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Ref: 001/VIT/26

Emerging Career Pathways for Humanities Graduates: Integrating Wellbeing and Sustainability

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Abstract
In an era defined by interlinked global challenges such as climate change, widening social inequalities, democratic fragility, and declining collective wellbeing, the relationship between higher education, employability and sustainable development requires renewed critical attention. This paper explores how humanities education can be re-conceptualised as a vital driver of emerging career pathways that foreground wellbeing, sustainability, and ethical responsibility. Moving beyond deficit-based narratives that frame humanities graduates as misaligned with labour market demands, the study positions them as essential contributors to resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies. Drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship from the humanities, education studies, sustainability research, and labour market analysis, the paper examines how core competencies cultivated through humanities education, critical and systems thinking, ethical reflection, cultural literacy, historical awareness, and reflexive communication align with the complex skill demands of contemporary and future-oriented professions. These competencies are increasingly recognised as central to addressing “wicked problems” that resist purely technical solutions and require values-based judgement, cross-cultural understanding, and participatory approaches. The paper situates employability within broader frameworks of wellbeing and sustainable development, challenging narrow, skills-centric or market-driven models that prioritise short-term economic outcomes. Instead, it adopts a holistic employability paradigm that emphasises meaningful work, social contribution, adaptability, and long-term societal impact. Through thematic analysis of emerging sectors and professional practices, the study identifies evolving and underexplored career pathways for humanities graduates in areas such as community development and engagement, public policy and governance, sustainability communication and advocacy, social and cultural innovation, ethical consultancy, and impact-driven non-governmental and hybrid organisations. The findings suggest that humanities graduates play a crucial role in mediating between policy, communities, and institutions, fostering dialogue, enhancing ethical decision-making, and supporting inclusive forms of development. By aligning humanities education with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and wellbeing-oriented policy agendas, the paper demonstrates how humanistic knowledge contributes to both individual employability and collective societal resilience. Ultimately, this research advocates for an expanded and future-facing understanding of employability that integrates humanistic inquiry with sustainability imperatives. It underscores the importance of revaluing the humanities within higher education policy and curriculum design, not only as sites of cultural and intellectual enrichment, but as foundational to building ethical leadership, social cohesion, and sustainable futures in an increasingly complex world.

Keywords: Humanities, Employability, Wellbeing, Sustainable Development, Career Pathways, Interdisciplinarity, Ethical Reflection, Cultural Literacy.

Ref: 002/VIT/26

Trade, competitiveness and growth in the countries of the South

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Abstract
The detailed examination of such a subject will be done on the basis of a fundamental problem, which will thus serve as a guideline in the presentation of the ideas that should underlie the approach. In this case, it concerns the question of the links between competitiveness through trade and the growth of countries in the South. In other words, how can GATT and WTO competitiveness of countries in the South, in order to promote their growth?
Thus the problem of the method is at the heart of any scientific work as it is true that the method illuminates the hypotheses and determines the conclusions, our approach will be ordered with a few exceptions around the use of the analytical and exegetical method but also comparative. It is understood as the analysis, interpretation and explanation of the rules of law, particularly those contained in the various legal texts of the GATT and the WTO.
As for the expected results, it will be a question of studying the incompatibility of tariff preferences with the WTO principle of reciprocity. This one was first brought about through a revision initiated through Part 4 of the GATT. It resulted in a confirmation of the principle of Special and Differential Treatment aimed at compensating for the significant gap in the standard of living of developing countries, and an exception to the principle of reciprocity. The abandonment of strict reciprocity is the lever that activated the principle of granting preferences to developing countries. Thus, non-reciprocity is the principle that governs negotiations with developing countries. Many developing GATT contracting parties criticizethe general role played by the concept of reciprocity in trade negotiations. For them, reciprocity can only be played between countries of a comparable level of development. The fact that developed (or rich) countries demand reciprocity in trade concessions from developing (or poor) countries would be particularly unfair to the latter and would penalise them. Their situation of poverty would mathematically increase the relative weight of their commitments. The contradiction would subsequently be confirmed by the 1979 enabling clause who grants a legal and permanent basis for the derogation status of developing countries and formally confirms the principle of non-reciprocity.

Ref: 003/VIT/26

An exploration of school violence in the Western Cape Townships, South Africa

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Abstract
School violence is not a new occurrence in South Africa, and it is not unique to the Western Cape province; it occurs in all South African provinces. A significant prerequisite for learning and development is to constantly feel safe, yet the issue of school violence in South Africa is an unfortunate reality. Many diverse variables contribute to school violence, and the repercussions for students can be disastrous. In South Africa, where crime and violence are prevalent, the dramatic increase in school violence reflects a complex combination of historical and contemporary strains on individuals, institutions, and communities. The culture of violence has grown firmly proved in our society, causing people to accept violence as a means of obtaining their goals. Schools are not exempt from this scourge, and the Safety Framework Report shows that schools have commonly applied physical interventions as part of their school safety plans. Measures include enhancing police presence at schools, installing burglar bars on school doors and windows, recruiting security guards, and building walls and fences. Non-physical violence reduction techniques, such as the introduction of school safety regulations and disciplinary measures, as well as other interventions aimed at altering and controlling learner behaviour, appear to receive less attention. School violence includes various negative underlying components, and these experiences have a long-term influence on children and their development into adults. Not only are such incidents predicted to have an influence on a child's attachment to a school, but they also contribute to rising dropout and absence rates, low self-esteem, and poor academic achievement. School violence is also likely to have a detrimental influence on young people's future susceptibility to violence, and there is a high likelihood that victims and/or perpetrators of school violence will engage in significant acts of violence as they grow older. Even while South Africa has made significant headway in fostering a human rights culture among its population, the constant exposure to violence has had a negative influence on students in most South African schools. In this setting, the researcher is certain that school violence can only be properly oversaw if school administrators, parents, community leaders, and the government work together. All these stakeholders' efforts must be placed within a complete framework of a concentrated social crime prevention plan that should target much of the violence that happens outside the reach of police and is typically conducted in the home. The purpose of this study was to better understand the phenomena of school violence as a kind of crime, as well as to shed light on the implications of school violence for students. The study was qualitative in nature, with the research participants providing detailed data verbally. A total of forty police personnel were questioned. According to the findings, school violence has a detrimental influence on both academic achievement and students' emotional and psychological well-being. This research was conducted at secondary schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. This township is notorious as one of the most violent areas in the Khayelitsha policing area. Purportedly, many learners who reside in this area have developed a fear of going to school as many have been attacked on their way to school, when they were inside the school premises and even when they were on their way back home

Keywords: Policing, school, South Africa, teachers, violence

Ref: 004/VIT/26

Integrating Psychosocial Care into Primary Health Systems: The Role of Social Workers in Advancing Sustainable Development in South Africa

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Abstract
The integration of psychosocial care into primary health systems is increasingly recognised as essential for achieving sustainable development goals related to health, well-being, and social equity. In South Africa, persistent socio-economic inequalities, high disease burdens, and mental health challenges continue to undermine the effectiveness of primary health care (PHC). This empirical qualitative study explores the role of social workers in integrating psychosocial care into PHC and examines how such integration contributes to sustainable development. Guided by ecological systems theory and a social justice framework, the study employed semi-structured interviews with social workers practicing in public primary health care facilities across three provinces in South Africa. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that social workers play a critical role in addressing social determinants of health, enhancing patient-centred care, strengthening community resilience, and promoting health equity, key pillars of sustainable development. However, systemic challenges such as workforce shortages, limited institutional recognition, and fragmented intersectoral collaboration constrain their impact. The study concludes that strengthening the integration of psychosocial care through policy alignment, interdisciplinary collaboration, and investment in health social work is vital for advancing sustainable and equitable health systems in South Africa.

Keywords
psychosocial care, primary health care, social work, sustainable development, qualitative study, South Africa

Ref: 005/VIT/26

The Impact of Geopolitical Risk, Economic Complexity, and Good Governance on the Environment, Across Countries with Different Income Levels

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Abstract
Environmental quality is considered one of the most important pillars of sustainable development and plays multiple roles in maintaining balance in human life. Due to the expansion of economic activities, global warming, and the emergence of diverse risks throughout the 21st century, the importance of The Impact of Geopolitical Risk, Economic Complexity, and Good Governance on the Environment has increased. However, because of the absence of specific laws and regulations and the lack of clearly defined ownership, the environment is often exploited in an unlimited and non-standard manner, resulting in environmental degradation and various forms of pollution. Consequently, environmental pollution has become one of the most critical challenges for all countries. Global warming and climate change driven by extensive human activities are among the major environmental problems that have generated significant concern in recent decades. Countries across all income groups—regardless of their level of industrialization, the quality of environmental regulations, or the scale of pollution-related expenditures—face environmental challenges. Given the intensification of global environmental pressures and the rise in geopolitical uncertainties, understanding the interaction among these factors is of considerable policy importance. Accordingly, this article employs panel data econometric methods to examine the impact of geopolitical risk, economic complexity, and good governance on environmental outcomes across countries with different income levels (low, middle, and high), over the period 2000–2024.The findings indicate that geopolitical risk has a positive and statistically significant effect on environmental pollution, leading to higher levels of environmental degradation. In contrast, economic complexity and good governance exert negative and significant effects on environmental pollutants, thereby contributing to pollution reduction. The results also suggest that the relationship between geopolitical risk and environmental degradation depends on countries' income levels. Specifically, elevated geopolitical risk increases environmental pressure in low- and middle-income countries. This may be attributed to weaker regulatory institutions, reduced investment in clean technologies, and the prioritization of defence and military expenditures over environmental concerns. Conversely, in high-income countries, the effect of geopolitical risk on environmental pollution may be weaker potentially, due to stronger public awareness and stricter environmental regulations. Based on these findings, environmental policies should be designed in accordance with the level of development and the specific conditions of each group of countries. For low- and middle-income countries, managing geopolitical risks and facilitating a transition toward environmentally compatible economic complexity and good governance are essential. For high-income countries, enforcing environmental laws and standards, and sustaining investment in green innovation appear to be vital.

Keywords: Environment, Economic Complexity, Geopolitical Risks, Good Governance

Ref: 006/VIT/26

Rapid Urban Micro-Heat Mapping and Cooling Strategy for Coastal Tourism and Public Health: An Urban Planning Study

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Abstract
Coastal secondary cities in Southeast Asia face increasing thermal stress due to rapid urbanization, high impervious surface coverage, and climate change–driven temperature rise. Vũng Tàu City, located in Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu Province, Vietnam, is a coastal tourism center with approximately 460,000 residents and a built environment characterized by dense commercial corridors, paved beachfront promenades, residential zones, and expanding transportation infrastructure. This study is structured as a case study of Vũng Tàu City, designed to demonstrate how targeted micro-scale thermal assessment can strengthen both tourism capacity and public health resilience in the context of rising temperatures associated with global warming. As a coastal destination dependent on walkability, outdoor recreation, and beach-oriented commerce, Vũng Tàu's economic vitality is directly influenced by thermal comfort. Simultaneously, increasing heat exposure presents heightened vulnerability for elderly residents, outdoor workers, and visitors. By integrating thermal mapping with urban planning strategies, the study positions climate adaptation as both an economic development strategy and a public health response. This research contributes to emerging discourse on scalable, low-cost climate resilience strategies for secondary coastal cities in the Global South. It demonstrates that rapid micro-heat mapping can serve as a decision-support tool for integrating vegetation planning, stormwater management, tourism development, and public health preparedness into cohesive urban cooling strategies. The model is replicable in similar mid-sized tropical cities seeking practical adaptation measures under constrained time and resource conditions.

Keywords: climate adaptation, urban heat islands, cooling cities, resilience

Ref: 007/VIT/26

From Reactive to Proactive: Exploring Intelligence-Led Policing as an Alternative policing Model for the South African Police Service.

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Abstract
The South African Police Service (SAPS) predominantly employs a reactive policing model, which focuses on responding to crime after it occurs rather than preventing it proactively. This approach has contributed to low conviction rates, significant case backlogs, and declining public trust. Despite global evidence supporting Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) as an effective crime prevention strategy, its adaptation to South Africa's socio-political and resource-constrained context remains underexplored. This study aims to examine ILP as a strategic alternative for SAPS by analyzing global best practices and assessing its feasibility within South Africa. Using a qualitative research design anchored in systematic literature review and documentary analysis, data were drawn from academic publications, policy documents, and international case studies. Findings indicate that ILP significantly reduces crime in jurisdictions where it is supported by robust data governance, predictive analytics, inter-agency collaboration, and community engagement. In contrast, SAPS's current ILP-related initiatives, such as the Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre (CIMAC), remain partial and ineffective due to systemic weaknesses in data integrity, the absence of real-time reporting, and limited analytical capacity. The study concludes that transitioning to ILP is a strategic imperative for SAPS and recommends phased, cost-effective reforms encompassing organizational restructuring, technological modernization, and policy changes. Future research should focus on empirical evaluation of ILP interventions, cost-benefit analysis, and ethical considerations in predictive policing.

Keywords: Intelligence-Led Policing; South African Police Service; Reactive Policing; Crime Prevention; Predictive Analytics.

Ref: 008/VIT/26

Data Integrity in Digital Policing: Evaluating the Quality of Cybercrime Statistics in the South African Police Service (SAPS)

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Abstract
Reliable cybercrime statistics are essential for effective digital policing in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), yet the South African Police Service (SAPS) continues to struggle with incomplete, inconsistent, and poorly categorized cybercrime data. These weaknesses—driven by underreporting, misclassification, and technological constraints—undermine South Africa's ability to respond to rising threats such as phishing, ransomware, identity theft, and business email compromise. This study evaluates the integrity of SAPS cybercrime data from 2013 to 2022, identifies systemic weaknesses affecting data quality, assesses underrepresented cybercrime categories, and proposes a diagnostic framework aligned with international best practices to strengthen data governance in digital policing. Using a qualitative research design, the study draws on SAPS annual statistics, institutional reports, academic literature, and policy documents. Content analysis, thematic analysis, and policy review were employed to examine reporting practices, technological constraints, and legislative alignment. Findings reveal substantial deficiencies in SAPS cybercrime statistics, including incomplete reporting due to fragmented systems and underreporting; inconsistent data arising from outdated crime-recording methodologies; and poor categorization, with cybercrimes frequently grouped under broad headings such as "Other Serious Crimes." High-prevalence offenses—such as phishing, ransomware, identity theft, digital extortion, and business email compromise—were found to be systematically underrepresented or misclassified. Institutional challenges include outdated infrastructure, uneven implementation of cybercrime SOPs, limited forensic capacity, and weak integration of cyber intelligence tools. These shortcomings hinder intelligence-led policing, obstruct evidence-based policymaking, and weaken public trust. The study proposes adopting the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), introducing a centralized national cybercrime reporting platform, enhancing digital forensic and intelligence capabilities, and strengthening training, data governance, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. These reforms would significantly improve transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in SAPS cybercrime data management.

The study relies on secondary data, which may not fully capture internal SAPS operational procedures or unpublished cybercrime records. Publicly released datasets may contain institutional bias, and limited disaggregation restricts comprehensive analysis of specific cybercrime categories. Further research should conduct empirical testing of the proposed diagnostic framework, explore cross-sector and cross-national comparisons, evaluate the operational impact of improved cybercrime classification systems, and examine the integration of artificial intelligence and digital forensics into SAPS data ecosystems. Longitudinal studies tracking post-reform data quality are essential for assessing institutional progress in digital policing.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Data Integrity, Digital Policing, Crime Statistics, Intelligence-Led Policing.

Ref: 009/VIT/26

Evaluating the Weak Protocol Theory: A Socio-Structural Framework for Understanding Corruption in African Institutions

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Abstract
Corruption in African public institutions is often analyzed through traditional criminological theories that privilege individual motivations, social learning, or weakened social bonds. While insightful, these person-centered approaches inadequately explain the institutional environments that enable systemic corruption. The Weak Protocol Theory (WPT) offers an alternative socio-structural explanation by positing that corruption results from the convergence of weak, vague, or poorly enforced protocols and the availability of exploitable resources. This study evaluates the conceptual foundations, analytical utility, and empirical potential of WPT within African governance contexts. Using a qualitative methodology—including document analysis, policy reviews, and thematic evaluation—the study interrogates the theory's assumptions, scope, and applicability. The findings reveal that WPT effectively captures how institutional fragilities such as rule vagueness, excessive discretionary authority, and weak oversight mechanisms create structural opportunities for corruption. The theory proves particularly relevant in African bureaucracies characterized by procedural ambiguity, entrenched patronage systems, and limited accountability. The study's implications highlight WPT's value for policy and institutional reform, especially in guiding strategies related to rule standardization, oversight strengthening, reduction of discretionary power, and integration of digital governance tools. However, WPT also exhibits limitations, including insufficient attention to individual psychological processes, challenges in operationalizing "rule weakness," and the need for greater cultural adaptability. Future directions propose multi-sectoral empirical testing, development of diagnostic rule-strength indicators, cross-national comparative research, and integration of behavioral governance approaches. The study concludes that WPT offers a compelling, context-sensitive, and reform-oriented framework that advances the understanding of corruption as an institutional—not merely individual—phenomenon within African public governance.

Keywords: Weak Protocol Theory, institutional corruption, Corruption theory, socio-structural criminology, Anti-corruption strategies.

Ref: 010/VIT/26

Human trafficking in the informal goods trading sector: A human rights perspective

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Abstract
While many people regard informal trading as a booming business that has created jobs in Southern Africa, South African cities are awash with informal traders displaying and selling their wares at transportation terminals to earn a living for their households. Despite that, many of the traders mingle with underage children found to be selling on the streets and pavements in cities. The children are tasked to display the goods to passersby and engage in trades that contravene the laws. The objectives of this qualitative research study were to explore the ramifications of human trafficking in the informal trading as a stealthy form of human rights abuses. To unearth the modus operandi used to facilitate the practice in various industries in the informal trading sector. Data were generated from in-depth semi-structured interviews and analysed through a qualitative lens. The analysis revealed a mirage of patterns of human trafficking in the informal sector, such as the exploitation of underage children who are used to sell food at transportation terminals. Some of them are smuggled from neighbouring provinces and countries, lured by better livelihoods in cities across South Africa. They do not attend school and are compensated with food, clothes and accommodation. They do not have identification documents such as birth certificates and clinic cards. In the scrap metal collection, waste collection, chop shop industry, and illegal mining sector, the children are kept working for long hours. Moreover, girls are often sexually abused by traffickers and smugglers. The findings suggest that law enforcement turns a blind eye to the bigger problem and does not police human trafficking sufficiently. They do not proactively enforce the law, and intelligence sources are not used optimally. Child traffickers should be arrested and sentenced heavily, as many of the children are stateless because of trafficking.

Keywords: Human rights violations, human trafficking, informal trading, and policing human trafficking

Ref: 011/VIT/26

Online trading of Intellectual property goods: Theft of incorporeal property

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Abstract
Technology innovation and internet speed have sharpened and contributed to the expansion of online trading in IP goods. Understanding the intricacies of online stores and trading platforms makes transacting safe and seamless. The online store hosts are reputable companies that operate worldwide. However, research on the dealings of online stores, such as trading in intellectual property-protected merchandise, poor quality goods and fakes, is under-researched. This research study is qualitative and used a systematic literature review to explore online trading in intellectual property-protected merchandise and the consequences of the practice in relation to brands and brand holders' businesses. Data was generated from a literature study and analysed systematically. First, there is an escalation in online trading with online market platfoms hoisted online by third parties and obtain commission for their trades. Second, many shop dealers trade in intellectual property-protected merchandise that deceives consumers. Third, it is a tedious and expensive exercise to take legal actions against the traders as they are situated in various jurisdictions in the world, and some are difficult to trace. Fourth, some traders do not disclose the country where their businesses are operated. Fifth, the manufacturers and suppliers are not disclosed. The findings suggest that online trading using marketplace platforms is increasing exponentially. Criminal networks have infiltrated the supply chains as intellectual property-protected merchandise is traded online. The difficulty in tracing manufactures make the trade risky for consumers. The merchandise cannot be tested before making a purchase. The use of a digital intermediary (go-between) makes the tracing of suspects insurmountable. It is difficult for law enforcement to police the crime as the culprits may be situated anywhere in the world.

Keywords: Brand holders, intellectual property, law enforcement, merchandise, online trading .

Ref: 012/VIT/26

Performance management system in South African municipalities: Performance and Challenges

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Abstract
This study discusses some of the prevailing work published by different scholars and government departments about performance management systems. The literature review commences with the concept of performance management in terms of its importance in municipalities. The legislative frameworks governing performance management in South African municipalities are also discussed. Further, this study identifies the benefits and barriers of the performance management system used by South African municipalities. Moreover, the study analyses the crucial aspects of the performance management system that promote performance effectiveness and efficiency in municipalities. Secondary data was employed in the study to gather information. No interviews and questionnaires form part of the study, hence there was no human interaction recorded. The literature compiled in this section explores the following: the conceptual framework of performance management; and challenges hampering the effective implementation of performance management system. Policymakers and strategic role-players can find value in the article's recommendations for implementing a well-executed performance management system in government departments, organisations, and local government entities. Since the data in this statement was gathered from publicly accessible sources, it satisfies the requirements of research ethics. Through document analysis, the data was evaluated. Explaining the elements that could prevent a performance management system from being implemented successfully at the local governance level is the study's goal. Training, senior management commitment, awareness, and cultural change are just a few of the issues the report highlights as being related to performance management. The study offers a few solutions to enhance the performance management systems' current state of implementation considering the findings. This study presented key arguments concerning performance management systems and described the concept of performance management and its elements and aspects. It explained that South Africa's performance management has advantages and disadvantages. In this case, the government formulated various policies and strategies to address such issues. To identify the key challenges and obstacles facing the performance management system, various methods and tools are outlined to address the imminent challenges. The literature review on the performance management system was the topic of this study. The statutory and legislative frameworks and the challenges of implementing performance management within South African municipalities were highlighted. Furthermore, the concept of performance management was the first to be reviewed, followed by the statutory, regulatory, and legislative frameworks that govern performance management. This study provided additional detail about the advantages and disadvantages of performance management, the essential components that support efficient and successful performance management, and the main obstacles it faces. Moreover, the study discussed the critical success elements for monitoring performance management implementation.

Keywords: Challenges, performance management system, South African municipalities, qualitative study

Ref: 013/VIT/26

The Nature and Extent of Illicit Drug Smuggling in Gauteng Correctional Service Centres, South Africa

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Abstract
The possession, distribution, and use of illicit drugs are criminal offences in South Africa. However, despite the secure nature of correctional centres, illicit drugs continue to infiltrate these facilities. This raises serious concerns regarding institutional security, inmate health, staff safety, and the broader social impact on families and communities. In South Africa, illicit drug use is reported to be significantly higher than the global average, further intensifying the challenges faced within correctional environments. An in-depth understanding of the prevalence, nature, and extent of illicit drug smuggling in correctional centres is essential for developing effective preventative strategies. This article examines three key aspects: (1) the primary methods used to smuggle illicit drugs into correctional centres; (2) issues associated with illicit drug use within these facilities; and (3) an analysis of current interventions aimed at addressing the problem. Illicit drugs enter correctional centres through multiple and often innovative channels, requiring correctional officials to continuously adapt to evolving smuggling techniques. The study focuses specifically on Gauteng correctional service centres in South Africa, including Kgoši Mampuru II Correctional Centre and Leeuwkop Prison. This study used a qualitative research approach integrating a comprehensive literature review drawing on narrative, systematic, and scoping review approaches with semi-structured, face-to-face interviews conducted with purposively selected participants who possessed relevant institutional knowledge and operational experience. These include correctional service unit managers, officials from the Correctional Officials Visit Section, former inmates, and security personnel who interact daily with inmates. The study concludes that more comprehensive and coordinated efforts are required to eliminate illicit drug smuggling in correctional centres and provides recommendations for the police, correctional services, and relevant stakeholders. The study recommends a multi-faceted and collaborative approach to addressing illicit drug smuggling in correctional centres. This includes strengthening security protocols through improved technological surveillance, enhancing staff training to recognise evolving smuggling methods, and reinforcing integrity management systems to reduce internal collusion.

Keywords: Correctional services, Illicit drugs, Inmates, Prison security, Smuggling

Ref: 014/VIT/26

The Digital Gavel: Analysing Facebook's "Shoot-to-Kill" narratives and the evidentiary imperative for Body-Worn Cameras in South Africa

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Abstract
It is argued that the profession of being a police officer remain a dangerous one world-wide, and the killing of police vary per country, but the situation remains dire in South Africa. The statement "shot to kill" or "shoot to kill" has been a subject of controversy in various countries, with different government officials or political figures using, or being accused of using, such language in the context of law enforcement or political unrest. The use of such phrasing has been met with significant backlash, as it implies an order that can potentially violate human rights and legal protocols regarding the use of lethal force. This assertion reflects the widely recognised principle that all individuals possess an inherent and inalienable right to life, which is often considered the foundation of all other human rights. This right is enshrined in several international agreements and national constitutions. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) explicitly states in Article 3 that everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person, reinforcing the universal consensus that this right should be legally protected and respected across the globe. In South Africa, the law recognises the right to self-defence also known as private defence, which can serve as a complete legal justification for actions, including those that result in death, if specific requirements are met. In 2024/25, South Africa witnessed a sharp escalation in police-related fatalities, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), where over 160 suspects were killed in a single year. Parallel to this surge is a burgeoning digital populism on social media platforms like Facebook, where public commentary overwhelmingly supports "shoot-to-kill" narratives in response to violent crime and construction mafia extortion. This public endorsement of lethal force creates a high-risk environment for extrajudicial action and institutional drift. This research explores the intersection of social media sentiment and police accountability. It argues that the viral hero-worship of lethal force on Facebook, often bypassing the presumption of innocence, exacerbates the accountability gap and necessitates the urgent utilisation of body-worn cameras (BWCs) as a tool of objective truth. This study employs a thematic analysis of Facebook commentary on high-profile KZN police shootouts, cross-referencing this sentiment with IPID fatality statistics and SAPS civil liability trends. It evaluates how digital mob justice narratives conflict with the legal requirements of Section 49 of the Criminal Procedure Act. This study identifies that Facebook's "shoot-to-kill" narratives provide a social license for militarised policing, which potentially discourages officers from utilizing less-lethal alternatives. Without the independent digital witness provided by BWCs, these populist narratives become the primary record of events, shielding the state from R21.2 billion in pending civil claims while eroding the Rule of Law. This article concludes that BWCs are essential to counteract narrative capture by social media. Technology must be deployed not just to monitor officers, but to preserve the integrity of the judicial process against the rising tide of digital extrajudicialism.

