

## HABILITATION THESIS

# **Innovation, Digital Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Social Impact**

- Summary -

Candidates: Cătălina Silvia Crișan

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## Summary

Given the systemic nature of socio-economic challenges facing society, innovation, inclusion, and the development of mechanisms to get the most out of the available resources are critical necessities. Challenges like climate change, sustainability, education and learning, equality, diversity and inclusion, require people to come up with new products, processes, and business models, to create growth and sustainable social impact. Thus, young generations must be driven toward such challenges, by facilitating access to successful innovation models, education, and experimentation.

This habilitation thesis aims to highlight the achievements, and the future perspectives of the candidate, Cătălina Silvia Crişan, related to her scientific, teaching activities and civic activities related to 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, her research initiatives were mainly oriented toward the development of literature and practice in the field of Social and Digital Entrepreneurship and Corporate Social Responsibility. The expertise and the knowledge achieved have been materialised over time, in research internships, participation in international conferences and cooperation with researchers from prestigious universities from abroad. Babeş-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 have access 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 and nurture collaborations for research purposes, both internationally and nationally. 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's habilitation thesis will address the topic of (social) entrepreneurship, and Corporate Social Responsibility and she will highlight findings regarding social and digital innovation, and the way organisations can contribute to sustainable development. The candidate will highlight in this habilitation thesis the results obtained so far, but also the perspectives aimed in her research, teaching and civic activities with the stakeholders from the entrepreneurial ecosystem. 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 visibility 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 students access to the latest trends in the field, but also attracting partners from both the academic and private sector and with the social economy. The candidate considers it is 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 behaviour 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 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), social entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship. 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 products/services innovation. The chapter begins with the influence of corruption on employees/citizens' migration and organizational performance and continues by highlighting the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility and the role of companies in sustainable development. This summary emphasizes the findings of the following articles:

- 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), pages 430-455.
- Crișan C. S., Stanca L. M. & Dabija D. C., (2020), "Corporate social Performance: an assessment model on an emerging market," *Sustainability*, 12 (10).
- 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), 2016, P. 161 – 173.

Also in this chapter are detailed 3 publications from her research activity, namely following two main directions: (1) *social entrepreneurship* and how social enterprises gain legitimacy and (2) *digital entrepreneurship*, which emphasises relevant factors in digital innovation

#### **Social entrepreneurship**

- Bunduchi, R., Smart, A.U., Crișan-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., Crișan-Mitra, C., Salanța, I.I. & Crișan, 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., Crișan-Mitra, C., Salanța, I.I., & Crișan, 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 article related to social entrepreneurship aims to highlight the way social enterprises gain legitimacy among main stakeholders, respectively, the role of innovation in social value

creation. The topic of digital entrepreneurship relies on the knowledge and the expertise of the candidate in the field of entrepreneurship, knowledge management, and strategic management and deals with how innovation can be managed to bring more value under the influence of different factors (e.g. internationalization, entrepreneurs cognitive frame)

In **Chapter 3**, the candidate presented the university career development plan envisioned to be implemented in the following years. The knowledge resulting from the research activities was capitalized on, during the doctoral and post-doctoral studies carried out at Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca; Complutense University, Madrid Spain; University of Rochester, New York, USA. 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.

Also, 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 validation of the results.

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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