

**Universitatea "Lucian Blaga" din Sibiu  
Institutul de Organizare a Studiilor Doctorale și  
Postdoctorale**

## **TEZĂ DE ABILITARE**

**CONTRIBUȚII ȘI PERSPECTIVE PRIVIND  
MANAGEMENTUL AFACERILOR ÎN CONTEXTUL  
DEZVOLTĂRII DURABILE**

**Domeniul: MANAGEMENT**

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## SUMMARY

In a world subject to major economic, social, and environmental constraints, sustainable development is a topic of much discussion and study in the academic community due to the need to find appropriate answers and solutions to problems affecting our security and future as individuals and society. In light of the growing challenges brought about by dwindling natural resources, accelerating environmental degradation, and increasing social pressures, this topic has become increasingly linked to business activities. As society has come to understand that business orientation towards sustainability, using management and entrepreneurship, serves the goals of sustainable economic and social development, companies have been encouraged to identify sustainable solutions that will enable them to prosper without affecting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Such an approach implies addressing the principles of sustainable development at the core of business management so that the profit motive is balanced with the interest of companies to take responsibility for the well-being of all stakeholders and society as a whole. A company is sustainable when it meets its targeted economic objectives and is socially, ethically, and environmentally responsible in all its business activities.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the recent Russian-Ukrainian military conflict have highlighted many of the issues surrounding sustainable development and heightened society's interest in how companies integrate sustainability principles into business management. Beyond the uncertainty that persists throughout society, concern for sustainable development and, in this context, the integration of sustainability into business management is the way forward for companies to face the challenges ahead.

My research interests have been subsumed under the broad field of business management since my doctoral internship by writing the thesis entitled "Managerial and marketing coordinates in international business" and have been further developed. In light of the increasing complexity of the issues surrounding sustainable development and concerns about the contribution of business to sustainability, the scope of the areas of interest has been channelled with priority in recent years toward research directions associated with business management in the context of sustainable development. These directions are in line with the teaching activity I carry out in my courses and seminars in Business Management, Small business management, Entrepreneurship, Business communication and negotiation.

The habilitation thesis is structured in three distinct sections, as follows: **Section I** - summarizes the main scientific, professional, and academic contributions and achievements obtained during the post-doctoral period; **Section II** - includes the evolution and development plan

of the professional, scientific and academic career, highlighting the objectives that I consider defining for increasing the quality of my work on the coordinates of teaching and scientific research; **Section III**-presents the bibliographical references that support the research included in this thesis.

The first section is divided into four chapters that follow the main thematic directions addressed, focusing on the results of own research that were the subject of scientific papers published during the post-doctoral period, with national and international visibility, scientific papers indexed in Web of Science, with an article influence score (AIS) higher than 0.15, authored books and chapters in books published by national and international publishers.

*Chapter 1* brings together a series of research on managerial interventions designed to guide companies towards sustainable business development and which serve long-term performance growth objectives. More specifically, my contributions focus on the following research directions: the implementation of quality and environmental management systems in small and medium-sized companies; organizational culture, approached from the perspective of its role as an important strategic tool for guiding companies towards performance in line with sustainability principles; managerial ethics and social responsibility, presented in close correlation as factors promoting business sustainability. Mixed qualitative and quantitative research methods underpinned the results of the studies presented.

*Chapter 2* presents the main results obtained on the resilient and sustainable entrepreneurship research direction. The first part of the chapter presents an analysis of motivating factors for starting a business, risks, and barriers affecting the initiation of entrepreneurial activities, carried out through qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs in Brasov County. The results obtained from the research allowed the identification of a set of concerted measures at the level of the entrepreneurial ecosystem to mitigate the action and consequences of all types of risks and constraints involved in business start-up and subsequent development. The second research included in this chapter addresses entrepreneurship from the perspective of the challenges start-up managers were exposed to in the context of the critical events generated by the Covid-19 health crisis and the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict. We used the qualitative research method to explore start-up entrepreneurs' perceptions of how this difficult context affects their business from the perspective of economic, social, and psychological factors acting on management. The main contribution of the research is supported by the fact that it comparatively analyses the suite of problems generated by the two events included in the study in terms of the intensity with which they were perceived by managers, providing a better

