



CLaRE, Campus 02, and the Regional Centre of Expertise Cymru (Resilient communities)

Conference theme: *Sustainability, business, and local economic development*

2nd Annual Conference – July 2023

Editorial

Welcome to the second annual Centre for Creativity, Leadership and Regional Economies (CLaRE) and Regional Centres of Expertise (Cymru) Resilient Communities Conference held at the Aberystwyth Business School. We are delighted to welcome presenters and conference delegates from across the globe.

The conference has the following objectives:

- To provide opportunities for Aberystwyth Business School (and Aberystwyth University) staff: to share their research with School stakeholders and contribute to the culture of research and enterprise at the School.
- To complement the CLaRE Working Paper Journal and to generate activity/working papers to be published in the journal.
- To contribute to a REF evidence-based research culture, in particular to use the conference to develop potential REF case studies
- To provide opportunities for Aberystwyth Business School (and Aberystwyth University) research students to share their research, receive feedback and contribute to the culture of research at the School.
- To create opportunities for the application/implementation of Aberystwyth Business School and wider Aberystwyth University research and enterprise activity with industry

This year's conference includes contributions exploring leadership, the role of trust and power in relationships, marketing, the use of language in economic development, the circular economy in Wales, and local economic development, amongst others. Presentations are to be delivered from colleagues representing African, European and UK based universities.

The keynote speaker for this year's conference is Prof Etienne Nel (University of Otago), who will deliver a presentation entitled **'New Zealand's 'left behind places': State and community responses to persistent uneven development.'**

The papers delivered at this year's conference consider a wide variety of subject matter from the role of trust and power in relationships to the impact of Covid19 on high street regeneration, from the use of language in economic development to the technology transfer value chain in Ghana, and from an ethnographic approach to online marketing to the era of Industry 5.0. Finally, the Business School is delighted to welcome keynote speaker Professor Etienne Nel.

Conference proceedings

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Abstracts

University Technology Transfer Offices and the Role of Human Interaction in the Technology Transfer Value Chain in Ghana

Abdul-FatahiAbdulai (Department of Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development, Tamale Technical University, Ghana),
Lyndon Murphy(Aberystwyth Business School, Aberystwyth University),
Andrew Thomas(Aberystwyth Business School, Aberystwyth University),
Brychan Thomas (South Wales Business School, University of South Wales)

Keywords: technology transfer offices; innovation; structural equation modelling

Introduction

Research into formal and informal technology transfer between universities and industry in economical developed counties is well-documented. However, such studies are limited in developing economies. In the context of developing economies, this study analyses technology transfer offices' role in university technology transfer to Ghanaian firms. Informal mechanisms are incorporated as a moderating variable to explore the role of human interaction in the technology transfer value chain. In a cross-sectional survey in Ghana, using structural equation modelling with 245 firms, the findings identify a negative moderating effect of informal mechanisms on the effect of technology transfer offices on innovation performance in firms. The findings are of significance to universities and corporate bodies in economically developing nations such as Ghana. Policies to improve the effect of informal mechanisms of university technology transfer offices are proposed in developing economies.

The aim of this study is to contribute to the development of literature on the influence of university technology transfer offices on firm-level innovation in developing economies and to understand how informal mechanisms of technology transfer affect the functioning of TTOs increasing firm level innovation activity.

Background

Commercialization of intellectual property through TTOs has received much attention in practice and in the literature (Landry, 2012). For this reason, much has now been written about such bureaus at local and international levels (Tidd, 2009), where they engage university scientists in their research and assess market potential for their findings and breakthroughs (Junior et al, 2014). Essentially, administrators of TTOs search for prospective investors for a variety of agreements and licensing for university research outputs (Siegel et al, 2004). In fact, scholars still debate the use of the terms technology transfer and technology exchange between universities and industry, and while some are of them consider that technology exchange represents the process better, perhaps due to its multi-directional transmissions of technology between actors, the term technology transfer rather continues to dominate the literature (Markman et al, 2005).

Research approach

To achieve the aim of the research, this study is designed to use a structural equation modelling technique in a hypothesis test study to examine the relationship between the study variables. To do this, a cross-sectional survey questionnaire was constructed and distributed via email to 350 companies in Ghana. Companies were identified from standard databases that contained company names and brief company details that allowed the research team to identify in simple terms whether the company would be suitable for the study. As a result, 245 usable questionnaire returns were obtained and data collected using a stratified simple random sampling method to achieve a fair representative sample of data (Krippendorff, 2004).

The questionnaire was designed to obtain information based on the experiences and knowledge of respondents on forms of informal relationships their firms had and their engagement with TTOs in universities for technology transfer (Cooke et al, 2005).

Conclusion/implications

The issues of the influence of informal mechanisms of university technology transfer and TTOs have been found to have different effects on innovation performance in firms, according to the study findings. Of course, the two means of university technology transfer will therefore need different responses from stakeholders to understand and address the subjects pertaining to their significance in the national innovation system of Ghana. Primarily, the insignificance of informal means of technology transfer in getting university research to firms for innovation requires a joint effort of innovation management professionals and universities to work toward recognizing the value and role they can play in fostering innovation. Indeed, the free nature of some channels for university technology and easy access of university researchers as social change factors present a great deal of potential for firms. Particularly, small and financially weak firms require and depend on informal mechanisms for university technology, to gain and achieve innovation and to increase productivity (Tetteh and Essegbey, 2014). Without doubt, inventions are typically tedious and costly to create, and no firms should believe they can benefit fully from them without contributing their fair share of the cost.

