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# **Preface: Understanding how intellectual capital can accelerate the recovery of the global health crisis and economic crisis**

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## **1 Introduction**

The global health crisis derived from coronavirus outbreak has caused vast disruption in societies and economies around the world. This new scenario poses unprecedented challenges, uncertainties and risks for the lives and livelihoods of citizens as well as for economies and societies. Governments need to lead the way to quickly revert the negative socio-economic impact of the health crisis and to work towards the development of inclusive and sustainable societies and economies. Governments and companies know they need to cooperate to be greener and more digital to face the challenges of this new disruptive scenario.

The pandemic has exacerbated existing problems in our societies and economies. In recent years, many young people face problems to access the labour market (Lytras and Ordóñez de Pablos, 2008; Zhang et al., 2012). This problem is now even bigger with the hardly hit economies around the world. Additionally, in the last years, higher education institutions observe the importance of monitoring the emerging needs of labour markets and respond quickly offering the best education and training that provided students with the skills, competences and tools to navigate in the digital economy and broaden their horizons. Educational policies, reforms and institutions have a key role in developing more inclusive, cohesive and competitive countries and regions (European Commission, 2020a). Higher education needs to be more connected to the society in order to offer opportunities for underrepresented and disadvantaged students to access university and create valuable human capital.

In the case of Europe, the Digital Education Action Plan (2021–2027) proposed by the European Commission highlights the importance of working towards a stronger cooperation at European level to make education systems fit for the digital economy and society. This plan has two strategic priorities:

- 1 “fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem
- 2 enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation” (European Commission, 2020b).

The vision of the European Union for education includes mastering of digital competences and transversal skills, fostering multilingualism, and promoting learning mobility and cooperation (European Commission, 2020c).

Information technologies play a vital role in finding solutions to coronavirus pandemic and economic damages. Information technologies can improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of health issues, not only covid-related health problems (Chui et al., 2017; Lytras et al., 2009). During the covid-19 crisis, *information technologies* were used at an unprecedented scale and helped students, teachers and workers to continue with their activities remotely during the lockdown in 2020 and will be key in the coming years.

Research in the field of intellectual capital, higher education, information technologies and green innovation can provide new ideas and insights for the recovery of economies in the coming months. This issue of the *International Journal of Learning and Intellectual Capital* will explore new studies on these topics.

## 2 Contents of the issue

The first issue of 2021 presents a collection of five papers that explores some key topics for the competitive advantage of companies and economies, especially in during covid-19 and post-covid-19 scenarios. Human capital, higher education, intellectual capital and green capital are strategic pillars for replying to the challenges of the global health crisis and trigger economic recovery fastly. The collection of papers is focused on Czech Republic, Indonesia, India, Brazil and Portugal.

The first paper of the issue, titled ‘Partnership between the employer and the staff as a vital factor for knowledge sharing’ by Benyahya and Matošková states that:

“Intra-organisational knowledge sharing has a significant influence on performance of organisations. Some researchers point out that knowledge sharing can be facilitated by organisational culture. This study examined which characteristics of organisational culture have positive impacts on knowledge sharing. A quantitative research with opinion-based questionnaires was applied. The findings indicated so-called knowledge sharing culture had a significant positive effect on the extent of knowledge sharing in the organisation. Four dimensions of knowledge sharing culture were suggested: partnership between the employer and the staff, cooperation among employees, user-friendliness of the used information system, and employees’ organisational commitment. All of them were moderate-significantly related to knowledge sharing. However, only partnership between the employer and the staff predicted knowledge sharing in the organisation. The results indicate that in the process of building knowledge sharing culture, partnership with the staff including support for employees from management, fairness and communication is essential.”

The second paper, titled ‘The role of green intellectual capital and green innovation on competitive advantage of SMEs’ by Anik and Sulistyopresents the results of a study that explores:

“The competitive advantage between the resource-based view approach and the green concept in products and processes (green innovation), especially in SMEs. The sample used was 100 SMEs actors in Indonesia, with a proportional sampling method. This study proved that the competitive advantage of SMEs in

Indonesia can be reached by increasing intellectual capital, environmental ethics and green innovation holistically. The ability of companies to manage environmentally oriented human resources in their operating systems will improve the performance of SMEs and can further create competitive advantage.”

Next paper of the issue titled ‘Intellectual capital and intellectual imperatives of higher education sector: an emerging economy perspective’ by Chatterji and Kiran proposes that:

“One in every four graduates of the world will be the product of Indian higher education system by the year 2030. Against the backdrop of the report issued by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), this study aims to explore the effect of university intellectual capital on intellectual imperatives of the Indian higher education. Structural equation modelling was tested on 590 university faculty members to gauge the influence of university intellectual capital on the intellectual imperatives of the higher education sector identified in the report. Results revealed that intellectual capital strongly influences intellectual imperatives. Research conducive policies, employee-oriented practices, equal employment opportunities, stakeholder orientation and networking emerged as the earmarks of university intellectual capital. The study has international implications and provides policymakers and practitioners a feasible model to leverage university intellectual capital to create a situation conducive to enhance university performance.”

The fourth paper of the issue, titled ‘Strategic factors of network organisations and their influence on inter-organisational learning’ by Filho, Olave and Barreto studies:

“The influence of strategic factors on inter-organizational learning in a local productive arrangement (LPA) network. Specifically, the apparel LPA located in the city of Santa Cruz do Capibaribe, Pernambuco – Brazil was studied, mainly composed of micro and small enterprises (MSEs). For this, the quantitative survey method was used, with a sample of 301 respondents, analysed through the modeling of structural equations of the PLS type. The results demonstrate a second-order model, due to the complexity of inter-organizational learning, with measurement and structural validation. This model shows inter-organizational learning in this type of network being influenced only by the trust factor and the spatial proximity existing between the participating MSEs.”

The last paper of the issue is titled ‘Intellectual capital and financial performance: evidence from Portuguese banks’ by Neves and Proença. The authors want to:

“Measure the intellectual capital and to analyse its relationship with the financial performance for 12 Portuguese banks between 2009 and 2016. To achieve this aim, we have used a panels dynamic models, where the value-added intellectual coefficient (VAIC) model measures the intellectual capital, allowing to conclude that this capital and its components human, structural and relational influence the three proxies used for financial performance return on equity, return on assets and net interest margin. Our results point out that intellectual capital components influence the Portuguese banks performance, and for this reason should be a bet on future strategic decisions. Banks manage intellectual capital to improve their financial performance, achieving the goals of the interested parties.”

### 3 Future publication agenda of the journal

Due to the even more strategic importance of human capital in coronavirus crisis and post-covid-19 scenario, the need of building higher institutions more inclusive and connected to societies, and the role of technologies in enhancing skills and competences for digital transformation, we will edit special issues on these priority topics. Education and healthcare sectors will especially focus our attention.

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