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Entrepreneurship in tourism.

Determinant factors of the entrepreneurial activity in tourism.

- Summary -

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Titlul proiectului: „Burse Universitare în România prin Sprijin European pentru Doctoranzi și Post-doctoranzi (BURSE DOC-POSTDOC)”
Cod Contract: POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133255



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Acknowledgment:

This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133255, project ID 133255 (2014), co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013.

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a phenomenon whose importance is recognized both globally and nationally or locally. It is a topical issue that has sparked the interest of researchers in many areas, practitioners and also of governments and public institutions.

Entrepreneurship is often associated with economic growth and development, generating new jobs, improving living conditions, technological progress, i.e. it is assimilated to prosperity in a society.

Entrepreneurship is a broad concept and is still vague and is defined differently by experts in various fields, each with a different perspective on what it is and how this phenomenon influences their social and economic environments. The different opinions should not be necessarily regarded as contradictory, but rather as providing an interpretation from another point of view, using a different “lens” in observing entrepreneurship. The complex nature of entrepreneurship and its multidisciplinary are key reasons for the lack of a widely accepted theoretical foundation for understanding entrepreneurship as a distinct economic and social phenomenon.

Although there is no universally accepted definition of what this phenomenon is and how it manifests, entrepreneurship is considered to be important because of the role it may have on economic growth and development. Evidence of the importance of entrepreneurship is the growing interest in recent years from economists and specialists in other fields and public initiatives at national and regional level to support and encourage entrepreneurship. The European Union provides financial support through a range of funding programs to stimulate entrepreneurship in all countries. According to the European Commission “The challenge for the European Union (EU) is to identify key factors for creating a climate in which entrepreneurial initiative and business activities prosper” (EC, 2003).

Tourism is a global phenomenon that plays a significant role in the economy and is one of the sectors of the economy that has the potential to make significant contributions to improving national economic indicators and ultimately may lead to increased welfare of the population.

From the perspective of entrepreneurship, tourism provides a specific operation context, perceived differently by other sectors. The way in which opportunities are identified and the process of their transformation into touristic products and services for consumer is very diverse in comparison with other areas of economic activity.

Reasons for choosing the topic

Because of the importance that entrepreneurship and tourism can have in the economy and the role of entrepreneurship in tourism I decided to approach the subject of interest in this thesis, hoping to contribute to a better understanding of the field.

Most concepts about tourism and entrepreneurship are not new, but explaining the relationship between the two is a complex journey, the link between tourism, entrepreneurship, economic growth and development having a multilateral character.

Despite growing interest related to entrepreneurship in tourism, the field is not characterized by a large number of researches or rigorous empirical studies.

If entrepreneurship and tourism are concepts that have caught interest lately, *entrepreneurship in tourism* is an area less discussed both in specialized literature and in the economic press. But promoting entrepreneurship in tourism is important because it can contribute to accelerating sustainable social and economic development through a higher recovery of the tourism potential of our country.

Objectives

In my PhD thesis I aimed to clarify a number of issues relating to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship in tourism based on an approach that combines theoretical and empirical research, which comes to validate or to invalidate the theoretical approaches on the two concepts. Therefore, I proposed a series of objectives to be achieved in terms of the analysis of the concept of entrepreneurship.

In the theoretical research I focused on the conceptual delimitation of entrepreneurship, entrepreneur and entrepreneurship in tourism, highlighting the elements individualizing them. Tracking over time the evolution of entrepreneurship and its forms of expression aimed a better understanding of the concept. Also in the theoretical research I aimed at presenting the main theories on entrepreneurship and the evidence of specialized academic literature on the determinants of entrepreneurship and the motivations of entrepreneurs, theories both in economics and in other fields. Presenting the link between entrepreneurship and economic growth and development was another objective.

In the empirical research I aimed at presenting the situation of entrepreneurial activity in Romania from various perspectives. I sought to capture the reality in terms of indicators that show the rate of entrepreneurial activity, aspirations and perceptions of individuals on entrepreneurship and their motivations. Moreover, I wanted to carry out the “demography” of the businesses, especially of tourism companies.

