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Instructional Design in the Face of COVID-19: Learned Lessons and Pending Tasks

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Abstract

Faced with confinement due to COVID-19, educational institutions with face-to-face models had to continue their activities under conditions and with resources not used up to that moment. For this, the institutions formulated and put into operation continuity plans, which involved everything from remote education to hybrids between the latter and online education. Institutions that already had online or hybrid education programs were able to apply that experience to their face-to-face programs, allowing them to respond more quickly than those that did not. The stages of the teaching-learning process that were "adjusted" during this emergency in order to give continuity to educational activities were the last two, namely: the development of instructional material and teaching. In this work, an intervention is proposed in a previous stage of the process, that is, in the instructional design (ID), using the ASSURE model derived from the ADDIE model or approach. This intervention is based on the lessons learned during the pandemic, for the preparation or reformulation of study plans that consider information and communication technologies as a platform to enhance the effectiveness of learning, selecting them and establishing their use strategy from the stage in which the materials are designed, which may be useful considering that even if the students return to the classrooms, a virtual part will be preserved, that is, a hybrid model, in which the face-to-face-virtual ratio will be determined by the educational strategy of the institution.

Keywords: ADDIE, ASSURE, instructional design, teaching-learning process
1. Introduction

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2, the activities carried out in all areas changed their form, their timing, the resources and methods used, among others, which has had both negative and positive consequences, mainly of the first type. However, although emergent measures had to be taken to continue with the activities, this need also forced to venture into methods not considered until then, given the face-to-face nature of work, education, health, etc.

In the case of education, confinement made it necessary to continue activities from home or on some occasions from the students’ workplace. For this, it was used from remote education to hybrids in part remote and in part virtual, environments in which physical spaces were replaced by videoconference rooms.

In the first days of confinement, teachers had to integrate their virtual classrooms with the resources they had and knew about, but the institutions reacted by designing, building and operating programs to address the situation, which included not only communication platforms (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, among others), but also training for its use. Also, and depending on the topic taught by the teachers, many integrated complementary tools or platforms, such as mathematical software, simulation software, digital libraries, vlogs, LMS (learning management system), etc., to their portfolio of instructional instruments.

Thus, the emerging situation forced changes of the same nature in teaching. The changes occurred mainly in the instructional materials and in the presentation of the same with the students, that is, the last two stages of the teaching-learning process were fundamentally modified, considering the evaluation of the students in the last stage.

Although the aforementioned actions have many times satisfactorily resolved the restrictions imposed by confinement, there are also lessons learned that can be applied to earlier stages of the teaching-learning process, particularly from the instructional design, for the achievement of a more effective teaching.

2. The teaching-learning process and instructional design

Without becoming mechanistic, since there is a high degree of soft components involved in teaching-learning, a design, construction, test and operation of it can be carried out as a process, in which one of its stages is the instructional design, which in turn is also a process.

**Teaching learning process**

Teaching-learning is a process that consists of various interconnected stages, which feed the product of one as an input to the next, while each one takes additional inputs. As a process, all the concepts of systems and process optimization are applicable to it, in addition to the fact that it must be considered that the teaching-learning process is developed in a multidimensional operational framework integrated at least by labor,
administrative, legal and budgetary aspects. All this means that the stages must be ideally coupled to each other and that each of them must have the same robustness, that is, they must be aligned and harmonized in order to achieve good performance.

![Diagram](image1)

**Figure 1. Teaching-Learning Process.**
Source: self made

It is noteworthy that, as a system, it is very important that in order to achieve good performance, each of the stages themselves are evaluated (unit tests), their coupling between them (comprehensive tests) and the feedback of the results to the previous stages for this control circuit. Through these tests, the alignment between the stages, the harmonization of them, and the general performance of the process can be verified and adjusted.

![Diagram](image2)

(*) Arrows are tests

**Figure 2. Tests in the Teaching-Learning Process.**
Source: self made.

The subject of tests and evaluation deserves a separate treatment, at this point we will only point out that for the efficient performance of the process its review is necessary to ensure the correct coupling and flow between the stages, and to ensure that the achievement of the pedagogical objectives is built in a sustained manner in the different stages.
Instructional design

According to the process, the instructional design is the way in which the educational model formulated by the institution is implemented, it is the materialization of the educational model, so its importance is capital within the process.

Instructional Design (DI) has been widely studied and conceptualized, among many the following concepts stand out, in alphabetical order:

Branch & Kopcha (2014) point out that “instructional design is intended to be an iterative process of planning results, selecting effective strategies for teaching and learning, choosing relevant technologies, identifying educational media, and measuring performance.”

Dick, Carey and Carey (2015) consider that instructional design is an umbrella term to include all phases of the instructional systems development process, that is, the design, development, implementation and evaluation of instruction, and that all components they work together to achieve effective instruction.

Reiser & Dempsey (2007) say that “instructional design is a systematic procedure in which educational and training programs are developed and constructed with the intention of achieving a substantial improvement in learning”.

For Smith and Ragan (2005), instructional design is “the systematic and reflective process of translating learning and instructional principles into plans for instructional materials, activities, information resources, and assessment”.

The Applied Research Laboratory at Penn State University (University of Michigan, 2003) established a four-part concept for instructional design: as a process, as a discipline, as a science, and as a reality. From a process point of view, they define it as “instructional design is the systematic development of instructional specifications using learning and instructional theory to ensure the quality of instruction. Is the entire process of analysis of learning needs and goals and the development of a delivery system to meet those needs”. This concept is important because it explicitly mentions the assurance of the quality of instruction, while other authors only leave it implicit in the effectiveness of learning, it also highlights that the use of learning theories and instructional theories in instructional design is emphasized, which implies the work of specialists in the exercise of ID.

Thus, all the authors agree that instructional design is a systematic process that aims to achieve the effectiveness of learning, making use of relevant and pertinent technologies and media, in accordance with the educational model that is being implemented. This stage is where the planning of the strategies and resources to be used in the subsequent stages of the process is most effective.
Many of the instructional design models are based on ADDIE, even if they do not mention it, since according to Robert Maribe Branch (2009), ADDIE is not a model but a product development paradigm, a concept for the development of instructional design and further notes that it is a guide for the development of educational products and other learning resources. In this way, ADDIE is both a generic model of instructional design for some or a guide to the stages of an instructional design process for others.

Table 1. Stages of the ADDIE Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (Analyze)</td>
<td>It consists fundamentally in identifying the target student, determining the instructional goals, determining the human and technological requirements, and creating the project management plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (Design)</td>
<td>Based on the elements obtained in the design stage, the strategies for the other stages are determined, instructional objectives, performance objectives, test instruments and performance metrics are generated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (Develop)</td>
<td>Generate learning resources and validate their performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (Implement)</td>
<td>Prepare teachers, students, and in the case of electronic learning prepare electronic platforms to ensure their continuity and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (Evaluate)</td>
<td>Qualify the quality and performance of the instructional products based on the criteria and metrics that have been established in the design stage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: self made.

Based on ADDIE, as a model or as a development paradigm, many models have been built that attend to the particularities of the various learning environments, whether face-to-face, virtual, hybrid, or special cases of them, such as the flipped classroom. The following models stand out among many:

Dick and Carey model. It is a systemic approach to instructional design (Dick, Carey & Carey, 2015) based on the assumption that there is a direct relationship between the stimulus and the response elicited in the student, the stimulus being the teaching materials and the response being the learning of these materials by the student, while the purpose of the stages is to create the conditions for that relationship to be established. The nine stages of this model are: identifying instructional goals; conduct instructional analysis; initial behaviors and characteristics of the students; performance objectives; elements of evidence contrasted against criteria; instructional strategy; instructional materials, design and development of formative assessment; and, design and development of the summative evaluation.
The Gagné and Briggs 14-step model is instrumented by the well-known nine training events. This is a systemic model, organized with the structure of information processing (Gagné, Briggs, Wager, 1992). Relevant work because many other models take up Gagné’s instructional events as a guide for the instructional stage.

Rapid Prototyping Model. In accordance with the agile methodologies so in force today, faster and more flexible instructional design models have been developed, but they also have disadvantages such as sometimes little depth or low focus on the aspects they deal with. One such case is the Rapid Prototyping Model by Tripp and Bichelmeyer (1990) which is based on the construction of individual lessons rather than the entire curriculum. The stages of this model are: perform a need analysis; construct a prototype; utilize the prototype to perform research; and, install the final system.

**ASSURE model**

In the context of this work, the ASSURE model, developed under the ADDIE approach by Heinich, Molenda, Rusell and Smaldino (1999) and formulated to ensure the effective use of instructional media, is particularly applicable due to the recommendation made to incorporate the resources of information and communication technologies from the instructional design stage of the teaching-learning process, even when it transitions to a hybrid or even face-to-face stage.

The acronyms are the acronym for Analyze learners; State objectives; Select methods, media and materials; Utilize technology media and materials; Require learner participation; Evaluate and revise.

Table 2. Stages of the ASSURE Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>(Analyze the characteristics of the students)</strong></td>
<td>It is the identification of the characteristics of the students to guide the development of the instructional material according to those characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S <strong>(Establish Standards and Goals)</strong></td>
<td>It is the specification of what students should be able to do as a result of instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S <strong>(Select strategies, technology, media and materials)</strong></td>
<td>It is about the ideal selection of these elements to achieve the learning objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U <strong>(Use technology, media and materials)</strong></td>
<td>It is the planning and use of resources to hook the student with the material that is being delivered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R <strong>(Require the student's response)</strong></td>
<td>It consists of planning how to achieve the participation of the student and the group in the learning process, given all the previous stages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The impact of teaching on students is evaluated, determining if the learning objectives were achieved. The results are used to make a review of all the elements put into play, strategies, technology, means and materials.

Source: self made.

ASSURE is based on ADDIE not as a model, but as a development paradigm because the stages do not correspond one by one, but they agree that they are a development methodology that goes from the analysis of the characteristics of the students, to the evaluation and review of the achievement of the learning objectives, with a progression of stages of strategies and plans of construction of materials and their use.

In this particular case, ASSURE is used because in the stages Select methods, media and materials and Utilize technology media and materials it is possible to determine from the instructional design the materials to be used later, as well as the means and the ways of using them (see figure 3).

Figure 3. ADDIE-ASSURE and applicable ICT resources
Source: self made.

As with all resources used in education, the proper selection is as important as the correct use of them, but in the case of technological resources it is even more critical because at the same time they have to have the maximum impact on learning. Other aspects of economic, technical and use are also presented, such as, for example, the possibility of accessing them given their price, compatibility with other systems and
platforms of the institution, and mastery of their management. All this, coupled with the strategy and technique with which they are used.

3. Methodology

From the experience lived during the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors of this document revisited their previous works regarding the systemic approach to online education (Quiroz and Muñoz 2019) (Quiroz and Muñoz 2020), contrasting against those advances the actions that were have carried out during it. For this, the strategies and actions taken by various higher education institutions in Mexico, both public and private, were investigated and through interviews with professors and students their opinion was obtained about the dynamics used and the results obtained.

The findings of this research are the lessons learned that can be used to improve the performance of the teaching-learning process, even with a partial or total return to the face-to-face modality.

4. Analysis and development

Considering that the pandemic was an emergent situation for which no one was prepared, the institutions reacted according to the available resources and previous experience in hybrid and online modalities. For this, most of the institutions developed contingency plans for the continuity of teaching activities.

In the first days, the teachers communicated with their students to have sessions through the free videoconferencing services offered by various platforms (such as Zoom and Google) and later in a more organized and formal way once the emerging plans, such as the PEER (Programa Emergente de Enseñanza Remota) of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, which considered hiring collaboration platforms at the institutional level (such as Zoom, Microsoft Team for Education, Google Classroom with Google Suite, among the most popular), as well as an intense training program, not only on the use of computer tools, but also on their use in the context of the educational model of the institution.

It should be noted that given the teachers’ preferences, some institutions hired more than one platform, for example, Microsoft Teams as primary and Zoom as secondary, in accordance with the institution’s “computer culture”, since some already had institutional contracts with companies such as Microsoft or Google. It is also worth mentioning that there were many barriers both of a technological and operational nature, some students have had to participate in class from their cell phones because they do not have a computer, communication problems on internet channels are frequent, the price of the plans data is high and the management of the applications has not been easy for everyone. A separate mention is the use of tools for the development of instructional material, while the use of electronic presenters (MS PowerPoint, Google Slides, etc.) is very broad, in this pandemic teachers and students have ventured into the use of other presentation tools, content creation, mathematical
software and simulation software, among others, which means that they have increased their knowledge and ability to use other technologies that they had not explored before, or were not sufficiently used.

With the aforementioned resources, plus some others already available, but not sufficiently exploited, the teachers created virtual classrooms that often resulted in remote teaching classrooms with online education elements (see figure 4).

Figure 4. Virtual Classroom model during pandemic.
Source: self made.

Although this experience has been full of challenges to solve, there have also been achievements for all those involved in this process:

By teachers

- Knowledge and mastery of communication platforms
- Knowledge and mastery of authoring tools
- Knowledge and use of learning management systems (LMS, Learning Management System)
- Experience in new pedagogical strategies supported with ICT

For the students

- Knowledge of digital resources for their learning (libraries, repositories)
- Knowledge and use of learning management systems (LMS)
• Skills to attend remote learning

By institutions
• Knowledge of the areas of opportunity for the reinforcement, updating or learning of the digital skills of their community
• Identification of the requirements of technological platforms to face the new reality
• Concern to incorporate the appropriate use of ICT in their teaching-learning processes

In this regard, it stands out that knowledge and mastery of information and communication technologies applied to education will allow them to be selected, and their proper use indicated, from the stages prior to the development and delivery of instructional material, that is, from the instructional design (see figure 5), setting this in the corresponding instructional matrix.

Figure 5. Determination and use of ICT from the ID.
Source: self made.

ICT for a successful incorporation into instructional design must meet the following goals:

a) Assist in the achievement of pedagogical objectives
b) Create effective and engaging learning experiences based on knowledge of how people learn
c) Contribute to educational quality

Educational quality is a subject of wide discussion, without definition and consensus, but in the case of e-learning, various protocols and methodologies agree that the
achievement of educational quality depends on four elements: equipment (teachers and technicians), design of learning, content and technology (see figure 6).

![Diagram showing the relationship between staff, content, technology, and learning design]

Figure 6. Quality of e-learning
Source: self made.

In the case of remote or virtual education during the pandemic, this model is also applicable for educational quality, since it has been seen that the favorable opinions of students have occurred when teachers have achieved the appropriate mix of these elements (Peñaloza and Hernández, coordinators, 2021), although it must be considered that the learning design does not begin with the preparation and delivery of the instructional material, but from the instructional design itself.

5. Conclusions

The design and construction of the instructional design process requires systematic, comprehensive and careful planning, because it is the forge from which the educational programs that represent the educational offer of an institution arise or the training programs that will affect the competitiveness and performance of an organization.

If instructional design models are compared with software development models, a great parallel will be found between them, so it is not surprising then that some are similar to the waterfall development model and its variants, and there are already based in agile methodologies, such as SCRUM. And that, consequently, when
developing new systems development methodologies, these can serve as a reference for new models of instructional design.

