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Editorial Foreword

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Welcome to the new Issue of the Journal Of Modern Trends in Social Sciences -JMTSS, Volume 1, Issue1, 2024. The topics covered by this Issue are related to the current trends of research, original research that uncovers sustainable development.

JMTSS Journal is an international journal that effectively provides a forum for academics, professionals, graduate and undergraduate students, fellows and associates to share the latest developments and advances in knowledge and practice of Social Sciences; Journalism, mass media, Sport and sport management, Humanities and Social Sciences, etc. Our interest in promoting high-quality research is clearly reflected in having an established peer reviewing process and a high-profile expert group of Associate Editors and Editorial Board Members.

Hopefully you find this Issue valuable and we definitely look forward to receiving your high-quality studies for the next issue of the Journal.

Prof. Dr. Bekim Fetaji
Editor-in-Chief

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Geopolitics of Israel in the Eastern Mediterranean

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Abstract: The map of the Middle East is relatively new, which means that the States in this region are also new, but their weight and importance in international relations is very great due to geopolitics and energy potential. Israel is one of those states, which has a strong strategic position in one of the most important regions in the world. The history of its independence and consolidation as a state has been characterized by strong opposition from its Arab neighbors, causing several wars that have changed the geographical and demographic map of this part of the world. The first Arab-Israeli war in 1948-1949, which ended with the latter's victory, allowed the Jewish State to expand beyond what was stipulated in the UN Resolution. The 6-day war of 1967 was the one that shocked the Arabs, while on the other hand it marked an extraordinary geopolitical achievement for Israel, since the geography of this space changed radically, bringing consequences and conflicts that continue even today. Almost all diplomatic attempts to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have failed. The latest war between Hamas and Israel is a continuation of previous wars, where, as always, the conflict between them can cause powerful instability, introducing the Middle East into a powerful spiral of instability with global consequences. In the past, Israel has faced another problem, that of a lack of energy resources, which may seem paradoxical considering that it is located in the Middle East, the richest region in the world in natural resources. This energy poverty had created geopolitical difficulties, but the situation would change in the second decade of the 21st century as it would bring a very important energy discovery for Israel in the waters of the Eastern Mediterranean, where it would go from importer to exporter of energy resources.

KeyWords: Israel, Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, geopolitics, energy

1. Introduction

The end of the Second World War caused powerful geopolitical changes around the world, and this inevitably affected the Eastern Mediterranean as well. The exit of a victorious but war-torn Britain caused it to lose power in the colonies, and left the fate of Palestine to the newly formed United Nations. Resolution 181 failed to resolve disputes between the two peoples, which led to the declaration of Israel's independence on May 14, 1948, which was unacceptable to the Arabs. The following day the Arabs declared war on the newly created state, which would end only a year later with the victory of the Jewish state. In the future, three more wars would take place, which shows that the existence of the state of Israel was something unacceptable for the Arab people. The creation of Palestinian nationalism forced Israel to discuss the future of the territory known as Palestine with them and not with Arab states as they had done in the past. Thus, Israeli geopolitics, in the first period of appropriation, was focused on ensuring its existence.

There was another geopolitical challenge for Israel, besides national security, and that was the lack of energy resources and foreign dependence, placing it in many cases in a weak strategic position. The discovery of the gas fields was a blessing for Israel that had been waiting for it since its acquisition, and that in the first decade of the XXI century it became a reality, giving it a powerful geopolitical position not only in the region, but also in international relations.

2. Israel's Geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean

Israel is an Eastern Mediterranean country, which has an exceptional geopolitical position, which is making it a very important actor in the region, the discovery of large reserves of natural gas, and its potential to export the same, has added even more weight to international relations

The First World War had caused powerful earthquakes in global politics, and as a result it was almost clear who would be its winner. The Ottoman Empire that had ruled the Eastern Mediterranean for a long time was losing on almost all fronts, which would create a political vacuum in the region, this was seen with hope by Jewish nationalists as the removal of Istanbul's power created opportunities for the creation of the state of theirs, which was reinforced after a statement was made by the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain on November 2, 1917.

A letter signed by the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur J. Balfour, conveyed this news: *“His Majesty's Government view with sympathy the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, and will do their utmost to facilitate the achievement of this objective. But, it must be clearly understood, nothing will be done that could violate the civil and religious rights of the non-religious communities in Palestine”*¹.

After the end of the First World War, the League of Nations that was created at the Peace Conference in Paris, gave Great Britain the mandate over Palestine, where the emigration of Jews from Europe in its direction at that time, caused strong reactions and revolts of Arabs who opposed the demographic changes that were taking place. Jewish emigrations to Palestine had occurred earlier, and they were known as Aliyah, and occurred in several stages, the first between 1881-1903, the second between 1904-1914, the third 1919-1923, the fourth 1924-1929, the fifth occurred after the rise of Nazism and their persecution in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s.

The end of the Second World War brought out a weakened Great Britain in political, economic and military terms, but which wanted to maintain its hegemony in the mandates that it had led for more than two decades, but in one from them he was encountering many problems, and that was Palestine. The Jewish and Arab groups were conflicting with each other, but the British troops in Palestine had also become targets of attacks, where the revolts from both sides had caused many deaths and the situation was getting out of control day by day.

In these circumstances, Great Britain, tired of the war and the inability to establish peace and order, in February 1947 declared its intention to end the Mandate over Palestine and left the fate of its future in the hands of the United Nations (UN), which had just been established. On November 29, the UN adopted Resolution 181², which provided for the creation of two states, one Jewish and one Arab, and a special status for the city of Jerusalem. Although this was accepted by the Jews with many reservations, it was strongly opposed by the Arab countries, who emphasized that this plan violated the rights and principles of self-determination.

3. The Arab-Israeli wars

In 1947, the United Nations adopted resolution 181³, which provided for the partition of Palestine as a British mandate and the creation of two states, that is, an Arab state and a Jewish state, as well as the creation of a special status for the city of Jerusalem, this plan was accepted by the Jews, but it was strongly opposed by the Arab states. In these circumstances, David-Ben-Gurion on May 14, 1948, the day before the end of the British mandate in Palestine,

¹ Albright, Madeleine. *Të fuqishmit dhe i Plotfuqishmi*, Fan Noli, Shqipëri 2018, p.159

²RESOLUTION ADOPTED ON THE REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, <https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/general-assembly/>

³UN Resolution 1947, <https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/general-assembly/>

declared the independence of Israel, which provoked harsh reactions from the Arab neighbors, who do not accept a new geopolitical reality in the Eastern Mediterranean, and expressed indignation with the UN about how 56% of the territory of Palestine could be given to a people who were considered foreign. The following day, the First Arab-Israeli War began when troops from Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon attacked Israeli positions, justifying their actions by saying that they were sticking to their stated goal of creating a unified Palestinian state⁴.

After a war of almost 1 year, a truce was reached between the warring parties, establishing temporary borders that became known as the Green Line, where Egypt took the part known as the Gaza Strip, while Jordan took the West Bank that included East Jerusalem, while Israel was not only accepted as a member state of the United Nations Organization by a majority of votes on May 11, 1949, but also from the 56% of the territory given by Resolution 181, it was expanded to 78%.

Israel's geopolitics in the post-independence period faced two very big challenges, one had to do with the mass emigration of Jews from all over the world towards the newly created state, which caused a very big problem, which was their housing, while the second had to do with the fact that, even though the war had ended, it was constantly faced with the refusal of its Arab neighbors to accept the existence of this new entity on the map of the Eastern Mediterranean, since hostile attitudes threatened its peace and existence .

Facing these two challenges, another challenge was appearing on the horizon, where the president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, nationalized the Suez Canal, which was a very big blow to Tel Aviv, where with its blockage, the Strait of Tiran, which penalized the navigation of Israeli ships as well as attacks on it from the territories of the Gaza Strip, caused it to join France and Great Britain in the attack on Egypt in 1956. On November 2 of that year, the UN adopted a resolution which almost was completely unanimous, calling for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of all military troops, but this war increased Arab nationalism and hatred of Israel as a creature of Western imperialism, while on the other hand, Tel Aviv's military prowess enhanced its image of a powerful country in international politics. After the end of this war, Israel went through a relatively peaceful period, but the situation would begin to change in the first months of 1967, Tel Aviv began to consider a potential threat to its security. This was especially reinforced after Nasser's decision to close the Straits of Tiran to Israeli ships at the end of May, where this caused strong reactions in the Jewish state, who reiterated the position that any attempt to close the strait is a *casus belli* (act that provokes or justifies war), in the meantime Egypt signed a defense pact with Syria and Jordan.

In this situation, Israel felt geopolitically isolated, this led to the fact that on June 5 it launched a preemptive attack on Egypt, but based on military agreements with Jordan and Syria, this war involved all four states that became known as "The Six Day War", which ended in Israeli victory. "Israel now controlled an area of 88,000 square kilometers, compared to 20,250 before the war, or 18 times the area Lord Peel had allotted to the Jews in the first partition plan of Palestine in 1937. The Sinai Desert, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank now offered Israeli cities a buffer zone that dramatically reduced the threat of annihilation of Israel by a surprise Arab attack"⁵.

This victory strengthened Israel's geopolitical position, as it enabled it to obtain some territories of immense strategic importance, which enabled it to have greater control over the region, which increased its security and at the same time gave easier access to the Eastern Mediterranean. This victory also had a danger, which was to increase the anti-Israel sentiments of its neighbors, who felt humiliated, and hoped for a speedy return of the territories they had lost, which were of immense strategic importance.

This loss had become a huge concern for Israel's Arab neighbors, who were looking for an opportunity to take revenge,

⁴Fraser, T.G. *The Middle East, 1914-1979*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK 1980, p.65

⁵ Bregman, Ahron. *Israel's Wars: A History since 1947*, Routledge, USA 2016, p. 95

and this was a warning that a new war, or the Fourth Arab-Israeli War, was only a matter of time. Anwar Sadat's arrival at the head of Egypt was followed closely by Israel, as he made several diplomatic moves that caused quite a bit of surprise, such as the removal of Soviet advisers from his country, which was an unusual move for the time, but that this was part of a strategy to regain territories lost in 1967. "The roots of the October War of 1973 (also known as the Yom Kippur War and the Ramadan War) are directly linked to the military and diplomatic results of the Sixth War Daily June 1967"⁶. Egypt's goal was to reclaim the Sinai Peninsula, while Syria's the Golan Heights, but after an extraordinary international effort and a resolution from the UN, the war stopped after 20 days.

The Arab-Israeli conflict, apart from being a regional conflict, also turned into a geopolitical conflict between two superpowers at the edge of the Cold War, where each side tried to attract as many allies as possible to its camp. Both the Soviet Union and the United States of America supported opposing sides in the conflict in order to protect their geopolitical interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. The situation during the Yom Kippur war became so tense between the two superpowers that the Soviet Union threatened direct involvement in the war that would take on global proportions, which was an indication of the danger contained in this conflict.

After the war, the situation continued to be very tense in the region, but US President Jimmy Carter sought to find a solution that would end the Arab-Israeli conflict. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin accepted Carter's invitation and met at Camp David in the US on September 5, 1978 to reach an agreement that would end the Arab-Israeli conflict, where the negotiation process between the two countries was very difficult, delicate and tense, where at some moments the President of the USA himself intervened to overcome the obstacles that were impassable from Cairo and Tel Aviv. Sadat and Begin signed two agreements on September 17, 1978, and US President Carter witnessed it. "The first set out general principles and laid out an outline for dealing with the West Bank and Gaza. The second, closely related to the principles set forth in the first, was a detailed formula for an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty"⁷.

This was an extraordinary geopolitical victory for Israel, as despite the fact that it had ceded the Sinai Peninsula, it had at the same time managed to sign a peace treaty and receive diplomatic recognition of its citizenship from one of the most largest, most powerful and most important of the Arab world, which was an indication that other countries could follow its example, to accept the new reality of the Eastern Mediterranean. Another very important aspect of this agreement had to do with the fact that peace with Egypt meant a less hostile state in the region, and this would directly affect the increase of its security, considering the role it had played in all the wars and conflicts that had been fought since 1948 against Israel.

The construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the agreement with Egypt had angered the Palestinians who had begun to create an independent national entity like the rest of the Arab people, who expressed their opposition to any peace process that could be done with Tel Aviv. A large Palestinian diaspora had settled in the neighboring state of Lebanon, from which they resisted Israel, where they took several actions from this country, which increased tensions in the region. "When Israeli troops crossed the border into Lebanon in June 1982, they launched what would become Israel's longest and most controversial war"⁸. Israel withdrew in 1986, but this war caused harsh reactions, weakened the internal unity of the country, after the massacre of Sabra and Shatila where many civilians were killed, the opposition to the war grew even more and after which many soldiers refused participation in the war, the people protested massively, where some generals resigned during the war, which had never happened before in the history of

⁶ Siniver, Asaf. *The Yom Kippur War Politics, Legacy, Diplomacy*, Oxford University Press, USA 2016, p. 14

⁷ Quandt, William B. *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, Brookings Institution Press, USA 2016, p. 262

⁸ L. Cleveland, William, Bunton, Martin. *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Routledge, UK 2016, p. 490

the country, and as a result, the Minister of Defense of the time also resigned.

4. Palestinian Nationalism

“One can speak of true Palestinians only from the beginning of the 1960s”⁹. Palestinian nationalism that had developed as an ethnicity in its own right, which included not only the residents of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, but also the millions of others living in the neighboring states around Israel's borders. In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Army (PLO) was created, the Arab League designated in 1974 as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinians. In the Oslo agreement of 1993, Israel accepted the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians, while on the other hand they accepted the existence of the Jewish state, and in this agreement the Palestinian National Authority was created to govern the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The construction of new settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for Jewish residents, the war in Lebanon, the increase in Tel Aviv's repression to a large extent, were among the many causes that would contribute to a major outbreak of protests and of violence so that they could tense the region.