Another objective that I had in view in this thesis was to study the impact that entrepreneurship in tourism has on the economy in our country.

A major objective was to identify those determinants of entrepreneurship that are found in the specialized literature and that are influence factors of the entrepreneurial activity in tourism. In this sense, I pursued in the empirical research the validation of the following specific hypotheses about the determinants of entrepreneurship in tourism:

I1 – *With age, the probability of becoming entrepreneur in tourism decreases*

I2 – *Men are more likely than women to start a business in tourism*

I3 – *The higher the household’s income, the higher the probability to create a company in tourism, to become entrepreneur in tourism*

I4 - *Employee occupational status is positively associated with the likelihood of becoming an entrepreneur in tourism and creating a new business in tourism*

I5 – *The greater the number of business opportunities perceived, the higher the probability to start a new company in the tourism sector*

I6 – *The lower the fear of failure, the higher the probability of becoming an entrepreneur in tourism and starting a business in tourism*

I7 - *The perception that society considers entrepreneurship as an attractive profession is positively associated with the probability of starting a new business in tourism*

I8 - *The perception that the society believes that successful entrepreneurs have a high social status and prestige is positively associated with the probability of opening a business in tourism*

I9 - *Confidence in their skills and knowledge is positively associated with the probability of starting a new economic entity in tourism and becoming an entrepreneur in tourism.*

I10 - *The level of education is positively associated with the probability of starting a new business in tourism*

I11 - *Knowledge of other entrepreneurs contributes to increased opportunity to become an entrepreneur in tourism, to start a business in tourism*

I12 – *Providing funds to others to start a business in recent years increases the probability of becoming an entrepreneur in tourism.*

Methodology of research

The empirical study presented in this PhD thesis is based on the reviewing of the existing literature and then following the way in which theoretical aspects are confirmed or invalidated for entrepreneurship in tourism. In the proposed model I used secondary data from reliable sources from institutions in Romania and abroad, and the type of analysis involved the use of statistical methods such as correlation, simple linear regression and binary logistic regression.

In the empirical analysis on the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic performance in tourism I have used secondary aggregated and non-aggregated data from ONRC (National Trade Register Office) on the number of new registrations of companies in the business of hotels and restaurants. I used time series from NIS (National Institute of Statistics) for the number of active businesses in the tourism sector and on the number of employees, information found in the companies' statistics (economic statistics) and labour force (social statistics). I used longitudinal data from WTTC (World Travel & Tourism Council) on the direct contribution of tourism to GDP. To check the relationship between variables we used statistical analysis and correlation and linear regression in chapter no. 5.

In the empirical study on the determinants of entrepreneurial activity in tourism I have used secondary data from GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor), data collected by using a questionnaire. The database used consisted of more than 160,000 observations and over 1,300 individuals and entrepreneurs in tourism from which 785 were included in the analysis.

The type of business mentioned by interviewees was recorded and encoded in the database by field of activity according to the classification approved by the United Nations Statistics Division namely ISIC (International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities), of which I selected only those in the tourism industries.

In the econometric model, the main multivariate analysis method used for testing the proposed hypothesis was the logistic regression. Given the nature of the targets subject to research, the assessment of the influence of certain factors, independent variables, on a dichotomous dependent variable, I used binary logistic regression.

In the analysis, the dependent variable was the tourism entrepreneur. The concept of "early-stage entrepreneur in tourism" was measured using a dichotomous variable which took the value "1" when respondents were early-stage entrepreneurs and belonged to a type of business in tourism and it was marked with "0" when it belonged to another area or were not involved in starting a

business activity. The independent variables analyzed were: age, gender, income, occupation, perception of opportunity, fear of failure, perception of entrepreneurship as a desirable career and the status associated with it, confidence in their own abilities, education, knowing other entrepreneurs and providing funds for starting other businesses.