The circumstances of confinement and the need to give continuity to the academic activities of educational institutions were the driving force behind the transformation in the teaching-learning process, but this transformation can be deepened by incorporating these new knowledge and experiences from the instructional design.

6. Final reflection

Although a good teacher is irreplaceable because he not only teaches, but also inspires and guides, his work can be supported by the lessons learned during confinement for the best use of time and the enrichment of teaching.

Based on what has been gained in the period of confinement, in particular in the domain of platforms, tools and strategies for effective instruction, either remotely or virtually, it can be recommended that this impact not only remain in the development stages of instructional material and teaching, but rather that in the constant updating of the revision of the study plans and programs, or even in the revision of the educational model, carried out by the institutions, information and communication technologies are integrated, to more effective instruction, impacting on the higher levels of the learning objectives (Bloom’s Taxonomy revised from 2001) and on the most memorable activities of Edgar Dale's learning pyramid.

The proposed incorporation of what was learned during confinement in the instructional design of study plans and programs will require collegiate work for the formulation of proposals, which must take care, on the one hand, of their correct alignment with the current educational model, and on the other professors' academic freedom. These proposals, whether of adaptation or modification, will go to the commissions of the collegiate bodies for their approval and wait for the appropriate moment to put them into operation. Thus, the path is not fast, nor is it easy, but it will be the way to take advantage of the knowledge and new skills developed in institutions, as well as in teachers and students, from the beginning.

References


Hume on The Epistemological Status of Metaphysical Statements

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Abstract

My paper examines critically the widespread view that Hume confines meaningful propositions to those which are analytic (a priori), and those which are synthetic empirical, thereby rejecting synthetic a priori propositions as meaningful. What I show is that Hume does recognize certain metaphysical synthetic a priori propositions as meaningful, thereby dispelling the traditional view that Hume rejects all synthetic a priori as meaningful.¹

Keywords: analytic a priori, synthetic empirical, synthetic a priori, meaning

Hume on The Epistemological Status of Metaphysical Statements

During the past century, commentators, especially the logical positivists, have sought an understanding of the types of propositions Hume is willing to allow as genuine, in light of his emphasis on observation and experience, and the need for the employment of the Experimental Method in Philosophy. Two interpretations emerged in this discussion. Each begins with the view that, in addition to analytic (a priori) propositions, Hume recognizes as meaningful propositions which are synthetic and empirical.² Where they differ is that one side holds the more extreme position, that

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Stanley Tweyman is University Professor, Humanities and Graduate Philosophy, at York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He has published 39 books, authored and/ or edited (some in their third edition), and more than 50 articles. The main focus of his research is the Philosophy of René Descartes and the Philosophy of David Hume; he has also published on George Berkeley and William Wollaston.

² All references to Hume’s Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding are to the Tom L. Beauchamp edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 (T. followed by the page number(s)), and to the Selby-Bigge edition, Enquiries Concerning The Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals, Second Edition, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1963 (S.B.E. followed by the page number(s)). References to Hume’s Treatise of Human Nature are to the edition edited by D.F. Norton and Mary Norton, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000 (T. followed by the page number(s)), and to the Selby-Bigge edition, revised by P.H Nidditch, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978 (S.B.T. followed by the page number(s)). The two passages most often cited to support this view are contained in the first two paragraphs of Section IV, Part I of the first Enquiry, and in the very last paragraph of the same book.
Hume holds that there are no synthetic a priori propositions, whereas the other group insists that synthetic a priori propositions are misleading and meaningless, inasmuch as no means of verifying them is possible; and consequently, they are pseudo-proposition. What these views have in common is that both maintain that Hume’s critique of his opponents - especially the rationalists, when they are doing metaphysics - is carried out by rejecting any proposition which purports to be both synthetic and a priori. I will attempt to establish that both views are mistaken in that, on the basis of what he says, Hume must admit a class of metaphysical propositions which are synthetic and a priori, and meaningful. If the views of Macnabb and Ayer are mistaken, then a reinterpretation is in order of the last paragraph of Hume’s First Enquiry, cited by A.J. Ayer in defence of his position on Hume, and which I set out in the third footnote in this article.

I will now show that both views mentioned above are fundamentally mistaken, inasmuch as on the basis of what he says, Hume must admit a class of metaphysical propositions which is synthetic and a priori, and meaningful.³

For the purposes of this paper, I will make the well-known assumption that all propositions can be divided into those which are analytic and those which are synthetic; and that every proposition is either a priori, or empirical or a posteriori. The meanings of these four classifications will also be offered along traditional lines. Accordingly, I hold that a proposition is empirical if, in order to verify it, some recourse to observation is required. If, on the other hand, no observation or series of observations can be employed to verify a proposition, solely because it would be impossible, even in principle, to verify it in this way, then the proposition in question is a priori. Therefore, to make out whether an a priori proposition is true or false, something other than recourse to observation is required.

Further, a proposition is analytic if it can be made out to be true by apprehending the meanings of the terms involved, or if it has been deduced from other propositions

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¹ For example, D.G.C. Macnabb in David Hume—His Theory of Knowledge and Morality (Blackwell, 1951) writes: “Hume’s contention is that no a priori propositions are synthetic, all a priori are analytic, all synthetic propositions are empirical” (p.46).

² See, for example, A. J. Ayer’s Language, Truth, and Logic (Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1946), pp. 31, 35, 53-54. On page 54, Ayer writes: “Of Hume, we may say not merely that he was not in practice a metaphysician, but that he explicitly rejected metaphysics. We find the strongest evidence of this in the passage with which he concludes his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. “If”, he says, “we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school of metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, DOES IT CONTAIN ANY ABSTRACT REASONING CONCERNING QUANTITY OR NUMBER? No. DOES IT CONTAIN ANY EXPERIMENTAL REASONING CONCERNING MATTER OF FACT AND EXISTENCE? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion”. (E.211; S.B.E.165) Ayer comments that this is but a rhetorical version of his own thesis that a sentence which does not express either a formally true proposition or an empirical hypothesis is devoid of literal significance? Ayer, therefore, regards Hume as holding the logical positivist position in regard to the meaning of sentences.

³ This is not to say that Hume regards all metaphysical synthetic a priori propositions to be meaningful. More on this toward the end of this article.
which have been so verified. Since all analytic judgements are verified without recourse to experience, all analytic judgements must be a priori. If, even after one has apprehended the meaning of a proposition, further steps would be required to verify it, then the proposition is synthetic.

Having now delineated three major propositional categories - the possibility of analytic empirical propositions having been shown to be impossible - I now turn to Hume’s writings to see where these three classifications can be employed.

In the Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Hume restricts propositions concerning the relations of ideas to Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic, and “in short, [to] every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain.” (E.108; S.B.E.25) Such propositions can be discovered by thought alone, “without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe”, and as a result, “though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would forever retain their certainty and evidence”. (E.108; S.B.E.25) An example of a proposition of this type which is intuitively certain is ‘a triangle is not a square’, and one which is demonstratively certain is ‘the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides’. (E.209; S.B.E.163) To determine whether a proposition concerns the relations of ideas, we need only determine whether the contrary is contradictory. Now, it is this contention of Hume’s which reveals that such propositions are analytic, since the criterion he has set out has application only in virtue of the meanings of the terms involved. Those propositions which are verified intuitively are immediately apprehended and gain our assent. However, others are not immediately seen by the mind, and, therefore, they require additional propositions (premises) before their truth is seen. And since the propositions to be demonstrated are analytically true, the premises employed in demonstrating their truth must be of the same nature.

Propositions concerning matters of fact are not verified in the same manner. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, and “we should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood”. (E.108; S.B.E.26) How, then, do we acquire knowledge of matters of fact? According to Hume, there are three possible means, depending on the type of problem with which we are concerned.

In certain cases, we can have recourse to the “present testimony of the senses” (E.108; S.B.E.26), and here, clearly, Hume is thinking of verifying propositions through direct observation, as, for example, that the sun is now shining, or that I am angry. That is, included in this category are matters of fact which are external to the observer or states of her/ his own consciousness, and the propositions concerning these can be confirmed or confuted by an immediate observation or observations. Now, it often happens that the propositions concerning matters of fact can no longer be verified by direct observation. Nevertheless, Hume holds that such propositions may be verified, provided that we can recall an observation of what they are about.
Hume’s main concern is with determining what evidence, if any, we have for apprehending the truth or falsity of propositions for which we do not have the direct evidence of the senses. To this question, he answers, first, that I can know a matter of fact which I myself have not observed if I know that it is connected by the relation of cause and effect with some matter of fact which I have observed. For example, if I observe footprints in the sand, then I can be said to know that some other human being was present here at some time in the past. In addition, Hume asserts that, if I am to know that two facts are connected by this relation, I can do so only through the aid of my own past experience. That is, the only legitimate evidence I can acquire for asserting to a causal proposition is to have found objects like the ones I now believe to be connected causally to have been constantly conjoined in the past. Therefore, for Hume, the only tribunal available to us for settling questions of fact is observation and experience. And as such, he holds that, in principle, the types of propositions we have been discussing can be known to be true or false. Further, from what was said earlier, it is clear that all the propositions concerning matters of fact discussed thus far must be classified as being both synthetic and empirical, since they cannot be verified by attending to the meanings of the terms involved, but only by having recourse to observation and experience.

It is to this point that philosophers such as D.G.C. Macnabb and A. J. Ayer maintain that Hume is willing to go in determining the range of meaningful propositions. To see that this cannot be Hume’s position, we must now push our inquiry concerning the causal relation even further.

As we have seen, reasonings concerning matters of fact are founded on the relation of cause and effect, and the foundation of such reasonings is experience. But Hume now asks for the foundation of all conclusions from experience, and he warns that this question “may be of more difficult solution and explanation”, and that “even after we have experience of the operations of cause and effect, our conclusions from that experience are not founded on reasoning, or any process of the understanding” (E.113; S.B.E.32).

We must first get clear on what it is that Hume is asking; and it is this. We know nothing of the powers or forces which may reside in objects. All that is ever present to us are the sensible qualities which objects possess. But even in the light of our ignorance, whenever we observe objects with sensible qualities resembling those of objects observed in the past, we assume that they also have similar secret powers “and expect that effects, similar to those which we have experienced, will follow from them” (E.114; S.B.E.33). In effect, the problem resolves itself into determining how we move from ‘I have found that such an object has always been attended by such an effect’ to ‘I foresee, that the other objects, which are, in appearance, similar, will be attended with similar effects’ (E.114; S.B.E.34); although Hume also poses the problem by asking by what argument or faculty we arrive at the conclusion that the
future will resemble the past (E.117; S.B.E.37), and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities (E.117; S.B.E.36).

Concentrating initially on the first formulation of the problem, Hume points out that, since the validity of the inference between these two propositions can be doubted, the connection between these two propositions cannot be intuitive. Nor can there be any demonstration of the conclusion we draw, since “it implies no contradiction that the course of nature may change” (E.115; S.B.E.35). Since we are able to assert without contradiction that the course of nature may change, the proposition that the future will resemble the past cannot be a tautology. Hence, this proposition must be synthetic in nature.

Perhaps, then, the inference between the two propositions in the first formulation is ‘experimental’. But Hume shows that it is also not in this way that the inference is made. “To say it is experimental is begging the question. For all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar secret powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities - It is impossible, therefore, that any arguments from experience can prove this resemblance of the past to the future; since all these arguments are founded on the suppositions of the resemblance” (E.117; S.B.E.37-38).

Accordingly, we find in Hume’s philosophy that the proposition that the future will resemble the past does not fit into the analytic - synthetic empirical mould which commentators such as Macnabb and Ayer hold is to be found there. In fact, the last passage quoted above makes our belief in the past as a standard for the future to be one which is requisite if we are to acquire empirical knowledge. That is, this belief that the future will resemble the past is ultimately seen to be a principle of the possibility of empirical knowledge - an expression anticipatory of Kant’s philosophy.

Other passages offered by Hume lend further evidence to such an interpretation. For example, after concluding that we come to believe that the future will resemble the past through the influence of Custom, Hume adds:

Custom, then, is the great guide to human life. It is that principle alone which renders our experience useful to us. Without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses. We should never know how to adjust means to end, or to employ our natural powers in the production of any effect. There would be an end of all action, as well as of the chief part of speculation. (E.122-123; S.B.E.45)

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1 Hume is not always clear on the exact relationship between these formulations, and believes himself justified in selecting whichever formulation best suits his purpose. For our purposes here, the same method will be adopted.

2 This custom or habit is the same one which Hume cites as leading us to believe that objects related as cause to effect are necessarily connected. (See, for example, E.144-145; S.B.E.75, T.92, 111; S.B.T.134, 165.)
I stated earlier that in this article the assumption would be made that every proposition is either analytic or synthetic, and either a priori or empirical. Now, since experience has been ruled out as a means of verifying the proposition that the future will resemble the past, the proposition must be non-empirical, that is, it must be a priori. And since its being analytic or tautological has also been ruled out, it follows that it must also be synthetic. In short, we have come upon a synthetic a priori proposition in Hume’s philosophy.

