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**BOOKLET OF ABSTRACTS**

## Business

Fani Bistikea (co-author: Dr Evangelia Markaki)

### **Strategic human resource management and development in the banking sector during the economic crisis. A quantitative approach.**

This research paper was focused on the HR management and development in the banking sector during the period of global economic crisis. The study was implemented in Greek's largest Bank, counting more than 22.000 employees in 2012. The aim of this paper was to highlight the consequences provoked to HR management and development by the economic crisis. The main objective of this study was to critically review the impact of economic crisis to the HR department of the Bank. Secondly, to analyze the influence of the acquisitions and the merges to the organization. Finally, an attempt has been made to investigate the effectiveness of HR management and the way employees evaluate it. The study was conducted by using a survey method, providing the participants the opportunity to express their feelings, and opinions about HR strategy, plans and actions. The analysis of the responses was categorized by subject and conclusions were drawn accordingly. The results of this study, indicate that the organization in question employees personnel of high quality and educational level, fully qualified to achieve organizational goals. Despite the stress they experienced during economic crisis, they were able to adjust smoothly to their new reality. However, findings underline the employees' dissatisfaction of their current job positions. Most of them feel disappointment towards the bank's evaluation and compensation system. Finally, the study reveals a strong sense of insecurity and abandonment by HR, during crucial periods such as the period of banks' acquisitions and capital controls. The participants felt as having no guidance or help adjusting from HR department. Recommendations were based mostly on how the HR should design new strategies and plans and ways to implement them effectively in similar situations. The department should focus on effectively communicating their plans and actions to the employees and should develop a system of evaluation and remuneration that will give employees a sense of satisfaction and a motive to be more efficient.

Eleni Koutroufini (co-author: Dr Evangelia Markaki)

### **Lifelong Learning as a strategicTool for Professional Development. An analysis in quantitative data.**

The aim of this paper is to detect the importance and the contribution of Lifelong Learning and E-learning programmes to professional development. The study conducted in two private educational organizations in Athens, Greece focuses on the potential use of Lifelong Learning practices as a useful tool in the hands of Human Resource Management to effectively lead employees to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills and if those practices facilitated employees' promotional opportunities. The first chapter examines the concept of the adult learner, the necessity for changes in the way new knowledge is perceived, the action plan suggested by the European Union, and the steps taken in Greece while research questions are set to investigate the degree of successful implementation of such practices at an organizational level. The second chapter analyses the concepts of Lifelong Learning, E-learning and professional development as well as the role HRM has in them. The third chapter presents the methodology adopted so that the research questions are answered. Findings are presented and analysed in chapter four. Finally, conclusions are reached, and recommendations are made in chapter five.

Aggeliki Fragkou (co-author: Dr Evangelia Markaki)

**Strategic CSR & Sustainability in the post-Covid era. Qualitative research on large Greek Businesses & Theater Organizations**

The present study investigates the relationship of the cultural sponsorship of the large businesses of Athens in the post-Covid-19 era in the context of the Corporate Social Responsibility.

For the needs of this study, 14 interviews were conducted. The 7 interviews were carried out with large companies that have a developed and active CSR department and the next 7 with theater organizations that have a stable and long-term path in the field of culture (theater). Through the interviews, the strategy, and the perceptions of the two different parties regarding the corporate social responsibility and the cultural sponsorship in the art of theater were studied.

The essence of this work is the investigation of proposals from the side of businesses towards theater organizations and vice versa. It is a two-way cultural exchange that can offer multiple benefits for the businesses, the theater and the society.

Manolis Dimosthenis (co-author: Dr Michalis Skordoulis)

**Greek Millennials and Gen Z perception of luxury food products.**

The aim of the present study is to investigate how Greek Millennials and Gen Zers perceive the concept of luxury concerning food products and take purchase decisions. In this study, features related to environmental sustainability, organic nature and healthy nature will be considered as luxury foods components. In order to achieve the aim of the study, a structured questionnaire was responded by 97 Greek Millennials and Gen Zers aging between 18 and 41 years. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research results indicated no statistically significant differences in the perception of luxury between Millennials and Gen Zers, and that attitudes towards luxury did not have an effect on purchasing behaviour. These findings can aid future researchers trying to investigate the aspects of luxury in food products, as well as assist firms create better marketing messaging in order to promote their offerings.

**Key words:** Luxury food products, environmentally friendly foods, healthy foods, organic foods, purchase decisions, consumer perceptions

Maria Papanastasiou (co-author: Dr Evangelia Markaki)

**The New Working conditions and their impact on employees' loyalty and productivity. Qualitative research.**

This study aims to assess the implementation of remote work at a broking insurance services multinational firm in Greece during the eras of post-Covid-19 and Great Resignation and understand whether and in which way the growing trend of remote work has impacted employees' loyalty and productivity.

Remote work made its appearance at the commencement of the 21st century as an investigational practice in a few corporations of specific industries. Since the Covid-19 outbreak, working from home has become a basic condition and the most common type of remote work. Nowadays, remote work persists, and the implementation of hybrid working models, with the flexibility they offer, seems to be of crucial importance for both employees and employers. This paper will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the growing trend of working from home and will address some of the key factors that influence employees' loyalty and productivity about this trend. Furthermore, the need to change companies' perception about managing their most valuable resource, the human capital, will

be analyzed, as well as the technological advancements and how these have led to the growing awareness of alternative approaches towards the hybrid working models.

Georgios Eleftheriadis (co-author: Dr Konstantinos Mamais)

**Effective start-up budget analysis in the apparel industry.**

The object of the study is the highlighting and the implementation of a business idea in a start-up company. This paper focuses on one of the most competitive professional areas, the clothing industry. The aim of this research is to focus and shape the ideal conditions, study the market, and understand the current needs of the sector for the best possible formation of an ideal sustainable budget in the long term. The purpose is to highlight entrepreneurship and emphasize how a properly structured and well-planned business plan with the right components for a start-up in a highly saturated industry such as clothing can bring about sustainable results and growth leaps. With the use of Administrative Accounting, we emphasize the regular analysis of costs, budget, P&L creation with the primary aim of securing the necessary financing and attracting investors for the sustainable development of the start-up. The era of constant availability of new information and technologies finds the new entrepreneur constantly alert to be able to take advantage of the new opportunities that are created. The company aims to properly and carefully manage its operating expenses with its main concern being the maintenance of high profit margins with the ultimate goal of establishing a solid foundation and a clear future path. Finally, it concludes by conducting an investment analysis using investment criteria such as KPA and ESA to determine if its establishment is considered sustainable even in the short term.

Antonios Karamitsas (co-author: Apostolos Pappas)

**Operational strategy for sustained business success**

Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company is an organization that operates under high standards in processes and services. The organization is aware of the latest technologies and is trying to implement them in its processes to maintain its competitive advantage and sustainability. Has the ability to recognize the issues that are holding back the processes and continuously try to improve and find a solution.

This report aims to investigate how a multinational leading manufacturing company like Coca-Cola HBC identifies the "building blocks" that must be resolved in current operations strategies to maintain the competitive advantage in the market and add value to the customers through the products and services.

The main emphasis of this report is how CCHBC adopts new technologies associated with the supply chain relevant to its operational strategies and how these technologies affect operations. An in-depth analysis will take place for the suggested solutions to identified problems in the manufacturing process but also a brief reference will be made to the technologies that are already adopted in the operations process.

How the Operational Strategy of Coca-Cola HBC is linked with sustainability to maintain business success, will be analysed in the last part of the report with reference to the Six-Sigma process and DMAIC methodology. All the above-mentioned are part of a holistic Lean & Resilient operating model, in which CCHBC found the ground to implement the BTL process to enhance its sustainability.

