

## Foreword

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daša Grajfoner, Editor**

### **PEOPLE AT THE CORE: PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR LASTING BUSINESS SUCCESS**

The intersection of psychology and the business world has become an essential area of inquiry, offering critical insights into leadership, decision-making, employee well-being and mental health and organizational success. The proceedings of the 12th International Scientific Conference of DOBA Business School, titled *Psychology in the Business World*, provide a comprehensive overview of cutting-edge research and practical applications that highlight the growing role of psychological principles in shaping modern business landscapes. The contributions within this volume address a diverse range of psychological domains, including positive psychology, leadership development, coaching psychology, innovations, behavioral economics, and consumer behavior, underscoring the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in contemporary business environments.

Advances in psychological research have demonstrated that employee engagement, decision-making processes, and leadership effectiveness are profoundly influenced by cognitive, emotional, and social factors (Dweck, 2006; Seligman, 2011). This body of knowledge has led to the integration of psychological insights into corporate training programs, leadership development initiatives, and employee well-being interventions, reflecting a paradigm shift in how businesses perceive and leverage human capital.

One of the key themes of this conference is positive psychology in business, education, and the social sector. Scholars and practitioners have increasingly recognized that fostering psychological well-being in the workplace enhances not only individual productivity but also organizational resilience and innovation (Fredrickson, 2001). Positive psychology interventions, such as mindfulness training and strengths-based development, have been linked to improved job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and enhanced organizational commitment (Luthans et al., 2007). The empirical studies presented in this volume explore how these interventions can be systematically applied across various business settings to optimize employee performance and overall workplace culture.

Coaching psychology has emerged as a vital component of business psychology, bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. Executive coaching, underpinned by cognitive-behavioral and humanistic psychological frameworks, has been shown to enhance leadership adaptability, emotional intelligence, and resilience (Grant, 2014). Businesses increasingly recognize the value of coaching interventions in developing talent, improving performance, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth. The research presented in this volume delves into the effectiveness of coaching relationships, highlighting factors such as trust, goal-setting, and feedback in driving successful outcomes. Studies also explore the use of digital coaching platforms and artificial intelligence in coaching psychology, examining their impact on efficiency and scalability in the business world.

An emerging and fascinating area of business psychology is the role of animals in enhancing workplace well-being, leadership development, and coaching interventions. Research has shown that the presence of animals in work environments can reduce stress, increase social interactions, and improve employee morale (Beetz et al., 2012). Animal-assisted coaching, for example, leverages the therapeutic benefits of human-animal interactions to enhance self-awareness, communication skills, and emotional regulation among business professionals (Grajfoner, 2012). Equine-assisted leadership development, in particular, has gained traction as an innovative approach to developing essential leadership skills such as trust-building, non-verbal communication, and emotional intelligence. These programs, which involve working with horses to improve leadership capabilities, offer profound insights into personal and professional development. The contributions within this volume explore the growing intersection of animal-assisted interventions and business psychology, providing compelling evidence for their efficacy in fostering resilience and interpersonal effectiveness in corporate settings.

Leadership development has long been a focal point of business psychology research, and contemporary findings underscore the importance of psychological capital, a construct encompassing self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Effective leadership is no longer defined solely by technical expertise or strategic vision but also by the capacity to foster psychological safety, motivate teams, and navigate organizational change with emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). The contributions within this collection analyze the psychological dimensions of leadership, offering empirical evidence on how leaders can cultivate professional identity, enhance team dynamics, and drive sustainable organizational success (Grajfoner et al, 2023).

The integration of psychological insights into economic decision-making has revolutionized the understanding of consumer behavior and financial decision-making processes. The research presented in this volume examines the psychological factors shaping consumer choices, highlighting the implications of cognitive biases in financial markets, the role of social influence in purchasing behaviors, and the psychological drivers behind brand loyalty and product perception.

Innovation and creativity are the lifeblood of competitive business strategies, and psychological research has provided valuable insights into the cognitive and environmental factors that drive creative thinking. Organizational culture plays a critical role in fostering innovation, and studies have shown that psychological safety—the belief that one can take risks without fear of negative consequences—encourages idea generation and experimentation. The proceedings of this conference explore various psychological strategies for enhancing organizational creativity, including the role of positive reinforcement, intrinsic motivation, and team collaboration. In addition, the psychological resilience of employees and leaders has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in the context of crisis management and workplace stress. Research findings presented in this collection emphasize the importance of adaptive coping mechanisms, emotional regulation, and supportive leadership in mitigating stress and enhancing workplace well-being.

As businesses continue to navigate the complexities of digital transformation, globalization, and evolving workforce dynamics, the role of psychology will only become more pronounced. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the workplace, for example, raises critical questions about human-AI collaboration, ethical decision-making, and the psychological impact of automation on

employees. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the necessity of psychological insights in addressing mental health challenges, remote work dynamics, and organizational resilience.

The research presented in this volume serves as a testament to the enduring relevance of psychology in the business world. By bridging the gap between academic scholarship and practical application, these studies contribute to a more holistic understanding of how psychological principles can be leveraged to drive business success, enhance employee well-being, and foster ethical leadership. As we move forward, continued interdisciplinary collaboration between psychologists, business leaders, and policymakers will be essential in shaping the future of work and organizational excellence.

The proceedings of the 12th International Scientific Conference of DOBA Business School offer a rich tapestry of insights into the evolving landscape of psychology in business. From leadership and coaching psychology to behavioral economics and organizational creativity, the research compiled in this volume underscores the profound impact of psychological principles on business success. It is our hope that these contributions will inspire further inquiry, inform evidence-based business practices, and foster a more human-centered approach to organizational management.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the researchers, practitioners, and thought leaders who have contributed to this collection. Their dedication to advancing the field of psychology in business is invaluable, and we look forward to the continued exploration of these critical themes in future academic and professional discourse.

## References

- Beetz, A., Uvnäs-Moberg, K., Julius, H., & Kotrschal, K. (2012). Psychosocial and psychophysiological effects of human-animal interactions: The possible role of oxytocin. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3, 234.
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218-226.
- Grajfoner, D., Bolton, L. & Ke Guek, N. (2023). Psychology of Leadership Across Cultures. In M. N. Craith, & K. Strani (Eds.). *Intercultural Issues in Business Management*.
- Grajfoner, D. (2012). The Introduction to Animal Assisted Coaching Psychology: Definition and Challenges. *Coaching Psychology International*, 5 (1), 22-25.
- Grant, A. M. (2014). (2014) The Efficacy of Executive Coaching in Times of Organisational Change, *Journal of Change Management*, 14:2, 258-280, DO10.1080/14697017.2013.805159
- Luthans, F., Youssef, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2007). *Psychological capital: Developing the human competitive edge*. Oxford University Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Atria Books.