

THE BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES

Doctoral School of Economics I



PhD THESIS

Presented and publicly defended by the author:
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Title of the PhD thesis:

THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON THE BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT IN ROMANIA

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Bucharest (month) 2025

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Thesis title: *Effects of Globalisation on the Business Environment in Romania*

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Keywords: effects of globalisation, impact of globalisation, business environment, tourism, qualitative research

Abstract:

Through in-depth qualitative analysis, this doctoral thesis investigates how globalisation affects the business environment in Romania, focusing on a case study – the town of Predeal – a small but nationally relevant mountain resort. The findings highlight nine significant effects of globalisation, some of which translate into competitive advantages. Local stakeholders perceive the impact of globalisation as ambivalent, with a tendency towards negativity. Labour migration, climate change, and the Covid-19 pandemic have significantly undermined business sustainability, while access to international tourism markets, digitalisation, and international sporting events represent opportunities that remain largely underexploited. The conclusions point to a limited local adaptive capacity, underscoring the need for collaborative and integrated resilience and sustainable development strategies.

The originality of this thesis lies in its detailed local-level perspective and rigorous qualitative approach. This research contributes to the academic literature by empirically documenting how local economic actors perceive the effects and impact of globalisation and by identifying contextually grounded directions for local policy and development strategies.

Summary of the doctoral thesis

1. Research context and motivation

Globalisation is one of the most complex phenomena of contemporary times. In Romania, its effects have been increasingly felt since 1990, especially after joining the European Union, leading to significant transformations in the economy and business activity, society, culture, technology, communications, and the natural environment. Against this background, the present doctoral research aims to investigate how the effects of globalisation are manifested, perceived, and assessed at the level of a local business environment – the town of Predeal, a mountain resort of national importance.

The study is motivated by the scientific literature on globalisation and its impact on businesses and by the need to identify action directions adapted to the local context, where globalisation can simultaneously represent opportunities and vulnerabilities.

2. Research objectives and questions

To explore the impact of globalisation on the local business environment, the research was guided from the outset by a set of clearly defined objectives. These objectives served to orient and structure the entire research process. The general research objective was described as follows:

General Objective: To understand the effects of globalisation on the business environment in Romania, focusing on the local business environment – the town of Predeal.

Three specific objectives were subsequently formulated:

- S.O. 1: To identify the specific characteristics of the business environment in Predeal within the current global context.
- S.O. 2: To assess the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation to the local business environment.
- S.O. 3: To analyse the implications of globalisation on the local business environment.

These objectives led to the formulation of three fundamental research questions, which structure and guide the present endeavour:

- R.Q. 1: What are the most significant effects of globalisation on the local business environment (the town of Predeal)?
- R.Q. 2: What is the impact of globalisation on the business environment, as evaluated by local stakeholders?
- R.Q. 3: What are the implications for the local business environment, and how should it adapt to the developments brought about by globalisation?

3. Theoretical and methodological framework

The thesis is logically and coherently structured, beginning with the conceptual analysis of globalisation, followed by a review of theories and schools of thought on the phenomenon, and advancing a dual research approach:

- positivist – to identify observable effects of globalisation.
- normative – to understand stakeholders' qualitative perceptions and assessments.

The methodology combines:

- descriptive statistical analysis, based on data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INS), Braşov County Directorate of Statistics (DJS Braşov), the National Trade Register Office (ONRC), and other official sources.
- qualitative analysis, based on data collected through semi-structured interviews, thematically coded using a rigorous codebook. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim using TurboScribe, line-by-line verified, and processed with software such as Dedoose and Jupyter Notebook.

The sample includes entrepreneurs, tourism experts, and local public authorities, selected based on relevance to the research and availability to answer the interview grid.

4. Results

The qualitative research highlights nine significant effects of globalisation on the local business environment, as perceived by the respondents:

- Access to international markets – perceived as insufficiently exploited, although foreign tourists visit the resort.
- International competition – perceived as strong yet passively approached.
- Labour mobility – generating instability in the workforce and demographic decline.
- Digitalisation – acknowledged as necessary and proper, but unevenly implemented.
- Foreign direct investment and international funding – perceived as difficult to access, manage, and underutilised.
- Climate change – seen as a direct threat to the future of winter sports in the resort and a factor accentuating seasonality.
- International sports events – with potential but insufficiently leveraged without a branding strategy.
- COVID-19 pandemic – a significant global effect, severely impacting local tourism activities.
- Mass media – influences tourist flows, particularly favouring international destinations.

5. Impact assessment

The analysis of the impact of globalisation, conducted within a normative paradigm, outlines an ambivalent picture, with greater emphasis on the negative dimension of the effects, particularly regarding:

- Human resources – migration of the local workforce to other countries.
- Climate change – increased business vulnerability and accentuated seasonality.
- Pandemic – drastic reduction in tourist flows and difficulties in resuming business activity.

On the other hand, digitalisation, access to international tourism markets, and international sports events are acknowledged as beneficial, although their potential is insufficiently exploited.

6. Conclusions

The local stakeholders' response to the effects of globalisation is partial, fragmented, and uncoordinated. However, respondents identified potential strategies and initiatives to better benefit from globalisation, including:

- Diversifying and personalising the tourism offer.
- Building employee loyalty through a favourable organisational climate.
- Investing in digital technologies.
- Cooperation among local entrepreneurs.
- Accessing European funds.
- Adopting a long-term, integrated, and sustainable development vision.

Thesis conclusions point to the urgent need for adaptive, collaborative, and coherent interventions to transform globalisation from a pressure factor for local businesses into a catalyst for sustainable development.

7. Originality and research limitations

An element of originality is represented by the combined quantitative-qualitative, positivist-normative approach, applied in a local business environment. The emphasis is on the voices of local stakeholders and on concrete, context-sensitive proposals for action.

The limitations are explicitly acknowledged, most of which are objective—the specific local context, sample size, and lack of parallel coding—but also subjective, inherent in qualitative research. Future research directions may include comparative studies, longitudinal analyses, or sample extension.