

Dear Readers,

The first issue of this year's *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie / Cracow Review of Economics and Management* features a collection of eight articles covering topics in the social sciences. Commencing the publication, Marcin Potrykus presents a study examining how selected capital markets responded to escalating numbers of COVID-19 cases. Using event analysis, he ascertained that a small number of emerging cases coupled with a high level of pandemic-related uncertainty had a more pronounced negative influence on investor behaviour than did larger numbers of cases being reported alongside a better comprehension of the pandemic.

The second article, by Olena Brintseva, presents the findings of a comparative analysis of human capital investments in Poland and Ukraine. Employing cost method and comparative analysis, the study examines the value of human capital. The investigation reveals that investments in human capital in Ukraine have been inefficient, largely due to adverse economic dynamics and limited public expenditures on education and healthcare. The author concludes that drawing on the experiences of Poland may help boost the efficiency of human capital investments in Ukraine.

In the third article, Mariusz Chmielewski, Ewa Malinowska, Renata Płoska, and Joanna Próchniak present the outcomes of their research on aspects of sustainable development and the decisions young consumers make when purchasing food, cosmetics, and clothing. Utilising online surveys administered to students at universities in Poland's Tri-city area, the authors establish that respondents take sustainable development criteria into consideration only to a moderate degree in their purchasing decisions. Notably, such criteria factor in food purchases more than in clothing purchases.

In their article, Łukasz Strączkowski and Piotr Bartkowiak analyse barriers to home ownership among young people. Survey research confirmed a strong desire for homeownership and the important role it plays in providing security and enabling plans to start a family. The authors emphasise that young individuals perceive numerous obstacles, including housing prices and income levels, to acquiring homes. Other factors hindering home purchase are also examined.

Paulina Śmiałek-Liszczyńska takes up the issue of employee misconduct in small and medium-sized enterprises. Drawing on a literature review and an analysis of other sources on employee misconduct, the author found that such misconduct is often detected accidentally, most commonly during employee rotations, when changes are made to internal procedures and in the course of routine internal audits. In her conclusion, the author highlights the need to limit misconduct, both by shaping ethical behaviour and implementing organisational measures to facilitate the reporting of misconduct.

In another article focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises, Dorota Kędzior and Marcin Kędzior analyse the factors that determine the capital structure of SMEs engaging in trade. Drawing on a literature review and an analysis of statistical data, the authors found that the companies they examined follow pecking order theory of financing in shaping their capital structure. Asset structure, company age, and size were found to be the most important factors determining the capital structure in SMEs.

The article authored by Barbara Danowska-Prokop examines the relationship between industrialisation levels and social security systems. Specifically, it discusses the division of the Upper Silesian plebiscite area and its impact on mining “brackie” insurance in the Silesian Voivodeship between 1922 and 1926. The author’s analysis of source materials leads her to conclude that the financial decline of mining “brackie” insurance in Upper Silesia following 1922 was a direct consequence of the economic backwardness of the Polish state.

A methodological study by Krzysztof Błóński rounds out the issue. The author presents the utility of netnography in the construction of comprehensive questionnaires, employing a study on consumer minimalism to illustrate the issue. Using netnographic enabled the author to gather information directly from respondents. Complementing them with a comprehensive review of relevant literature facilitated the formulation of precise survey questions.

The theoretical investigations and empirical research presented in the 2023 inaugural issue of the *Cracow Review of Economics and Management* analyse current issues across a range of contexts. I encourage you to dive in and explore the issue in the hope that its insights will be helpful in your own academic work and inspire critical reflection and further research.

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Editor-in-chief