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The Importance of Wine Tourism in Georgia

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Since the last century, the world has seen a sharp progress in all fields. If in the 19th century it was impossible for the middle class to travel around the world, the technological progress of the 20th century made it possible. Because of this, many countries have used their geographical location and history as a catalyst for tourism.

For countries where production is not developed, it is important to promote the service sector, including tourism services. In recent years, tourism in Georgia has developed at a rapid pace. According to the data of 2019, the expenses of those who came to Georgia on a tourist visit amounted to approximately 9 billion GEL, which was almost 20% of the GDP, and the number of visits in total exceeded the 9 million marks. Compared to 2018, the mentioned data increased by 7.5% in the revenue part, and by 10.6% in the visitor's part.

As mentioned above, the history of the country plays an important role in the development of tourism. As a result of archeological research, it was established that wine was made on the territory of Georgia as early as 8000 years ago, which is the oldest in the world according to the Guinness Book of Records. This fact contributed to the promotion of Georgia.

The aim of the paper is to determine how wine tourism developed after 2017, what factors influence the development of wine tourism and what can be done to promote the development of wine tourism in Georgia.

The resources of the National Statistical Service of Georgia and the National Tourism Administration were used in the research.

Keywords: Tourism, Economy, Wine Tourism

A Method for Measuring 21st Century Skills

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Abstract

This paper presents a new and innovative approach to assessing non-technical skills in university programs for computing students. Non-technical skills, also known as professional, transferable or 21st century skills are recognized worldwide as very important for university graduates. These skills include communication, problem solving and the ability to function successfully on a multi-disciplinary team. While academic programs worldwide strive to develop a solid professional skills base in students, these skills are notoriously challenging to teach and assess. This paper presents the development of the Computing Professional Skills Assessment (CPSA), a performance assessment of the six professional skills outcomes identified by ABET, the accreditation board for engineering and technology, for the computing discipline. The CPSA is an innovative approach devised by the authors that assesses all six professional skills simultaneously. Existing methods assess the skills individually and distinct from each other. Disparate measurement tools that were not designed to complement one another and that rely heavily on perceptions are inadequate for data-driven curriculum decision making as well as course or program level assessment of student achievement. The CPSA is the only direct method in literature that can be used to measure a targeted set of learning outcomes simultaneously for both course and program-level assessment purposes. The approach consists of a performance task, a rubric and an implementation method and these are described here. The CPSA has been developed in an iterative manner and results suggest that it can accurately and consistently elicit and measure the targeted professional skills. While developed for the computing discipline the method can be adapted for other disciplines.

Keywords: assessment, quality assurance, professional skills, evaluation

Biography

Maurice Danaher is an Associate Professor in Information Technology at Zayed University. He received his PhD in Information Systems in 2003 from Swinburne Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Australia.. His research interests are in Information Technology and Quality Assurance in IT Education. He has published his work in these areas and has over 50 refereed publications. He has won a number of grants in the UAE totaling over US\$500,000 for research into quality assurance of IT education.

Smartness and Gamification in Contemporary Society

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Abstract

In recent years, several debates focused on the concept and on the phenomenon of the “smart city” have flourished in different sectors. Among the measures recently proposed with the aim of modifying the behavior of the social actors in order to make them virtuous and smart, the game is increasingly becoming more and more important. Through a theoretical analysis conducted in the perspective of the general sociology, this intervention aims to investigate the relationship between smart city and gamification process emerging in every social sphere and, particularly, in urban context. The aim is to draw a critical analysis on the opportunity of using game in the smart city context and, above all, of society ’s gamification dynamics, in order to highlight the critical issues arising from a specific interpretation of the smart city-gamification relationship.

Keywords: gamification; smart city; game; smartness; smart society; sociology.

Analysis of Energy Companies' Stock Performance in Russia, China and Australia Under Energy Sanctions Against Russia

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Abstract

War have affected the world economic. The war between Russia and Ukraine have cause an energy sanction against Russia by European Union (EU). Several studies have showed that the war and energy sanction can affect the energy companies' stock performance around the world. This study aims to fill the gap of the influences on the energy companies stock performance in Russia, China and Australia after the energy sanction since Russia, China and Australia are world top five gas exporters. The companies stock sample covers from August, 2021 to September 2022, which have 80 companies in China, 17 companies in Russia and 127 companies in Australia. The study used the event study approach to estimate the CAR (cumulative abnormal return) of stock performance based on the Fama-French three-factor model. The empirical result shows that the stock performance of energy company in Russia are influenced and fell while energy companies' stock performance in China and Australia rose, and by comparing the CAR and t value between Russia, China and Australia, it shows that how effected it is in this order: Russia, Australia, China. This suggests that the war and energy sanction causes financial loss to Russia, but third party countries benefit from it.

Keywords: Energy sanction, stock performance, energy company, event study

JEL Classification: G01, G30, F00, F51

Decentralization, Local Government Reforms and Regional Inequalities: the Greek Case

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Abstract

This paper aims to assess the decentralization process in Greece by taking into consideration the perceptions of the regional politicians that are tasked with its implementation. Greece has implemented extensive decentralization during the past 25 years through two local government reforms, the Kapodistrias plan (1998) and the Kallikrates Project (2011). These processes of decentralization amalgamated successively the huge number of 5.775 municipalities and communities into 325 enlarged municipalities, while also institutionally establishing the second tier of local government: the 13 Greek regions.