“The Intifada—the Palestinian uprising in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Jerusalem from 1987 to 1993—imposed on the IDF and Israeli society as a whole a new kind of warfare that Israel found difficult to cope with”¹⁰. The Intifada or "Shake" was an uprising that began in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by Palestinians who sought an end to Israeli rule of these territories and the establishment of their own independent state, which caused many casualties on both sides. “Arafat announced the state, with Jerusalem as its capital, on November 15, 1988”¹¹.

The Israeli-Palestinian issue had been somewhat overshadowed as a result of the First Gulf War, but despite this, the Intifada continued to threaten the peace and stability of the entire Middle East. The coalition led by the United States of America forced Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait, which seems to herald a greater engagement of Washington in this part of the world, where the most sensitive issue was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This was also made clear by the President of the USA, Bush, who declared before the Congress that “The time has come to end the Arab-Israeli conflict”. From this moment, the US exerted pressure on the parties involved to find a solution. “The proposed instrument for resolving the conflict was an international peace conference supported by the Madrid Conference, although it had achieved few results on the ground, but it had a very great symbolic importance, as it succeeded in bringing Israel to the negotiating table with its Arab neighbors, which had been impossible earlier, and had thickened the path of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. “The decision to hold direct talks with the OCP constituted a diplomatic revolution in Israeli foreign policy and paved the way for the Oslo Accords of September 13, 1993”¹². The purpose of this agreement had to do with the temporary self-government in these regions by the Palestinians, the resolution of the Palestinian issue in the next 5 years in accordance with UN Resolutions 242 and 338, the withdrawal of the Israeli army and the transfer of responsibilities to the Palestinian authorities.

This agreement was extremely important, since through its signing, it became possible for the Palestinians to accept the existence of Israel, which they had opposed for so long, and on the other hand, Israel recognized the PLO as a representative of the Palestinians after a long time, and this constituted a historic step for the region. The parties agreed in principle to the division of Palestine into two parts, and to do so they gave up some territories they had previously claimed for themselves. This agreement was received in different ways in both countries, where a part of

⁹ Lacoste, Yves. Gjeopolitika e Mesdheut Lindor, Lira, Shqipëri 2011, p. 551

¹⁰ Bregman, Ahron. Israel's Wars: A History since 1947, Routledge, USA 2016, p. 187

¹¹ Kimmerling, Baruch, Migdal, Joel S. The Palestinian People, Harvard University Press, USA 2003, p. 269

¹² Fawcett, Louise, Marrëdhëniet Ndërkombëtare të Lindjes së Mesme, UET Press, Tiranë 2010, p. 240

the opposition in Israel supported this agreement, while a part called it national betrayal, but the same situation was in Palestine, where a part accepted the agreement, while the rest refused any kind of agreement with Tel Aviv. Further adjustments and other issues would determine and lead to a final decision between the two countries would be decided in another agreement, which would be written in the USA between the two leaders, ie Arafat and Rabin, in the presence of other representatives of the region who were strongly and directly affected by any kind of agreement that the two parties could reach. "On September 28, 1995, the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip was signed in Washington by Yitzak Rabin and Yasser Arafat in the presence of Bill Clinton, Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein of Jordan. It became widely known as Oslo II"¹³.

Both Oslo I and Oslo II provoked harsh reactions from the two sides, who both declared Arafat and Rabin as traitors to the people and their causes, who committed themselves to undermining its realization, which was hindered especially after the arrival in power in Israel of the Likud party which had strongly opposed this agreement. Despite the fact that an agreement had been reached between the parties, there were many sensitive issues that were waiting to be addressed, such as the issue of Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements, the status of the holy city of Jerusalem, which were indicators that peace and the final solution would to be very sensitive and difficult to implement.

The blocking of the realization of the agreements that had been reached within the framework of the Oslo agreement, caused the Palestinian-Israeli tensions to increase, where in this situation the USA in July 2000 called a new summit of the parties to discuss a final solution in Camp David (Camp David), after the threats coming from Arafat for declaring an independent party. The failure of the Summit was an indication of the explosion of violence, it is only a matter of time, where Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount on September 28, 2000 was seen as a provocation and this caused the Second Intifada to break out the next day.

The summit that was held in Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh Summit in early February 2005 is described as the end of the Intifada, where it was agreed that the Palestinians will stop acts of violence while Israel will stop all military actions. The death of Yasser Arafat in 2004, had imposed new elections which would be held in 2006, which would bring a very big surprise, and would have an impact in the future between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Palestinian politics also took a somewhat unexpected turn. "Parliamentary elections on January 25 resulted in a landslide victory for the Islamist resistance movement Hamas, taking 76 of the legislature's 132 seats, defying poll predictions and surprising almost everyone – perhaps including Hamas itself"¹⁴. Hamas was designated a terrorist organization by the US, the European Union and Israel, which stopped financial aid, increasing polarization within Palestinian society. The clash between Fatah and Hamas as the two largest Palestinian parties escalated after the elections, culminating in 2007, when Hamas defeated Fatah's forces and took control of the Gaza Strip, and has controlled it ever since.

In 2008, Israel began a conflict in Gaza, following attacks by Hamas that were considered a violation of the ceasefire, which lasted for 3 weeks, and ended with a unilateral ceasefire by Tel Aviv. In May 2021, another crisis erupted in the Gaza Strip between Hamas and Israel, with the latter accusing the organization of firing rockets into its territory that left many dead, showing how a frozen conflict is risking the peace and stability of the entire Eastern Mediterranean region, which will continue for so long, until we have a final solution between the two peoples.

The declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and its recognition by the former American President Donald Trump in 2017 caused harsh reactions from the Palestinians and other Arab countries, but also from the international factor, who consider such an action as a violation of the Resolutions of UN Security Council. Throughout this period, continuous efforts have been made by the UN, the European Union, and the United States of America to find a solution

¹³ Fawcett, Louise, Marrëdhëniet Ndërkombëtare të Lindjes së Mesme, UET Press, Tiranë 2010, p. 250

¹⁴ Harms, Georgy, M. Ferry, Todd, The Palestine-Israel Conflict, PlutoPress, UK 2017, p. 186

that would end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

“For much of the twenty-first century, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has stagnated and diplomatic initiatives have fallen short”¹⁵. There are several issues that prevent an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians such as the two-state solution, where Tel Aviv is not very interested in allowing the creation of a Palestinian state, Israeli settlements in the occupied lands, the fate of refugees, the borders of the state new and the status of Jerusalem.

5. The new conflict between Hamas and Israel

Since the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is a frozen conflict, it means that we have a *quasi* status, that is, a temporary peace that stands on glass legs and it is only a matter of time before it explodes.

“In the early hours of 7 October, Hamas launched what it called Operation al-Aqsa Deluge, a multi-pronged attack on Israel, including Israeli border towns ringing the Gaza Strip”¹⁶. This was an attack that occurred on the 50th anniversary of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, so it had a powerful symbolic significance in a region where symbolism carries a lot of weight. "In response to the attacks, Israel's cabinet officially declared war on Hamas. In the created situation, Israel, which had unfinished business with Hamas, responded in a very harsh way, which has resulted in over 17,000 Palestinians and about 1,300 Israeli casualties, and the end is not yet over. it is being seen. This war has put Israel in a very difficult geopolitical position, as this brought back the fear of its national security, that is, its existence as a state, while the harsh reaction caused global indignation.

The Arab-Israeli wars, each time, have involved a more complicated complexity than any other war that has been fought in the last century in the world, which made it more dangerous and unpredictable. In these circumstances, the reactions and attitudes of the neighboring states and regional powers caused a kind of alarm to the global powers, which did not stand idly by. Assessing that the war could escalate, the US deployed its fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, which is seen as a message to third parties not to get involved in the conflict, as well as a guarantee that it will not spread to other countries.

Since this conflict involves powerful geopolitical interests, it means that the longer the conflict continues, the involvement of extra-regional countries and powers will be inevitable, risking a global confrontation. The efforts for peace so far have failed despite the international pressure on both sides, where the exchange of prisoners between Israel and Hamas can be considered the only "success" of diplomacy. The future is predictable, but a difference can be made in the conflicts between these two parties, since the past shows us that the clashes between them have been prolonged and have produced many destructions and victims, so the beginning of this war is known, but not the end.

6. Israeli Energy Geopolitics

In addition to the existential threat that Israel has faced since its annexation, it has also faced an extraordinary challenge, which has had a strong geopolitical impact on it, and this has been the lack of energy resources, despite the fact that it is located in one of the areas or regions with the largest hydrocarbon reserves in the world. Faced with the lack of energy resources, it has been constantly dependent on imports, but these imports have often brought great concern to its geostrategy, since the countries around it that have energy supplies and from which it has imported have

¹⁵Djerejian, Edward P, Muasher, Marwan, Brown, Nathan J. B. Two States or One? Reappraising the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse, Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA 2018, f, 3, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CarnegieBaker_Palestine_Final1.pdf, 01.11.2023

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, A Second October War in Israel-Palestine, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/second-october-war-israel>, 01.11.2023

maintained a hostile attitude towards it, and many times have refused to supply it with this much needed product. The security of hydrocarbon supply has been one of the most declining elements of Israel, which has tried to meet its needs through the diversification of sources, importing from Russia, the USA, as well as other African countries, but the concern about the security energy has been constantly present in its geopolitics. Conscious of the negative impacts caused by energy dependence, it had led Israel to search for potential energy sources in its territorial waters, since being close to a region rich in these resources, it hoped to discover oil or gas, which would save it from importation. The history of hydrocarbon exploration by Israel dates back to the early years of its independence, when in 1952 the Hydrocarbons Law was passed, and several state-owned companies were established, where they were engaged in finding energy resources of which the country had many needs.

In 1953, the first well was opened in Mazal, but from which nothing was extracted. "In 1955, the Heletz oil field was discovered at that location with the deepening of the original well"¹⁷. Although the discoveries produced small amounts of hydrocarbons, they were hopeful that in the future fields containing very large amounts of oil and gas could be discovered, where from the 1950s to the end of the 90s of the 20th century, about 450 drillings were made, but not very successful. This intensity shows that the discovery of oil and gas had become a very important strategy for him, but that the successes would not be delayed.

"Although the Mediterranean has traditionally been a side issue in Israel's geopolitical thinking, in the 2000s we saw a change: it is turning seaward"¹⁸. This change came as a result of the discoveries of considerable natural gas resources in the Noa field in 1999, which contained 1.2 billion cubic meters of natural gas, just one year later in February 2000 another gas-bearing field, Maria-B, was discovered. which was located southeast of the Noa field, which contained 45 billion cubic meters of natural gas. These discoveries were of great importance, since Mabria-B started production for domestic needs in 2004, which for almost 1 decade has met about 40% of its domestic needs, also this had a very positive impact on the energy sector of Israel, as it changed the way it was produced, from oil and coal to gas, and at the same time it affected the relative decrease of Tel Aviv's energy dependence.

A remarkable discovery would be made in January 2009, when Nobel Energy would announce that it had discovered the Tamar field in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which was estimated at the time to contain 240 billion cubic meters, which would meet the needs of Israel for several decades, also within the same year in the Dalit field southeast of the Tamar field about 8 billion cubic meters of natural gas would be discovered. In June 2010, the discovery of a huge natural gas reserve, Levianthanin, was announced, which was estimated to have about 605 billion cubic meters of natural gas, which was considered the biggest discovery in the first decade of the XXI century. This field lies 130 kilometers west of Haifa and covers an area of 330 square kilometers. Research did not stop and in the period between 2012-2013 other gas reserves were discovered in the fields Dolphin, Tanin, Karish, Aphrodita-Ishai and Tamar SW. In May 2023, Israel's Energy Minister announced the discovery of a new gas field known as Katlan, which contains about 68 billion cubic meters of natural gas, indicating that it is becoming a tremendous energy powerhouse.

The discoveries of significant volumes of natural gas at the end of the last decade have now brought Israel to a decisive crossroads. "Paradoxically, the more abundant the gas, the more complex the decisions to be made"¹⁹. This is

¹⁷ <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1131312/000113131206000077/exploration.htm>, 03.11.2023

¹⁸Dentice , Giuseppe, Talbot, Valeria. A Geopolitical Sea: The New Scramble For The Mediterranean, Italian Institute For International Political Studies (ISPI), Italy 2020, p. 21, https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/isp_i_dossier_a_geopolitical_sea_july_2020.pdf, 05.11.2023

¹⁹Giannakopoulos, Angelos. Energy Cooperation and Security in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Seismic Shift towards Peace or Conflict? The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University, Israel 2016, p. 64,

expressed especially in the border disputes that Israel has with its neighbors, where the frictions around the maritime borders have become more pronounced after the discovery of large reserves of natural gas in the Tamar and Leviathan fields. Israel has an unresolved dispute with the Palestinians over the maritime border, as Tel Aviv rejects the two-state solution, which is preventing it from establishing an energy cooperation or strategy with its Arab neighbors, and is undermining the strengthening of its energy geopolitics. in the region.

Out of two main natural gas fields determined in the territorial waters of the Gaza Strip, the bigger one is called “Gaza Marine”, which located 36 km west of Gaza city. The second smaller field, the “Border Field” straddles the international boundary separating Gaza’s territorial waters from Israel’s territorial waters²⁰. The Gaza Strip is estimated to contain 28 billion cubic meters of natural gas, which makes resolving the dispute very difficult, as billions of dollars and influence in the region are at stake.

Israel has another maritime border dispute with Lebanon, which in the last decade have been the source of clashes and harsh rhetoric between the two countries that has threatened the fragile stability of the Eastern Mediterranean. “Since 2011, Lebanese and Israeli authorities have disputed the precise delineation of their respective EEZs, which may hold other large reserves of natural gas”²¹. Tensions between the two countries rose in January 2017 when Lebanese authorities announced the licensing of several companies to search for hydrocarbons in 5 blocks, which prompted Israeli reactions, as they claim 3 of the 5 blocks are within the Exclusive Economic Zone hers. In this situation, Israel warned of the adoption of a law through which it would claim the disputed areas, but this provoked a strong reaction from Beirut, which emphasized that if this is done, then this will be a declaration of war.