It may be objected here that the proposition that the future will resemble the past is not a priori, since the basis for our belief in this proposition is custom or habit which is acquired from repeated experience. But this objection can have no force here. Custom, for Hume, explains how certain propositions, and the belief which attends them, come to be generated. But Custom cannot explain the specific character of such propositions as synthetic and a priori, given that Custom has no role to play in the process of verification. In fact, the enigmatic aspect of the proposition that the future will resemble the past is that no means of verifying it is available to us. However, Hume’s contention is that, precisely because of its character and the important role it plays in our lives, its veracity is something to which we must always consent: no speculative argument, nor any experience, can for long dissuade us of its truth. Unlike all synthetic empirical propositions, it is both, in practice and in principle, intrinsically unverifiable.¹

Nature will always maintain her rights, and prevail in the end over any abstract reasoning whatsoever - and that principle (Custom) will preserve its influence as long as human nature remains the same. (E.120; S.B.E.41)

One matter remains to be dealt with here. As we have seen, the passage which is most often cited to support the contention that Hume holds that only analytic propositions and those pertaining to empirical matters of fact are genuine propositions is to be found in the last paragraph of the First Enquiry. Clearly, therefore, if the contention of this paper is correct, then a reinterpretation of this passage is required. The passage reads as follows:

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, DOES IT CONTAIN ANY ABSTRACT REASONING CONCERNING QUANTITY OR NUMBER? No. DOES IT CONTAIN ANY EXPERIMENTAL REASONING CONCERNING MATTER OF FACT AND EXISTENCE? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. (E.211; S.B.E.165)

¹ To see that this is so, one need only imagine the most extreme case of a lack of uniformity in the universe, namely chaos, and speculate on how we would react to it. It is clear that in such a universe we would merely expect further irregularities rather than question the veracity of our belief that the future will resemble the past. In fact, the expectation of further irregularities is itself dependent upon our belief in the conformity of the future to the past.
When dealing with this passage, commentators often lose sight of the context in which it is provided. For this paragraph sums up Hume’s answer to the question raised two pages earlier, namely, “what are the proper subjects of science and enquiry?”, that is, when is it appropriate to engage in reasoning? But it does not follow that, because our reasonings may be fruitfully employed solely with respect to quantity or number (relations of ideas) and matters of fact and existence, that these two realms provide the only genuine propositions. On the contrary, all that does follow is that it is only in these two realms that reasoning can serve a justificatory function. It is still possible that what we cannot justify or verify, namely, certain metaphysical propositions which are both synthetic and a priori, may be genuine and meaningful. And so it is with the proposition that the future will resemble the past: although we all do, and must, believe in it, we find that no process of reasoning ever can support our belief in it. Hence, what Hume wants committed to the flames are volumes which are concerned with attempting to reason about, or verify, propositions which are not the proper objects of science and inquiry. How could such volumes not but contain ‘sophistry and illusion’? In short, the final paragraph is not concerned to outline the scope of genuine propositions, but rather is concerned with the types of propositions about which our reasonings can be concerned. Therefore, Hume has not ruled out the possibility that there are genuine propositions which are both synthetic and a priori in nature. And if the analysis presented here is correct, then Hume must accept certain synthetic a priori propositions as genuine propositions, in the sense that, without believing in them, empirical knowledge would, for us, be impossible. Each of these beliefs is such that “Nature has doubtless esteem’d it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations”. (T.125; S.B.T.187)

A metaphysical proposition which is endorsed by Nature Hume holds to be genuine and meaningful, even though the proposition is synthetic and a priori. Synthetic a priori propositions which are not so endorsed, Hume rejects as meaningless. But even these meaningless propositions Hume divides into two groups. The first of these consists of those which are necessary to satisfy, at least temporarily, the conflicting claims of reason and imagination. Such is the case with those asserting the existence of souls and substance. The act of the mind here is called ‘feigning’, and the object of belief is entitled a ‘fiction’. The ‘feigning’ and resultant ‘fiction’ take place when we ascribe an identity to our successive perceptions, and suppose ourselves possessed of an invariable and uninterrupted existence through the whole course of our lives. Hume illustrates this with how we come to believe in the identity of plants and animals. He explains that we have a distinct idea of an object that remains invariable and uninterrupted through a period of time (identity or sameness), and we have a distinct idea of several different objects existing in succession and connected together

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1 The other beliefs of this sort which Hume discusses are our belief in the Principle of Causality, our belief in the continued and independent existence of body, and our belief in a continuing self. Following Norman Kemp Smith, these beliefs are often referred to ‘natural beliefs’.
by a close relation (diversity). He points out that in our common way of thinking, they are generally confounded with each other:

“[T]he relation facilitates the transition of the mind from one object to another, and renders its passage as smooth as if it contemplated one continuous object...In order to justify to ourselves this absurdity, we often feign some new and unintelligible principle, that connects the objects together, and prevents their interruption or variation. Thus we feign the continued existence of the perceptions of our senses, to remove the interruption; and run into the notion of soul, and self, and substance, to disguise the variation. But we may farther observe, that where we do not give rise to such a fiction...we are apt to imagine something unknown and mysterious, connecting the parts, and this I take to be the case with regard to the identity we ascribe to plants and animals....Thus the controversy concerning identity is not merely a dispute of words. For when we attribute identity, in an improper sense, to variable or interrupted objects, our mistake is not confin’d to the expression, but is commonly attended with a fiction, either of something invariable and uninterrupted, or of something mysterious and inexplicable, or at least with a propensity to such fictions. (T. 166-167; S.B.T. 254-255)

The second group of such metaphysical propositions which are rejected as meaningless are propositions expressing beliefs in the existence of matters with respect to which one can never have an idea, nor even generate a fiction, and, therefore, they are propositions which can never have meaning for us. Such is the case, for example, with regard to the claim that causal powers exist in objects. ‘Tis natural for men...to imagine they perceive a connexion betwixt such objects as they have constantly found united together...But philosophers, who abstract from the effects of custom and compare the ideas of objects; immediately perceive the falsehood of these vulgar sentiments, and discover that there is no known connexion among objects... For it being usual, after the frequent use of terms, which are really significant and intelligible, to omit the idea, which we would express by them, and to preserve only the custom, by which we recall the idea at pleasure; so it naturally happens, that after the frequent use of terms, which are wholly insignificant and unintelligible, we fancy them to be on the same footing with the precedent, and to have a secret meaning, which we might discover by reflection. The resemblance of their appearance deceives the mind...and makes us imagine a thorough resemblance and conformity. (T.147-148; S.B. 223-224)

Much of the Humean enterprise in the First Book of the Treatise can, therefore, be seen as an attempt to sort out metaphysical synthetic judgements a priori, in order to determine which are intelligible and which are not, and which are merely useful and which are not.

Hume’s reliance on the Experimental Method does not commit him to the view that there are no synthetic propositions a priori, or that all such utterances are mere
pseudo-propositions. The use of the Experimental Method is viewed by Hume as the technique for determining which propositions are meaningful and which are not, and how belief in such propositions arises.
The Formulation and Validation of a Conceptual Framework for the Transition from E-government to M-government

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Abstract
The proliferation of mobile devices has spurred many nations across the globe to make the necessary transition from e-government to m-government to provide better services to their citizens more flexibly, transcending temporal and geographical barriers. However, making such transitions is fraught with numerous challenges that may impede a smooth transition of these services. To make matters worse, there is a lack of conceptual frameworks to which relevant stakeholders can refer. Against this backdrop, this study was carried out to formulate and validate a conceptual framework to guide the transition of services from e-government to m-government in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This study was based on a qualitative approach involving a survey in which 15 academicians from reputable universities in the UAE were selected to seek their opinions on the conceptual framework of the study. The research instrument used in this study constituted a survey questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part sought to gather personal information of the participating experts, namely gender, age, educational level, working experience, and fields of expertise. The second part aimed to elicit their opinions regarding the appropriateness of five constructs and their components used for the formulation of the conceptual framework of the study, namely IT Infrastructure, IT Skills, Security and Privacy, Knowledge of Operating Standard and Protocols, and Operating Frameworks, each of which was rated along a spectrum of agreement based on 4-point Likert-type scales, ranging from ‘1’ (Strongly Disagree) to ‘4’ (Strongly Agree). This part consisted of 25 items, with each construct being rated by five items. The survey questionnaire was pilot-tested involving four experts in the field of mobile communication. The analysis of experts’ opinions were analyzed based on the Fuzzy Delphi Method, showing that IT Infrastructure and Security and Privacy were deemed highly valid, closely followed by the
remaining constructs, namely IT skills, Operational Frameworks, and Knowledge of Standards and Protocols. Likewise, all of their components were also deemed highly valid. The above findings strongly suggest that all the five constructs as well as their components are crucial aspects that may have significant impacts on the transition of services from e-government to m-government in the UAE. From the practical standpoint, the validated conceptual framework help provide a greater insight into the understanding of potential challenges that relevant stakeholders have to face as they embark on making such an ambitious transition. However, more studies are required to examine the usability of the proposed conceptual framework for the transition of services from e-government to m-government from the perspective of practitioners working in the related fields.

**Keywords:** e-government, m-government framework

**Introduction**

Lately, organizations around the globe has been paying strong emphasis on the efficiency of business transactions, which has been spurred by the rapidly increasing advancements in a wide range of technologies. In particular, the advent of electronic government, also known as e-government, has drastically altered the business realm by employing information and communication technology (ICT) to improve the efficacy of government services of many nations to serve their citizens, employees, businesses, and agencies through web-based internet applications (OECD/International Telecommunication Union, 2011). Around the world, various federal, state, and local governments have applied various e-government initiatives to enable the purchase of goods and services, the delivery of information and forms, and submission of bids and proposals (GAO et al., 2001). These online services offer many benefits to both citizens and governments of many nations. From the public perspective, e-government is an efficient strategy of modernizing information acquisition, thereby reducing the cost of a business transaction. It is also an effective strategy of providing an array of information to citizens and private business ventures through the Internet. From the governmental standpoint, e-government plays a major role in information dissemination for the public, thereby facilitating the implementation of government services, transactions, policies, and resource distributions across agencies which results in agencies experiencing significant cost reductions and improved efficiency, with citizens receiving faster, more convenient services. In recent years, the public, including government employees working in various organizations, have witnessed the proliferation of mobile devices that expedited the transition from e-government to m-government, also known as (Mobile government), as more people are becoming more aware of the importance of m-government, which they can gain access to anytime, anywhere using their mobile devices (Pandey & Sekhar, 2013; Song, 2005).
Mobile-Government

Essentially, m-government is an extension or evolution of e-government through the utilization of mobile technologies for public service delivery (Oui-Suk, 2010). M-government involves the utilization of different mobile devices, such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), handheld operated devices, smartphones, and cellular phones, to access governmental services. Essentially, M-government has several unique features that can significantly improve the delivery of governmental services, such as providing non-stop, fast, and reliable services throughout the year, adapting to changes quickly, and devising solutions to challenges, and facilitating people’s lives.

However, the transition from e-government to m-government has several challenges (Song, 2005; Sharma & Gupta, 2004; Weerakkody et al., 2007), which encompasses both social and technical dimensions, such as people’s awareness, the privacy of information, data security, trust, and technology training skills (Abu-Shanab, 2012; Al-Shboul et al., 2014; Qader & Kheder, 2016). In this respect, several researchers have outlined some of the challenges that include cultural, political, structural, legal, social and administrative aspects (Abu-Shanab, 2012; Al-Thunibat et al., 2010; Antovski & Gusev, 2005; El-Kiki & Lawrence, 2007; Fasanghari & Samimi, 2009; Kim et al., 2004; Mukherjee & Biswas, 2005). For example, in Jordan, Aloudat et al. (2014) investigated several challenges and barriers, such as trust information security and privacy concern, which were associated with the adoption and acceptance of m-government.

Like other aspiring nations, the United Arab Emirates has also been compelled to implement m-government to meet its citizens’ need for services that are easily accessible anywhere, anytime. In 2015, the two-year deadline imposed by the UAE’s government for m-government services to be implemented across all governmental organizations had passed, culminating in a remarkable milestone that witnessed the implementation of its m-government peaking at 96.3%, encompassing 337 important governmental services offered by 41 governmental entities. Admittedly, an implementation rate at 100% would be extremely difficult to achieve due to various challenges. A report published by Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) - UAE (November 24, 2015) indicated its governmental entities faced several key challenges in implementing m-government services, such as interoperability, integration efficiency, data privacy, security, user-friendly applications, and accessibility.

As highlighted in the above report, in rushing to meet the deadline (in May 2015) set by the UAE’s government to transform services from websites to mobile applications, many of its government entities had to face several challenges in ensuring the quality of applications, the security of information as well as the effectiveness of the applications in terms of their usability, which were highly challenging to small entities that typically lacked essential infrastructures and technical skills. As such, an implementation rate at 100% was practically impossible to achieve given such
challenges. The above problem evoked considerable interest that motivated the researchers, who was as a government employee with expertise in communication and computer engineering, to investigate the challenges and barriers faced by most of UAE’s governmental entities that hindered a complete transition from e-government to m-government within the given time frame.

This study, therefore, focused on exploring these challenges as well as identifying ways to evaluate a framework for m-government standards, protocols, and opportunities for various business engagements.

Against the backdrop discussed above, three research questions were formulated to guide this research:

What are the challenges faced by various UAE’S governmental and private business organizations in making a smooth transition of services from e-government to m-government?

What will be the appropriate conceptual framework to facilitate the transition of services from e-government to m-government?

What will be the effective method to validate the proposed conceptual framework?

Correspondingly, three research objectives were formulated to address the above research questions:

To identify the challenges faced by UAE’S governmental and private business organizations in making a smooth transition of services from e-government to m-government.

To formulate a conceptual framework to facilitate the transition of services from e-government to m-government.

To validate the proposed conceptual framework for the transition of services from e-government to m-government using the Fuzzy Delphi Method.

**Development of the Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The study employed a systematic review of literature to identify the challenges and opportunities for the transition from e-government to m-government. Specifically, relevant articles published from 2012 to 2017 that were available from several leading electronic digital data bases, namely IEEE Xplore, Science Direct, Scopus, Springer Link, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. This process helped to facilitate the formulation of the conceptual framework of the study regarding the challenges in the transition from e-government to m-government, which led to the identification of five categories of challenges that constituted the study constructs (see Figure 2.3), namely IT Infrastructure (Ndou, 2004; Sharma & Gupta, 2004), IT Skills (Al-Shboul et al., 2014; Tair & Abu-Shanab, 2014), Security and Privacy, Knowledge of Operating Standard and Protocols (Akram & Malik, 2012; Al-Hujran, 2012; Alshehri et al., 2012;
Hung et al., 2013; Shareef et al., 2014), and Operating Frameworks (Qader & Kheder, 2016).

The five categories formed the basis for the formulation of the conceptual framework to highlight the main constructs of the study, which were examined based on the opinions of employees of selected governmental and private organizations in Dubai in the UAE through a survey. Figure 1 shows the proposed conceptual framework of the study consisting of five constructs with several components identified through the literature review.

**Figure 1**: The proposed conceptual framework of the study

**Methodology**

**Participants**

A total of 15 academicians from several reputable universities in the UAE were selected as the experts, comprising six (6) senior lecturers, three (3) assistant professors, four (4) associate professors, and two (2) professors, whose opinions were sought through a survey to validate the conceptual framework of the study. As stressed by Turoff (2002), a panel consisting of experts from 10 to 50 is deemed suitable to ascertain expert opinions, depending on the available resources. In this study, the experts in the area of the study were scarce, thus the 15 experts selected were considered acceptable. Specifically, they were selected because of their strong knowledge and vast experiences in the mobile and wireless communication technology. Table 1 summarizes the background of the experts selected for the Fuzzy Delphi method.

**Procedure**

All the 15 experts were contacted at their respective institutions to elicit their feedback or opinions regarding the appropriateness of the five study constructs that
constituted the conceptual framework of the proposed study. Survey questionnaires and relevant materials were sent to the experts by emails together with a cover letter, informing them the main purpose of the research, detailing the procedure that they were required to follow to answer the survey questions, and thanking them for the participation in the survey. They were given ample time to go through the questionnaires and reminded to submit the filled out questionnaires accordingly based on a given deadline.

**Instrument**

The research instrument used in this study constituted a survey questionnaire consisting of two parts, which was used to gather experts’ opinions regarding the framework constructs. The first part sought to gather personal information of the participating experts, namely gender, age, educational level, working experience, and fields of expertise. The second part aimed to elicit their opinions regarding the appropriateness of the five study constructs, namely IT Infrastructure, IT Skills, Security and Privacy, Knowledge of Operating Standard and Protocols, and Operating Frameworks, each of which was rated along a spectrum of agreement based on 4-point Likert-type scales, ranging from ‘1’ (Strongly Disagree) to ‘4’ (Strongly Agree). This part consisted of 25 items, with each construct being rated by five items. The survey questionnaire was pilot-tested involving four experts in the field of mobile communication.

**Data Analysis and Results**

This section provides a detailed account of the analysis of data undertaken in this study. This section highlights and summarizes the results of both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Table 1 summarizes the demographic backgrounds of the selected experts.