Policies need to be designed to institute functional literacy and education for less-educated business owners and workshops and seminars to give confidence and increase the absorptive capacities of less-educated entrepreneurs in Ghana. This is believed to be able to strengthen their links with universities and bring expected results as found in more economically developed countries. It is believed that other countries in a similar situation could benefit from lessons learnt from these findings and recommendations. The study was limited to the ten administrative areas of the country, which could affect the generalizability. However, some urban centres were captured for data in an effort to achieve valid results. We therefore recommend further research that should capture the entire country of Ghana, achieving data more representative of the country.

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Critical Analysis of the interaction of Trust and Power in business collaboration based on multiple case studies with a view to improving practice

Stephen Bibby (Cardiff Metropolitan University) sbibby@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Key Words: Collaboration; Power; Trust,

Introduction

It is the contention of this research that collaboration is always a combination of both trust, the most frequently discussed and researched aspect, as well as the power in its various forms in business collaboration.

The aim of this research is to fill a gap in knowledge and practice by undertaking an empirical analysis of trust and power concurrently and to make recommendations through greater understanding to improve practice.

1. To research and understand from literature and to develop a framework of analysis of collaboration through the lenses of trust and power.
2. Empirically analyse the success of collaboration and the effect the interaction of power and trust have had on outcomes.
3. To draw conclusions and make recommendations as to whether an a priori understanding of trust and power positions before entering collaborations would improve outcomes.

Research Approach

South Wales contains a plethora of business collaboration in public, third sector and private companies and forms the basis of the research. Arguably, if the two forces of trust and power are at work together, they will consistently occur in all sectors and circumstances. Business collaborations were therefore identified through a mixture purposive sampling based on known contacts who had been active in business collaborations, Cardiff Metropolitan Business collaborations and through snowballing in Business LinkedIn. The research adopted a mixed method of questionnaire followed by semi structured interviews.

Discussion

Endorsing collaboration as a strategy, of the 18 projects, almost two thirds reported the objectives had been fully achieved whilst almost one third had partially achieved their objectives, only 1 not achieving the objectives at all. Projects were grouped into four types based on relative trust and power positions:

Group A – Power and no trust – collaboration was not found

Group B – Trust and power noted giving a mixture of outcome dependent upon the circumstances of the collaboration

Group C – No trust and no power collaborations not found

Group D – Trust only present, with power not dominant in any one partner, predominantly successful outcomes.

Conclusions/Implications

The most successful arrangement was to have trust across all participants and no dominance of power. This accords with much of the literature (Ansell, & Gash, 2012) (Huxham et al 2000). With respect to the relative trust positions, the overwhelming case for trust building as an essential part of any collaborative initiative was clear.

However, power was always resident in all projects, often, participants were not cogent of the source of power and cannot be ignored as a predeterminant of outcome. Often taken for granted, the source of power and how it is used is significant to the outcome.

When power is used by a dominant partner, usually for positive reasons to reinforce the objectives of the collaboration, organizations understand this. Organizations will return even if power has been used by the dominant partner and stressed the trust relationships as the wider commercial benefits outweigh not participating at all.

Only in extreme cases where partners did not fulfill their agreed commitments and the essential trust prerequisite has been broken, will partners find another way to achieve their objectives. Practitioners and organizations therefore need to identify the essential expectations that are agreed to be delivered before entering collaborations to avoid breaking trust.

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Identifying the Fit-for-Purpose Leadership for the Manufacturing Organizations in the Era of Industry 5.0

Diana Dcruz (Aberystwyth University)

Throughout history the industrial revolutions have occurred when profound changes in social structures and economic systems are brought about by the new technologies and novel ways of perceiving the world (Schwab, 2016). The initial three industrial revolutions were a result of mechanisation, electricity and IT, but the advent of Internet of Things and Services ushered in the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0) (Kagermann *et al.*, 2013). However, Saxena *et al* (2020) and Muller (2020) notes that the Industry 4.0 overlooks the importance of human-value dimensions, sustainability and social fairness and hence calls for a paradigm shift from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0 wherein the focus shifts from techno-deterministic rationale to human-deterministic rationale. "Industry 5.0 will be defined by re-found and widened purposefulness, going beyond producing goods and services for profit. The wider purpose constitutes three core elements: human-centricity, sustainability, and resilience" (Breque *et al.*, 2021, p.13). Moreover, Industry 5.0 is to be seen as an evolution or logical continuation of Industry 4.0 and so it is neither an alternative nor a replacement of Industry 4.0 (Muller, 2020).

Along with each industrial revolution, the capabilities of technology have evolved, and it has not only changed the dynamics of human and machine interaction, but it has also changed the demands of work environment. Thus, to address the needs of changing work environment, the notion of leadership has also evolved with each industrial revolution. For instance, in Industry 3.0, the electronics & ICT increased the need for knowledge workers, and it ushered in the transformational leadership behaviour (Kelly, 2019). Alternatively, in Industry 4.0, the Cyber-Physical Systems, and the supporting technologies demand for a digital leadership wherein the focus of the leader should be on utilizing the digital assets of the organization to improve business performance (Kelly, 2019 and Durmaz & Hawrami, 2022).

However, with the shift towards Industry 5.0, businesses would have to combine consistency and speed of collaborative machines with resourcefulness and creativity of humans for the mutual benefit of industry and workforce (Breque *et al.*, 2021, Muller, 2020 and Maddikunta *et al.*, 2022). Hence in Industry 5.0, machines will be considered as collaborators and not a competition to humans and this changes the dynamics of future work environment. Additionally, one of the main concerns in Industry 5.0 will be achieving synergy between humans and autonomous machines (intelligent agents capable of collaborating with humans at same workplace and at the same time) (Nahavandi, 2019).

