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THE COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY IN ROMANIA

Diana-Florentina Spînu (Năsulea)

Academic advisor: Professor Emeritus PhD Marta-Christina Suciu

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Keywords: collaborative economy; peer-to-peer transactions; circular economy; digital transformation; global sustainability; resource efficiency

Summary

The collaborative economy is a new paradigm of economic activity. It is focused on sharing resources, peer-to-peer transactions, and access instead of ownership. These new collaborative practices are very relevant for Romania, which is already in the process of fast advancing its digital transformation and economic development. The collaborative economy has the potential to bring new opportunities for employment, encourage entrepreneurship, and foster regional growth. Additionally, the collaborative economy also serves global sustainability goals by ensuring efficient use of resources and decreasing waste - an acutely pressing issue in the Romanian case.

This thesis is an original attempt at exploring the collaborative economy in the Romanian context, based on its theoretical underpinnings, motivational drivers, socio-economic impacts, business models, and regulatory environment. It integrates systematic literature review with two empirical studies furthering new insights in the dynamics and potential of the collaborative economy in Romania.

The research identifies some of the key motivational factors that drive participation for both consumers and providers within the collaborative economy, such as economic benefits, convenience, access to sources, technology developments, social interaction, and sustainability concerns. The facilitation of secure and reliable transactions is founded on trust and reputation mechanisms. Empirical evidence has proved that providers are mostly driven by economic gains, while consumers are driven by economic savings, the environment, and social influence. In that respect, the findings bring out aspects of trust, convenience, and flexibility as enhancing participation.

The thesis also looks at how collaborative and circular economies work together, illustrating the way some business models complement each other in driving sustainability and resource efficiency. A pilot model, innovated for the toy industry, which holds huge potential for economic and sustainability benefits through peer-to-peer resale platforms, illustrates the application of business practices of a circular-collaborative nature across industries in a bid to improve reutilization of resources and extend product life cycles.

This research hence adds to the general understanding of how the collaborative economy affects Romania, providing useful insights for policymakers, entrepreneurs, platform designers and consumers. Through its conduct, this dissertation addresses important gaps in the current literature and proposes pragmatic solutions that contribute to the academic discourse on the collaborative economy, thus promoting sustainable economic development in Romania and beyond.