



Structured Abstracts of 'Society in a Changing Labour Market and Economic Environment: Trends, Challenges, Responses' session

Motherhood and the Child Penalty: Gendered Consequences in the Labour Market – A Systematic Literature Review Based on PRISMA Method

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Background and introduction: Gender inequality in the labour market remains a persistent global issue, particularly for women who become mothers. The "child penalty" refers to the economic and professional disadvantages women often experience following childbirth, such as wage gaps, reduced employment opportunities, and slower career advancement. These penalties are influenced by institutional, cultural, and occupational factors and are especially pronounced in sectors with high female representation, such as healthcare and academia.

Objective: This study systematically examines how motherhood affects women's labour market outcomes and identifies key mechanisms and patterns behind the child penalty. The goal is to map existing knowledge, synthesize findings, and suggest policy and academic discourse directions.

Methodology: The research follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology. A structured search was conducted in Scopus and other major academic databases using predefined keywords ("motherhood," "child penalty," "female"). After screening and eligibility assessment, 50 peer-reviewed articles were included in the final analysis. The selection process and data extraction followed strict inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure transparency and reproducibility.

Results: The review confirms the widespread existence of the child penalty across various countries and professional fields. The most affected are highly educated women in demanding careers with limited flexibility and parental support policies. Factors influencing the penalty include inadequate maternity leave, rigid work structures, and persistent gender norms. Several studies also highlight long-term consequences such as reduced retirement savings and underrepresentation in leadership roles.

Conclusions: The child penalty is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that reinforces gender inequality in the workforce. Although policy interventions have made some progress, the structural barriers facing mothers remain significant. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts at institutional, governmental, and societal levels.

Limitations and future research directions: The study is limited by language (only English sources are included), access to full-text articles, and the heterogeneity of national labour policies. Future research should include longitudinal studies and comparative analyses across different socio-economic contexts. There is also a need for a deeper exploration of intersectionality—how race, class, and marital status interact with motherhood and labour market outcomes.

Keywords: motherhood, child penalty, PRISMA, gender inequality, labour market, female



Hungary's bilateral investment and trade relations with the Republic of Korea: a systematic literature review

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Background and introduction: The role of Asian partner countries in Hungary's foreign trade and FDI relations has increased thanks to the Opening to the East policy announced in 2012. Among them, the Republic of Korea (otherwise known as South Korea) stands out, which was the largest foreign investor in our country in 2019, 2021 and 2022, and is also among the top ten most important partner countries in terms of imports in our foreign trade. The aim of the research is to map the capital investment and trade relations of these two countries based on the literature published on the subject so far.

Objective: The study seeks to answer the following research question: how do relevant publications published between 2006 and 2024 present the foreign economic relations of Hungary and the Republic of Korea, specifically focusing on trade and foreign direct investment? The aim is to map out what research has been conducted on the topic in the international literature so far and to see what results they have reached, thereby creating a general picture of the development of Hungarian-South Korean bilateral economic relations in the above referred period.

Methodology: The systematic literature review was conducted following the PRISMA principles, which provide an appropriate framework for conducting this type of research. Relevant literature was identified by searching ScienceDirect, Scopus and Google Scholar databases. The PEO framework was used for screening the literature. The PEO framework divides the relevant search terms into three larger units: population (P), exposure (E) and outcome (O). The chosen terms included variants of Hungary, South Korea, relations, foreign direct investment and trade. After the initial search, the results had to be further narrowed down based on certain criteria. For example, the publications should be freely accessible, written in English and between 2006 and 2024, should be related to the fields of Social Sciences, Business and Management, and should also be related to the topic of the research question. In addition, studies that were included in multiple databases had to be filtered out to avoid duplication.

Results: By running the search query composed of the search terms, 45971 publications were found in the ScienceDirect database, 874 in the Scopus database, and 20900 in the Google Scholar database. After applying the above mentioned criteria, a total of 96 relevant literature was screened out from the three databases based on the titles and abstracts of the various publications.

Conclusions: Based on the preliminary results, it can be stated that the topic seems to be quite under-researched in international literature. There seems to be only a few publications that specifically deal with Hungarian-South Korean FDI and trade relations, at least in English, in the examined databases, and along the given search terms. In many cases, information about this relationship can be found in publications that deal with South Korean relations more in the context of the Visegrád Four, the CEE region, or the EU. With a few exceptions, publications that specifically deal with Hungarian-South Korean relations are typically research published in English by Hungarian researchers.