Thus, in Industry 5.0, with machines as co-workers, human leaders will have to manage both human and machine subordinates to achieve a synergy at workplace. This calls for a change in the traditional mechanisms of leadership, but the leadership research has not yet accounted for human leaders leading both human agents and machine agents in a collaborative work environment. To address this gap there is a need to explore the notion of next generation leadership which can be termed as Leadership 5.0 to denote organizational leadership that leads human & machine agents in the collaborative environment that is expected in the era of Industry 5.0 in the manufacturing industries in the UK.

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Perceptions of Staff in Venues in Wales Regarding VIP/Hospitality Event Packages and Consumers

Jonathan Fry (Aberystwyth University)

This paper focuses on the perceptions of venue staff in Wales about VIP/Hospitality event packages and consumers. A range of venues are represented including an arts centre, rugby stadium and multi-purpose arena. The venues also represent a variety of types of entertainment and sports events. Some of the key themes that emerged from the interviews with representatives from the events industry (n=18) were demographics, customer purchase behaviour, ticket pricing, transparency of face-value tickets, phrasing when promoting packages, co-creation and economic impacts. There will also be a discussion of the model of event mis-marketing.

Evaluation of a British Council sponsored regional economic development programme in Uzbekistan which aimed to develop entrepreneurial skills amongst university students involved in the creative industries

Chris Lane (London Metropolitan University) c.lane@londonmet.ac.uk, Jamilya Gulyamova (British Council, Uzbekistan), Victoria Levinskaya (British Management University, Uzbekistan), Gerald Lidstone (Goldsmiths University), John Newbiggin (Goldsmiths University), Abbos Utkirov (Westminster International University, Uzbekistan)

Key words

Participatory development, international cooperation, economic development, entrepreneurship, university students, Central Asia.

Introduction – purpose of paper / objectives

This article presents an account of a British Council international development programme – Creative Spark - in Uzbekistan. The aim of the programme was to align closely with Uzbekistan national policy on economic development in the cultural industries sector, entrepreneurship education and a more liberal approach to regulation of universities. The focus of the programme was partnership working between UK Universities and Uzbekistan Universities with the aim of developing increased awareness of the potential of the creative economy and entrepreneurship skills to empower a new generation of young entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the programme aimed to address social inequalities through the stimulation of regional economic development, the creation of new businesses and a strong entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Relevant background information/context

The authors begin with an overview of the regional policy and economic context in Uzbekistan, especially in the creative economy and considers the impact of government and NGO interventions over the last seven years, a period which has been characterised by significant reform.

Research approach e.g. primary research methods utilised, desk based research

Methodologically, the study draws on testimonies drawn from a writing retreat project that was held at the conclusion of the programme and brought together a range of industry and university stakeholders including staff and students. The focus of this summative project was to gather and collect views about key challenges and gaps in provision in order to build capacity in the creative economy and develop regional sustainability. Quantitative and qualitative research based on questionnaires completed by project participants was also utilised.

Discussion (including results where appropriate)

The article goes on to explore the nature of partnership working under the British Council's Creative Spark programme and the participatory nature of the collaborations between UK and Uzbekistan's higher education institutions that emerged during a five year period between 2018 and 2022.

The authors then present an analysis of Creative Spark's objectives by considering the intersection of evaluation methods such as the theory of change principles that underpinned the inception of the program as well as considering a cost benefit analysis and wider evaluative techniques.

The article considers the effect the programme has had on the local economy and the influence on policy and regional economic development that has been achieved. It also investigates the outcomes of the programme in terms of curriculum change in universities, the numbers of social enterprises and startups that have emerged from the programme and the type of industries that have been supported.

Conclusions/implications

The article concludes by considering potential lessons that can be learned from the programme and considers the wider international context for initiatives that target development of the creative economy and the growth of entrepreneurship capacity. It highlights the needs for ongoing capacity-building and strong international NGO, university and business partnerships in order to accelerate the economic and social impact of the cultural industries.

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Implementing circular economy: Experience from South Wales

Zheng Liu (Cardiff Metropolitan University) zliu@cardiffmet.ac.uk, Nick Clifton (Cardiff Metropolitan University), Homeira Faqdani (Cardiff Metropolitan University), Gary Walpole (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

Keywords: Circular Economy, Sustainability-Oriented Innovation, Innovation

Purpose/ Research Question:

With sustainability orientation and opportunities provided to economic growth, the circular economy is much promoted by the Welsh government, which has planned to be world-leading in reducing, reusing, and repairing. There is evidence of efforts being made to change industry practice with innovation happening in terms of technology, product, and business model. However, such transformation faces challenges: the understanding and priorities of circular economy vary from business to business; barriers exist in terms of mindset changing and technology choices; for SMEs, there is no standard framework to follow. Thus, this paper explores the industry practice ongoing in Wales, aiming to outline the activities and processes during the circular economy implementation. Practically, it develops a process-based model, supporting organisations to reduce their carbon footprint whilst moving to a circular economy.

Literature Review:

Literature review concerns sustainability-oriented innovation (Liu and Stephens, 2019; Shi et al., 2021), dynamics of open innovation (Yun, 2015) and circular economy. Specifically, circular economy “*aims to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits. It entails gradually decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, and designing waste out of the system. Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model builds economic, natural, and social capital*”, circular economy is based on three principles: 1) Design out waste and pollution, 2) Keep products and materials in use, 3) Regenerate natural system” (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2020). In addition, resource coordination, product and process redesign, industry symbiosis can help companies to rethink about their business model and value chain, achieving more efficiency and effectiveness.