In December of the same year, the situation became tense again, after the Lebanese authorities announced a consortium for the development of two blocks, and this caused the reaction of Tel Aviv, since they claimed that block 9 was in the disputed waters. “Thus, an area of 860 kilometers became disputed”²². These areas are of great geopolitical importance to Israel, as they are very close to its giant Karish and Kana gas fields, and the subsurface of the disputed waters is believed to contain other very large quantities of hydrocarbons, which Tel Aviv is targeting that you adopt, but that this can also be a cause for tensions and conflicts in the region.

In October 2022, with the support of the US, the two countries signed an agreement on the delimitation of maritime borders, ending a dispute that threatened to explode the region. Today, Israel has an unresolved border dispute with its other neighbor, Syria, where the conflict between them is even more complicated, since, apart from the maritime dispute, it is also related to the Golan Heights, which Damascus lost during the 6-day war and which he claims the same, but that Tel Aviv refuses to give him back.

<https://www.ceps.eu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/03/Energy%20Cooperation%20and%20Security%20in%20the%20Eastern%20Mediterranean%20small%20file.pdf>

²⁰AKARÇAY,Pınar.AK, Gökhan: GAS FIELDS OFFSHORE GAZA STRIP: HOW SHARP POWER THREATENS SOFT POWER IN THE EAST-MED?, https://tasam.org/Files/Icerik/File/yeni-deniz-guvenligi-ekosistemi-ve-dogu-akdeniz_EKT_y-207-248_pdf_da7eb8ae-141f-479f-8883-83c1199607b2.pdf, p. 234

²¹ Sachs, Natan, Boersma, Tim. The Energy Island: Israel Deals with its Natural Gas Discoveries, Foreign Policy at Brookings, USA 2015, p. 12, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/energy-island-web.pdf>

²²HAşıl, Hamza, LEBANON - ISRAEL MARITIME BORDER AGREEMENT: FROM THE LINE OF TENSION TO THE REGIONAL STABILITY,Türkiye 2022, p. 4, https://orsam.org.tr/d_hbanaliz/lebanon-israel-maritime-border-agreement-from-the-line-of-tension-to-the-regional-stability.pdf, 06.11.2023

Israel's natural gas reserves are currently estimated at 1,087 billion cubic meters, but predictions are that these figures may increase in the future, giving it tremendous geopolitical power, transforming it from an importer to an exporter of gas. natural towards international markets. The gas fields have given Israel powerful geopolitical and geoeconomic victories. In the internal aspect, it will satisfy the energy needs through the quantities of gas, reducing the dependence on foreign sources, and at the same time this will generate extraordinary monetary profits, influencing the growth of the country's economy, since the income from newly discovered energy resources are estimated at over 250 billion dollars. In foreign geopolitics, it will become an influencing factor not only in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, but also in international relations, as it will be a strong voice in the world energy market.

At the same time, the discovery of gas has also created room for maneuver in international relations, as it is now free from energy imports, which in the past has been a serious problem for the political independence of Tel Aviv. The first example of how gas will affect Israeli foreign policy is related to its neighbors who need Tel Aviv's gas. The Tamar gas field is another area located about 90 kilometers from the city of Haifa, and the reserves of this area are estimated at 315 billion cubic meters of gas. About 20% of the gas from this field is exported to Egypt, where its amount for a period of 15 years will be 25.3 billion cubic meters, with a value of about 4.5 billion dollars. "In 2017, the export of natural gas from the Tamar reservoir to customers in Jordan began"²³.

This has given Israel a very big geopolitical victory over its Arab neighbors, since by exporting gas, they create energy dependence on it, increasing influence in these countries, and as a result, Cairo and Amman will be more careful. to the policies they follow towards Tel Aviv, since a gas stop to these countries could cause strong economic instability with great consequences for them.

The geopolitical benefits of gas discovery will not be limited to the Eastern Mediterranean region, but it will also expand to international markets, which they aim to reach through the EstMed project. The EstMed pipeline has a length of 1900 kilometers, a capacity of 10 billion cubic meters per year, while in the second phase it was calculated that its capacity will reach 20 billion cubic meters of gas per year. "The planned EastMed pipeline, which would link the Eastern Mediterranean gas fields to mainland Greece via Cyprus and Crete, has also been a major source of contention"²⁴. This pipeline aims to bring gas from the Israeli fields, pass through Cyprus and Greece and then towards Italy and the European Union (EU) markets. From the beginning, this project caused strong geopolitical reactions not only in the region but also wider, and the parties took sides, where some supported it while others opposed it. It was strongly supported by three countries, Israel, Greece and Cyprus, as this would have strong geopolitical impacts for all three countries, and its main winner would be Tel Aviv, as it would increase its weight and influencing power in Brussels would also transport its gas without the need for its gas to be stored in Egypt to then go to the Union markets. The EU supported this project, as it aims to de-diversify energy resources and get rid of dependence on Russian gas, which has turned into a problem not only economic, but also political, and as such this project has a special importance for her. The USA initially supported this idea, but it was withdrawn on the grounds that it did not justify the financial and environmental cost. Turkey strongly opposed it, as it sees this project as a geopolitical goal of Israel and other countries to weaken its role as a hub country, and as such this is unacceptable to it. There are two alternatives as to the fate of the flow of Israeli gas towards Europe: at the last meeting of September 2023 between the leaders of Israel, Cyprus and Greece, where the construction of a terminal in Cyprus was discussed and then the delivery of of Israel's gas in the direction of Europe, the second is related to the possibility of building a pipeline that would pass to Turkey,

²³Tamar Petroleum Ltd. Annual Report 2021, f. 9, https://www.tamarpetroleum.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Tamar_Petroleum_Ltd_2021.pdf, 06.09.2023

²⁴Lopez Piqueres, Sofia. Taking the EU out of the EastMed pipeline quagmire, Belgium 2022, https://www.epc.eu/content/publications/EastMed_pipeline_SLP_PB.pdf, 06.11.2023

but which has remained hostage to the relations between the two countries. Since this project is of great geopolitical importance for Israel, but has caused strong disagreements, it is not known what its future will be.

7. Conclusion

Although Israel has fought four wars against alliances of Arab states and individual wars against Lebanon, it has not yet managed to resolve the issue of security of its existence, as its neighbors still do not accept its existence. In addition to the problems with its neighbors, it still has not resolved the issue with the Palestinians about their future, so will they have their own state, or will this situation continue indefinitely, which poses a significant risk to its security. The attack by Hamas on October 7 showed how fragile its security is and how quickly not only Israel but also the entire Eastern Mediterranean can be destabilized. So even after 75 years since independence, Israel's geopolitics continues to face the challenge of existence. Vigorous efforts to achieve a lasting peace starting with Camp David, Oslo II and II have all but failed, without any tangible achievements.

While in one geopolitical aspect, Israel continues to be vulnerable and insecure, in the other aspect, i.e. the energy aspect, it seems to have found the solution. From a country that has been completely dependent on foreign supplies of energy resources, after recent discoveries, it will turn into a weighty factor in the global energy market. Now from an importer of energy resources, it is turning into its exporter not only to neighboring countries, but also aims to expand to international markets. Thus, the EstMed project aims to send its gas to the European Union, which would give it a powerful lever of influence in the Brussels offices. As this is a project with strong geopolitical weight for Israel, it has provoked reactions by raising tensions in the region. US support for such projects is vital, which initially gave the green light, but then withdrew by led to a dead end. Israel will benefit greatly from the discovered gas, placing it at a higher stage of development and influence in international relations.

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Individuals in organization: Factors affecting individual behaviour in organisation

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ABSTRACT

The term “individual” implies a physical person, a creature, a social being that continually changes, progresses, develops, and excels in the skills and various abilities they possess. Individuals are not the same; they differ in values, attitudes, motivations, skills, abilities, personality, and so on. Differences among individuals allow them to exhibit different behaviours in similar situations.

Productivity within an organization depends significantly on the engagement and contribution of the individual, while, on the other hand, an individual depends on the income generated within the organization. Recognising the impact and significance of an individual’s behaviour in the organization, this research identifies and analyses factors that positively or negatively influence an individual’s behaviour and productivity within an organization.

The study is theoretically-empirical, utilizing statistical methods, descriptive-comparative methods and doctrinal research to meet the work’s requirements. Primary data is collected through surveys conducted with randomly selected employed citizens in various organisations across different cities in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The study draws conclusions and recommendations that can contribute to advancing individual behaviour within an organization and increasing productivity within that organization.

KEYWORDS

Behaviour, factors, individual, organization, productivity

1 INTRODUCTION

People make up the central internal system of an organization. Time is shows that individuals are the most important resource of a business. Organisations depend on the individual’s commitment, while the individual relies on the means that are realized it. In various ways, people contribute to the success of the organization (Kovacevski & Zlatkovski, 2010: 267). There are many factors that determine behaviour biological factors that include all those elements related to genetic inheritance and the biology of the human being, environmental factors, and sociocultural factors (Musaraj, 2006).

Human behaviour is very diverse and varies greatly from one individual to another. These differences help us improve together, learn and discover new things, complement each other, and co-operate. People have common characteristics that connect them to each other, but also characteristics that make them special and unique. If we look around the environment where we live, we will notice that each of us is special in some way. What makes us special are as follows: biographical characteristics, values, attitudes, motivations, interests, abilities and skills, the way of learning, etc .(Kasimati & Maxhari, 2005: 29-35).

The research question is as follows: What factors determine the behaviour of the individual in organisations?

The research hypothesis is as follows: The behaviour of the individual in an organization is influenced by biographical characteristics, personality, values, attitudes, motivation, abilities and skills.

The study has multiple objectives:

- To identify the factors that determine the behaviour of the individual in an organization.
- To offer theoretical knowledge about the importance of the individual's and his commitment to the development, productivity, and growth of the organisation's success.
- To contribute to the mitigation of the lack of local literature on the topic being addressed.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the needs of the study, a survey (structured type) was conducted with 200 random citizens of different nationalities of the Republic of North Macedonia, employed in various organisations and enterprises. The survey included a total of 9 questions, the first 5 questions related to the socio-economic status of the participants in the research, while the other questions posed in the survey related to the evaluation and attitude of the citizens regarding the factors that determine the behaviour of the individual in an organization. The collection of secondary data was carried out through literature review. The research process, the collection and processing primary data, took more time and was one of the major challenges in the realization of this study.

Table 1: The attitudes of the surveyed citizens regarding the questions posed in the survey.

Question	Yes	No
1.Does age influence the behavior of the individual in an organisation and productivity in an organisation ?	68%	32%
2.Does gender influence the behavior of the individual in an organisation	34%	66%

and
productivity
in an
organisation
?

3. Do the attitudes of the individual influence their behaviour in an organisation and the individual's productivity in an organisation ?	65%	35%
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4. Do the abilities and skills of the individual affect their behaviour in the organisation and productivity of an organisation ?	73%	27%
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From the results of the research, the following can be established:

- From all 200 surveyed, the majority of them, respectively 68%, think that the age of the individual affects their behaviour in an organization. 66% of them think that gender of the individual does not affect their behaviour in an organization. Out of the total 200 surveyed, the majority, respectively 73%, believed that abilities and skills influence the behaviour and productivity of individuals in an organization. The majority of the surveyed

individuals, specifically 65% of them, believed that the attitudes of the individual influence the behaviour of the individual in an organization.

- the behaviour of an individual in an organization is significantly influenced by biographical characteristics: gender, age, marital status and tenure. Based on empirical data from the research and several psychological studies, it is assumed that as a person's age increases the productivity of the individuals in an organization decreases. This is because efficiency, speed, strength, motivation and intellectual stimulation decline with age. From gender perspective, it is believed that there is no difference between men and women in their ability to solve problems, analytical skills, competitiveness, motivation, leadership, sociability or the ability to learn. Likewise, job tenure does not impact the productivity of an individual in an organization because productivity also depends on other factors.
- Personal values also play an essential role in determining human behaviour and productivity in an organization. Positive outcomes in an organization can be brought about by an individual with values (desirable positive qualities such as being ambitious, open minded, intellectual, responsible, moral, self-controlled, etc).
- The attitudes that an individual has towards the organization in general also plays a significant role in productivity. If an individual has a positive attitude towards the organization, the working conditions, and the work environment, they will undoubtedly adapt more easily and produce positive results.
- Individuals behave, react, and interact in different ways depending on their personality type. Different individuals have different personalities. Since jobs vary, it is good for certain personalities to be matched with certain jobs.
- In an organization, depending on the individual's engagement in it, skills and expertise that match their activity are required. If the individual does not possess the necessary skills and expertise required to perform a job or has them below the required level, their execution will be poor, and the productivity in the organization will be low.

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Professional capacity for social intervention with older people

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Abstract

Professionals are a key factor that enables adequate service in different fields, and especially in the social one, because the professional tasks and activities always have in their essence humane acts towards people who are in a certain type of social risk and in need of help and support. From here, of course, comes the importance of the professional capacity of the professionals involved in social intervention with the older people, because they are the key stakeholders in providing the care of the older people and the support of their families. This role of professionals imposes the need to be prepared with sufficient level of knowledge and skills, which will enable them to provide services with high quality and on time. Having this in mind, the aim of this study is to examine the level of professional capacity of the professionals involved in social intervention with older people. For this purpose, we created a questionnaire for the total professional capacity for social intervention with older people. The questionnaire has two domains: 1) Knowledge (with six subdomains) and 2) Skills (with three subdomains), each subdomain is composed of a certain number of indicators (Appendix 1). In the research participated a total of 61 professionals employed in providers of social services for older people in North Macedonia. Each professional was tasked on a 3-point Likert scale to self-assess their level of knowledge and skills for each indicator in all subdomains. The results for overall professional capacity showed that 44.26% of professionals have an insufficient total level of professional capacity, 22.95% a basic level, while only 32.79% have a sufficient level.

Keywords: professional capacity, social intervention and older people.

Introduction

Above all, knowledge has a theoretical meaning and represents a set of scientifically systematized and generalized knowledge, acquired in a certain scientific field. According to Pearsall and Hanks (1) in the Oxford dictionary, knowledge represents: "Facts, information and skills gained through experience and education, theoretical and practical understanding of the subject" (2).