Nevertheless, decentralization measures such as the Regional Autonomy Index (RAI) portray Greece as one of the more centralized European countries. Despite the Greek government transferring an unparalleled set of rights and powers to the municipalities and regions, local authorities in Greece still rely heavily on fiscally centralized revenue sources, thereby achieving a limited extent of tax or other forms of fiscal autonomy. Most importantly, there are competences shared between the central government and sub-national authorities on different policy issues, allowing the central government to have a hand in the daily management of regional and local issues. The present paper thus intends to contribute to the ongoing worldwide discussion on decentralization by filling up some of the gaps in the existing research for Greece and by providing some perspectives from a fiscally centralized nation.

Keywords: Decentralization, reforms, inequalities, Greece

Evidence Based Social Emergencies Policy Improvement: Engagement, Methodology, Data and Technologies Gaining Feasibility for Challenges – The DECIDO Project Turin Pilot

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Abstract

Public administrations are an integral part of every state, which is currently changing to gradually improve weak policies in emergencies management. In particular policies addressing emergencies such as floods, poverty and Ukrainian refugees are very hot issues in most of European countries. Citizens engagement methodologies, data and digital technologies are there to support this endeavor, yet the opportunities they offer are not still fully exploited in Europe and a lack between administration perception and citizens needs is still there. In parallel, digital transformation, intensified by the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, is both imperative and inevitable for almost every aspect of the modern world and economy but a big issue remains to be addressed to boost the citizens participation in policy lifecycle development and in their evidencing real achievements. This creates both new needs and solutions for public administrations. This paper aims to identify the open needs encountered by public administrations, involving reflections on available methodologies, data, and tools towards evidence-based policy making tailored to these needs. To accomplish that, knowledge, as represented by extensive desk research, was integrated with experience going on in the city of Turin, including the outcome of qualitative interviews with public administration experts. Key findings are discussed in detail concluding with a public administration needs ecosystem, mapping the needs, and uncovering similarities to support the replication of practices and procedures in different policy making settings.

Keywords: public administration, needs, public sector, digitalization, policy making, decido project, emergency management.

Towards Sustainable Artificial Intelligence: An Overview of Environmental Protection Uses and Issues

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used to create more sustainable production methods and model climate change, making it a valuable tool in the fight against environmental degradation. This paper describes the paradox of an energy-consuming technology serving the ecological challenges of tomorrow. The study provides an overview of the sectors that use AI-based solutions for environmental protection. It draws on numerous examples from AI for Green players to present use cases and concrete examples. In the second part of the study, the negative impacts of AI on the environment and the emerging technological solutions to support Green AI are examined. It is also shown that the research on less energy-consuming AI is motivated more by cost and energy autonomy constraints than by environmental considerations. This leads to a rebound effect that favors an increase in the complexity of models. Finally, the need to integrate environmental indicators into algorithms is discussed. The environmental dimension is part of the broader ethical problem of AI, and addressing it is crucial for ensuring the sustainability of AI in the long term.

CCS CONCEPTS • *Artificial intelligence* • *Impact on the environment* • *Sustainability*

Encouraging Public Participation With Open Science

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Abstract

Governance has been implemented as a management model that invites all relevant parties to the table in decision-making processes. The governance model has been expanded at the global level over the years with the contributions of the World Bank, OECD, European Union, UN and WTO. During this time, the industry did not encounter any problems in participation in agenda-setting processes related to its power. However, this is not the same for citizens, societal stakeholders and the workforce. These stakeholders have difficulty making their voices heard. At this point, open science appears as an important initiative that encourages public engagement in policy-making. According to the OECD's definition, open science encompasses unhindered access to scientific articles, access to data from public research, and collaborative research enabled by ICT tools and incentives. Open science helps disseminate the latest knowledge by providing open access and sharing scientific data. Thus, open science increases creativity and drives the wide range of adoption of open practices. After the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become much more important to make policy in the light of scientific results that have become more accessible by open science.

Open science encourages the participation of all stakeholders in policy-making via digital tools. Scientific data and public research are made available on digital platforms in open science. In addition, draft policy documents or legislation in the enquiry process are also made available to these stakeholders. In this way, all interested parties can evaluate data and comment on policy documents via digital tools. Thus, public participation in agenda-setting processes will increase with the help of scientific research and digitalisation.

Public engagement enhances responsible governance. It will ensure the efficiency and relevance of research. Increasing public participation improves the quality of public services. Open and inclusive policy-making improves democratic performance and increases transparency and accountability.

Keywords: Governance, Open Science, Policy-Making, Public Participation, Agenda-Setting.

Evaluation of Hiking Trails In Terms of Tourism: Beyşehir Example

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Abstract

In recent years, many alternative tourism types have emerged both in the world and in our country. In time, people's orientation towards nature is increasing rapidly in their travel preferences. In order to meet the changing demand, ecotourism centers are being discovered in our country and added to the tourism supply. The aim of this study, which is discussed because of the necessity of evaluating this potential of Beyşehir, which is rich in natural and cultural resources, with touristic product diversification policies; To create alternative walking routes in Beyşehir. In the research, the data obtained as a result of the document analysis method and the expeditions to the region were evaluated. Walking routes in Beyşehir were included in the study.

As a result, the current status of hiking activities/events, the problems facing these activities/events, hikers' preferences and heavily used hiking trails in Beyşehir have been identified. Therefore, the development of a management system related to trekking activities can make these activities more sustainable.