Liliana Karali (co-author: Apostolos Pappas)

**Operational strategy in family-owned business. Challenges and opportunities.**

The following study aims to develop and understand the existing operational strategies followed by "Pharmacy Dina Margarita Douvis and Co. Ltd" and the challenges faced when extending a current service. For the execution of the study, a SWOT analysis is provided where the strengths and weaknesses of the company are identified. Also, the 4Vs and the 5 Performance Objectives profiles are presented to better understand the company. The way in which the laboratory operates, which is mainly based on the Just in Time strategy and the main points of the supply chain that is followed, are then examined. In conclusion, the most important operational improvements to be implemented are the prioritisation of laboratory prescriptions, according to their importance and complexity, the evaluation of the need to hire an extra employee to achieve full-time laboratory operation, and the evaluation of the use of bulk messaging services for the immediate notification of customers for order pickup. Finally, the development of the B2B customer base and the mass production of the most popular products produced is evaluated.

Spyridon Kormis (co-author: Dr Evangelia Markaki)

**The Role of People Analytics in Employee Retention**

People Analytics, also known as Human Resources (HR) Analytics or Workforce Analytics, is a field that combines data analysis, statistics, and Human Resources Management (HRM) to derive insights and make data-driven decisions regarding the workforce. It involves the systematic collection, integration, and analysis of HR-related data to understand patterns, trends, and relationships that impact organizational performance and employee outcomes. The theory behind People Analytics is rooted in the idea that data can provide valuable insights into the behavior, preferences, and needs of employees. By analyzing various data sources, such as employee surveys, performance evaluations, time logs, and demographic information, organizations can gain a deeper understanding of their workforce. This data-driven approach allows HR professionals and organizational leaders to move beyond intuition when making decisions related to talent acquisition, performance management, employee engagement, and employee retention. The application of People Analytics is broad and encompasses various areas of HR management. This study primarily focuses on employee retention. Employee retention is a critical concern for organizations across industries, as high turnover rates can lead to significant financial losses and hinder productivity. Consequently, understanding the factors that influence employee retention and identifying effective strategies to address them is crucial for organizations striving to maintain a talented and engaged workforce. The research aims to investigate how HR Analytics can contribute to enhancing employee retention efforts. By leveraging data-driven insights, organizations can identify patterns and trends related to employee turnover. These insights can shed light on the underlying causes and help organizations implement proactive measures to retain valuable talent. Moreover, People Analytics enables HR professionals to identify at-risk employees and develop personalized interventions to mitigate turnover risks. Therefore, the importance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights and practical implications for organizations seeking to improve employee retention. By understanding the role of HR Analytics in this context, organizations can make informed decisions and implement targeted strategies. Moreover, this research can contribute to the broader field of HRM by expanding the knowledge base on the effectiveness of People Analytics in addressing employee retention challenges, particularly in medium and large companies in Greece, which is the primary focus of this research.

Maria Panteli (co-author: Dr Evangelia Markaki)

**Harassment & Mobbing in the workplace. Quantitative Research on the Greek private sector.**

Given that the labor market is changing at a rapid pace, mainly due to the increasing presence of women, the employment of people from diverse backgrounds and the tolerance regarding sexual orientation, the composition of the workforce presents a high degree of expectations that appear to invade workplace reality. This is the main reason harassment and mobbing have become the focal point of attention in employment relations. Employers are beginning to acknowledge the impact tensions and conflicts have on the organizational atmosphere and culture, pointing out the risk of them impairing the overall corporate image. In addition, employment relations have been proven to economically suffer from victimization and wrong policies, as employees may not be happy with existing codes of practice. The aim of this study is to investigate the existing width of harassment and bullying in the private sector in Greece and whether employees were adequately enhanced to manage and raise these incidents in a formal manner within their working environment, especially after the latest enactment of the Labor Law 4808/2021.

The objectives of the study that emerge are identified as follows:

- to determine the forms of workplace harassment and bullying that take place in the organization,
- to determine the extent of harassment and bullying that take place in the organization,
- to investigate their impact on the workforce,
- to explore existing legislation and how the organizations abide by it,
- to define if the employees in the Greek private sector are well informed and have the possibility and the confidence to raise a formal complaint about any type of harassment within their workplace.

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Kyriillos Parthenidis (co-author: Nikos Bilios)

**AI and Machine Learning**

In recent years, AI and ML technologies have emerged as powerful tools with the potential to transform various industries, including human resources management. The primary objective of this thesis is to examine the current adoption and utilization of AI and ML technologies in talent management processes, such as recruitment, selection, training, and performance evaluation, within Greek organizations. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the perceived benefits, challenges, and ethical implications associated with the implementation of these technologies.

To achieve these objectives, a quantitative research approach will be employed, including quantitative surveys among HRM departments in Greek organizations. In addition, correlation analysis will be conducted providing useful data regarding the relation of factors affecting companies to adopt AI and ML technologies in their HR departments. The findings will provide valuable insights into the extent of AI and ML technology adoption, as well as the factors influencing their implementation of AI and ML technologies systems in Greece.

The anticipated results will contribute to the existing literature by offering a comprehensive analysis of the current state of AI and ML technologies in HRM departments in Greece, shedding light on their potential impact on talent management. Additionally, the study will provide practical recommendations for organizations and HRM professionals on how to leverage these technologies effectively while addressing associated challenges and ethical concerns including the future of employment and discrimination issues.

## Computing

Evangelos Vasilakis (co-author: Vasilios Vogkas)

### ***Real-Time Rendering applications in Game Development***

The term rendering describes the computer process of synthesizing a realistic two-dimensional or three-dimensional representation, with the possibility of space movement. It applies to every simulated technical environment, from architecture and aeronautics to bio-medicine, cinema and game development.

The processing and image synthesis is based on complex algorithms and is based on the understanding of the system to be synthesized or simulated. It is therefore a truly inter-thematic / inter-scientific case, which combines almost every field of Information Technology.

In this paper there is a discussion about rendering, with emphasis on the development of realistic computer games. Also it includes a demonstration of a game implementation with development tools that gives a complete picture of the process, and the possibilities that today's technology offers us, for real-time composition.

**Key Words:** Image processing, image synthesis, rendering, game development, simulation

Achilleas Bezianis (co-author: Michalis Dagiakidis)

### ***Study and Implementation of a Phishing Attack***

In today's Cyberspace ecosystem, with the abundance of electronic services available, Security is important, both technically (for the good operation and availability of systems) and from a social point of view (for the protection of data and the legal interest of users). Often the discussion of security goes down to impressive but empty statements that overlook simple matters of information and user awareness: "Your debit card has been blocked – immediate action is required – use the link below". How many times have we received such a message in our e-mail?

Phishing attacks are based on deceiving users, where the attacker impersonates a trusted entity (web-banking service, social networking, forum, etc.) and the ignorance and/or panic of the target victim, to obtain sensitive data such as passwords.

Such an attack belongs to the category of social engineering attacks and does not require complex tools and cannot be easily detected. In this report, a functional and effective phishing attack is implemented. Good practices for scanning, identifying, and taking appropriate measures are discussed.

**Keywords:** security, cyber security, phishing attack, protection of user data on the Internet

Aiantas Sotiropoulos (co-author: Vasilios Vogkas)

**Development of a Soul-Like game with innovative characteristics**

The category of Souls-Like games is based on demanding gameplay combined with a dark fantasy environment and the related Lore of heroes and characters.