Keywords: Body-Worn Cameras, Crime, Facebook narratives, digital populism, IPID, SAPS, Shoot-to-Kill, KwaZulu-Natal

Ref: 015/VIT/26

A five-year longitudinal study towards sustainable youth development: social work and social development responses and approaches

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Abstract
Climate change is one of the most pressing contemporary challenges, with disproportionate impacts on youth and significant implications for their social, economic, and developmental trajectories (Thomaes, 2025; Pereira & Freire, 2021). Young people are expected to experience the most severe long-term consequences of climate change, including disruptions to livelihoods, and wellbeing, particularly in vulnerable communities within the Global South (Barford et al., 2021). As such, advancements in the field of sustainable youth development is critical for responding and adapting to the threats posed by climate change, particularly for developing countries. This proposed five-year longitudinal study (2026-2030) sets out to explore and understand the intersectionality between sustainability and youth development in South Africa, with the aim of creating a more holistic view of sustainable youth development in the social work and social development discipline. The longitudinal study will include five yearly research topics that, in conjunction, will contribute to sustainable youth development knowledge. Yearly research topics will include youth perceptions of climate, sustainability and livelihoods; education and skills for a green economy; youth mental health and climate anxiety; youth leadership and climate justice and gender and intersectionality in youth development. Each yearly topic will be guided by its own research paradigm, theoretical framework(s) and methodologies, hence adopting an eclectic research methodology. An eclectic approach is usually more flexible, integrating various theories, approaches, tools and techniques depending on the study purpose (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). While the theoretical frameworks will differ each year, depending on the topic, the overarching perspectives guiding this longitudinal study will be positive youth development and climate justice. Positive youth development is a developmental approach that emphasizes the importance of youth as deliberate actors in their own development (Benson et al., 2007). Climate justice is an important development of environmental justice scholarship whereby the main concern is about local experiences, inequitable vulnerabilities and community functioning in the face of global climate disaster (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014). Hence, by combining these two overarching perspectives, the five-year longitudinal study will ensure youth voices about their own development are amplified while simultaneously understanding and addressing issues of climate injustice faced by youth in the Global South. It is hoped that the results from the five-year longitudinal study will inform social interventions, theories, practice and policy aimed at sustainable youth development in developing countries, with populations who are particularly vulnerable to the most devastating effects of climate change.

Keywords: Global South, Social Work, Social Development, Sustainability, Youth Development

Ref: 016/VIT/26

Transformative Governance for Sustainable Development: Building Inclusive and Resilient Institutions

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Abstract
Across the world, governments are operating in an environment marked by mounting complexity and uncertainty. Persistent inequality continues to shape patterns of exclusion, limiting access to livelihoods, education, healthcare, and political participation. Fiscal pressures, intensified by economic volatility and competing public demands, constrain states' capacity to invest in long-term social and institutional reform. At the same time, climate change has amplified environmental risks, exposing weaknesses in infrastructure systems, disaster preparedness, and development planning, particularly in vulnerable regions. In many countries, these pressures are compounded by institutional fragility, uneven administrative capacity, and fluctuating political commitment. Taken together, these dynamics demonstrate that contemporary development challenges are deeply interconnected and cannot be addressed through isolated or sector-specific interventions. The adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represented a collective global commitment to tackle poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and institutional weakness in an integrated manner. Yet progress toward these goals has been uneven. Governance systems often remain fragmented, with limited coordination across government departments and between national, regional, and local spheres. Policies may be ambitious in design but inconsistent in execution, weakened by resource shortages, short political cycles, and competing institutional mandates. In some settings, public institutions remain distant from the communities they serve, reducing trust, limiting participation, and undermining legitimacy. These challenges suggest that sustainable development depends not only on the policies adopted but also on how governance systems function in practice. This paper examines how governance can be strengthened to advance inclusive and resilient development outcomes. Drawing on governance theory, institutional analysis, and scholarship on sustainable development, it conceptualises governance as a dynamic and relational process shaped by power, norms, accountability structures, and patterns of participation. Rather than treating governance as a purely technical exercise, the study situates it within broader political and ethical debates about inclusion, representation, and institutional responsibility. Methodologically, the paper synthesises interdisciplinary literature and comparative governance experiences to identify recurring implementation challenges, including policy fragmentation, weak intergovernmental coordination, limited fiscal space, unequal power relations, and insufficient oversight mechanisms. On this basis, it develops an applied framework for institutional reform. The analysis argues that sustainable development is more likely where governments align policies across sectors, enable meaningful public engagement, strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms, and cultivate collaborative partnerships with civil society and the private sector. Evidence-informed decision-making, combined with context-appropriate digital innovation, can further enhance coordination and institutional learning. By linking theoretical insight with practical reform strategies, the study contributes a grounded governance framework that connects institutional performance to long-term sustainability. It offers guidance to policymakers and scholars seeking context-sensitive approaches that reinforce institutional resilience while advancing inclusive human and social development.

Keywords: Governance; Sustainable Development; Institutional Reform; Policy Alignment; Collaborative Partnerships

Ref: 017/VIT/26

A comparative analysis of women's awareness of legal protection from microaggression in the Gauteng province

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Abstract
Ideally, social cohesion in a modern society should eradicate or inhibit human conduct that threatens gender equality. Unresolved cultural practices and beliefs in some African communities legitimize inequalities. Legitimizing gender inequality has exacerbated gender-based violence across South Africa. In 2024, the Human Sciences Research Council established that an estimated 5 417522 million women experienced a lifetime of violence since aged fifteen; and an estimated 3 055 810 million men experienced childhood physical abuse. Furthermore, family members were the most perpetrators of lifetime non-partnered violence in South African communities. Gender hierarchies continuously threaten the livelihood and safety of venerable groups. Vulnerable groups may experience offensive behaviour such abusive language, racist jokes and array of aggression in different social settings. Subtle violence called microaggression is prevalent. Microaggression can manifest as microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations directed at an individual or social group to prejudice and cause hurt. Although prejudice is harmful it is not as regulated as discrimination. The South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996 prohibits discrimination. The South African government has adopted various international laws that criminalize discriminatory conduct to protect women's right to dignity and retore positive gender relations in affected communities. Most importantly, the South African legislative framework is accessible on public platforms. The objective of the study was to establish women's perception of the law as a shield against microaggression. The methodology of the study involved a quantitative comparison of two groups of forty women from adjacent districts, Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni. The study used a probability sampling technique for simple random sampling of eighty female participants. Structured questionnaires were issued to participants for thirty-minute interviews. Participation criteria included females of all races, aged between 20 and 45 years, residents in Johannesburg or Ekurhuleni, and South African ethnicity. All participants provided formal written consent and did not get incentives for their contributions. Participants were informed of their rights to confidentiality, withdrawal, and were assured anonymity. Demographics of the sample showed that most participants were literate. A T-test was conducted on SPSS to compare perceptions across the two groups. The research results showed insignificant differences in the perception between the two groups. Most members of both groups perceived that the South African constitution does not protect women against microaggression. The common trend identified in the comparative data was ignorance of the law. The study provides insight on South Africa women's lack of awareness of the legal protection from microaggression. The results are ungeneralizable due to the sample size. Government sponsored awareness training initiatives was recommended to educate women on legal protection from microaggression.

Keywords: Equality, gender, ignorance, illiteracy, microaggression, protection.

Ref: 018/VIT/26

Artificial Intelligence for Sustainability Problem-Solving: A Model for Practitioners

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Abstract
The accelerating impacts of climate change, rapid urbanization, and environmental degradation are reshaping the global sustainability workforce. The World Economic Forum reports that demand for sustainability-trained professionals has risen by approximately 40% since 2015, yet only a small fraction of the labor force possesses the required interdisciplinary competencies. Concurrently, Deloitte Insights (2026) highlights a widening gap in artificial intelligence (AI) literacy within sustainability-related roles, particularly in climate analytics, ESG reporting, infrastructure planning, and environmental risk assessment. This dual skills deficit, limited sustainability fluency among technologists, and insufficient AI capability among sustainability practitioners pose a significant barrier to effective place-based problem-solving.

This paper presents a practitioner-centered, workshop-based model for integrating AI into sustainability decision-making. Unlike institutional or center-based educational frameworks, the proposed model emphasizes hands-on, rapid skill transfer tailored to professionals operating in geographically specific contexts such as urban planning, environmental consulting, engineering, property development, and governmental compliance. The model is demonstrated through a case-based prototype workshop conducted in Vietnam, focusing on AI-assisted flood risk and climate resilience mapping in the Mekong Delta, one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions.
The workshop integrates open-source geospatial tools, such as QGIS and Google Earth Engine, with satellite datasets (Sentinel-2, SRTM elevation data, CHIRPS rainfall data) to construct a place-based flood-susceptibility model. Machine learning techniques, including Random Forest (RF) and Support Vector Machines (SVM), are introduced to classify flood risk zones based on elevation, hydrological proximity, and rainfall intensity. Remote sensing workflows incorporate land-use/land-cover (LULC) classification and change detection to support infrastructure planning and climate adaptation strategies. In parallel, Large Language Models (LLMs) are employed to translate spatial risk outputs into policy-ready resilience recommendations, environmental compliance drafts, and adaptation briefs aligned with national climate frameworks.

The model moves beyond theoretical AI training by embedding practitioners directly within applied analytical pipelines, from data ingestion and preprocessing to spatial modeling, visualization, and regulatory reporting. Participants learn structured prompt engineering for sustainability scenarios, enabling them to generate context-sensitive adaptation strategies, infrastructure planning insights, and risk communication summaries. By combining geospatial analytics, remote sensing, machine learning, and generative AI, the workshop framework equips professionals with hybrid competencies that reflect the evolving demands of climate governance.
The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that approximately 3.3 billion people are highly vulnerable to climate impacts, with Southeast Asia among the most exposed regions. Addressing such vulnerability requires not only technological innovation but also the democratization of applied AI skills among frontline practitioners. The workshop-based model proposed here offers a scalable and context-aware pathway for operationalizing AI in sustainability practice. It positions AI not as an abstract innovation, but as an augmentation tool that enhances analytical rigor, accelerates evidence synthesis, and strengthens resilience-oriented planning.
By prioritizing skill transfer, open-source tools, and place-based applications, this model contributes a practical framework for closing the AI-sustainability capability gap and enabling climate-responsive decision-making in vulnerable regions.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, data analytics, manpower training

Ref: 019/VIT/26

Transnational Organised Crime in Southern Africa: Persistent Threats Posed by Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking, and the Illicit Trade of Firearms

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Abstract
Transnational organised crime (TOC) remains one of the most persistent threats to security, governance, and development in Southern Africa. This paper examines the dynamics and impacts of three major forms of TOC—drug trafficking, human trafficking, and the illicit trade in firearms—and evaluates the effectiveness of national and regional responses. Anchored in the theoretical frameworks of globalisation and networked criminality, the study employs a qualitative, desk-based methodology using scholarly literature, policy reports, and official documents from institutions such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The findings indicate that TOC networks exploit porous borders, corruption, and disparities in law enforcement capacity to establish resilient cross-border supply chains. Drug trafficking fuels violence, corruption, and public health challenges across the region. Human trafficking persists due to socio-economic vulnerabilities, weak governance, and inadequate victim-protection mechanisms. Meanwhile, the proliferation of illicit firearms significantly escalates levels of violent crime and undermines regional stability. Although regional frameworks and international conventions exist to combat these threats, their implementation remains fragmented due to limited resources, weak institutional coordination, and insufficient political will. The study argues that more effective responses require strengthened cross-border intelligence sharing, harmonised legal frameworks, enhanced capacity for law enforcement and judicial institutions, and community-based prevention strategies that address the underlying socio-economic drivers of organised crime. This paper contributes to the literature by providing an integrated assessment of transnational organised crime in Southern Africa and by offering policy-oriented recommendations aimed at strengthening regional resilience and enforcement effectiveness.

Keywords: Transnational Organised Crime; Drug Trafficking; Human Trafficking; Illicit Firearms; Regional Cooperation; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Ref: 020/VIT/26

Exploring the Dynamics of Child Abuse and Neglect Committed by Parents in South Africa: A Socio-Criminological Analysis

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Abstract
Child abuse and neglect in South Africa remain pervasive, with parents and primary caregivers consistently identified as the leading perpetrators of both non-fatal and fatal maltreatment. This paper presents a socio-criminological analysis of parental abuse and neglect, drawing on a qualitative meta-synthesis of empirical studies, child-death review findings, national statistics, and criminological theory. The analysis demonstrates that parental maltreatment arises from the intersection of individual vulnerabilities, family stressors, community disadvantage, and broader structural and cultural conditions. Key risk factors include chronic poverty, caregiver mental-health challenges, harmful alcohol and substance use, intergenerational trauma, social isolation, domestic violence, and cultural norms that legitimise corporal punishment. Using socio-ecological, strain, social learning, feminist, and life-course criminological perspectives, the paper illustrates how these factors interact to heighten the risk of maltreatment and shape gendered patterns of abuse, with mothers more frequently associated with neglect and fathers or male partners more often implicated in physical and sexual violence. Systemic weaknesses—including under-resourced child-protection services, limited interagency coordination, inconsistent case management, and community silence—further undermine early detection and intervention. Case studies illustrate how structural disadvantage and family stress create conditions in which neglect, severe physical abuse, and fatal maltreatment can occur. The paper argues that preventing parental abuse requires multi-level strategies that address economic strain, strengthen mental-health and substance-use services, expand evidence-based parenting programmes, enhance interagency collaboration, and promote community-level norm change through partnerships with religious and traditional leaders. Strengthening child-death review mechanisms and integrated child-protection systems is essential for improving accountability and reducing preventable harm. Overall, the study highlights the need for holistic, contextually grounded approaches to break intergenerational cycles of violence and to protect children within South African families.

Keywords: Child abuse; neglect; parental perpetration; South Africa; criminology; socio-ecological analysis.

Ref: 021/VIT/26

The role of international law principles in directing shared successes in the sustainable development agenda

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Abstract
The seventeen goals that underpin the global drive for just development are many times perceived as individual and separate in nature in that each address but a component of the complex overarching goal that is sustainable development. Recent studies have shown that only 17% of the targets supporting the seventeen SDGs have been met and that this low level of success may be attributed to challenges such as weak accountability at national and global scales and selective implementation of goals. These challenges present the theoretical concerns underpinning this presentation, namely that fragmented approaches to ensuring end-game success in individual/cherry-picked goals is counterproductive to the overarching objective of global sustainable development and that the nature of Agenda 2023 weaken national accountability. It is the objective of this presentation to highlight how international law should be harnessed in addressing the above-mentioned concerns. In the first instance, the presenter sets out to show that normative overlap between two distinct SDGs, namely: climate action and access to water exist and that further overlap with existing international hard law exist. The hypothesis is that overlap among the founding principles of international climate change, water and human rights law provides the direction for more coordinated efforts to achieve the specific SDG 6 and 13 targets. Furthermore, national accountability may be improved by basing it on the binding directives contained in the hard international law instruments. The presentation concludes with recommendations related to the two hypotheses and relate to the relevance of the overlap and legal nature of international law and legal principles in directing greater global success in the achievement of the sustainable development agenda.

Keywords: Accountability, coordinated, fragmented, implementation, normative.

Ref: 022/VIT/26

A comparative analysis of multi-scalar development agendas in addressing South African Human Trafficking: A *Bosadi*-Centred Critique of Institutional Amnesia

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Abstract
This research investigates the systemic implementation gap between global, continental, and national development frameworks in the eradication of human trafficking in South Africa. Utilizing a multi-scalar Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), the study systematically deconstructs the synergy and subsequent friction between the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 5.2 and 8.7), the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, and the South African National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. The analysis is filtered through the University of South Africa (UNISA) *Bosadi* (Womanhood) lens, a decolonial, Afro-centric framework used to identify the latent intersectional vulnerabilities of African women as the primary targets of modern slavery. This paper argues that despite a 94% conceptual alignment across these scales, enforcement is paralysed by what is conceptualised as the acid of blind loyalty. Drawing on the author's theory of learning to forget, the QCA provides an empirical critique of the South African Police Service (SAPS) Detective Service and Crime Intelligence (CI). It asserts that political patronage and the looting of the Secret Service Account (SSA) have dissolved the Competence Paradigm, replacing professional investigative rigour with a "code of silence" and institutional amnesia. This decay renders the state expertly ignorant, effectively stalling progress toward SDG 16 (Peace and Justice). Employing an innovative Performance-as-Research (PaR) methodology, the researcher adopts the reflexive positionality of an "Academic-*Seroki*" (praise singer**, or** public orator Social Conscience). This study introduces an original Oral Poetry intervention, *"The Acid of Silence: A Seroki/Sereti for the Forgotten,"* as primary qualitative data. This poetic data is subjected to thematic content analysis to name state failures and reclaim the *"Seriti"* (Dignity) of the victim, bypassing institutional silence. The findings suggest that sustainable development is physically impossible while "blind loyalty" dictates the security cluster. This paper concludes with a Tactical Operational Roadmap for relevant role-players, calling for the insulation of CI from political interference and the restoration of *Botho/Ubuntu* ethics.

Keywords: Blind Loyalty, Bosadi Womanhood, Human Trafficking, Sustainable Development Goals, Performance-as-Research, South Africa

Ref: 023/VIT/26

The Ogoni Communication: a critical contribution to human rights interpretation in Africa

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Abstract
SERAC and CESR v Nigeria is a foundational African human rights decision that transformed environmental harm from a mere development issue into a rights-based violation. The case was heard by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in 2001. The communication made important findings and recommendations as to the interpretation of human rights and access to justice in the African regional context. The facts of the communication revolved around oil production by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company(NNPC), the majority shareholder in a consortium with Shell Petroleum Company SPDC. It is alleged that the military government was directly involved in oil production through the NNPC and SPDC. It was alleged that oil production caused environmental degradation and health challenges among the Ogoni people.

Disposing of toxic waste into waterways in violation of international environmental standards and neglecting to maintain oil facilities resulted in numerous spills near villages in Ogoniland. As a result, short- and long-term health impacts, ranging from skin infections to neurological and respiratory ailments, were observed. By placing military and legal powers at the disposal of oil companies, the Ogoni alleged that the Nigerian government condoned the activities that led to the challenges they faced.

The Ogoni people faced a challenge of admissibility as local remedies were not exhausted in the present case. The Commission, however, provided an important reading on admissibility in the present instance, providing an important 'precedent' in the African region. This will be dealt with in more detail during the presentation. Moreover, the Commission, based on the merits of the communication, gave an expansive interpretation of the responsibilities of states flowing from both regional and international human rights instruments. In so doing, the communication emphasises the importance of respecting human rights, especially when environmental harm harms human health. The commission specifically focused on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the provision relevant to physical health and "the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development". The foregoing rights are contained in articles 16 and 24 of the ACHPR. The Commission interpreted Article 24 to impose clear *obligations* on states to take reasonable measures to prevent pollution and ecological degradation, promote conservation, and secure ecologically sustainable development and the use of its natural resources. This expansive interpretation should be lauded, especially in the context of Africa as a developing regional space. The Commission also referred expansively to international legal instruments and to some foreign caselaw. The Commission also made various remarks on the effects of the Nigerian government's actions on violations of the rights to food, dignity, and adequate housing.

Although the communication was dealt with before the formal introduction of the SDGs, various SDGs such as SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 11 (sustainable communities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 15 (life on land), and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) can be argued to find application.

This paper aims to explore the landmark communication considering human rights and how environmental pollution can affect it. Moreover, the Commission's expansive and innovative reading of access to justice will indicate the Commission's competence and pro-human rights orientation. An approach that is critically important to the African continent.

Keywords: Admissibility, Conservation, right to a healthy environment, Right to health, Pollution

Ref: 024/VIT/26

Indicators of Sustainable Business Model in Petrochemical Industries

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Abstract
Given that technological innovations alone cannot solve the challenges of sustainability, there is a need for something more fundamental, lasting and dramatically different to reciprocate the relationship between production and consumption and in practice calls for a new business model as Part of a wider shift to social justice is needed or created. Nowadays, Businesses face two major challenges. The first challenge is the transformation of the business models into account in the light of developments in the world, and the second challenge is to adapt itself to the elements that shape sustainable development and the creation of a sustainable business. There is now a growing interest in using new business models. But little has been done to explore and research the development of business models that are consistent with sustainable development and sustainable business creation. In this framework, sustainable business is defined as a business that is economically sustainable, environmentally responsible and socially responsible.

Since the petrochemical industry is known as an industrial that potentially facing a continuous challenge with some sustainable business components, especially environmental ones, and on the other hand, the lack of research on components for other dimensions of Sustainability, this research seeks to develop sustainable business models in the industry by introducing 16 environmental components, 16 economic components and 14 social components from among 602 different components in various texts, examining sustainable business models in the petrochemical industry. The situation of this industry in the world, due to the fundamental changes in the price of oil in recent years, strongly requires changes in the business model of the major oil companies in the world, despite the perception of this position by some large and multinational corporations in the world and the beginning of the change process. The business model needs to standardize some of the components of the environmental, economic and social aspects, and the requirement for companies to use them in their current business models, have been felt for greater business continuity and accelerated the change process of Business model.

Keywords: Business Models, Sustainability, Sustainable Business Model, Business Model Innovation

Ref: 025/VIT/26

Prospects and Challenges of the Labour Laws in Fiji: An Empirical Study

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Abstract
Fiji has a variety of employment laws and regulations in place to protect employees and employers. Labour laws in Fiji are primarily governed by the Employment Relations Act 2007 (ERA), which enforces 8 core ILO conventions, promoting fair, safe, and equitable working conditions under the guidelines of the constitution in Fiji. The national minimum wage is increasing to $5 FJD per hour as of 1 April 2025, with specific wage regulations for various sectors. There are some key rules that include strict anti-discrimination, mandatory 30-minute breaks for every 4 hours, and specific overtime compensation. It is reported that the employment laws in Fiji faces some challenges with enforcement, widespread non-compliance regarding minimum wage and, and disputes over proposed, stricter, punitive reforms. Many rights are also being frequently infringed directly or indirectly.

There are also key issues that include over $12 million in unpaid wage claims, failure to provide employment contracts, and slow action on unfair termination, particularly in the security and retail sectors. But it is essential to implement and enforce the labour laws at the national and international levels for the services of the mankind.

This study however, examines the present state of labour laws for economic sustainability as applied in Fiji consisting of 50 respondents in the different criteria such as professors, industry people, owner of the companies, workers of the industries and companies, common people, students, law enforcing agency etc.; based on the primary and secondary sources in Suva, Fiji.

Keywords: Labour Laws, Challenges, Prospects. National Labour Law, International Labour Laws, Fiji.

Ref: 026/VIT/26

The Nature and Extent of Illicit Drug Smuggling in Gauteng Correctional Service Centres, South Africa

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Abstract
The possession, distribution, and use of illicit drugs are criminal offences in South Africa. However, despite the secure nature of correctional centres, illicit drugs continue to infiltrate these facilities. This raises serious concerns regarding institutional security, inmate health, staff safety, and the broader social impact on families and communities. In South Africa, illicit drug use is reported to be significantly higher than the global average, further intensifying the challenges faced within correctional environments. An in-depth understanding of the prevalence, nature, and extent of illicit drug smuggling in correctional centres is essential for developing effective preventative strategies. This article examines three key aspects: (1) the primary methods used to smuggle illicit drugs into correctional centres; (2) issues associated with illicit drug use within these facilities; and (3) an analysis of current interventions aimed at addressing the problem. Illicit drugs enter correctional centres through multiple and often innovative channels, requiring correctional officials to continuously adapt to evolving smuggling techniques. The study focuses specifically on Gauteng correctional service centres in South Africa, including Kgoši Mampuru II Correctional Centre and Leeuwkop Prison. This study used a qualitative research approach integrating a comprehensive literature review drawing on narrative, systematic, and scoping review approaches with semi-structured, face-to-face interviews conducted with purposively selected participants who possessed relevant institutional knowledge and operational experience. These include correctional service unit managers, officials from the Correctional Officials Visit Section, former inmates, and security personnel who interact daily with inmates. The study concludes that more comprehensive and coordinated efforts are required to eliminate illicit drug smuggling in correctional centres and provides recommendations for the police, correctional services, and relevant stakeholders. The study recommends a multi-faceted and collaborative approach to addressing illicit drug smuggling in correctional centres. This includes strengthening security protocols through improved technological surveillance, enhancing staff training to recognise evolving smuggling methods, and reinforcing integrity management systems to reduce internal collusion.

Keywords: Correctional services, Illicit drugs, Inmates, Prison security, Smuggling

Ref: 027/VIT/26

Challenges of the Present and Future Sustainable Development of Africa

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Abstract
Sustainable developmental challenges are emergent in accordance to time and they spring out in accordance to several factors that govern development trends. Such factors include political leaders governing the country; knowledge of the majority people regarding various issues including their rights; understanding of various issues related to the rulers of the country and tolerance of the people who had been mistreated. It is from thence, that this paper is vital in highlighting some sustainable development challenges on the present and the future facing Africa as a continent. We generally understand that Africa is the continent which is larging behind development compared to other continents. We equally acknowledge that Africa is the most endowed continent with riches but it does not utilize this strength do attain sustainable development. Hence this paper tries to respond through research on what culminates these sustainable development problems in Africa continent. This is a case study which has utilised respondents of one country to carter for the 54 countries. The first part is the introduction facet on the entire topic of sustainable development. The second part is the literature review which expounds various researches on development and sustainable development. The third part is the objectives which narrates in a broad perspective on the entire development. The fourth part is Materials and methods which narrates on generality of the methods that have been used to obtain data. This study was qualitative in nature and has used professional people ranging from bachelor's degree to doctoral degree to make this study possible. We have used questionnaire, interviews and documentation to explore this research. The total sample which was used was 150 respondents but those who actively filled the questionnaire and or were interviewed were 135. We have indulged into elite group to capture the responses. We conclude that there are several factors that emerge to be challenges to the present and future sustainable development of Africa which range from lack of leaders who have vision to develop the African countries, and similarly lack of voters who know what is the pertinence of electing competent leaders. We highlight that corruption is the biggest problem for African countries to develop and we propose that laws governing these countries must be well made and they must institutionalize each and every one to face the consequence of evils that is made and the laws must pin everyone from a normal person to presidents. We propose that laws governing elections must change to allow relatively knowledgeable people to participate in elections and in party electoral processes. We conclude that competence-based recruitment, promotion and appointment is the key to attaining sustainable development in Africa.