Keywords: Alternative Tourism, trekking, Beyşehir

How do Entrepreneurs Lead in Current Today's Fourth Industrial Revolution World?

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Abstract

In the current period, major changes are affecting almost every aspect of life, forcing companies to adjust their strategic management directions to cope with this changing environment.

This research focuses on the entrepreneurs' ability to bring innovation into the organization, which is a vital element for firms to cope with constantly changing environments, by examining their leadership traits in the past and evaluating how they have changed throughout the years.

The main data analysis tool was Natural Language Processing (NLP), which was able to locate leadership attributions automatically within an enormous corpus of written texts. An analysis was conducted of entrepreneurship leadership attributes during the last four industrial revolutions, from the 19th century to the present. The output addresses a gap in the current knowledge and examines how entrepreneurial leadership attributes can be adapted to better cope with the fast-paced technology environment and promotes an innovation mindset within companies.

Furthermore, the article describes an innovative approach for conducting qualitative research in the field of entrepreneurship, which uses advanced tools of machine learning and artificial intelligence to enable us to analyze a vast amount of data in order to verify theories or phenomena.

There are several leadership attributes that are prevalent in the fourth industrial revolution, such as holistic vision, integrator, influencer, prioritize, and listener. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs tend to be open-minded, avoid rejecting innovation from other firms and are eager to share their experiences with the adjacent technology ecosystem. A high emphasis was found on coaching attributes, which implies the need for continuous learning in the current era.

Public Perspective of Migration: The Case Study of Teplice City

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Abstract

Czechs negatively viewed third-world immigrants, especially those from the Middle East of Africa. This is supported by evidence of results stemming from the Eurobarometer. Several authors, including Eurobarometer, indicated that socio-economic factors of respondents highly leverage this phenomenon. The article is considered a pilot one as it will partially contribute to the more substantial research on the perception of immigration. The aim is to analyse whether we should understand the immigration perception through the security frame or the racist/xenophobia frame and the causes. The paper will illustrate the findings of people's assumptions and misunderstandings of immigration. The study case aims at the city of Teplice, which is located in one of the poorest regions in the Czech Republic; therefore, it is a suitable case for confirming or refuting the claim that the lower socio-economic background of citizens mostly causes negative attitudes. The article concludes by confirming the assumption and relation between the perception of immigration and the respondents' socio-economic background.

Keywords: migration, immigration, Czech, security frame, racist frame

Implementation of Project Management Knowledge Areas by Project Managers

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Abstract

Academic and professional literature records the primary areas of interest within a discipline and how they change across time. However, it does not always keep up to date with the practical needs of various industries. This article discusses the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) areas and their implementation among active project managers (PMs). The PMBOK guide defines terms, guidelines, and knowledge areas within project management. A survey was conducted among 117 active PMs who were asked to rate the degree to which they implement the PMBOK areas. PMs reported integration, cost, and procurement as being implemented by them to the greatest extent, while their implementation of quality, scope, and stakeholders was not reported. This points out the need for reinforcement among PMs. No correlation was found between the degree to which additional knowledge was implemented by PMs and the degree to which the knowledge areas were covered in the last generation of textbooks. Textbooks do not align with the PMs' implementation in their working fields. The study identified gaps between the degree to which the knowledge areas of project management were implemented and the importance that the authors of the textbooks attach to the above areas of knowledge. The research findings may contribute greatly to reducing these gaps. They can also contribute to training programs targeted at project managers.

Keywords: PMBOK Knowledge Areas, Textbooks, Project Management

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Preserving and Enhancing Natural Capital of Georgia Guarantees Its Security and Prosperity

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Natural Capital; Risk Assessment

The natural capital includes three principal categories: natural resource stocks, land, and ecosystems. Examples of natural capital are extractable minerals and fossil fuels; clean water; renewable energy resources; natural waste assimilation capacity; carbon dioxide absorption capacity; arable land; habitats; fossil fuels; erosion control by ecosystems; recreation capacity; visual amenity; biodiversity; temperature regulation and oxygen production. This definition could be expanded to include *the capacity to provide resilience to ongoing climate change* as well as *bioclimatic regime leading to improved human wellbeing*.

This paper analyzes the natural capital endowment of the Republic of Georgia, risks to the natural capital, and provides recommendations for preserving and enhancing the Georgian natural capital.

While the well-being of Georgia is ***critically dependent on the country's ability to maintain and enhance its natural capital (NC)***, there are significant external and internal risks to the NC such as air, water, and soil pollution; natural ecosystem destruction and fragmentation; under-regulated construction and land use; poor waste management; etc.

Main approached to preserve and enhance the NC of Georgia:

- A. Recognize the country's Natural Capital as a separate national asset and establish Natural Capital Accounting and Management Center
- B. Ensure equitable and transparent distribution of the **return on natural capital** (locally, regionally, and nationally)
- C. Establish ecosystem service markets – costing natural capital components (ecosystem services) and creating ecosystem service markets (water, soil, pasture, etc.)
- D. Introduce NC tax on long term newcomers for the extra use of natural capital
- E. Restrict and regulate free access to vulnerable landscapes for grazing, recreation, construction
- F. Establish taxes/fines for abandoned lands – subject for pollution, erosion, migration of invasive species and other negative impacts.