This thesis has two main aspects: on the one hand it gives the opportunity to discuss fundamental concepts of game development, such as game mechanics, gameplay, inventory, game pace, user interface and others. On the other hand, a complete, fully playable product is developed, using the integrated tools of the Unity environment, with the following features:

- Battles and action
- Advanced imaging features
- Integration of AI techniques
- Completion in a suitable user interface
- Rapidly evolving user experience

The results are supported by an critical analysis and presentation, which displayed in detail the aspects and concepts of game development.

**Keywords:** game development, souls-like gaming, mechanics, gameplay, game inventory, gamer experience



## Engineering

Nikos Dogramatzakis (co-author: Alexandros Siasos)

### **Effect of nitrogen injection on the flushing efficiency of hydraulic systems**

Flushing, in fluid mechanics, refers to the cleaning of hydraulic systems via circulation of hydraulic oil through a network of pipes, to remove contaminants. As the oil circulates, it goes through filters that remove contaminants and the process can take a long time depending on the cleanliness level of the system. Flushing is applied to a variety of hydraulic networks such as the ones used in shipping and manufacturing and aims to completely remove contaminants that degrade the operation of the hydraulic systems, thus reducing the risk of their failure.

This study aims at determining the effect of nitrogen on hydraulic flushing results against existing methods, that just circulate hydraulic oil through filters.

The rationale for this study is the development of an existing method that is used especially in shipping and heavy industry. The gain from this method is that there will be considerable time saving during maintenance and more effective cleaning of the systems, leading to reduced risk of equipment damage. This makes flushing more effective, in technical and economic terms.

The first step taken was setting up a flushing machine that incorporated the technology of the implementation of the additional pulsed transmission of nitrogen gas.

Different experiments followed with sample hydraulic systems of the same structure and initial cleanliness level, were monitored via PC using a Particle Pal measurement device throughout the process. The experimental parameters that were taken into consideration were temperature and nitrogen injection frequency.

The results are compared to determine whether the suggested method is more effective than existing techniques.

Recommendations for further research and development of flushing equipment are also made.

Ilias Nikolopoulos (co-author: Dr Aggeliki Karali)

### **Improving internal combustion engine power output through cooler air intake**

This presentation is based on an experimental study, aiming at increasing the horsepower of a petrol internal combustion engine, naturally aspirated, without reprogramming the electronic control unit (ecu).

Cooler air was introduced into the combustion chamber through a custom induction kit designed to produce higher air speed while gaseous nitrogen was injected to cool down the air.

The air needed to be at as low a temperature as possible, to increase its density which in turn led to greater horsepower output from the engine.

The experimental steps of the project are described below:

1. The temperature of the air input into the engine was tracked through a sensor and the torque and power from the engine were measured at the dynamometer.

2. A venturi tube was designed, to inject air into the engine at high speed. The diameter of the tube was greater than the diameter of the throttle body and a sudden contraction occurred right at the point of the throttle body.
3. A kit was used for the injection of gaseous nitrogen to reduce the air temperature.
4. The temperature of the air that goes into the engine was tracked again and then the power and torque that the engine provides with this new induction kit was tested to compare possible differences.

The study led to a better understanding of the Influence of intake air temperature on internal combustion engine operation.

George Lampropoulos (co-author: Dr Aggeliki Skaropoulou)

#### **The Posidonia Oceanica as Thermal Insulation Material**

The work to be presented is based on an analytical study of the processing of the dead leaves of *Posidonia Oceanica*, an endemic alga of the Mediterranean, to be used in thermal insulation applications. *Posidonia Oceanica* exhibits excellent thermal conductivity properties, which allow the production of high-quality products offering efficient solutions to technical problems related to insulation while, at the same time, contributing to circular economy.

The pollution of the environment and the depletion of resources necessitate research and development of innovative materials and environmentally friendly products, and our work aims to contribute to the efforts made by the engineering community in this direction.

Specifically, the objectives of the study included:

- The analysis of the structure and properties of the algae as well as an estimate of their quantities available in Greece.
- Exploration of the European market needs for innovative, ecological products, which will contribute to the reduction of over-consumption of energy and the environmental burden of the planet.
- A series of experiments for the investigation of the behavior of the proposed insulation material in hot air, in contact with a heated metal plate, as well as its exposure to an open flame. Measurements from experiments to evaluate the material's resistance to high pressures were also made.

The study contributes to the field of recycling and promotion of ecological materials, as thermal insulating synthetic materials currently available and widely used have significant negative impact on the environment and the phenomenon of climate change.

## Education

Vasilis Iosifidis

### ***The causes of teacher turnover in international elementary schools: a worldwide phenomenon***

Teacher turnover is a global phenomenon that has raised concerns among policymakers and educators. This research aims to identify the causes of teacher turnover in international primary schools, which has received little attention in existing literature. The research objectives are to (1) identify the causes of teacher turnover, (2) gather data that policymakers can use to find solutions to teacher shortages, and (3) explore ways to improve teacher retention. A literature review revealed that factors such as pressure of time, low pay, immense workload, negative behavior of students, problematic function and/or relationships with leadership, pressure of accountability, and societal status of the teaching profession may lead to teacher turnover. Furthermore, the literature showed that teachers' working experience, job satisfaction, working environment conditions, and accountability are significant factors that affect teacher turnover. This research employs a phenomenological approach to document and describe teachers' immediate experiences in international primary schools. Data collection includes semi-structured interviews and surveys, which are analyzed using thematic analysis. The sampling method is purposive, and the participants are teachers who have left or stayed in their positions for at least two years. The research is ongoing, and the findings will provide policymakers and school administrators with a better understanding of the reasons behind teacher turnover in international primary schools. The results will also identify areas for improvement to retain teachers and promote better learning outcomes for students. However, it's worth mentioning that the results indicate the challenges of increasing teacher turnover rates for international primary teachers (IPTs) due to heavy workloads, lack of resources, job-related anxiety, and the impact of COVID-19 on their work that could be tackled by providing adequate resources, reducing workload, competitive salaries, and clear communication and support from leadership.

Maria-Gracie Drakopoulou

### **The knowledge and opinions of educators regarding Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with ASD in the classroom.**

The inclusive education of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in general classrooms has become a significant concern in recent years both domestically and internationally. As the percentage of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) increases, all countries are adapting their legislative frameworks to ensure positive outcomes for these students. Achieving full inclusion of students with ASD in mainstream schools requires collaboration between general and special education teachers. In this study, we explore the views and experiences of six teachers (three general and three special education) who worked in primary schools in Agia Paraskevi (Attica) during the 2021-2022 school year. The teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured approach to gather their knowledge and opinions on the inclusion of students with ASD in mainstream classrooms. The results of the survey indicate that all teachers possessed knowledge about ASD, with special education teachers showing greater specialization. Additionally, all teachers demonstrated positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with ASD, though they considered the severity of symptoms to be a key factor for inclusion. Finally, the teachers emphasized the importance of collective cooperation between general and special education teachers and the need for continuous training programs to ensure effective inclusion practices.

Moschoula Kanaki

***Preferable leadership styles among educators within a private school in Athens***

It has constantly been verified by research that the various leadership styles deeply affect the performance and attitude of the teaching staff. The leader is no more seen as the solo leader of an educational organisation, who lifts the heavy burden of bureaucratic and instructional roles. Nowadays, teachers feel the need to share power and responsibility and earn their professional autonomy. It is not easy to predict which leadership style has the best outcome on teachers, since teachers who like assuming critical roles prefer the shared or distributed kind of leadership, whereas teachers, who feel safer in their comfort zone, might be keen on a more authoritarian, hierarchical style. This qualitative study's purpose was to investigate how leadership is experienced at a private primary school in Athens and to find out what kind of leadership style contributes to teachers' reaching their full potential, keeping a positive attitude towards the profession. It also aimed to explore what is expected from a leader at a school and what processes need to be put in place for a healthy working environment to be secured. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two teachers, two teacher leaders and the director of the foreign languages department. Data analysis revealed that although the shared model of leadership is embraced by followers, the allocation of duties should be done by taking their increased work obligations into consideration. Another finding showed that receiving feedback, support and appreciation from the leader encourages followers to reach their full potential and, on the other hand, what discourages them is a leader's dominant behaviour. Finally, it was revealed that neither a too democratic, nor a too autocratic model would be preferable, but what is important is to work with leaders who possess emotional intelligence for a healthy school environment to be secured.

