Universitatea Transilvania din Brașov

HABILITATION THESIS

SUMMARY

Title: Managing the Digital and Sustainable Transformation of Organizations: Contributions to Human Capital, Consumer Behavior, and Organizational Resilience

Domain: Management

Author: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexandra Zamfirache

University: Transilvania University of Brașov

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This habilitation thesis is structured into two main sections: (1) the presentation of the scientific and professional contributions achieved during the postdoctoral period and (2) the identification of strategic directions for the development of an academic career in the field of Management. The central theme of the thesis focuses on analyzing the ways in which organizations adapt to changes generated by digitalization and the requirements of sustainable development, with an emphasis on human capital, consumer behavior, digital capabilities, resilience, and sustainability-oriented practices.

The scientific activity carried out after obtaining the doctoral degree focused on the development of applied research, involving the design and use of statistical instruments and models for assessing digitalization and sustainability processes, as well as organizational performance and adaptability. The research activities were supported by interdisciplinary collaborations and disseminated through the publication of results in internationally recognized scientific journals.

The first research pillar addresses the strategic role of human capital in supporting organizational adaptation and transformation processes, with an emphasis on education and skills development. The research conducted highlighted the importance of formal education and the quality of educational services in developing human capital capable of responding to the requirements of the contemporary economy. An important research direction focused on the role of universities in developing digital and entrepreneurial skills, as well as students' interest in economic initiatives oriented towards sustainability. The research results highlight the importance of formal entrepreneurial education in the development of human capital by strengthening the knowledge and competencies required by future entrepreneurs. Based on the results obtained, an entrepreneurship program is proposed, aimed at improving the competencies of future graduates and developing their capacity to initiate and develop sustainable organizations.

The second research pillar focuses on the analysis of consumer behavior and experience in the context of transformations generated by digitalization. The first study examines the management of consumer decision-making in the digital environment and identifies the factors that facilitate the transition from the evaluation stage to the purchase stage, in the context of the "messy middle" of the consumer journey. Based on the results obtained, the TEAM model was developed, encompassing four relevant dimensions of website performance for optimizing the consumer journey. This research pillar also examines the management of the purchasing experience and organizational competitiveness. The findings highlight the need for organizations to adopt a differentiated approach to consumers, as purchasing behaviors vary depending on factors such as age, the level of trust in the digital environment, product type, and the degree of technological adoption.

The third research pillar focuses on the capacity of organizations to adapt and respond to digital transformations and sustainability requirements. One research direction addresses organizational digital maturity and the adoption of technologies based on artificial intelligence. Among the results obtained, the development of an instrument for assessing organizational digital maturity is particularly noteworthy, as it enabled the measurement of digital maturity levels and the identification of five specific organizational typologies. With regard to cybersecurity, the research findings highlight the need to approach it not only as a technical function but also as a strategic element of digital management, with an impact on organizational competitiveness. The thesis proposes strategies for strengthening resilience in SMEs, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, adaptability, and investment in human capital during periods of crisis. Furthermore, the research on the role of digitalization in the supply chain and in ensuring sustainability in the Romanian restaurant market highlights an intermediate level of digitalization, focused primarily on operational activities and to a lesser extent on customer relations and procurement processes.

The second section of the thesis presents the strategic directions for the development of an academic career, including the continuation of research in the field of digitalization and organizational transformation, as well as the strengthening of interdisciplinary collaboration. With regard to teaching activities, concerns related to digitalization are complemented by the course Logistics, which provides the necessary framework for integrating and further exploring concepts related to the digitalization of logistics processes. I intend to develop students' competencies in understanding and using digital technologies in logistics activities, as well as to continue collaboration with economic actors and representative organizations in the field, in order to facilitate the exchange of experience and align students' education with the requirements of the labor market.

The findings resulting from the research reflect a commitment to developing an interdisciplinary perspective oriented towards practical applicability, while taking into account the contextual particularities of the studies conducted. The thesis also provides a basis for future research through the extension of comparative analyses at the international level and the use of advanced methodologies for evaluating digital and sustainable transformation processes. The directions proposed within the academic career plan highlight the continuity of scientific interests and the need to align research activities and university programs with digital, economic, and social transformations, as well as with the continuously evolving requirements of the professional environment.