According to this knowledge involves collecting, analyzing and synthesizing information and explanations, which do lead to "knowing about something". Having knowledge about something does not mean that it is constantly implemented in practice, although the acquisition of knowledge is always with a pre-planned goal. More specifically, we acquire knowledge in order to understand ourselves and others around us, as well as to understand the world and the happenings in it.

Knowledge is a dynamic category that is in constant motion, therefore it should be constantly upgraded and improved. New scientific knowledge and practical experiences, as well as characteristics and extent of social risks, require a new kind of knowledge and practical skills. The professionals knowledge and its practical application represent an important, and in many cases, a key factor for dealing with the social risks to which citizens are exposed. Considering the nature and specifics of the helping or humanitarian professions, knowledge represents the greatest and most important capital and resource that should be constantly invested in.

The knowledge base acquired by the professionals involved in social intervention with older people, during their education, but also the way that knowledge base affects the development of professional practice, are the starting point for the study of professional skills. It is in line with Platon's famous thought, according to which "Knowing does not mean that you can.", to which Donevska adds: "This is due to the fact that today it is not enough just to know, but it is also important to be able to do it" (3).

Considerations of skills run from one extreme to the other in terms of whether they are innate or acquired. According to Betler, Crago, Arizmendi, Meltzoff, Komreich, (4,5): "Some understandings of skills go along the lines of concepts that emphasize that skills are a kind of talent, i.e., inherent, innate abilities, while others, on the other hand, emphasize that skills can be learned" (6). Skills represent complex behaviors and actions, which are closely related to other processes and environmental influences, and mutually influence each other, but are learned through the process of socialization and work on oneself. Hence, practical experience is a key point for developing professional skills for social intervention with older people.

Talent is innate and we can possess it or not, but we consciously develop skills by applying the accumulated knowledge in practice. We are constantly learning and improving our skills, regardless of whether we have talent. Skills are often divided into general and specialist skills. Both can be practiced at a basic, intermediate or advanced level. Depending on experience, capabilities and training, almost all practitioners use generalist skills most of the time. In the past, generalist skills of this kind tended to be associated with the generic practice approach which, according to Persloy (7), assumes: "A common core of knowledge, values and skills that underpins all practice".

When we talk about the context of social intervention, it can focus on: individuals, families, communities, groups or organizations and of course it can take many forms, "depending on their purpose and on the generalist and specialist nature of the works that are described as more effective" (8). According to Kolshid and Orme (9): "In general, interventions can be categorized as direct and indirect."

In principle, direct interventions are aimed at trying to deliberately change the course of events. In this task, they can be heavily influenced by the institutions policy itself, ie the service provider or the practice itself, in order to find the ways to move things forward. Direct social interventions include giving advice, information and recommendations about what to do or perhaps how the user should behave in certain circumstances. "This range of interventions can be particularly important and require a special professional approach, in situations where there is immediate danger or risk" (8).

According to Kolsheed and Orme (9): "In indirect interventions, the professional should not try to make decisions for people, nor lead or persuade them to accept his/her specific conclusions." In indirect interventions, the task is to work with service users, carers and others, but in ways that enable individuals to make their own decisions.

According to Andjelkovic: "During the aging process, numerous structural and morphological changes occur in the body that more or less cover all vital functions" (10). Therefore, "Social workers should have knowledge of biopsychosocial factors relevant to the elderly, how to work in interdisciplinary teams, and resources specific to the needs of the older people" (11,12,13,14).

Considering that human potential is an important factor in social intervention, in this study we investigate the level of professional capacities of professionals employed in social service providers for the older people.

Materials and methods:

Considering that there is no standardized procedure and validated questionnaire for researching the professional capacity of professionals involved in social intervention with older people, for this study we made a questionnaire through which professionals self-assess the level of professional knowledge and skills (Appendix 1). The questionnaire on professional capacities for social intervention with older people has two domains: 1) knowledge and 2) skills. The Knowledge domain contains six subdomains, while the Skills domain contains three subdomains, each subdomain consisting of a number of indicators. Each professional was tasked on a 3-point Likert scale to rate their level of knowledge for each indicator in each subdomain.

Questionnaires were distributed electronically to professionals employed in the non-family social care providers for older people, centers for social work and organizations (associations) providing home and community services and were asked to fill out the questionnaire individually and independently.

In return, 61 fully completed questionnaires were received from professionals involved in social intervention with older people, of which:

1. 35 professionals employed in institutions for non-family social protection of older people. This includes all institutions for institutional non-family social protection of the older people, which at the time of the research had a work license

from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and all social workers employed in these institutions;

2. 21 professionals employed in centers for social work: Resen, Ohrid, Skopje, Bitola, Debar, Berovo, Kumanovo;
3. 5 professionals employed in organizations (associations) that provide services in the home and services in the community: Association for Support and Development "Humanost", Red Cross of the City of Skopje, Red Cross of the Municipality of Saraj, Red Cross of the Municipality of Chair and Red Cross of the Municipality of Gazi Baba.

Table 1

Demographics of participants (total = 61)

Sex	
Female	n = 53 (86.9%)
Male	n = 8 (13.1%)
Age	
<30	n = 18 (29.5%)
31 – 40	n = 19 (31.2%)
41 – 50	n = 12 (19.7%)
51 – 60	n = 10 (16.3%)
61+	n = 2 (3.3%)
Educational level	
ISCED 5	n = 5 (8.2%)
ISCED 6	n = 38 (62.3%)
ISCED 7	n = 18 (29.5%)
Working experience (in years)	
<1	n = 14 (23%)
1 – 5	n = 11 (18%)
6 – 10	n = 21 (34.4%)
11 – 20	n = 8 (13.1%)
21 – 30	n = 7 (11.5%)

Statistics:

The data obtained from the completed questionnaires were first subject to content and logical control and then were analyzed using SPSS version 23.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Descriptive techniques (arithmetic mean, frequency and percentage), analysis of influence and connection between two variables with linear regression, factor

analysis for the influence of a group of factors on one variable with standard and non-standard regression coefficients were used in the processing of the research data. The obtained data are descriptively and graphically presented and a statistical conclusion is made.

Results:

Results according individual domains

In the *Knowledge* domain (Table 2), the highest percentage of professionals with an insufficient level of knowledge is in the subdomain *Old age and aging*. In this subdomain, 47.6% of professionals have insufficient level of knowledge, while only 26.2% have sufficient level. Also, in the subdomain *Physical and mental health characteristics in old age*, the percentage of professionals with a sufficient level of knowledge is low (26.2%). In the subdomain *Social policy of older people*, 27.8% of the professionals have a sufficient level of knowledge, while 36.1% have an insufficient level. In the subdomains *Social services for older people* and *Family and family care*, 27.9% of the professionals have sufficient level of knowledge. The highest percentage of professionals with a sufficient level of knowledge is in the subdomain *Social and health protection of older people* (31.1%).

In the *Skills* domain (Table 2), the *Organizational Skills* subdomain has the lowest results, in this subdomain 29.5% of the professionals have a sufficient level, while 44.3% have an insufficient level of skills. In the *Emotional Skills* subdomain, the percentage of professionals with a sufficient level of skills is 31.1%, while 37.8% of professionals have an insufficient level of skills. In the *Communication skills* subdomain, 32.8% have a sufficient level (which is the highest percentage of all subdomains), while 34.4% have an insufficient level of skills.

Table 2. Knowledge and Skills levels

	Level		
	Insufficient	Basic	Sufficient
Knowledge			
Old age and ageing	47.6%	26.2%	26.2%
Physical and mental health characteristics in old age	37.7%	36.1%	26.2%
Family and family care	39.3%	32.8%	27.9%
Social policy for older people	36.1%	36.1%	27.8%
Social and health protection of older people	41%	27.9%	31.1%
Social services for older people	45.9%	26.2%	27.9%
Skills			
Communication skills	34.4%	32.8%	32.8%
Emotional skills	37.8%	31.1%	31.1%
Organizational skills	44.3%	26.2%	29.5%

Results for the overall professional capacity

The total professional capacity of the professionals involved in social intervention with older people is obtained by summing up all the points from the two domains *knowledge* and *skills*. The results, show that 44.26% of the professionals have an insufficient level of professional capacity for social intervention with older people and 22.95% have a basic level of professional capacity, which means that they have basic knowledge and skills. The results for this two levels of the professional capacity show that 67.21% of the professionals need to raise their professional capacity in the two domains of Knowledge and Skills. The results show that only 32.79% of professionals have sufficient capacity level for social intervention with older people.

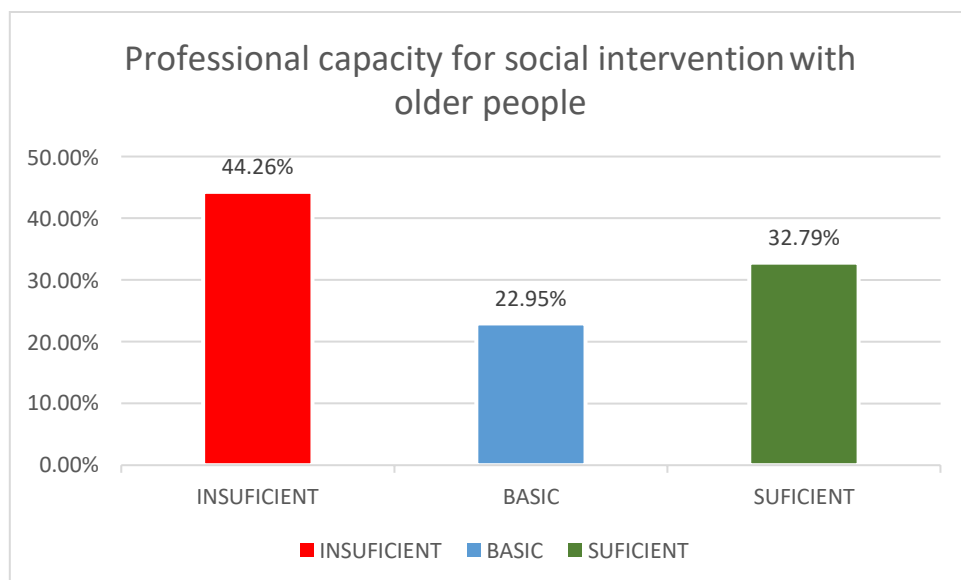


Figure 1. Professional capacity level for social intervention with older people

According to the mode (189), the median (192) and the mean size (194) for the total professional capacity and according to the negative coefficient of Kurtosis (-0.256) it can be concluded that this distribution is asymmetric negative (Table no. 3).

Table 3. Overall professional capacity

	Overall professional capacity
Mean	194.20
Median	192.00
Mode	189
Standard deviation	11.797
Skewness	.380
Std. Error of Skewness	.306
Kurtosis	-.256
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.604
Min	168
Max	222

In picture no. 2, it can be seen that the results are distributed on the negative side on the left side, which means that insufficient level of knowledge and skills of the professionals dominates.

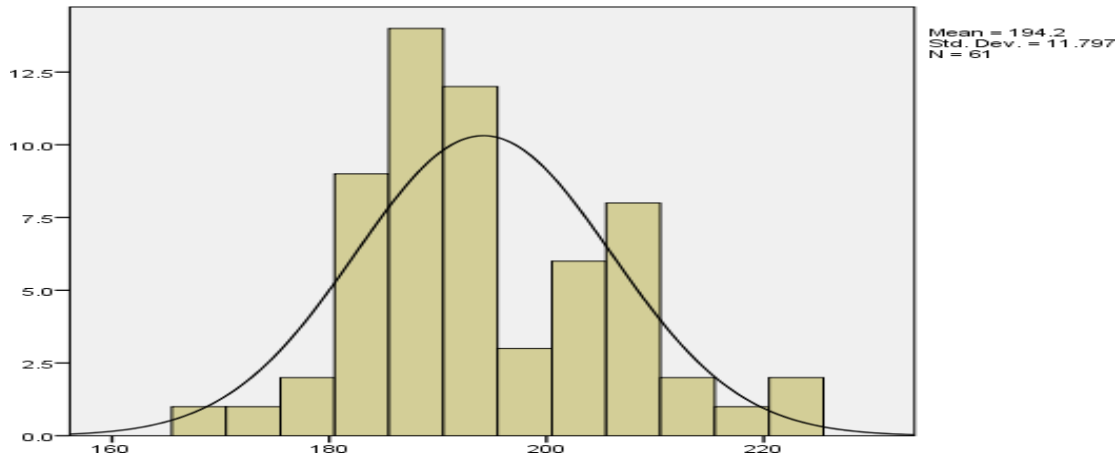


Figure 2. Distribution of the professional capacity

2.2. Factorial analysis

The coefficient of linear regression ($R^2=0.894$) shows that there is a high positive correlation of the domains of knowledge and skills with the total professional. Also, the significance coefficient shows that the knowledge and skills factor has a significant impact on professional capacities.

Table number 4 shows individual coefficients of the influence of all factors from the group.

Table 4. Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	133.392	14.489		9.206	.000
Gender	-4.769	2.808	-.139	-1.699	.099
Age	-.264	1.237	-.027	-.213	.833
Education level	-.378	1.106	-.028	-.342	.735
Knowledge					
Old age and ageing	-.219	.955	-.016	-.229	.820
Physical and mental health characteristics in old age	7.391	1.313	.522	5.628	.000
Family and family care	2.365	.992	.170	2.383	.023
Social policy for older people	4.854	1.027	.345	4.728	.000
Social and health protection of older people	2.320	1.036	.172	2.239	.032
Social services for older people	4.081	1.129	.314	3.616	.001
Skills					
Communicational skills	4.492	1.035	.321	4.341	.000
Emotional skills	.581	1.033	.043	.562	.578
Organizational skills	4.954	.898	.372	5.519	.000

a. Dependent Variable: overall professional capacity

Discussion:

Knowledge of old age and aging is fundamental in working with older people. Professionals working with older people should have an understanding of the interrelated aspects of the biological, psychological, social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual factors that affect the lives of the older people (15). Professionals should "Understand the differences between normal aging and "pathological" ageing in order to apply a holistic and systemic approach to understanding the needs of clients and to assist the coping mechanisms of both clients and families (11,16). Despite the importance of the knowledge contained in the subdomain Old age and aging, the fact that only 26.2% of the participants in our study have a sufficient level of knowledge in this subdomain is worrying.