Limitations of the research

The analyses undertaken also have a number of limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results.

One aspect that I want to mention is related to the activities placed under the umbrella of tourism. Even though I used, in order to prevent this problem, the theoretical framework recommended by the UNWTO, certainly some of the activities related to tourism were not included here and I mention here the shops that can sell products to tourists (handicrafts, souvenirs, duty-free, etc.). I would like to mention that not all codes related to the tourism areas of activity included in the survey capture only companies that are addressed exclusively to tourists.

If in chapter 6 I used the ISIC codes for tourism (International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities), in Chapter 5 I used NACE codes (Classification of Activities of National Economy). With regard to NACE codes, I should state that there is a correspondence with ISIC codes, but not a perfect overlap, and the classification system of economic activities in Romania has changed over time, in the period under review. So some divisions, groups and classes have been added and/or removed, these changes being reflected in the data that may have slight variations according to NACE classification valid when those companies were founded.

Another aspect that I want to mention is connected with the fact that even if the questionnaire and database used in chapter 6 were built using the scientific rigor required in gathering the information, the emphasis has not been on tourism entrepreneurs, but on entrepreneurs in general. This required a recoding of variables and it resulted in a decrease of valid observations on tourism entrepreneurs.

As I mentioned in the actual thesis, the values obtained and especially their interpretation should be treated with caution. In the analysis conducted in chapter 5, some reasons responsible for these precautions are primarily related to the analyzed period. A period of 7 or 10 years may not be long enough to reflect the correct time relationship between the two variables.

In the analysis performed in chapter 6, the following statement is also required: analysis shows the situation at a certain period in time, and the factors that influence entrepreneurial activity may change from year to year and in future it is recommended that such analyzes are repeated to observe over time the changes in the determinants of tourism.

Structure and organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of a number of 6 chapters structured as follows:

The first chapter is an overview of the concepts of entrepreneurship and entrepreneur with existing definitions in the specialized literature. In this chapter I presented a brief history of entrepreneurship and mentioned the evolution in time of the entrepreneur and the link to the forms of organization of economic activity. Also in this chapter I have highlighted the most important contributions of entrepreneurship in the history of economic thought presenting the vision on entrepreneurship of authors like Cantillon, Schumpeter, Knight, Schultz, von Mises and others.

The second chapter presents entrepreneurial activity in Romania in terms of the indicators developed by a number of global institutions such as the OECD, GEM, EUROSTAT and others. In the first part, I mention and describe which are the most popular international initiatives aimed at measuring entrepreneurship and in the second part of the chapter I present in detail the indicators of entrepreneurial activity in our country in the eyes of the most important initiatives of this kind.

In the third chapter I identified the link between SMEs and entrepreneurship and presented the detailed situation of SMEs in Romania based on data from NIS, NTC, FPP and CNIMMPR highlighting, where possible, tourism companies. There is provided information on the number of registrations and closures of companies, changes in the number of companies over time and by sector as well as information on the number of employees in SMEs and value added created by this group of companies.

In the fourth chapter I presented, from the theoretical point of view, information about tourism and highlighted the link between entrepreneurship and tourism. I tried to define the concept of *tourism entrepreneurship* and showed which is the current state of research in entrepreneurship in tourism.

In the fifth chapter, after a brief review of the specialized literature on entrepreneurship and economic growth, I performed a series of statistical analysis to identify whether there is a

connection between entrepreneurship in tourism and economic development and the nature of this relationship. In an attempt to see what is the economic impact of tourism entrepreneurship in many ways I operationalized the concept of entrepreneurship in accordance with the existing recommendations in the specialized literature.

In the sixth chapter I focused on the identification of factors that determine an individual to start a business in tourism. Following the results obtained in the previous chapter and which were indicating a positive relationship between tourism entrepreneurship and economic performance I tried to observe which are the determinants of entrepreneurship in tourism. In this final chapter I verified the key assumptions regarding the influence factors on the probability of becoming an entrepreneur in tourism.