Methodology:

As this topic is an ongoing issue underexplored, theory building approach is adopted through case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). In particular, we engage with five organisations in Wales across manufacturing and service sectors. They all demonstrate successful transformation or implementation of the circular economy. Semi-structured interview is the main method, in combination with secondary document review ensure the data triangulation (Yin, 2003).

Findings and Discussion:

Through within-case and cross-case analysis, we identify a general process of circular economy implementation with main stages and details of activities. We further highlight the key themes of internal process, local partnership, learning and evolving, as well as the engagement with wider business ecosystem.

Conclusion:

This paper explores circular economy implementation process through multiple case studies in Wales. While the study mainly contributes to circular economy and sustainability-oriented innovation theories, it also provides practical implications. Companies can understand better of their competence development, innovation process and collaboration opportunities during the circular economy transformation. Meanwhile, deeper capturing of innovation mechanism will also help policy makers to develop appropriate support.

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Conceptions of Entrepreneurship Among University Students

Sizwe Mkwanazi (University of Oxford) sizwe.mkwanazi@education.ox.ac.uk

Keywords: Higher Education, Livelihoods, Students, Entrepreneurship and Policy

What different conceptualisations of entrepreneurship do South African university students articulate, how do these relate to their own livelihood strategies, and how do they differ from those promoted by universities and policymakers? To address these questions, this dissertation is a case study of a South African university with approximately 80% of enrolled students from low-income backgrounds. The design includes analysis of the National Development Plan 2030 and National Youth Policies 2015/2020–2030 to understand the policy promotions of entrepreneurship in South Africa. I also carried out 30 semi-structured interviews among students, five interviews with policymakers and three with university management stakeholders, including a student representative, who offer different conceptualisations.

The findings show that there are at least nine types of understandings of entrepreneurship among students and five main categories of response that students direct to their university's promotions of entrepreneurship. Their understandings and responses are dominated by their needs for cash. Lack of cash, poverty and hardship are the socio-economic issues dominating higher education experiences of low-income students in South Africa. Such students struggle to afford basic clothes, toiletries, food, and textbooks, despite funding from National Student Financial Aid Scheme. This funding is not enough to meet all their needs adequately.

The policy players interviewed express mixed views, depending on their positions and roles. Some saw the promotions as a way for policymakers and the university stakeholders to avoid dealing with the problems faced by students. Others felt that entrepreneurship was seen as an approach to help students help themselves. I analyse these emergent findings and deal with differences, frictions, disjuncture, and contrasts in the conceptualisations (understandings) and articulations (responses) of entrepreneurship among students, policy, and the university. This research explores the way in which the university promotes entrepreneurship policies, and contrasts this with student experiences and conceptualisations.

This dissertation makes an important contribution by linking together research on student livelihoods and entrepreneurship. It questions the popularization and promotion of entrepreneurship in South African HE and challenges the 'grand narrative' of entrepreneurship, suggesting that this is a misguided policy priority.

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Circular economy social enterprises in mid and north Wales– a case study approach

Lyndon Murphy (Aberystwyth University) (lym18@aber.ac.uk); Nerys Fuller-Love (Aberystwyth University)

Keywords: Circular economy, social enterprise, community development

Introduction

The circular economy is becoming increasingly important as a community based response to global sustainability challenges. Three social enterprises were identified as case studies to illustrate the circular economy work undertaken in mid and north Wales. The three case studies chosen for the project are Aber Food Surplus, Y Drefwerdd, and Craft, both Aber Food Surplus and Craft are based in mid Wales and Y Drefwerdd is based in north Wales

A circular economy may be defined as an 'industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design' (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013). Similarly, Rosa et al (2020) state, the circular economy may be considered as concept that replaces the linear approach to economic activity. However, the scientific underpinning of the circular economy principle may

be stated as being 'superficial and unorganised' (Korhonen et al, 2018). Nevertheless, policy makers have becoming increasingly aware of the concept of the circular economy (Geissdoerfer et al, 2017).

Background information

Aber Food Surplus is a not-for-profit social enterprise based in Aberystwyth. Its origins are found in the Aberystwyth University Sustainability Society organised and led by students. Three members of the sustainability society became the founding members of Aber Food Surplus. It was established in 2015/16 with the collection of food waste from the Morrisons supermarket in Aberystwyth. The food that is destined to be thrown away is donated (providing it is fit for human consumption) to the community. Aber Food Surplus is run largely by volunteers. It is a provider of volunteering opportunities for people in Aberystwyth and its hinterland. Aber Food Surplus supports the development of a sustainable society. Aber Food Surplus aim is as follows: 'Our vision is for Aberystwyth to be a pioneering example of food sustainability. A place where food is grown, distributed, and consumed in a fair and environmentally sustainable way. Where people of all ages and backgrounds come together to enjoy tasty and nutritious food. Where food waste is a thing of the past'.

Y Drefwerdd is an environmental community enterprise which was established in 2006 as part of the Communities First project in Blaenau Ffestiniog. The original aim of the project was to protect and improve the local environment in the Bro Ffestiniog area. This has changed over time to not only include protecting and improving the environment but also to look after the people and improving their health. One of the key activities for the circular economy is the food waste that is collected from the large supermarkets in Bangor and re-distributed to the food banks in Blaenau. The activities that are undertaken by Y DrefWerdd are mainly for the Bro Ffestiniog area and the area has been expanded recently to include the Penrhyndeudraeth, Croesor, Minffordd and Llyn areas.