Keywords: Appointment; Development; Management; Nominations; Recruitment

Ref: 028/VIT/26

Spatial Analysis of Housing Inequalities and Multi-Hazard Resilience Planning in Chennai Metropolitan Region, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract
Urban centres across the Global South face the dual challenges of climate-induced hazards and deep-seated socio-spatial inequalities. While risk assessment typically evaluates vulnerability, exposure, and capacity, there is a critical gap in understanding how housing inequalities interact with overlapping hazards like urban heat and flooding. This study addresses this gap by proposing a methodology to derive quantitative risk indicators for the Chennai Metropolitan Region (CMR), a rapidly urbanizing area characterized by the loss of ecological buffers and uneven housing conditions. The housing vulnerability assessment in the study is developed using census-based indicators. These housing-specific metrics are integrated with socio-economic indicators, such as dependency ratio and literacy, to create a comprehensive assessment of how inequalities shape differential risk patterns. This data is then spatially overlaid with hazard layers to identify clusters where structural housing inadequacies converge with high exposure to heat and flooding.

Using a GIS-based Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA), the research constructs vulnerability indices for heat and flood hazards by integrating exposure (e.g., land surface temperature, elevation), sensitivity (e.g., demographic groups), and adaptive capacity (e.g., green cover, infrastructure access). These indices are overlaid with census-based socio-economic and housing indicators to identify multi-hazard vulnerability hotspots. The findings reveal distinct spatial patterns: high heat vulnerability is prevalent in the western and southern CMR due to dense built-up areas, while flood vulnerability is concentrated in the eastern and north-eastern zones. Crucially, the results highlight a "peripheralisation of risk," where marginalized populations in peri-urban areas face compounded vulnerabilities due to structural housing inadequacies and limited adaptive capacity. The Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard™ (PIRS™) is a methodology used to evaluate how effectively a city's various statutory and policy documents address known vulnerabilities. To assess policy efficacy, the study utilizes the PIRS™ to evaluate existing statutory documents. The analysis reveals significant gaps, noting that current planning strategies often operate in silos and fail to target identified high-risk zones. By bridging spatial analysis with policy evaluation, this research proposes an Integrated Multi-hazard Resilience Planning Framework that emphasizes risk-sensitive land use, blue-green infrastructure, and targeted interventions to ensure more equitable and climate-responsive urban development.

Keywords: Urban flooding, Heat stress, Housing inequality, Multi-hazard Vulnerability, Resilience Scorecard, Climate resilience.

Ref: 029/VIT/26

Forecasting Regional Economic Effects of the Bien Hoa–Vung Tau Expressway

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Abstract:
This study evaluates the economic impacts of the Bien Hoa - Vung Tau Expressway using an integrated framework that combines accessibility analysis, regional interaction modeling, industrial development potential assessment, economic corridor analysis, and GRDP forecasting. The results show that improved transport connectivity enhances regional accessibility and strengthens interregional economic linkages, particularly along key corridors. Bien Hoa and Long Thanh emerge as the main beneficiaries, while Phu My maintains its role as a logistics and industrial hub, and Vung Tau benefits from improved connections to upstream economic centers. Overall, the findings suggest that the expressway contributes to stronger regional integration, supports industrial concentration, and improves the efficiency of logistics networks, although the magnitude of impacts remains sensitive to modeling assumptions.

Keywords: Transport infrastructure; Regional economic impact; Accessibility analysis

Ref: 030/VIT/26

Cluster-Guided Interpretable Ensemble Learning for Operational-State Prediction in Wastewater Treatment Using Online Sensor Data

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Abstract

Reliable monitoring of wastewater treatment plants requires predictive models that can convert multivariate online sensor streams into operationally meaningful information. However, wastewater process data are typically nonlinear, weakly labeled, and strongly affected by hydraulic, aeration, and thermal variability, which limits the direct use of conventional supervised learning. This study proposes a cluster-guided interpretable ensemble-learning framework for operational-state prediction in wastewater treatment using online sensor data from the Tilburg wastewater treatment plant in the Netherlands. The framework first applies unsupervised clustering to discover latent operating regimes from influent flow, staged aeration, temperature, dissolved oxygen, nitrate, and ammonium variables. The resulting clusters are then semantically interpreted and transformed into operational-state labels, after which Decision Tree, Random Forest, and Extreme Gradient Boosting classifiers are trained to predict plant states from online measurements. The derived labels revealed four operationally meaningful regimes, namely low-load operation, stable nitrification, oxygen-limited behavior, and shock-load/transition conditions. Comparative results showed that all models achieved strong classification performance, with accuracies of 0.960, 0.988, and 0.989 for Decision Tree, Random Forest, and Extreme Gradient Boosting, respectively. Error analysis further indicated that the remaining misclassifications were concentrated mainly near regime boundaries rather than within stable state cores. Interpretability analysis showed that hydraulic loading was the dominant predictor, followed by late-stage aeration variables and temperature, which is consistent with the underlying mechanisms of oxygen transfer and nitrification stability. These findings demonstrate that cluster-guided label construction combined with interpretable ensemble learning provides an effective and practically relevant pathway for transforming weakly structured wastewater sensor data into robust operational-state knowledge for real-time monitoring and decision support.

Keywords: wastewater treatment; operational-state prediction; online sensor data; cluster-guided learning; interpretable ensemble learning; real-time monitoring

Ref: 031/VIT/26

Risk of giving government health care staff permission to work other remunerative work

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Abstract
Department of Health employees are not allowed to work privately without permission. Not only Department of Health, but government employees are also not allowed to perform remunerative work outside the public service. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) then implemented a control strategy (policy) for public servants to perform other remunerative work outside the Public Service. This policy is known as the ORWOPS policy which authorizes or gives permission to DPSA employees to work part time. This paper discusses the permission given to government medical staff, the doctors and nurses who work or desire to work part time. This study found that there is a significant shortage in government hospitals which might be the cause for negligent cases that are costing the Department of Health exorbitant amount of money through litigation. Some employees are abusing this permission, once the permission is obtained, they start neglecting their permanent jobs getting too tired to go to work or get to work and be on a go slow because there was no rest in between the jobs. This paper seeks to recommend limitations in ORWOPS permission; to exclude medical staff. The permission already excludes Supply Chain Management (SCM) staff; on a separate DPSA (2024) policy on conducting business with an organ of state, SCM staff are not permitted to own or conduct businesses, because they work with procurement. Recommended in this paper also, is equipping or empowerment of government investigators, with powers to retrieve and obtain information from information barriers. A desktop study was conducted in this paper. In social science, desktop research is described as a systematic method for collecting existing secondary data to gain insight rather than collecting primary data.

Keywords: Litigation, locums, negligence, private hospital, private investigator, lifestyle audit.

Ref: 032/VIT/26

Challenges of investigating cybercrime in KZN Province: South Africa

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Abstract
Cybercrime has drastically become a major threat in KwaZulu-Natal as technology advances correspondingly, the cyber criminals become more innovative. The researchers conducted interviews in this article, and the following problems were discovered. There are numerous challenges that were established in this article. There is an enormous shortage of police investigators that are not properly trained on cybercrime especially at police station level. There is a lack of equipment and resources to investigate cybercrimes. The importance of the situation should be realised, and the endorsements of this article be practically applied to improve the SAPS procedures and cybercrime investigations in KwaZulu-Natal. There is a huge necessity for continuation of trainings and data input between all stakeholders. This article was conducted in Durban and Pietermaritzburg under the province of KwaZulu-Natal. A qualitative approach was adopted to critically analyse the techniques used to investigate cybercrime in KwaZulu-Natal. The paradigms that were deemed to be suitable were interpretivist and constructivist. The conducted interviews were restricted to SAPS District Police stations in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. Participants were interviewed. The aim of the article was to evaluate the current techniques and procedures that are used to investigate cybercrime in KwaZulu-Natal Province, if these are still effective as cybercriminals advance daily. The researchers are of the opinion to propose a model that will assist to curb and combat cybercrime in KwaZulu-Natal. The findings in this article shows that, the collaboration with other countries such as Denmark and the United Kingdom concerning cybercrime can assist in combating cybercrime, as this crime has no boundaries. Various literature reviews were referred to gather data on other writers' findings on this area of article.

Keywords: Cyber investigation, Cyber modus operandi, Cyber-attack, Cyber legislation, Cybercrime, Cybercrime Investigator

Ref: 033/VIT/26

Exploration of the fundamentals of photography as crime scene investigative tool

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Abstract
The reconstruction of the crime scene is more challenging and give inaccurate narrative to both investigators and courts in many instances. As such, photography outline clear recording in permanent basis to ensure accuracy and reliability. In this research, the non-probability purposive or judgemental sampling was designated method of choosing the prospective or targeted group of participants from the larger study population. This approach relies on the researcher's judgement to identify information rich cases or individuals with relevant experience. While judgemental sampling allows for targeted selection, it risks introducing bias and limits generalisability due to subjectivity Furthermore, it increases the relevance of the sample to the population of interest, as only individuals that fit the criteria are included in the sample. In this research, the non-probability purposive or judgemental sampling was designated method of choosing the prospective or targeted group of participants from the larger study population. This approach relies on the researcher's judgement to identify information rich cases or individuals with relevant experience. While judgemental sampling allows for targeted selection, it risks introducing bias and limits generalisability due to subjectivity. Furthermore, it increases the relevance of the sample to the population of interest, as only individuals that fit the criteria are included in the sample. While empirical data collection was collected from six (6) experts in the field of Forensic Photogrammetry in Germany and United States of America respectively. This article opted for the qualitative research design approach, based on the exploratory nature of the research question, which aimed to gain in-depth insights into participant's experiences and perceptions. Qualitative research involves studying phenomena in natural settings, focusing on meaning and interpretation. Also, the qualitative approach use common methods include interviews, focus group and thematic analysis.

Keywords: Camera Calibration, Crime Scene, Forensic Photogrammetry, Forensic Investigation, Photography and Reconstruction

Ref: 034 /VIT/ 26

Exploration of crime scene measurements photogrammetry as technology embracement

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Abstract
Traditional measurement approaches, such as tapes, laser distance meters and total stations have been widely used, yet they are often time consuming, labour intensive and susceptible to human error. While photogrammetry measurements are more accurate and appropriate for modern technological world. The purpose of this article is to emphasize the application of forensic photogrammetry in crime scene measurements as reliable tool. In this research, the non-probability purposive or judgemental sampling was designated method of choosing the prospective or targeted group of participants from the larger study population. While empirical data collection was collected from six (6) experts in the field of Forensic Photogrammetry in Germany and United States of America respectively. This article opted for the qualitative research design approach, based on the exploratory nature of the research question, which aimed to gain in-depth insights into participant's experiences and perceptions. Again, according to and qualitative research is beneficial due to its capacity to acquire data beyond the limiting objectivity imposed by scientific enquiries. Qualitative research involves studying phenomena in natural settings, focusing on meaning and interpretation. Also, the qualitative approach use common methods include interviews, focus group and thematic analysis

Keywords: Crime Scene, Crime Scene Search, Forensic Photography, Forensic photogrammetry, Measurements

Ref: 035/VIT/26

Unpacking the Scholar Transport Permit Crisis in Gauteng: Who's Really to Blame?

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Abstract
The scholar transport permit crisis in Gauteng has sparked heated debates between operators and the Department of Road and Transport. The Gauteng issue with scholar transport permits arises from a detrimental combination of protracted government licensing, regulatory non-compliance by operators, and significant financial strain. Following the transport MEC, Kedibone Diale intensified enforcement of compliance regulations; operators are facing roadblocks like permit delays that have persisted since the COVID-19 pandemic. This article seeks to investigate the complex dynamics of the situation, unpacking the roles of the MEC, operators and systemic inefficiencies in the permit process. While the government focuses on safety and accountability, operators argue that bureaucratic hurdles and inconsistent permit issuances cripple their ability to operate legally. By examining both sides of the issue, the article seeks to uncover who is truly responsible for the crisis and offers insights into potential solutions to bridge the gap between compliance demands and operational realities. The article took the thematic analysis research approach, where a non-empirical research design is no issue. This article actively used a pure literature review of previous and current information related to scholar transport. The findings of this study discovered that school transport operators face frequent changes to scholar transport permits and a lack of government support.

Keywords: Permits, Scholar Transport, Accidents, Vehicles, Children

Ref: 036/VIT/26

Exploring the investigation of motor vehicle accident crime scenes: A case study of the experience of police officials in the Tshwane Metropolitan Area

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Abstract

A vehicle accident scene may be chaotic, with several activities occurring simultaneously. Accident scenes from motor vehicle incidents are sometimes tumultuous and difficult to manage, with cars traversing and individuals entering and exiting. No two car accident scenes are identical; thus, the first measures conducted during an inquiry are crucial to the outcome of these cases. Law enforcement organisations must investigate motor vehicle accidents (MVA) to guarantee accurate recording and preserve evidence for legal proceedings. Consequently, police investigators must possess the requisite abilities, expertise, and traits to effectively manage such situations. This article aims to examine the experiences and obstacles faced by police investigators in investigating motor vehicle accidents and to provide appropriate suggestions for law enforcement authorities to handle these issues. A qualitative study methodology and purposive sample strategy were used to investigate the experiences of police investigators in the Tshwane metropolitan region. A total of 27 semi-structured interviews were done with the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD). The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the data were analysed using themes. Participant interviews indicated that police investigators encounter several problems, including insufficient resources, trauma, and inadequate competence throughout MVA investigative procedures. The paper asserts that police investigators need MVA rules for training, sufficient resources, and the implementation of enhanced MVA awareness programmes to educate communities about their responsibilities during MVA incidents.

Keywords: Crime, Detective, Investigation, Law Enforcement Agency, Motor Vehicle, Motor Vehicle Accident, Police Officer, Traffic Officer, Traffic Volume

Ref: 037/VIT/26

Bridging the gap between the public and corporate sectors in fighting corruption in South Africa

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Abstract
Crimes connected to corruption are an important topic that needs a lot of attention and knowledge from many parties. Effective collaboration among the South African Police Service (SAPS), corporate forensic investigators, and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) is essential for the effective prosecution of intricate corruption cases. Recent institutional changes, including the creation of the Investigating Directorate against Corruption (IDAC) as a permanent entity inside the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), seek to address these deficiencies by facilitating prosecution-led investigations. The article's goal is to highlight how difficult it is to handle case studies requiring cooperation between police departments, business forensic investigators, and prosecutors. You may get important insights into best practices, obstacles encountered, and tactics for enhancing coordination in corruption investigations by examining successful situations where various parties collaborated well. In addition to making a scholarly contribution, this essay will provide useful suggestions for improving the efficacy of upcoming anti-corruption initiatives. The article took the thematic analysis research approach, where a non-empirical research design is no issue. This article actively used a pure literature review of previous and current information related to scholar transport. The findings of this study indicate that they could lead to improvements in the fight against corruption.

Keywords: Public Sector, Corporate Sector, National Prosecuting Authority, Corruption and Investigation

Ref: 038/VIT/26

Assessment of Urban Growth Typologies and their impact on Green Space Dynamics and Thermal Ecological Stress: A Case of Thiruvananthapuram Region, Kerala, India

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Abstract
Rapid urban expansion in medium-sized cities is increasingly characterized by heterogeneous growth patterns that significantly alter urban ecological structures, vegetation distribution, and thermal environmental conditions. This study develops a typology-based assessment of urban sprawl to examine its influence on vegetation dynamics and thermal ecological stress within the Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) Urban Agglomeration, Kerala State, India. The methodology utilizes multi-temporal Landsat imagery (Landsat 5 TM, 8 OLI/TIRS, and 9 OLI-2/TIRS-2) covering the years 2005, 2015, and 2025. Land Use Land Cover (LULC) classification is performed using a supervised Maximum Likelihood Classifier (MLC) to identify built-up areas, vegetation, water bodies, open land, and wetlands. To quantify urban expansion patterns, the study employs the Landscape Expansion Index (LEI), which categorizes growth into three distinct typologies based on the spatial relationship between new urban patches and existing boundaries: infill, edge, and leapfrog growth. The ecological implications of these growth typologies are evaluated through two primary indices. First, green space dynamics are assessed using the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) to monitor changes in sparse and dense vegetation. Second, thermal environmental conditions are analysed by deriving Land Surface Temperature (LST) and calculating the Urban Thermal Field Variance Index (UTFVI). The UTFVI is used to classify thermal ecological stress levels ranging from "excellent" to "worst". The Urban Thermal Field Variance Index (UTFVI) is a quantitative measure used to evaluate thermal ecological conditions by analyzing the variance in land surface temperatures across an urban area. It is calculated using the formula UTFVI = (LST – LSTmean) / LSTmean, where LST represents the Land Surface Temperature derived from satellite thermal infrared bands and LSTmean is the average surface temperature of the study region. Based on the resulting values, the index categorizes ecological stress into six distinct levels: excellent (< 0), good (0–0.005), normal (0.005–0.015), bad (0.015–0.025), worse (0.025–0.04), and worst (> 0.04). These classifications allow for the creation of ecological stress maps and the identification of thermal hotspot zones, which are then correlated with urban growth typologies, such as infill, edge, and leapfrog growth, to assess the severity of environmental impact resulting from urban expansion.

Spatial overlay and zonal statistical analyses are integrated to examine the direct relationships between specific growth typologies and their environmental impacts. The results are synthesized into an output matrix that characterizes how growth types, such as edge, leapfrog, infill, and ribbon development, contribute to vegetation loss, habitat fragmentation, and the intensification of thermal hotspots. The worst ecological stress is defined by an Urban Thermal Field Variance Index (UTFVI) value exceeding 0.04, which represents the most degraded thermal environmental condition. According to the study's output matrix, several growth typologies, including Edge, Leapfrog, Infill, and Ribbon development, can all lead to a "Severe" environmental impact when they are associated with high fragmentation and high UTFVI classes. While growth patterns like Leapfrog (LEI of 0) and Edge (LEI of 0–50) are primary indicators of sprawl, the sources indicate that the "worst" stress is not exclusive to one typology; instead, it occurs when any form of expansion results in significant vegetation loss and the intensification of thermal hotspots. Thus, the severity of ecological stress is a functional outcome of how these growth types alter green space dynamics and the urban thermal field, in the system. This research provides a comprehensive spatial analytical framework for understanding the ecological consequences of urban sprawl, offering critical insights for sustainable urban planning and heat mitigation in rapidly transforming Indian cities

Keywords: Urban flooding, Heat stress, Housing inequality, Multi-hazard Vulnerability, Resilience Scorecard, Climate resilience.

Ref: 039/VIT/26

Spatio-Temporal Analysis of Urban Carbon Emissions and Scenario-Based Land Use Modeling in Kozhikode City, Keral, India

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Abstract
Cities are primary drivers of global carbon emissions, with an increasing body of research establishing a significant correlation between urban spatial structures and emission patterns. Despite this, a critical research gap persists regarding these dynamics in medium-sized cities within developing nations. This study addresses this deficit through a comprehensive analysis of Kozhikode City, India. The research employs a multi-faceted geospatial approach integrating Land Use Land Cover (LULC) analysis, carbon stock estimation, and spatial statistics. LULC transitions for the years 2005, 2015, and 2025 were mapped via satellite imagery, with corresponding carbon emissions derived from carbon pool calculations. Urban spatial patterns and autocorrelation were further quantified using Shannon's entropy, Global Moran's I, and Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA). The findings reveal a substantial expansion in built-up areas, which rose from 34% to 52% during the study period, accompanied by a significant increase in carbon emissions from 3.12 to 5.09 million tonnes. Spatial analysis indicates that emissions are significantly clustered (Moran's $I = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$), with hotspots predominantly localized in the central and western sectors of the city. Predictive scenario modelling suggests that under current growth trends, emissions could escalate to approximately 8.16 million tonnes by 2040.

The 2040 scenario modeling was conducted by integrating geospatial tools with scenario-based land use modeling to project future urban carbon trajectories. The methodology utilized Land Use Land Cover (LULC) data from 2005, 2015, and 2025 generated through satellite imagery, to establish growth trends, while future carbon emission levels were estimated by calculating carbon pools associated with these land-use changes. Additionally, the study applied spatial statistical techniques, including Shannon's entropy, Global Moran's I, and Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA), to analyze spatial patterns and autocorrelation, identifying emission hotspots that inform how the city's spatial configuration will impact its projected rise to 8.16 million tons of emissions by 2040. The carbon emission hotspots in the central and western sectors of Kozhikode are primarily driven by a "marked increase" in the city's built-up area, which expanded from 34% to 52% and led to a total emission rise of 3.12 to 5.09 million tonnes. This localized concentration is a direct result of the city's urban spatial configuration, where specific Land Use Land Cover (LULC) transitions have created significant spatial clustering as identified by Global Moran's I and LISA analysis. Ultimately, the research indicates that the spatial structure of these specific urban zones fundamentally defines the city's carbon patterns, making them focal points for high-density emissions. The research study underscores the pivotal role of urban spatial configuration in shaping carbon trajectories and demonstrates the efficacy of integrating geospatial tools with scenario modelling to inform sustainable urban carbon futures.

Keywords: Urban Spatial Configuration, Carbon Emissions, Land Use Land Cover (LULC), Spatio-Temporal Analysis, Scenario-Based Land Use Model.

Ref: 040/VIT/26

Urban Liveability and its De-Linkages with Climatic Stress - The Case of Degradation of Urban Blue Infrastructure in Bangalore

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Abstract
Loss of urban blue infrastructure is a troubling trend for cities, particularly in rapidly urbanizing metropolitan regions that face accelerating climate risks like urban heat islands (UHI) and urban flooding. This study explores the spatial relationship between climate-related vulnerabilities and degradation of blue infrastructure in Bangalore, a rapidly urbanizing Indian city. This study performs spatial analysis using Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) in Geographic Information System (GIS) platforms to identify climate-related vulnerability zones using several spatial indicators, with a focus on urban flood risk and heat stress. It also studies the degradation of blue spaces and examines the linkages between their degradation and hazard vulnerabilities. This analysis evidences successive increase of impervious surfaces and a rapid contraction of blue infrastructure networks that historically facilitated the city's hydrological functions. A critical finding confirmed by Moran's I analysis and spatial autocorrelation is the significant spatial overlap and clustering of high flood risk zones with degradation of blue infrastructure patches, which scientifically establishes the implications of destruction of wetlands with increasing flood vulnerability. The study indicates that the sub-region of Bellandur Lake is of high criticality and notices that urban hotspots have emerged as points of intersection between stress due to climate and structural degradation around the lake. This study concludes with certain thoughts on an actionable nature-based solutions using urban blue into smart enabling frameworks, and to call for action to build resilient urban environments with a focus on blue infrastructure.

Keywords: Climatic Hazard Mapping; Liveability, Spatial Autocorrelation; Urban Blue Infrastructure

Ref: 041/VIT/26

Integrating Urban Carrying Capacity Assessment into Sustainable Urban Planning: A GIS-Based Framework for the Rapidly Urbanizing City of Vijayawada, India

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Abstract
Rapid urbanization has intensified pressure on environmental resources, posing significant challenges for sustainable urban development. Conventional urban planning approaches often prioritize infrastructure expansion and land development without adequately considering the ecological limits of natural resource systems. This study proposes an integrated framework for assessing Urban Carrying Capacity (UCC) using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and statistical analysis to evaluate the relationship between urban development sectors and environmental resource constraints. The framework integrates spatial analysis with regression modelling to quantify how key urban development factors—including population growth, residential expansion, transportation infrastructure, and economic activities—contribute to pressure on natural resources. The methodology is applied to the rapidly growing city of Vijayawada, which has experienced significant urban expansion due to economic growth and regional development initiatives. Results reveal that population growth and residential land-use expansion are the dominant drivers of resource demand, while transportation infrastructure and commercial activities further intensify environmental pressures. Spatial analysis highlights significant variation in carrying capacity across the urban landscape, with densely developed areas approaching critical resource thresholds. The study demonstrates the potential of integrating GIS-based carrying capacity analysis into urban planning processes to support evidence-based decision-making. The proposed framework offers a practical tool for planners and policymakers seeking to align urban development strategies with ecological sustainability and contributes to global efforts toward sustainable and resilient urban systems.

Keywords: Development Density, Environmental Sustainability, Sustainable Urban Planning , Urban Carrying Capacity, Urban Resource Management

Ref: 042/VIT/26

International trade and the fight against drugs

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Abstract
A detailed examination of such a topic will be based on a fundamental problem, which will serve as a guiding principle in the presentation of the ideas underpinning the approach. In this case, it concerns the question of the links between international trade and the fight against drugs. In other words, how do the standards or rules of the GATT and the WTO make it possible to fight against narcotics? For the purposes of this research, this study aims to analyze the relationship between international trade and the fight against drug trafficking through the lens of the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the GATT. It focuses particularly on tariff preference mechanisms, notably the European Union's GSP-drug regime, and the tensions they generate with the fundamental principle of non-discrimination. From this perspective, the research examines the legal framework applicable to trade preferences granted to developing countries and assesses their compatibility with the most-favored-nation clause. It also analyzes the jurisprudence of the Dispute Settlement Body, highlighting the criteria used to justify differentiated treatment between states based on their specific needs. Finally, the study highlights the economic and legal implications of these mechanisms for developing countries, particularly in Africa, while identifying the limitations of the multilateral trading system in the face of non-trade issues such as the fight against drugs. It therefore proposes a reflection on possible ways to improve the effectiveness of public policies and respect for the rules of international trade. Our approach will be ordered with a few exceptions around the use of the analytical and exegetical but also comparative method. It is understood as the analysis, interpretation and explanation of the rules of law, particularly those contained in the various legal texts of the GATT and the WTO. As for the expected results, the GSP resulted in a questioning of the MFN clause of the WTO system, in particular of equal treatment between countries in the same development category, and operates positive discrimination in favor of developing countries in contradiction with the WTO principle of non-discrimination. This contradiction will subsequently be illustrated by the SGP-drugs case law. This considers that discrimination between developing countries could be accepted, even if it is on the basis of previously defined objective criteria. It provides, for the first time, a legal basis for the accumulation of trade preferences that are both unilateral and discriminatory. The latter is reflected in the selective nature of the EU's GSP on drugs (Section I) and in a haphazard application of the principle of non-discrimination (Section II).

Keywords: Appellate Body, GATT, GSP- drugs, Special Group, WTO.

Ref: 043/VIT/26

Digital Governance and Transparency: Leveraging E-Government Systems to Combat Corruption in South Africa

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Abstract
The objective of the present study is to identify methods how the concept of digital governance and transparency could be applied using e-governance tools to tackle corruption in South Africa. This study is based on the theory that digital governance will bring about increased accountability by reducing discretion, traceability, and improved accessibility to government records and data. By employing a structured review method, the current study examines the recent scientific literature dealing with such themes as e-governance, open data, digital accountability, e-procurement, anti-corruption measures, etc., focusing on their implications for South Africa and other African countries. As the results show, digital governance will contribute significantly to enhancing the level of transparency owing to increased visibility, standardization, and openness of the entire process. In addition, digital governance will make corrupt practices impossible due to limited contact between officials and citizens, along with increasing control over delivery and procurement processes. However, as seen from the paper's results, the above-stated benefits require satisfaction of several conditions, including institutional capability, interactivity of the platform, enforcement measures, and provision of necessary data for public use. Digital governance is indeed an effective strategy in tackling corruption in South Africa. Still, it needs to go hand in hand with other reforms.