Maria Delmadorou

***Exploring the views on blended learning by adult students and teachers on an EFL environment***

Blended learning is a teaching strategy that involves using both traditional classroom settings and online learning environments. The development of home computing in the 1980s and the introduction of the 1990s globally led to the introduction of new teaching strategies in the educational system. As a result, BL was introduced and used by professionals as a novel strategy (Bryan and Volchenkova, 2016). In addition, using BL to help pupils improve their language abilities (Adas and Bakir ,2013). As more schools and universities transition to BL in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the phrase is undoubtedly being used more frequently lately. 186 countries had closed their schools, affecting more than 1.2 billion children. In this situation, educators all around the world have had to come up with creative solutions to keep their pupils in the classroom. For the balance of the school year, distance learning became required in many regions (Al-Hunaiyyan, A., et al., 2021). BL is also a way to boost learners' interest and motivation (Banditvilai ,2016). Moreover, Crisp (2011) listed many forms of online assessment, including blogs, simulations, digital environment scenarios, e-portfolios, Wikis, conversations in a forum, social media platforms and LMS (Learning Management Systems). It is therefore clear how difficult it is sometimes to implement these applications correctly, and to identify, for example, plagiarism or the cooperation of students, because they are asynchronous. It is essential to mention that this qualitative research through online interviews will help in the evolution of education, the current needs of students, education in all environments and in all circumstances, as well as in the appropriate training of teachers (Salakhova et al., 2020).

It is noteworthy to point out that some students prefer BL while others prefer the traditional course. Among the main observations we find that for most of the students, either because of age, daily use or training, the use of new technologies was easy. Some of them found it difficult to memorize vocabulary and grammar through BL due to special needs such as

dyslexia and many also raised their concerns as they wanted direct contact with the teacher, their markers and the paper book. On the other hand, BL helped the students in speaking and listening because of the oral communication and examination from the teachers. Of course, many observed that it helped them to develop their ICT skills and avoid the stress of exams as well as the comfort of being away from home at the time of the course via BL. This of course included the problem of the internet signal in some areas. As far as teachers are concerned, it was observed that they are divided into two categories. Those who were BL proponents and those of the traditional order. They all use tools like Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom. Some use in BL the exercises they would do exactly in the traditional course while others use applications like Moodle, Twinkle, K12 application, Teachers pay teachers, Kahoot or just Google search for videos, movies and even flashcards. Some also use team rooms in online courses for student practice. As for assessment, they test students orally or with a home test or through Moodle or most interestingly through projects using GPT chat and critical thinking, something mentioned by an international teacher. These results show that Greece needs to evolve and more specifically to modernize its educational system even more.

Christina Tzortzi

**Intervention patterns for the three basic deficiencies of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

Autism Spectrum Disorders belong to the sphere of diffuse developmental disorders and include severe deficiencies extending to more than one area of a child's development. According to Lorna Wing, the triple key deficiencies of a person with autistic spectrum are problems in socialization, communication, and creative imagination. However, each of these three areas involves a wide variety of different behaviors that depend on different cognitive mechanisms and emerge at different points of normal development (Sue Fletcher & Francesca Happé, 2022: 78). The purpose of this work, using the method of systematic literary review, is to explore contemporary intervention models for the formal and informal education of individuals of different ages in the Autism Spectrum in school structures of special education and inclusive education, such as integration departments, special schools, E.U.E.K., KDIF, KDAPmeA, etc. Thus, academic papers, scientific articles and research results of the last decade were searched from libraries and well-known databases (Google Scholar, ECB, etc.) in Greek and English, which dealt with the definition and triad of basic deficits of the ASD. In terms of socialization, a large percentage of children with autism experience social isolation as they get away from their surroundings, find it difficult to establish social relationships and interact with them. Advancing in communication, people with autism find it excessively difficult to communicate, having a deficit in both verbal and non-verbal skills. Regarding incomplete creative imagination, individuals with ASD manifest repetitive and stereotypical patterns of behavior, interests and activities for a long time, which do not leave room for the development of their creativity and imagination. These were correlated with similar literature on the teaching utilization and application of modern models of educational and therapeutic intervention for ASD and in the results of the systematic review are presented, among other things, the visualized programs, the TEACCH method, the PECS technique, the sensory integration exercises as appropriate models for intervention and improvement of the three key deficiencies of ASD.

**Keywords:** Autism Spectrum Disorders, Special Education, Methods of Intervention, Inclusive Education, Diffuse Developmental Disorder.

Christina Mavreli

**Teachers' views on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the field of Children's Literature in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten**

Living in the 'Knowledge and Information Society', education for 'Global Citizenship', according to UNESCO (2003), must include familiarity with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) at all levels of education as method of acquiring knowledge and useful daily life skill (Tsafos, 2014; Pagge, 2015; Albani et al., 2018). The purpose of this paper is to investigate the views of kindergarten teachers regarding whether the use of ICT in the field of children's literature benefits students, to find out in what ways they use it and if there are any challenges. It is a fact that although the use of ICT in kindergarten has increased significantly, in contrast to the other levels of education, this is not reflected at a research level (Dadamoglia & Oikonomou, 2016; Nikolopoulou, 2018). In other words, there is a need for further investigation of the present matter. The sample of the study was found using the avalanche sampling method and consisted of eight kindergarten teachers, working in public and private kindergartens, residing in the Athens area and having at least three years of teaching experience. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and coded using the thematic analysis method of Braun & Clarke (2006). Regarding the benefits of using ICT, the findings confirm previous research, as teachers recognize its positive impact in the areas of language, physical and cognitive development. In relation to the ways of exploitation, a distinction was made between those that are exploited in general and those in the field of children's literature, and a multitude of them were mentioned. Finally, a variety of challenges were reported, some related to the teacher, others to the students, and others to the school and parent-guardians. Despite the limitations, this research can contribute to highlighting the positive effect of ICT, the ways of its utilization and the most frequent challenges during its use. Finally, it can be a trigger for those responsible for drawing up school policy in order to act to remove the challenges through the implementation of purely experiential training and the equipment of the schools.

## Psychology

Anyfantaki Savvina-Kalliopi, Giatra Charalampia, Gkioka Anastasia, Glykioti Nefeli, Neila Alexandra, Pavlidis Kosmas-Marios (project supervisor: Evaggelia Tserpeli)

### **"Infant massage classes: the experiences of mothers. A qualitative study".**

The number of studies in the worldwide literature regarding the beneficial effects of infant massage on the neurological development of infants, the emotional state of mothers in the postpartum period and its positive impact on the quality of parent-infant interaction have been increasing. This has paved the way for further implementation of infant massage. However, relevant research studies in the Greek literature are limited, if non-existent. Following the identification of this research gap, the present study was conceptualised.