**Table 1:** The demographic backgrounds of the selected experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert #</th>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Field of expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert 1</td>
<td>S. Lecturer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Web Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 2</td>
<td>S. Lecturer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Web Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 3</td>
<td>S. Lecturer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>App. Design and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 4</td>
<td>Asst. Prof.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Information system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 5</td>
<td>Asst. Prof.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Information system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 6</td>
<td>Asst. Prof.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Web Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 7</td>
<td>S. Lecturer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Web Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 8</td>
<td>Prof.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Information system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 9</td>
<td>Prof.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Information system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 10</td>
<td>S. Lecturer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>App. Design and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expert 11</td>
<td>S. Lecturer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>App. Design and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 12</td>
<td>Assoc. Prof.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 13</td>
<td>Assoc. Prof.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 14</td>
<td>Assoc. Prof.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>App. Design and Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the results of the internal consistency reliability testing of questionnaire items regarding the five constructs of the study.

**Table 2: Results of the internal consistency reliability testing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>No of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>IT Infrastructure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Security, Trust, and Privacy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>IT skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Knowledge of Operating Std. and Protocols</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Operating Frameworks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 and Table 4 show the results of the Fuzzy Delphi method in terms of triangular fuzzy numbers and defuzzification values of experts’ opinions of the five constructs and their components, respectively, for the transition of services from e-government to m-government in the UAE.

**Table 3: Experts’ opinions of the constructs of the conceptual framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Triangular Fuzzy Numbers</th>
<th>Defuzzication Value</th>
<th>Mean threshold value (d)</th>
<th>Mean % of expert consensus</th>
<th>Mean fuzzy score (a)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT infrastructure</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT skills</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and Privacy</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational frameworks</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Std and Protocols</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Experts’ opinions of the components of constructs of the conceptual framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Triangular Fuzzy Numbers</th>
<th>Defuzzication Value</th>
<th>Mean threshold value (d)</th>
<th>Mean % of expert consensus</th>
<th>Mean fuzzy score (a)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viability</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROI</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>Consented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

As shown in Table 1, the experts were made up of members of academia working in several public universities in the UAE, whose working experiences ranged from 5 to 25 years. In addition, they were vastly experienced in web design, applications design and development, information system, information technology, and mobile learning. These results highlight a strong diversity of the experts in related fields of technology, making their opinions of the study constructs highly reliable. As indicated in Table 2, the computed Cronbach’s Alpha values of the questionnaire items ranged from 0.77 to 0.86, which exceeded the recommended value of 0.60, indicating high internal consistency of the scales of the research instrument in measuring the construct.

As indicated in Table 3, the mean percentages of experts’ opinions of IT Infrastructure and Security and Privacy were both 100%. The remaining constructs, namely IT skills, Operational Frameworks, and Knowledge of Standards and Protocols attained mean percentages of experts’ opinions of 93%. These results suggest that IT Infrastructure and Security and Privacy are extremely crucial to ensuring a successful transition of services from e-government to m-government in the UAE. Additionally, establishing proper infrastructures to handle the required services as well as employing the necessary techniques to safeguard the security and privacy of information are vital for an efficient transition from e-government to m-government (Miller, 2013).

As shown in Table 4, the experts’ opinions on the components of IT infrastructure, namely Integration and Accessibility, attained a high level of consent at 100%, signifying that IT infrastructure must have the capacity to support high integration and accessibility to foster efficient maintenance and quality delivery of services to both governmental and private organizations. Likewise, the components of IT Skills, namely Capability and Efficiency, were deemed highly valid, with each attaining a mean percentage of experts’ opinions of 100%. It can be reasonably argued that the availability of capable manpower is necessary for the efficient transition of services from e-government to m-government. In particular, such a transition entails highly capable, efficient professional with good knowledge and vast experiences in handling a wide spectrum of services in governmental and private organizations. Similarly, the components of Security and Privacy, namely Structure and Culture and efficiency, were also rated to be highly valid, as evidenced by their high mean percentages of experts’ opinions of 100%. Specifically, this finding indicates that the structure of security measures for safeguarding data and maintaining the privacy of information is a vital component or aspect that needs to be seriously taken into account when making a transition of services from e-government to m-government.

Equally impressive, the components of Operational Framework, namely Viability and Fitness, were strongly accepted by the experts to be valid, with both equally attaining a mean percentage of experts’ opinions of 100%. This finding signifies that a viable operational framework is important and crucial to handling the need of variable
services. Hence, such an operational framework needs to be fitted with various dimensions of services. With such a framework, as implored by (Kushchu & Kuscu, 2003) governmental organizations can provide users with easy access to data using m-government in several alternative forms, such as voice, text messages, or video calls, to encourage the public to use the services that they offer. Meanwhile, the components of Knowledge of Standards and Protocols, namely Return of Investment and Sustainability, were deemed valid, with each component attaining a mean percentage of experts’ opinions of 93%. Even though these components were not as highly rated as other components, there are, nevertheless, can be considered important too. This finding suggests that the return on investment and sustainability are important factors to the implementation of m-government, which can be prohibitively expensive for some nations. Surely, the former is paramount to justifying the cost of such an implementation and the latter to maintaining the operations of m-government on a long term. Thus, careful considerations of these two components must also be factored in making a transition from e-government to m-government.

As discussed, the findings of the validation of the conceptual framework based on the Fuzzy Delphi Method showed that the experts had reached a strong consensus regarding the validity of the five constructs of the study as well as their components, signifying that they are crucial aspects that may have significant impacts on the smooth transition of services from e-government to m-government in the UAE. From the practical standpoint, the validated conceptual framework help provide a greater insight into the understanding of potential challenges that relevant stakeholders have to face as they embark on making such an ambitious transition. Surely, such an understanding can help them become more prepared to deal with such challenges in implementing m-government (Alharmoodi & Lakulu, 2020). Arguably, more studies are required to examine the usability of the proposed conceptual framework for the transition of services from e-government to m-government from the perspective of practitioners working in the related fields.

References


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Abstract
All research strategies suffer from some weaknesses. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches might offset some flaws. Recently a growing methodological trend arose from the acknowledgement that mixed methods may increase the value of several research projects. With this background, the paper analyses trends of mixed methods in the business, management and accounting area during the last twenty years. The analysis highlights domains where mixed methods are not frequently used, such as entrepreneurship, and presents ongoing research based on mixed methods on the Italian community enterprises, a set of collective entrepreneurial initiatives working for sustainable regeneration in their territories. These enterprises are elusive since they are neither easily identifiable nor extractable from databases. A fixed and sequential mixed method approach turns out to be effective for investigating these evolving enterprises. The work is relevant for novices to mixed methods research and provides meaningful insights to analyze a type of organisation that is very important in depleted contexts.

Keywords: Mixed methods, business management and accounting research, literature trends, entrepreneurship, community enterprise.

Introduction
Starting a scientific study implies several research decisions or design dilemmas to face. Indeed, there is not a set of choices that ensures maximum results, as there are goals that are difficult to match (for instance, the generalizability of results and realism of contexts). Therefore, it can be argued, as stated by McGrath (1981, p. 179), that “all research strategies and methods are seriously flawed”. Nevertheless, the methodological triangulation may mitigate some limitations (Dezin, 2009; Turner et al., 2017), as one method can compensate for the weaknesses of another (Jick, 1979), and support the growth of understanding of a phenomenon and the advance of the knowledge frontier.
However, it is worth saying that mixed methods are not a solution to all problems. Echoing the words of Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17), it is important to remember that: “In some situations the qualitative approach will be more appropriate; in other situations, the quantitative approach will be more appropriate. In many situations, researchers can put together insights and procedures from both approaches to produce a superior product”.

In other words, although some weaknesses cannot be completely overcome, when the combination of different methods in a study is performed effectively, new avenues for knowledge creation arise (Hurmeinta-Peltomäki et al., 2006).

This is a reason why mixed methods have achieved a certain success in several fields, such as organisational science (Molina-Azorin et al., 2017), to the extent that they have been recognised as “the third major research approach or research paradigm” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 112). However, there are still fields or areas of research where they are taking hold more slowly. In this perspective, the study addresses the following question: do mixed methods represent an emerging methodology in business, management and accounting research? In this vein, to promote their use, the paper illustrates the design of ongoing research concerning Italian community enterprises, which adopts the mixed methods approach to address some specific research complexities.

To this end, the paper is organised as follows. The next section offers background information on the mixed methods approach and a brief description of the community enterprise concept together with some elements characterizing Italian community enterprises. The following section depicts the methodology adopted to analyse the mixed methods research in the investigated areas. In addition, this section provides some information on the methodological features concerning the application case. Then, the paper describes the results of the analysis and presents how the mixed methods approach has been fruitfully used in the application case. Finally, the discussion section proposes some reflections on the literature trends, and the conclusions section illustrates some future issues and limitations of the work.

Mixed methods: literature backgrounds

For many years, researchers have integrated qualitative and quantitative methodologies, but until the 1980s there was no conceptualisation of this way of doing research (Bryman, 1988). Subsequently, mixed methods gained more recognition and were frequently adopted, at least in certain research areas, such as education, health science, sociology (Denscombe, 2008; Molina-Azorin et al., 2017).

For those new to the subject, it is relevant to distinguish between multi-methods and mixed methods, since the former approach concerns the use of either multiple quantitative methods or multiple qualitative methods in the same study, while the latter involves – as indicated in the research methods map proposed by Sage
Publications - to mix that crosses the quantitative and qualitative boundary in inquiries by combining two or more methods within given research.

However, adopting mixed methods is not so easy and may present obstacles because, as Mason (2006) pointed out, it requires thinking outside the box. In practice, researchers may face perceptual and epistemological obstacles (Tunarosa and Glynn, 2017). From this point of view, as highlighted in Howe (1988), who endorses the compatibility thesis, some authors (see for instance Smith, 1983; Smith and Heshusius, 1986) think that the compatibility between qualitative and quantitative methods is unlikely. Indeed, these methodological approaches have different goals and use different techniques. Theory testing is usually the primary objective of a quantitative study (Dezìn and Lincoln, 2005) and, in this perspective, it analyses hypotheses deductively, operationalizes (independent and dependent) variables, gathers data by trying to reach a representative sample and demonstrates statistical significance. Whereas, theory building is typically the goal of a qualitative study. In this type of study, the adopted approach is inductive and the analysis is developed on archival data or data collected through interviews, case studies and other field research methods. In addition, there are divergences from an epistemological point of view, as quantitative studies tend to refer to the positivist paradigm, whereas qualitative studies embrace the interpretivist paradigm; therefore, these studies have discordant postures and this implies differences in the way of knowing and in research questions. These features represented obstacles to methods integration, even if many authors considered it positively (Cresweel et al., 2003).

In the first attempts, the combination of two different types of methods resulted from a hierarchy of them, as authors considered one type of method as an extra part with a completing function. For example, several quantitative studies employed qualitative analyses to provide detailed information about the context of reference. This practice cannot be considered as an effective integration if anything a collage of methods, so much so that the subordination of the qualitative method to the quantitative method has met with some criticism (see, for instance, Jick, 1979).

As noted in the introduction, some situations and motivations suggest the adoption of mixed methods. Green et al. (1989) provided a non-exhaustive list of non-mutually exclusive cases aiming at the following purposes:

the identification of convergences and for confirmatory goals (triangulation),

the use of the results of one method for the description and interpretation of the results achieved through the other (complementarity),

the identification of contradictions to refine or even to reframe theory (initiation),

---

1 The map is available at the following link: https://methods.sagepub.com/methods-map.
the use of the results of one method for the determination of the elements characterising the second (development),

the use of different methods to increase the level of detail and/or the breadth of the analysis (expansion) and,

the use of different methods to reveal the different aspects of a given phenomenon (diversity).

To maximize the potential benefits of mixed methods, suitable choices have to be made in the research design phase. In particular, they concern not only the selection of the type of technique employed (case study, survey, focus group, simulation, etc.) but also the weight assumed in the combination (qualitative dominant, equal status, quantitative dominant) (Johnson et al., 2007) and the application order (concurrent or sequential). Consequently, those who opt for this type of methodological approach are called upon to construct a specific pathway to reduce complexity and facilitate the rearrangement of information. To systematize these choices, Figure 1 shows the mixed-methods design matrix presented in Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004).

![Figure 1 - The mixed-methods design matrix](image)

Source: Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004)

Notes: qual=qualitative; quan=quantitative; + = concurrent use; → = sequential use; capital letters = dominant status; small letters = lower relevance

However, although mixed methods have a large literature and their use is progressively increasing, there are areas where they are relatively nascent, as in the case of management studies (Harrison et al., 2020), or not fully established, as in accounting (Grafton et al., 2011). Concerning the latter, even if mixed methods are potentially relevant to different strands of research, they have only been used in some
of them, like in management accounting studies (as they are more prone to qualitative methods). In this case, however, the degree of integration between the methods was sometimes low, as the qualitative methods served to complement contributions (Tucker and Hoque, 2017).

Community enterprises: peculiarities hindering analysis and gaps in the Italian case

Community enterprises are usually bottom-up collective entrepreneurial initiatives aiming to attain economic, social and environmental goals for the well-being of the community of reference (Johannisson, 1990; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Somerville and McElwee, 2011). They usually grow in depleted contexts, namely in territories characterised by depopulation, low-income levels, lack of services and job opportunities, trying to counter and reverse these negative trends. For this reason, community enterprises are initiatives to be analysed carefully, not so much for the economic dimension they achieve, but for the regenerative capacity, they show in depleted contexts. In addition, if one considers that these enterprises also operate in urban areas (not necessarily marginalised areas), then their significance and the plurality of their implications become evident. As a consequence, several studies and reports have been published on this topic, but some gaps persist.

For example, on the subject of entrepreneurship, very few studies have been conducted in recent years. Nevertheless, some meaningful pieces of evidence arose in the work of Buratti et al. (2022), which showed that these enterprises tend to have a humane entrepreneurial posture (Kim et al., 2018; Parente et al., 2018). Similarly, except for a few countries (where specific plans have been launched to promote and support this type of enterprise), there are not many analyses of the phenomenon on a national scale and almost no studies or comparisons on an international scale. Suffice it to say that even literature reviews are scarce, the last one was published about eight years ago (Pierre et al., 2014). In light of this, the following application case is derived from an ongoing research project aiming to represent Italian community enterprises through the adoption of mixed methods.

In the Italian case, community enterprises mainly take the form of cooperatives (Buratti et al., 2022) and in the various regions of Italy there are regulations governing community cooperatives (CCs), but at the national level, there is no law recognising them as a type of enterprise. Therefore, it can be argued that the label community (or cooperative) enterprise may represent status and not a recognised type of company (Alleanza delle Cooperative Italiane, 2018). This is relevant from the researcher point of view, because CCs are elusive organisations as they are difficult to detect in databases as community enterprises. Hence the unavailability of a national picture of the phenomenon and the need to design an analysis to face this gap. In the light of these difficulties, research based on a mixed-methods approach proved to be a cost-effective option. Therefore, the paper describes the application case both to show how a mixed-methods approach can address certain research complexities and to promote this method in fields where it has been little used.
Methodology

To analyze mixed methods literature trends in the investigated domains, the work collected data from the Scopus database. To this end, following the Scopus classification, the analysis selected the subject areas of business, management and accounting (BMA) and, as a term of comparison, social sciences. Concerning these areas, the paper considered English-language articles published between 2002 and 2021 that had the term mixed methods in their title or keywords. To identify these documents, the search was carried out at the end of January 2022 through specific queries on the Scopus database.