Keywords: digital governance, e-governance, anti-corruption, open data

Ref: 044/VIT/26

Sustainable Best Practices on Suitable Information Retrieval and Presentations Systems: Cases in Africa, Middle East, Asia and Europe

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Abstract
A widely known and recognized saying is that “Information is Power”. That is because a person with the right information can go straight to a specific destination while the person without any information could be wondering around wasting time and could even get lost. Wasting time and/or getting lost can definitely be regarded as counterproductive and a detriment to sustainable development which is a desirable goal of any country especially developing countries. While the advent of computing and information systems assisted developed countries in providing relevant information to their citizens, the under-developed countries are missing such opportunity. Developing countries varies on their prospects along the spectrum. Countries in Asia seems to be higher than countries in Africa in the utilization of information systems for the provision of relevant information to their citizens which could lead to further development. This study therefore studies the application and the utilization of information retrieval and presentation systems for the provision of relevant information so as to reduce wastage of time and efforts and lack of orderliness etc. We began by looking at how some societies in rural areas in less developed countries seek information such as directions. We then move into how some rapidly developed and developing cities and countries such as Rome in Italy (Europe), Abu Dhabi in United Arab Emirates (Middle East), Bangkok in Thailand (Asia) and in Johannesburg in South Africa retrieve and present relevant information. This could enable one to see if there are lessons that other African and less developed countries can learn in the application and the utilization of information systems for the provision of relevant information towards sustainable development. And given that computer programming serves as backbone for developing these information retrieval and presentation systems, we demonstrate that if without formal knowledge in programming, one can even utilize free-to-use google AI to develop computer program serving as backbone for these information retrieval and presentation systems, the developing countries have little or no excuse anymore. The road is then clear for developing countries to actively learn from more developed countries and strive towards sustainable development. This is because as the people who have the power to act learn and hence try new practices, these efforts could continue and get the positive changes anchored in the various organization’s corporate and societal culture towards sustainable development.

Keywords: Information retrieval, Information presentation, Information systems development, Organizational and societal learning, Sustainable development

Ref: 046/VIT/26

Assessment of Gen Z Customer Experience Preferences and Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence for Improving Financial Services Experience in the Context of the Georgian Market

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Abstract
Over the past decade, the global economy has increasingly shifted from a production and service-based model toward an experience driven economy, in which customer perception, emotional engagement and the quality of interactions play a decisive role in organizational competitiveness. At the same time, the rapid development of digital technologies and social platforms has significantly increased customers' influence over brand image and corporate reputation. In this context, Customer Experience (CX) has become a strategic priority for organizations seeking sustainable growth and differentiation. As products and services become more standardized and easier to replicate, competitive advantage increasingly depends on the ability of firms to design and manage meaningful, consistent, and customer-cantered experiences.

This paper examines Generation Z's preferences in customer experience and evaluates perceptions of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool for improving financial services experience in Georgia. The study is based on the premise that Generation Z, as the first fully digital-native generation, has distinct expectations toward service providers, particularly in terms of speed, simplicity, personalization, authenticity, omnichannel consistency and emotional relevance. However, despite their familiarity with technology, Gen Z consumers also demonstrate heightened sensitivity to trust, security and the preservation of human interaction, especially in the financial services sector.

The paper discusses the importance of CX, the complexity of its management and the specific characteristics of Generation Z as an emerging and influential consumer group. Empirically, the study applies a quantitative research design to investigate the attitudes of Gen Z consumers toward current financial service experiences and the prospective role of AI in Georgia. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social media and university student networks. A total of 225 respondents participated in the study, with a reported margin of error of 6.54%. The survey instrument included four main dimensions: demographic characteristics, satisfaction with existing customer experience in the financial sector, attitudes toward AI integration in customer experience and expectations regarding AI's impact on six emotional dimensions of CX.

The findings reveal that respondents report the highest satisfaction with the simplicity of using financial services, while the lowest evaluations relate to customer understanding, customer knowledge and trust. These results suggest that financial institutions perform relatively well in delivering functional convenience but remain less effective in providing emotionally intelligent and individualized experiences. The study further shows that although a substantial proportion of respondents express a certain degree of trust in existing AI-based tools, security concerns remain significant. In addition, only a limited share of participants believe that AI will definitively improve customer experience, while a considerable number remain uncertain or sceptical. The strongest expectations associated with AI concern improved speed, ease of service use, consistency across channels and better identification of customer needs. By contrast, respondents are less convinced that AI can enhance empathy, emotional understanding, or the human dimensions of service delivery. Notably, most respondents indicate that AI-based virtual assistants are acceptable only when access to a human representative remains available.

The study concludes that a meaningful gap exists between Generation Z's expectations and the customer experience currently offered in Georgia's financial sector. Although this generation is open to technological innovation, its acceptance of AI is conditional upon trust, transparency, security, and the continued availability of human touchpoints. Accordingly, AI should be viewed not as a substitute for human interaction, but as a complementary tool that can enhance efficiency, personalization, and responsiveness. The findings offer practical implications for financial institutions seeking to develop more relevant and future-oriented CX strategies for Generation Z.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Customer Experience; Customer Preferences; Financial Services; Generation Z.

Ref: 047/VIT/26

Beyond Adoption: Direct Effects of Behavioral Beliefs and Innovation Alignment on Continuance Intentions in Electric Mobility - Evidence from Vietnam

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Abstract
Although substantial research has examined the adoption of electric motorcycles in both international and Vietnamese contexts, the post-adoption phase has received limited scholarly attention, particularly regarding the mechanisms that influence continued purchase and recommendation intention among existing users. To address this gap, the present study investigates the factors that shape the post-purchase behavior of electric motorcycle users in Vietnam. The research model evaluates the effects of behavioral beliefs, control beliefs, and innovation attachment on user satisfaction and subsequent behavioral intentions. Data were collected from 316 electric motorcycle owners and analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0. The findings reveal significant interaction effects among perceived innovation, satisfaction, and continued purchase behavior, reinforced by driving experience a key indicator of actual product performance in real world conditions. Importantly, the study advances a new conceptual perspective by demonstrating a direct link between behavioral beliefs and continued purchase intention, diverging from traditional frameworks. This research provides essential insights for policymakers, strategic planners, and manufacturers to design effective customer retention strategies and cultivate long-term engagement with electric motorcycles in Vietnam.

Keywords: Electric Motorcycles, Post-Adoption Behavior, Continued Purchase Intention, Innovation Alignment, Driving Experience.

Ref: 048/VIT/26

Justice Deferred: Bridging the Gap Between Developmental Aspirations and Resource Realities in South Africa's Rape and Sexual Offences

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Abstract
South Africa is frequently cited as possessing one of the most progressive legal frameworks for addressing sexual violence globally, anchored by the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007. The Act introduced an expansive, survivor-centred approach, strengthened procedural protections, and aligned domestic law with international human rights standards. Yet, more than three decades into constitutional democracy, South Africa continues to report among the highest rates of rape worldwide, accompanied by persistently low investigation, prosecution, and conviction outcomes. This contradiction exposes a profound legislative paradox: a state that excels in normative design but struggles to translate legal promise into lived justice. This article argues that this paradox is best understood as a condition of implementation paralysis, a systemic failure in which strong legislation and policy intent are rendered ineffective by deficiencies in material resources, institutional capacity, and operational logistics. In this context, justice is not denied through overt legal exclusion but deferred through delay, attrition, distance, and administrative decay. For survivors of sexual violence, justice deferred often becomes justice denied.

The analysis situates South Africa's sexual offences landscape within its broader developmental commitments, as articulated in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Together, these frameworks commit the state to gender equality, access to justice, strong institutions, and the protection of human dignity. The NDP 2030 explicitly acknowledges that fear of crime particularly sexual violence, denies women and girls substantive equality and constrains social development. Similarly, SDG 5 calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, while SDG 16 emphasises access to justice and institutional effectiveness. AU Agenda 2063 reinforces these commitments by envisioning modern, capable, and people-centred justice systems across the continent.

Despite this alignment between constitutional values and developmental aspirations, the operational realities of South Africa's criminal justice system (SACJS) remain misaligned with these goals. Using a transdisciplinary analytical framework informed by Resource Attrition Theory and Knowledge Management, this article examines the sexual offences criminal justice value chain through three critical nodes: the forensic value chain, the infrastructure of survivor care, and the human-capital pipeline within the South African Police Service (SAPS) Detective Service.

First, the forensic value chain emerges as the most decisive logistical constraint. Although official reports point to reductions in historic DNA backlogs, the processing of newly collected forensic kits remains subject to significant delay. Centralised forensic laboratories, long transport routes from rural areas, and fragile chain-of-custody systems undermine the integrity and timeliness of evidence. Scientific certainty, which should be the strongest ally of prosecution, is frequently lost to administrative inertia. The result is a system in which cases collapse not because evidence does not exist, but because it arrives too late to sustain legal action. This reality stands in direct contradiction to the SDG 16 requirement of timely access to justice and the AU's vision of modernised institutions.

Second, the infrastructure of survivor care most visibly represented by Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs), illustrates the uneven geography of justice. While TCCs are internationally recognised as a best-practice model for integrated medico-legal support, their concentration in urban centres creates a stark rural-urban divide. Survivors in remote or under-resourced provinces often face prohibitive travel distances to access forensic examinations, counselling, and prosecutorial support. Geography thus becomes a determinant of justice outcomes, producing what may be described as a "postcode lottery" of protection. This spatial inequality undermines the NDP 2030 vision of safe communities for all and violates the SDG commitment to "leave no one behind." Third, this study identifies a deepening human-capital crisis within the SAPS Detective Service, particularly in Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences units. High caseloads, insufficient psychosocial support, fiscal consolidation, and weak post-training competency frameworks have contributed to the attrition of experienced investigators. As institutional knowledge exists the system, newer recruits are left to manage complex sexual offence dockets without adequate mentorship or support. Coupled with weak knowledge-management systems, this attrition produces a cycle in which investigative intelligence is repeatedly lost, relearned, and lost again. The state, in effect, learns to forget. This erosion of investigative capacity directly weakens institutional legitimacy and public trust, an outcome that further suppresses reporting and entrenches impunity.

Drawing on empirical data from Statistics South Africa, SAPS, and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), alongside a critical review of contemporary scholarship, the article demonstrates that South Africa's persistent failure to reduce sexual violence does not stem from a lack of legislative ambition or constitutional commitment. Rather, it reflects a chronic neglect of the logistics of justice: the material, human, and technological systems required to make rights real in practice. This article concludes that until South Africa invests decisively in decentralised forensic capacity, embeds durable knowledge-management systems within law enforcement, and ensures geographically equitable access to survivor-centred care, its constitutional promise of dignity, equality, and security will remain aspirational rather than operational. Justice deferred, in this sense, is not an accidental outcome; it is the predictable consequence of a state that prioritises the symbolism of law over the science of implementation.

Keywords: State Capacity, Resource Allocation, NDP 2030, AU 2063, SDGs, Sexual Offences, South Africa

Ref: 049/VIT/26

Effect of the Absence of Gender Mainstreaming on the Persistence of Gender Blindness

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Abstract

Gender mainstreaming has been widely adopted as a global strategy for achieving gender equality since its formalisation at the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. Originating from feminist critiques of development and governance, it has evolved from a marginal concern into an institutionalised framework embedded within international organisations, national governments, and local governance systems. Despite its institutionalisation within policy frameworks, particularly in countries such as South Africa with progressive constitutional and legislative commitments to equality, its implementation remains uneven and frequently ineffective. This article advances a theoretical analysis of the relationship between the absence or inadequate application of gender mainstreaming and the persistence of gender blindness. The article interrogates the paradox between progressive gender policies and persistent gender inequalities in practice. It highlights how bureaucratic inertia, limited capacity, fragmented accountability, and the depoliticisation of gender discourse contribute to ineffective mainstreaming and, consequently, gender-blind outcomes. Gender mainstreaming has evolved from a feminist critique into a global governance strategy. Despite its achievements, gender mainstreaming faces significant challenges, including conceptual ambiguity, technocratic implementation, and institutional resistance. The persistence of gender blindness in the presence of gender mainstreaming is not a paradox, but a reflection of the limits of technocratic approaches to deeply political problems. Achieving substantive gender equality requires moving beyond procedural compliance toward a transformative vision of governance—one that recognises gender as central to the organisation of social, economic, and political life. In the South African context, this analysis helps to explain the persistent gap between progressive constitutional and policy frameworks and the continued reality of gender inequality. Despite robust legal commitments and institutional mechanisms, gender mainstreaming has often been implemented in a fragmented, technocratic, and symbolic manner. As a result, gender blindness remains embedded within policy design, implementation, and evaluation, contributing to enduring disparities in areas such as economic participation, access to services, and exposure to gender-based violence. Addressing gender blindness requires more than the formal adoption of gender mainstreaming frameworks. It necessitates a fundamental transformation of institutional logics, epistemic practices, and power relations. Gender mainstreaming must be re-politicised, re-embedded within core governance processes, and reoriented toward intersectional and context-sensitive analysis. Without such transformation, mainstreaming risks functioning as a legitimising discourse that obscures, rather than challenges, inequality.

Keywords: Gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender blindness, gender neutrality

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A Passive Design Benchmarking Framework for Warm-Humid Residential Ratings

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Abstract: This study proposes a benchmark for a Passive Design Rating System (PDRS) applicable to residential structures in warm-humid climates, addressing a critical gap as global green building rating systems lack climate-specific benchmarks for passive design, leading to suboptimal performance and over-reliance on mechanical cooling. The objective of this research is to develop and validate a climate-specific PDRS framework for residential buildings. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining a three-round Delphi survey with a multidisciplinary expert panel (n=25) to establish consensus, followed by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to identify latent design dimensions and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the robustness of consensus across professional groups. Key quantitative results show the Delphi process achieved a strong final consensus (Kendall's W = 0.89). PCA distilled the benchmark variables into two principal components, collectively explaining 85.23% of the total variance. The validated PDRS provides a tailored, performance-based tool to guide climate-responsive design and policy in warm-humid regions.

Keywords: ANOVA, Climate-Responsive Architecture, Delphi Method, PCA, Warm-Humid Climates,

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Fengshui of Sustainable land use planning

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Abstract:

Feng Shui is a traditional spatial philosophy that emphasizes the creation of living environments in harmony with natural systems. It may be understood as a framework for evaluating spatial configurations, orientations, and environmental relationships in connection with the flow of energy (qi). Although Feng Shui originated in ancient East Asian traditions, its underlying principles—such as balance, environmental adaptation, and human–nature integration—share conceptual similarities with contemporary sustainable planning approaches. In the context of sustainable land-use planning, Feng Shui principles may provide alternative perspectives for improving spatial quality, environmental integration, functional efficiency, and ultimately human well-being.

This study investigates the potential application of Feng Shui principles in sustainable land-use planning at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Natural Resources and Environment (HCMUNRE), with particular attention to spatial organization and environmental harmony. The research focuses on the Bagua map, a commonly used Feng Shui analytical framework that divides space into directional sectors associated with different functional and symbolic attributes. In this study, the Bagua framework is explored as a conceptual tool for evaluating land-use organization, zoning arrangements, circulation patterns, and orientation strategies within the planning context of the HCMUNRE site in Nha Be District, Ho Chi Minh City.

The study adopts a conceptual and qualitative approach by comparing Feng Shui principles with selected concepts in sustainable planning, including environmental responsiveness, spatial efficiency, ecological balance, and user well-being. Through spatial analysis of the HCMUNRE site, the research examines how the arrangement of entrances, circulation systems, open spaces, and building orientation may influence perceived environmental harmony and functionality. Particular emphasis is placed on identifying how directional analysis within the Bagua framework could support land-use allocation and design decision-making.

The findings suggest that Feng Shui principles may serve as a complementary heuristic framework in sustainable land-use planning rather than a deterministic or purely metaphysical system. The Bagua map demonstrates potential value as a structured interpretive tool for assessing spatial relationships and orientation strategies. For the HCMUNRE site, the study proposes relocating the primary entrance from the South sector toward the West or West-Northwest sector in order to improve spatial balance and alignment according to Feng Shui interpretation. This recommendation is presented as a conceptual design consideration rather than an empirically verified planning solution.

The study further argues that Feng Shui may contribute to planning discourse by encouraging greater attention to contextual adaptation, environmental harmony, and human-centered spatial experience. Nevertheless, the research acknowledges that Feng Shui should be applied cautiously and integrated with contemporary scientific planning methodologies, environmental assessment tools, and regulatory frameworks. There is no universal formula for Feng Shui application because planning outcomes depend on multiple variables, including physical site conditions, socio-cultural context, user characteristics, and temporal factors.

This paper contributes to the growing discussion on integrating traditional knowledge systems into modern sustainable planning practices. It highlights the possibility of bridging cultural-spatial philosophies with contemporary planning approaches in order to enrich urban and environmental design thinking. Future research may further explore empirical validation methods and the integration of Feng Shui principles with quantitative assessment frameworks, including ESG-based land-use indicators, spatial analytics, and sustainability evaluation models. Such interdisciplinary integration may provide new opportunities for combining traditional environmental wisdom with modern land-use planning strategies in rapidly urbanizing regions.

Keywords: Feng Shui, Bagua map, Sustainable land use, Land use planning, Sustainable land planning.

Ref: 052/VIT/26

From Rescue to Prosecution: A Sustainable Development Perspective on Anti-Trafficking Governance in Rustenburg, South Africa

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Abstract
This study investigates South Africa's commitment to addressing human trafficking through the lens of sustainable development, focusing on the specialised rescue-to-prosecution pipeline. Human trafficking is a critical transnational crime that undermines economic stability and social equity, necessitating a multidisciplinary governance response. This research aims to analyse the integration of policing, health, and migration frameworks in combating trafficking, specifically within the localised context of Rustenburg, South Africa. By examining these intersecting sectors, the study provides a comprehensive view of how institutional governance can be strengthened to support long-term sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly those related to peace, justice, and reduced inequalities. This study employed a qualitative research design, utilising semi-structured interviews with 30 key informants. These participants represented a cross-section of essential state institutions, including the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), and the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). To address the health component of the governance framework, the methodology incorporated perspectives on victim support services and health-related interventions during the rescue phase. This localised focus on Rustenburg allowed for a detailed exploration of how regional migration patterns, driven by the area's mining industry and economic profile, influence trafficking dynamics and the subsequent state response.
Findings indicate that while South Africa has made significant progress in aligning its domestic laws with international human rights standards, critical gaps remain in the operational synergy between policing and health services. The results show that the rescue phase is often disconnected from the long-term "prosecution" phase due to inadequate coordination between migration officials and social health practitioners. In Rustenburg, the study found that porous border management and high migration flows complicate the identification of victims, leading to policy bottlenecks that hinder successful legal outcomes. However, the data also highlights successful collaborative efforts where multidisciplinary task teams effectively integrated health screenings with criminal investigations, offering a blueprint for more resilient institutional governance.

In conclusion, the study argues that a sustainable development perspective is vital for evolving South Africa's anti-trafficking strategy. It asserts that effective governance must move beyond a purely criminal justice approach to incorporate robust migration policies and health-centric victim protections. By identifying the specific challenges faced in Rustenburg, this research contributes to the global discourse on localised governance and multidisciplinary collaboration. It ultimately reinforces the need for a unified strategy that bridges the gap between rescue and prosecution, thereby strengthening the collective effort to achieve sustainable social justice and protect human rights across the continent.

Keywords: Anti-Trafficking Governance; Health Policy; Migration; Policing; Rustenburg

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Influences of the Built Environment on A Neighbourhood's Walkability: Towards an Inclusive Planning Framework for Residential Neighbourhoods in Chennai

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Abstract
Due to rapid urbanization which Leeds increased focus on automobile-oriented planning made many urban neighbourhoods reduce the walkability. This not only affects mobility patterns but also the social interaction and overall wellbeing of communities. Walkable environments are essential elements of sustainable and liveable neighborhoods as they promote physical activity, social interactions and sustainable environments. In the context of rapidly growing Indian cities, neighbourhood level studies examining the relationship between built environment characteristics and walkability remain limited.

This study aims to assess neighbourhood walkability and explore the influence of built environment attributes on pedestrian and community wellbeing. The study adopts a cross-sectional approach which integrated spatial analysis, field-based street audits, and built environment assessment indicators. Two residential neighbourhoods in Chennai were selected for the study Shenoy Nagar (ward 101) and Indira Nagar (ward 173). Both areas are predominantly residential in character; their surrounding land use contexts differ. Shenoy Nagar is located within a zone influenced by commercial and mixed-use activities, whereas Indira Nagar is surrounded by institutional developments such as educational campuses and IT parks. GIS techniques were used to analyze land use patterns, road network connectivity, accessibility to public amenities, spatial distribution of open spaces. In addition, a detailed road and pedestrian infrastructure inventory was conducted to evaluate sidewalk conditions, pedestrian facilities, street furniture, and accessibility features.

Initial findings indicate that neighbourhood surrounded by commercial and mixed land use has better street connectivity and accessible public amenities demonstrate higher walking potential. On other hand inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, discontinuous sidewalks, and encroachments drastically reduce pedestrian comfort and safety. The study highlights the importance of integrating built environment indicators with pedestrian oriented planning to enhance neighbourhood walkability and improve community wellbeing.

The findings contribute to the development of a neighbourhood level walkability assessment framework that can support urban planners and policy makers in developing pedestrian friendly and liveable urban neighbourhoods in Indian cities.

Keywords: Walkability, Built Environment, Pedestrian Infrastructure, Pedestrian Comfort, Community Wellbeing

Ref: 054/VIT/26

Community Policing Forums and Crime Prevention: A Multidisciplinary Case Study of Pretoria Central, South Africa

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Abstract
The persistence of heinous crime in South Africa's major urban centres remains one of the most significant barriers to achieving long-term social stability and economic resilience. Large metropolitan hubs such as Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban consistently contribute to high national crime statistics each financial year, creating an environment of insecurity that hinders sustainable development. This study specifically investigates the Pretoria Central Police Station precinct, the administrative heart of South Africa, which continues to experience high volumes across various crime categories. These include contact crimes, sexual offences, trio crimes (carjacking, residential and business robbery), aggravated robbery, and property-related crimes. The prevalence of these offences has far-reaching consequences, negatively affecting the daily lives of citizens and the broader national economy. Fear of crime discourages local residents and tourists from visiting the city or fully participating in economic activities. In many instances, visitors limit their movement, rely heavily on private security, or remain confined to their means of transport, thereby reducing anticipated expenditure and limiting their contribution to the city's economy. To address these challenges, this study explores the effectiveness of Community Policing Forums (CPFs) as a collaborative mechanism for crime prevention. Adopting a qualitative research approach, the study conducted in-depth interviews with 30 key informants. This sample was comprised of the station commander, deputy station commander, the South African Police Service (SAPS) CPF coordinator, and 27 additional police management officials specifically responsible for crime prevention and community safety strategies. The use of a qualitative design allowed for a nuanced understanding of the institutional and operational realities of community policing within a high-crime urban environment. The findings reveal a significant gap between statutory policy and practical implementation. While station management clearly recognises the statutory requirement to establish CPFs and acknowledges their intended role in crime prevention, their actual effectiveness is severely limited. Key challenges identified include an inadequate number of functional CPFs within the station's jurisdiction and a significant lack of sustained institutional support. These obstacles indicate a lack of proactive attention, monitoring, and evaluation, which ultimately undermines the effectiveness of CPFs as a viable crime-prevention mechanism. The study concludes that without robust institutional backing and consistent evaluation, CPFs cannot fulfil their role in mitigating the pervasive fear of crime that currently stifles economic participation and tourism in the capital. To align with sustainable development goals, the study recommends a multidisciplinary intervention strategy that prioritises the revitalisation of these forums through better resource allocation and active community-police partnerships.

Keywords: Community Policing Forum; Crime; Crime Prevention; Multidisciplinary Approach; South African Police Service

Ref: 055/VIT/26

An empirical study on the needs of the financial labor market and the improvement of academic programs

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Abstract
Universities, through the study programs they offer, play a key role in preparing students for the labor market. Digital transformation and globalization have significantly affected the nature of professions, therefore universities must constantly review their curricula. In this way, graduates will acquire the competencies required by employers. The labor market is in continuous change, including not only academic knowledge but also interpersonal, digital and analytical skills. The banking, non-banking and insurance sectors represent the most dynamic area of the economy. The financial market in Albania plays a key role in the employment of graduates in economics, finance-accounting, technology, etc. Through lending, the banking, non-banking and insurance sectors stimulate economic activity and create new jobs. At the same time, financial stability increases the confidence of foreign investors, attracting projects that rely on the local workforce. The financial sector acts as a powerful engine for job creation and improving the professional skills of employees.

Alumni employed in these sectors face new challenges such as communication, digital skills and flexibility.
This study aims to assess the compatibility of the competencies of graduates of the Faculty of Economics, at the University of Korcë, Albania, with the current demands of the financial labor market, with the aim of improving the professional preparation of graduates. The study is based on a questionnaire conducted with branch managers and alumni employed in banking, non-banking and insurance companies operating in the Korcë region. 164 questionnaires were prepared and distributed, 34 for branch managers and 128 for alumni of the Faculty of Economics, University of Korcë. The questionnaires contained closed questions with multiple answer alternatives and open questions, to collect suggestions from the respondents. The data analysis, which was carried out using the Excel application and the EView statistical program, showed that the continuous improvement of study programs has a direct positive impact on the preparation of students for the labor market. The most important skills required by branch managers were financial and analytical, along with technological and digital skills. In addition to these basic competencies, communication skills and teamwork play a vital role in academic development and professional success. The study recommends improving academic curricula, including practical training and information technology modules, as well as strengthening cooperation with financial and labor market actors. Partnerships with banks, insurance companies and non-banking institutions will enrich the curriculum and offer open lectures by experts in the field as well as internship opportunities for students.