This study aimed to investigate the experiences of mothers who had attended infant massage classes. Mothers with children under 12 months of age and who attended infant massage classes participated in this qualitative study. Participants were invited to discuss their overall experience and reflect on the impact this has had on a personal level and on the dyadic relationship. Semi-structured interviews were carried out. Data analysis was conducted based on thematic analysis. The discussion of the results of the present study was realised considering previous research that has illustrated the positive experience of learning infant massage for mothers and the improved interaction with their infants following their participation in such a class. The takeaway message is that infant massage classes have the potential to benefit both mothers and infants. Future research will further enrich this topic area.

**Key words;** infant massage, mother-infant, mothers' experiences, dyadic relationship

Catherine Faratzi (co-author: Dr Konstantinos-Christos Daoultzis)

### **The Relationship between Animal Abuse and Dark Tetrad of Personality depending on Gender.**

Psychology has included most negative human behaviors in the Dark Tetrad (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy, Sadism). Several studies support a significant association of the Dark Tetrad with human mistreatment and violent behaviors. One of the most common violent behaviors is animal abuse, which has predicted other forms of abuse. The present study aims to test the relationship between Dark Tetrad traits and animal abuse, but also the indirect effect of gender between the two variables, as there have been no previous similar investigations. The research draws on previous studies examining the relationship of the Dark Tetrad to abusive behavior, but also the relationship of animal abuse to other delinquent and abusive behaviors. The survey involved 192 participants, 137 women and 55 men, aged 18 to 65, regardless of nationality. The survey was conducted online from 01/12/2022 to 30/01/2023 and participants filled out their demographic information and two scales, one scale for the Dark Tetrad (SD4) divided into four subsections, one for each feature of the Dark Tetrad, and an animal cruelty scale (PET). Correlation and prediction analyses with moderator were used for this research's purposes. The research results showed a significant relationship between all Dark Tetrad traits and animal abuse, supporting previous studies, but showed no effect of gender on the relationship between the two previous variables. Specifically, the research argues that all Dark Tetrad traits predict animal abuse behavior regardless of gender. It is important to emphasize that the highest predictive scores for animal abuse were presented by Machiavellianism and Sadism. Also, the set of Dark Tetrad traits showed a particularly high score in predicting animal abuse. It would be useful to repeat the research also testing the relationship between animal abuse and domestic violence. Also, in future research it would be useful to use the Dark Tetrad traits as moderators, to test the effect they may have between two abusive behaviors.

**Keywords:** Dark Tetrad, Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy, Sadism, Animal Abuse, Gender.

Georgios Tsirimokos (co-author: Dr Penelope Louka)

**Till work do us part. An investigation of occupational burnout, familial relationships, and quality of life.**

Burnout is a work-oriented psychosomatic syndrome that gradually develops in response to chronic occupational stress, resulting in adverse health alterations. To address the intrapersonal and interpersonal implications in terms of determinants and health-inclined outcomes, the current study aims to investigate the paradigms of occupational burnout, quality of life, and familial relationships, and explore the underlying considerations of these variables. Results concerning the (a) analysis of variance (ANOVA), indicate that occupational burnout and familial relationships in isolation significantly affect quality of life, to a considerable 19,1% margin of effect. Yet, the interaction effect of these factors produces non-significant results. With regard to the (b) correlational design (Multiple Regression), the investigation also corroborates significant results demonstrating that quality of life and familial relationships predict occupational burnout, by a 27,6% effect amplitude. Several implications concerning burnout determinants, health-inclined consequences, as well as probable amplifying, nullifying, and even synergistic effects among the triumvirate of burnout, familial relationships, and quality of life, are thoroughly discussed.

**Key words:** burnout, familial relationships, quality of life, determinants, health implications

Abdulsalam Israa Khaled Kabeel (co-author: Dr Triantafyllia Iliopoulou)

**An IPA Analysis: Investigating if Instagram has a negative impact on body image.**

The relationship between children and teenagers and social media is developing daily as technological reach expands. It is thought that such a rise in social media usage has an impact on the mental health of adolescents and early teens. Body image is one of the most critical issues young people face at school and work (Mental Health Foundation, 2019). 68% of Instagram users are female, while 32% are male, according to reports. This study seeks to determine the impact of social media on people's body image, identify potential interventions, and assess their efficacy. In pursuit of the objectives, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to gain insight deeply into participants' own experiences and perspectives. A total of 6 men and women took part in this study between the ages of 25 to 35. This study validates the notion that Instagram has a negative influence on users' body image regardless of gender but has a greater impact on women than males. According to the interviews, even if both men's and women's body images are negatively influenced by Instagram, it has resulted in varied responses between men and women. One area of contention between men and women on this subject is that practically every male participant turned this negative influence into a strength. They accomplish this by channeling their negative feelings into a strong desire to go to the gym and work on themselves to have a better body image. Female participants, on the other hand, noted that seeing all these "perfect" bodies might be overpowering, making them feel even worse about their own bodies.

**Keywords:** body image, social media, gender differences



Panagiotis Koukoulis (co-author: Dr Penelope Louka)

### **An Investigation of Authenticity and Guilt and Shame Proneness as Predictors of Moral Agency**

Although conceptualizations of morality are diverse with no clear consensus, rational and conscious paradigms represent tenable positions, whose exploration can provide valuable contributions. However, although moral agency is the singular construct that forms the basis of ethical decision-making in such paradigms, until recently it could only be indirectly measured through the moral disengagement scale and has therefore remained largely under-researched. Moral agency has already been associated with moral self and moral integrity, and examining other personality traits such as authenticity and guilt and shame proneness could be fruitful. While authenticity is morally relevant insofar as it indicates alignment with values, guilt and shame proneness are relevant to the extent that they reflect responses to violations of such values. 320 primarily Greek adults aged 18-73 (mean=35.91, SD=12.71) responded to questionnaires on moral agency, authenticity, and guilt and shame proneness regarding unethical decision-making, and regression analyses revealed that moral agency was positively predicted by authentic living, and reparative behaviors of guilt and negatively predicted by self-alienation. Mediation effects were also identified, and guilt-negative behavior evaluations positively predicted moral agency primarily through reparative behaviors of guilt, while accepting external influence was fully mediated by authentic living and self-alienation. Negative self-evaluations of shame may positively predict moral agency only through a tentative interaction with accepting external influence. This study successfully expanded knowledge on predictors of moral agency but failed to provide strong evidence for the moral relevance of shame from a functionalist perspective. Furthermore, the present results contradict theory suggestions that accepting external influence may interact with authentic living and self-alienation; however, future research needs to determine whether this is specific to moral agency as outcome.

Keywords: moral agency, authenticity, guilt, shame, ethical decision-making

Nikos Karvounopoulos (co-author: Panagiota Afendouli)

### **The relationship between disordered eating behaviours and emotion regulation strategies with body dissatisfaction**

Young adult girls comparing themselves with thinner women (upward comparison) in social media experience body dissatisfaction<sup>1</sup>, which is associated with disordered eating behaviours, like restraint eating, to fulfil the thin beauty standards<sup>2</sup>. Recent studies suggest that maladaptive emotion regulation strategies increase body dissatisfaction, which is effectively reduced by the adaptive ones. However, most of these studies are based on instructing emotion regulation strategies and more recently, McComb & Mills (2021)<sup>3</sup> utilising self-report measures demonstrated controversial results. Thus, this study adopting a social comparison paradigm explored whether the general use of the adaptive cognitive reappraisal and the maladaptive expressive suppression<sup>4</sup> and the disordered eating behaviours of restraint, uncontrolled and emotional eating can predict state body dissatisfaction. 183 healthy young adult girls (18-24years) with a mean BMI = 21.93 ± 3.45 participated in this study and hierarchical regression showed that restraint eating, and uncontrolled eating had both a very weak positive relationship with state body dissatisfaction, and cognitive reappraisal had a weak negative relationship with state body dissatisfaction. Thus, this study partially confirms the correlation of both disordered eating behaviours and emotion regulation strategies with state body dissatisfaction. Consequently, young adult girls familiarized with cognitive reappraisal can benefit when it comes to upward body comparison. Because merely restraint eating predicted a worse mood, its maladaptive emotion regulation character can be confirmed<sup>5</sup>, and the cognitive elements of body dissatisfaction may be highlighted. Interestingly, body dissatisfaction was not related to BMI thus, regardless of their weight young adult girls are able to experience body dissatisfaction.