According to Berkman et al. (12): "Social workers must continue to learn about the impact of illness and treatment on the older people and their families, including knowledge of the symptomatology and psychopathology of illness, both physical and mental" (17). Bearing this in mind, the fact that only 26.2% of respondents have an adequate level of knowledge in the sub-domain Physical and mental health characteristic in old age is worrying. The main source of health and social protection is the family and it depends on the functioning of intergenerational and intragenerational solidarity (17). But taking into account that in the Family and family care subdomain, only 27.9% of participants have a sufficient level of knowledge, it can be seen that professionals are not trained in an efficient way to assess and use the family's potential in providing help and support to the older people.

The policy for older people includes all measures, solutions and mechanisms used by society in relation to the aging process and the needs of the older people in several domains: pensions, health care, income security, housing, social services, education" (17). The social policy for older people is expected to guarantee the well-being and quality of life of the older people, as well as to influence the maintenance of their autonomy and independence. Professionals involved in social intervention with the older people should know social policy well, because social policy, through several of its domains, tries to create conditions that will enable a better quality of life for older people. However, in the subdomain social policy for older people, most of the respondents have an insufficient level of knowledge.

According to Rowan (13): "Social workers must have a deeper knowledge of service planning and connecting with service providers and resources that support older people in the community" (16). At the same time, it is not only important for professionals to have knowledge in this area, but also the ability to approach and explain it to the older people, in a way that they can understand. For those reasons, the fact that in the subdomain Social and health care of older people 41% of respondents have an insufficient level of knowledge is worrying.

Knowledge of social services for older people refers to the knowledge that is crucial for the implementation of individual and group social work with older people. This group includes: knowledge of assessment, knowledge of services planning, knowledge related to the application of the multidisciplinary approach in social services, knowledge of the application of group work, knowledge of communication with older people according to their limitations and the use of professional boundaries, knowledge of compassion, professional grief, burnout and secondary traumatization, as well as knowledge of the application of reflective practice and critical thinking.

Social workers play a critical role in advocating for and providing for health care that centers on older adults' goals, needs, and strengths and in creating societal conditions favorable to health and well-being in old age (18). The availability of both in-home services (such as personal care, housekeeping, meal preparation, care management, and home health care) and community services (such as day programs, congregate meals, and social centers) enables a growing percentage of older adults to delay or even avoid institutional care (19). Bearing this in mind, the fact that in the subdomain Social services for older people 45.9% of respondents have an insufficient level of knowledge show that they are not well prepared to provide high quality services.

According to Lishman (20): "The core of any intervention with older people is in adequate usage of verbal and non-verbal skills. For those reasons, professionals involved in social intervention with the older people should have good communication skills. But the results of our study show that only 32.8% of the professionals have a sufficient level of skills in the subdomain Communication skills.

Professionals in social intervention with older people are often exposed to stressful and difficult situations, where they have to be aware of their own emotions and the emotions of the clients. That's why they need emotional skills with which they can establish appropriate connections with clients. However, despite the importance of the Emotional skills subdomain, 37.8% of participants in this study have an insufficient level of skills in this subdomain.

By developing organizational skills, situations of omissions and negative results for the clients, that is, the older people and their family members, are avoided. The essence of organizational skills among professionals involved in social intervention with the older people refers to successful management and prioritization of all obligations and activities in

the work. Having this in mind, as well as the fact that 44.3% of the participants in this study have an insufficient level of knowledge in the Organizational skills subdomain, the need to strengthen skills in this subdomain is imposed.

Study Limitations:

This study has several advantages, first this is the first study in North Macedonia that examines the professional capacities of professionals who are involved in social intervention with older people and thus represents a basis for further research. Second, by defining the main domains and subdomains, it represents a basis for creating a validated self-assessment questionnaire for professional capacity for social intervention with older people. Third, representatives from all types of social service providers participated in the study. Fourth, representatives from social service providers located in different cities of the country participated in the study.

However, despite its advantages, the study has certain limitations. First, it does not use validated tools for quantitative measurement of professional capacity. Second, although all types of social service providers from the territory of the entire country are included, the research sample should be larger in order to adequately cover all subgroups, especially employees in centers for social work.

Conclusions:

From this study it can be concluded that in both domains Knowledge and Skills, but also in all subdomains, which make up the professional capacity, the respondents have a low level of knowledge and skills. As a result, there is a need to systematically approach the creation of a system that will enable raising the professional capacities of professionals involved in social intervention with older people, in order for the end users to receive quality and timely services.

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The role of Emotional Intelligence in organizational culture: Case of Business in RMV

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Abstract:

Much research has shown that Emotional Intelligence is a key factor in achieving organizational goals and mission by creating a strong culture of work, talents, development, and loyalty to the organization. Organizational culture refers to the character of an organization, and its approaches to problems, decision making, its way of treating employees, and its way of dealing with the outside world. Regarding this, the usual thing that organizations face is a chronic stress of problem solving and emotional weakness. Today employees are more motivated by a successful culture of work, better environment, appreciation, communication, and collaboration; and EI seems to have the ability to recognize the meanings of emotions, relationships and the problem solving based in them. The aim of this paper is to analyze the influence of EI and organizational culture in organizations in RMV, and how EI can affect the culture of managers and employees. From the results it is possible to conclude that higher levels of individual Emotional Intelligence are associated with higher levels of organization's cultural propensity to support EI.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, measures, organizational culture, relationships, instincts, emotions

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is a recent concept to organizations in RNM, but it has shown that is important to managing the performance of employees and organization's performance. EI has been a flurry of research and applies studies, so it has captured the public spotlight but and a strong interest from academics and consultants.

Meantime the research has been focused on defining relationships, work attitudes, communications'; practitioners are seeking to maximize potential employee performance and culture through identifications and training competences involving the emotional abilities of employees. This paper aim is to measure the influence of EI in organizational cultures in organizations, will examines the nature of this relationship and presents empirical evidence that suggests there is a complex relationship between emotional intelligence, organizational culture, and organizational performance.

Organizational culture has received much attention in the last two decades due to its effects and potential impact on organizational success (Zabid, Sambasivan, & Johari, 2003). The pioneering work of (Deal & Kennedy, 1982) incited the interest of researchers in the concept of organizational culture, and how these values and philosophy guide employees' behavior in the organization towards greater success.

Research during the last twenty-five years has consistently pointed to a set of competencies – some purely cognitive but most emotional – such as self-confidence, initiative and teamwork as making a significant difference in the performance of individuals. These competencies represent what is called emotional intelligence and are believed to be predictive of superior performance in work roles (Goleman, 2001).

(Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, The emotional reality of teams, 2002) have shown the link between EQ and organizational climate. There is also a small body of work that examined the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance. For example, Higgs and McGuire (2001) had shown the relationship between individual emotional intelligence and organizational culture and the relationship between leadership and emotional intelligence. (Higgs & McGuire)

Erkut Altındağ and Yeliz Köseadağı (2015) have shown that there is a meaningful relationship among emotional intelligence, innovative institution culture and the performance of the employees. It has been stated that it is necessary for a company to create an innovative institution culture and to have managers who have high level of emotional intelligence to increase the employees' performance at work. (Altındağa & Köseadağia, 2015)

Referring to the empiric research is concluded that emotional intelligence level of the managers, directly affects the

employee performance, because a manager, who has a sense of empathy, and can assess the behavior of employees analytically, minimizes the problems within the organization. If managers understand the feelings of employees, collaborate, communicate, and tell the employees that the emotions are a management strategy, they improve the working quality of employees, and allow them to progress in the areas of their professional expertise.

(Jorfi & Jorfi, 2011) concluded that there is a strong correspondence between organizational culture, communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence in educational administrations.

Goleman (1996) and Dulewicz & Higgs (1998) showed that EI plays a crucial role in positive increment performance and individual success in organization. The study has explored the impact of organizational culture and levels of individual EI by which has been concluded that higher levels of individual Emotional Intelligence are associated with higher levels of an organization's cultural propensity to support EI. (Higgs & McGuire)

LITERATURE REVIEW; HYPOTHESIS

Emotional intelligence

Defining Emotional Intelligence

(Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 1990) explored and defined the term EI in 1990, while being aware of the previous work on non-cognitive aspects of intelligence. They described emotional intelligence as *"a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action"*.

After Salovey and Mayer definition, Daniel Goleman became aware of their work, and this eventually led to his book and a general definition: *"the array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions"*.

Both authors define the EI as a ability to control emotions; in Mayer case it shows how others emotions work to control your own, and in Goleman definition EI as a ability of motivation, empathy, social competences. Besides these authors, Gordon says that emotional skill' can help you get a job in company, but emotional skill helps you grow in the job once you were hired, this explains the influence of EI in increasing the performance of employees and their work culture.

As the empirical research shows the most widely credible authors to have coined the term Emotional Intelligence are (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 1990), and possibly the best-known author to have contributed through his work to the popularization of the term is (Goleman, Emotional Intelligence, 1995)

What do we know about EI?

1. Emotional intelligence is distinct from, but positively related to. other intelligences.
2. Emotional intelligence is an individual difference, where some people are more endowed, and others are less so.
3. Emotional intelligence develops over a person's life span and can be enhanced through training.
4. Emotional intelligence involves, at least in part, a person's abilities to identify and to perceive emotion (in self and others), as well as possession of the skills to understand and to manage those emotions successfully. (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002)

Daniel Goleman's (1995) model divides up the components of Emotional Intelligence, one of the most popular models of EI which is focused on defining EI by using skills and competencies that affect organizational and leadership performance. According to him, there are 4 main characteristics of EI:

- Self-Awareness
 - ✓ Self-awareness involves being able to read your own emotions and recognize their impact. It also involves knowing your strengths and limits and having a sense of self-confidence.
- Organizational Awareness
 - ✓ Self-management competencies involve having a sense of achievement, displaying honesty, integrity and trustworthiness and being able to keep disruptive emotions under control.
- Social Awareness
 - ✓ Social awareness competencies involve being able to sense other people's emotions, understanding their unique perspectives and learning to take an active interest in things they are concerned about.
- Relationship Management
 - ✓ Relationship management involves having a sense of teamwork and collaboration, being an inspirational leader and learning how to resolve disagreements.

Even though each model emphasizes and defines the components of Emotional Intelligence in their own way, with this model we have a pretty good understanding of what the structure of Emotional Intelligence is. It involves both self and others, and it combines awareness with the intelligence of how to use that awareness to better manage emotions, both of self and others.

Based on the study that is done in 2009 with managers in Italy from Boyatzis and Ratti emotional intelligence, social and cognitive intelligence competences predict performance in the workplace. (Boyatzis & Ratti, 2009)

Organizational culture

The word "culture" is defined in different ways, however what defines it as organizational culture means the common system of attitudes, beliefs, values and behavior in the organization. (Robert Gilbson, 2002). Hofstede called organizational culture the "collective mental program." Meanwhile Schein says that culture is a very complex concept which can explain everything and nothing. People in a company think, feel, value and act, guided by ideas, meanings and beliefs of a cultural (common social) nature. Culture within an organization therefore consists of the beliefs, norms and values that a certain group of people share and can be seen as a challenge for businesses operating internationally (Edgar H Schein, 1984).

Schein (2010) in elaborating the concept of culture concludes that: if one understands the dynamics of culture in the organization, individuals within it will find it easier to cope with stress and worries while dealing with previously unknown situations. But there are findings that organizational culture and performance are clearly interrelated (Richard , Brief, & Guzz, 1990). Through organizational culture employees understand the history of their organization as well as the way they operate in that organization. Employees while recognizing the organization understand its values, norms and rules, which leads them to common sense with other employees and motivates them to achieve the goals of the organization and increase the performance of the same. This proves the fact that the organization achieves effectiveness when, despite personal differences, employees share the same values and the same goals and quality at work in order to advance the organization.

It is evident that in most organizations the working atmosphere is much more motivating in cases where we have an organizational culture that respects the basic principles of employee development, leaders contribute to increasing the reputation of both employees and the organization in order for people within it to feel valued and give the best.

Regarding to this Sharma's paper on impact of organizational culture on job satisfaction of the employees that was conducted in three Information Technology companies in Maharashtra (India), with an sample of 220 IT professionals. The findings of this paper reveal that organizational cultural values such as fairness, growth opportunities and reputation of organization have a positive effect on the job satisfaction, whereas organizational traits like aggressiveness have a negative influence on job satisfaction (Sharma, 2017).

Collaboration and relationships are part of cultural values that serve as a control mechanism for shaping behavior in emotionally intelligent organizations.

EI and Organizational Culture

Managers' Emotional Intelligence has a significant effect on the culture, especially organizational culture. (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, The emotional reality of teams, 2002). Therefore, culture impacts the development of emotional intelligence. (Sung, 2007) . This management style impresses upon employee members organizational values such as supportive relationships and interactive communication (Kwan & Walker, 2004).

In this paper the following hypothesis will be evaluated:

H: Emotional intelligence has a direct positive impact on organizational culture?

Culture is shared through communication. Communication is the method of creating, sustaining, and managing meaning among individuals (Conrad & Poole, 2005). (Waldron & Krone, 1991) claimed that organizational culture shows strong form of control that informs and guides the emotions of employees and contributes to shared emotional intelligence.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive analysis

Questionnaires and interviews were used as a method of collecting primary data for the research. The survey was conducted through direct and online contact, always based on the target groups such as employees, owners, CEOs, department managers. Communication with respondents is made in such a way that the target groups could express their

opinion on the issues raised, their perception in the workplace, the advantages and disadvantages of organizational culture, the relationship with leadership at work as well as impressions for the work environment, all this is done while maintaining complete anonymity. The questionnaire was sent to private and public institutions as well as to credible organizations as well as established communities to support the private and business sector in the RNM. From the released questionnaires, we managed to have 390 respondents. The questionnaires were multiple-response questionnaire that response is measured on 5-point Likert-type scales and range from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” There is measured how organizational culture changes as a result of EI, in this case we are focusing on determinant variables of Emotional Intelligence as dependent variable in organizational culture of organizations in RNM.

