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TABLE OF CONTENT

Editorial	3
Liviu Warter	
Ethics & Consciousness in Organizations: A Conceptual Hierarchical Model	5
Hershey H. Friedman, Kenneth A. Globerman	
Ethical Challenges in Online Research.....	17
Bianca Hanganu, Irina Smaranda Manoilescu, Beatrice Gabriela Ioan	
Ethical Challenges of Digital Technologies in Covid-19 Pandemic Management.....	25
Simina Petra Simion; Harald Jung	
The Image of the Male and Female Doctors in the Covid-19 Pandemic. The First Pandemic with Woman Doctors in the Front Line	39
Orsolya Horber, Karoly Zilahi	
Why Nations Collapse: The Rise and Fall of The United States	45
Hershey H. Friedman, Sarah Hertz	
Egocentric Perceptions and Self-Serving Bias in Negotiations: Fairness, Dynamics, and Ethics	61
Oleg Komlik	

EDITORIAL

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The current issue includes interesting papers from various fields, portraying the diversity of the research community and the cross-disciplinary approach of this journal.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the fifteenth issue of the Journal of Intercultural Management and Ethics (JIME). This issue is dealing with the nexus between culture, ethics and different socio-economic areas. I am confident that this issue of JIME contributes in bridging the gap between scholars and practitioners.

Hershey H. Friedman and Kenneth A. Globerman posit that one should not take a binary approach to business ethics because there are gradations. They propose that firms may be classified according to the following metric: Level I: The Totally Unethical Organization; Level II: The Legalistic Unethical Organization; Level III: The Superficially Ethical Organization; Level IV: The Ethical Organization; and Level V: The Fully Conscious Ethical Organization.

The authors show that the firms at the lowest level of ethics are only concerned about profits and not getting caught, while the firms at the highest level are advocates of conscious capitalism.

Bianca Hanganu, Irina Smaranda Manoilescu and Beatrice Gabriela Ioan highlight that the Internet has become an increasingly used tool in research, and the COVID-19 pandemic has increased its applicability. The authors reveal that the researchers rely in their studies on the many benefits of the Internet- saving resources (e.g. time, money, energy), rapid dissemination to a large number of people, indefinite storage of data collected in the virtual environment. The authors conducted an analysis of data published in the literature to identify the ethical challenges associated with the use of the Internet in different fields of research and the ways in which they could be overcome. The authors conclude that online research brings both advantages and challenges; the acknowledgment and the prevention of the latter create the premises for conducting research in the appropriate ethical framework, in safe conditions for all participants.

In the same vein, Simina Petra Simion and Harald Jung show that researchers and experts have highlighted the benefits of various digital resources use, with the aim of collection, analysis and correlation of individual data as strategy in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. They posit that digital surveillance is accompanied by legal and ethical risks and concerns, thus civil rights organizations and data protection authorities are highlighting the risk of intensified digital surveillance even after the pandemic situation.

The authors have identified four main categories of digital technologies used to manage the pandemic: proximity and contact tracking, symptom monitoring, quarantine control, and individuals flow monitoring. They conclude that although digital technology seems to demonstrate its importance in flattening the incidence curve of SARS-CoV-2 virus infection, notable technical limitations have also been emphasized, such as accuracy, data quality and last but not least the existence of risks related to cybersecurity.

Orsolya Horber and Karoly Zilahi observe that the last great pandemic, the Spanish flu of 1918, took place at a time when the number of women graduating from medical schools was still very low. They point out that the COVID-19 pandemic is the first one in which female professionals participated in the front line, working as doctors or pharmacists. They claim that during turbulent times like the pandemic, the physician (regardless of gender)

as a person has become vulnerable, the image and the control of image are much more difficult. Throughout history, the medical community has sought to create an image appropriate to the current social, historical, and political era.

The authors conclude that during the epidemics, the doctor-patient relationship becomes more superficial, subordinated to public health and the collective good, the personality of the doctor and of the patient changes. For that reason, the control of image is much more complicated today, in a pandemic, in a society based on permanent communication and social media.

Hershey H. Friedman and Sarah Hertz analyze the rankings of the United States in critical areas so that people can easily evaluate how well the country is doing. Areas discussed include Social Progress Index, Quality of Infrastructure, Income Inequality, Social Mobility, Global Peace Index, Stability of Nations, Democracy, Median Wealth per Adult, Poverty Rate, Happiness, Perception of Corruption, Education, Life Expectancy, Healthcare System, Top 25 Countries in the World, Reputation of Country, and Prison Population. The authors hope that examining the above statistics will make people aware of what needs to be done if the United States wants to remain a world power. The findings show that the first task is to focus on repairing the decaying infrastructure and providing jobs and training for Americans. The conclusion of the article is that a flourishing middle class is the key to a strong democracy.

Oleg Komlik reflects upon negotiation and claims that it is one of the most common forms of social interaction and conflict resolution strategies – occurring in business, workplaces, and organizations – in which two or more parties strive to figure out an acceptable solution for their different or incompatible goals. His article sheds light on two significant cognitive components impacting all facets and stages of negotiation – *egocentrism* and *self-serving bias*. The paper addresses how egocentric perceptions and self-serving tendencies affect the ethical behavior of the involved parties, and it looks at these biases through intercultural lens too. The author comes to the conclusion that by proposing tactics and practices aimed to reduce the damaging consequences of egocentric shortcomings in negotiation and increase chances to achieve the best possible outcomes.

I am confident that you will enjoy reading this issue of the Journal and I am looking forward to receiving and publishing your interesting articles.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the colleagues who contributed to this journal.