The Effect of Bank Loans and Money Supply on Industrial Production: The Case of Turkey

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Abstract

Industrial production for countries is one of the most important elements of prosperity and enrichment. The most difficult issue for countries in industrial production is the need for financing. As a source to meet their financing needs, countries use the loans provided by banks. Through banks' effective credit channel that supports production, the money supply expands and savings are transformed into productive investments. From the past to the present, governments have implemented money supply expansion policies to support investment and production. In this study, it is aimed to determine the money supply effect, which shows the direction of the applied monetary policies and the bank loans representing the financial indebtedness of Turkey's industrial production by using the monthly data of January 2010 and June 2022. In the study, the stationarity of the series was determined with the two and one-break unit root tests developed by Lee and Strazicich in 2003 and 2013. The long-run relationship between the stationary series was investigated with the Hatemi-J Co-integration Break Test. According to the Hatemi-J test results, it was determined that the series have a co-integration relationship and the series act together. Afterward, the Fourier Standard Granger Causality Test was performed on the series to investigate the causality relationship. According to the findings obtained from the analysis, changes in banking sector loans and money supply as a monetary policy instrument in Turkey have been found to have a direct impact on industrial production. Through the bank credit channel and the credit transmission mechanism, bank loans and money supply changing according to monetary policies directly or indirectly affect production and hence the continuity of economic growth. Another result is that there is a bidirectional causality relationship between the variables.

A Research on the Impact of Augmented Reality Applications on Generation Y and Z in Phygital Marketing

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been fierce competition in every field including marketing in the world. Businesses use advanced marketing techniques to be more accessible to current and future consumers and to get ahead of their competitors. Today, consumers want to compare products, get ideas and suggestions. Most importantly, they want to feel the product before making a decision. Digital marketing or traditional marketing methods cannot meet these desires of consumers alone. People are now looking for a holistic experience in which online convenience and the tangible aspect of offline are integrated. In this context, phygital marketing, which is a combination of digital and physical, comes into play. The new way for businesses to appeal to large audiences and express themselves is the dynamic digital realities within phygital marketing. Another way of digital realities is augmented reality. With augmented reality, consumers can connect with brands on a more emotional and empathetic level. The behaviors of Y and Z generations, who are among the potential consumers of augmented reality applications in phygital marketing, in this area are important. In this context, it has been tried to investigate the effect of augmented reality technology, which is an instrument of phygital marketing and combines the real world and the virtual world, on Y and Z generations and whether there are similarities and differences between these generations. Sample applications of phygital marketing and augmented reality belonging to some products and companies were watched on the internet, and the opinions of this generation members were collected by online survey method. As a result of the research, it was determined that the Y and Z generation individuals viewed these practices positively and there was no statistically significant difference in their phygital marketing perceptions between the two generations.

Keywords:Phygital Marketing, Augmented Reality, Consumer Behavior, Generation Y, Generation Z.

Age-dependent Differences in Using FinTech Products and Services - Young Customers versus Other Adults

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to identify and evaluate differences in the attitudes to using FinTech products and services adopted by two study cohorts – one comprised of young customers, born no earlier than in 1990, and the other comprised of other adults. The data discussed in the paper were provided by a CAWI survey that was conducted in 2020 and covered a sample of 1,153 adult Poles. To achieve our goal, we used nonparametric statistical testing and backward stepwise logistic regression models. The research demonstrated that young customers showed considerably more interest in all aspects of the use of FinTech considered within the framework of our study than the other adults. With regard to the experience of using FinTech, such determinants as the male gender, a larger household in which a given respondent lives, and the possibility of making financial decisions independently exerted more impact on the young customers cohort than on the other adults cohort. Irrespective of their opinion about FinTech, persons under 30 years of age are more likely to use FinTechs beyond average than the other adults whereas the persons over 30 years of age will do so only if they evaluate FinTechs as very good.

Online Bullying on Tiktok Towards Arab Bedouin Female Students

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In 2021, a dangerous phenomenon began to spread on TikTok: Bedouin youths filmed young Bedouin women and uploaded the videos to TikTok accompanied by defamatory and blatant captions and offensive music. In these videos, young women were filmed without their consent or knowledge, walking around in public spaces, and apparently violating the rules of tradition in a way that harms the honor of the family. Our study examines this phenomenon through the concept of backlash mechanism, which describes a phenomenon of Bedouin youth who oppose the improvement of women's status and engage in online gender violence against Bedouin female students as a means of social punishment. One of the main challenges facing young Bedouin women is acquiring a higher education. the departure of the young women outside the male control of the family threatens the traditional patriarchal order.

Our research includes a survey with 77 Bedouin female students, 23 semi-structured interviews with them (including a vignette), and 8 interviews with Bedouin men officials. The findings indicate a wide scope of online gender-based violence against Bedouin female students and the difficulty of society and law enforcement to prevent it.

We found that the videos express 3 forms of abusive behavior: (1) allegation of immoral behavior; (2) comment on immodest clothing; (3) Forgery using Photoshop. From the analysis of the responses to the vignette, we found that the female students chose one of two positions: (1) A passive position that accepts the situation as unchangeable; (2) An active position of seeking the help of authoritative men within the family and external factors. One of the conclusions is that the backlash mechanism harms the female students' sense of security, but in practice it does not prevent the development of the higher education trend that is gaining momentum among them.

An Investigation of the Piano Lessons Repertoire Applied in the Music Education Departments Based on the Views of Teaching Instructors

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to investigate the piano lessons repertoire applied in the Music Education Departments based on the views of the teaching instructors. For this particular purpose, the qualitative method was utilized in the study and a case study in accordance with this method was used. The study group of the study consisted of 10 instructors who were assigned by the easily accessible sampling method and who conducted piano lessons from five different Music Education Departments. The data of the study were collected by using semi-structured interview technique, which is one of the interview technique types.