Variables of EI: Self-Awareness; Organizational Awareness; Social Awareness; Relationship Management; have been coded from 1 to 5.

Variables of organizational culture Y: Communication; Identity; Motivation; Beliefs have been categorized data as a result of not having the same degree of response for ex, communication from 1 to 3; identity as dummy variable, motivation from 1 to 5 and beliefs as dummy variable.

As Control Variables we have used: Gender, Education, Type of Organization, Size of the Organization and Experience In Probit regression, the cumulative standard normal distribution function $\Phi(\cdot)$ is used to model the regression function when the dependent variable is binary, that is, we assume $E(Y|X)=P(Y=1|X)=\Phi(\beta_0+\beta_1X)$.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	O b s	M e a n	St d. De v.	M i n	M a x
Self-awareness	390	3.6	1.01	1	5
Organizational awareness	390	3.75	1.07	1	5
Social awareness	390	3.56	1.11	1	5
Relationship Management	388	3.80	0.49	1	4
Communication	390	2.85	0.39	0	3
Identity	390	0.97	0.15	0	1
Motivation	390	3.73	0.20	1	5
Beliefs	390	0.96	0.18	0	1
Female	390	0.2	0.2	0	1
Age_18_33	390	0.	0.	0	1

	9	66	47		
	0	4	3		
	3	0.	0.		
	9	26	44		
Age_34_49	0	4	1	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
	9	07	25		
Age_50_greater	0	2	8	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Education/primary	8	11	31		
	9	3	7	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Education/University	8	51	50		
	9	9	0	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Education/Master	8	30	46		
	9	8	2	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Education/PhD	8	05	23		
	9	9	6	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
	9	65	47		
Private/Sector	0	1	7	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Employees upto 9	9	24	43		
	0	9	3	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Employees_10_49	9	34	47		
	0	6	6	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Employees_50_249	9	25	43		
	0	4	6	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Employees_250_greater	9	15	35		
	0	1	9	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Experience_1_10	9	70	45		
	0	0	9	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Experience_11_20	9	23	42		
	0	1	2	0	1
	3	0.	0.		
Experience_21_g~r	9	06	25		
	0	9	4	0	1

Source: Author Calculations

While collecting data from respondents, they were given the opportunity to express themselves more freely through open-ended questions, which made a primary contribution to the qualitative analysis of the research. Out of 390 surveys, 58.8% were women and 41.5% were men, of which 37.8% are in leadership positions and 62.2% are employees.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this part we are going to examine the effect of Emotional Intelligence in organizational culture in Organizations in RNM. In the following table (Table 2) we will present the ordered probit model estimation. And in the (Table 3) we will

report the results of marginal effect of Communication and Motivation which represents the probability of changes in the depended variables of being Self-Awareness; Organizational Awareness; Social Awareness; Relationship Management.

Table 2: Ordered probit estimation.

	(1) communica tion	(2) iden tity	(3) motivat ion	(4) beli efs
main				
Self-awareness	0.061 (0.147)	0.289 (0.274)	0.771* ** (0.102)	0.228 (0.217)
Organizational awareness	0.008 (0.141)	0.081 (0.240)	0.813* ** (0.098)	0.201 (0.205)
Social awareness	0.060 (0.118)	0.014 (0.215)	0.288* ** (0.076)	0.155 (0.169)
Relation Management	0.597*** (0.160)	0.469* (0.256)	0.145 (0.137)	0.407* (0.231)
Female	0.578*** (0.193)	0.581 (0.381)	-0.011 (0.128)	0.186 (0.314)
Age_34_49	-0.602** (0.287)	0.093 (0.668)	-0.005 (0.208)	0.360 (0.474)
Age_50_g~r	-0.542 (0.567)	0.00 (.)	0.631 (0.416)	0.291 (0.871)
Education/Unive rsity	0.727*** (0.247)	0.715 (0.439)	0.283 (0.210)	0.058 (0.501)
Education/Maste r	1.120*** (0.313)	1.015 (0.628)	0.097 (0.229)	0.389 (0.542)
Education/Phd	1.257**	0.22	0.301	0.03

		5		9
		(0.8		(0.8
	(0.582)	45)	(0.336)	39)
Private/Public		0.05		0.26
Sector	0.426*	6	-0.142	1
		(0.4		(0.3
	(0.238)	40)	(0.146)	45)
		-		-
Employees_10_		0.18		0.22
49	0.308	0	-0.194	9
		(0.5		(0.4
	(0.258)	80)	(0.175)	85)
		-		-
Employees		0.48		0.06
5~249	0.472	3	-0.248	4
		(0.6		(0.5
	(0.329)	17)	(0.196)	41)
		-		-
Employees		0.00		0.02
250~r	0.361	6	-0.248	7
		(0.9		(0.5
	(0.350)	17)	(0.222)	81)
		-		-
Experience		0.87		0.07
_1~20	0.272	2	-0.092	7
		(0.8		(0.4
	(0.311)	59)	(0.215)	88)
		-		-
Experience		1.20		0.93
_21~r	0.463	5	0.092	6
		(0.9		(0.7
	(0.620)	90)	(0.414)	83)
		-		-
_cons		1.04		0.21
		6		2
		(1.1		(1.1
		74)		21)
N	387	359	387	387

Table 2 The symbols ***, **, * denote that the coefficient is statistically different from zero at 1,5,10 percent

As is shown in Table 2 the independent variable shows a statistically significant relationship between dependent variables in our case EI. This can be seen even in the comparison between females and males, where females value Communication as one of the main indicators of Organizational Culture unlike males. Referring to the negative value we can say that those in age of 34-39 do not value communication or consider it as relevant as an aspect of organizational culture despite age 18-33 as younger generation.

Table 3 Marginal effect of Communication of ordered probit model.

Delta-method						
dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]	

self_awareness1						
_predict						
1	-0.00065	0.001608	-0.4	0.687	-0.0038	0.002502
2	-0.0078	0.018897	-0.41	0.68	-0.04484	0.029241
3	0.008446	0.020467	0.41	0.68	-0.03167	0.04856
org_awareness1						
_predict						
1	-8.3E-05	0.001511	-0.06	0.956	-0.00305	0.002879
2	-0.001	0.018178	-0.06	0.956	-0.03663	0.034627
3	0.001084	0.019688	0.06	0.956	-0.0375	0.039672
social_awareness1						
_predict						
1	-0.00064	0.0013	-0.49	0.622	-0.00319	0.001907
2	-0.00771	0.015202	-0.51	0.612	-0.03751	0.022083
3	0.008355	0.016456	0.51	0.612	-0.0239	0.040608
relationship_mngt1						
_predict						
1	-0.0064	0.003729	-1.71	0.086	-0.0137	0.000914
2	-0.07686	0.02243	-3.43	0.001	-0.12082	-0.0329
3	0.083254	0.023929	3.48	0.001	0.036354	0.130154
female						
_predict						
1	-0.0062	0.003647	-1.7	0.089	-0.01334	0.000953
2	-0.07447	0.024843	-3	0.003	-0.12316	-0.02577
3	0.080663	0.026415	3.05	0.002	0.028891	0.132435
age_34_49						
_predict						
1	0.006451	0.004411	1.46	0.144	-0.0022	0.015097
2	0.077528	0.037327	2.08	0.038	0.004369	0.150687
3	-0.08398	0.040081	-2.1	0.036	-0.16254	-0.00542
age_50_greater						
_predict						
1	0.005807	0.006779	0.86	0.392	-0.00748	0.019093
2	0.069794	0.072993	0.96	0.339	-0.07327	0.212857
3	-0.0756	0.079013	-0.96	0.339	-0.23046	0.07926
edu_uni						
_predict						

1	-0.00779	0.004761	-1.64	0.102	-0.01712	0.001543
2	-0.09361	0.034195	-2.74	0.006	-0.16063	-0.02659
3	0.101396	0.036526	2.78	0.006	0.029805	0.172986

edu_master
_predict

1	-0.012	0.006884	-1.74	0.081	-0.02549	0.001494
2	-0.14421	0.041823	-3.45	0.001	-0.22618	-0.06224
3	0.156205	0.044404	3.52	0	0.069176	0.243235

edu_phd
_predict

1	-0.01347	0.00902	-1.49	0.135	-0.03115	0.004212
2	-0.16185	0.075736	-2.14	0.033	-0.31029	-0.01341
3	0.17532	0.081192	2.16	0.031	0.016187	0.334453

private
_predict

1	-0.00457	0.00332	-1.38	0.169	-0.01108	0.00194
2	-0.0549	0.03003	-1.83	0.068	-0.11375	0.003961
3	0.059464	0.032281	1.84	0.065	-0.00381	0.122733

size_10_49
_predict

1	-0.0033	0.00315	-1.05	0.294	-0.00948	0.002869
2	-0.03971	0.032982	-1.2	0.229	-0.10435	0.024937
3	0.04301	0.035588	1.21	0.227	-0.02674	0.112762

size_50_249
_predict

1	-0.00506	0.00424	-1.19	0.233	-0.01337	0.003254
2	-0.06076	0.041419	-1.47	0.142	-0.14194	0.020416
3	0.065819	0.044681	1.47	0.141	-0.02175	0.153392

size_250_greater
_predict

1	-0.00387	0.004168	-0.93	0.353	-0.01204	0.004299
2	-0.0465	0.044774	-1.04	0.299	-0.13426	0.041252
3	0.050373	0.048389	1.04	0.298	-0.04447	0.145214

exper_11_20
_predict

1	-0.00292	0.00365	-0.8	0.424	-0.01007	0.004234
2	-0.03508	0.040095	-0.87	0.382	-0.11367	0.043502
3	0.038002	0.043392	0.88	0.381	-0.04704	0.123049

exper_21_greater _predict						
1	-0.00496	0.007127	-0.7	0.486	-0.01893	0.009009
2	-0.05961	0.080126	-0.74	0.457	-0.21666	0.097432
3	0.064574	0.086738	0.74	0.457	-0.10543	0.234577

Table 4 Source: Authors Calculation

As it is shown in the Marginal effect of Communication by keeping the other variables of OC constant in their averages, we can see what happens if (X-Variable) in our case IE moves by 1 unit; So by increasing one unit of Relationship Management increases the probability that the value of Communication Variable will be 3 (higher) for 8.3%.

Table 5 Marginal Effect of Motivation of Ordered probit model.

Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
self_awareness1 _predict						
1	-0.00089	0.000625	-1.43	0.154	-0.00212	0.000334
2	-0.03619	0.01015	-3.57	0	-0.05608	-0.01629
3	-0.2144	0.033585	-6.38	0	-0.28022	-0.14857
4	0.089339	0.028461	3.14	0.002	0.033555	0.145122
5	0.162135	0.025079	6.47	0	0.112981	0.211288
org_awareness1 _predict						
1	-0.00094	0.000654	-1.44	0.15	-0.00222	0.00034
2	-0.03816	0.010642	-3.59	0	-0.05901	-0.0173
3	-0.22607	0.03287	-6.88	0	-0.2905	-0.16165
4	0.094205	0.029548	3.19	0.001	0.036292	0.152117
5	0.170966	0.024715	6.92	0	0.122525	0.219406
social_awareness1 _predict						
1	-0.00033	0.000248	-1.35	0.178	-0.00082	0.000152
2	-0.01353	0.004923	-2.75	0.006	-0.02318	-0.00388
3	-0.08016	0.021861	-3.67	0	-0.12301	-0.03732
4	0.033404	0.012655	2.64	0.008	0.008601	0.058207
5	0.060623	0.017036	3.56	0	0.027233	0.094013
relationship_mngt1 _predict						
1	-0.00017	0.000194	-0.86	0.388	-0.00055	0.000213
2	-0.00679	0.006667	-1.02	0.308	-0.01986	0.006273

