

HABILITATION THESIS

Innovation, Digital Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Social Impact

- Summary -

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Summary

Given the systemic nature of socio-economic challenges facing the development of entrepreneurship and sustainable development, innovation, inclusion, and the development of mechanisms to get the most out of the available resources are critical necessities. The specific challenges that our society is facing (e.g., climate change, sustainability, education and learning, equality, diversity and inclusion, etc.) require people to come up with innovative ways to support the development of our society. Thus, young generations are the engines that must be driven towards such challenges, through successful innovation models, education, and experimentation.

This habilitation thesis aims to highlight the achievements, and the future perspectives of the candidate, Cătălina Silvia Crișan, related to her scientific, teaching activities and building relationships with the entrepreneurship ecosystem. The candidate summarizes her activity in the field of management, focusing mainly on entrepreneurship and sustainable development. After completing the doctoral thesis in 2010, her research initiatives were mainly oriented toward the development of literature and practice in the field of Social and Commercial Entrepreneurship, Corporate Social Responsibility and Strategic Management. The expertise and the knowledge achieved have been materialized over time, in research internships, participation in international conferences and cooperation with researchers from prestigious universities abroad. Babeș-Bolyai University offered her access to competitive training and skills development framework through research internships during her doctoral and post-doctoral studies, but also the opportunity to examples of good practices and valuable sources for social capital development. Following the visits and research internships carried out at international universities, the candidate was always interested to identify colleagues willing to collaborate for research purposes, both internationally and nationally, to create synergy. These interactions enabled her to have access to examples of good practices and models that can be implemented, both in research and in teaching, to ensure a high-performance activity and follow the newest trends in the field.

The candidate approached the topic of social entrepreneurship, given the acute need for empirical studies that highlight the current reality, to promote social innovation and the increased need for gaining resilience while operating in a highly challenging domain. To serve this purpose, the candidate aims to promote practices and approaches aimed at strengthening the entrepreneurial mindset among students and promote technologies and processes that

allow the strengthening of entrepreneurial practices in Babeş-Bolyai University and the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Business Management (FSEGA). These aspects are detailed in the present habilitation thesis, and the candidate highlights the results obtained so far. These aspects will be detailed in this paper, as follows:

Chapter 1 highlights the candidate's career achievements providing a perspective on her teaching and research activity and civic implications for the business environment and the social economy. The three targeted components will provide an overview related to the impact in the research field, the prestige and recognition acquired so far, and the collaborative partnerships developed by the candidate. The chapter also highlights a series of scientometric indicators and the international recognition of the candidate's activity, respectively a record of the events, activities and contacts created throughout her career. The evolution in the teaching career was closely related to the field of research, and always aimed at deepening theoretical knowledge through research, providing the access to students access to the latest trends in the field, but also attracting partners from both the academic and private sectors and with the social economy. The candidate considers it vital to interconnect the research activity with that of the business environment and the social economy, to promote both competitive and valuable teaching activities for students, as well as to facilitate market integration and contribute to the development of the local economy. Innovative approaches and the encouragement of entrepreneurial behavior among students cannot be done otherwise than by providing relevant and up-to-date examples, but also by highlighting the practicality intended to help students understand the applicability of the theory.

Chapter 2 highlights the candidate's most relevant publications due to her research activity. Her postdoctoral research was aimed at deepening the research initiated during her doctorate, respectively she pursued the permanent updating with the international trends in the entrepreneurship field.

The candidate, together with collaborators from FSEGA and researchers from some internationally prestigious faculties, carried out research activities in the sphere of management, with an orientation on social and commercial entrepreneurship. To highlight the results obtained, the candidate's achievements are underlined through scientific publications, participation in various conferences and scientific events and citations obtained. During her scientific career, the candidate contributed to the development of literature in the field of entrepreneurship and sustainable development, presenting an interest in the way for-profit

organizations (e.g. entrepreneurs and corporations), contribute to sustainable development and product/services innovation. The chapter begins with the influence of corruption on employees/citizen migration and organizational performance and continues by highlighting the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the relevance of companies and social enterprises in sustainable development. This summary emphasizes the findings resulting from the following articles:

- Crișan C. S., Stanca L. M. & Dabija D. C. (2020), Corporate Social Performance: an assessment model on an emerging market, *Sustainability*, 12 (10).
- Crișan. E. L., Crișan-Mitra C. & Dragoș C., (2019), The Impact on Migration Intentions of Perceived Corruption at the Organizational and Country Level in Romania, *Eastern European Economics*, Taylor & Francis Journals, vol. 57(5), p. 430-455.
- Crișan C. S., Dinu V., Postelnicu C. & Dabija D. C., (2016), Corporate Practice of Sustainable Development in an Emerging Market, *Social_Sciences_Citation, Transformations in Business & Economics*, Vol. 15, No 1(37), P. 161 – 173.
- Crișan C-S, Dabija D. C. & Dinu V., (2015), *Social Entrepreneurship in Romania: Significance and Models*, *Montenegrin Journal of Economics*, Vol 11 , 2015, P.65 – 77.
- Crișan-Mitra C. & Borza A., (2015), Approaching CSR in Romania: An empirical Analysis, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Elsevier, Vol.207:546-552.
- Crișan C. S, (2013a), Social Enterprise - The Engine of Social Entrepreneurship, *Managerial Challenges of the Contemporary Society*, Risoprint, Vol 6 , p. 77-80.
- Crișan C.S., (2013b), Approaching corporate social responsibility through cross sector social partnerships case study of Bufab Romania, *Management & Marketing*, Vol 8(4): P.623-636.
- Crișan-Mitra, C. (2013), Approaching corporate social responsibility through cross sector social partnerships—case study of Bufab Romania”, *Management & Marketing*, Vol. 8, No 4, pp.623-636.
- Crișan C-S & Borza A., (2012), Social Entrepreneurship and Corporate Social Responsibilities, *International Business Research*, Vol. 5 (2), p.106-113.

Also, in this chapter are presented in extenso 3 publications, following two main directions: (1) *social entrepreneurship* and how social enterprises gain legitimacy and (2) *digital entrepreneurship*, which emphasizes relevant factors in digital innovation:

Social entrepreneurship

- Bunduchi, R., Smart, A.U., Crişan-Mitra, C. & Cooper, S. (2022), Legitimacy and innovation in social enterprises, *International Small Business Journal - Researching Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 0(0), p. 1-30

Digital entrepreneurship

- Bunduchi, R., Crişan-Mitra, C., Salanţa, I.I. & Crişan, E. L. (2021), Digital product innovation approach in entrepreneurial firms – the role of entrepreneurs' cognitive frames, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Vol.175, p.1-15.
- Yoruk, D. E., Bunduchi, R., Yoruk, E., Crişan-Mitra, C., Salanţa, I.I., Crişan, E. L., (2021), Pathways to innovation in Romanian software SMEs: Exploring the impact of interdependencies between internationalization and knowledge sources, *Journal of International Management*, Volume 27 (4), p. 1-22.

The topic related to social entrepreneurship aims to highlight how social enterprises gain legitimacy among main stakeholders, and the role of innovation in social value creation, while the topic related to digital entrepreneurship deals with innovation and how it can be managed to bring more value under the influence of different factors (e.g. internationalization, entrepreneurs cognitive frames). These articles relies also on the knowledge and the expertise of the candidate in the field of (social) entrepreneurship, knowledge management, and strategic management.

The knowledge resulting from the research efforts was capitalized and supplemented, during the doctoral and post-doctoral studies carried out at Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Complutense University, Madrid, Spain, University of Rochester, New York. The candidate aimed to strengthen her results through contract scientific research, in this sense, looking for opportunities to apply for various research projects and grants. These approaches involved collaborations with teaching staff from the country and abroad and contributed to the development of research skills, opening new research perspectives

In **Chapter 3**, the candidate presented the university career development plan envisioned to be implemented in the following years. The candidate's research was guided by the desire to identify practical solutions, and good practice examples, in the field of entrepreneurship, to

enable the access of the students to a realistic perspective on the applicability of the theory, in the context given by the national and international market. To ensure the continuity of research activities, the topics addressed by the candidate consistently followed the line of entrepreneurship and sustainable development, a fact that allowed the creation of a community of practice that enabled access to knowledge and expertise to objectively get the results validation.

Interdisciplinary collaboration was always considered by the candidate to be the way to promote innovation, both in projects with students and in research activities. The research studies carried out will be capitalized on by the candidate, both in the teaching and research career and in the relationship with actors from the business environment and the social economy. The candidate appreciates the fact that research and practice in the university environment can generate synergistic effects with spectacular beneficial results, as long as the expectations of the parties involved are known and the partners assume and fulfil the assumed responsibilities. Such partnerships between researchers and practitioners can lead to remarkable results, as long as the parties involved manage to develop long-term partnerships based on trust and commitment.

The university career plan aims to address the research, teaching and relationship with the business environment and the social economy, due to the need for validation that can only take place through practice, respectively it can be used to strengthen the learning process and complement practical knowledge.

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