Limitations and future research directions: The results were selected and analyzed based on the screening criteria given above. Focusing on other databases and analyzing studies written in other languages could further refine the results. In addition, the search terms used during the initial screening also limited the applicable results. In future research, it would be worthwhile to further refine the picture by conducting a systematic literature review in Hungarian databases (especially MTMT) and also in South Korean databases.

Keywords: Hungary, South Korea, bilateral relations, foreign direct investment, trade, systematic literature review

Innovation- and platform based internationalisation of SMEs in the Central and Eastern European countries

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Background and introduction: The internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries is increasingly shaped by innovation-driven strategies and digital platform integration. This study explores how SMEs leverage technological advancements and digital ecosystems to expand beyond domestic markets, overcoming traditional resource constraints and institutional barriers.

Objective: We focus on the qualitative features of internationalisation. By analysing key drivers such as innovation capabilities, platform-based business models, and supportive policy frameworks, we identify patterns that enable competitive international market entry of the relevant SMEs.

Methodology: Our methodology relies on semistructured interviews with SME-owners/managers of ten firms and detailed company case studies based on the interviews and publicly available data. We carried out a case study level comparison of the interview responses.

Results: The findings highlight that SMEs in CEE countries benefit from digital platforms that reduce transaction costs, facilitate cross-border collaboration, and enhance scalability. Moreover, the role of innovation in product differentiation and process efficiency is crucial in sustaining global competitiveness. Policy implications suggest that fostering digital infrastructure and innovation-friendly environments can accelerate SME internationalization.

Conclusions: The study contributes to the broader discourse on internationalisation of firms and digital transformation by offering insights into the strategic pathways CEE-based SMEs adopt in international markets.

Limitations and future research directions: Limitations include the relatively small sample of Hungarian SMEs, thus further research is aimed at extending the sample and maybe comparing the Hungarian situation with those of other countries of the Central and eastern European region (most probably Slovakia, Czechia, Romania and Poland).

Keywords: small and medium sized enterprises, innovation, internationalisation

The Role of Microfinance in Women's Empowerment: A Bibliometric Review

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Background and introduction: Over the past few decades, women's empowerment through microfinance has been recognized as a strategic tool for poverty reduction, gender equality, and inclusive development. As a result, it has become a critical focus for scholars in the fields of development and financial inclusion research.

Objective: This study aims to assess, evaluate, and synthesize past, current, and future trends and research trajectories in the field of microfinance and women's empowerment by extracting bibliographic metadata from the Web of Science and Scopus databases.

Methodology: This study employs a bibliometric analysis of 455 scholarly documents published between 1996 and 2024.

Results: The results indicate an annual publishing growth rate of 14.18%, underscoring the rising academic interest in the subject. India excels in research output, although the United Kingdom and South Africa demonstrate the greatest citation impact, signifying substantial academic influence. Emory University (USA), the University of Liverpool (UK), and the University of Oxford (UK) are prominent contributing institutions.

Conclusions: The international collaboration rate of 23.08% signifies an expanding worldwide research network in this domain. The co-occurrence network method visually illustrates the evolution of the research domain, emphasizing important subject themes including microfinance and poverty alleviation, gender equality and health, financial inclusion and policy, and empowerment within rural credit initiatives.

Limitations and future research directions: The limitation with this study is that it only uses quantitative data, including citation metrics, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence, which are based on Biblioshiny and VOSviewer. This study addresses the gap by delineating the evolution of significant research areas. The findings may inform future research and assist policymakers, NGOs, and development organizations in the formulation of effective, evidence-based microfinance programs.

Keywords: Microfinance; Women's Empowerment; Gender Equality; Financial Inclusion; Bibliometric Analysis



Active Ageing Index and the social and economic role of ageing entrepreneurship in sustainable rural development

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Background and introduction: The active economic participation of older people has great social and economic potential, while also having a positive impact at individual level. Encouraging them to become entrepreneurs can be both a response to the demographic crisis caused by youth emigration, the problem of economic disempowerment - which is leading to the increasing marginalisation of rural areas - and the strengthening of community-based enterprises as the basis for a more sustainable and inclusive economic vision.

Objective: According to the concept underlying the Active Ageing Index (AAI), active ageing is not only about participation in the labour market, but also about voluntary activities, social relations, independent living and health maintenance. The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of supporting older people to become entrepreneurs on strengthening AAI and on macro- and micro-level development, especially in rural areas facing ageing and depopulation.

Methodology: In this research I will present the Active Ageing Index based on reports from 2012, 2016 and 2018, with a focus on the cluster including Hungary. Based on article analyses and interviews with experts involved in its preparation, I will present the WellOSyst 2024 programme and SilverLab plan for Székesfehérvár, which calculated the city's Active Ageing Index and developed an action plan to increase the AAI by 2 percentage points in 2 years.