3	-0.04025	0.038178	-1.05	0.292	-0.11508	0.034576
4	0.016773	0.016678	1.01	0.315	-0.01592	0.049462
5	0.03044	0.028785	1.06	0.29	-0.02598	0.086858

female
_predict

1	1.25E-05	0.000148	0.08	0.933	-0.00028	0.000303
2	0.000506	0.005996	0.08	0.933	-0.01125	0.012258
3	0.002997	0.035522	0.08	0.933	-0.06663	0.072619
4	-0.00125	0.014821	-0.08	0.933	-0.0303	0.0278
5	-0.00227	0.026848	-0.08	0.933	-0.05489	0.050355

age_34_49
_predict

1	5.93E-06	0.000241	0.02	0.98	-0.00047	0.000478
2	0.00024	0.009766	0.02	0.98	-0.0189	0.019382
3	0.001424	0.057857	0.02	0.98	-0.11197	0.114821
4	-0.00059	0.024109	-0.02	0.98	-0.04785	0.04666
5	-0.00108	0.043755	-0.02	0.98	-0.08683	0.08468

age_50_greater
_predict

1	-0.00073	0.000707	-1.03	0.302	-0.00212	0.000656
2	-0.02962	0.020863	-1.42	0.156	-0.07051	0.011266
3	-0.17552	0.115934	-1.51	0.13	-0.40274	0.051709
4	0.073138	0.051699	1.41	0.157	-0.02819	0.174467
5	0.132733	0.088503	1.5	0.134	-0.04073	0.306197

edu_uni
_predict

1	-0.00033	0.000337	-0.97	0.331	-0.00099	0.000333
2	-0.01327	0.010346	-1.28	0.2	-0.03355	0.007008
3	-0.07862	0.058491	-1.34	0.179	-0.19326	0.036025
4	0.03276	0.025966	1.26	0.207	-0.01813	0.083651
5	0.059453	0.04427	1.34	0.179	-0.02731	0.14622

edu_master
_predict

1	-0.00011	0.000277	-0.41	0.685	-0.00066	0.000431
2	-0.00456	0.010768	-0.42	0.672	-0.02567	0.016542
3	-0.02703	0.063542	-0.43	0.671	-0.15157	0.097512
4	0.011263	0.026658	0.42	0.673	-0.04099	0.06351
5	0.02044	0.048047	0.43	0.671	-0.07373	0.114609

edu_phd

_predict

1	-0.00035	0.000465	-0.75	0.454	-0.00126	0.000564
2	-0.01413	0.016046	-0.88	0.379	-0.04558	0.017321
3	-0.08371	0.093342	-0.9	0.37	-0.26665	0.099239
4	0.034881	0.040029	0.87	0.384	-0.04358	0.113337
5	0.063303	0.070588	0.9	0.37	-0.07505	0.201652

private
_predict

1	0.000165	0.000204	0.81	0.419	-0.00023	0.000564
2	0.00668	0.007042	0.95	0.343	-0.00712	0.020481
3	0.039577	0.040774	0.97	0.332	-0.04034	0.119493
4	-0.01649	0.017587	-0.94	0.348	-0.05096	0.017978
5	-0.02993	0.030821	-0.97	0.332	-0.09034	0.030479

size_10_49
_predict

1	0.000224	0.000253	0.88	0.376	-0.00027	0.00072
2	0.009083	0.008513	1.07	0.286	-0.0076	0.025769
3	0.053815	0.048815	1.1	0.27	-0.04186	0.149491
4	-0.02242	0.021301	-1.05	0.292	-0.06417	0.019325
5	-0.0407	0.036877	-1.1	0.27	-0.11298	0.031581

size_50_249
_predict

1	0.000287	0.000305	0.94	0.346	-0.00031	0.000884
2	0.01164	0.009581	1.21	0.224	-0.00714	0.030418
3	0.068966	0.054753	1.26	0.208	-0.03835	0.176279
4	-0.02874	0.024016	-1.2	0.231	-0.07581	0.018333
5	-0.05215	0.041501	-1.26	0.209	-0.13349	0.029185

size_250_greater
_predict

1	0.000287	0.000325	0.88	0.378	-0.00035	0.000925
2	0.011645	0.010763	1.08	0.279	-0.00945	0.032741
3	0.068997	0.062029	1.11	0.266	-0.05258	0.190572
4	-0.02875	0.026934	-1.07	0.286	-0.08154	0.024038
5	-0.05218	0.046962	-1.11	0.267	-0.14422	0.039864

exper_11_20
_predict

1	0.000107	0.000261	0.41	0.682	-0.0004	0.000618
2	0.004338	0.010146	0.43	0.669	-0.01555	0.024224
3	0.025702	0.059919	0.43	0.668	-0.09174	0.143141
4	-0.01071	0.025138	-0.43	0.67	-0.05998	0.038559

	5	-0.01944	0.045301	-0.43	0.668	-0.10822	0.069351
exper_21_greater							
_predict							
	1	-0.00011	0.000481	-0.22	0.825	-0.00105	0.000836
	2	-0.00431	0.019432	-0.22	0.824	-0.0424	0.033772
	3	-0.02556	0.115129	-0.22	0.824	-0.25121	0.200087
	4	0.010651	0.048122	0.22	0.825	-0.08367	0.104968
	5	0.01933	0.086978	0.22	0.824	-0.15114	0.189804

Referring to the P value, the dependent variables have a significant relationship between EI and OC.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this paper is to provide an analysis of the role of Emotional Intelligence in Organizational Culture in organizations in RNM. The ordered probit model has estimated the relationship between EI and OC. The econometrics results of the probit model show that respondents who have completed PhD value communication as a positive impact on EI more than those with bachelor's degree and secondary education. Also, respondents who are more empathic are more motivated towards organizational culture; Also, respondents who have cooperation and team working in their organizations tend to evaluate organizational culture as positive indicator on that relationship. Employees with high organizational awareness are more motivated towards communication and teamwork. Regarding the results that respondents who have self-control are also more inclined towards the creation of organizational culture, our hypothesis **“H: Emotional intelligence has a direct positive impact on organizational culture?”** Has been accepted. As expected, organizations, employees and managers with high emotional intelligence have had a direct and positive impact on organizational culture.

From the results it is possible to conclude that higher levels of individual Emotional Intelligence are associated with higher levels of organization's cultural propensity to support EI.

LIMITATIONS

The important limitations of this paper consist on the sample that has been insufficient on a global stage. That's why it is recommended that further researchers should reach a wider sample group. In addition, it has been found that some of the employees who filled in the questionnaire have been suspicious of the questions and answered a few questions with concern.

The most important weakness of questionnaires methods in the social sciences is that the research changes something by mistake while trying to measure it. To eliminate this error from the beginning, scales and questionnaire should be prepared in a systematic way.

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The use of digital signature by natural persons for signing official documents – the case of North Macedonia

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Abstract

The use of digital signature by natural persons for signing of official documents is hindered primarily by the cost of obtaining a valid certificate for application and secondarily by the complex procedure of getting it. The legal system of North Macedonia favors the use of a valid certificate but does not rule out alternative manners of expression of the consent from the contracting parties. In everyday living both public and private entities resort to the use of various creative approaches of doing business online, avoiding the use of a qualified digital signature yet insisting on displaying the free will of the contracting parties as a backbone of the validity of the contract. The state should move forward with officialization of the unofficial but widely used approaches of doing business online while not ruling out the system of a qualified digital signature. Thus, the state will act in consent with both, the legislative framework of the European Union and the factual situation widely exercised in North Macedonia’s business milieu. This approach will result in an increase of online transactions and alleviate the burden off the state administration because the number of citizens interacting with the administration through physical presence will decrease.

Keywords

Digital Signature, Public Administration, Qualified Certificate, Natural Persons

1 Introduction

We are living in the 21st century where some of the most prominent social debates evolve around the provision of the universal basic income or the approach of the moment of technological singularity when it is expected that the artificial intelligence will surpass the capacities of the human intelligence. Yet, in the era of massive digitalization of many public services North Macedonia nationals still cannot utilize the full potential of the digitalization because their physical presence is still required throughout various public institutions when they need to utilize some of the state’s administered services, such as the provision of the documents for traveling and personal identification. In other words, if a North Macedonian national can purchase a book from the United States from let’s say Amazon and the book gets delivered at his doorstep, why on earth couldn’t he/she submit an online application for getting a new passport (because the old has expired), pay online, and get the passport delivered at his/her doorstep? In the scientific world there is a widely known simplicity principle, traditionally referred to as “the Occam’s razor”. The essence of this principle is the idea that simpler explanations of observations should be preferred to more complex ones. Simplicity is undoubtedly one of the dominant approaches with regards to designing and advertising modern days

commercial products. In the words of John Maeda (2006, p.5) “The hunt is on for simpler, more efficient ways to move the economy forward”.

The goal of this research is to reveal the legal framework and the actual situation with regards to the use of digital signature by natural persons for signing official documents. And based on the findings to suggest some simple and efficient solutions which will allow wide availability of digital services for the citizens of North Macedonia using their digital identification as a valid alternative for their physical presence. The methodology used for carrying out this research is comprised of review and analysis of laws and other legal regulations, followed by semi structured interviews with selected stakeholders. In addition, we’ve carried out a short opportunity-based sampling survey (Robson, McCartan, 2016. pp. 280-281) involving citizens that were queuing for submission of application for getting new passports. On the side of processing the gathered data, we have utilized framework analysis (Lacey, Luff, 2001).

2 Legal framework on the use of digital signature

Under this item we will layout an analysis on the actual legal framework regarding the use of a digital signature for signing official documents. The analysis is twofold, comprised of laying out the legal framework for North Macedonia, followed by laying out the legal framework of the European Union (EU).

2.1 Legal framework on the use of digital signature in North Macedonia

North Macedonia’s Law on General Administrative Procedure embraces the use of electronic communication between the parties in certain phases of the administrative procedure (such as sending notifications to the parties), stipulating that administrative acts in electronic form can be delivered to the party or its representative only in cases where parties have previously agreed to utilizing this form of communication (Law on General Administrative Procedure, 2015. Article 37/2). And in addition, there is an obligation for all public authorities that appear in any capacity during the administrative procedure to carry out the communication among themselves strictly in electronic form (Ibid, Article 37/3). With article 60 of the Law on General Administrative Procedure (2015) the legislator is recognizing the same legal validity to any official act issued by competent public authority regardless of whether it is produced in written or electronic form. Thus, the legislator has widely opened the space for embracing the electronic manner of handling various acts during the living cycle of a concrete administrative proceeding. On the side of contract law, various documents are being created in relation to the transactions between the legal subjects, and most of these documents need to be signed by the parties to the document as a formal token of its validity. The expression of free will to dispose with something one owns and the application of a signature to a written document as additional formal token of the free will are some of the essential preconditions that need to be meet in order transactions to be legally valid²⁵. Illustrated with the words of Charles Fried, “The law recognizes the completed transaction (after I actually hand over or sign over the automobile), presumably in recognition of my right to do with my property as I choose.” (Fried, 2015. p.37). The North Macedonia’s contract law legislation recognizes the presence of free will as “*conditio sine qua non*” toward legal validity of the agreements concluded between the contracting parties (Law on

²⁵ To dive deeper into the theory of contractual obligations, read Charles Fried’s “Contract as promise: a theory of contractual obligation”.

Obligations, 2001. Article 59/1). Nevertheless, for certain types of agreements of greater significance²⁶ the Law on Obligations stipulates that the agreements need to be concluded in writing and signed by the contracting parties (Galev, Dabovikj Anastasovska, 2021. pp.355-361). In a similar fashion the North Macedonia's legislation on administration stipulates that in cases where the law requires a signature, paper acts should be hand signed (Law on General Administrative Procedure, 2015. Article 38/1). The Law also contains provisions with regards to the manner of signing electronic documents, stipulating that the electronic documents are completed with a printed name of the signatory and relate to a generally accepted electronic signature in accordance with the Law on data in electronic form and electronic signature (Law on General Administrative Procedure, 2015. Article 38/2). Here we come to the question, what is "a generally accepted electronic signature in accordance with the Law on Data in Electronic Form and Electronic Signature"? It is not a mere signature written with a stylus pen on a tablet and translated to your personal computer's screen. It is a rather unique encrypted sequence of numbers delivered by an authorized service provider through a certificate that the final user can use for applying electronic signature. With regards to who is eligible to offer services of issuing certificates for application of digital signature on the territory of North Macedonia, the Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services (2019) stipulates that only the companies that will meet the criteria set forward in the law (Ibid, article 33) and shall apply for registration in the Registry of Trusted Service Providers and Electronic Identification Schemes²⁷ shall be eligible to offer services of issuing certificates for application of digital signature. In addition, the providers of confidential services that are established by a member state of the European Union and are included in the List of confidential services of the European Union, can work and provide services on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia, without prior registration in the Register of providers of confidential services and schemes for electronic identification (Ibid, article 37/2).

2.2 Legal framework on the use of digital signature in the European Union

The European Union is well known for its efforts to keep up with the modern day available technological solutions and implement them to ease the living and doing business for its citizens. The legal basis for regulating the use and the application of digital signing in the EU is laid out in the Regulation on Electronic Identification and Trust Services for Electronic Transactions in the Internal Market (2014). This Regulation is directly applicable across EU without the need for transposition into national legislation and is paving the way to new remote qualified signature solutions and improved user experience, a pan-European harmonization of electronic signature equating the validity of the electronic with that of the manual signature, introduction of qualified trust services across Europe, the introduction of electronic seals, the introduction of time stamping etc. (Milidoni, 2023).²⁸ For the purpose of writing this paper there is not a particular need

²⁶ Such as: the agreement for selling/purchase of real estate; the agreement for selling where the buyer is paying in instalments; credit agreement, etc.

²⁷ This is the internet address of the Registry of trusted service providers and electronic identification schemes, containing the names of the companies eligible to offer services of issuing certificates for application of digital signatures in North Macedonia - https://trusteid.mioa.gov.mk/registar_listi/

²⁸ For more info on the e-signature related EU legislation go to: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building->

to go in depth with scrutinizing EU related electronic signature legislation, simply because North Macedonia's national legislation concerning the matter in question is a mere copy of EU's legislation. But this should come as no surprise bearing in mind that North Macedonia is a candidate country for becoming member of the EU and in accordance with article 68 of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (2001), North Macedonia agreed to ensure that its existing laws and future legislation will be made compatible with the EU legislation and that such laws will be properly implemented and enforced.

3 The actual situation with regards to the use of digital signature

Under this item we will review the functioning of the government operated centralized internet portal for provision of online administrative services for the citizens of North Macedonia, we will investigate the constrains on the use of digital signature, but also some positive examples of public entities who have established and are successfully running online systems for provision of digital services outside of the government operated internet portal. Finally, we will present the results from the survey conducted among a group of citizens who were queuing in attempt to set up an appointment for getting a new travelling document.

3.1 The functionality of the centralized internet portal for provision of online administrative services

In 2019 the Government of North Macedonia introduced an internet portal (uslugi.gov.mk), envisaged as a place where users can access information on how to use any of the services provided by the Government. Users may carry out a limited number of services directly through the portal such as getting a copy of their citizenship or birth certificate, but for most of the services the portal does often only guidance and transfers the user to an external domain where re-login is required. According to a Research on the Progress of the Implementation of Digital Services in North Macedonia, the state provides a limited number of e-services, i.e. only 51 out of a total of 816 services (Bojadzievksa, Shikova, 2022. p. 16). Similar findings with regards to the inconsistency of the application of e-services among municipalities in North Macedonia can be found in the fresh issued Analysis of the e-services in Municipalities of North Macedonia (2024). Apart from the aforementioned limitations on using the functionalities of the internet portal, citizens are required to verify their identity and get access to the use of certain services only if being holders of a valid digital signature. The services available on the portal are ranked in three security schemes for identification required for getting the service in question (Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services, 2019. article 13). With the lowest security level services allowing the client to get the service using his username and password obtained through previous registration in the Public Revenue Office's database. Looking into the Strategy for Reform of the Public Administration 2023-2030 (2023), the Government is planning to continue the effort of provision of more online services for the citizens, such as the plan for the establishment of Electronic System for Digitalization of various government inspections and their proceedings.

