

Abstract

Competitiveness, at any level, is an inexhaustible scientific approach because the complexity of the global environment in which it manifests, in fact exogenous influences are able to provide volatility, on the one hand, and the variety of endogenous factors and indicators, that are more and more sophisticated, are able to provide competitive advantage for business. Competitiveness is a very controversial concept with multiple meanings, which generate a number of challenges both individually and globally, because people, companies, society, and nations try to identify those elements of differentiation that take them out of anonymity.

The present habilitation thesis brings together under the title *Business international competitiveness: determinants, challenges, constraints* an important/relevant part of my research/scientific work (articles, books, postdoctoral thesis) from 2003 to present, since I got the PhD.

The main contributions to the state of art are in the following directions:

(1) *Determinants of the business international competitiveness* by capturing the triangle of competitiveness.

Competitiveness creates *sustainable prosperity for the economy, profitability for companies, welfare for people*, as long as it is perceived as a constructive element. The approach of international competitiveness of nations is based on my postdoctoral thesis entitled "*International competitiveness of the national economy: analysis, experiences and perspectives*" that was elaborated under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Lucian-Liviu Albu, MCA. Scientific relevance is based on: identification of most important models to measure the national competitiveness; evaluation of national global performance by a synergistic model that integrate competitiveness, economic freedom, country risk, knowledge economy and human development; *sustainable competitiveness* as a step forward to another level.

A competitive economy creates a competitive business environment. In reality, they are interconnected: a developed and competitive economy creates a competitive business environment or vice-versa. From this perspective, the business environment (at every of its levels and by any of its forms) is more and more competitive and challenging for firms nowadays. On the other hand, firms themselves exercise a growing pressure and influence over the society (by their economic, social and environmental – wanted or not – outputs/effects). Under these circumstances, new theories and practices emerged, in order to bring together and make long term peace between firms/businesses and society (as a whole and considering each part and category of it as well).

Business competitiveness is a synergy between sophistication of company operations and strategy, quality of the microeconomic business environment and state of cluster development. But business competitiveness is strictly related to financial performance and to financial competitiveness. A company can be competitive only if it is financial competitive. In order to obtain financial competitiveness companies must improve all financial indicators over the industry average, which means that the profitability, the liquidity, the solvency, ROS, ROA, ROE.

The result of interrelation between competitiveness of nation and firm competitiveness consist in *personal wellbeing* that can be measured by GDP per capita. But the income is not a complete measure of wellbeing; you have to consider also human development, intellectual capital because the concept means *living a long and healthy life and gaining knowledge*.

In conclusion, all levels of competitiveness are influencing each other while being both input and output.

(2) *Challenges for business international competitiveness* from managerial perspectives and knowledge-based economy.

The general reference framework of analysis, decisions and actions regarding businesses, and particularly the global corporations, is exponentially multiply and continually sophisticate nowadays. Within an ocean of challenges and uncertainty, one thing is for sure: the "old" thinking/theoretical models, as well as the "old" business/practical models can no longer be the appropriate answer to the new problems; or, at least, they has to be refined.

The scientific relevance of this part consists in: the development of a *behavioral model of management* that incorporates synergistic knowledge management in the triple bottom line components; the construction of firm competitiveness index by leveraging tangible and intangible assets; the raise of *Panarchy global corporation* (a company that integrates two major characteristics: stability and change).

Therefore, the ways that the ongoing transformations are understand, the future evolutions are anticipated, and the decisions are taken (by integrating the positive deviations and avoiding or eliminating the negative ones), while assuring the sustainable competitiveness of businesses, are essential.

(3) *Constraints for business international competitiveness* given by cultural diversity, leadership style and corruption.

The culture and the corruption are, in most of the cases, the main explanation of the fact that one country is developed quicker than other. This part demonstrate that: a *cultural model* that can provide the competitiveness of an economy *doesn't exist*, the *corruption* and the lack of economic freedom are main *milestones* in business international competitiveness.

These research directions emphasize my previous activity as a researcher and teacher.

Given the complexity of *business international competitiveness*, on one hand, and my fields of competence, that interferes between management and finance, on the other hand, the *future research* will be focus on the same direction but with different approaches, from different points of view, such as: *behavioral finance* (international financial management perspective) and *sustainable business* (CSR and stakeholders theory). Regarding the *teaching and practical perspectives* I intended to develop software for gamification of business simulations discipline.