Keywords: competencies of graduates, financial sector, practical knowledge, soft skills, skill gap, technological and digital skills

Ref: 056/VIT/26

Between Dharma and Artha: A Comparative Study of Ethical and Pragmatic Governance in Sanskrit Literature

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Abstract
Profound reflection on statecraft, ethics and administration that influenced classical Indian political thinking are preserved in Sanskrit literature. The relationship between ethical governance and political pragmatism occupies a central place in Sanskrit political thought. The Manusmṛti and the Artaśāstra present two significant but different conceptions of governance grounded in dharma and artha, respectively, among Sanskrit texts. While the Manusmṛti frames kingship within a moral and cosmological order, emphasising the ruler as the protector and embodiment of dharma, the Artaśāstra portrays governance as a practical science rooted in economic strength, political strategy and state stability. This study examines how these two texts negotiate the relationship between ethical commitments and pragmatic statecraft when formulating models of ideal governance. Using qualitative textual and conceptual analysis of primary Sanskrit sources of Manusmṛti and Artaśāstra alongside secondary sources and scholarly works, this paper comparatively analyses the political and ethical foundations of both traditions. While the teachings of Manusmṛti address this subject in a relatively limited manner, the Artaśāstra engages with governance more directly and systematically across the entire text. The study argues that although the Manusmṛti prioritizes moral legitimacy and the Artaśāstra foregrounds material prosperity and political efficiency, neither text views dharma and artha as mutually exclusive. Instead, both works recognize the necessity of balancing ethical responsibility with pragmatic governance. Furthermore, both texts instruct the ruler to employ punishment for maintaining social order, protecting the people and the wealth of the kingdom, and ensuring discipline among government officials. Through a comparative analyses of these texts this study demonstrates that ethics and political strategy are complementary dimensions of effective governors. This comparative study contributes to boarder discussions on classical Indian political thought and offers insights into the enduring relevance of governance models for contemporary debates on political leadership and ethical decision making.

Keywords: artha, Artaśāstra, dharma, Governance, Manusmṛti,

Ref: 057/VIT/26

Contraband Detection Technology in Correctional Facilities: Examination of Technologies for Screening People, Vehicles, and Correctional Environments

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Abstract
The infiltration of contraband into correctional centres remains a persistent threat to institutional safety, operational security, and the rehabilitation of offenders. In response, correctional services globally have increasingly adopted advanced technological solutions to strengthen screening and detection capabilities. This paper examines key contraband-detection technologies used in correctional environments to screen individuals, vehicles, and physical spaces. These technologies include full-body scanners, X-ray imaging systems, metal detectors, trace detection devices, surveillance systems, and emerging innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI)-driven analytics, drone detection systems, and biometric access controls. The study critically evaluates the effectiveness, operational practicality, and limitations of these technologies across different correctional contexts, with particular emphasis on their implementation within resource-constrained environments, such as those in South Africa. Furthermore, the paper explores ethical and legal considerations associated with contraband detection practices, including privacy rights, human dignity, and the treatment of inmates during security procedures. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study incorporates a comprehensive literature review and face-to-face structured interviews with correctional service unit managers, officials from the Correctional Officials Visit Section, former inmates, and security personnel who engage directly with inmates at Kgoši Mampuru II Correctional Centre and Leeuwkop Prison. By comparing international best practices with local operational realities, the study underscores the necessity of a multi-layered, contextually responsive technological framework to enhance contraband detection and overall correctional security. The study recommends that correctional services adopt an integrated, multi-tiered technological strategy that aligns advanced detection systems with the operational realities of correctional centres, particularly in resource-limited environments

Keywords: Contraband, Correctional centres, Security technology, Illicit drugs, South Africa

Ref: 058/VIT/26

Understanding Inequality of Urban Green: Applying UGDI to Prioritize Underserved Planning Districts of Bengaluru, India

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Abstract
Rapid urban expansion in contemporary metropolitan cities has intensified disparities in the distribution and access of urban green spaces (UGS), raising critical concerns about spatial equity and environmental justice. While green spaces contribute significantly to ecological balance, climate regulation, and human well-being, their uneven distribution often reflects underlying socio-economic and planning inequalities. This study, titled *"Mapping Urban Green Inequality: Applying UGDI to Prioritize Underserved Planning Districts of Bengaluru, India,"* seeks to systematically examine the spatial patterns and characteristics of UGS and identify areas that are underserved. (AK Tarafdar, 2010) The research focuses on understanding the nature and distribution of urban green spaces through three key dimensions: spatiality, landscape characteristics, and spatial access. Spatiality involves analysing the geographic distribution and density of green spaces across planning districts, highlighting patterns of concentration and scarcity. Landscape characteristics assess qualitative aspects such as size, type, vegetation cover, usability, and ecological function of green spaces. Spatial access evaluates the ease with which residents can reach and utilize these spaces, considering proximity, connectivity, and physical as well as social barriers. To address these dimensions, the study proposes the application of the Urban Green Distribution Index (UGDI) as a comprehensive analytical tool. UGDI integrates spatial metrics, accessibility indicators, and landscape attributes to generate a composite index that reflects the degree of green space equity across different urban districts. By incorporating both quantitative geospatial analysis and qualitative assessment, the index enables a nuanced understanding of how urban green resources are distributed and experienced by diverse communities.

Using a metropolitan city as a case study, the research maps the variation in UGDI scores across planning districts to identify priority areas that lack adequate green parks. The findings are expected to reveal significant disparities in access and quality of UGS, particularly in densely populated and economically disadvantaged areas. These insights will help in prioritizing interventions and guiding planners toward more equitable allocation and design of green spaces. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the discourse on urban sustainability by providing a data-driven framework for identifying and addressing green inequalities. The UGDI approach offers a practical tool for policymakers and urban planners to promote inclusive, resilient, and just urban environments by ensuring that the benefits of green spaces are accessible to all segments of society.

Keywords: Environmental Justice, Green Accessibility, Spatial Inequality, Urban Green Spaces (UGS), Urban Green Distribution Index (UGDI).

Ref: 059/VIT/26

Building a sustainable workforce: Integrating digital skills into intercultural language curricula to meet the economic needs of Ba Ria - Vung Tau region

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to investigate the gap between the daily digital usage habits of language students and the professional digital competencies required by modern multinational employers, and to propose an integrated curriculum model (ICM) to address this disparity. The study was carried out using a mixed-methods approach at Ba Ria - Vung Tau University in Vietnam. Quantitative data were gathered through a self-assessment survey of 421 students in the Faculty of Languages - International Cultures, aimed at evaluating their digital technology habits and capabilities. Concurrently, a qualitative document analysis was conducted on three foundational course syllabi to determine the current extent of digital integration in language teaching methodology. The results indicate a significant paradox: although the vast majority of students reported high levels of daily internet use, their self-assessed proficiency in higher-order professional skills, such as digital collaboration and digital content creation, was sharply lower. Furthermore, the syllabi analysis reveals a fragmented approach to education, in which technology is either isolated as a teaching tool or entirely absent from core communication courses. The significance of these findings lies in their highlighting the inadequacy of relying solely on students' innate social technology skills to prepare them for professional careers. By mapping these deficits against a global digital literacy framework, the study successfully proposes a cross-curricular integration model that embeds specific digital tasks into existing language modules. This approach creates a simulated learning environment where students confront real-world digital challenges identical to those encountered in foreign direct investment enterprises. This ensures the sustainability of human capital by enhancing flexibility and adaptability, equipping graduates to meet the demands of the globalized digital economy.

Keywords: Ba Ria – Vung Tau University, Cross-cultural collaboration, Digital literacy, Sustainable development, UNESCO Framework

Ref: 060/VIT/26

Low Reporting Rates and Investigation Delays: Understanding Why Cybercrime Thrives Despite the Cybercrimes Act

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Abstract
Cybercrime has emerged as one of the most significant threats to South Africa's economy, businesses, government institutions, and citizens due to the rapid expansion of digital technologies, online banking systems, social media platforms, and electronic communication networks. The increasing dependence on digital infrastructure has created opportunities for cybercriminals to exploit technological vulnerabilities through offences such as phishing, ransomware attacks, identity theft, cyber fraud, online extortion, and unlawful access to computer systems. In response to the growing prevalence of cyber-related crimes, South Africa enacted the Cybercrimes Act No. 19 of 2020, which officially came into operation on 1 December 2021. The Act was introduced to establish a comprehensive legislative framework aimed at criminalising cyber offences, regulating cybercrime investigations, facilitating the preservation and admissibility of electronic evidence, and strengthening cooperation between law enforcement agencies and service providers. Despite these legislative advancements, cybercrime continues to thrive in South Africa, raising concerns regarding the effectiveness of cybercrime enforcement and the operational readiness of institutions responsible for implementation. This study examines the reasons behind low cybercrime reporting rates and persistent investigation delays within the South African Police Service (SAPS), while analysing why cybercrime continues to flourish despite the implementation of the Cybercrimes Act. The study further explores the operational, institutional, and societal factors that undermine effective cybercrime policing and prosecution in South Africa. A qualitative literature-based approach was adopted through the analysis of scholarly literature, policy documents, legislative frameworks, and empirical studies relating to cybercrime enforcement and digital policing. The study specifically focuses on the challenges associated with cybercrime reporting, digital forensic investigations, institutional capacity, public awareness, and inter-agency collaboration. The findings reveal that SAPS continues to face significant challenges, including shortages of specialised cybercrime investigators, inadequate digital forensic infrastructure, outdated investigative technologies, insufficient technical training, and fragmented collaboration between law enforcement agencies and other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, cybercrime incidents remain significantly underreported because many victims lack awareness regarding reporting mechanisms or have limited confidence in the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate cyber offences effectively. The study also found that the transnational and technologically sophisticated nature of cybercrime further complicates investigations, particularly in relation to digital evidence collection, jurisdictional authority, and international cooperation. The study concludes that although the Cybercrimes Act provides an important legislative foundation for combating cybercrime in South Africa, its effectiveness remains constrained by implementation gaps, operational limitations, and inadequate public awareness. The study therefore recommends improved cybersecurity awareness programmes, specialised cybercrime training, advanced digital forensic capabilities, stronger public-private partnerships, and enhanced international cooperation to strengthen South Africa's cyber resilience and improve the effectiveness of cybercrime investigations and prosecutions.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Cybercrimes Act, Cybersecurity Awareness, Digital Forensics, SAPS.

Ref: 061/VIT/26

Common Ground, Distinct Voices: Comparing Japanese and Sri Lankan Folktales for a Sustainable World

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Abstract
Japanese and Sri Lankan folktales share many common features and relatable elements: a moral core which transcends cultural boundaries. Folktales, a prominent form of storytelling, promote mutual and intercultural understanding by uniting past and present, integrating diverse knowledge systems, and shaping our perception of the world and our relationships within it. They address the interconnected social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability drawing on the accumulated wisdom of traditional civilizations. This connects directly to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Climate Action (SDG13), Life on Land (SDG15), Reduced Inequalities (SDG10), Global Partnerships (SDG17), Quality Education (SDG 4) and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG16). This study examines the similarities and differences between folktales from Japan and Sri Lanka by analysing and categorising them from multiple perspectives, irrespective of genre. Several common features emerged across both traditions: Buddhist concepts such as karma and reincarnation, Buddhist philosophy, and life wisdom; mythological narratives in which gods interact with humans; and moral dimensions conveyed through characters and animals shape-shifting, with particular emphasis on filial piety, selflessness, and courage. Additionally, problem-solving wisdom, universal values derived from lived experience, harmony with nature, and sustained cooperation in the face of adversity were identified as shared commonalities. While Sri Lanka possesses a distinct body of narratives centred on the events of the Buddha's previous lives: Jataka tales, which are primarily didactic in nature and differ fundamentally from conventional folktales, Japanese folktales encompass the same elements in one genre. In conclusion, while the folktales of both countries share deeply rooted cultural elements, their social roles reflect both significant similarities and notable differences. Buddhism plays a major role in folktales of both countries, with Japan's tales further enriched by Shinto traditions, reflecting the spiritual foundations of Asian culture.
Keywords: folktales, SDGs, intercultural understanding, Buddhist values, sustainable development

Keywords: folktales, SDGs, intercultural understanding, Buddhist values, sustainable development

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The Need for Effective Debugging in Real-Life Application Development towards Satisfying Clients: Is AI the Sustainable Saviour or Villain?

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Abstract
Robust debugging of application systems has long been attributed to the development of systems that meets the needs of clients satisfactorily. Therefore, users don't expect to see errors while using systems especially real time application systems. When users experience system errors especially that can lead to loss of money or loss of life, then there is need to explore if clients' reduced trust on such systems will not reduce the degree of sustainable development brought by the use of effective applications in the society. This study therefore explores the impact of the possible reliance on the use of AI in developing and debugging application systems as well as on possible future capacities to deliver robust systems for the society which can negatively affect sustainable development if not properly addressed. We examine, analyse and discuss an ongoing informal debate on the possibility to be able to develop usable systems without knowledge of how to code, without having knowledge of programming languages such as Java, without having experience being a real software developer etc. We then discuss the concept of Vibe Coding Trap as a false promise. We also examine some simple java codes generated by google AI and critically examine the code line by line to appreciate the need for understanding the components of the code so as to be able to learn from it and be able to perform maintenance of the code. We conclude with the fact that a simple truth remains that responsibility for the systems produced still rests on the people and not on AI as AI can at best only assist developer to finish a basic task faster. The continued reliance on computing systems in different aspects of life implies that systems development needs to be approached seriously as life and death situations, as this principle led to the term software engineering that was coined so that software development can be approached with the precision of engineering designs. Therefore, since one cannot effectively maintain a system that you don't understand, continuous learning is critical and we should use codes generated by AI for learning to achieve effective maintenance towards attaining development and sustainability.

Keywords: AI, Application development, Artificial Intelligence, Information systems development, Debugging, Learning, sustainable development

Ref: 063/VIT/26

Thrift Consumer Buying Intentions: Circular Business Models in Nexus with Planned Behaviour Theory

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Abstract

In the current world scenario, shifting or switching towards the circular business economy will offer immense opportunities towards the retail fashion sector to reduce resource dependence and promote sustainable growth and responsible consumption. This article focused and examined on the circular economy and its innovation in terms of retail fashion sector and consumer behaviour towards sustainable products in emerging economies under the framework of the United Nations sustainability. This research article is towards the Planned Behavioural Theory and the Business Model Innovation theory to analyze the internal and external elements that impact on consumers buying intentions and the techniques that gear up the adoption of circular practices.

Quantitative research design was used to collect data from 559 respondents in India to assess consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion products and market preparedness for circular economy initiatives. The result analysis indicated that the attitude of consumer towards behaviour is the significant predictor of the buying intention towards the sustainable products, whereas the perceived behaviour control and subjective norms indicates the positive reflection on purchase intentions. However, this article also indicated that price sensitivity, convenience perseverance and product involvement were significant factors that affected consumers' attitudes towards sustainable purchasing behaviour. However, these variables had little effect on subjective norms.

Merely, this research article focuses on consumer centricity as key performer of circular business innovation and the logistics as an enabler in speeding up clothing reuse and circular retail transformation. The present work contributes to the existing literature by linking consumer behavioural aspects with circular business model innovation in the fashion industry. The findings provide useful theoretical and managerial implications for retailers, policymakers and sustainability practitioners working on promoting the adoption of circular economy and sustainable consumer behaviour in developing markets.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Planned Behaviour Theory, Sensitivity on Price, Perseverance on Convenience, Products Involvement.

Ref: 064/VIT/26

Impact of different Sentiments evoked by Dance on Healthy Volunteer Spectators: A study on selected Sri Lankan Mask Dances.

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of differential sentiments evoked by the mask dances in Sri Lankan Low- Country tradition on spectators' heart rate changes from baseline. Guided by the hypothesis that varying sentiments (or *Rasa, as described In Nātyashāstraya of Bharatamuni)* evoke distinct physiological responses, the research addressed the central question: *How do different sentiments arising from Sri Lankan Low Country mask dances influence spectators' heart rates?* This cross-sectional study involved three live mask dance performances *Salu Pāliya*, *Nonchi Kōlama*, and *Kalu Yakā* which incorporates Humor, odious and furious sentiments respectively. Forty-eight healthy volunteers attended to examine the heart rate changes from baseline, and they were recorded using three-channel portable digital ECG monitors, and the data were analyzed quantitatively. Although the selected dances share many stylistic similarities, they differ primarily in mask type, character depiction, and the predominant sentiment conveyed. A reduction in mean heart rate from baseline was noted across all performances. *The* odious sentiment produced the greatest decrease (79.03 ± 16.49 bpm), lowering heart rate by 8.04 bpm, while humor (81.92 ± 18.04 bpm) and furious (83.21 ± 18.06 bpm) elicited smaller reductions of 2.11–3.40 bpm. The most significant variations were found in combinations involving odious sentiment. Overall, the results suggest that sentiments embedded in mask dance traditions exert a measurable influence on spectators' physiological responses. These findings highlight the potential of preserving and promoting such indigenous performing arts to support well-being and contribute to sustainable development through cultural continuity.

Keywords: Audience, Heart rate, Low Country mask dance, Physiological responses, Well-being

Ref: 065/VIT/26

A Critical Review on Employee Psychological Contract Fulfilment in Nexus with Machine Learning: A Data-Driven Approach to Predict Job Satisfaction

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Abstract
Workplace commitment, productivity, and job happiness are all significantly impacted by employee psychological contract fulfilment (PCF). Self-reports and surveys are used in traditional PCF assessment procedures, which can be laborious and subjective. Using a data-driven methodology, this study analyses PCF and predicts work satisfaction using machine learning (ML). Different machine learning methods are trained to identify trends in contract fulfilment and satisfaction levels by utilising sentiment analysis, workplace behavioural indicators, and employee feedback. While model evaluation guarantees accuracy and generalisability, feature selection strategies pinpoint important predictors. The findings show that when it comes to forecasting work happiness, ML models in particular, ensemble learning techniques perform better than traditional statistical methods. This study demonstrates the potential of AI-driven insights in HRM, which can help firms better engage employees, meet their expectations, and strengthen retention tactics. The study emphasises how ML may revolutionise workplace dynamics by helping to understand and optimise them.

Keywords: Machine learning, Job satisfaction, psychological contract.

Ref: 066/VIT/26

The Role of Local Religious Centers to Alleviate Poverty and Inequality: From Religious Practice to Spiritual Empowerment

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Abstract

Empirical literature on poverty and spirituality suggests that poverty and inequality are reproduced not only through structural constraints but also through the conditioned mindsets of both poor and wealthy individuals. Yet poverty alleviation efforts continue to focus largely on external factors, with limited attention to these inner dimensions. This study examines the potential of local religious centers to contribute to poverty alleviation and inequality reduction through spiritual transformation, identifies barriers to that role, and outlines policy-relevant implications. The study draws on a review of relevant literature and a pilot survey in the *Kobeigane* GS Division of *Kurunegala* District, Sri Lanka, involving interviews with 20 households from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and discussions with community and religious leaders. The findings suggest that mental conditioning is an important factor in the persistence of poverty and inequality. Although local religious centers appear well positioned to help address these inner dimensions, their influence remains constrained by a predominant emphasis on doctrinal, ritualistic, and cultural practices rather than transformative spiritual engagement. The findings, therefore, suggest the value of reorienting local religious centers toward spirituality, understood here as liberation from mental conditioning, as a complement to conventional poverty alleviation strategies. While exploratory, the study highlights the potential of such a shift for advancing social equity and more holistic community development.

Keywords: *conditioning, inequality, local religious centers, poverty, spirituality, ,*

Ref: 067/VIT/26

Protecting DNA Evidence in Murder Investigations: Crime Scene Management, Contamination Control, and Practitioner Competence

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Abstract
DNA evidence has become indispensable in modern murder investigations, yet its forensic power is only as strong as the crime scene practices that protect it. This study addresses the persistent problem that, despite global advances in forensic technology, frontline crime scene management remains inconsistent, increasing the risk of DNA degradation, contamination, and evidentiary failure. The aim of the article is to examine how crime scene practitioners understand and apply principles of crime scene management, contamination prevention, and DNA preservation during murder investigations. Guided by an interpretivist paradigm, the study employed a qualitative exploratory design and conducted semi-structured interviews with 36 practitioners directly involved in murder scene processing. Data were analysed thematically. Findings reveal that while practitioners possess basic awareness of crime scene processes, their knowledge of core functions such as crime scene conceptualisation, contamination control, examination sequencing, access regulation, evidence packaging, storage, and chain-of-custody management is partial and inconsistently applied. Using Locard's Exchange Principle, Trace Evidence Transfer Theory, and Systems Theory, analysis shows that these gaps reflect both individual-level and systemic weaknesses that heighten the risk of compromised DNA integrity. The study concludes that significant improvements in practitioner training, procedural standardisation, and organisational support structures are essential for strengthening forensic reliability. The implications extend beyond technical evidence management and directly influence investigative accuracy, prosecutorial outcomes, and the overall administration of justice. Recommendations include enhanced forensic training, improved contamination control protocols, clearer role definitions, and investment in digital chain-of-custody and evidence-handling infrastructure.

Keywords: crime scene management, contamination, chain of custody, DNA evidence, forensic investigation, murder investigation.

Ref: 068/VIT/26

Cybersecurity as a Pillar of Sustainable Development: Assessing the Efficacy of Digital Search Warrants in South Africa

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Abstract
This study evaluates the efficacy of digital search and seizure procedures within the South African Police Service (SAPS), framing cybersecurity as a fundamental pillar of SDG 16. It specifically critiques the transition from the object-based Criminal Procedure Act (CPA) 51 of 1977 to the specialized mechanisms introduced by the Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020 and the latest SAPS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) published in October 2023. This study adopted an empirical qualitative approach, utilising purposive sampling to engage with 30 participants from the SAPS Cyber-Crime and Deep Web Investigation Unit and the Specialised Commercial Crime Unit (SCCU). Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, focusing on the practical challenges of executing search warrants in the deep web. Results indicate a significant implementation gap. While the Cybercrimes Act provides a modern mandate for "cyber articles," specialized investigators report that institutional efficacy is hindered by a lack of advanced forensic tools and a persistent reliance on traditional tangible evidence mentalities inherited from the CPA. The investigation of the deep web remains particularly problematic due to the volatility of data and the complexities of jurisdictional authority. For South Africa to achieve the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 goal of a crime-free society, policing institutions must move beyond legislative compliance toward operational readiness. Sustainable development requires a justice system where virtual evidence is as admissible and secure as physical evidence. This research offers a unique practitioner-led evaluation of the SAPS digital investigative mandate. It recommends a dual-capacity building model that integrates technical forensic expertise with legal mastery of the new Cybercrimes Act to ensure the rule of law is upheld in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Keywords: Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020, Deep Web, Digital Justice, SAPS, Search and Seizure.

Ref: 069/VIT/26

Developing a Mechanism for Identifying and Reactivating Vacant Housing to Improve the Efficiency of Housing Resource Allocation in Vietnam in the Context of Two-Tier Administrative Reform

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Abstract
In the context of rapid urbanization, escalating housing prices, and the increasingly severe shortage of social housing in Vietnam, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City, the phenomenon of long-term vacant housing has emerged as a significant paradox in the allocation of urban land and housing resources. While a large proportion of the population struggles to access affordable housing, numerous apartments, townhouses, and villas remain unused for extended periods due to speculative investment or expectations of future price appreciation. This situation not only reduces land-use efficiency but also results in the underutilization of technical and social infrastructure financed through public investment.

From the perspective of "Dormant Housing Assets" in international urban economics, this study argues that Vietnamese cities do not entirely lack housing supply; rather, they lack effective mechanisms to identify and reactivate underutilized housing assets. This approach aligns the research with contemporary urban governance trends such as data-driven governance, smart land administration, and sustainable urban development. The study focuses on developing a mechanism for identifying and reactivating vacant housing in Vietnam through an efficient land-resource management approach in the context of two-tier administrative reform and digital urban governance transformation. Based on an analysis of current legal gaps in the 2024 Land Law, the 2023 Housing Law, and the special institutional framework under Resolution No. 98/2023/QH15, the study proposes a three-layer vacant housing management model: (i) an identification layer based on the integration of electricity, water, residency, taxation, and digital land database information; (ii) an incentive layer designed to encourage property owners to bring vacant housing back into use through financial support, rental incentives, and social leasing mechanisms; and (iii) a regulatory layer utilizing economic instruments such as land-use surcharges or vacant property management fees for prolonged housing vacancy.

The study also develops a five-step process for identifying vacant housing, ranging from establishing quantitative criteria, integrating inter-agency data, conducting field verification, and creating GIS-based digital mapping to classification and reactivation decision-making. This approach facilitates the transition from conventional administrative management to Big Data-based land governance and digital governance models.
Research findings indicate that reactivating vacant housing could create a substantial "potential housing stock" at significantly lower costs compared to the development of new social housing projects. At the same time, it could improve urban infrastructure efficiency, reduce real estate speculation, enhance market transparency, and improve housing accessibility for residents. The study proposes Ho Chi Minh City as a suitable pilot locality for implementing this mechanism under the city's special autonomous governance framework established by Resolution 98.

From an academic perspective, the study contributes a new approach to urban land management in Vietnam by shifting the focus from expanding housing supply toward optimizing the allocation and utilization efficiency of existing housing assets. This approach is considered an important intermediate solution for promoting sustainable urban development, social equity, and efficient land-resource utilization during the current period of administrative reform and national digital transformation. Furthermore, the study helps align Vietnamese urban governance research with emerging global models of urban asset optimization and data-driven land governance.

Keywords: Vacant housing; housing reactivation; land management; two-tier administrative reform; digital transformation; social housing; land-use efficiency; ESG in land governance; sustainable urban governance; Governance, spatial injustice.

Ref: 070/VIT/26

Impact of the Economic Crisis on Household Welfare in Underserved Settlements: Evidence from Jaffna City and Nallur Peri-Urban Fringe, Sri Lanka.

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Abstract

The recent economic crisis in Sri Lanka has generated severe macroeconomic instability, yet its localized impacts on vulnerable urban communities remain underexplored. This study examines the effects of the economic crisis on household welfare in Underserved Settlements in Jaffna City and the Nallur peri-urban fringe, with a focus on multidimensional welfare outcomes and livelihood dynamics. Grounded in the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, the study employs a mixed-methods design combining a structured household survey, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations. A composite Household Welfare Index was constructed to capture changes in income, food security, health, education, and living conditions before and during the crisis.

The findings reveal a significant decline in household welfare, with the mean HWI decreasing from 0.61 in the pre-crisis period to 0.43 during the crisis. Income losses (-21.4%) and rising living costs substantially reduced purchasing power, while food insecurity intensified, evidenced by reduced meal frequency, declining dietary diversity, and increased reliance on borrowing for food. Econometric analysis indicates that income loss ($\beta = -0.284$) and debt burden ($\beta = -0.196$) are significant negative determinants of welfare, whereas asset ownership ($\beta = 0.221$), education level ($\beta = 0.143$), and social support ($\beta = 0.117$) positively influence household resilience ($p < 0.05$).