Results: Drawing on data and interviews, I will show the potential to increase the value of AAI by encouraging older people to become entrepreneurs, which is not only a means of self-employment but also has a positive impact on all dimensions of AAI: promoting social participation, health maintenance and increasing the use of information and technology tools. The research will also look at how local authorities can support older people to become entrepreneurs.

Conclusions: The AAI is a complex set of indicators that assesses the activity of the ageing population along four main dimensions: employment, social participation, independent, healthy and secure living, and an environment that supports active ageing. The employment dimension is central to the index, as it has a direct impact on dimensions 2 and 3. The local governments can play a key role in ensuring that dimension 4, the supportive environment, by supporting older people to become entrepreneurs.

Limitations and future research directions: Further research should include a questionnaire survey to examine the motivation, attitudes, knowledge, skills and willingness of older people to start a business. How any concerns, fears and risks can be addressed, including by setting up social, community enterprises and cooperatives. How local authorities, adult education institutions, Universities, NGOs and existing businesses and professional organisations can work together in this field.

Keywords: Active Aging Index, Silver Economy, Entrepreneurship in the Silver Age, Sustainable rural development



LABOR MARKET IMPLICATIONS OF THE SHIFT FROM FOSSIL FUELS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Background and introduction: The global shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy is transforming labor markets, raising questions about job creation, workforce displacement, and the effectiveness of reskilling efforts. This study aims to assess the labor market implications of the energy transition through a systematic literature review, identifying key trends, regional disparities, and policy responses that support a just and inclusive shift to sustainable energy systems.

Objective: The objective of this research is to systematically review existing literature on the labor market impacts of the global energy transition, focusing on job creation, employment shifts across sectors, and socioeconomic challenges. It aims to identify key factors influencing employment outcomes and policy measures that support a just and inclusive workforce transformation during the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Methodology: This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to analyze research on labor market effects of the energy transition. It examines peer-reviewed articles focusing on job creation, sectoral employment shifts, and social challenges linked to decarbonization. The review synthesizes findings across regions and industries, highlighting workforce impacts and policy responses to support skill development and equitable employment outcomes.

Results: The review finds that renewable energy adoption leads to net job gains, especially in solar, wind, and hydropower sectors, benefiting marginalized groups like workers with disabilities. However, job gains vary by region and industry, with coal-dependent areas facing displacement risks. Key challenges include skill mismatches, informal employment, and gender disparities. Effective policies such as carbon pricing and skills training improve outcomes but gaps remain in achieving full labor market b

Conclusions: The study concludes that the energy transition offers significant job creation opportunities but requires tailored, inclusive policies to address regional disparities and workforce challenges. Aligning education and training with evolving energy needs and implementing effective policy tools are critical for a just transition. Further research is needed on underexplored technologies and regions to fully realize sustainable, equitable labor market outcomes in the shift to renewable energy.

Limitations and future research directions: The study is limited by reliance on existing literature, which may underrepresent emerging technologies and regions. Variability in data quality and scope across sources affects comparability. Future research should explore labor impacts in less-studied renewable sectors and geographies, address informal and gendered employment dynamics, and evaluate long-term policy effectiveness to better inform inclusive and adaptive workforce strategies during the energy transition.

Keywords: Energy transition, labor market institutions, employment, Renewable energy, Systematic Literature Review.

The educational structure of the population and its impact on spatial inequalities in household incomes and the working poor in Bulgaria

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Background and introduction: Currently, the rise of the working poor and the deepening wealth gap generate serious challenges to socioeconomic development, and these issues are closely linked to extensive European research on spatial inequalities and labor market segmentation. Examining the impact of the educational structure on poverty and incomes of the population, the paper builds on prior studies in Bulgaria and abroad, applying a strong spatial approach and a variety of indicators (demographic, economic, and social).

Objective: The study aims to explore the impact of the educational structure of the population, respectively, the labor force, on the evolution of inequalities and spatial differences in household income, as well as the number and share of working poor in the country's regions at the NUTS 3 level.

Methodology: The study is based on analyzing data from the National Statistical Institute and the Employment Agency of Bulgaria, as well as legislative documents; statistical analysis (correlation and cluster analysis) of empirical data on indicators characterizing the age and educational structure of the population, indicators of poverty and social inclusion, and the Gini coefficient.