Future studies could alternatively measure mood and whether the explored emotion regulation strategies are utilised during the experiment.

Giorgos Kapetangeorgis

**Dealing with the Implications of Childhood Financial Patterns for Achieving Economic Freedom**

This research proposal aims to investigate the relationship between early childhood experiences, attachment styles, and economic behaviors and attitudes. Attachment theory provides a framework for understanding how early relationships with caregivers influence personality development and social functioning. Furthermore, research in psychology and economics has shown that attachment styles can have implications for financial outcomes, such as income, savings, debt, financial literacy, risk-taking propensity, and overall attitudes, behavior, and beliefs towards money.

The proposed study aims to explore how attachment styles influence economic behaviors and attitudes, and whether financial psychotherapy can help individuals with insecure attachment styles improve their financial outcomes. Based on a literature review across various fields, including psychology, economics, and financial management, it is suggested that attachment styles have significant impacts on financial outcomes. Previous studies have indicated that attachment styles affect financial behaviors, financial satisfaction, financial literacy, financial anxiety, and financial conflicts. Moreover, attachment styles can influence consumer behavior and financial decision-making.

The study aims to identify underlying mechanisms and develop effective interventions or support for individuals with insecure attachment patterns to improve their financial outcomes. The proposed research intends to address entrepreneurs, managers, etc., who seek to enhance the economic well-being of their businesses, as well as individuals who face a combination of economic and psychological problems and aspire to improve their mental health while also improving their personal financial situation.

Overall, the research seeks to highlight the importance of understanding the psychological factors that can influence an individual's or a company's financial outcomes, as well as ways to address them.

**Keywords:** early childhood, attachment styles, economic behaviors, financial psychotherapy, Bowlby, insecure attachment.

Danai Vichou, Alexandra Neila (co-author: Georgios Pilafas)

**The influence of canned laughter in the sense of humor of healthy Greek adults: independent samples test comparison.**

Humor is the individual's perception of something interpreted as funny. It is usually accompanied by emotional and vocal reactions, such as laughter. Scientists have long studied the factors that can influence this response and have argued whether it is contagious. Canned laughter is widespread in American situation comedies, but does it influence the sense of humor of the audience? To test this question, much research has been conducted, but the findings remain controversial. This laid the foundations to create a study on Greek healthy, adult population to examine the influence of canned laughter on their sense of humor, using independent sample test comparison in SPSS software. Thirty individuals were approached with convenience sampling and participated in the study. Half of them watched a video with canned laughter in the background, whereas the rest watched a video without canned laughter. Then they were asked to evaluate the comicality of the video on a Likert scale. The data was collected with the use of questionnaires and statistically analyzed in SPSS. The results showed that there were no significant differences in the means of the two groups, concluding that there was not a direct influence of canned laughter on the humor of the participants. Great limitations to this study were the sampling method, the language of the videos that were not in the native language of the participants, and the tendency of the participants to respond with socially liked answers.

**Keywords**

humor, laughter, canned laughter, influence of canned laughter, Greece

Orsalia Lambropoulou (co-author: Christina Zourna)

**DEALING WITH THE "RESISTANT" CLIENT»: How the integrative therapist experiences the client who resists the therapeutic process.**

There is consistent evidence in psychotherapy research that the therapist-client relationship lies at the heart of any therapeutic process. While the bulk of literature on the subject focuses on the client's perspective and needs, very little research is focusing on the struggle of the therapist, even the experienced one, to be congruent while creating at the same time relational depth with the client. This study seeks to bring the therapist to the spotlight and understand their lived experience working with clients who resist the therapeutic process.

Through the lens of a phenomenological, qualitative study, personal accounts are examined on how client's "resistance" is perceived and dealt with, by three experienced integrative therapists, while the researcher attempts to make sense of how the participants make sense of their own experience (double hermeneutics).

Main themes emerged from the analysis, as to "What is..." resistance, "Client as a human", "Therapist as human", the "I-Thou" relationship, the "Lessons learned" and "Safeguards" needed, as well as the benefits of Integrative practice and how it can be effective in conjunction with the transtheoretical model (TTM stages of change). Subthemes highlighted the need for further discussion on issues like, client's autonomy v. client's responsibility, understanding v. empathizing, transference and countertransference, but also, the overall need to (re)define the concept of "resistance" in the context of psychotherapy.

This study is not designed to prove a hypothesis or generate a theory. Due to its phenomenological nature, it is seeking to comprehend a phenomenon and offer an insight to the strengths and limitations of the therapist, through identifying and understanding the individual therapist's responses to individual clients. This insight can hopefully inform clinical practice and training with a view to enhancing the quality of therapeutic outcome.

**Keywords:** resistant client; reluctant client; therapeutic process; lived experience of therapist; impact on therapist; self-care; integrative counselling

Eleni Evangelidou (co-author: Dr Triantafyllia Iliopoulou)

**An interpretative phenomenological analysis of how dream analysis, and dream sharing contribute to well-being outside of the therapeutic environment.**

Dreaming is a phenomenon that is encountered across time, different cultures, and diverse geopolitical contexts. Among the theories developed about it are the psychoanalytic, cognitive, activation-synthesis, and simulation theory. Dreamwork is much older than psychotherapy, which is why this study tackles the effect of dreamwork outside the therapeutic environment. Dream analysis engages with interpretations that serve a deeper understanding of oneself and often acts as a mirror to beliefs, and internal discourses. Dream-sharing includes a storytelling element which may contribute to bonding, and shared meanings which may form, consolidate communities and even serve as a healing tool. The automated software programs for analysing textual data that are usually used in dreams are mainly lexicon-based, which might overlook the nuances, the layers and the embedded personal meanings. Phenomenological research examines personal experiences considering its structural features and the specific point of view of the individual. Oddly, there are not many phenomenological accounts on how dreamwork affects well-being outside the psychotherapeutic environment. The present study examines dreamwork implementing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, attempting to inspect how the different facets of dreamwork may inform every day, waking life emotions and cognitions, how dreamwork might be connected to the well-being, and how it is utilised outside the structured, therapeutic environment. If the contribution of the dream work to the well-being could be demonstrated, it might renew the interest of psychotherapists to include it in their therapeutic toolbox, and probably find new ways to approach it.

Eva Ferhati (co-author: George Thomas)

**The effect of loneliness and life satisfaction on problematic Internet use**

Internet is the most exciting and useful innovation in the world and has been integrated into every aspect of our daily lives. However, its ever-increasing importance and variety of activities has led to its uncontrolled use, known as problematic Internet use. The relationship between problematic Internet use and psychosocial well-being, including loneliness and life satisfaction, has greatly attracted much research interest over the years, with consistently mixed findings. Therefore, the current study examined the effect of loneliness and life satisfaction on problematic Internet use. A factorial (2x2) independent measures ANOVA was used with a total of 200 participants, of which 125 were females and 75 were males aged 18 to 49 years ( $M=25.7$ ;  $SD=7.27$ ). The UCLA Loneliness Scale, Satisfaction With Life Scale and Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire were administered. The results revealed that there was a significant main effect of loneliness on problematic Internet use ( $F(1,196)=18.05$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Similarly, life satisfaction significantly affected problematic Internet use ( $F(1,196)=13.1$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). However, the interaction effect of loneliness and life satisfaction on problematic Internet use, produced non-significant results ( $F(1,96)=3.46$ ,  $p=0.064$ ). The limitations of the study and suggestions for future research were also discussed.