The study demonstrates that welfare impacts are unevenly distributed and strongly mediated by livelihood assets and coping capacities. It highlights the compounding effect of pre-existing spatial and socioeconomic vulnerabilities in USS. The findings contribute to urban poverty and crisis literature by providing micro-level, spatially grounded evidence from a post-conflict context. Policy implications emphasize the need for targeted social protection, livelihood diversification, and integrated urban development strategies to enhance resilience in marginalized urban settlements.

Keywords: Sri Lanka Economic Crisis, Household Welfare, Sustainable Livelihood Framework, Urban Poverty, Underserved Settlements.

Ref: 071/VIT/26

English language teaching in primary grades in Sri Lanka: teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices, institutional support and perceived effectiveness

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Abstract
English is considered to be a gateway to educational and occupational opportunities. However, despite decades of English language education in Sri Lanka, students continue to demonstrate poor performance in national examinations. A key contributing factor appears to be the way English is taught in Sri Lanka because English is less prioritized during the most crucial years of a child's educational life i.e. during the primary education period, particularly between the ages of five and twelve. Therefore, an investigation was conducted to explore teachers' knowledge, attitudes, instructional practices, institutional support and perceived effectiveness of English language teaching in primary grades (grades 1-5) in Sri Lankan schools. Data were collected from thirty-seven (N-37) primary school teachers across different provinces in Sri Lanka using an online questionnaire that consisted of both open ended and closed items. Mixed responses received revealed the inequality of resource distribution, lack of support given by the educational institute and inadequate time given to teach English in primary grades as major constraints affecting the effectiveness of teaching English in primary grades in Sri Lanka. Despite these challenges, the majority of teachers reported that they are professionally qualified and have required knowledge to teach English to young learners. More importantly, it was found that teacher motivation was high, and they enjoyed teaching English to primary grade learners. Also, the majority of teacher participants stated that they use innovative game-based interactive lessons when teaching English to young children and believed their teaching to be effective. Thematic analysis of qualitative responses provided further insights into the challenges faced by teachers. Lack of qualified teachers and teacher training programmes, limited collaboration among English teachers in the primary grades, mixed ability classrooms, poor support from home, lack of appropriate teaching materials, limited technological support, inadequate physical infrastructure, limited instructional time, pressure to complete the syllabus, overemphasis on traditional methods, and limited exposure to the English language and learning resources outside the classroom were cited as key challenges to teach English effectively in primary grades in Sri Lanka. Continuous teacher development through training programmes and practical workshops focusing on primary English pedagogy, enhancement of resources such as audio-visual materials, smart classrooms, phonics resources and activity based materials, pedagogic reforms such as activity based and learner centred methods, use of songs, games and storytelling, structural improvements such as smaller class sizes, dedicated English activity rooms, and increased learning opportunities like English speaking activities, more time allocation, greater parental involvement and institutional and administrative support were recommended to enhance the quality of English language education in primary grades in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: institutional support; instructional practices; perceived effectiveness; primary grades; teachers' knowledge and attitudes

Ref: 072/VIT/26

Linking Employer Value Propositions to Talent Attraction: The Mediating Role of Employer Brand Image in India Representing South Asia

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Abstract

Employer branding is one of the strategic levers of talent attraction that arise due to the complete reshaping of workforce dynamics in South East Asia that was originated by the digital transformation. This paper addresses the impact of the major dimensions of employer value proposition(EVP), such as economic value (EV), development value(DV), interest value(IV), social value(SV), and application value(AV) in attracting talent and whether the mediating factor in this relationship is the employer brand image(BE). The analysis uses India, the pace-setter in the progress of the labour market towards digitization in the region, as the hub of the analysis. The opinions of 250 professionals working in various fields were surveyed in Mysore, India by means of a structured five-point opinionated Likert scale. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used and employed to the assessment of its direct as well as just infringement associations between structural constructs. The findings identify that though economic and development values are significant straight forward impacts on talent attraction, the association between the two values is considerably moderated by the employer brand image on all value dimensions. The analysis of indirect effects further validates the mediating role of Employer Brand Image (BE) in the relationship between Employer Value dimensions and Talent Attraction (TA). Application Value (AV), which did not have a significant direct effect on TA, exhibited a strong and significant indirect effect via BE. Application Value (AV) showed a strong and statistically significant positive effect on BE, affirming that opportunities to apply one's knowledge and skills meaningfully enhance the employer's perceived brand image. BE exhibited a strong and highly significant direct effect on TA, reaffirming its role as a key mediating variable that amplifies the effects of EVP dimensions on talent attraction. This highlights that the symbolic and psychological appeal fostered through brand image plays a more decisive role in translating certain Employer Value Propositions(EVP) dimensions—particularly those related to skill application, growth, and social culture—into talent attraction outcomes. Collectively, the findings suggest that while Development Value and Economic Value directly influence talent attraction, Application and Social Value contribute more indirectly through brand image, whereas Interest Value appears to be less influential in this context. It is an important example of the importance of brand perception in the transformation of value propositions into effective results on the talent side. The article provides real-life suggestions to corporate PR chiefs and brand planners who want to match the digital era value proposition with the changing needs of employees. It helps to compose the bigger picture on human capital innovation within the changing workstations in South East Asia.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Employer Value Proposition, Employer Brand Image, South Asia, Talent Attraction

Ref: 073/VIT/26

A Buddhist Framework for Dignity-driven Sustainable Development Strategies

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Abstract
Human dignity is a key principle in sustainable development, emphasizing the intrinsic worth of individuals and their right to live with respect, equality, and freedom. Sustainable development, as defined by the United Nations, aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. However, many development models prioritize economic growth over ethical and spiritual considerations, often neglecting the role of dignity in fostering inclusive and just societies. This study introduces an integrated framework based on Buddhist principles to examine the relationship between dignity and sustainable development. Employing a qualitative analysis, the study explores three interconnected sets of variables; dimensions of human dignity, developmental fields of application, and Buddhist ethical principles. The research methods involve hermeneutic analysis of Buddhist texts, thematic and narrative analysis to categorize ethical dimensions, and comparative analysis to align Buddhist values with global sustainability frameworks. A few case studies of successful applications of Buddhist ethics in sustainable development projects from Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan and India have been analyzed to provide practical insights. These cases illustrate how Buddhist principles have been effectively integrated into governance, economic systems, and social policies to uphold human dignity. The methodology ensures a rigorous, interdisciplinary, and practical approach to studying human dignity through Buddhist ethics in sustainable development. It combines philosophical inquiry, empirical analysis, and community engagement, making the findings both academically robust and socially impactful. The findings reveal that Buddhist ethics provide a holistic foundation for sustainable development by addressing ethical, social, and environmental concerns. The principle of non-harm promotes environmental sustainability, while compassion and equanimity encourage social policies that prioritize well-being over material wealth. The Middle Path (Majjhima Patipada) offers a balanced economic model, advocating for responsible consumption and equitable resource distribution. Despite these strengths, challenges remain in integrating Buddhist perspectives into mainstream development policies, particularly in non-Buddhist contexts. This study highlights the necessity of embedding dignity-driven principles into sustainable development strategies, ensuring that economic progress does not come at the expense of ethical considerations. By incorporating Buddhist wisdom into global development frameworks, societies can cultivate a more inclusive, just, and sustainable world where dignity remains at the core of progress. Future research should explore practical case studies of Buddhist-inspired development models to further validate these findings.

Keywords: Human Dignity, Sustainable Development, Buddhist principles, integrated framework, decision making.

Ref: 074/VIT/26

Role of Climate Change related Laws and Policies for Promoting Climate Justice in Bangladesh: A Case Study

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Abstract
Climate change is one of the global concerns now a day due to its direct impacts on the environment and development worldwide. Bangladesh is not an exception to it. With its overpopulation with limited natural resources, cutting hills and trees, heavy transportation, air pollution, disobedience to laws and the nature etc.; this country has been facing numerous problems such as, sea level rising, hotter, health hazards, ecosystems and biodiversity loss etc.; due to climate change impacts. According to Achim Steiner, the Executive Director, UNEP said once with conclusive proof that humans are altering the climate of the world. The developing countries in the process of the UNFCCC negotiations have experienced great difficulty in implementing decisions and policies at the country level. Bangladesh is not an exception to it. In order to address above issues, there are some important international mechanisms and initiatives including the Kyoto Protocol 1987, the Paris Agreement, 2016, the Vienna Convention, 1995; the Montreal Protocol 1987; the UNFCCC 1992, the IPCC1988, the Copenhagen Accords 2009, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), the Climate Financing for Adaption, the Technology Transfer Policy, the Vocational Education Policy, Net Zero Policy etc. In Bangladesh, there are also some important Acts and policies such as the 'Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995, 'the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Rules 1997; the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Rules 1997 and the Environment Courts Act, 2010; the Environment Policy and Action Plan 1992; the Forest Act, 1927; the Disasters Management Act, 2012; the Brick Burning (Control) Act, 2013; the Brick Burning (Control) Rules,199 etc; along with the international soft laws and policies. Besides, the constitution of Bangladesh, Article 18A commits the state to protect and improve the environment. But unfortunately, the above initiatives are not implemented properly due to non-compliance, weak enforcement mechanisms and also non-binding force of the international treaties, convention, protocols etc. This study however, examines the climate related laws and policies as applied in Bangladesh based on the primary and secondary sources consisting of at least 25 respondents in the different criteria through online as well.

Keywords: Climate related laws and policies, Climate Justice, Bangladesh

Ref: 075/VIT/26

Understanding Youth Tax Compliance Behaviour: The Role of Tax Awareness Drivers

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Abstract
Tax compliance is often discussed in terms of laws, penalties, and enforcement mechanisms, yet the decision to comply with taxation is deeply human, shaped by trust, fairness, social responsibility, and citizens' everyday experiences with the state. Among all taxpayer groups, youth occupy a particularly significant position because their first interactions with taxation systems frequently establish the long-term attitudes and behavioural patterns that influence future compliance. In many developing economies, however, young taxpayers enter tax systems that are perceived as complex, bureaucratic, and disconnected from their lived realities. Limited financial literacy, weak civic education, expanding digital and informal economies, and declining institutional trust further complicate this relationship. Under such conditions, tax compliance becomes more than a technical obligation; it becomes a question of whether young citizens perceive taxation as fair, understandable, and socially meaningful. Despite growing international attention toward behavioural taxation, existing studies continue to focus heavily on deterrence, audits, and penalties, while comparatively little attention has been given to how young taxpayers emotionally and cognitively interpret taxation systems during the early stages of civic participation.

Drawing conceptually from the Slippery Slope Framework and contemporary tax morale
literature, the study repositions tax awareness as a multidimensional construct rather than a purely informational issue. In particular, it distinguishes between procedural awareness (knowing how to comply), legal awareness (understanding tax obligations), awareness of taxpayer rights, trust in government, and internalized tax morale. By doing so, the research moves beyond the traditional assumption that increasing procedural knowledge automatically leads to compliance and instead explores whether young taxpayers comply because they understand the system, because they fear penalties, or because they perceive the tax system as fair and worthy of cooperation.

Data was collected from a sample of 1705 of youth utilizing cross-sectional questionnaire with five reflective latent quantitative constructs comprising 37 indicators originally. An Exploratory Factor Analysis using Principal Axis Factoring with Promax (Kaiser normalized) rotation produced an interpretable factor structure aligned with the theorized constructs. Statistical testing confirmed strong reliability and validity across the measurement framework of confirmatory factor analysis, while estimated structural equation model revealed several important and unexpected insights into youth compliance behaviour. Most notably, awareness of taxpayer rights emerged as the strongest predictor of compliance motivation, outperforming procedural awareness, generalized trust in government, and even some traditional deterrence-oriented assumptions. This finding suggests that young taxpayers are more willing to cooperate with taxation systems when they perceive themselves not merely as subjects of enforcement, but as citizens entitled to fairness, transparency, respect, and procedural protection rather than as a unilateral state demand.

Tax morale plays a central role in shaping compliance intentions among youth. Ethical beliefs regarding civic responsibility, collective contribution, and social obligation were found to significantly influence willingness to comply, indicating that young taxpayers respond strongly to value-driven narratives surrounding taxation. The results therefore challenge the long-standing assumption that compliance can be sustainably achieved through technical enforcement measures alone. Instead, the study suggests that voluntary compliance among youth is closely tied to whether taxation aligns with broader perceptions of social justice and national development. Procedural awareness showed only a limited direct influence on compliance motivation. While understanding filing procedures and administrative requirements remains necessary, procedural knowledge alone did not substantially motivate compliance behaviour. This finding indicates that technical guidance campaigns, although useful, may have limited effectiveness if they are disconnected from broader civic and ethical engagement strategies. Similarly, trust in government demonstrated only a modest direct effect, suggesting that generalized institutional trust may influence compliance indirectly through other psychological pathways such as fairness perceptions, legitimacy, and tax morale.

This study contributes to international tax compliance literature by integrating behavioural, institutional, and rights-based dimensions into a unified framework, and by identifying taxpayer rights awareness as an underexplored driver of voluntary compliance among youth in developing contexts. The findings support governance-oriented theories that prioritise legitimacy and cooperation over coercion, extending the Slippery Slope Framework by showing how fairness and rights recognition shape young taxpayers' behaviour." From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that youth-focused tax education should move beyond procedural instruction to emphasise civic participation, ethical contribution, and transparency in public finance. Revenue authorities are likely to secure stronger long-term compliance by communicating why taxation matters for social development and democratic accountability, with rights-based education, simplified legal communication, and trust-building engagement proving more effective than penalty-driven campaigns. Ultimately, the study shows that youth tax compliance is shaped less by fear of punishment or technical competence than by perceptions of fairness, reciprocity, and moral legitimacy. Sustainable compliance therefore depends not only on stronger enforcement, but on cultivating a generation that views taxation as part of responsible citizenship and collective nation-building.

Keywords: Slippery Slope Framework, Tax awareness, Tax morale, Taxpayer rights, Youth tax compliance

Ref: 076/VIT/26

A Geo-environmental and Economic Multi-criteria Framework for LULC-Driven Condominium Site Suitability in a Rapidly Urbanizing Sri Lankan Suburb

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Abstract

Land Use and Land Cover change is one of the most noticeable impacts of rapid urbanization, especially in suburban areas undergoing fast population growth and continuous expansion of urban infrastructure. In Sri Lanka, this is a big problem because many people want to live in urban areas, but there isn't enough housing. To solve this, building condominiums has become a popular solution. This study focuses on identifying suitable lands for condominium development within Kaduwela Divisional Secretariat Division, it uses a special framework that considers both environmental and economic factors. Environmental factors include Land Use and Land Cover (LULC), slope, and distance from water bodies, while economic factors include proximity to services, proximity to road networks, population density, and land value. They looked at six key services: public transportation, hospitals, supermarkets, schools, town centers, and banks. A Geographic Information System based weighted overlay analysis was employed to generate the final condominium land suitability map. The Analytical Hierarchy Process was used to assign weights to each criterion according to their relative importance in site selection for condominium development. The results show that about 19.25 km² (22.88%) of area is highly suitable for condominium development, while 24.63 km² (28.85%) is identified as suitable. Accordingly, 20.53 km² (24.52%) is moderately suitable, 15.69 km² (17.95%) is less suitable, and 4.83 km² (5.72%) is identified as least suitable for future condominium development. The study's findings can be used to make informed decisions about where to build new housing, which can help reduce the pressure on urban areas and make them more sustainable. By considering both environmental and economic factors, the study provides a comprehensive approach to urban planning that can be applied to other rapidly urbanizing regions.

Keywords: Condominium Site Suitability, GIS-AHP, LULC Change, Multi-Criteria Framework, Rapid Urbanization, Suburban Planning, Sri Lanka.

Ref: 077/VIT/26

Social and intellectual capital effects on dynamic capability and financial performance with leverage as a moderating variable

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Abstract

The increasingly dynamic global economic development is driving developing countries, including those in Southeast Asia, to undergo structural transformations to enhance their competitiveness. Indonesia, as the largest economy in the region, plays a central role with the largest contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) compared to other ASEAN countries. The manufacturing sector serves as the backbone of the national economy with the largest contribution to GDP, making the strengthening of this sector's performance a strategic priority in economic development. However, the manufacturing sector faces various challenges, such as global economic fluctuations, trade wars, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which require companies to have high adaptability and innovation capabilities. In this context, a company's financial performance is not only influenced by financial factors but also by the quality of internal resources, especially intangible resources.

The conceptual framework is built based on the Resource-Based Theory (RBT) as the grand theory, emphasizing the importance of unique and hard-to-imitate resources in creating a competitive advantage that ultimately enhances financial performance. Eight hypotheses were formulated to examine the direct effects of social capital and intellectual capital on dynamic capability and financial performance, as well as the effect of dynamic capability on financial performance. Three additional hypotheses test the moderating role of leverage on the effects of social capital, intellectual capital, and dynamic capability on financial performance.

This research is explanatory research using a quantitative approach. The type and source of data are secondary data obtained from company annual reports. The population of this research consists of manufacturing companies listed on the IDX during the 2017–2023 period. After applying purposive sampling, the research sample comprises 16 companies over 7 years of observation. The analytical method used in this study is Partial Least Squares (PLS) using the Warp PLS version 8.0 software.

The results of this study show that social capital has a positive but insignificant effect on dynamic capability and financial performance. Meanwhile, intellectual capital has a positive and significant effect on both dynamic capability and financial performance. Furthermore, dynamic capability was found to have a negative and insignificant effect on the company's financial performance. This study also reveals that leverage positively and significantly moderates the effect of social capital on financial performance, as well as positively and significantly moderates the effect of intellectual capital on financial performance. Leverage also positively and significantly moderates the effect of dynamic capability on financial performance. These findings provide important insights into the role of social capital and intellectual capital in enhancing the dynamic capability and financial performance of companies. Moreover, the results also highlight the importance of leverage as a moderating factor in these relationships.

This research provides significant contributions from three perspectives: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Ontologically, it treats organizational phenomena as real and measurable entities, bridging abstract concepts with numerical metrics and viewing organizations as complex systems that can be analyzed through data. Epistemologically, the study adopts various strategic management theories (Dynamic Capabilities View, Stakeholder Theory, Knowledge-Based View, and Agency Theory) by shifting from an interpretive approach to a positivistic framework, operationalizing abstract concepts (such as social capital, intellectual capital, dynamic capability, and leverage) into measurable indicators that can be empirically verified. This allows for the generalization of findings and supports the development of data-driven theory. Axiologically, the study emphasizes the harmony between economic and social values, integrating humanistic, strategic, and business ethics considerations into performance measurement. Variables such as social capital, intellectual capital, and dynamic capability are used to assess the

strategic value of human and systemic resources, while ROA, ROE, NPM, as well as DER, DAR, and LTD/TA measure financial performance accountability based on the principles of prudence.

Based on the findings and limitations of the research, the researcher offers several suggestions for stakeholders and future research. First, since social capital and dynamic capability do not have a significant effect on financial performance, future studies are recommended to examine other industrial sectors to compare the effects of these variables in different contexts. Second, the indicators of social capital used in this study are quantitative; future research could re-examine these using qualitative indicators such as trust levels, cooperation, social networks, and the quality of relationships with the community. Third, as the research period includes the COVID-19 pandemic, future studies are advised to select sectors or companies that are relatively stable or to focus on non-pandemic periods. Fourth, given the indirect effect of social capital on financial performance, future researchers are advised to explore mediating variables such as innovation capability to better understand the mechanisms involved. Fifth, future researchers could explore dynamic capability indicators that are more relevant to the characteristics of the manufacturing industry. Sixth, company size can be considered as a moderating or control variable in future research.

Keywords: Social capital, Intellectual capital, Dynamic capability, Financial performance, Leverage.

Ref: 078/VIT/26

Carbon Market Regulation and Corporate Capital Structure: Evidence from Vietnam

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Abstract
This study aims to examine the causal effect of the regulation of the carbon market in Vietnam as stipulated in the Law on Environmental Protection 2020 and the Decree 06/2022/ND-CP on the capital structure choice of companies. In recent years, market-based instruments like emissions trading systems and carbon pricing have become a more central means of reaching environmental goals in the area of climate governance. The financial implications of such policies for firms are an under-researched aspect, especially in emerging markets, where financial market systems are bank-based.The financial impact of such policies on firms, however, has received less focus in the literature, particularly in emerging markets with bank-based financial market systems.

Vietnam offers a valuable empirical context, as it has recently begun to require GHG inventories for its largest emitters and is in the process of creating a domestic carbon market framework. The policy shifts are exogenous shocks that have different impacts on firms based on their emission levels. Carbon-intensive companies are exposed to greater risks of transition, regulatory uncertainty and significant investment costs when switching to low-carbon technologies. These pressures could affect their financing patterns, especially in their dependency on debt financing in an environment where banks are the major source of financing.

This is a quasi-experimental research with a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) approach and Propensity Score Matching (PSM) is used to estimate the causal effect of carbon regulation on corporate financial leverage. This sample includes 166 listed Vietnamese companies, comprising 822 firm-year observations in the years 2020-2024. Treatment group: Firms in energy-intensive and high-emission industries; Control group: low-emission firms. Matching procedures are used to minimize selection bias and make the comparison of observable firm characteristics comparable.

The empirical findings show that the implementation of carbon market regulation substantially raises the financial leverage of the treated firms. However, high emission companies' debt ratios are on average about 7.4 percentage points higher than those of comparable control companies after the introduction of the 2022 policy framework. The results are similar both at baseline DiD and PSM-DiD, indicating robustness of the estimated treatment effect.

The resulted increasing leverage is attributed to the joint effects of capital demand and structural features of the financial system in Vietnam. Companies in pollution intensive industries will have to make huge investments to meet the anticipated environmental standards and to remain competitive with export markets. The investments are mostly debt-financed, due to limited opportunities for equity financing and the large part that commercial banking plays in Vietnam. But the cost of carbon regulation is not the same for all companies. The increase in leverage for state-owned enterprises and firms with concessional financing from the Vietnam Environment Protection Fund (VEF) and firms using IRECs is much lower, suggesting that there are institutional mechanisms that reduce transition risk.

In general, this study can be seen as an early empirical study in an emerging Southeast Asian economy that has grown in significance in the environment regulation and corporate finance literature. It underscores the need to consider transition risks as part of the fundamentals of capital structure and underlines the role of financial institutions and policy support mechanisms in driving firm reactions to climate-related regulation. Policy implications include what was found: the fact that a carbon pricing mechanism can successfully internalize the environmental costs, but complementary financial instruments are needed to avoid excessive financial strain in regulated industries.

Keywords: Carbon Market Regulation, Corporate Capital Structure, Difference-in-Differences, Emerging Markets, Transition Risk

Ref: 079/VIT/26

Factors Affecting the Application of Green Accounting in Restaurant Enterprises in Ba Ria - Vung Tau Area

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Abstract
In the context of moving towards sustainable development, Green Accounting has become an essential strategic management tool to identify, collect, and analyze environmental costs. As a sector with high resource consumption and emissions, applying green accounting in the restaurant industry helps optimize costs, enhance competitiveness, manage risks, attract capital, and foster innovation. This study seeks to examine the determinants impacting the implementation of green accounting and evaluate their degree of influence on restaurant businesses in Ba Ria–Vung Tau area. The study uses quantitative methods through primary data from 280 questionnaires from managers and accountants at restaurants. The proposed research model includes 4 independent factors, 2 moderating variables, and 1 dependent factor. Data is processed by Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The SEM analysis outcomes confirm that all four groups of factors positively affect the application of green accounting, including: (1) Legal framework and state policies; (2) Leadership's awareness of environmental responsibility; (3) Competence of human accounting resources; (4) Stakeholder pressure. Among them, "Legal framework and state policies" has the strongest impact. Specifically, "Enterprise size" and "Operating time" act as moderating variables, but in the model do not change the effect around of the variables. The study reinforces the theoretical foundation of environmental accounting and provides empirical evidence. Based on quantitative results, the authors propose important managerial implications to help policymakers and businesses build strategies to promote green accounting, aiming for sustainable development goals in Vietnam.

Keywords: Stakeholder pressure, green accounting, restaurant, sustainable development, environmental responsibility.

Ref: 080/VIT/26

Modelling Digital-Green Support Systems for Sustainable Franchise Performance: The Interplay of Relational Quality and Management Participation

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Abstract
Integrating agency theory, resource scarcity logic, signaling theory, social exchange theory, the resource-based view (RBV), the natural-resource-based view (NRBV), and contingency theory, this study develops and tests a theoretical framework explaining (Franchisee Support): Green Franchise (GF), Digital Franchise (DF), and Brand Reputation (BR) influence Sustainable Franchise Performance (SFP) through Relationship Quality (RQ) (Trust and Commitment), with Franchise Typology (FT) as a moderator. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted on 314 franchisees and store managers in the F&B sector of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) and multi-group analysis were employed.

Results show that Digital Franchise (DF) and Brand Reputation (BR) have direct positive effects on both Relationship Quality (RQ) and Sustainable Franchise Performance (SFP). In contrast, Green Franchise (GF) affects SFP only indirectly through RQ. Additionally, Franchise Typology (FT) moderates key relationships: DF drives SFP more strongly for multi-unit franchisees, and BR has a larger impact on RQ for international brands compared to local brands. These findings contribute to franchising theory by demonstrating how digital, environmental, and reputational resources interact under different governance configurations to enhance sustainable performance in emerging markets.

Keywords: Franchisee support; Sustainable franchise performance; Relationship quality; Franchise typology; Digital franchise

Ref: 081/VIT/26

Unlocking Digital Innovation in IT-Based SMEs: The Roles Of Digital Orientation, Digital Transformation, and Digital Literacy

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Abstract:
This study aims to examine the influence of digital orientation and digital transformation on digital innovation in IT-based SMEs, as well as to analyze the moderating role of digital literacy in strengthening these relationships. This study adopts a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey of 182 IT-based SMEs in East Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that both digital orientation and digital transformation have a positive and significant effect on digital innovation. Digital orientation shows a slightly stronger direct effect than digital transformation. Furthermore, digital literacy significantly moderates the relationship between digital orientation and digital innovation. However, digital literacy does not significantly moderate the relationship between digital transformation and digital innovation.

This study is limited to IT-based SMEs in East Java and relies on cross-sectional data, which may restrict generalizability and causal interpretation. Future research is encouraged to include broader sectors, longitudinal designs, and additional contextual variables. The findings highlight the importance of enhancing digital literacy among SME managers and employees, particularly in strengthening the role of digital orientation in fostering digital innovation. This study contributes to the literature by integrating digital orientation, digital transformation, and digital literacy within the Dynamic Capabilities View framework. It provides empirical evidence from an emerging economy context and offers insights into how SMEs can leverage digital resources to achieve sustainable innovation.