Results: Statistical analysis (5 clusters and the correlation values) reveals that educational disparities impact the spatial polarization in incomes and labor markets in NUTS 3 regions of Bulgaria. The capital district stands out as the country's economic and educational hub, but at the cost of high inequality (Gini index: 39.3, 2024) and poverty rate. Conversely, 9 out of 14 regions in Northern Bulgaria have high unemployment and deprivation rates due to low educational attainment and R&D capacity.

Conclusions: The widening of economic, social, and demographic disparities in Bulgaria has been an intensifying process in recent years, and, therefore, the areas in the country with a high share of the population living below the poverty line are expanding. Economic activities with low added value and low labor productivity result in an increase in the nominal number of working poor and a decrease in the standard of living for a significant part of the population in Bulgaria.

Limitations and future research directions: The study limitations are predominantly related to the lack of information at a lower spatial level. Future research will elucidate the regional focus aimed at establishing the relationship between the educational attainment of the population and the vocational profile of schools within specific territorial units, on the one hand, and the economic activities and the qualification of the labor force, on the other.

Keywords: working poor, educational structure of the population, regional disparities, household income



How organic farming can become a driver of sustainability, and how its study reveals the (un-) consistency of sustainability indicators and strategies

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Background and introduction: It is now a triviality that the question of global sustainability will determine the outcome of the 21st century, and all further history of humanity. And besides its utmost importance, this is by far the largest management problem humanity has ever faced. Yet (or as a consequence), not only an adequate global answer to this question, but a global effort or motivation for it is far from reality.

Objective: As a result, research on sustainability management methods, strategies and other sustainability governance techniques should pay increased attention to forerunner economic sectors and trends in social change.

Methodology: By analyzing secondary data, we search for indicators and causes of growth, especially massive growth in the organic farming sector; as well as patterns of its propagation and its connection with other sustainability trends beyond agriculture. We also analyse similarities and differences in organic farming sectors of different regions, in order to understand which factors are crucial, and which are indifferent in shaping a more rapidly extending and economically successful organic agriculture.

Results: In this paper, we study organic farming as such a forerunner, and potential initiator of other parts of sustainability transition in neighbouring sectors, socioeconomic structures and activities. The results are ambiguous; the main strength of organic farming in this role remains being a promoter of sustainability in consumeristic settings. Ambiguities about UN SDG's have been found and described as well.

Conclusions: We draw conclusions as for the main identifiable indicators of future prospects in organic farming, the connection between organic farming prosperity and general sustainability, the most efficient channels of spreading sustainability-oriented thinking to other socioeconomic sectors, etc. The main conclusion is that policymakers have to stress sustainability as a systematic feature much more in the organic industry.

Limitations and future research directions: Sparsity of quality data, the coarse regional and sectorial resolution, as well as the diversity of underlying causalities may hinder drawing the results, but coarse results are already able to be used for certain strategic analysis and planning.

Keywords: organic farming, global sustainability, sustainability transition, sustainable agriculture, sustainability patterns, UN SDG's



Perceptions of Social Equality and Emigration Intentions Among University Students in Albania

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Background and introduction: Widespread perceptions of inequality can shape young people's outlook on their future, including the decision to emigrate. In Albania, where socioeconomic disparities and institutional distrust persist, this study examines how university students' perceptions of social equality influence their intentions to emigrate. We ask: Do perceived inequalities drive emigration aspirations among educated youth?

Objective: This study aims to analyze the relationship between university students' perceptions of social equality and their intentions to emigrate from Albania. It seeks to determine whether perceived social and institutional inequalities significantly influence students' migration aspirations, while accounting for demographic and socioeconomic factors.

Methodology: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among university students across major Albanian institutions. The questionnaire measured perceptions of social equality, emigration intentions, and demographic variables. Data were analyzed using logistic regression to assess associations between perceived inequality and migration intent, controlling for socioeconomic and academic factors.

Results: Students perceiving higher levels of social inequality were significantly more likely to express intentions to emigrate (OR = 2.15, $p < .01$). Emigration intent was also higher among those reporting low trust in public institutions. Socioeconomic background and field of study moderated these relationships, with social science students showing the strongest effects.

Conclusions: Findings suggest that perceptions of social inequality significantly shape emigration intentions among Albanian university students. Addressing perceived injustice and institutional distrust may be crucial to mitigating youth brain drain. The study highlights the need for policies that foster social inclusion and restore confidence in domestic opportunities.

Limitations and future research directions: The study relies on self-reported data and a cross-sectional design, limiting causal inference. The sample may not capture students from all geographic or institutional backgrounds. Future research should use longitudinal methods and include qualitative insights to explore how perceptions evolve over time and influence actual migration behavior.

Keywords: Social equality, Migration intentions, University students, Albania, Inequality of Opportunity