Craft are an independent, not-for-profit enterprise. Its main aim is to reuse household good and stop them being thrown away. A strapline used by Craft sums up their work as being 'good for the planet, good for you'. From its inception Craft arguably was born as a circular economy enterprise. As Craft evolved it became an enterprise which focused heavily on reducing landfill waste. The most significant element of Craft's contribution to the reduction of landfill waste is to reduce the amount of furniture going to landfill sites. The furniture is donated to Craft and is then offered to the public as an opportunity to reuse the furniture. Geographically, Craft works within a 25/30 mile radius of Aberystwyth. The geographic extremities of Craft's range include Newquay, Lampeter, and Tywyn.

Research approach

The three case studies have been constructed primarily via semi-structured interviews. The interviews have been held with individuals with similar functions or relationships in each case study organisation. For example, individuals performing leadership and/or management, roles at the circular economy based enterprise have been interviewed. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews were written up in a predetermined format, designed to achieve a common interpretative lens for each case study.

Conclusions/implications

There are several aspects of the work undertaken by Aber Food Surplus which contributes to its success. For example, Aber Food Surplus try to be as visible as possible in its community space. The team prides itself on encouraging open dialogue with all of its stakeholders. This is particularly the case with its volunteers, who are a valuable source of both new knowledge and skills. The volunteers help reinforce the core values of Aber Food Surplus and challenge the organisation to go further with its work. The organisation is fully invested in social justice, environmentally focused and being a fun place to be.

One of the most important achievements for the DrefWerdd is to build a team of people who share the approach to regeneration and the circular economy. They have very close relationships with the local community in Blaenau Ffestiniog and they respond to what is needed as they are in daily contact with the individuals who live there. The services provided by the DrefWerdd are now ingrained in the community and people know where to go with universal credit applications and developing a garden for the community. Things are changing all the time and the focus for the future is to grow more food for the community and develop alternative sources of energy.

The factors enabling the work at Craft are many and varied. The working environment at Craft is described as being a “a family atmosphere.” An environment where, as stated above, circular economy practices are omnipresent. The shared expectation of saving goods going to landfill, repairing and reusing household goods is the driving force behind all that Craft achieve. The location of Craft is a key enabler. Craft is located in Aberystwyth train station in buildings formerly used as part of the train station. As a result, rail passengers often shop at Craft. Craft is also a thoroughfare for shoppers visiting the local supermarket. Finally, it is close to a large car park and has easy access to its delivery/loading bay. There is ease of access for both inbound and outbound deliveries, and customer visits to the shop. Another enabler is the loyalty of the team members at Craft. Staff members are regularly consulted about decision making which may affect Craft’s operations. This consultative approach contributes to a feeling that we’re all in this together. As stated by an interviewee “I wouldn’t ask someone to do something I wouldn’t be prepared to do myself.”

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Improving Contingent Gig Workers' Engagement Within the Welsh Hospitality Industry

Elena Peshkova (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

Keywords: Gig economy, contingent gig workers, engagement, Welsh hospitality industry

Introduction

This research aims to explore and enhance the engagement of contingent gig workers within the Welsh hospitality industry. The objective is to understand the unique challenges faced by this workforce and propose strategies to improve their engagement, ultimately benefiting both the workers and the industry.

Background

The hospitality industry plays a crucial role in the regional economy of Wales. The Welsh economy relies on the tourism and the hospitality industries; for example, in 2019, direct tourism Gross Value Added (GVA) was £3.4 billion for Wales, which was 5.0 per cent of the total Welsh GVA (Welsh Government, 2022). According to the latest Welsh government report, 11.3 per cent of the workforce was employed in the industry in 2020, having grown from 8.5 per cent in 2014 (Oxford Economics, 2015; Welsh Government, 2022). However, the proportion of part-time and full-time employees within the hospitality industry in Wales has remained steady over recent years, with predominantly 61 per cent of jobs in 2020 being part-time and seasonal (Welsh Government, 2022). The food and beverage sector accounted for the largest share of such employment in 2020, with 6.0 per cent (80,000) jobs in Wales (Welsh Government, 2022).

Research Approach

This study adopts a primary research approach to gain deeper insights into the engagement of contingent gig workers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including business owners, hospitality managers, and contingent gig workers. These interviews gave a comprehensive understanding of the realities, concerns, and experiences surrounding engagement within the Welsh hospitality industry. Desk-based research was also employed to support and contextualise the findings.

Discussion

The findings revealed several factors influencing the engagement of contingent gig workers. These factors include the temporary nature of their employment, lack of benefits, limited sense of belonging, and the perception of being undervalued. Moreover, the study identified the importance of recognising contingent gig workers as valuable contributors and fostering a supportive work environment that promotes engagement. Strategies such as offering training and development opportunities, providing feedback and recognition, and creating a supportive culture emerged as key drivers to boost contingent gig workers' engagement.

Conclusions

Improving the engagement of contingent gig workers within the Welsh hospitality industry is crucial for enhancing their performance, retaining these workers, and ultimately elevating the industry's overall success. The study emphasises the need for hospitality managers to shift their focus beyond cost and efficiency and to create an inclusive and supportive work environment for all workers. The industry can foster a more committed and productive workforce by implementing the proposed strategies and recognising the value of contingent gig workers.

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Disability benefit patterns and the health impact of the pandemic

Maria Plotnikova (Aberystwyth University)

There has been a large increase in the number of people awarded disability benefits, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in England and Wales between 2021 and 2022. PIP is aimed to help compensate some of the living costs associated with disability; it is not means tested and does not depend on one's working status.

The increase of 48% between 2021 and 2022 has been far from uniform across space, ranging from 18% to 90% for local authorities. As Joyce, Chaudhuri and Waters (2022) note, this increase does not seem to be driven by a change in how the benefits are allocated, as the proportion of awards has remained consistent with previous years at 40%. The authors suggest the reason for the increase to be deteriorations in health across all conditions that disability payments are granted for.