At the end of this thesis I made a brief summary of conclusions, opinions and personal contributions on the subject matter and its implications.

Conclusions and final considerations

The study of the phenomenon called entrepreneurship is a relatively new, but under development area of research, and entrepreneurial activity analysis and understanding the implications of this phenomenon on the economy raised an increased interest in recent years, both from researchers and practitioners. Although entrepreneurship, as the practical process of capitalizing opportunities arising and the creation of entities to transform these opportunities and business ideas into successful, profitable enterprises, is as old as human history, entrepreneurship as a field of research is relatively young compared especially to devoted subjects of analysis of such phenomena such as economics, psychology, sociology, etc.

Reality shows that entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon with major implications at economic and also social level, and as I have shown in this thesis, an inter- and multi-disciplinary approach is required in trying to understand more correctly and completely the concept and its effects.

Without claiming to be a comprehensive work regarding the interpretations of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs, I presented throughout this thesis how these concepts are defined in terms of different authors from various fields.

In addition to the difficulties in defining the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship there is also the challenge of finding a way to operationalize the concept to be used in various statistical and econometric analysis, but due to the absence of a single definition, finding ways to quantify entrepreneurship in a variable involved an arduous journey in the specialized literature to find theoretical support.

Also, tourism is a complex area and presents its specific challenges in the definition, especially in finding a framework encompassing all activities under its umbrella. Because of the many economic activities that are directly related to trips made by tourists, and the multitude of other activities related to it, it is more difficult to calculate the exact value of the actual size of the tourism industry.

Tourism entrepreneurship can be defined as “how, by whom and with what consequences opportunities to produce new goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited” (Venkataraman, 1997) in the specific context provided by tourism.

The reason of the analysis and presentation of the situation of SMEs in Romania, focusing on those that operate in tourism, was linked to the importance they have in the economy, but also because of their connection with entrepreneurship. Most of the times, business ideas that involve the opportunities in the market, are translated into reality through micro firms, small and medium

companies; most entrepreneurial initiatives start as a small entity, therefore SMEs are a vehicle for entrepreneurship.

As shown throughout chapters 2 and 3, SMEs play an important role in the country's economy by their contribution to the generation of jobs (employment), through added value created and through social implications that companies might have at community level.

The situation of SMEs in Romania shows an economy in which they predominate in number, employ about two thirds of the workforce at national level and generate about half of the value added. However, the results obtained in comparison with those of the EU are below the European average. An important aspect to be noted is that the effects of the crisis have made their mark on the development of SMEs and we can notice that in 2013 we still had the values of the performance indicators of SMEs lower than in 2008, the SME sector having failed to fully recover, but an improvement can be foreseen in the future in the development of small and medium enterprises.

Entrepreneurial initiative originates in the individual, so, in addition to the analysis of forms of organizing the economic activity, I also investigated the propensity towards entrepreneurship, the motivations, attitudes and perceptions of individuals with entrepreneurial spirit.

The analysis of indicators on entrepreneurial activity shows an increase in recent years in Romania. The number of those who intend to open a business has increased. According to data from different institutions, half of Romanian respondents prefer the status of self-employed at the expense of occupational status employee, entrepreneurship as a desired career increasing.

The analysis also shows an increase in the number of opportunities perceived by individuals, as existing in the environment in which they operate, but also a varied development which has grown in the last year with regard to the perception that they have the skills and knowledge required to starting a business.

Together with perceptions, the main reasons and fears that individuals have are when starting a business in terms of different indicators were observed and highlighted. Such grounds relating to personal independence obtained as an entrepreneur, the possibility of flexible working hours and getting a better income, but also the operation of a business opportunity are the main answers provided by respondents in Romania. Fears of starting a business are generally associated to the risks to fail, loss of ownership and lack of security offered by a job and a regular income.