Then, to highlight (as far as possible) the most frequent subfields and the quality of journals that published the selected articles, the analysis gathered data from the Scimago database. In particular, based on the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) and journal categorization, the paper shows the quartile in which the publication outlet was ranked in 2020 and the thematic categories of the BMA area with which the journal is linked.

The application case concerns the Italian context where, since it is difficult to identify CCs, there is no up-to-date national picture of this type of enterprise. Following Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), the application case adopted a fixed mixed-methods approach, as this choice was made at the research design stage and not afterwards. In addition, considering the mixed methods design matrix (Figure 1), the adopted approach can be placed in quadrant 2, as it places qualitative and quantitative methods on the same level and applies them sequentially. The order of application is in line with Morse’s suggestion (1991) for research on topics that cannot be considered mature and/or where there is a need for more knowledge.

Mixed methods research in Business, Management and Accounting area

Figure 2 clearly shows how mixed methods have found wider application in the area of social sciences than in the area of BMA. Indeed, although in the early 2000s the number of articles was similar, already by the end of the first decade one can see an increased use of mixed methods in the social sciences. For example, in 2010, the number of mixed methods articles published in the area of BMA was only 16 (39 considering keywords), whereas almost 90 (119 considering keywords) articles were published in the area of social sciences. This gap has gradually widened to the present day, so that mixed methods articles in the area of BMA number less than 140, whereas those published in the area of social sciences exceed the threshold of 810.

However, if one considers the articles that have the term mixed methods in their keywords, one notices that the gap is narrowing - although not by much - and this
might suggest that researchers in the area of BMA are starting to use this methodology more.

![Mixed methods in the title and keywords](image)

**Figure 2 – Literature trends of mixed methods research in the selected areas**

Source: direct elaboration on Scopus data

BMA scholars have published their research in different journals. However, the journals that have given the most space to the mixed methods articles are (see Table 1): *International Journal of Production Research, Journal of Cleaner Production, International Journal of Production Economics, Evaluation and Program Planning* and *Journal of the Operational Research Society*.

Overall, the journals publishing mixed methods articles are of a good standard, as they are in the top two quartiles in most cases (see Table 1). In addition, to provide an overview of the research strands to which the selected articles can be linked, the thematic categorisation of the BMA area was considered. In this respect, there are few journals related to accounting; whereas journals related to the categories strategy and management, business and international management and marketing show a greater interest in mixed methods research. Again, a certain degree of openness emerges for the category related to management information systems.

**Table 1 – Main journals publishing mixed methods articles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal ranking</th>
<th>N° of articles</th>
<th>Category in the subject area of Business, Management and Accounting</th>
<th>Ranking in the category according to SJR (quartile; 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed methods in the title</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Single methods in the title</th>
<th>Single methods in the keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>01)</strong> Evaluation and Program Planning</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Business and International Management Strategy and Management</td>
<td>Q2 Q2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>02)</strong> Electronic Journal Of Business Research Methods</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Business and International Management Strategy and Management</td>
<td>Q4 Q4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03)</strong> Journal of Business Research</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04)</strong> Tourism Management</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Strategy and Management Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management</td>
<td>Q1 Q1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>05)</strong> Journal of Cleaner Production</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Strategy and Management</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>06)</strong> American Journal of Evaluation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Business and International Management</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>07)</strong> Journal of Health Organization and Management</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Business, Management and Accounting (miscellaneous)</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>08)</strong> Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>09)</strong> Journal of Travel Research</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10)</strong> MIS Quarterly Management Information Systems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Management Information Systems</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mixed methods in the keywords**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Single methods in the title</th>
<th>Single methods in the keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>01)</strong> International Journal of Production Research</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Strategy and Management</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>02)</strong> Journal of Cleaner Production</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Strategy and Management</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03)</strong> International Journal of Production Economics</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Business, Management and Accounting (miscellaneous)</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04)</strong> Evaluation and Program Planning</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Business and International Management Strategy and Management</td>
<td>Q2 Q2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The selected articles deal with a variety of topics, among the most frequent ones are analyses concerning social interaction, innovation and environment, while papers concerning corporate social responsibility, intellectual capital, entrepreneurship or other meaningful topics are fewer in number. Given this, to promote the adoption of mixed methods in studies concerning entrepreneurship, this paper describes a pilot research project on community entrepreneurship in Italy.

**Application case**

The pilot research project was designed to answer several questions such as a) when did CCs originate and in which areas of Italy did they become more widespread? b) What are their distinctive features? c) What is the type of entrepreneurship that characterises them? d) What activities do they carry out? e) On average, how much wealth do they produce and how many employees do they have? Due to space constraints, it is not possible to present the results of an extensive research project in this contribution. Therefore, considering the aim of the work, the paper merely illustrates the adopted approach to answer the above-mentioned questions effectively and efficiently.
The research on Italian CCs started with the conduct of seven case studies selected considering different reference contexts (rural/urban) and life cycle phases. In particular, through face-to-face interviews, information was collected on different aspects, including the birth of the CC, its mission, strategy and business model, governance, etc. This qualitative analysis allowed the researchers to detect the basic characteristics and typically distinctive features of an Italian CC. This represented a key result because it allowed the researchers to recognise just under 250 CCs in the Italian Register of Cooperatives, which gathers all active Italian cooperatives (at the beginning of 2022 their number will exceed 110,000). Subsequently, the email contacts of these CCs were searched and this task triggered the design and administration of a questionnaire. The second part of the research made it possible to depict the phenomenon on a national scale, both by using archival analysis on economic data of the sample, and by delving into various topics through the questionnaire, which included not only the themes of the face-to-face interviews but also new questions concerning, for example, the factors that triggered the entrepreneurial initiative, the obstacles met (for example, in terms of education and training), the relationships with the context of reference, the ways to communicate the results to the stakeholders, etc. The results obtained are more than satisfactory since, considering that a valid email contact was not available for all CCs, the number of responses exceeded 24% of the sample. Thanks to all the data collected, the research project is now completing the analysis of CCs in Italy and preparing the related report.

Discussion

The literature trends revealed some interesting elements, e.g. focusing on the articles in which mixed methods are considered as characterizing elements (namely those with the term in the title). In this perspective, if one compares the number of articles in the selected subject areas to the respective total production of English-language articles in the Scopus database, it emerges that:

mixed methods have a limited impact since in the years 2002, 2010 and 2021 they usually did not exceed 0.3% of the total scientific production;

considering these years, researchers from the social sciences area have contributed more to mixed methods research than BMA researchers. Indeed, although starting from a lower percentage of articles (in 2002, in the social sciences area it was 0.007% of the total scientific production, whereas in the BMA area it was 0.023%), in 2021 the percentage has increased since in the social sciences area it is close to 0.3% and in the BMA area, it is just over 0.166%.

As for the BMA area, it is clear from Table 1 that the contribution of accounting research to the diffusion of mixed methods is limited and this is in line with what Grafton et al. (2011) noted.
This might be influenced by branches of accounting, such as financial accounting, which are less predisposed to mixed methods, as they are traditionally linked to quantitative methods. In general, however, as Cameron (2011) pointed out, several barriers might have influenced the trends shown, those being philosophical (deriving from incompatibility of paradigms), cultural (prejudices against mixed methods), psychological (more confidence in a specific methodological approach), practical (preference towards routines and methods already known). Some of these obstacles are also increasing in importance because of the pressure on researchers to be productive (publish or perish). This is not good. Indeed, as Marchi (2021) noted, hyper-specialisation and the tendency to avoid certain types of research (probably the least profitable) do not benefit the growth of the scholar.

To promote mixed methods, it might be useful if widely recognized journals showed more interest in mixed methods articles. Indeed, although the ranking of the journals in the various categories of the BMA area is appreciable (Table 1), it is evident that this type of research has not been widely published in elite or distinguished BMA journals (such as Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Accounting, Organizations and Society, The Accounting Review, Accounting Horizons, Contemporary Accounting Research), nor in leading practitioner journals (such as Academy of Management Perspectives, MIT Sloan Management Review).

As for the application case, it was useful for the author to describe this pilot experience, not only to promote mixed methods in the domains where they were least used, but also to highlight the chance of achieving multiple purposes with this methodological approach. Indeed, since mixed methods can have non-mutually exclusive purposes, the presented experimental design is a good example of the way mixed methods can achieve different purposes. In particular, the research project described achieves the aims of:

development, since the interviews supported the design and administration of the questionnaire;

to expanding the knowledge of CCs in Italy, and

complementarity, as the results of qualitative and quantitative analyses and secondary data (archival analysis on economic data) were combined to produce a realistic picture of Italian CCs.

Conclusions

The paper presented the development of the literature on mixed methods in the last twenty years in social sciences and BMA areas. The analysis showed that in the latter area this methodological approach is not very widespread and proposed some determinants. However, these answers are not definitive, since it would be necessary to carry out a structured literature review. This represents a limitation of the work,
but it should also be noticed that a structured literature review is a complex task, even if limited to a specific domain such as accounting, as noted by Grafton et al. (2011). This is certainly a future issue, but along with this, it is hoped that there will be an increase in the adoption of mixed methods in different research fields such as in analyses concerning social enterprises, corporate social responsibility, intellectual capital, integrated reporting, business model or entrepreneurship. To promote research in this direction, the design of a research project adopting mixed methods was briefly presented. By effectively integrating the methods adopted, it benefited from the strengths of each method and filled a gap in the current state of knowledge of community entrepreneurship in Italy.

References


The Elderly and Leisure Activities: A Case Study

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Abstract

Studies on the ageing population are increasing in number, aiming to find strategies that allow this life cycle's phase to be lived with quality. The practice and development of leisure activities is an important factor of life’s quality, since it contributes to a better state of mind and, in the case of older people, it may be a strategy to mitigate the effects resulting from the ageing process. Despite, and according to some studies, the elderly do not give leisure a great importance in their lives, often due to their life history, which did not provide them with good conditions and opportunities to develop these activities. Even for elderly people who have no leisure time habits, the fact is that, when they reach a certain age, these activities can become a structural element of their daily lives. This study aims to ascertain what type – and with which intensity – of leisure and free-time occupation activities the elderly perform, as well as the impact of the pandemic on the performance of these activities. This descriptive research uses a questionnaire as a data collection tool, divided into four parts: the first part involves a set of sociodemographic data; the second part, based on the "Leisure Activities Index" by Rosa Martins (2016), includes a set of nine questions; the third part integrates a question to understand the elderly's perception of their leisure time use; and, finally, the fourth part includes a set of questions on the impact of the pandemic on the performance of leisure activities. The non-probability convenience sample included a set of 33 older people attending a Day Care Centre and a Home Support Service in central Portugal.

Keywords: Ageing; leisure and free time; pandemic and free time; healthy ageing

Introduction
Introduction

Currently, when we speak of quality of life in ageing, we are not only referring to the state of physical and psychological health, but also to social involvement and to the capacity and opportunity to develop activities to continue the process of personal cherishing.

The practice and development of leisure activities are of crucial importance, and, in the elderly’s case, it may mitigate the effects arising from the aging process. Despite, studies show that, recurrently, the elderly do not attribute great importance to leisure.

Such feeling may arise from the lack of conditions, opportunities or the inexistence of leisure habits and practices throughout their lives. It needs to be held in mind that today’s elderly people belong to a generation in which work was considered the core of their lives, and leisure was often seen as an unnecessary time off and it could even be despised. However, and in opposite senses, it was this generation that experienced the invention of free time and retirement. It is, therefore, a generation of transition, which often only experiences leisure and free time when it reaches an advanced age.

For Chen and Fu (2008, p. 872), leisure activities may have several positive effects, since "participating in social activities significantly increases life satisfaction, psychological well-being, happiness and physical functions" and, simultaneously "decreases mortality". Thus, we consider it essential to identify the type and intensity of leisure activities practiced by the elderly.

In this study, we focus on play and leisure activities as an important dimension for the well-being of individuals at later ages. These activities are moments in life where one can enjoy pleasure, tranquility and rest (Diaz, 2009). Professionals working in this area should be able to help older people use leisure time to contribute to their quality of life, supporting them to become more active and providing them with more potential for personal growth and empowerment.

Leisure and free-time activities in ageing

Many variables/factors influence older people’s perception of quality of life. According to the research of Wilson and Cleary (1995), the authors Halvorsrud et al. (2010) identified a set of quality of life’s dimensions regarded as important by older people: having energy, being happy, having senses that work well, and having no pain. In the same year, the studies of Molzahn et al. (2010) obtained similar results regarding the most valued dimensions by the elderly.

Nevertheless, it is known that the influence – and even the importance – given to each of these factors vary from one elderly person to another, and according to their social, cultural and, among others, economic context. Despite this variability and individuality, studies show that preventive measures and leisure activities developed
during the aging process have a positive impact on aging, namely on improving the quality of life (Silva, 2009; Santos, 2003).

In his 2007 book, "Animação de idosos", Luís Jacob analysed a series of studies on the elderly’s quality of life and concluded that it depends on a set of factors, among which he highlighted: autonomy to perform daily activities, the presence of regular family and/or social relationships, the existence of economic resources to meet their needs and, finally, the capacity to develop playful and recreational activities.

There are several forms of leisure, and according to Lee and Bhargava (2004), they can be grouped into passive, active and social activities. In turn, Dumazedier (2001) classifies them into physical, artistic, social, intellectual and practical.

João Teixeira Lopes (2000), in a study on urban cultural practices, presents a categorisation of leisure and free time activities, grouping them into: i) domestic space activities, where it integrates domestic and creative practices, domestic expressive practices, practices of interaction and sociability, domestic receptive practices, practices of consumption and/or fruition and, domestic practices of abandonment; ii) activities in the public space, where it incorporates public expressive practices, public participatory practices; iii) activities in the semi-public space, in which are found the semi-public expressive practices, the semi-public receptive practices and the semi-public routine practices; iv) activities in the associative space (organized semi-public), in which the author considers to belong the creative associative practices and the expressive associative practices; and v) the activities in the space of cultivated/overlegitimised culture, in which we find erudite creative practices and the receptive and informative practices of cultivated publics.

In a study carried out by Maria João Valente Rosa (1999) on Pensioners and Leisure Time in Portugal, the author found that 53% of the pensioners preferred to spend their leisure time at home, 17% outside home and 30% inside and outside home. In the case of at home activities, it is the women who assume, in this study, greater expressiveness. Concerning the leisure activities practiced, it was found that the majority of both men and women chose "watching television". Men replied that they also go to the café or tavern, listen to the radio, read newspapers or magazines, frequent plazas or gardens, and, with less expressiveness, they play cards and other games, go to religious events, to shopping centres or markets. Women, in addition to watching television, dedicate themselves to religious activities, listen to the radio, go to the market or to shopping centres and, with less expressiveness, they answered that they read newspapers or magazines.