As the data collection tool, a "piano lesson instructor interview form" developed by the researcher was utilized. The qualitative data obtained as a result of the interviews were analyzed using the content analysis technique in accordance with the descriptive analysis stages. In the light of the findings analyzed under eight themes in the study, it was concluded that the instructors considered various criteria for the students, repertoire and course while generating the repertoire they used in the piano lessons applied in the Music Education Departments; that they definitely considered the course achievements, chose the works that met the achievements as much as possible, and planned the course according to these achievements; that they included the works from each period and also the Turkish works in the repertoire they used in order for students to recognize each period, to have the necessary information about these periods, to apply the rendering styles of each period and to gain technical and musical achievements by recognizing the whole piano literature; that they included various etudes and practice from different composers; that they failed to prefer the works of different genres such as atonal, impressionist and popular music from the contemporary period for various reasons; and that they encountered various problems while creating a repertoire and furthermore, the piano literature which had a wide range, should not be restricted to a common repertoire to be used in the Music Education Departments.

Keywords: Music, Music Education, Piano, Piano Education, Repertory

The Relationship Between the Executive Compensation Gap and Corporate Risk-taking in China

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of the compensation gap between CEOs and non-CEOs on firm risk-taking levels. It examines the moderating effect of CEO compensation levels on the two. The research results show that the executive compensation gap can increase the risk-taking of the enterprise. However, this incentive effect is only reflected in non-state-owned enterprises. At the same time, the CEO's compensation level has a positive impact on the relationship between the executive compensation gap and corporate risk-taking, indicating that the differentiated compensation system within the top management team in non-state-owned enterprises can play a role in promotion incentives, thereby alleviating the manager's risk aversion problem. The study conclusion not only enriches the research on the internal compensation gap of enterprises but also has specific practical significance for improving the current situation that the risk-taking level of Chinese enterprises is generally not high.

JEL: G32, G34, G35

Keywords corporate risk-taking, CEO compensation, executive compensation gap, state-owned enterprises, non-state-owned enterprises.

Religious Tourism in Beyşehir: Sacred Sites from the Neolithic to the Islamic Period

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Abstract

Beyşehir is a district in Konya province in Turkey. Located on the southern corner of ancient Lake Caralis (Modern Lake Beyşehir), Beyşehir has witnessed nearly all the periods related to religious history. The city has various assets and opportunities in terms of religious tourism. Because of its rich religious background, this study is developed in historical order. The first section of this paper is about the emergence of religion in Erbaba and Çukurkent Neolithic settlements. In the following section of the study, the effect of Neolithic figures on Anatolian religion or art is going to be given by Fasillar Hittite monument. Another section of this paper is about open-air sacred places. Not far from Fasillar Monument, the Hittites once more built one of their cult centers by blessing a spring at Eflatunpınar. After the Hittites, the fashion of designing open-air temples, rock-cut altars, niches, and offering bowls in Phrygian style affected the societies in the region. In the following centuries, the chief god of Greek mythology, Zeus began to decorate the sarcophagi of the region and the moon god Men Askaenos found a place in the hearts of people. The introduction of monotheistic religions forms the next section of the study. 2000 Jewish families settled in Lydia and Phrygia in the 3rd century BC. and a large underground burial place near Beyşehir confirms their presence in the region. Paganism lost its position in the area with the spread of Christianity in the first century AD. By that time, Islam has influenced the area after the arrival of the Turkic people in Anatolia. In the final part, examples of current tourism activities related to religious tourism are given. A general evaluation is made at the conclusion part of the study.

Key Words: Religion, Tourism, Paganism, Mythology, Monotheism, Beyşehir

JEL Codes: N 93, Z 12.

Introduction:

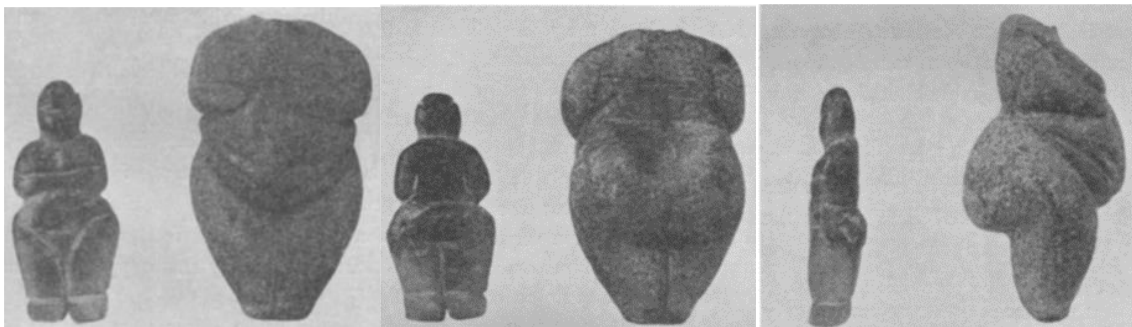
Many definitions of tourism might be given according to the interests of the definer. But, in general sense tourism is an act of temporary visits to places away from residence for a certain period (Lickorish and Jenkins, 1997: 2). A similar definition is given by UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation) as: “*Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to places outside their usual place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivation*” (United Nations & World Tourism Organization, 2010:1). In the same international recommendations (p, 10) an indirect evaluation is made for the duration of a tourism activity as less than a year. Maybe a simpler definition should be made for tourism as “*the business of providing travel, accommodation, food, entertainment, etc., for tourists*” (Black A. & C, 2009).