In the analysis of entrepreneurship in tourism, especially in small companies, a step forward can be done by recognizing that there are a number of reasons for entrepreneurship initiative, from economic reasons to non-economic reasons. I have underlined that there are some specific reasons for the entrepreneur in tourism, in addition to the economic ones that consider profit maximization. One of the major motivations seen in individuals who begin small businesses in tourism is linked to enjoying a certain lifestyle, focusing on the social benefits, economic objectives being located in the background.

An individual can be determined to start a business both for reasons related to opportunity and necessity, having two categories of factors that influence the decision to start a business: “push” and “pull” type of factors. This confrontation of motivations helps to better understand what causes an individual to choose the path of entrepreneurship.

In Romania we have a higher share of entrepreneurs who said they were motivated by the opportunities that they have noticed in the market and they wanted to exploit them for income growth.

I wanted to emphasize that the individual is determined both by necessity and opportunity and that there are economic factors in the environment, but also related to the perception of opportunities and skills held, self-confidence, education and knowledge of other entrepreneurs, which influence a person's activity and decision to start a business.

Theoretically, the influence of entrepreneurship on the economy appears to be simple, direct, associated with a positive relationship between the two. Theoretical and empirical studies however, do not always confirm these relations, and they have shown that these influence relations between entrepreneurship and economy may differ in time, depending on the type of economy and specific national and regional characteristics. Thus, I conducted a series of analysis between tourism entrepreneurship and economic performance. In the studies performed I have operationalized in several ways entrepreneurship such as: the number of new registrations of companies, start-ups, in tourism and the number of active companies in tourism. Through the analyses carried out I showed the existence of a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and the economic impact in the country. Even if the analysis model used was one with a lower level of complexity, and the results have not indicated, in all cases, a very high proportion of explained dependence variance, there is however a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and economic performance in the Romanian economy.

At the end of the thesis I proposed a model for analyzing the determinants of entrepreneurship activity in tourism and highlighted those that are relevant and important to entrepreneurship in tourism.

Throughout the thesis, in the penultimate chapter, we have identified a link, a positive correlation between entrepreneurship in tourism and economic development. Therefore, if entrepreneurship in tourism influences economy in the desired direction, I thought it was important to analyze and highlight what are the factors that lead individuals to start a business in tourism. Knowing the determinants, recommendations could be made about what should be done to support people with initiative in the field and thus in helping people start business, to contribute to improving the overall economic environment.

I analyzed and evaluated the influence of certain factors on the probability of becoming an entrepreneur in tourism, the influence of demographic and economic factors; factors related to the perception of the environment and personal characteristics of individuals; factors that measure the social and intellectual capital. In the analysis performed we used data from the APS (Adult Population Survey), database containing voluminous information collected rigorously in the project GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor).

In the statistical analysis I used binary logistic regression, a statistical analysis technique that is suitable for the research carried out due to the dichotomous character of the analyzed dependent variables, the entrepreneur/non-entrepreneur, and the influence of various factors.

The results suggest that variables such as *age* and *occupational status* influence the decision to become an entrepreneur in tourism. Specifically, individuals who have the opportunity to become entrepreneurs in tourism are young and working, are employed, which increases their chance to become entrepreneurs.

As we mentioned in chapter 4, “Entrepreneurship and Tourism” those individuals employed in tourism who decide to follow the entrepreneurial path will open business activities related to the field where they worked and gained experience. Therefore there should be supported and encouraged not only those who are beginners as for example students or graduates, but such measures should also target those who already have a job.

In addition to the aforementioned demographic and economic factors, factors such as individual perception on the environment and personality traits also affect the decision to start a business in the area.

Including these perceptual variables in the model used is important because some authors do not usually include them in the analytical models developed on entrepreneurial behaviour analysis (Arenius & Minniti, 2005).

The results of this analysis show that individuals who perceive business opportunities in their environment and do not feel strongly the fear of failure are much more likely to become entrepreneurs in tourism. A better understanding of the economic environment and the consequences of starting a business in terms of advantages and disadvantages associated could lead to an improvement in the perception of opportunities and reducing the fear of failure. Measures to improve the economic environment conditions should be taken so as to increase the opportunity for individuals to become entrepreneurs.