Regardless of the type of leisure activity, it is generally agreed that its practice is "an important ingredient in the 'recipe' for achieving a successful old age. Initially formalised as 'Activity Theory', this perspective holds that high participation in an active lifestyle is an antidote to the loss of 'productive' roles that results from the transition to retirement" (Silverstein and Parker, 2002, p. 528).
Leisure activities have numerous advantages for older people, namely in preventing and combating problems in the elderly, since these activities can compensate for deficits in other areas of their lives (Silverstein and Parker, 2002) and mitigate the impact of social, functional and cognitive declines. In addition, it combats sedentary lifestyle, which, as Dogra and Stathokostas (2012) warn us, may compromise the health of adults.

**Methodology**

This study aims to ascertain what type – and with which intensity – of leisure and free-time occupation activities the elderly perform, as well as the impact of the pandemic on the performance of these activities. It will also try to understand the possible relationship between the development of free time activities, social responses and gender.

This descriptive research uses a questionnaire as a data collection tool, divided into four parts: the first part involves a set of sociodemographic data; the second part, based on the "Leisure Activities Index" by Rosa Martins (2016), includes a set of nine questions, ranging from very little, a little, neither a lot nor little, quite a lot, and a lot; the third part integrates a question to understand the elderly's perception of the use of their free time; and, finally, the fourth part aggregates a set of three questions on the impact of the pandemic on the performance of free time and leisure activities.

Data was processed through a simple descriptive statistical analysis.

The non-probability convenience sample included a set of 33 older people, 19 of whom receive Home Support Services (HSS) and 14 attend a Day Care Centre (DCC), in a rural area of central Portugal. The requirement was to attend the above-mentioned social services, to be able to collaborate in the interview and to accept and sign the informed consent.

**Presentation of results**

The questionnaire was applied to 33 elderly people from a rural area in central Portugal, 19 of whom were using HSS and 14 attended the DCC.

The average age was 79, being that the youngest subject was 52 and the oldest 93, both from the HSS. The average age at the HSS was 77 and the average age at the DCC was 81.

The sample was composed of 19 women and 14 men. Although these data cannot be interpreted in a generalist way, our sample is in line with the national data: with a feminization of old age, explained by the differences in the physical and metabolic decline between men and women, which leads to a greater longevity of women, which has also been related to other risk factors, such as occupational accidents, smoking and alcohol use, as well as differences in the way of facing diseases and disabilities (Mazo; Lopes; Benedetti, 2009).
With regard to gender by social response, we found that, in our sample, the DCC is mainly composed of women (10 out of 14 users, 71.4%), while in the HSS there is a balance with 9 women and 10 men. Although no data were collected to justify this difference, we can assume, based on the existing literature, that men have greater difficulty in participating in group activities (Ferreira, Izzo, Jacob, 2007).

In what concerns academic qualifications, our sample reflects the reality of the country, since compulsory education did not exist when they were young and the opportunity to attend school for several years was scarce, especially in rural areas, as is the case of the geographical context of our respondents. Thus, in the sample, we have as maximum school qualifications the 2nd cycle (corresponding to 6 years of schooling) with 3 elderly (2 female and 1 male); followed by the 1st cycle (of 4 years of schooling) with 13 elderly, 7 women and 6 men; the 1st cycle incomplete with 10 elderly, equally distributed between men and women; and, finally, 7 elderly (5 women and 2 men) never attended school and can neither read nor write.

The profession they exercised is related to the qualifications of the sample and to the rural context where they live. Thus, 11 elderly, of which 6 women and 5 men were farmers, 5 elderly (3 women and 2 men) were factory workers, 5 elderly worked in the hotel industry, of which 3 women and 2 men. These were followed by construction workers (3 men), domestic workers (3 women) and, with 1 elderly person each, office workers (1 man), cellar workers (1 woman), drivers (1 man), medical auxiliaries (1 woman), cleaners (1 woman) and fishmongers (1 woman).

Reading is an activity that, in our sample, is little valued, with 22 older people (66.8%) who read little, very little or not at all. Only 4 older people (12.1%) consider that they read quite a lot or a lot. These data are understandable if we take into account the low level of education of our sample.

When comparing the two social responses, we found similar reading habits, although with less intensity among the older people in the DCC. Of the 19 elderly people in the HSS, 57.9% (11) read little, very little or not at all, and only 10.5% (2) read a lot. In the DCC, 78.5% of the senior citizens (11) read little, very little or not at all and 2 elderly people read quite a lot or a lot (7.1%, 1 in each).

In the analysis of reading habits by gender, it was possible to verify that women are the ones who read the most, with 3 women stating that they read a lot quite a lot and only 1 man considering the same (15.8% of women against 7.1% of men). In contrast, women are also the ones who admit that they read little, very little or not at all, with 15 women against 7 men (78.9% of women and 50% of men).
The habit of watching television is the most expressive in our sample, with 54.5% (18) of the elderly considering that they watch a lot (15, 45.4%) and quite a lot (3, 9.1%) of TV. On the other hand, 15.2%, corresponding to 5 older adults, consider that they watch neither a lot nor a little TV and 10 older adults (30.3%) consider that they watch little, very little or no TV (7, 21.2% little and 3, 9.1% very little or not at all). These data are in line with national studies, namely the study by Rosa (1999), which concluded that, in Portugal, the most expressive leisure and free time activity was "watching television".

The elderly who are at home and receiving HSS are the ones who watch TV the most. So, when compared, in the HSS 12 seniors (63.1% of the 19) consider that they watch a lot and quite a lot of TV whilst at DCC we found 6 elderly people (42.8% of the 14). At the other end of the spectrum, there are 4 seniors (21%) in the HSS who watch
little, very little or no TV, compared to 6 seniors (42.8%) in the DCC. This situation may be related to the time that these elderly people spend inside their homes, often isolated, having the TV as their daily companion.

In the TV watching habit, we found many similarities between genders. Comparing men and women, the tendency in the sample to watch a lot and quite a lot of TV is very similar.

Concerning the habit of listening to music, we found that it is not a highly valued activity. Only 9 older people (27.3%) listen to a lot of music, 5 older people (15.1%)
listen neither a lot nor a little, and the majority, 19 older people, 57.6%, listen to little, very little or no music at all. When comparing the two social responses, we found that it is the older people with HSS who listen to music the most.

In our sample, men are the ones who usually listen more to music. Of the 19 women questioned only 5 (26.4%) listen to a lot of music and the majority, 11 (57.9%) rarely or never listen. This situation refers to the fact that men listen to radio more and, consequently, have the possibility of listening to music during the broadcasts, between news and other programmes.
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When questioned about whether they gardened, most of the elderly, 24 (72.7%), did little, very little or none, and only 5 (15.2%) did quite a lot or a lot. Although this is a population which is used to "working the land", their age may be a factor for this activity to have so little expressiveness.

Once again, the type of response that the elderly attend does not influence the habit of gardening, since we have similar numbers of elderly people who usually do it – 3 in HSS and 2 in DCC – and those who don't – 15 in HSS and 9 in DCC.

This activity is more carried out by men: 21.4% (3) of men do it a lot or quite a lot, against 10.6% (2) of women. The number of those who rarely or never do it is similar between genders, with 73.7% of women (14) and 71.4% of men (10).
Horticulture is developed regularly by 12.1% (4) of the elderly and 72.7% (24) do it rarely or never. When distinguishing between the social responses, it is not possible to find significant differences, since the number of older people in HSS (3) and DCC (1) who engage in horticulture, as well as those who do not, is similar.

The difference in the practice of vegetable-growing by gender is not significant in the sample. With a regular practice we found 2 women (10.6%) and 1 man (7.7%) and with inexistence or infrequent practice we found 15 women (78.9%) and 9 men (96.2%).
Although knitting is a practice very much associated with women, it is not very well represented in our sample. We found that it is an activity that no one does frequently and only 1 woman (3%) considers that she knits neither very much nor little. The overwhelming majority of 32 older people (97%) rarely or never knit. As can be seen in the following graph, the difference between the social responses is not significant.

Playing cards is also an infrequent or not frequent practice (32 elderly people, 97%). Only one elderly person (3%), from HSS, considers that he plays neither a lot nor a little. All the women rarely or never play cards.
The habit of talking is the second most pointed out in the study: 6 elderly people (18.2%) consider that they talk a lot and 6 (18.2%) admit that they talk neither a lot nor a little. Of the remainder, 16 (48.5%) consider that they talk a little and 5 (15.1%) consider that they talk very little or not at all. Contrary to what one would expect, none of the seniors from the DCC consider that they speak a lot, and only 2 seniors consider that they speak quite a lot. Most of the seniors who consider that they speak very little or not at all frequented the DCC.
Women are the ones who talk the most, being the ones who consider, in 5 of the cases, that they talk a lot, against only 1 man.

When questioned whether they felt that they used their free time for leisure activities and activities that give them pleasure, we found that most of the elderly (17, 51.5%) are satisfied, 5 older people (15.2%) consider that they are more or less satisfied and 11 (33.3%) consider that they do not make the best use of this time.

There is no significant difference in the answers given to this question by men and women, nor by social response.
In the third part of the questionnaire we tried to understand the impact of the pandemic on leisure and free time. When questioned about whether the pandemic had changed the way in which they spent their leisure time, it was possible to verify that, for the majority, there was no change – 23 older adults (69.7%), 13 from HSS and 10 from DCC. Only 10 elderly people (30.3%) consider that their leisure time was affected by the pandemic, 6 from the HSS and 4 from the DCC.

These data were contrary to expectations, since, during the pandemic, the elderly in DCC had a long period when they could not attend the centre, so it would be expected that all considered that the pandemic changed the leisure activities they performed. However, only 5 reported this fact. This may be related to the lack of memory of the
activities they carried out before the pandemic or to the fact that, at that time, they were not involved in the activities that were developed in the DCC, where they could have watching TV as a priority action.

Of the 10 elderly who consider that there have been changes, we found that the activities that they no longer do are: going to the Day Care Centre (3 men from the DCC), going to the Senior University (1 woman from the HSS), going to the swimming pool (1 woman from the HSS), playing games (1 man from the HSS), going to church (1 man from the HSS), fishing (1 man from the HSS), going to the gym (1 man from the DCC) and socializing (1 woman from the DCC).

When questioned whether they started doing any new activity in the pandemic, only 2 women from DCC replied having started the activity of cutting and sewing and 1 woman from HSS started going to the library. The remaining 30 elderly people, 90.9%, did not start any activity. This shows that this is a population with few leisure habits and/or leisure opportunities.

Conclusions

The data presented allow us to understand that the elderly in the sample do not have leisure habits. The most expressive activity was "watching television", which is the way they occupy their free time. We highlight that this activity is more expressive among the elderly in HSS and is equally distributed between men and women. The second most representative activity is "talking", although the numbers are low for those who do it very regularly. Here, and contrary to what one might assume, it is the older people in HSS who talk the most. Taking into account that these elderly people remain at home, we supposed that they could have a greater sense of isolation when compared with the elderly people who attend the DCC, but this was not the case. Women are the ones who most value the act of talking.

The remaining activities presented show a low or even zero adherence by the elderly. The least developed are "knitting" and "playing cards", where almost all elderly rarely or never do it. This is followed by gardening and horticulture, where 24 elderly people (72.7%) do not do this activity or do it rarely. With a low level of practice, we also found "reading" and "listening to music"; of the few older people who developed these activities, the majority were from the HSS; and in the case of reading, women stood out, and in music, men.

Although our sample is integrated in the rural environment, with a life totally or partially linked to agriculture, the fact is that the number of older people who practice gardening and/or horticulture in their leisure time is residual. This situation may be related to the advanced age of the sample.

If we take into account Lee and Bhargava's (2004) division of leisure activities, we may conclude that most elderly develop a passive leisure activity. If the reference is the categorisation of Lopes (2000), we may verify that the majority of the sample
develops activities in domestic space, followed by activities in semi-public space – in which we find talking to acquaintances. Activities in public space, activities in associative space and activities in space of cultivated/overlegitimised culture were left out.

We cannot, however, separate leisure from the social context, since it is itself an expression of culture and depends on the lifestyle of each individual. We point out that the fact that the elderly present economic difficulties limits the possible participation in some leisure activities, since the reduction in income associated, in most cases, with a significant growth in health expenses, promotes the increase in dependence and limits life options.

Old age, most often associated with retirement and a substantial increase in free time, represents a break with professional life and, consequently, with social habits and practices. Thus, free and leisure time could be an excellent opportunity for the elderly to interrelate and develop practices they enjoy. Despite, in our sample it was clear that there is a reduced habit of developing leisure activities, and a satisfaction with their free time use – most of the sample is satisfied with the way they occupy their free time, both in men and women and in both social responses. It needs to be held in mind that today's elderly people belong to a generation in which work was considered the core of their lives, and leisure was often seen as an unnecessary time off and it could even be despised.

We point out in the results that the fact that the elderly were in DCC was not mirrored in leisure habits. Here, we may have as a limitation the fact that the elderly were questioned at the time of the pandemic and their answers were related to their immediate memory and not before. However, these same elderly, when questioned if the activities they performed in their leisure time had changed with the pandemic, considered that they had not. This situation makes us wonder if the responses developed in the DCC are those most appreciated by the elderly.

We highlight as limitations of this study the low number of older people surveyed, the fact that we used a predetermined set of activities – necessarily leaving out others – and, finally, the fact that the older people were surveyed during the pandemic period, which may have influenced the answers given.

Leisure and free time occupation may be considered as one of the components for a better quality of life in ageing and integrates various activities, which are willingly developed. Janke, Davey, and Kleiber (2006) consider that these activities influence the physical and psychological well-being of the elderly, since they promote active participation and the feeling of group belonging. In addition, the studies developed by Newall et al. (2013, p. 921) showed that leisure allows for the development of positive emotions and "will undo the negative effects of negative emotions", which may arise as a result of the changes at this stage of life. This perspective is also advocated by the studies of Santos et al. (2003) and Silverstein and Parker (2002) who concluded that
leisure and leisure activities help older people cope with negative life events/factors, namely loneliness and depression.

In this sense, this study demonstrated the urgent need to rethink the type of leisure activities proposed to the elderly and the need to find strategies to motivate and involve them in and for these activities. The classic model of gerontological care (based on the treatment of the consequences of ageing) is definitely exhausted given its limited nature in the way it views ageing. It is urgent to make the elderly active and participative players in a process of healthy and quality ageing.

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Recent Opportunities for Increasing Georgian Wine Export - Incentives or Obstacles to Improving Wine Quality

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Abstract

Along with the internationally recognized image of Georgian wine and the increase of wine exports, special attention is paid to maintaining and improving the quality of Georgian wine. Taking into account the requirements of the local and international wine markets and, consequently, promoting the development of a competitive market remains a challenge for Georgian law. The creation of favorable conditions for the export of wine at the local and international level implies, first of all, the existence of legal regulations. The aim of the Law of Georgia on Vine and Wine and its accompanying subordinate normative acts is to develop a competitive wine market in Georgia and to protect the interests of consumers, to maintain and grow the international reputation of the Georgian viticulture and winemaking sector. The law was substantially amended in 2017 and the aim of the reform was to adapt to the challenges in the wine sector and bring it closer to international standards. At the same time, the export of Georgian wine to different countries is regulated by a different legal framework. Therefore, it is in our interest to analyze these different legal regulations, which have a direct impact on the opportunities for wine exports from Georgia - the incentive or obstacle to improving the quality of Georgian wine. EU regulations apply to both wines produced in the EU and imported to the EU market, as well as to Georgia, as a third country that has signed the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the EU. Russia, Ukraine and the USA are important export markets for Georgia. Georgia has different international legal relations with each of them and, accordingly, the legal requirements for wine exports to these countries are different. The paper examines the current state of the modern Georgian wine market in the context of domestic and international norms regulating wine exports. It is analyzed whether local legislation and international agreements regulating wine exports contribute to the growth of Georgian wine exports and the improvement of wine quality.