**Keywords:** Problematic Internet use (PIU), Loneliness, Life Satisfaction, Online Communication, Social Isolation

Athanasios Ganotis (co-author: Dr Penelope Louka)

**'Religion is the opium of the people': An FDA analysis on the construction of religion by young Greek adults.**

Religion is a time-space-bound multivariant phenomenon which holds a great influence on how people behave, react and shape their identities. In comparison to its importance, religion is a topic that has been neglected from psychological studies, even after its establishment in APA during the 90's.

In the context of Greece, religion has a long and complex history, with roots in ancient Greek mythology and the adoption of Christianity in the early Byzantine period. Currently, the number of Orthodox believers is estimated to overcome the 80% of the population. The Greek Orthodox Church has played a central role in shaping Greek society and culture, influencing not only religious practices but also social norms and political ideology. In examining the role of religion in Greece through the lens of discourse analysis, a deeper understanding of how religion shapes identities and behaviors can be obtained.

For this study, seven interviews were conducted on young Greek adults to explore their constructs regarding religion in Greece. Three main themes have emerged from the data. The first regards the decline of religious power in Greece, divided into two sub-themes: First, how education and social interaction negatively impact religious beliefs and second, how the Greek Orthodox church is discursively constructed as corrupted and inefficient. The second theme explores the discourses that are created among the religious individuals in Greece and how they shape their actions and identities, with the first regarding an acceptive discourse, where people are tolerant towards religious diversity, the second a conservative discourse, where people are more engaged in participating in religious practices and disregard contrasting beliefs, and the third a fanaticism discourse, where people exaggerate and place religion above social needs and logic. The third theme focuses on the constructed benefits of religion, divided into two subthemes, the first exploring constructs regarding mental strength and hope, and the second how religion assists family bonding and the process of an individual in becoming a better person. The findings are critically discussed and compared to relevant theories and literature.

Ioanna Kapanteli (co-author: Dr Konstantinos-Christos Daoultzis)

**Sexual Orientation, investment, and relationship satisfaction**

This study, based on Rusbult's Investment Model (1980, 1983), aimed to examine the association between sexual orientation, relationship satisfaction level, and investment level (measured by quality of alternatives, investment size, and commitment level), as well as the interaction effect between sexual orientation and relationship satisfaction level on investment level. A factorial two-way independent measures ANOVA was conducted to analyze the data collected from 256 participants, including 115 gay and 141 straight individuals, who completed a survey measuring their sexual orientation, relationship satisfaction level, and investment level. The scales that have been used to measure these variables are Kinsey Heterosexual-Homosexual Likert-type Scale, Self-Measures for General Relationship Satisfaction, and Investment Model Scale: Measuring commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. The results indicated that the main effect of relationship satisfaction level on investment level was significant  $F(1, 252) = 13.05, p < 0.01$ ,  $F(1, 252) = 82.40, p > 0.01$ ,  $F(1, 252) = 85.19, p > 0.01$ , suggesting that higher levels of relationship satisfaction were associated with higher levels of investment. However, the main effect of sexual orientation on investment level was non-significant  $F(1, 252) = 3.56, p > 0.01$ ,  $F(1, 252) = 0.17, p > 0.01$ ,  $F(1, 252) = 4.63, p > 0.01$ , indicating that there was no significant difference in investment behavior between straight and gay participants. Moreover, the interaction effect between sexual orientation and relationship satisfaction level on investment level was also non-significant  $F(1, 252) = 0.51, p > 0.01$ ,  $F(1, 252) = 0.01,$

$p > 0.01$ ),  $F(1, 252) = 0.00$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ), implying that the association between sexual orientation and investment level did not vary by relationship satisfaction level. These findings may have arisen from some limitations that the study have, which are included in the study with suggestions for future research too.

Tserpeli Evangelia, Psychologist; Vlasopoulou Stavroula, Psychologist; Lambropoulou Orsalia, Mental Health Counselor; Raftopoulou Myrto, PhD, Neuroscientist

### **TRAINING IN INTEGRATIVE COUNSELLING-PSYCHOTHERAPY: A SYNTHESIS OF REFLECTIONS BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS**

From Freud to modern integrative counselling approaches, there is one thing in common: the acceptance of human nature.

Our training in psychotherapy has taught us to be genuine and empathetic, to accept unconditionally our clients, to explore the reasons why a person is who they are, because I am who I am. I have reasons why I feel, think and behave in a certain way - so does my client. My client and I may have different life stories, but our 'creative adaptations to the world around us' (Mearns and Thorne, 1988:59) eventually meet in the counselling room and interact.

The purpose of this paper is to present our reflections in an attempt to record and process our experience in the context of our training in integrative counselling psychotherapy.

Critical reflective practice is fundamental to both clinical training and lifelong learning of trainees. It is linked to the formation of their professional identity, competence and self-awareness.

Areas of focus for the joint reflections include supervision and personal therapy, practice, self-care and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In discussing the above, reflections on what happened, the impact of these on our development and the lessons learned are provided.

Consequently, this presentation brings together themes that have run through our educational journey.

We conclude that any challenges in our training (i.e., the pandemic, managing sessions with real clients, dealing with issues of self-efficacy and self-doubt, and reconciling with becoming a "good enough" therapist can be resolved through supervision and personal therapy with appropriate self-compassion and self-care.

We conclude with a loan from William Butler Yeats: education is: *"...not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire"*.

Almpina Ntaoyti (co-author: Panagiota Afendouli)

**The effect of time spent on social networking platforms and gender on body dissatisfaction.**

Recent research suggests that 91 percent of women are unhappy with their physical looks, but only 80 percent of men feel self-conscious about how they seem. This discrepancy may be attributed to the fact that women tend to be more critical of their appearances than males. College students nowadays face an increasing number of challenges, including negative body views, poor self-esteem, and other mental health issues. Festinger claims that individuals perpetually evaluate their own capabilities, opinions, and standing in relation to those of others. The social comparison theory explains how people's incessant comparisons to those they perceive as superior can lead to feelings of physical inferiority. Moreover, studies suggest that spending time on social media platforms can significantly affect one's self-perception of physical appearance. Also, for decades now, academics have marveled at the correlation between the news media and public issues. Several academics have attempted to quantify this correlation, and the results tend to back up the claim that media exposure is correlated with a common dissatisfaction with one's own physique between both genders. There have been limited studies conducted to determine the amount of time that male and female college students in Greece dedicate to using social media. Since previous research has shown that young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 spend the most time on social media, sampled 150 college students in this age range. The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between social media usage (categorized as low, average, high, and extremely high) and gender with regards to body image dissatisfaction. The participants were administered two questionnaires, namely the body esteem scale and social networking time use. The research findings indicate a significant correlation between the duration of social media usage and body image among both male and female individuals. However, there was no noteworthy relationship observed between gender and social media usage duration. Similarly, women score higher than men on body image concerns.