Another interesting result is related to the fact that there can not be provided support for the idea that the perception of entrepreneurship, as desired career, and entrepreneurship association with a high social status and prestige, have an influence on the probability of becoming an entrepreneur in the field. Social legitimacy perception variables are not significant in the model developed so there can not be made a presumption about their influence on the individual's intention to become an entrepreneur in tourism.

According to the results of the analysis model, the strongest factor influencing the decision to start a business in tourism is *confidence in their own abilities*, knowledge and experience required to start an entrepreneurship initiative. Confidence that they have the skills and experience is the most important determinant of entrepreneurship in tourism. Besides the psychological implications which are intrinsically related to the individual, these results should be considered together with the information related to the fact that those who are employed also have great chances of becoming entrepreneurs. I mention this because the experience, knowledge and skills are formed over time and often in employment.

The other analyzed variable of entrepreneurial ability, intellectual capital, represented by *the level of education* has significant values for primary and lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary education, which reveals a positive relationship between the level of middle school education, high school, college and the opportunity to become entrepreneurs in tourism.

Current results on the educational level confirm that it is associated with the likelihood of becoming an entrepreneur in tourism. The only category that is not significant is that of individuals with a university degree, evidence to suggest that there is a match with the views of the authors who assert that people with higher education and specialized experts in a field are rather employees in well-paid positions than entrepreneurs.

A practical implication deriving from these findings for government measures to support entrepreneurship is that they should be geared towards helping people to develop the skills and knowledge to start a business, so that with increasing skills confidence will increase which can lead to a greater number of entrepreneurs in time. High academic education is less important than professional and practical knowledge for an individual who intends to start a business in tourism, according to the results obtained. These results do not only dispute the importance of higher education for an individual, but they show that some variables currently have a greater influence on the probability that an individual becomes entrepreneur in tourism.

The variables used to measure social capital, *knowing other entrepreneurs*, and providing funds to another initiative, *business angels*, have an important influence on the decision to start a business.

A practical implication deriving from these results is the fact that government initiatives to support entrepreneurship should encourage and facilitate interaction and relationship between individuals with concerns about starting a business because through the “networking” events in the field, the exchange of valuable information and resources between individuals is encouraged and thus it contributes to reducing indecision and uncertainty that ultimately influences the decision to start a business in tourism.

Personal contributions

The fact that entrepreneurship is an emerging area of research is particularly true especially for studies in sectors such as tourism, a sector in which relatively few researchers have carried out extensive research on the phenomenon of creating new business opportunities for exploitation. (Ateljevic and Page, 2009).

This thesis is intended as a humble contribution to research in the field of entrepreneurship in tourism and is a step forward towards a better understanding of the determinants of entrepreneurial activity in the tourism sector, the factors influencing the decision to start a business in tourism.

I emphasize once again that the research on entrepreneurship in tourism presents a relatively small number of studies and surveys both globally and nationally, and this paper brings a new element, namely this analysis of the factors influencing tourism entrepreneurship.

In the field of entrepreneurship, especially in recent years, a series of studies addressing the phenomenon from different angles have been conducted. Despite the growing interest in

entrepreneurship there is no generally accepted definition for it, no widely accepted way to operationalize the concept.

In defining entrepreneurship and identifying the factors that determine a potential entrepreneur to start a new business for him, researchers have used a variety of approaches specific to disciplines such as economics, psychology, sociology, management, and others, some of the approaches being captured and presented throughout the chapters of this thesis.

Contrary to the importance attributed to the phenomenon of “entrepreneurship” and research that has grown in the field, with regard to entrepreneurship in tourism, in the specialized literature there is a modest number of studies, both internationally and nationally.