As a tourism type, religious or faith tourism is visiting holy places to perform religious rituals or show belief (Aktaş, A., and Ekin, Y. 2007:171). But, do tourists only visit places according to their religion? If a Christian or Muslim tourist visits The Belz Great Synagogue in Jerusalem in Israel, will we consider their visit within religious tourism? Examples may vary according to different beliefs. Surveys conducted in the 1990s revealed that people from different beliefs tend to visit churches, cathedral, shrines, and temples of another faith. Surveys also showed that religious sites attract more visitors than expected. In Britain, religious sites were the third most visited place among six attractions after shops, markets, restaurants, and cafes. In Germany, half of the visitors responding to the study declared that they would visit a church, and two-thirds of them expressed that they enjoy visiting the churches of another faith. The situation is nearly the same in Japan and France as well. Motives of non-religious visits are; spending time during rainy hours, relaxing, their close location to transportation facilities, interest in other cultures, or just curiosity (Stausberg, 2011: 76-87; Olsen and Timothy, 2022: 1). Stausberg, Olsen and Timothy’s contributions to the definition or explanation of religious tourism has motivated the author of this paper to include all sites related with religion, belief, divinity or holiness within the interest of religious tourism in or around Beyşehir.

Sacred Sites of Beyşehir:

Göbeklitepe, known as the oldest temple in the world from 9500 BC (Tok and Yıldız, 2006), was visited by 495725 tourists in the first 8 months of 2022 (Tokihaber, 2022). Çatalhöyük, another famous Neolithic site, visited by many tourists, has not provided sufficient information about the religion of its inhabitants (Hodder, 2011). But the figurines made of clay influenced and shaped the religious life or art of Anatolia in the following millenniums. Despite a very small amount (less than 3%) of female figurines (Hodder and Meskel, 2012) unearthed on the site, a seated female character with leopards on either side has been imitated throughout history in Anatolia.

Erbaba and Çukurkent are two Neolithic sites in the vicinity of Beyşehir. Of these mounds, Erbaba yielded an interesting stylized male figure with a hat (Bordaz, 1973: 284). Inhabitants of the latter also designed figurines resembling neighboring Neolithic sites such as Çatalhöyük and Hacilar. The first scientific studies were conducted in Çukurkent by Ormerod in 1911 (Bahar, 2015: 34-35). As a result of early studies on the findings of figurines, Ormerod published their pictures. The first group included two female figurines of limestone. Artists tried to reflect a fat female figure with large and short arms and legs (Ormerod, 1912/1913: 48-53). Standing figurines resemble the female figurines of Çatalhöyük. The fame of Çatalhöyük in Türkiye is rather high among domestic tourists due to its well-preserved remains and promotion studies (Tuncer and Bulut, 2019). Detailed excavations and presenting findings of Çukurkent and Erbaba in a museum will increase attention and the number of visits to the sites. For the similarity of Çatalhöyük and Çukurkent sites see photos 1-6.



Photos 1, 2 and 3: Figurines of Çukurkent (Ormerod, 1912/1913: 49).



Photos 4,5 and 6: Figurines of Çatalhöyük (Meskel and Nakamura, n.d: 167).

During the Hittite Period Beyşehir and its surroundings played an important role in history. They built their beautiful monuments at Eflatunpınar and Fasıllar. Eflatunpınar monument is a religious monument that was built by a pond to show their gratitude to water sources during the reign of Tuthaliya IV (1250-1220 B.C). The monument is 420 cm high and 710 cm wide. It has 12 figures representing a god and a

goddess in the middle and by their sides 10 spirits holding the winged sun. Eflatunpınar monument together with the Manisa Akpınar monument is the only example of a frontal portrayal of Hittite art (Mellaart, 1962; Akurgal, 2001: 174-175; Akurgal, 2005: 163). As a result of excavations and decreasing water levels in the pool 5 deities resembling the mountain gods of Yalılıkaya Sanctuary became visible (Photos 7, 8).



Photo 7: Eflatunpınar (Hittite Monuments n.d.)

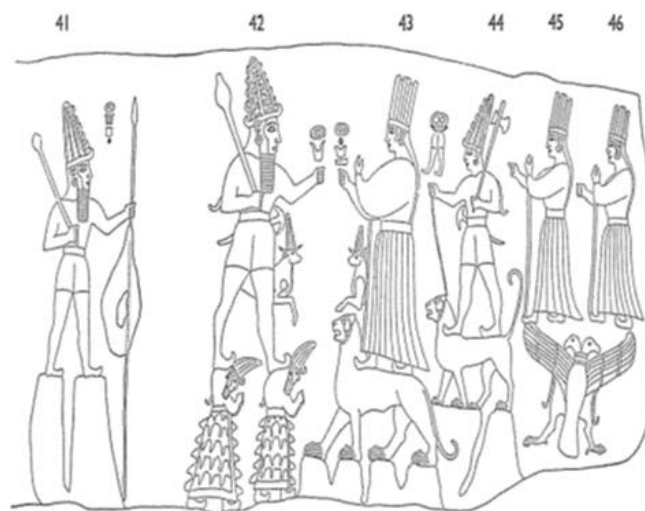


Photo 8: Chief god, Teshub (no 42) standing on deified mountains, relief at Yazılıkaya, Hattusa (Akurgal, 2020: 433).