3.2 Constrains on the use of digital signature

The most salient constraint on the use of qualified certificate for digital signing is the cost of obtaining one. For instance, a physical person is required to pay a minimum of 35 euros²⁹ for purchase of qualified certificate from a trusted service provider to be able to use his/her digital signature in full compliance with the legal provisions in North Macedonia. In everyday life a physical person would be in position to use his/her digital signature only few times per year, such as in case of applying for getting personal identification or travelling documents or submitting certain administrative request to the authorities. In both cases it is much more economically viable to opt for submitting one's request with physical presence than pay 35 euros for utilizing one or two digital signatures per year. Under the previous paragraph we have explained that for a few basic administrative services available on the internet portal uslugi.gov.mk individuals (in theory) can login and claim the service using their previously created profile in the database of the Public Revenue Office. In practice one of the authors of this paper (Aleksandar Petkovski) owns an active profile registered in the database of the Public Revenue Office more than four years ago. Mr. Petkovski was accessing his profile in the past especially with regards to verifying his annual personal tax submission form. Recently Mr. Petkovski has tried to register on the internet portal uslugi.gov.mk using his Public Revenue Office username and password, but the registration was denied. Next, Mr. Petkovski tried to access his profile through the webpage of the Public Revenue Office³⁰, but the access was denied. Next, Mr. Petkovski submitted a written complaint, and after the second submission and a telephone inquiry Mr. Petkovski was contacted by a technical support officer and the problem with accessing his profile through the webpage of the Public Revenue Office was solved. But, even after solving the issue with accessing his profile through the webpage of the Public Revenue Office, Mr. Petkovski was again denied registration on the internet portal uslugi.gov.mk, although (in theory) the username and the password for logging to one's personal profile on the webpage of the Public Revenue Office should also allow the user to log in and use the functionalities of the government operated portal for use of administrative services uslugi.gov.mk. The representative of KIBS Trust (one of the two companies registered as trusted service providers eligible for selling digital signature certificates in North Macedonia) Ms. Katerina Jovanovic (Jovanovic, 2024) pointed out that most of their clients are legal persons i.e. companies who are purchasing subscriptions for certificates to be used for application of digital signatures on behalf of their respective representatives. Ms. Jovanovic added that KIBS Trust is a commercial company which is setting up the prices for their services in accordance with the free-market rules and are not able to offer any pro bono services, especially considering that North Macedonia is a rather small market and does not allow space for resilience. Following up on Ms. Jovanovic's statement, the overall insight into the use of digital signature in North Macedonia does confirm the stance that companies and their legal representatives are by far the most common users of this benefit.

3.3 Services outside of the government operated internet portal

²⁹ Link to the website of one of the two trusted service providers eligible for selling digital signature certificates in North Macedonia <https://www.kibstrust.mk/categories/fizicki-lica-21/verba-sign-adv>

³⁰ Link to the user registration section on the webpage of the Public Revenue Office <https://e-ujp.ujp.gov.mk/ureg/home.seam>

There are several other active services where users can interact with public entities and use digital based communication instead of paperwork. The Cadaster is allowing construction companies submission of various documents related to obtaining construction licenses to be carried out online including the use of digital signature. Lawyers can also rely on using certain benefits from the online communication with courts with regards to submitting and receiving certain documents. But also, there are situations where state institutions with functional digital services oblige their users to submit reports both in digital online format but at the same time to physically hand over a printed copy of the same report. Such is the case with the private medical facilities with regards to the submission of their monthly reports to the State Health Insurance Fund. In an interview with an employee of the Ministry of information society and administration³¹, we were basically told that as far as the Ministry of Information is concerned both the legal framework and the requirement of getting (paying) for obtaining a certificate for digital signing are in accordance with the existing EU Directive and there is no need for any amendments. Then we have pointed to the fact that people do not pay for the purchase of certificates, and therefore most of the system is useless because people are not using it.

3.4 A survey of users' habits of using the centralized government online portal

The period of writing this paper coincided with the period when thousands of citizens of North Macedonia were desperately trying to get hold of a new passports because our politicians (without approval from the citizens) had decided to change the name of our country, and subsequently citizens were forced to get new passports holding the new name of the country. The authorities were inert and slow with regards to planning and executing the process of replacement of the documents for traveling and personal identification and this incompetence resulted in jostling and crowding outside police stations where applications for getting new passports were submitted and passports picked up later. On December 13th, 2023, we visited the crowd of people gathered in front of Prolet police station, waiting for their turn to get photographed, submit their application and hope to get the new passport³². Considering the subject of our interest, our plan was to interview 20 people using the method of random choice, and in the end, we managed to interview a total of 22 people. Some people refused to talk to us, although we had properly presented ourselves and the purpose of doing the interviews and of course we guaranteed anonymity to any respondent who chose not to reveal his/her identity. Our questionnaire was plain and simple focusing on whether the respondents have used the online system and whether they were ready to go for full online communication with the administration, judiciary, and other public services providers. The questions were: Have you tried to set up a term for passport

³¹ The employee of the Ministry of information society and administration didn't want his/her identity to be disclosed. The interview has taken place in February 2024.

³² The moment authorities figured out that the system with setting up an appointment via phone call or via uslugi.gov.mk is too slow, they have opened an additional capacity such as the one in the Prolet police station where people were invited to go without prior appointment, get in line and wait for their turn. You can imagine that when you leave the crowd to self-organize there always be someone who will not obey the rules and try to jump the line and normally annoy all the other people who were patiently waiting for their turn. Establishing of such a disordered system in the 21 century it does not suit any normal country. And North Macedonian authorities have failed "big time" with regards to organizing an executing the whole process of replacement of personal documents.

replacement via uslugi.gov.mk? If the answer is positive then we would ask what went wrong, and if the answer was negative then we ask the respondent if they would opt for using the online system, should they had known such an option existed. Finally, we asked each respondent about whether they would be willing to switch to online submission of documents, including the use of online signature for annual cost of 35 euros. It is worth noting that all our respondents belonged within the age group between mid-thirties and around sixty.

Table 6: Different manners used by respondents for setting up term for passport replacement

	phone	online - uslugi.gov.mk	online after phone failed
Manner of setting up term for passport replacement	20	2	6

Out of 20 respondents who tried to set up the appointment via phonenumber, 12 people managed and 8 couldn't get through, although they were trying many times. Often the machine returned messages like "all our operators are busy, please try later", or "the service is temporarily unavailable". Six respondents reported that they've set up online appointments after failing to set up the appointment over the phone. We were curious why these six respondents didn't choose to set up the appointment directly through uslugi.gov.mk portal, and their answers were that they feel more confident to use the phone than setting up the appointment via online tools, but once setting up over phone was impossible, they were assisted by a colleague at work or someone from their family and guided in setting up an appointment online. It is interesting to report that most of the 22 interviewed people have managed to set up an appointment be it over phone or online, but the reason why they were lining up in front of Prolet police station was because their appointments for passport replacement were 5

to 6 months ahead and these people had much urgent need to travel abroad earlier and couldn't afford to wait for their new passport to be issued in six months but were desperately trying to find a way to get their passport as soon as possible. All respondents replied that they would be willing to switch to online submission of documents, with exception of four people over the age of fifty who expressed certain reserves on whether they would be able to manage the online system on their own, but they were willing to try if someone offers them technical support at least for the first few sessions.

Table 7 Willingness to use administrative services online

	Yes	Yes, but I will need additional assistance
Are you ready to use only online manner when communicating with the administration	18	4
	No	Only if the cost is justified
Are you ready to pay 35€ per year for using digital signature	21	1

On the other hand, almost all respondents rejected the use of digital signature if they were to pay a 35€ annual fee for using this service. Some respondents commented that there is no economic logic in paying 35 euros and using the signature on one or two occasions. In that case it is more rational to apply in person. Other interesting comment was that the state should provide the service of digital signing free of charge, the respondent referred to the omnipresent model during the last 30 years where citizens are expected to bear the costs of virtually every novel service introduced. If we are to pay for every administrative service, then maybe the state should revoke VAT and personal taxation – commented one of the interviewed respondents.

4 Alternatives to using generally accepted electronic signature

There are practices in everyday legal transactions where people and companies are using creative ways to complete their transactions avoiding the use of the generally accepted electronic signature, yet respecting the principle of declaration of free will with regards to entering the transactions in question. These transactions are taking place both in public and private sector related legal traffic. The parties to such transaction potentially are facing higher level of uncertainty with regards to proving the legal validity (compared to those who use a generally accepted electronic signature), but it is generally accepted principle that the courts are reviewing the evidence suggested by the parties and deciding on their relevance (Civil Procedure Law, 2005. Article 206). In other words, if a legal transaction is concluded electronically but in absence of a generally accepted electronic signature, it doesn't mean that the transaction is invalid per se, but should

its validity be disputed in court than the court will decide based on evidence presented. In the context of the previously mentioned practices on completing transactions while avoiding the use of the generally accepted electronic signature, here we refer to some real-life examples. In March 2022 Aleksandar Petkovski received a letter on the property tax that he was compelled to pay. Aleksandar was of opinion that the Skopje City authorities have calculated the tax incorrectly and within the legally allowed timeframe for objecting the decision he submitted an objection (Petkovski, 2022). From the perspective of this paper, the fact that Aleksandar submitted the objection via e-mail in absence of any electronic signature is of particular interest. Even more interesting is that the Skopje City Administration has accepted the arguments and has amended the decision on Mr. Petkovski's property tax. Another example is Mr. Petkovski's submission of request for access to documents produced by the Ministry of Interior Affairs. The request was submitted via e-mail in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character (2019, Articles 12,15). The Ministry has accepted the request and sent Mr. Petkovski an electronic copy of the rulebook he was requesting. The last example is when Mr. Petkovski signed a contract for using the services of the Skopje Water Supply Public Company back in 2021 via e-mail, where Mr. Petkovski received a contract template that he had printed and populated with the required data, signed, scanned, and sent back to the Water Supply Company. Based on this contract Mr. Petkovski is using water supply services unimpededly and receiving monthly service bills on regular basis, though the contract was not signed by Mr. Petkovski in paper form, neither with the application of the generally accepted electronic signature. The examples we were referring to in the previous paragraphs are related to state or public entities. If we take into consideration the private sector, we will see that there is an overwhelming legal traffic of purchasing and selling over the internet, both within the country and beyond, where people use internet-based communication and payment as tools for conclusion and execution of various transactions in absence of digital signature.

5 Discussion

The facts that we have discovered while carrying out this research have undoubtedly revealed that natural persons in North Macedonia are not ready to bear the costs of obtaining a certificate from a trusted provider that can later be used for application of a qualified digital signature. The situation is somewhat different regarding the commercial companies and other legal persons who are willing to benefit from the conveniences of using digital signature. The idea behind digitalization of public services is to make them available for a wider group of people and if there is no other option but to make people pay for using these services, then the price should be set in a manner acceptable to everyone. The authors are fully aware that the legal requirements for obtaining a certificate from a trusted provider do contribute to the authentication and guarantee the identity of the person using the signature. We are also aware that the companies issuing certificates work on a commercial basis and charge users for their services. But the big question hovering above our heads is whether we need to use trusted signature on every occasion, or we may simply resort to simplified alternatives that will serve the purpose of enhancing accessibility and usability of electronic services for the ordinary citizens. With reference to the legal provisions of both civil and the administrative law in North Macedonia, earlier in the text we have pointed out that the expression of free will from the contracting parties is the substantial conditions to be met regarding the validity of the contract. The Law on General Administrative Procedure (2015) allows the use of electronic communication between the parties in certain phases of the administrative procedure and lays out an obligation for all

public authorities that appear in any capacity during the administrative procedure to carry out the communication among themselves strictly in electronic form. We have discussed the tendency of many public entities to be practical and complete certain administrative tasks through online communication with the citizens, avoiding the use of the certified electronic signature. As was the case when Mr. Petkovski submitted a complaint via personal email on the Decision on Payment of Property Tax issued by Skopje City Administration, and the authorities have accepted the complaint and amended the Decision. We have noted the deficiencies of the Government's portal for provision of e-services, but nevertheless it is a very good start and a very good basis to build upon. Also, the registration of one's personal e-mail address in the database of the Public Revenue Office is a very good substitute for the verification of the identity of the submitter. So once the state registers any citizens' personal email, we don't see why any correspondence sent from this address cannot be treated as official. Maybe a provision should be enacted that an additional email should be sent as a confirmation from the receiver, but let's be honest and practical about this and stop unnecessary complicating things especially in a situation when we have technology at our disposal for implementation of simple and more effective solution. Of course, there still is a significant group of citizens who are not ready to go all digital and for their sake the services should be available both digitally and physically. But imagine the situation where any citizen of North Macedonia would get an opportunity of submitting an online application for a passport replacement and if not getting the new passport delivered at his/her home address, then at least minimize the number of physical visits to the passport issuing facility and thus reduce the pressure and the number of nervous people waiting at the counter. Here we have used the "passport paradigm" for an illustration, but the same approach should be applicable to a myriad of state related services such as: submitting application for getting various licenses, addressing public authorities, submitting documents during various proceedings in courts, etc.

6 Recommendations

Notwithstanding the whole legal concept of trusted service providers and eligible companies of issuing certificates for application of digital signature on a commercial basis, we urge the authorities to explore the possibilities of relying on the principle of expression of free will as a legal basis for conclusion of various online transactions especially between citizens and public authorities. Citizens' emails registered in the database of the Public Revenue Office should be considered as reliable addresses for official communication with any public entity. As much administrative services as legally possible should be made available for the citizens via Government's Portal for digital administrative services uslugi.gov.mk which should be the hub for finding the service of interest and the corresponding instructions on getting it.

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