Keywords: Digital orientation, Digital transformation, Digital literacy, Digital innovation, IT-based SMEs

Ref: 082/VIT/26

Conceptual Design of a Voice-Based Accounting Information System to Enhance Financial Literacy Among Culinary Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Through Learning by Doing

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Abstract
Low financial literacy remains a persistent barrier to financial management quality among culinary micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia, manifesting as unstructured transaction recording, inability to calculate costs of goods manufactured, and absence of business-personal financial separation. Existing accounting information systems address none of these barriers because they presuppose the financial literacy they aim to support. This paper proposes SIVORA (Smart Integrated Voice-Based Operational Recording Application), a conceptual system design grounded in learning by doing theory, in which financial literacy is repositioned from a prerequisite to an outcome of repeated system use. Through systematic needs analysis employing structured observation, semi-structured interviews, and structured expert judgment at two culinary MSMEs in Malang, East Java, Indonesia, five functional requirements were identified and a conceptual architecture was developed integrating Google Cloud Speech-to-Text voice recognition, artificial intelligence transaction classification, and dual-mode payment data capture combining automatic QRIS (Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard) synchronization via the National Open API Payment Standard (SNAP BI) for QRIS-enabled operators and voice-recorded entry for cash and bank transfer transactions. Each voice-recorded transaction generates a micro financial literacy interaction: the system reads back the artificial intelligence-assigned accounting category and requests verbal confirmation, building operator familiarity with income, expenditure, and cost of goods manufactured concepts through repeated practice rather than formal training. Expert judgment confirmed both accounting logic compliance with SAK EMKM (Indonesian MSME Accounting Standards) and the technical feasibility of the architecture. The proposed model contributes a new financial literacy development pathway for culinary MSMEs grounded in situated, practice-based learning rather than formal instruction, with relevance to Sustainable Development Goals No. 1, No. 4, No. 8, and No. 9.

Keywords: Accounting information system, financial literacy, Indonesian MSMEs, learning by doing, QRIS, voice recognition

Ref: 083/VIT/26

Responsible Generative AI Adoption in Vietnamese Higher Education: Conceptual Framework Aligned with SDG 4

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Abstract
The rapid growth of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is reshaping higher education by changing how students learn, produce academic work, receive feedback, and interact with digital knowledge systems. Tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, Claude, and other GenAI applications can support writing, coding, explanation, translation, feedback, teaching preparation, and research-related activities. However, their use also raises complex governance concerns related to academic integrity, assessment validity, data protection, equity, institutional accountability, and AI literacy. These concerns are especially important in Vietnam, where national strategies have promoted artificial intelligence and education digital transformation, but detailed institutional guidance for responsible GenAI use in teaching, learning, assessment, and research remains limited.

This paper develops a conceptual policy framework for responsible GenAI adoption in Vietnamese higher education. Rather than conducting an empirical survey or institutional case study, the study uses a conceptual policy analysis and framework development approach. It synthesizes academic literature on GenAI in higher education, international Responsible AI guidance, Vietnamese policy documents, personal data protection requirements, and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) targets. The purpose is to address the gap between broad global AI governance principles and practical university-level implementation in a developing-country higher education context.
The proposed GenAI Responsible Adoption Framework for Vietnamese Higher Education (GRAV-HE) consists of four interdependent governance dimensions. The first dimension, ethical policy and AI disclosure standards, focuses on academic integrity, authorship, acceptable AI use, disclosure practices, and transparent course-level guidance. The second dimension, data governance and secure digital infrastructure, addresses privacy, personal data protection, approved platforms, restricted data categories, and equitable access to AI-supported learning. The third dimension, pedagogical transformation, emphasizes assessment redesign, authentic learning, process-based evaluation, human oversight, and critical engagement with AI-generated outputs. The fourth dimension, comprehensive AI literacy development, highlights student AI literacy, faculty professional development, critical evaluation, ethical use, and data awareness.

The originality of GRAV-HE does not lie in proposing entirely new AI ethics principles. Instead, its contribution lies in translating existing Responsible AI and SDG 4 principles into institutional governance mechanisms that are meaningful for Vietnamese higher education institutions. The framework positions SDG 4 not as a general label, but as a normative lens for evaluating whether GenAI adoption supports inclusive and equitable quality education, relevant skills development, safe learning environments, and teacher capacity. It also recognizes that GenAI governance in Vietnam must consider uneven digital infrastructure, different levels of institutional readiness, personal data protection requirements, and unequal access to AI tools and AI literacy.

This paper contributes to sustainable higher education by reframing GenAI governance as more than a problem of cheating, detection, or technology management. It argues that responsible GenAI adoption requires coordinated institutional governance across policy, data protection, pedagogy, assessment, and capacity building. The GRAV-HE framework offers a practical basis for Vietnamese higher education institutions and comparable systems to develop context-sensitive GenAI policies, support responsible innovation, and guide future empirical validation through stakeholder consultation, institutional case studies, and pilot implementation.

Keywords: AI governance, Generative AI, Higher education, SDG 4, Vietnam.

Ref: 084/VIT/26

The impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence on employee green well-being: The mediating role of employee engagement in Vietnamese enterprises

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Abstract
This study examines the mechanisms through which positive attitudes toward Generative AI (POS_ATT) and responsible AI signals (RAIS) affect employee green well-being through the mediating role of employee engagement (ENG) in Vietnamese enterprises. Drawing on an integrated framework of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Signaling Theory, and Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, the study tests a theoretical model with five hypotheses using PLS-SEM analysis on a sample of 342 knowledge workers employed in AI-adopting enterprises in Vietnam. Green well-being is operationalized along three dimensions: Green Emotional Well-being (GEW), Green Cognitive Well-being (GCW), and Green Social Well-being (GSW). Results show that POS_ATT ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$) and RAIS ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$) positively affect ENG, which in turn significantly predicts all three green well-being dimensions. Bootstrap analysis confirms partial mediation by ENG. The study contributes theoretically by integrating three theoretical lenses to explain the AI–well-being mechanism and provides managerial implications for enterprises undergoing digital transformation in Vietnam

Keywords: Employee engagement, Green Well-being, positive attitudes toward Generative AI, responsible AI signals,

Ref: 085/VIT/26

Barriers to the Transition From Intention To Green Consumption Behavior: An Empirical Study in Ho Chi Minh City

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Abstract
This paper aims to explore factors impacting green consumption intention and behavior and evaluate the moderating play of price sensitivity and green product availability on the intention-behavior gap in the consumption perspective of Ho Chi Minh City. A mixed-methods approach is use in this study including qualitative research with data collected from 13 consumers interviewing and focusing group discussions with, and formal quantitative research with data collected from surveying of 354 consumers aged 18 and above in HCMC. Using SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 24.0 with Cronbach's Alpha, CFA, and SEM techniques analyze the data. The study finds that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control have positive significant impacts on green consumption intention. Green consumption intention has a very strong significant impact on actual green consumption behavior. Additionally, price sensitivity and green product availability both have significant negative moderating effects on the intention-behavior relationship. Thus, all 6 hypotheses in this study are accepted. By adding two moderating variables - price sensitivity and product availability, the study contributes to extending the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and provide managerial implications for enterprises and policymakers to support green consumption in Vietnam's major cities.

Keywords: Theory of planned behavior; price sensitivity; green consumption; product availability; HCMC.

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Reimagining Evidence-Based Policing: CIMAC as a Knowledge System in South Africa

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Abstract
Evidence-based policing is increasingly promoted as a means of improving police effectiveness through the systematic use of research, data, and analysis. However, limited attention has been given to the institutional and epistemic processes through which policing knowledge is produced, interpreted, and operationalised, particularly in Global South contexts. This article examines the Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre (CIMAC) of the South African Police Service (SAPS) as a station-level policing knowledge system underpinning evidence-based policing. Using a qualitative interpretive research design, the study draws on in-depth interviews with SAPS officials, crime analysts, investigators, and managers at station, provincial, and national levels, supplemented by documentary analysis and international comparative perspectives. The findings demonstrate that CIMAC plays a critical epistemic role in crime pattern identification, analytical sense-making, decision support, and organisational learning. However, its contribution is significantly constrained by institutional marginalisation of analytical roles, role dilution, weak professionalisation, inadequate resources, and inconsistent utilisation of analytical outputs. The article argues that evidence-based policing should be understood not merely as a technical intervention, but as an institutionally embedded knowledge practice shaped by governance arrangements, organisational culture, and epistemic authority. Reimagining CIMAC as a protected, professionalised, and integrated knowledge system is essential for strengthening policing effectiveness, accountability, and shared development in South Africa.

Keywords: Crime analysis; CIMAC; Evidence-based policing; Policing knowledge; Governance; South Africa.

Ref: 087/VIT/26

A Dynamic Capability Perspective on SME Eco-Innovation: Internal and External Drivers

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Abstract

Amid increasing global climate change and ecological degradation, Indonesia continues to face serious environmental challenges, as reflected in its low position in the 2024 Environmental Performance Index (EPI). Although Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) contribute approximately 61% of Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), they are also associated with substantial environmental pollution and inefficient resource utilization. Despite growing awareness of sustainable business practices, many Indonesian SMEs still experience limitations in technological capability, environmental knowledge, and institutional support, which hinder the implementation of eco-innovation. This study investigates how internal drivers, namely environmental awareness and social media usage, together with external drivers such as government support, influence eco-innovation through the mediating role of Sustainable Dynamic Capability (SDC) among green-oriented manufacturing SMEs in Indonesia.

This study is grounded in Dynamic Capability Theory, which emphasizes a firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources in response to rapidly changing business environments. The study also incorporates Institutional Theory to explain how external institutional pressures and support mechanisms shape organizational behavior and strategic adaptation toward sustainability. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study proposes Sustainable Dynamic Capability as a strategic mechanism enabling SMEs to transform environmental awareness, digital interaction, and institutional support into eco-innovation outcomes.

This study employed a quantitative research approach targeting green-oriented manufacturing SMEs in Indonesia, particularly those located in Java and Bali, where environmentally oriented SMEs are more concentrated and actively engaged in sustainable business practices. Data were collected through structured online questionnaires distributed via social media platforms using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. A total of 380 SME owners and managers who had implemented environmentally friendly business practices participated in the survey. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine both direct and indirect relationships among environmental awareness, social media usage, government support, Sustainable Dynamic Capability, and eco-innovation.

The findings reveal that environmental awareness significantly enhances Sustainable Dynamic Capability by encouraging proactive managerial behavior toward environmental sustainability and resource efficiency. Social media usage was also found to positively influence Sustainable Dynamic Capability, indicating that digital platforms serve as important tools for organizational learning, knowledge acquisition, stakeholder interaction, and market sensing related to green opportunities. Furthermore, government support, including financial assistance, environmental policies, training programs, and innovation-oriented regulations, demonstrated a significant positive effect on Sustainable Dynamic Capability.

The results further confirm that Sustainable Dynamic Capability has a strong positive impact on eco-innovation, particularly in supporting environmentally friendly product development, sustainable production processes, and green organizational practices. In addition, Sustainable Dynamic Capability was found to significantly mediate the relationships between environmental awareness, social media usage, government support, and eco-innovation. These findings indicate that SMEs with stronger sustainability-oriented adaptive capabilities are better positioned to transform environmental knowledge, digital resources, and institutional support into innovative green business practices.

Among the examined predictors, environmental awareness emerged as the strongest determinant of Sustainable Dynamic Capability, highlighting the critical role of managerial environmental consciousness in driving sustainable transformation. Meanwhile, government support played a crucial role in accelerating eco-innovation adoption by reducing resource constraints and encouraging strategic sustainability initiatives.

Theoretically, this study extends Dynamic Capability Theory by integrating the sustainability dimension through the concept of Sustainable Dynamic Capability within the context of emerging economies. The study also enriches eco-innovation literature by simultaneously examining internal and external drivers within a comprehensive integrated framework. Empirically, the research contributes evidence from Indonesia, where studies on eco-innovation among manufacturing SMEs remain limited.

Practically, the findings provide strategic implications for SME managers to strengthen environmental awareness, optimize social media usage as a knowledge and innovation platform, and actively utilize government support programs to improve eco-innovation capability. For policymakers, the results emphasize the importance of targeted sustainability policies, digital empowerment programs, and institutional support mechanisms to accelerate green transformation among SMEs. Nevertheless, the geographical focus on Java and Bali may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Indonesia with different environmental and institutional characteristics. Ultimately, this study contributes to the advancement of sustainable competitiveness and supports Indonesia's transition toward a green economy.

Keywords: (Five words in alphabetical order) Eco-Innovation; Environmental Awareness; Government Support; Social Media Usage; Sustainable Dynamic Capability.

Ref: 088/VIT/26

Urban Center Identification and Ranking Using VIIRS Night-Time Light Data: A Scalable GIS-Based Framework for Sustainable Planning in Developing Countries:

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Abstract
Identifying urban boundaries and growth patterns with the rapid population growth in urban areas of the developing countries is significantly important for sustainable planning processes. However, the conventional boundary delineation methods utilizing on administrative parameters often lack accurate and scalability. Hence this research aims to address this gap by proposing an urban center Identification and ranking approach for Southern Province of Sri Lanka based on Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) Night Time Light (NTL) satellite data with the support of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) techniques.

Conventional method tested by using built-up density derived from the Normalized Difference Built-up Index (NDBI), Population density, Infrastructure availability and road connectivity. These conventional outputs tested and then comparatively analyzed in a structured manner against NTL based results exclusively obtained from VIIRS data selected because of its high spatial and radiometric resolution, low saturation in bright urban areas and availability of cloud free monthly and annual composites compared with conventional tests. Urban center identification was done by applying thresholding directly to VIIRS brightness intensity values.

This research focuses to identify if the VIIRS NTL data clone is sufficient to accurately identify and rank urban centers, producing results that strongly align with the outputs generated by the multi variable conventional approach. Areas that represent higher illumination intensity consistently in alignment with conventionally defined urban centers and confirm the urban spatial structure, development intensity and underlying economic activities without requiring multiple complex datasets or highly detailed processing frameworks simplify by VIIRS NTL data.

The study reveal that VIIRS based NTL analysis offers a pragmatic, cost-efficient, and scalable approach for urban center identification, significantly in data scare developing country contexts. It is sensible to incorporate into urban planning processes to enhance the measure of sustainable development and contribute to a more credible forecasting of the urban growth.

Keywords: Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Night- Time Light (NTL) data, Remote Sensing (RS) techniques, Urban center ranking, Visible Infrared Imagine Radiometer Suite (VIIRS)

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Geospatial Assessment of Urban Green Space Dynamics for Ecological Restoration of Urban Landscapes to Mitigate Urban Heat Island (UHI) Formation: Colombo Municipal Area, Sri Lanka Using the Intensity Analysis Approach

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Abstract
Rapid urbanization in tropical regions severely alters natural environments, replacing lush vegetation with impervious surfaces. In tropical urban landscapes, this transition is particularly disruptive; high ambient temperatures and intense solar radiation exacerbate the formation of Urban Heat Islands (UHIs), compromising ecological balance and human thermal comfort. The Colombo Municipal Area in Sri Lanka serves as a critical case study of this phenomenon, where accelerating surface modifications have severely fragmented urban green spaces (UGS), leading to changes to the microclimate and ecological balance. To implement effective ecological restoration and mitigate UHI effects, understanding the precise spatiotemporal patterns of land change is imperative. This study utilizes a geospatial assessment coupled with the Intensity Analysis approach that quantifies land-use transitions at interval, category, and transition levels. The main aim of the study is to evaluate the dynamics of urban green spaces and their impact on UHI formation in the Colombo Municipal Area (CMA), Sri Lanka. Utilizing geospatial analytical and remote sensing technologies in combination provides an improved understanding of urban growth patterns both spatially and temporally, as well as of the subsequent environmental implications. Therefore, multi-temporal Landsat images (2000, 2015, and 2025) were analyzed using geospatial techniques, and intensity analysis was applied at interval, category, and transition levels to examine land use/land cover (LULC) changes. The results reveal that there has been a significant increase in built-up areas from 16.69 km^2 to 39.28 km^2 and a continuous decrease in green spaces from 7.54 km^2 to 3.58 km^2 during the study period. The time interval level analysis shows a transition from a dormant phase (2000-2015) to an active phase (2015-2025) of rapid land transformation. In addition, there was a significant relationship between LULC and land surface temperature (LST), with built-up areas having higher temperatures, while green spaces acted as a cooling mechanism. The transition analysis showed that green areas were among the most vulnerable forms of land use, being converted into built-up surfaces, underscoring the impact of urbanization on ecological transformation. The growth in built-up surface cover and reduction in vegetation has led to increased heat island effect. It is noted that the role of urban green space is important for mitigating heat stress as well as for a sustainable environment within densely settled urban areas. This study highlights that geospatial and intensity analysis aid sustainable urban planning and green management to reduce UHI impacts and enhance resilience through ecological restoration of the urban landscape. The findings of the research provide a science-based framework for policymakers and implementers to target urban greening infrastructure, optimizing ecological restoration to cool rapidly developing tropical cities.

Keywords: Geospatial assessment, Intensity Analysis, Sustainable ecological restoration, Urban green space dynamics, Urban heat island formation, Urban landscape

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Multi-layered water crisis in South Africa: Considering the digging of boreholes to achieve sustainable water provision

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Abstract
South Africa is confronted by severe water crisis, and this is attributable to numerous factors. Rapid population growth and climatic change place a strain on the already limited water resources. Many years of neglected maintenance of the aging infrastructure and poor repair have resulted in considerable water losses. The cancer of corruption that has become the norm in our municipalities continue to hamper the delivery of water services to the communities. Approximately above 35 percent of households have reported defective water services in 2023, some enduring dry taps for weeks and even months. It is estimated that there will be more than 16 percent water shortage by 2030. This is disturbing indeed because one of the sustainable development goals is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Many municipalities in the country have resorted to water tankers to alleviate water shortages. However, the usage of water tankers has proven to be inadequate, expensive and already hijacked my “water tanker mafia” that claims money but fail to deliver water to the communities. This paper argues for the consideration of borehole digging to alleviate the current water crisis and this is more likely to be cheaper and sustainable if compared to the usage of water tankers.

Keywords: Water crisis in South Africa, considering borehole digging

Ref: 091/VIT/26

Denial of Reproductive Rights as a Social ill and Violation of Many Rights

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Abstract
The reproductive autonomy would be meaningless if the government cannot intervene positively by making necessary resources available to women in need of them. It goes without saying that the undisputable biological facts shows that only women can fall pregnant, and it is their right to choose to have sex whenever they deem it necessary. It is equally within the confines of their right to choose freely to have children and spacing between them. Women go through many untold social challenges and if they are denied exercising reproductive rights that would worsen their predicament. History of the world teaches that women used to be treated as chattels and that is no longer justifiable in our contemporary society that is founded on the doctrine of human rights. This paper is arguing that enough is enough, women ought to be given their true liberation by allowing them the right to choose freely on matters concerning reproduction at least. Denial of reproductive rights threatens not only the right to equality and non-discrimination but also the right to life. This denial of reproductive rights never serves as a deterrence of any kind, but this forces women to seek unsafe procedures that lead to severe injuries and even death. Access to quality reproductive care that is safe and affordable is also part and parcel of the right to health and if denied, the right to health is also violated.

Keywords: Denial of reproductive rights as a violation of many rights

Ref: 092/VIT/26

Regulating the Digital Carbon Footprint: Green Information Systems Governance in India's Copyright Societies

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Abstract
This extended abstract addresses the conference objective of advancing sustainable development through governance innovation, specifically examining how statutory frameworks governing digital infrastructure can be reformed to reduce carbon emissions, a critical nexus of environmental sustainability, institutional design, and digital transformation. The central empirical and theoretical concern is the governance gap: India's copyright societies, statutory bodies registered under Section 33 of the Copyright Act, 1957, operate essential digital portals for royalty management and licencing but face no legal requirement to account for or reduce the carbon emissions from these digital operations. While the Copyright Act meticulously regulates financial and tariff matters, it remains silent on digital environmental accountability, creating a form of "institutional decoupling" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) in which formal governance structures ignore the environmental consequences of mandated digital activities. This study is located at the intersection of Green Information Systems (Green IS), institutional theory, and public sector information management. Green IS research (Melville, 2010; Watson et al., 2010) has traditionally focused on corporate environmental sustainability, leaving the statutory digital infrastructure understudied. Recent scholarship identifies a "physicality bias" in technology governance (Smith, 2022), where regulators attend to physical assets but ignore the carbon footprints of digital services. This study fills this gap by examining copyright societies as information management organisations whose websites function as digital public utilities in the cultural economy. Methodologically, this study employed a multi-method empirical design. First, a census audit of all seven registered copyright society websites was conducted using the Wholegrain Digital Website Carbon Calculator V4, a validated tool based on the sustainable web design methodology. The collected metrics included grams of CO_2 per page view, energy consumption (kWh), energy type (renewable vs. grid), and cleanliness rating (A+ to F). Second, organic traffic data were gathered from Ahrefs.com to estimate the real-world impact. Third, a legal-institutional analysis of the Copyright Act of 1957, Copyright Rules of 2013, and relevant procurement regulations was conducted to identify governance mechanisms. The main arguments and supporting evidence are as follows. First, a majority of India's copyright society websites are high-emitting: 66.7% of societies scored "No Green" on carbon classification, with average emissions for non-green sites at 2.49 g CO_2 per page view, four times the benchmark of 0.615 g for compliant sites; the worst performer emitted 24.53 g CO_2 per page view. Second, green hosting alone is insufficient: half of the audited websites used sustainable energy servers, yet only one achieved a "Green" rating, demonstrating that poorly optimised web design (large assets, inefficient code) overrides the benefits of renewable energy – a finding that challenges simplistic "green hosting" solutions. Third, there is a direct relationship between traffic volume and emissions, justifying proportionate governance: the society with the highest organic traffic produced the largest carbon footprint, accounting for 89% of the total offset burden despite representing only 57% of the sample. Fourth, the governance gap is structural, not accidental: legal analysis reveals that while societies must submit detailed financial and tariff reports, no rule requires digital carbon disclosure, a gap that persists despite India's international commitments to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and its long-term low-carbon strategy.

The main conclusion is that the digital carbon footprints of statutory bodies are not merely technical problems but governance failures requiring regulatory intervention. This study proposes a three-component framework: (1) mandatory digital carbon reporting via amended Copyright Rules; (2) sustainable web design guidelines for statutory portals; and (3) leveraging CSR funds and green procurement rules, along with a proposed "Green Copyright Portal" certification model. The relevance to an international audience is significant: the findings apply beyond India to any jurisdiction where statutory or quasi-public bodies operate digital infrastructure without environmental oversight. As countries worldwide digitise public services, from copyright management to tax filing to healthcare portals, the risk of unregulated digital carbon emissions grows. This study offers a replicable governance model that combines technical auditing, legal reform, and institutional incentives that can be adapted for public sector information systems globally. For developing economies, balancing rapid digital expansion with climate commitments and integrating sustainability into statutory governance frameworks is both urgent and achievable. This research contributes to sustainable development by demonstrating how targeted regulatory interventions can align digital transformation with environmental accountability, providing a pathway for policymakers, information systems practitioners, and sustainability scholars across national contexts.

Keywords: Copyright societies; Digital carbon footprint; Green Information Systems; Public sector information management; Sustainability governance

Ref: 093/VIT/26

Expanding the Expectation-Confirmation Model with Technology Readiness to Predict E-Wallet Continuance Intention: An Empirical Study on OVO Users in Indonesia

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Abstract

The rapid growth of the digital economy has accelerated the adoption of financial technology services and transformed consumer behavior toward cashless transactions. In Indonesia, electronic wallet applications have become an important component of the digital financial ecosystem. However, increasing competition among fintech providers, shifting market dynamics, and changing user preferences have created major challenges in maintaining continuance intention among users. This issue is particularly relevant for the OVO fintech application, which has experienced changes in market position and user retention in recent years. Therefore, understanding the determinants of continuance intention is essential to support the sustainability of fintech services and strengthen long-term customer retention in the digital economy era. This study aims to analyze the determinants of continuance intention in using the OVO fintech application in Indonesia by focusing on the roles of technology readiness, confirmation, perceived security, and user satisfaction. The study develops the Expectation Confirmation Model by emphasizing perceived security as a strategic construct influencing sustainable fintech usage behavior. Specifically, the research examines five relationships: technology readiness toward perceived security, confirmation toward perceived security, perceived security toward user satisfaction, perceived security toward continuance intention, and user satisfaction toward continuance intention. This research employed a quantitative approach involving active OVO users in several major cities in Indonesia. Data were collected through a self-administered digital questionnaire distributed to respondents with experience using OVO for digital financial transactions. A total of 511 valid responses were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling with SmartPLS software. The dominant respondent profile consisted of users aged 26–33 years (36.40%), representing the millennial generation that is highly familiar with digital technology. Most respondents had monthly incomes ranging from IDR 3,000,000–4,000,000 (32.49%), worked as private-sector employees (30.13%), and were married (51.86%). These characteristics indicate that fintech usage is strongly associated with productive-age users who have stable financial activities and frequent digital transaction needs.

The results demonstrate that technology readiness significantly influences perceived security ($\beta = 0.257$; $p = 0.001$), indicating that users who are more prepared to adopt technology tend to perceive fintech services as safer and more reliable. Confirmation also exerts a positive and significant effect on perceived security ($\beta = 0.328$; $p = 0.000$), suggesting that users whose experiences meet or exceed expectations develop stronger confidence in fintech transaction security. Furthermore, perceived security significantly influences user satisfaction ($\beta = 0.291$; $p = 0.000$), confirming that transaction safety and data protection are important determinants of positive user experiences. Perceived security also directly influences continuance intention ($\beta = 0.108$; $p = 0.029$), indicating that users are more likely to continue using fintech services when they trust the security of the platform. In addition, user satisfaction was found to be the strongest predictor of continuance intention ($\beta = 0.550$; $p = 0.000$), confirming that satisfied users are more likely to maintain long-term usage of fintech applications. The findings imply that the sustainability of fintech services cannot rely solely on promotional incentives such as cashback and discounts. Instead, fintech providers must strengthen users' readiness to adopt technology while simultaneously ensuring secure, stable, and trustworthy digital transaction systems. Enhancing transaction security, minimizing operational risks, and improving overall user experience are essential strategies for maintaining customer loyalty and competitiveness in the fintech industry. This study contributes to the development of the Expectation Confirmation Model within the fintech context by highlighting the strategic roles of perceived security and technology readiness in encouraging sustainable digital financial behavior. The findings also provide practical implications for fintech providers and policymakers in designing adaptive, user-oriented, and sustainable digital financial services that support financial inclusion and long-term digital economic growth.