There are a number of studies, both theoretical and empirical, from renowned authors in the field which have helped identify a large number of influencing factors that determine an individual to start an entrepreneurial activity, some have even proposed a theoretical framework analysis of the determinants of entrepreneurship, but few of these studies focus on entrepreneurship in tourism and its determinants.

This allowed me to try to integrate several approaches, based on the theoretical support taken from several disciplines and combining the viewpoints to develop an analytical model to see which are the influence factors of entrepreneurial activity in tourism and travel industries, the determinants for entrepreneurship in tourism.

Within the analysis performed I tried to take into account other studies and their limitations so that in the design of the proposed model for the testing of the hypotheses, to overcome the shortcomings encountered in some studies in order to generate results with relevance to the field.

I shall further present some evidence to support the novelty and timeliness of this doctoral thesis.

In **theory**, some contributions of this scientific approach consist of:

- Capturing and clarifying, at the level of the theoretical approaches, the meaning of the concepts of entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, tourism and tourism entrepreneurship, by doing so I helped to enrich the specialized literature on entrepreneurship in tourism.
- Synthesizing information on the history of the entrepreneur and its evolution along with the forms of economic activity.
- Identifying and presenting a summary of the contributions of scientific research, both theoretical and empirical, internationally and nationally to the development of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship in tourism, and also the existing trends in the field.

- Presenting the links between entrepreneurship and economic performance; I presented evidence from many sources that support the existence of a positive influence of entrepreneurship on the economic environment.
- Presenting the main factors influencing entrepreneurial activity, making a summary of those most commonly used in the analysis of entrepreneurship.
- Contribution to the clarification and understanding, at methodological level, of key instruments and research methods of the determinants' influence of entrepreneurship in tourism.
- Providing an overview of the characteristics of the SME sector in Romania, focusing on those operating in tourism. SMEs have a dual significance: both for the role and the significant contribution they have in the economy and that they constitute the main form of manifestation of entrepreneurship.

At empirical level, contributions are reflected in the results obtained in the research:

- Presentation of the business sector development in Romania through the dynamics of small and medium companies' indicators. Moreover, I captured the elements related to entrepreneurial intention and Romanian entrepreneurs' perceptions and attitudes on entrepreneurship.
- Highlighting the relationship that exists between entrepreneurship in tourism and economic performance in the country, outlining the positive correlation between the two phenomena. This involved identifying and proposing ways to operationalize and quantify the theoretical concepts before they can be introduced into the analysis.
- Construction of a model showing which are the determinants of entrepreneurship in tourism and identifying the main factors that influence entrepreneurial activity in tourism. The statistical model used, the logistic regression, allowed testing of a series of twelve hypotheses on the influence of various factors on the opportunity to become an entrepreneur in tourism. In the proposed model to be used in the analysis we introduced a mix of factors such as: economic factors, but also perceptual ones and related to the social and intellectual capital of an individual, and such an approach is new in entrepreneurship in tourism.

Future research directions

Entrepreneurship in tourism and the study of factors influencing entrepreneurial activity can be deepened in the future both because of the importance of the concept, and the fact that it is still a relatively young and developing field of research.

For a better understanding of the determinants, especially since some of the variables are perceptual in nature, we propose their further study using qualitative research methods. The information obtained through interviews with individuals directly involved in starting a business in tourism or who plan such an initiative should provide the opportunity to complete the current image with high quality data.

As possible objectives to continue this research, I mention the influence factors analysis in the regions of the country because each region has its specificity both in terms of the economic environment and the social and cultural environments. Due to the specificity of each area influence factors of entrepreneurship in tourism might be different. Such an approach is beneficial to better understand the situation and to intervene with personalized support measures in each area.

To complete the picture on entrepreneurship in tourism, investigating its impact on social and economic environment depending on the type of motivation, is a possible target for future research in this field.

This thesis addresses a field of research which is still young and does not yet have a well-grounded theoretical framework or specific methods used exclusively in the field, something that gives the researcher the opportunity to be creative in the research conducted.