The aim of this study is to ascertain if economic factors are associated with the increase in PIP by local authorities. A spatial econometrics model is used to explain the spatial pattern of the increase in PIP claims controlling for health authority areas. The dependent variable is the percentage increase in PIP claims between 2021 and 2022. The explanatory variables are local authority level data on the level of PIP recipients in 2019, industry sectors, occupation, employment status, demographic characteristics from 2021 Census data for local authorities, as well as at risk of poverty rate for UK local authorities computed as part of Horizon 2020 IMAJINE project.

Preliminary analysis underscores the difficulty in disentangling the economic and health factors at play. The link to the economic determinants is that poorer areas have experienced greater economic shock and variable recovery because of their sectoral and occupation composition where greater share of workers could not work from home. The concern is that these areas are at a risk of suffering more from already existing health inequalities and health impacts of the pandemic. These areas are also likely to be harder hit by the cost of living crisis prompting those eligible for disability benefits to apply for them. Persistence in benefits uptake has implication for regional inequality in economic and health outcomes and diverging patterns of growth and development.

The ongoing impact of Covid19 on the small high street

Matthew Price (Aberystwyth University) map92@aber.ac.uk

Key words: High street, Local economy, covid19, Regeneration, small business, de-pedestrianisation, cost of living crisis

This study is the second part of a greater longitudinal piece of research into the regeneration of a rural town and the impacts of events such as Brexit, coronavirus and latterly the cost of living crisis on that regeneration. Holywell in Flintshire, North Wales is undergoing a regeneration project and pre-coronavirus small businesses were interviewed to understand their views on Brexit and how this will affect ongoing regeneration. The research has now shifted in focus to post coronavirus recovery and the ongoing impact of the cost of living crisis. While Brexit was a primary topic in the early stages of the research it has now become a secondary area of impact. Initially interviews were conducted face to face, however during coronavirus they were conducted remotely, either via telephone or Zoom call. The researcher was able to resume face to face interviews post coronavirus.

The high street businesses in Holywell have changed their views overall at this point regarding current impact and for the future. Whereas before coronavirus hit the area, they were upbeat about the regeneration, believing that it would breathe new life into the town and attract tourists, they now believe original plans will not be viable in a post Covid environment. Many businesses were struggling, with total or partial closure having negatively impacted their revenue streams during the pandemic to the point that some were concerned about the future. These concerns have deepened post coronavirus as the cost of living crisis has impacted consumers in the area and landlords as they try and minimise the impacts on themselves.

The research continued with interviews of the same businesses at 6- and 9months intervals to assess the short-term impact of lockdown and the subsequent easing of restrictions as life returns towards normality. Although Brexit returned to the agenda as an area of concern for small businesses, the impacts from the cost of living crisis have taken over as the primary concern. During the later stages of the 2021 lockdown, several new businesses have opened, suggesting that regeneration efforts albeit different from initially planned maybe come viable again. However, in late 2022 and early 2023 two of these businesses have since ceased trading claiming that the high street in Holywell is not a viable location. Another business has now moved out of its premises and is currently sharing with another business.

An implication of this research is that the situation is quickly evolving, which would open up for future research to assess the longer term impacts on the town in terms of its businesses and its users.

An Ethnographic Approach to Online Marketing and Consumer Perceptions of Techniques employed by Large Austrian Financial Institutions on the Regional Level using a Specific Cross-Sectional Socio-Cultural instance

Aryan Salhenegger-Niamir (FH Campus02, Fachhochschule Der Wirtschaft, Austria)

While large financial organizations within Austria have observably effectuated marketing strategies that have enabled them to acculturate into dispersed regions within their national borders, such approaches are typically employed as offline implementations, and carried out by regional branches (of such organizations). However, this combined strategy is largely the result of practicality and the lack of online resources available to people living in the regions, many of whom are of generations who have had comparatively lesser exposure to the internet (Esser and Pftesch, 2017. IN: Caramani, 2017). Nevertheless, regional acculturation is a

phenomenon that can also be performed online (Geismer and Knox, 2021); however, ostensibly with its limitations, as well as impositions of enigmas that engender additional challenges requisite of organizations to overcome. However, with a national variance of regional cultures and identities maintaining a sense of idiosyncratic socio-cultural traits simultaneous to the ascendancy of the digital economy, an online approach to acculturation (with a focus on regional marketing techniques) may need to be considered and employed by organizations in order to maintain relevancy and meaningful relationships with its expansive and dispersed consumers, and this is evident in the practices of some organizations with branches within the regions of Austria.

This study will employ an ethnographic method of research to investigate how these large financial institutions use online marketing on the regional level using an example of a particular municipality as the focus area, and how these organizations with a nationwide reach could potentially overcome the challenges that prohibit this approach from being effectuated more efficaciously. It will also achieve this by seeking the perceptions and opinions of consumers on the regional level as well as by seeking observational phenomena that demonstrates how online marketing is implemented, and how these may compare to offline marketing approaches that are also implemented on the regional level. This study will further investigate the perspectives of those within the industry who are affiliated with the focused local branches as well as those within the central committees based in Vienna in order to provide a holistic overview of strategies, ideas, concepts and perspectives pertaining to the effective implementation of regional online marketing. Within the context of this research, the term “regional” reflects the Austrian definition of a locally governed municipality (i.e. the German term, “*Gemeinde*”). Oftentimes, these municipalities accommodate their own autonomous regional branches of larger financial institutions; in this study, the focus will be on the municipality of Mürzzuschlag based in the north-east of the Austrian state of Styria. While this study will not seek to demonstrate a generalized and representative example of this specific phenomenon, it will provide a cross-sectional illustration as to how online marketing is implemented in this specific regional and socio-cultural instance, which can provide insight to future investigations of a similar nature.

