goals, yet they often struggle with inefficient and vulnerable supply chains. While national policies like the National Agrofood Policy 2021-2030 (NAP 2.0) emphasize modernization and resilience, a significant gap remains in their application to the MSME context. This study investigates the structure of sustainable supply value chains among Malaysian agriculture-based entrepreneurs to address this gap. Employing a qualitative multiple-case study design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five agro-entrepreneurs across diverse sub-sectors. Thematic analysis of the data revealed a multi-elements framework for sustainability, moving beyond a linear chain model. The findings identify three core, interdependent elements: (1) an **integrated core operations** controlling upstream and downstream activities; (2) a **strategic value enhancement** for diversification and differentiation; and (3) an **enabling environment** of financial, knowledge, and social resources. The framework is also supported by cross-cutting drivers of **adaptability and resilience**, including digital transformation and the ability to pivot business models in response to internal and external changes. The study concludes that sustainability for agriculture-based MSMEs is not achieved through operational efficiency alone but through the synergistic interaction of these elements. This framework offers a practical model for entrepreneurs and policymakers to enhance competitiveness, resilience, and alignment with national agricultural development goals.

Keywords: Supply Value Chain, Sustainability, Agro-entrepreneurs, MSMEs, Thematic Analysis, Malaysia, Resilience.