The Fasillar statue is very famous like the Eflatunpınar monument of Tuthaliya IV too. It is the only surviving example of Late Bronze Age Anatolian art. The statue is 740 cm high and lies in an old Roman stadium. The monument consists of a god probably Tarhundas the weather god standing on a smaller deity may be a mountain god with leopards on two sides (Mellaart, 1962: 114). The resemblance of the position of leopards of the statue with the goddess of Çatalhöyük indicates the cultural continuity in Anatolia (Photos 9,10).



Photo 9: Fasillar m. (Hittite Monuments n.d.)



Photo 10: Replica of Fasillar Monument at the Museum of Anatolian civilizations, Ankara (Hittite Monuments n.d.)

The Phrygians began to arrive in Anatolia in the last centuries of the second millennium B.C. from Europe. Their name was first mentioned in Assyrian texts in around 1160 B.C. Their well-known king, Midas, founded the kingdom, but in a short period, the Cimmerians defeated him in the 7th century B.C. Phrygian art created its own style on rock formations around Eskişehir province. These are rock carvings representing a façade of a Phrygian house with niches for their goddess Cybele. These niches were carved on the rock surface to place the statue of the goddess on the festival or religious days (Lloyd, 2003: 59-66; Akurgal, 2019: 15).

Beyşehir is very rich in Phrygian spiritual rock carvings and decorations. These are found in a nearby village of Karahisar and include stone niches, steles, offering bowls, open-air temples, and stepped altars. As mentioned above, mountains have an important role in the religion of ancient Anatolia. The Phrygian name of the goddess, Matar, simply means mother. Matar Cybele is a mountain goddess often

represented by an anthropomorphic image with predatory birds and rarely between two lions. Karahisar is densely decorated with these Phrygian elements. One of these reliefs near Karahisar is a figure carved in a small niche. The figure (Photo 11) was seen by Cronin and mentioned as a male figure between two possible lions (Cronin, 1902: 111). İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı was shown this figure in the late 1950s or early 1960s. He associated the figure with a female figure standing between two lions (Konyalı, 1991: 359). Baldıran and Söğüt published the relief in 2008. According to their evaluation, the figure is female and standing in the middle of two lions. The photo they included shows the good form of the niche even after Cronin's visit 100 years later (Baldıran and Söğüt, 2008). While searching the area for a different purpose in 2015, I could find the relief in a very difficult place to reach. Unfortunately, it was damaged (Photo 12) by treasure hunters in the quest for gold (Arslan, 2015).

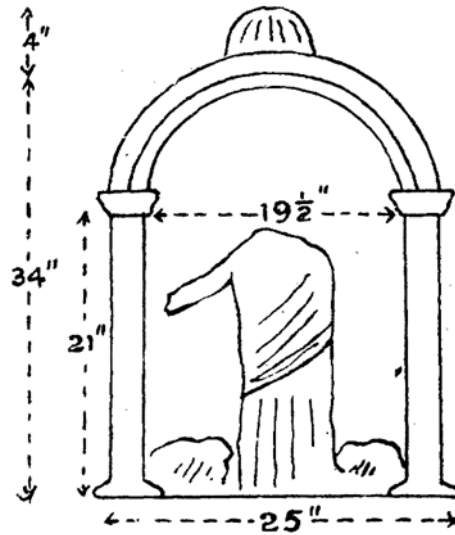


Photo 11: Figure in a niche, Karahisar, Cronin, 1902: 111.

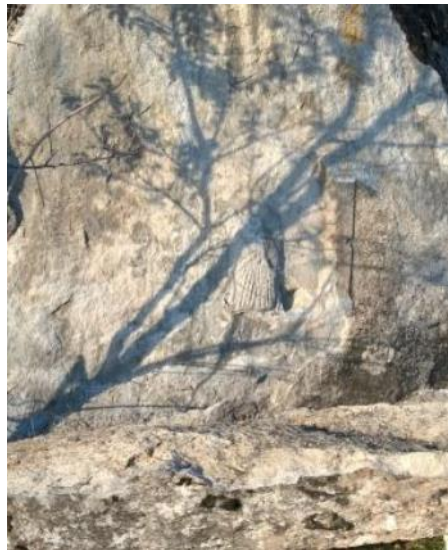


Photo 12: Karahisar figure, Arslan, 2015: 252.

Baldıran and Söğüt found and registered Phrygian-style niches, stone niches, altars, open-air temples, stepped altars, offering bowls, and a stepped temple in the vicinity of Karahisar village (Baldıran and Söğüt, 2008).

Karahisar is an interesting place in terms of the history of religions. Because the symbols, decorations, and buildings reflecting paganism can be seen in a very large area and are indicators of a considerable

population worshipping Matar Cybele. Hall's discovery of an inscription at Akçapınar Çeşmesi (Akçapınar Fountain) mentioning a dedication to Cybele by a small community (Hall, 1968: 67) once more proved the religion of the area. Probably before Hall, Konyalı reported that a cross of 52X90 cm in size was carved on a rock surface around Karahisar (Konyalı, 1991: 359). The presence of a carved cross in the same place reveals a possible transformation of beliefs from paganism to Christianity.