The research questions that this study will aim to answer are the following:

- What online strategies and practices are employed by large Austrian financial organizations in order to connect with audiences on the regional level within the ascending digital economy?
- How may the contemporary complications and hindrances faced by organizations to adopt more region-specific targeted approaches to online marketing be overcome?

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'Contemporary Practices, Sensibilities and Perspectives towards the Festivals of Krampus and Perchten and the Regeneration of Local Culture as a Marker of Styrian and Alpine Identity in the Austrian Municipality of Mürzzuschlag'

Aryan Salhenegger-Niamir (FH Campus02, Fachhochschule Der Wirtschaft, Austria)

Keywords: Krampus and Perchten, Cultural-regeneration, Austrian Folklore, Ethnographic Research, Styrian and Alpine Identities, local economies, inward investment from tourism.

The cultural celebrations of Krampus and Perchten are closely associated with the peoples residing in the alpine regions of central Europe, primarily Austria, Bavaria (Germany), and South Tirol (Italy). These festivities take place on the 5th of December and the 5th of January for Krampus and Perchten, respectively. While distinct in nature, these traditions share numerous similarities and have undergone a contemporary and commercial transformation compared to their historical observances. Depicted as half-demonic and half-goat figures with exaggerated features intended to frighten children, Krampuses represent the antithesis of St. Nicholas, who is celebrated on the subsequent day, namely the 6th of December. On the other hand, Perchten symbolize duality, although the negative manifestation of Perchten is often conflated and resembles Krampus. Presently, Krampus and Perchten are celebrated through parades, fairs, and exhibitions organized by dedicated societies. These events showcase

intricately themed masks and costumes, providing entertainment for local crowds, schools, and organizations within the region.

The research conducted for this study utilized ethnography to gain profound insights into the contemporary practices and attitudes surrounding the Krampus and Perchten celebrations, as well as their observable transformations within the specific alpine community. The study spanned a period of nearly five and a half years, from September 2017 to January 2023, focusing specifically on twenty adult individuals from various generations within the small municipality of Mürzzuschlag, located in the northeastern alpine region of Styria, Austria. Members of this selected group actively participated in semi-structured and unstructured interviews, discussions, and were observed within naturalistic settings related to the celebratory observances, whenever applicable. The inclusion of naturalistic observations encompassed witnessing and monitoring the Krampus and Perchten festivals in practice within Mürzzuschlag and its surrounding areas, attending costume and cultural exhibitions organized by local societies, and examining the paraphernalia associated with these traditions. Informal discussions with individuals outside the immediate focus group also contributed to enhancing the depth of this investigation, and other factors, such as the impact of these festivals on the local economy and tourism were also considered.

Throughout the field work, it became evident that the festivals had led to a shift in public perception among the residents of Mürzzuschlag, both in real-time and when comparing the contemporary interpretations and practices of the celebrations to their historical counterparts. Participants within the same generational group often exhibited similar patterns of perception and attitudes. Older generations expressed a more positive view of the modern portrayal of Krampus and Perchten compared to their own experiences in their youth. This change is attributed to a perceived cultural shift and modifications in laws and regulations that have made the events more family-friendly. Meanwhile, younger generations have been the driving force behind the creative reimagining and revitalization of the modern Krampus and Perchten festivals. Many consider these adaptations crucial not only for the preservation of their cultural heritage but also for adapting it to the demands of the modern era. In most cases, participants also believed that the preservation of the Krampus and Perchten festivals plays a significant role in maintaining and strengthening the local sensibilities pertaining to Styrian and Alpine identities. The study uncovered additional findings indicating that these festivals contributed to heightened community exposure and stimulated inward investment and tourism in the host townships, including Mürzzuschlag, where Krampus and Perchten fairs, exhibitions, and parades were held. Local businesses in the gastronomy and hospitality sectors, such as bars, cafes, restaurants and accommodation providers were typically the most likely beneficiaries.

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Empowering Youths through Sustainable Agribusiness

Nawa Joe Silishebo (Aberystwyth University)

In the isolated target districts of Chitambo, Serenje and Mkushi in Central Province, Zambia, young people are limited in opportunities and effectiveness as potential leaders due to rural poverty (76.6%) and malnutrition (42% of under-5s stunted). This is largely due to reliance on unsustainable farming practices that degrade soil and decrease yields, limited diets through mono-cropping and deteriorating cash-crop sales. We are concerned about the increasing depletion of natural resources from unsustainable land and water practices. YEFI (Young Emerging Farmers Initiative) has planted seeds of action in target districts, strengthening farmer networks, garnering the support of traditional leaders and sharing skills since 2014. However, with limited financial resources, sustainable agriculture skills and livelihoods expertise the communities remain trapped in a downward poverty cycle with little opportunity to consider escalating ecosystem issues.

Forming a 3-pronged approach GE (Scottish Partner) brings community building (leadership, group facilitation, communication), sustainable agriculture and livelihoods training expertise; WWF Zambia brings experience in conservation, advocacy and communication. YEFI contributes experience in youth led programmes, strengthening young farmer-led networks and bringing traditional leaders on board. The youth are very enthusiastic to consider regenerative farming techniques and eager to participate in income-generating activities. There is land abundant with water available for agribusiness thanks to YEFI mobilisation of traditional leaders. The soil, though degraded, can produce well e.g. tonnes of tomatoes go to waste due to lack of preservation.