Keywords: wine, wine export, wine quality, wine market, wine legislation, trade agreements
Introduction

Georgia has recently entered into new types of trade agreements with the EU and partner and neighboring countries, which provide for the gradual reduction of tariff barriers and the shift from traditional tariffs and quotas to non-tariff measures (mainly to quality assurance measures). Non-tariff measures are central to trade agreements and are often seen as a particular challenge for developing countries. The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) between the EU and Georgia, signed in 2014, is a prime example of this. It is a new generation trade agreement that combines liberalization and regulation. The agreement gives Georgia access to the EU market with 500 million users but, at the same time, provides for complex legal and institutional harmonization (Kasradze, Tea, 2018).

Unfortunately, even seven years after the implementation of the DCFTA, the removal of tariff barriers has not had the expected positive impact on exports, including wine exports. Non-tariff measures related to quality are considered to be one of the main impediments to the growth of exports to the EU.

Due to the fact that bilateral agreements with partner and neighboring countries place less emphasis on the quality of export products, the growth of Georgian wine exports in these countries is noticeable.

Research methodology

The paper is a desk study of the impact of new generation trade agreements on Georgian wine export. It is based on trade agreements, national legislation governing Georgian wine export, scientific papers by Georgian and foreign researchers, and studies and reports by various local and international organizations. The data was retrieved from the Internet, official websites and various scientific databases. Relevant conclusions were made based on the processing and analysis of the information obtained.

Literature review

Economists agree that trading barriers, such as tariffs and quotas, harm trade because they distort the price and hinder the distribution of resources so that they prevent the comparative advantage of the country. It is easy to calculate the exact effect of tariffs as they are transparent and predictable. According to the OECD, if tariffs were removed entirely, it would reduce trade costs and carry welfare gains equal to 1.37 percent of GDP per year in developing countries and 0.37 percent in developed countries (Love & Lattimore, 2009).

Unlike tariffs, non-tariff barriers, which are an essential part of new trade agreements, are not easily measurable. The impact of non-tariff SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) and TBT (Technical Barriers to Trade) measures is mainly negative on the agriculture and food sector (Li & Beghin, 2012). Some scholars have suggested that compliance with standards increases short-term production costs (Maskus, Wilson, & Otsuki,
2000). Some argue the opposite, that standards have a positive effect on exports because they indicate quality protection. (MANGELSDORF, PORTUGAL-PEREZ, & WILSON, 2012).

The goal of policymakers when pursuing a non-tariff policy is not to influence foreign trade flows. Unlike tariffs and quotas, which are discriminatory measures that lead to inefficient allocation of resources. However, non-tariff measures, like tariffs, can damage trade flows (Maskus, Wilson, & Otsuki, 2000). In addition, their evaluation is often more difficult because they are less transparent due to their qualitative and complex nature. Moreover, the diversity of regulations represents a significant international trade barrier as it generates transaction costs (Ederington & Ruta, 2016) Therefore, accurately quantifying the impact of non-tariff measures on foreign trade is a challenge for countries.

Numerous well-known scholars have advocated for free trade and argued in their own works against scholars with opposing views. Developing countries will develop faster if they are allowed to pursue their own policies, taking into account their own stage of development and other conditions. In the long run, this is beneficial for developed countries as well, as investment and trade opportunities expand, although, unfortunately, developed countries do not take advantage of this opportunity. (Chang & Gershman, 2003).

The paper "Economic Feasibility, General Economic Impact and Effects of the Free Trade Agreement between Georgia and the European Union" examines the economic benefits, feasibility and potential impacts of the Free Trade Agreement between Georgia and the European Union. The study emphasizes that in order for agro-companies which produce agriproducts to enter the EU market, this is especially true of Georgian wine, it is important to introduce modern production methods, raise the awareness of Georgian brands through proper marketing and for all agro-companies the starting point should be the implementation of EU regulations and compliance with modern quality standards. (Kudina, et al., 2008).

DCFTA allows Georgian products that meet non-tariff requirements to enter the EU market with zero customs tariffs. This fact pushes Georgian wine producers to improve the quality of products, to be able to diversify the types of products and, most importantly, to increase the export of products produced, thus contributing to the economic progress of the country. Norway, Canada, Japan and Switzerland are also on the list of export countries whose preferential systems can be used by Georgian producers. (Eisenbaum, 2007).

Georgian Wine Market Overview

Over the last decade, the wine industry in Georgia has experienced a strong growth in all key indicators, such as exports, turnover, employment and salary of employees. The financial situation of the sector during this period also looked quite impressive (Zarnadze & Kasradze, 2020).
In 2019, the average monthly salary of employees in the wine production sector amounted to 1046 GEL, and this figure increased by an average of 11.5% annually in 2011-2019. The average salary in the wine production sector has increased significantly compared to the average salary in Georgia - from 79% in 2014 to 93% in 2019 (Georgia Today, 2021).

In 2019, wine was the 3rd most exported commodity from Georgia (after copper ores and ferroalloys) and accounted for 8.2% of the country's total exports. The most significant increase in wine exports was recorded in 2017, when compared to 2016 it increased by 54.4%.

![Export of Georgian wine (million bottles) and average price of 1 bottle (2011-2020)](chart)

Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia

The average price of wine exported in 2011-2020 was $2.46 per bottle. From 2012 to 2014, the price increased significantly from $2.41 to $2.95, although in 2016 it dropped sharply to $2.26. In 2016-2020, the price stabilized from $2.2 to $2.4. For comparison, the world export price of wine in 2019 was $2.59, which is slightly higher than the average price of a bottle of wine exported from Georgia that year - $2.38. In 2011-2016, Georgian wine was more expensive than the average price in the world.
Percentages of wine exports from Georgia by countries look like this:

Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia

As the data shows, exports have been growing over the years, with only 2020 data showing a 5% decrease due to the pandemic compared to 2019 data, which is not really a large number considering other sectors of the economy. In 2020, compared to 2019, there is a 1% decrease in the amount of wine exported in bottles. In 2020, up to 92.4 million wines were exported outside the country. However, as the price of wine in the world market has fallen, wine exports in value terms have declined by 9% (National Wine Agency, 2020).

Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia

The year 2021 was especially important for the Georgian wine industry: the largest number of wines was exported in the history of independent Georgia. Georgia exported 107 million bottles (0.75 l) of wine to 62 countries around the world, with revenues from exports reaching $250 million, which is also a record high (Placeholder2).
Russia has been the main wine export destination since 2017, but there has been a significant increase in Europe as well.

Export rates are growing every year in strategic European markets: Poland, UK, USA, Ukraine, France, etc. However, it should be noted that despite the bitter experience of the 2006 Russian embargo, unfortunately, the Russian market is still inalterable, especially for small and medium-sized wineries to export their wines. The main determining factor, however, is the difficulty of adhering to quality standards (Kasradze & Zarnadze, 2019). Small and medium-sized wineries do not have a large scale of production, they suffer from a lack of resources and qualifications, due to which their products do not meet the requirements of the EU market. It is easier to acquire the Russian market, because there are no such strict requirements for quality there. However, based on the past experience, such a high level of dependence on the Russian market poses a great risk to the country (Kasradze & Kapanadze, COVID-19 Pandemic - Challenges and Opportunities for Georgian Wine Industry, 2022).

Taking into account the requirements of local and international wine markets and, consequently, promoting the development of a competitive market remains a challenge for Georgian law. Creating favorable conditions for the export of wine locally and internationally, first of all, implies the existence of proper legal regulations.

**Discussion of domestic and international norms regulating wine exports**

In Georgia, wine production, processing, distribution and export are regulated by various legislative and sub-legislative normative acts in force in Georgia. There are requirements of normative acts for wine production in Georgia, such as registration of business operators, state control, internal system of traceability and threat control, labeling, standardization, metrology, hygienic certification, as well as obligations, rights and responsibilities of business operators.
Determining the designations of the origin of wine and including them in a strict legal framework is especially important for Georgia. It is a necessary precondition for the production of high-quality and valuable products in our country and to protect it from unfair competition.

In accordance with the “Law of Georgia on Appellation of Origin and Geographical Indication of Goods” - Appellation of origin is a modern or historical name of a geographical place, district, region, country, used to denote goods originating in that geographical location; Whose exceptional quality and properties are, in whole or in part, determined solely by the natural environment and the human factor of this geographical place; Whose production, raw material production and processing take place within the boundaries of this geographical place.

The place of origin can be the village, the city, the region and the country itself. Thus, in accordance with the legislation of Georgia, the concept of a geographical indication is more general and fully includes the concept of appellation of origin. Any designation of origin is also a geographical indication, but not vice versa. The registration of the appellation of origin and geographical indication of the goods is carried out by the LEPL National Intellectual Property Centre of Georgia - Sakpatenti.

Decree #88 of the President of Georgia of 28 February 2002 “On the Measures Related to the Enactment of the Law of Georgia on Appellation of Origin and Geographical Indication of Goods” defines the procedures for determining, registering, using and controlling the appellation of origin of the wine. This Ordinance provides a list of wines with appellations of origin and conditional boundaries of specific viticulture zones for wines with appellations of origin and wine brands.

The Law of Georgia “On Vines and Wine” regulates the promotion and development of viticulture and winemaking as a priority sector of the country’s economy, and the production and marketing of competitive grapes, wines and other alcoholic beverages of grape origin, and the protection of the consumer market from falsified and poor-quality products.

According to the Law of Georgia “On Vines and Wine”, activities in the field of viticulture and winemaking are regulated by a legal entity under public law (LEPL), the National Wine Agency, which is controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia. Certificates of Conformity and Origin are issued by the National Wine Agency in accordance with the rules established by the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia. The Law of Georgia “On Vines and Wine” regulates the general requirements for the certification of alcoholic beverages. According to this law, certification of wines with appellations of origin is mandatory.

Certification of the table and regional wines, as well as strong spirits, is voluntary. For certification, it is sufficient to submit a declaration of conformity drawn up by the manufacturer of alcoholic beverages, based on the test protocol of an accredited
examination laboratory, which provides information on the manufacturer's requisites, product origin and quality.

Tasting is mandatory to issue a certificate of conformity of wines with the appellation of origin intended for export. In other cases, wine tasting is voluntary and is carried out by a standing tasting commission set up by the National Wine Agency on an order basis. According to the same law, the export of wines with the appellation of origin is allowed only in bottled form.

Order #2-221 of 2003 of Minister of Agriculture and Food of Georgia on “Certification System of Alcohol Drinks”, “Rules for Certification of Alcohol Drinks”, “Issuing Certificate of Origin for Alcohol Drinks”, and “Rules for Writing off Wines” regulates the issues of certification of alcoholic beverages and spirits of grape origin. In order to make a decision on issuing a compliance certificate, three necessary conditions are considered: the results of the analytical examination; the results of organoleptic testing and the results of state control over the observance of the rules and regulations for the production of alcoholic beverages.

The state strictly controls the compliance of export wines and certificates of origin issued. In order to inspect the samples submitted by the exporter, the National Wine Agency and the LEPL National Food Agency are authorized to take samples from the relevant certified batch, submit them for laboratory testing and compare them to the samples submitted by the exporter no later than 3 working days after the prior notification of the business-operator by the National Wine Agency. It is not allowed to export the certified batch or place it on the market otherwise before the expiration of this period.

The Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia (Art. 1794) provides for punitive sanctions, in particular: forgery of a wine laboratory test report by a testing laboratory, forgery of a wine certificate by a certification body is punishable by a fine of 5,000 GEL, in repeated cases 20,000 GEL; Placing or exporting non-compliant products specified in the wine certificate to the export party shall be punished by a fine of 10 000 GEL, in repeated cases - 20 000 GEL (Art. 1795).

It should be noted that the state requirements for the wine to be exported are different for the EU and CIS countries. Only the analysis of the forms of certificates of origin allows us to see clearly the difference between the legal regulations of the EU and the CIS countries when it comes to the quality control of exported wine.

Under the legislation of Georgia, which is consistently in line with EU regulations, if certified wine is intended for export to EU countries, it must be accompanied by a Form VI 1 Certificate of Compliance, which is fully compliant with EU regulations and legislation issued by the National Wine Agency.

In the case of wine export to Russia and Ukraine, the agency issues another type of certificate of origin - CT1 form. We want to note here that in this case too, the legal
regulations for the export of wine are conditioned by the bilateral agreements between Georgia and the Russian Federation and the state of Georgia and Ukraine.

We will briefly review the requirements for both deep and comprehensive free trade agreements with the EU, as well as the requirements for certificates of compliance to be issued under Georgian law in the context of the above-mentioned bilateral agreements on wine exports.

The Georgian-Russian Free Trade Agreement (Agreement, 1994) is used for trade with the Russian Federation and the Free Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Georgia and the Government of Ukraine (Agreement, 1995) is used for trade with the Ukraine. The terms of the agreements are identical for both countries. According to the first article, 1. “Sides to the agreement do not impose customs duties, taxes and charges having equivalent effect on export and import of commodity originated from the customs area of one of the Sides and designated for delivery to the customs area of another Side.”

According to Article 2, “Sides will not impose local taxes or charges directly or indirectly on goods, covered by the present agreement, at the rate that exceeds the level of relevant taxes or charges imposed on analogous goods of the local production or those produced in third countries; Sides will not introduce special restrictions or demands towards export and/or import of goods, covered by the present agreement, that in similar cases are not used towards analogous goods of the local production or those produced in third countries;

However, the free trade regime with the Russian Federation, unlike other countries, provides for exceptions, in particular, the removal of certain goods from the free trade regime.

It should also be noted that under Article 1 of the Treaty the peculiarity of using the trade regime to agree on the nomenclature of goods between the two countries are formalized in annual protocols which is an integral part of this Agreement. Which allows the parties to revise these terms.

The contracts do not contain details about either the quality or the special requirements related to the labels.

We have a different reality in the case of wine exports to EU countries. Currently, under this agreement, 18 geographical names of Georgian wines are protected in the European Union. In addition to geographical indications and appellations of origin, the issue of labeling in relation to wine quality protection regulations within the framework of Georgia's Association Agreement with the European Union is noteworthy.