Keywords: Continuance intention, E-wallet, User Satisfaction, Perceived security, Technology readiness

Ref: 094/VIT/26

The role of university social responsibility in shaping students' perceived employability: Integrating digital innovation self-efficacy and institutional reputation - Evidence from universities in Southeast Vietnam

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Abstract
The accelerating pace of digital transformation has fundamentally restructured labor market expectations, placing universities under growing pressure to holistically develop students' adaptability through both social responsibility and digital competence. Drawing on Social Cognitive Theory and Signaling Theory, this study examines the mechanisms through which university social responsibility (USR) shapes students' perceived employability (EMP). The research specifically investigates the mediating role of digital innovation self-efficacy (DIS) and the moderating role of institutional reputation (REP). Data were collected from a valid sample of 419 undergraduate students in Southeast Vietnam and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Results indicate that USR significantly directly drives EMP. Furthermore, REP not only acts as a significant direct predictor of EMP but also positively moderates the USR-EMP relationship. While USR positively influences DIS and both independently enhance EMP, the sequential mediating role of DIS is unsupported. These findings offer strategic insights for higher education governance, emphasizing the need to concurrently institutionalize social responsibility initiatives and targeted digital self-efficacy programming to significantly enhance graduates' labor market competitiveness.

Keywords: Digital Innovation Self-Efficacy, Institutional Reputation, Perceived Employability, PLS-SEM, University Social Responsibility

Ref: 095/VIT/26

How Does India's Act East Policy Drive Its Maritime Diplomacy: A Review from Policy Declaration to Practical Implementation

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Abstract
Using discourse analysis and policy analysis methodologies, this study finds that after a decade of implementation (2014 - 2024), maritime diplomacy under the AEP has enabled India to become increasingly integrated with Eastern countries, while advancing as a major power in the Indo-Pacific. This approach has contributed to "softening" the military presence of the Indian Navy in partner countries, allowing India to achieve both AEP-specific and broader foreign policy goals in its gradual pursuit of becoming a maritime power. The authors of this article are of the view that India's maritime diplomacy has generated spillover effects that contribute to shaping a rules-based order and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Keywords: Act East Policy, India, maritime power, maritime diplomacy, rules based order

Ref: 096/VIT/26

Rainfall-Induced Landslide Triggers during Cyclone Ditwah in Sri Lanka's Central Highlands: A GIS-based Intensity-Duration Threshold Analysis

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Abstract:
Tropical cyclones can cause extreme rainfall, which often leads to hydrological and geomorphological hazards including floods, slope failures and landslides in mountainous regions. However, cyclone-specific rainfall thresholds for landslide initiation remain poorly constrained in many tropical environments particularly in data-scare areas. This study presents a qualitative and quantitative analysis of rainfall-induced landslide triggers associated with Cyclone Ditwah in November 2025 in in the Central Highlands of Sri Lanka. Specifically, it examines three of the most severely affected Divisional Secretariat Divisions: Ganga Ihala Korale, Uda Palatha, and Kothmale. Using CHIRPS daily rainfall data, including a 2015-2024 baseline period and the even period from 26 November to 1 December 2025, together with landslide inventory data obtained from the National Building Research Organisation (NBRO), rainfall intensity-duration (I-D) relationships were identified. The analysis indicates that intense rainfall exceeding approximately 150-200 mm within one to two days can act as a critical trigger for landslide occurrence in the study area. Accordingly, a power-law rainfall threshold model was developed to present the relationship between rainfall intensity and duration: $I = 165.00 \times D^{-0.05}$. GIS-based spatial overlay and kernel density analyses revealed a strong spatial correspondence between high-rainfall zones, particularly during the peak rainfall period of 27–28 November 2025 and landslide clusters. The relationship was especially evident in Uda Palatha and Kothmale, where steep slopes exceeding 30° and cumulative rainfall effects amplified slope instability. The derived rainfall threshold is broadly consistent with the NBRO red-level warning criterion ≥150 mm/24 hours. Field observation and photographic survey further confirmed that landslides occurred predominantly on steep slopes and along natural drainage pathways where connected surface runoff and soil saturation likely contributed to slope failure. This research provides an initial cyclone-specific rainfall threshold for landslide initiation in Sri Lanka by integrating satellite-derived precipitation data, landslide inventory records and GIS-based spatial analysis and field validation. The research also highlight the importance of integrating landslide-risk information into sustainable development planning in mountain environments. Identifying rainfall thresholds and spatial landslide clusters can support safer settlement planning, infrastructure development, road network management, and watershed conservation. In this sense, the study contributes to climate-resilient development by linking scientific hazard assessment with practical decision-making for vulnerable communities and local authorities. These outcomes are particularly relevant to SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 13 on climate action, and SDG 15 on life on land. Overall, the findings provide practical evidence for strengthening landslide early warning systems, guiding sustainable land-use planning and supporting disaster risk reduction in climate-vulnerable tropical mountainous regions.

Keywords: Cyclone Ditwah, GIS-Based Spatial Analysis, Intensity-Duration Thresholds, Rainfall-Induced Landslides, Sri Lanka's Central Highlands

Ref: 097/VIT/26

The impact of perceived university social responsibility on lecturers' education for sustainable development implementation behavior in Vietnam

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Abstract
This study addresses the empirical gap regarding the mechanism through which university social responsibility (USR) commitments translate into the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) implementation behavior of lecturers in Vietnam. Using a stratified sampling method, data were collected from 354 lecturers and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that perceived USR positively influences ESD implementation behavior. Furthermore, the serial mediating mechanism through university reputation and organizational commitment is statistically supported. Notably, individual attitudes towards sustainable development moderate the effect, increasing the magnitude of the relationships. The study presents strategic managerial implications to help higher education institutions to integrate USR into core business processes to improve innovations in teaching methods.

Keywords: Education for sustainable development, implementation behavior, organizational commitment, sustainable development attitude, university social responsibility

Ref: 098/VIT/26

Enhancing Crime Analysis through Structured Information Flow and Reporting: A Framework for the South African Police Service (SAPS) CIMAC

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Abstract
Crime analysis has become an essential component of contemporary policing, enabling evidence-based decision-making, strategic resource deployment, and proactive crime prevention. Within the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre (CIMAC) is responsible for collecting, processing, analysing, and disseminating crime-related information to support operational and strategic policing activities. Despite its central mandate, CIMAC faces persistent challenges, including fragmented information flows, inconsistent reporting practices, and weak feedback mechanisms. This study addresses these challenges by proposing a structured framework to improve information flow and reporting processes within SAPS CIMAC, thereby strengthening the overall effectiveness of crime analysis. The study is informed by the theoretical and empirical concern that ineffective information management systems and organisational communication barriers undermine the ability of crime analysis units to contribute meaningfully to policing outcomes. In the broader literature, crime analysis is closely associated with intelligence-led policing, which emphasises the systematic use of data and analysis to guide operational decisions. Scholars highlight that effective crime analysis depends on integrated information systems, standardised reporting protocols, and strong communication between analysts and end-users. However, in many developing policing contexts, including South Africa, these principles are not consistently operationalised due to structural inefficiencies, resource limitations, and organisational silos. This creates a gap between the potential and actual impact of crime analysis. The present study contributes to this discourse by offering a context-specific framework tailored to the operational realities of SAPS CIMAC. The study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the experiences and perspectives of practitioners involved in crime analysis within SAPS. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with crime analysts, operational police officers, and relevant stakeholders within CIMAC environments. In addition, a review of policy documents, internal reporting guidelines, and existing literature was conducted to contextualise the findings.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns, systemic challenges, and areas requiring intervention. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of both the technical and organisational dimensions of information flow and reporting within crime analysis. The findings reveal several challenges that limit the effectiveness of CIMAC. Information flow across units is often fragmented, leading to delays and inconsistencies in the dissemination of critical intelligence. There is a lack of standardised reporting formats, resulting in variability in the quality and usability of analytical outputs. Limited feedback from operational units constrains analysts' ability to refine their products and respond to the evolving needs of policing environments. Insufficient integration between information systems further complicates data sharing and analysis. These challenges collectively reduce the operational impact of crime analysis and hinder its ability to support proactive policing strategies. This study proposes a framework to enhance information flow and reporting within SAPS CIMAC. The framework rests on three core pillars: structured information flow, standardised reporting, and continuous feedback mechanisms. Structured information flow emphasises establishing clear communication channels and protocols for data sharing across units. Standardised reporting focuses on developing and implementing uniform templates and guidelines to ensure consistency and clarity in analytical outputs. Continuous feedback mechanisms aim to institutionalise two-way communication between analysts and operational personnel, enabling ongoing improvement of analytical products. Together, these components form a cohesive model designed to improve coordination, enhance data utilisation, and strengthen the overall effectiveness of crime analysis. The study concludes that improving information flow and reporting processes is critical to maximising the value of crime analysis within SAPS. The proposed framework not only addresses existing operational challenges but also provides a scalable model that can be adapted to similar policing contexts internationally. Its relevance extends beyond South Africa, as many law enforcement agencies globally face comparable issues related to information fragmentation and underutilisation of analytical capacity. By offering both theoretical insights and practical solutions, this study contributes to the advancement of crime analysis as a key pillar of modern policing and supports ongoing efforts to strengthen intelligence-led approaches worldwide.

Keywords: Crime analysis; Crime data management; CIMAC; Information flow; Policing; SAPS

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Conceptual Competence in Homicide Investigations: Practitioner Understanding of Core Forensic Principles

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Abstract
Conceptual competence is central to the scientific validity and interpretive integrity of homicide investigations, yet there is limited empirical evidence examining how frontline practitioners understand and apply core forensic principles in practice. While existing forensic and policing literature often assumes that practitioners possess adequate conceptual knowledge, this assumption remains largely untested, particularly in relation to how such knowledge informs investigative decision-making. This study addresses this theoretical and empirical gap by critically examining practitioner interpretations of key concepts, including criminal investigation, forensic investigation, Locard's Exchange Principle, identification, and individualisation, and by situating these interpretations within broader debates on forensic reasoning, scientific literacy, and the theory–practice nexus in policing. Drawing on scholarship in forensic science and intelligence-led policing, the study highlights the importance of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical expertise to ensure reliable evidence interpretation and sound investigative outcomes, particularly in complex cases such as homicide investigations where evidentiary accuracy is paramount. In addition, the study recognises that contemporary policing environments are increasingly data-driven and complex, requiring practitioners not only to follow procedures but also to apply critical thinking and scientific reasoning when interpreting forensic evidence and reconstructing crime events. This study adopts an interpretivist qualitative design to explore the subjective meanings practitioners attach to core forensic principles. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 36 crime scene practitioners, including detectives, first responders, crime scene investigators, and forensic support personnel, providing diverse perspectives from across the investigative process. The inclusion of participants from multiple roles allows for a holistic understanding of how conceptual knowledge is interpreted across different stages of the investigative process, from initial response to forensic analysis and case development. The data were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's framework, allowing for the identification of patterns, inconsistencies, and underlying assumptions in practitioner understanding. The findings reveal that practitioner knowledge is often fragmented, procedural, and shaped predominantly by experiential learning rather than formal theoretical grounding. While practitioners demonstrated familiarity with forensic processes, their conceptual understanding of foundational principles was frequently limited or inconsistent. Notably, significant misconceptions emerged in relation to the distinction between identification and individualisation, with these concepts often conflated or applied inaccurately in practice. Locard's Exchange Principle was generally understood in intuitive or simplified terms, lacking depth in its scientific application, while forensic investigation was commonly reduced to the technical task of evidence collection rather than a broader analytical and interpretive process.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that limited exposure to continuous professional development and insufficient emphasis on theoretical training contribute to the persistence of these misconceptions, thereby reinforcing a practice culture that prioritises routine procedures over conceptual accuracy. These findings suggest that although practitioners are operationally competent, there is a critical gap in conceptual competence that may affect the quality of forensic reasoning and, ultimately, the reliability of investigative outcomes. Such gaps may also increase the risk of cognitive bias, misinterpretation of evidence, and challenges in court where the articulation and defence of forensic conclusions require strong conceptual grounding. In response, the study argues for a more integrated approach to forensic training and practice, emphasising the need for theory-informed professional development, enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration between forensic scientists and investigators, and organisational reforms that prioritise conceptual clarity alongside procedural proficiency. This includes revising training curricula to incorporate deeper engagement with forensic theory, promoting reflective practice, and strengthening knowledge exchange between academic institutions and policing agencies.

The study concludes that strengthening conceptual competence is essential for improving forensic interpretation, supporting evidence-based investigations, and reducing the risk of misinterpretation in homicide cases. Importantly, the findings have broader relevance beyond the immediate context, as similar theory–practice gaps have been identified in policing systems internationally, particularly in environments characterised by resource constraints and operational pressures. This suggests that the challenges identified are not unique to a single policing context but reflect a wider global issue in the professionalisation and scientific development of forensic investigation practices. By providing empirical insight into how forensic knowledge is understood and applied in practice, this study contributes to ongoing global efforts to enhance the scientific foundations of policing and improve the overall quality and credibility of criminal investigations. The study supports the advancement of more scientifically grounded, accountable, and effective investigative practices that align with international standards of forensic excellence.

Keywords: Conceptual competence; Crime scene investigation; Forensic principles; Homicide investigation; Identification; Individualisation; Locard's Exchange Principle;

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Multi- Temporal Satellite and GIS- Based Assessment of Landslide Dynamics before and after Cyclone Ditwah's Extreme Rainfall in Sri Lanka's Central Highlands

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Abstract

Understanding landscape dynamics before and after extreme rainfall events is critical for cyclone-induced landslide assessment. This study quantifies pre- and post-Cyclone Dithwah (November 2025) landslide dynamics in Sri Lanka's Central Highlands (Kothmale, Udaipalatha, and Ganga Ihala Korale Divisions) using multi-temporal Sentinel-2 imagery (10 m) and GIS-based spatial analysis. Supervised classification (Maximum Likelihood) of pre- and post-cyclone LULC revealed significant changes: forest decreased by 20.66 km² (-9.0%) and barren land increased by 1.75 km² (+65.3%) directly indicating landslide damaged and disturbed areas. Field assessment at Ulapane, Thawalantenne, and Ramboda Horawanguwa documented complete destruction of the A5 main road, upcountry railway line, sawmills, vehicle sales centers, and 18 fatalities in Ulapane alone. In Ramboda, a 0.36 km landslide (7,306 m²) buried four houses, killing 15 people, and blocked the Gampola-Nuwara Eliya road for eight days. Infrastructure assessment showed road reconstruction within 14–18 days, but water and electricity restoration took up to one month in some areas. Kernel density and hotspot analyses identified Kotmale as the highest-risk zone (99% confidence hotspots), while weighted overlay risk mapping (slope 40%, rainfall 30%, land use 20%, elevation 1%) classified 45–50% of the study area as high-risk red zones. This paper provides the first quantitative pre-versus-post cyclone LULC change analysis for this region, demonstrating that multi-temporal satellite assessment combined with field-validated infrastructure damage data is essential for evidence-based post-disaster recovery planning.

Keywords: Multi-Temporal Analysis, Landslide Dynamics, Pre-Post Cyclone Assessment, LULC Change Detection, Infrastructure Damage

Ref: 101/VIT/26

Post-Landslide Damage Assessment and Development of a GIS-Based Decision Support System for Landslide Risk Reduction in Sri Lanka's Central Highlands

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Abstract

Landslides are becoming a bigger threat to development in tropical mountain areas, especially in Sri Lanka's central highlands, where extreme weather events and anthropogenic pressures intensify slope instability. This study assesses the impacts of Cyclone Ditwah (November 2025) and develops a Geographic Information System-based Decision Support System (GIS-DSS) for landslide risk reduction. Using multi-temporal Sentinel-2 and PlanetScope imagery combined with field-validated GPS surveys, land use/land cover (LULC) changes were analyzed. Newly formed barren land was identified as a proxy for landslide occurrences. Spatial analyses including hotspot mapping, infrastructure exposure assessment, and network-based accessibility modelling were conducted to evaluate risk patterns. The study found that newly formed barren land can be a sign of landslide occurrences. Spatial analyses were done to evaluate risk patterns, including mapping hotspots, assessing infrastructure exposure, and modeling network-based accessibility. The results showed that landslides are often clustered in certain areas and are influenced by topography, drainage, and land use changes. Significant impacts on vegetation, infrastructure, and emergency service accessibility were observed. The integrated GIS-DSS translates complex spatial data into actionable outputs, including evacuation routes, priority risk zones, and relief shelter suitability maps, directly supporting disaster response and long-term planning. This research bridges a critical gap between scientific hazard assessment and operational decision-making. It demonstrates that integrating remote sensing, spatial modeling, and DSS frameworks enhances resilience planning in climate-vulnerable regions. By leveraging advances in remote sensing and spatial modeling, we can create more resilient communities and reduce the risk of landslides in tropical mountain regions.

Keywords: Landslide Risk Reduction, GIS-Based DSS, Remote Sensing, LULC Change Detection, Accessibility Analysis, Disaster Management

Ref: 102/VIT/26

GIS based spatial analysis of landslides susceptibility mapping: A case study from Nuwara Eliya District, Sri Lanka.

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Abstract
A natural hazard is any phenomenon or process of natural origin that may adversely impact human life, economic activity, structures, or the environment. Of the various hazards mentioned above, landslides are known to be one of the important natural hazards occurring in Sri Lanka, and this leads to adverse social, economic, and environmental implications. About 20,000 km2 of land within ten different districts of the country has been identified as prone to landslides. As a result of the hilly topography, steep slopes, rainfall, and environmental sensitivity of the region, Nuwara Eliya District is considered one of the regions of Sri Lanka most susceptible to landslides. A Geographic Information System (GIS)-based multi-criteria evaluation approach was adopted in this study in order to determine and recognize landslide-prone zones in the Nuwara Eliya district.

The objectives of this study were to create geospatial information that could be used to reduce the effect of the landslide hazards on the environment and humans. The use of a GIS-based approach in this kind of study is very important since it allows the consideration of different spatial criteria in scientific hazard zonation and risk reduction. The following physical and environmental parameters were considered as important landslide parameters that determine landslide susceptibility within the study area. They include: slope, altitude, topographic wetness index, vegetation cover in the year 2025, and annual mean precipitation from 2015 to 2025. All these parameters were considered since they influence the slope stability, saturation of soils, surface runoff and surface protection. The preparation of these parameters was done by creating their raster data sets and integrating them into the GIS system. Weighted overlay approach was used in the analysis of these datasets. From the results obtained from the analysis, it is clear that landslides are more likely to occur in the DSDs of Ambagamuwa, Kothmale, and Hanguranketha in Nuwara Eliya District. It was also observed in the raster-based weighted overlay analysis that out of a total land area of 5,207.26 km^2 in Nuwara Eliya District, 1626.46km^2 belongs to landslide susceptible zones of moderate degree of susceptibility. It can also be noted that among all the DSDs in Nuwara Eliya District. The current geospatial investigation can significantly contribute to non-structural approaches to reduce the hazard of landslides through vulnerability mapping and choosing appropriate locations for adopting structural methods. The results derived from this investigation can also be used to assist land use management, infrastructure development, environmental preservation, and disaster preparedness in landslide prone areas. Hence, this investigation is essential for initiating the process of disaster management cycle particularly in terms of prevention, preparedness, and risk reduction in hazard prone environments in the Nuwara Eliya District.

Keywords: Geographic Information System (GIS), Landslide Susceptibility, Multi-Criteria Analysis, Nuwara Eliya District, Weighted Overlay Analysis

Ref: 103/VIT/26

Local Knowledge, Global Lessons: Role of Community-Based Disaster Education in Southern Sri Lanka for Climate-Resilient Development

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Abstract
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) education has been institutionalized in the formal schooling system of Sri Lanka after the tsunami of 2004 in the Indian Ocean, however there remains significant disparity between the disaster knowledge that is contained within the curriculum and the actions that are taken by students when disaster occurs. This study examines the effectiveness of school-based DRR education and explores the inter-connectedness of knowledge-action gaps from the perspectives of a psychosocial, structural and epistemological approach to producing effective practical DRR outcomes among students in flood prone rural communities of the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Based on Social Learning Theory and The Health Belief Model, the study is designed into qualitative research design and employs data gathered from three Focus Group Discussions carried out in secondary schools in Galle, Matara and Hambantota districts, and six Expert Interviews with DRR professionals and experts, four Key Informant Interviews with the school administrators and community representatives. Braun and Clarke's framework of thematic analysis was used for analysis of all data. These findings show four interwoven patterns. In the first place, the national DRR curriculum is not situationally adjusted to meet the flood experiences lived by the students in the immediate surroundings of Southern Sri Lanka and the critical knowledge of the local hydrological dynamics of the Nilwala river networks, seasonal flood risk calendars, etc. are systematically missing in the curriculum and from the teaching materials. Second, household preparedness practices are far more community-transmitted and reactive rather than educationally induced and proactive; for instance, vertical shifting of household goods and dependence on informal upstream flood communication systems are practices stemming from experiences with floods across generations within the community, rather than from educationally-directed preparedness programming in schools. Third, psychosocial dimensions such as risk normalization, fatalism, which may follow from chronic flood exposure, as well as lack of emotional preparedness and the collective self-efficacy also interact with structural barriers like precarious agricultural livelihoods, in addition to cognitive awareness of flood risk. Fourth, the indigenous knowledge systems must be acknowledged and incorporated into formal DRR knowledge systems, because there are some other local 'informal environmental knowledge systems' that exist at the local level in rural communities of the study area such as the local level 'flood behaviour literacy' and community-organized early warning networks which are legitimate and powerful pedagogical resources. The implications of these outcomes have significant consequences with regards to DRR education policy and curriculum transformation in Sri Lanka and other DRR settings in the Global South. There are four recommendations in the study. Localizing DRR curriculum at the district level, integrating community environmental knowledge element into the school curriculum, using simulation and participatory teaching in school, and institutionalizing the role of school security committees as an active part of districts' DRR-related systems. The study provides fresh empirical data for international discussions on climate-resilient education, through a novel vision on the implementation of DRR education in rural communities as a knowledge-action gap that can be addressed through a context-sensitive approach, a behaviour-oriented approach and a community-oriented approach.

Keywords: Community resilience, Disaster preparedness, Disaster risk reduction education, Knowledge-action gap, Southern Sri Lanka

Ref: 104/VIT/26

Unveiling the Digital Disruption–Productivity Nexus: A Bibliometric Synthesis of Social Media Addiction, Cyberloafing, and Employee Performance

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Abstract
This study delivers a pioneering bibliometric synthesis that systematically maps the intellectual landscape at the intersection of employee productivity, social media addiction, and cyberloafing over the period 2000–2024. Drawing from 1,426 peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus, we employ an integrated toolchain comprising Bibliometrix (R), VOSviewer, and thematic Sankey mapping to uncover structural patterns, thematic shifts, and emerging research trajectories. The results reveal three major intellectual clusters: (1) techno-behavioral antecedents of cyberloafing, (2) psychosocial mechanisms underlying digital addiction, and (3) organizational responses focused on digital well-being and hybrid work. A notable thematic evolution is observed—from early concerns with internet misuse to contemporary debates around digital wellness and the productivity paradox in post-pandemic work environments. The study highlights critical research gaps, including limited multi-level modeling, underrepresentation of non-Western contexts, and fragmented integration of digital behavior with productivity outcomes. By consolidating disciplinary silos across psychology, information systems, and organizational behavior, this review proposes a forward-looking research agenda and offers evidence-based managerial implications to foster ethically grounded, digitally balanced, and high-performing workplaces.

Keywords: employee productivity; social media addiction; cyberloafing; digital behavior; hybrid work; thematic evolution; bibliometric analysis; workplace well-being.

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Artificial Intelligence for Sustainability Problem-Solving: A Model for Practitioners

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Abstract
The accelerating impacts of climate change, rapid urbanization, and environmental degradation are reshaping the global sustainability workforce. The World Economic Forum reports that demand for sustainability-trained professionals has risen by approximately 40% since 2015, yet only a small fraction of the labor force possesses the required interdisciplinary competencies. Concurrently, Deloitte Insights (2026) highlights a widening gap in artificial intelligence (AI) literacy within sustainability-related roles, particularly in climate analytics, ESG reporting, infrastructure planning, and environmental risk assessment. This dual skills deficit, limited sustainability fluency among technologists, and insufficient AI capability among sustainability practitioners pose a significant barrier to effective place-based problem-solving.

This paper presents a practitioner-centered, workshop-based model for integrating AI into sustainability decision-making. Unlike institutional or center-based educational frameworks, the proposed model emphasizes hands-on, rapid skill transfer tailored to professionals operating in geographically specific contexts such as urban planning, environmental consulting, engineering, property development, and governmental compliance. The model is demonstrated through a case-based prototype workshop conducted in Vietnam, focusing on AI-assisted flood risk and climate resilience mapping in the Mekong Delta, one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions.
The workshop integrates open-source geospatial tools, such as QGIS and Google Earth Engine, with satellite datasets (Sentinel-2, SRTM elevation data, CHIRPS rainfall data) to construct a place-based flood-susceptibility model. Machine learning techniques, including Random Forest (RF) and Support Vector Machines (SVM), are introduced to classify flood risk zones based on elevation, hydrological proximity, and rainfall intensity. Remote sensing workflows incorporate land-use/land-cover (LULC) classification and change detection to support infrastructure planning and climate adaptation strategies. In parallel, Large Language Models (LLMs) are employed to translate spatial risk outputs into policy-ready resilience recommendations, environmental compliance drafts, and adaptation briefs aligned with national climate frameworks.

The model moves beyond theoretical AI training by embedding practitioners directly within applied analytical pipelines, from data ingestion and preprocessing to spatial modeling, visualization, and regulatory reporting. Participants learn structured prompt engineering for sustainability scenarios, enabling them to generate context-sensitive adaptation strategies, infrastructure planning insights, and risk communication summaries. By combining geospatial analytics, remote sensing, machine learning, and generative AI, the workshop framework equips professionals with hybrid competencies that reflect the evolving demands of climate governance.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that approximately 3.3 billion people are highly vulnerable to climate impacts, with Southeast Asia among the most exposed regions. Addressing such vulnerability requires not only technological innovation but also the democratization of applied AI skills among frontline practitioners. The workshop-based model proposed here offers a scalable and context-aware pathway for operationalizing AI in sustainability practice. It positions AI not as an abstract innovation, but as an augmentation tool that enhances analytical rigor, accelerates evidence synthesis, and strengthens resilience-oriented planning.
By prioritizing skill transfer, open-source tools, and place-based applications, this model contributes a practical framework for closing the AI-sustainability capability gap and enabling climate-responsive decision-making in vulnerable regions.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, data analytics, manpower training

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