understanding of the most significant challenges that start-ups may face in crises of the magnitude of those analysed. The research results highlight response measures that can be solutions for increasing the resilience of these companies and that can help start-up managers overcome turbulent times and make sustainable choices for business revitalization. The final part of the chapter presents contributions on the role of entrepreneurship education in developing resilient and sustainable entrepreneurship. The focus is on fostering entrepreneurship among young people to be more engaged in actions aimed at creating value in the context of their work and for society at large, but also on expanding entrepreneurial expertise by adding to the set of essential knowledge and skills in crisis management, which can be used to generate innovative and sustainable business reconstruction solutions.

*Chapter 3* addresses consumer protection management as a strategic component of sustainable economic and social development, from a conceptual-methodological perspective and the perspective of the implications for sustainability in business management. The research reveals the importance of responsible business conduct concerning consumer protection in a context where the professionalization of consumer protection management is becoming a necessity that will increase in the years to come, particularly as consumer behaviour changes to place values related to high quality, safety and sustainability of products and services at the forefront of consumer expectations. In terms of research typology, the research is qualitative, exploratory, and explanatory to contextualize, interpret and understand the aspects that describe the content of consumer protection management and to identify effective ways of applying the methods, techniques, and procedures that are specific to it.

*Chapter 4* presents personal contributions on using multi-platform business models developed by intermediation firms in support of multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development, by considering new approaches and solutions that enable levels of organizational, sectoral, and cross-border collaboration in a wide range of modalities. The main goal pursued was to shape a unified model for the development of an interoperable intermediation system at a large geographical scale, capable of creating a network of interdependent connections between all stakeholders to mobilize and access relevant resources to achieve sustainable development objectives. The results expand the flow of knowledge on the thematic direction addressed and open new perspectives on how the design of an interoperable intermediation system based on the principles of the model presented creates new opportunities for collaborative business arrangements, supporting adaptive companies to expand their business practices internationally.

The second section of the habilitation thesis presents the professional, scientific and academic career evolution and development plan. This part comprises two sections corresponding to the two priority components of the academic career, namely teaching activity, and scientific research. The objectives, intentions, and prospects for development have been established for each of them based on achievements to date. We have highlighted the results from the perspective of teaching activity, mentioning the textbooks and collections of applications designed to support the teaching approach for the main courses and seminars taught, the activity of supervising undergraduate theses and dissertations, as well as participation in various training modules and specialization programs aimed at improving skills in the sphere of university teaching and field of expertise. On the didactic level, I will aim at acquiring new skills, knowledge, and competencies with the main objective of facilitating an intellectually stimulating learning process, developing students' creative thinking, and better connecting them with real contexts of managerial practice and current labour market demands. From the scientific perspective, the results of the research carried out during the post-doctoral period have been materialized in the publication of 26 books/chapters in collective volumes, 10 articles in ISI-listed journals, 6 of which in journals with an article influence score (AIS) higher than 0.15, more than 140 articles and studies in journals indexed in international databases and volumes of national and international conferences, including ISI Proceedings, 21 research and development projects in which I participated as a director or team member. On the scientific level, I intend to continue and deepen the research directions addressed so far, but also other related topics that I want to develop through the involvement and training of Ph.D. students whom I will coordinate in the future, with the priority to increase the visibility of the results obtained in the scientific community and their use in the economic environment.

The habilitation thesis concludes with the presentation of the list of bibliographical references, which includes my scientific papers and the papers from the literature that I have referred to in this scientific endeavour.

The integrative approach of the dimensions that outline my scientific, professional and academic activity, starting from the achievements and results obtained, to the future directions of development of my academic career, aimed to support my teaching and research competencies and performances, the contribution to the development of knowledge in the field of management, as well as the ability to coordinate research teams to increase the prestige and recognition of the results obtained internationally.