The Law of Georgia on Vines and Wine complies with EU standards and sets requirements for mandatory information on the label.
According to the Law of Georgia on Vines and Wine, Art.31. The label of a product bottled for the market shall include the following necessary information:

a) Name of the product;

b) Nominal volume;

c) Actual alcohol content;

d) Name of protected appellation of origin and geographical indication, as well as an indication “controlled appellation of origin” or “protected geographical indication” (should be sequential), which may be replaced by sign or abbreviation of controlled appellation of origin or protected geographical indication approved by the agency;

e) In the case of special wine – the name of the appropriate category; the name of the manufacturer country of the product;

f) Name and address of the manufacturer of the product, name and address of the bottler, if the manufacturer and bottler of the product are different persons, and in the case of wine or drinks imported to Georgia – name and address of the importer;

g) Lot number;

h) Noting “contains sulfites”, if the content of sulfites in one liter of the product exceeds 10 milligrams.

In addition, the law permits placing the following information on the label (article 32):

a) Trademark;

b) Name of vine species if the product is produced at least 85% of grapes of the mentioned vine species;

c) Year of harvest if not less than 85% of the wine is produced from grapes harvested in that year; according to the production method: in case of Georgian wine – designation “Georgian wine”;

d) In case of sparkling wine – designation “traditional method”, if the sparkling wine is produced by the bottled method;

e) In case of wine – designation of fermentation and/or aging in a wooden barrel if the wine was fermented and/or aged in a wooden barrel.

Any information that does not mislead the customer regarding the quality, place of origin, year of harvest, manufacturer, type, style and/or other characteristics of the product is permissible. To include nutritional and/or health claims on a wine label is not obligatory, to include environmental claims on a wine label is not obligatory.

Any information that does not mislead the customer regarding the quality, place of origin, year of harvest, manufacturer, type, style and/or other characteristics of the product is permissible.
Conclusion

Recently, Georgia has signed new types of trade agreements with the European Union and various other countries, in which the emphasis has shifted from traditional tariffs and quotas to non-tariff quality assurance measures. These agreements, on the one hand, allowed Georgian products, including Georgian wine, to enter and establish themselves in new markets at competitive prices, and, on the other hand, the non-tariff measures provided for in these agreements became a special challenge for Georgian winemakers.

The practice has shown that the DCFTA has contributed mainly to the growth of exports of raw materials which are less affected by non-tariff measures, but have not had an economically significant positive impact on the growth of the agri-food and manufacturing sectors. Moreover, the SPS and TBT measures of the EU have a significant limiting impact on Georgia’s export potential to the EU. On the other hand, there is a tendency to focus on the CIS and Asian markets, which have much lower requirements in terms of non-tariff measures.

Experts agree that the growing dependence of Georgia on the Russian market is alarming given the lessons of the recent past. The main challenge today is the quality of Georgian wine. It is possible to export relatively low-quality wine to Russia and that is why Georgia is actively cooperating with it. In order for Georgian wine to achieve serious success in Europe and other countries, producers must first improve its quality. Since the 2006 embargo, Georgia has diversified its wine markets, though insufficiently. Since 2013, Georgian wine exports to Russia continue to grow.

Although there was already a bilateral free trade agreement in 2006 that included dispute resolution mechanisms in line with international practice (Agreement on the establishment of a free trade zone, 1999), the Russian authorities, without any hesitation, unilaterally used the politically motivated decision on the embargo.

The Russian market is obviously highly attractive. However, at the same time, it is dangerous, unsustainable and creates many risks, especially of a political nature. Because there is a temptation for Georgian wine producers to return to the production of low-quality and falsified products, which they will sell freely in the Russian market (which again makes it possible for the embargo to be repeated multiple times due to political motives).

Given that Ukraine has also signed the Association Agreement with the EU and the DCFTA, in the near future this means the modernization of the Ukrainian market and rapid harmonization with EU standards, which in the future will lead to the revision of bilateral agreements and the establishment of EU standards.

The EU market is attractive, first and foremost, only to producers of high-quality products and services. Differentiation of products and services helps to diversify
markets for Georgian exporters. Moreover, this is the only way to develop our small open economy (Tea Kasradze, 2018).

If high-quality wine is ensured, in the presence of free trade agreements with different countries it will inevitably have an impact on the growth of wine exports. Quality, authentic Georgian wine has a great potential to acquire new strategic markets. To achieve this, companies need to consider the needs of local and international markets. It is especially necessary to harmonize the local regulations related to wine quality with the EU regulations and strictly adhere to them, which will help increase the international reputation of Georgian wine and increase its demand in foreign markets, improve the financial performance of the wine industry, there will be further increases in employment and salaries of employees in the industry (Kasradze & Kapanadze, COVID-19 Pandemic - Challenges and Opportunities for Georgian Wine Industry, 2022).

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The Shared Landscape. Strategies for Ethical and Democratic Living

Vereno Brugiatelli

Abstract

Living is placed within an environmental fabric consisting of infinite abiotic, biotic and cultural threads. Integrated living is required to be part of this fabric. Ethical living, characterised by knowledge, awareness and responsibility towards the landscape is the only way to protect the environment and enhance its biological and cultural wealth to effectively contribute to the fundamental quality of living and man's well-being. Ethical living needs active participation shared by the inhabitants in the processes of protection, transformation and management of the landscape. In turn, such participation requires fostering by the ethics of living. In this study, from a phenomenological and hermeneutic viewpoint, I intend to highlight some fundamental structures of living to demonstrate that democratic participation is a determining factor in contributing to the realisation of integrated living, which is indispensable for respect of the landscape to promote quality of life and man's well-being.

Keywords: Landscape, Ethical living, Democratic participation, Quality of life, Well-being.

Introduction

The history of the landscape is the history of its transformations produced by interacting abiotic and biotic processes, and it is the history of the changes produced by human habitation. Man lives a landscape that is partly the result of his modifications. A destructive living of the landscape fabric produces material, ethical and spiritual degradation in man, and has a negative impact on his quality of life. Ethical living is the only way to enhance and protect the biological and cultural richness of the landscape and thus make a decisive contribution to the quality of living and human wellbeing. Ethical living requires the active and shared participation of inhabitants in the processes of protection, transformation, and management of the landscape. This participation, in turn, needs to be fed by the ethics of living.

Through a phenomenological and hermeneutic pathway, I intend to highlight some fundamental structures of living and then to show that the active participation of the inhabitants, guided by the ethics of living, contributes to respecting the landscape,
promoting the quality of living and improving human wellbeing. In the second part, I aim to point out the practical-operational methods suitable for achieving these goals. I will identify them in those forms of participatory democracy and planning capable of integrating individual and collective interests in order to achieve shared objectives.

**Biological and cultural circularity between man and landscape**

The landscape includes a multitude of territorial, environmental, biological, historical and cultural elements which are so closely interconnected to constitute a web of interrelations. Man is not outside this web but is included as part of an infinite network of chemical, biological and cultural processes. Man lives the natural and cultural landscape and, by doing so, modifies and transforms it while being changed by it at the same time. Thus, the landscape is not there simply to be contemplated by man. Westerners have separated themselves from the landscape limiting it to a picture subject to aesthetic judgement. In this gnoseological and practical setting man has forgotten the ontological dimension of belonging to the environment. Man’s actions are interpreted as being external to nature and the landscape. This type of relationship has misrecognised the fact that man is also the result of the biological and cultural processes produced by the environment (Brugiatelli, 2020, pp 29-34).

The value of the landscape can not only be attributed to its visual and contemplative aspects or to what it offers from an aesthetic viewpoint. Originally, before being an object of contemplation, the landscape ties man to other living beings and material elements. Like man, all living creatures are involved in the landscape with each contributing to “making the landscape”, modifying it and, in turn, being changed by the landscape which they have contributed to modifying. Like other living parts, man transforms the landscape but with the difference that he changes it more rapidly with lasting consequences, on a global scale.

Environmental transformations are frequently the result of cultural interventions on the landscape. Man is not only living an environment-territory, but he is also living his own cultural products with which he moulds the landscape. From this perspective, the landscape is also the result of long and complex cultural interventions (Bonesio, 2002, p. 80).

**The ethos of living the landscape**

Living is specified as relations, or complex interactions. Interaction, rather than relations, because the latter is positioned on a unidirectional level while interaction comprises both activity and passivity, giving and receiving according to circular paths and feedback. Living is circularity with the biological and cultural elements where its ethical sense is fundamental. Living ethically leads to the realisation of a connected living which is integrated with the territory, the environment and the natural landscape (including territory and environment). Such living is a complex living, or “tied” (*complexus*) fabric together with the landscape, being a natural and cultural part of it. Therefore, living cannot fail to be openness. It builds itself and refers to itself
but, at the same time, in its openness it builds itself with respect to a set of abiotic, biological and cultural elements. From this point of view, living does not contrast the landscape, but it constitutes a continuity. Living is the product of man’s organisational activities, but such activity proves itself ethical if it is achieved openly and not separately from the abiotic, biotic and cultural context. Living acquires an ethical significance if established through complex interactions.

Originally Ethos also means dwelling, home. In a passage in Brief über den “Humanismus” (1976) Martin Heidegger speaks about ethos as living space, as a living place. In Mille plateaux, Gilles Deleuze and Pierre-Félix Guattari observe that “ethos is both dwelling and manner, country and style” (Deleuze-Guattari, 1987, p. 464). Thus, on the one hand, ethos refers to customs, habits and behaviour while, on the other hand, to living, dwelling, the living relations with the world, with the landscape and place (Venturi Ferriolo, 2002). Living made up of complex interactions reminds man of himself and to search for a sense in his living-inhabiting (Brugiatelli, 2017, pp. 63-64). This meaning is born of care, concern, consideration and regard towards the environment and landscape.

**Shared Living**

On a biological level living is positioned in the processes of utilisation, consumption and waste of resources. Responsible living is characterised by mindful use, recycling, re-use and renewable energy sources. Over the last century, the market, an abstract yet omnipresent entity, has led to the loss of status as inhabitants by transforming people into consumers. According to this model, a good citizen consumes a lot and diversifies consumption, which is promoted as an indicator of well-being. It is time, however, to give people back their status as inhabitants and to allow their well-being to coincide with the quality of their living. It is necessary to claim that the good citizen is someone who lives well in the landscape and possesses an ecological conscience and thereby acts responsibly taking care of the landscape and reducing the impact of his actions on the environment.

Shared living of the landscape also means participating and taking part in the discussion of projects, choices, decisions relating to the protection and changes to the landscape. Living can be interpreted as a political action in the sense that it is seen as exercising shared democracy. The ethical goal of the good life needs, therefore, to be based on the doctrine of a shared and planned democracy which, according to Hannah Arendt should be achieved by people able to identify common interests and to collaborate to transform them into global actions (Arendt, 1977, pp. 103-108). This idea of democracy is related to Ezio Manzini’s idea of planned democracy in Politiche del quotidiano (Manzini, 2018) in which he writes about the integration of individual and collective interests to achieve shared objectives.

The implementation of democratic practices through shared procedures and inclusive measures is doubtless fundamental for the protection of the distinctive and
characteristic features of the landscape and for decisions on responsible construction with regard to the environment and its cultural identity. This practice is necessary in order to raise collective awareness of living the landscape.

Knowledge and awareness, gained by the inhabitants of their living the landscape, are essential for the development of a democratic movement to protect and promote the environmental and landscape patrimony. Through the principal procedures of a shared democracy the inhabitants can implement various forms of mediation with the institutions to establish constructive channels of dialogue. Alternatively, they can activate initiatives or evaluate State proposals. The collective defence of the landscape often contrasts economic interests making any form of dialogue difficult, if not impossible. Certainly, however, the confrontation between the opposing parts must not descend into any form of violence. When economic interests become the only criteria upon which a choice is made to realise certain works, awareness and conscience are not always sufficient to preserve, defend and enhance the landscape patrimony. Yet, neither is it possible to accept nor reject the construction of the necessary infrastructure for economic development. The defence of the landscape and economic interests should find agreement based on reasonable compromises which guarantee, on the one hand, the protection and enhancement of the landscape and, on the other, the possibility to realise works which are effectively useful to the community from an economic and social point of view and not advantageous for particular economic interests.

Planning and implementing integrated living through processes of democratic participation

The protection and enhancement of the landscape patrimony (nature and culture) does not exclude changes and innovations, such as the construction of infrastructure. Conservation for its own sake may endanger the enhancement of the landscape and the development of integrated living, which, as far as possible, respects the biological rhythms and ecosystems protecting the cultural patrimony. Innovating does not mean destroying when it clarifies the natural and cultural potential of a certain landscape. Knowledge and awareness of one’s landscape are fundamental to promote and realise works to trigger the potential of the landscape involving the institutions through means characteristic of an active democracy. If it is the institutions, public bodies or private firms that are promoting innovations, the inhabitants should be informed about the planned works and be made aware of the possible natural, social and economic effects. The risk analysis which certain works represent for the natural and cultural landscape, as well as the quality of life should be openly discussed. With constructive debate, the planned project could be modified in the light of observations put forward by a committee of local residents. Some large-scale building projects, which are perceived as a threat to their landscape and the quality of life often awaken the sense of belonging motivating the inhabitants to rediscover the natural and cultural richness of their territory.
A community can become the protagonist of a living integrated with the landscape through activities that enhance the resources, respect the biological cycles and ecosystems, promote and appreciate the natural and cultural patrimony (Capra, 1982). A shared democracy of the landscape possesses the potential to activate a network of strengths, competencies, knowledge and capabilities able to regenerate the territory, the environment and the landscape. This can be done by planning economic activities which can generate both material and spiritual wealth with limited environmental impact.

**Final considerations**

The safeguard and protection of the landscape patrimony does not mean scarce economic development. To the contrary. Economic activities, such as organic agriculture, produce quality products because they optimise the resources of the territory and have a low environmental impact. Organic farming bonds with many other economic activities such as eco-tourism, commerce, handicrafts and small industry. Such low environmental impact activities can be supported by a transport system fuelled by renewable energy sources. In this way a network of interacting activities is established forming an integral part of the landscape. Therefore, the landscape is no longer considered a commodity.

Alberto Magnaghi defines this network of activities integrated with the territory and landscape as “multi-faceted” made up of: new-farmers, new-artisans (traditional, innovative, digital), environmental and cultural associations, movements focusing on local and global issues (against climate change, for democracy and human rights), youth groups, inhabitants in the peripheries promoting self-governing living experiences, ethnic movements, mutual help associations, cooperatives with ethical, fair, environmental and social aims, groups promoting self-sufficient consumers, critical consumption and fair purchase, fair trade etc. (Magnaghi, 2020, p. 217). Such activities, through common and shared planning channels, gradually enable communities to reclaim their territory, landscape, knowledge and practices.

Besides, they promote and enhance the environmental and landscape resources to such an extent as to positively influence the quality of living which fosters complex relationships with the landscape. In order to boost such processes, forms of shared and planned democracy, which can integrate individual and collective interests to realise shared objectives, are needed. These shared objectives are attainable by means of choices, actions, and activities based on knowledge, awareness and shared responsibility translated into practices through democratic channels. Therefore, it is a matter of promoting ethical and integrated living characterised by: 1. an *ethos* which differentiates it from other types of living; 2. actions dictated by care, concern, involvement and responsibility with regard to the landscape (Mortari, 2020, pp. 145-150); 3. an open and welcoming structure towards diverse cultures that is capable of recognising the cultural identities to which it contributes to producing; 4. enhancing the landscape together with the growth of man’s well-being.
References