Before the introduction of Christianity in the region, beliefs had changed already. A simple drawing of the Greek chief god Zeus holding a thunderbolt on a sarcophagus on the edge of a hill just opposite the Fasillar Hittite monument shows the change. Besides Zeus, the moon god Men Askaenos worshipped in the area. His estates were managed by his priests as Strabo mentioned (Strabon, XII. 3. 31). Influence of these two gods was probably seen in very close areas to each other or shared some parts of the region. Because, an archaeological artifact with a crescent - the symbol of Men Askaenos - now lies in the garden of Lake Beyşehir National Park's main building in the center of Beyşehir.

The transformation of paganist belief to monotheistic religion might begin during the Seleucus rule in Asia Minor. Antiochos III the Great (reigned from 223 to 187 B.C) ordered his viceroy Zeuxis to move 2000 Jewish families from Mesopotamia to Lydia and Phrygia. New Jewish families, settled in Lydia and Phrygia, played an important role at the beginning of Christianity (Johnson, 1958: 14). In the first century, A.D. St. Paul and Barnabas made speeches to Jewish communities in Iconium. It is clear that the Jewish minority lived together with the paganists until the visit of St. Paul and Barnabas around 47 A.D.

The presence of a Jewish community near Beyşehir is proved by an underground burial in Çavuş town in Seydişehir. In 2011, rescue excavations were conducted in Sekiyurtlar ruins by Konya Archaeological Museum. Archaeologist Enver Akgün unearthed mainly a necropolis (Photos 13, 14), and underground burial, a church, and some building remains with mosaic decoration (Akgün, E. (n.d.)). Nowadays some attempts are seen in local or national media to open the site for touristic purposes. I believe that the site is going to be a religious destination if promotion activities continue.



Photo 13: Sekiyurtlar, underground burial, Enver Akgün (n.d.)

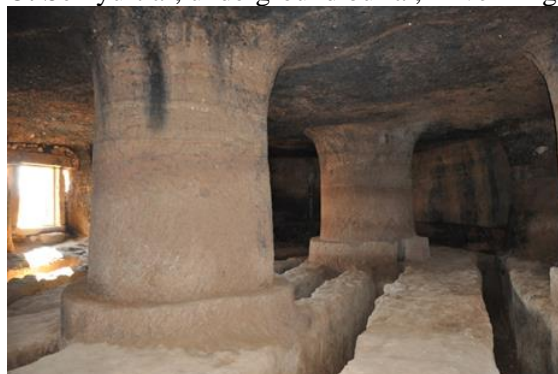


Photo 14: Sekiyurtlar, underground burial, Enver Akgün (n.d.)

Nearly a quarter-millennium year later, the religion of Beyşehir had changed dramatically with the spread of Christianity in the region. We can assume that the travels and speeches of St. Paul and Barnabas around Beyşehir in 47 A.D (Acts, 14:1-7) attracted the attention of locals. The origin of Christian symbols in the region is not clear. It is hard to determine the date of the cross carved on rocks near Karahisar. I think there are two or three possibilities. First; it was carved by Christians to announce their identity. Second and third; it was carved by new Christians against paganism or Islam. My reason for the third possibility is that there are Islamic symbols (Allah is written) on the same rocks (Photo 15). Maybe Christians and Muslims once lived together in a very remote period than we expect. Both of the symbols are not damaged by any of the groups. This can be a result of a friendly life in the region.



Photo 15: Karahisar, writing Allah in Arabic, Baldıran and Söğüt, 2008: 273.

The first arrival of the Muslims in the area was in 812 but their operations ended in a very short time and they did not threaten the region for nearly 90 years. In 900, this time Saracens sieged Misthia (Beyşehir) but they had to quit their attacks when a Byzantine army attacked Cilicia. While attacks were directed against the region we see Misthia and its neighbors such as Neapolis (Şarkikaraağaç) and Vasada (Bostandere) in archbishopric lists. Misthia's position sometimes weakened and became a bishopric under Iconium and sometimes gain strength to be an archbishopric again (Ramsay, 1960: 367-368).

During the Turkish period, Beyşehir and its environs had been ruled by different states such as Eşrefoğlu Dynasty, Anatolian Seljuqs, Mongols, İlkanids, Ottomans, and Karamanids. Beyşehir was the seat of Eşrefoğlu rulers and Beyşehir people still express their gratitude to the dynasty. Eşrefoğlu Dynasty left us the most beautiful wooden mosque in the world. Today, the 723-year-old mosque (Efe, 2012) is one of the most visited attractions in Beyşehir.

Conclusion:

Beyşehir has been inhabited since the Neolithic Ages. All the developments experienced in early history such as agriculture, and animal and grain domestications were seen in the Beyşehir region. The area is also famous for its figurines found around the Çukurkent settlement. The earliest form of the mother goddess form is seen in the region. Mother goddess between two leopards is a very common motif in all of Anatolia and Beyşehir has got this kind of statue as well. Hittites also erected their unique monuments again in Beyşehir. Two Hittite cult places close to each other show the importance given by the Hittite kings. Phrygian cult places and structures strictly related to Matar Cybele were also found in the region. As a Pisidian city, Beyşehir has all Phrygian elements on its hills. Greek mythology is represented by Zeus, a more regional deity, Men Askaenos is represented by a crescent symbol in Beyşehir. Finally, all Abrahamic religions were introduced in the city and normally today it's an Islamic city. Fasıllar, Eflatunpınar, and the mosque are mostly visited places by tourists. But on the other hand,

people are not aware of other sacred places in Beyşehir. Sekiyurtlar and Karahisar monuments have the highest chance to be religious tourism destinations.

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