The project has built the capacity of over 1250 local youth leaders (at least 60% female) to become active and effective change agents in youth-led campaigning on social and environmental issues, sustainable income generation and food security actions. The youth

change agents have reached out to 150,000 more youth to raise awareness of the need for better social and natural system management through multiplier actions on ecosystem conservation, sustainability programmes and advocacy campaigns. Project-trained youth have worked with 1,440 households to increase food security through diversification and abundance of nutritional farm produce and increase income by adding value to surplus produce and diversifying in farming-related activities. 27 community enterprises have been set up e.g. beekeeping, vegetable conservation, fisheries, dried turmeric and native tree nurseries that local partners have identified as great opportunities for community-led income generation. The project has maximised the benefit from the October to May growing season to dramatically increase surplus produce for processing and sale e.g. sun-dried tomatoes and vegetables. The results have been captured through film, blogs, photographs and presentations. The sale of produce on Jubilee Road markets has been negotiated. The Project impact is centred upon empowering the vulnerable youth sub-population, and young females have been prioritised, ensuring they make up at least 60% of participants in training and lead implementation activities.

Socio-cultural mechanisms of linguistic choice and political implications for promoting the use of minority languages: A case study of the Welsh language in community sport.

Lana St Leger (Cardiff Metropolitan University) LStLeger@cardiffmet.ac.uk, Nicola Bolton (Cardiff Metropolitan University) and Carwyn Jones (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

Keywords: Community Sport, Minority Language, Welsh Language, Continued Professional Development.

Introduction

This research critically analyses the challenges and opportunities for encouraging the use of Welsh in community sport settings. The evidence presented in this paper derives from two research settings which included one Welsh medium school and seven community sport clubs. These were used as the starting points for building our case which focused on three objectives: 1. To evaluate the opportunities for, and barriers against, the role community sport can make in encouraging Welsh language use among young people 2. To analyse the use of the different relationships with, and attitudes towards the Welsh language among community sport organisations 3. To evaluate the views of young people, community sport providers and policy informers about the opportunities and barriers to using and promoting the Welsh language in community sport and beyond.

Context

From managing volunteers to enhancing partnerships, community sport embraces many challenges in return for its role in supporting an active nation and producing champions. Community sport has long been used as a tool for developing wider political objectives, and in Wales, it has been suggested as a vehicle for promoting the use of the Welsh language. Despite growth driven by formal education policy and legal enhancements, Welsh remains a minority language in its own country. This paper (along with Evans *et al.*, 2019) offer new evidence to address the potential for sport to be a vehicle for promoting minority languages, albeit sport's wider contribution to community development has been widely acknowledged (Collins, 2010).

Research Approach

Using a case study research design (Harrison *et al.*, 2017), qualitative insights (through participant observation and interviews) into the experiences of young Welsh speakers living in a non-traditional Welsh speaking area were undertaken. Given the diversity of Welsh language use in Wales and the somewhat nebulous question of whether and how far sport

can contribute to achieving goals set out in Cymraeg: 2050, we narrowed the focus and adopted a case study of one community in South Wales.

Discussion

The research revealed several challenges of working in the community sport setting and how the use of a minority language can intensify those difficulties. These challenges included (i) limited human resources (notwithstanding whether those are Welsh speakers or not), (ii) a lack of understanding surrounding the roles and responsibilities among the wider community sport context and within organisations, and (iii) linguistic habits. To support the development of future interventions, policy direction and implementation, we have started to develop a sport structure for Wales that enhances the need to understand and incorporate the legal responsibilities of organisations towards the Welsh language. Furthermore, there is a need for enhanced opportunities such as continued professional development for paid staff and volunteers to developing the use of Welsh in community sport.

Conclusion

Several challenges which emerged in this research relate to roles and responsibilities among organisations within the Welsh sport system, especially with regards to the Welsh language. For the Welsh language to be developed further, and beyond formal education settings, strategic leadership and collaboration across several organisations and individuals is needed.

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Language and heritage as key elements in developing a regenerative tourism industry

Einir Young (Prifysgol Bangor)

The paper outlines the evolution of Ecoamgeuddfa Llŷn (the Llŷn Ecomuseum) and its aim of ensuring that Pen Llŷn (the Llŷn Peninsula) is respected as a home as well as a destination.

There are a number of reasons for needing a new approach to tourism:

- Pen Llŷn is full to capacity and beyond during peak season
- The focus is on extending the holiday season to attract visitors outside the traditional holiday period.
- This needs to be done in a way that will provide year-round social, cultural and environmental benefits as well as economic benefits.
- Ways of keeping the pound local is critical in order to move away from the current corporate extractive model of tourism

The ecomuseum model of promoting the area will be discussed. Increasingly, communities in honeypot locations such as Venice, Barcelona, Cornwall and Eryri are expressing their anger at being swamped by visitors, especially, in Wales, as a result of the Covid pandemic and the lockdowns. A lot of attention is given to 'being an environmentally friendly tourist' but what of

people and their communities? Language and culture are equally important and there are opportunities to make us of this as a USP – but there are threats too. As part of the project we explored the impact of the visitor economy on language and culture through the eyes of 14 local women. Their thoughts on belonging to the community, their anger at being priced out of their own home, the unsustainability of villages that are predominantly holiday homes, their hopes and fears for the future are discussed in the context of creating a regenerative rather than an extractive visitor economy.

Ecoamgueddfa Llŷn is currently part of the LIVE operation. LIVE received funding from the European Regional Development Fund through the Ireland Wales Cooperation Programme.