Dimitrios Athanasopoulos (supervisor: Panagiota Afendouli)

**The effect of phonological loop suppression on the TMT-B performance.**

About fifty years ago, Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) presented the theoretical model of working memory. According to that model, information from external sources is imported to stimulus memory, and then our attention to a particular source, transfers this information to working memory. Later, the theoretical models of Baddeley and Hitch (Baddeley, 2007) were presented, which take the research one step further by stating that attention is controlled by a mechanism they call the central executor. That central executor, according to the model, works with some "slave executors" who are divided according to the type of information they will handle. The one that concerns us in the present research, is the phonological loop executor that handles the management of phonetically encoded information. Research shows that working memory has a very small capacity and that it can receive information from several sources at the same time. The question that arises is whether the speed of processing is affected by the information load in the phonological loop, which if true would confirm these theories. A critique was written by James Nairne (2002, as cited by Baddeley, 2007) who believes that there is no working memory but only long-term memory which, however, has an infinite capacity and therefore could not undergo suppression. To test the hypothesis, an independent measures design was carried out on a convenience sampling of 90 people, and to test the processing speed, the Trail Making Test (TMT-B test) was used, which is widely accepted and very useful for the performance in counting various cognitive abilities, but specifically in the processing speed. The results ( $n_1 = 45$ ;  $n_2 = 45$ ) = 90,  $p = 0.0001$ , tail of test,  $d = -0.9575$  showed statistical significance between suppression and non-suppression in the phonological loop, which confirms the above primary theories, while future research with a much larger sample is of interest.

Samantha Cable (co-author: Dr Konstantinos-Christos Daoultzis)

**INTERPRETERS, INTEGRATIVE THERAPY, AND REFUGEES**

Research around the use of interpreters in fields such as medicine and politics is vast; however, there is much less literature when it comes to using interpreters in psychology. As the refugee crisis has emerged in the last few years, there is an increasing need for interpreters, or translators, when working with those from other countries. As more people immigrate, either willingly or otherwise, often a range of difficult experiences are encountered, and therapeutic intervention can be useful if not essential. Cultural differences and legal, economic, and social issues can create harsh problems and realities for many of these people. Studies are usually aimed at the use of translators being effective in a therapeutic context; which all signs point to yes. Establishing this, research moves further into which psychological approaches are more useful than others. These studies have often concluded that many approaches to therapy are effective when working with refugees using an interpreter, including integrative therapy. Integrative therapy is described as the combination of two or more schools of psychology to create a comprehensive framework for individual clients. Again, these studies focus on the effectiveness of therapy or the experience of the therapist in this context. Yet, there are three people in this therapeutic relationship. The thoughts, feelings, and emotions of the interpreters, along with their physical self being there, undoubtedly add dimensions to the therapy-client relationship, the effect of therapy, and how therapy is conducted. Understanding the experience of interpreters as a therapist can increase awareness of how best to handle working with interpreters, what support they will need, and overall make therapy more effective. There is little to no research on interpreters themselves, which will be the aim of this study. This is a qualitative study based on five interviews conducted in a semi-structured fashion. The researcher used interpretative phenomenological analysis to interpret the experiences. Using this, researcher identified common themes spoken by some or all of the participants. Looking at the results, the most common ideas were as follows: lack of training and support from the therapist made it difficult to translate psychological terms and ideas, the effect of exposure to trauma, specifically in the early stages of becoming an interpreter and when not having as much experience with the refugee population, and the relationship between the interpreter and therapist being very important for the triad relationship to be effective. Among the smaller themes was the particular role the interpreter should have and the difficulties working with someone using the same language, but having a different culture. Asking questions and creating an open discussion with interpreters is incredibly important in a field like psychology, especially when we look at how closely therapists study body language, the tone of a client's voice, and how they structure their language. It only makes sense that these would all be directly affected by having an interpreter in the room, and although studies have shown that using interpreters in the therapeutic context can be effective in helping ease the psychological distress of the client, there is no research done on how it affects the interpreter. In the future, research can be continued in finding the experience of interpreters in other schools of psychology, how training can be put into place to enhance the therapeutic experience, and support the platform of therapists and interpreters alike aiding in the integration of refugees and immigrants into society.



Michelle E. Armata, Babis Giannios, Alexandros Ivanidis, Evaggelia Kallini, Stella Kourmouli, Despina Pagourtzi, Andreas Pantazis, Fani Papamiliou, Ina Toledo (supervisor: Elena Bolonasi)

### **Society's Attitudes Towards Rape: A Tabula Rasa Criminology Investigation**

We, the second-year students of Tabula Rasa Criminology class, conducted a study on society's attitudes towards rape, inspired by the influential "MeToo" movement -the renowned social campaign against sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and rape culture. Through this movement, individuals have shared their experiences of sexual abuse and harassment, shedding light on the pervasive but often invisible nature of rape. In our research, we aimed to explore society's attitudes towards rape, specifically examining the existence of prejudices and myths associated with this crime. Today, we will discuss the key issues that emerged during our investigation.

- Provocation

We examined the myth that victims provoke their own victimization through clothing or sexuality, challenging this notion with evidence.

- Stigmatization of Victims

We explored the stigmatization of rape victims, assessing whether they face unique marginalization compared to victims of other crimes.

- Socio-Economic Background

We investigated the potential influence of socio-economic background, including education and economic status, on the likelihood of someone becoming a rapist or being victimized.

- Reporting Behavior

The reasons behind underreporting of rape cases, considering factors such as fear, taboos, and victim stigmatization.

- Overcoming Trauma

The long-term effects of rape, both psychologically and physically, was another crucial aspect of our investigation.

We aim with our research to underline the social factors that keep most rape assaults unreported. Changing society's attitude towards rape victims and sexual assaults through education, awareness on the matter and victim support, we can increase rape reporting and -in the long term- reduce crime rates. Challenging prejudices and myths is evidence of progress in any society. We thank the participants for their voluntary involvement and assure the protection of their personal data.

## Sports

Dedes Dimitrios

### ***Exercise rehabilitation for patients with Post COVID-19 syndrome: A review of the literature***

**Background:** A substantial number of COVID-19 patients experience residual symptoms of the disease that can last for more than 12 months. Among these symptoms, the most prevalent are reduced physical capacity, fatigue, dyspnea, and psychological disfunctions. A number of recent studies have evaluated the effects of exercise rehabilitation in post-acute COVID-19 patients with promising results. However, research on the effects of exercise rehabilitation in patients with post-COVID-19 symptoms more than 3 months after infection is scarce. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to review the current literature on exercise-based rehabilitation interventions and outcomes, in patients that suffer from long COVID-19 symptoms 3 or more months after infection.

**Methods:** A review of the published literature was conducted. An electronic search of the literature was performed in Google Scholar and PubMed databases. The eligibility criteria were formed according to the P.I.C.O.S. framework. The inclusion criteria involved any experimental study that involved exercise intervention on post COVID-19 patients, 3 or more months after infection. Studies that did not provide information about the exercise intervention parameters were excluded. The study selection was conducted according to the P.R.I.S.M.A. guidelines.

**Results:** Out of 589 studies, 6 met the inclusion criteria. Most were small, experimental, or quasi- experimental studies, including 1 RCT, and were primarily of low quality. The interventions of the studies involved primarily aerobic and resistance training. After exercise rehabilitation, all studies reported significant improvements in physical capacity and muscle strength. Regarding physical symptoms, three studies that evaluated dyspnea and fatigue reported significant improvements. Three studies that evaluated anxiety, depression, pulmonary function, functional status, and health-related quality of life showed mixed results.

**Conclusion:** Based on literature results, exercise-based rehabilitation could improve physical capacity, muscle strength, and reduce the symptoms of dyspnea and fatigue among patients with post COVID-19 syndrome, with no adverse effects. The effects of exercise intervention on anxiety, depression, pulmonary function, functional status, and health-related quality of life should be cautiously interpreted due to inadequate and conflicting data reported across studies. Larger sample sizes and higher quality studies are needed to verify the current results.