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CANDIDAT:
Prof. univ. dr. Delia POPESCU

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**SUSTAINABILITY OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION IN THE FIELD
OF SERVICES**

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the scientific research activities are highlighted, emphasizing the academic development directions from the year 2001. On February 15, 2001, I defended my doctoral thesis in a public meeting with the theme of Sustainable Development – Priority in Territorial Tourism Planning, sustainable development being a constant through which I wanted to build my academic career. According to the methodology for the preparation of habilitation theses, the work is divided into two parts, the first part representing the scientific activity after obtaining the doctorate and the second part dedicated to future plans.

The first part is divided into two main topics: Macro-sustainability and Micro-sustainability in tertiary sector. The first part contains articles, many of which are the result of research carried out in the framework of various projects dealing with sustainability at the general level or in specific economic sectors, while the second part contains scientific articles dealing with quality and sustainability at the micro level, especially in the field of services and tourism.

A. MACRO -SUSTAINABILITY

The paper Energy Transition and Sustainable Development at the level of the European Union (Authors: Daniela Vîrjan, Claudia Rodica Popescu, Iuliana Pop, and Delia Popescu) highlights the importance of the energy transition and the green economy in the context of the European Union, focusing on concerns related to greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on imported fossil fuels. The author argues that the European Union is playing a leading role in combating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The study focuses on analyzing the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and important determinants such as GDP per capita and past greenhouse gas emissions per capita. A panel data model was applied using statistical data from EUROSTAT for the 27 EU Member States from 2005 to 2020.

The research results show that in developed countries with high GDP per capita, GHG emissions are generally higher. This underscores the need for an energy transition, especially in these countries, which have the financial resources to support this transition.

Finally, the article underscores the importance of the energy transition in the European Union and points out that developed countries have an essential role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, given their financial capabilities. It also recognizes that the 21st century will bring challenges related to population growth, economic development, and climate change, and that the transition to renewable energy sources is essential to meeting these challenges.

The article also highlights the impact of geopolitical events, such as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022, on the energy market and the importance of transitioning to more secure and sustainable energy sources.

Finally, it articulates research objectives, including identifying the factors influencing greenhouse gas emissions during the EU energy transition, and outlines how the EU can achieve its goal of climate neutrality by 2050.

It is emphasized that the transition to a green economy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions are crucial to address 21st century problems such as climate change and dependence on non-renewable energy sources. The author argues that the European Union and other countries must continue their efforts to promote sustainable economic development and an energy transition toward cleaner and more secure sources.

About the energy transition, the shift towards clean energy has been discussed since the 1970s, especially after the major oil crisis of 1973-1974. Thus, to give just a few examples, in 1977, Hayes wrote in the *Futurist* magazine about the necessity of an energy transition, just like Dartois, who, in 1979, delved into this issue. Works based on this theme are relatively numerous, expressing different viewpoints and debating various aspects, from business management models to the sustainability of the energy sector. One such work, an analysis of the energy transition's impact on climate change and the labor market, is conducted by Kusi-Appiah and Essandoh, an article published after our article in June 2023, demonstrating the ongoing concern of researchers for such a sensitive field.

Another article, CEE-16: A Cluster Analysis based on Tourism Competitiveness and Correlations with Major Determinants (Authors: Delia Popescu, Iulia Monica Oehler-Şincai, Daniel Bulin, and Ion Alexandru Tănase) provides an overview of a study analyzing tourism competitiveness within the ECE-16 (16+1) group, an initiative initiated by China. The authors conclude that tourism infrastructure is a key factor for competitiveness and that China can play an important role in improving this infrastructure within ECE-16. They have developed a specific

indicator of competitiveness of the travel and tourism sector (ISCTC) to assess competitiveness. In the case of Romania, despite significant investment in tourism, qualitative performance remains modest.

It is also mentioned that the 16+1 initiative has opened opportunities for cooperation in tourism between China and countries in Central and Eastern Europe (ECE). The authors emphasize the importance of tourism as an engine of economic growth and analyze its impact on the economy.

They conclude that tourism cooperation under the 16+1 initiative can bring economic benefits and increase the visibility of the ECE in China, which has a positive impact on economic growth and competitiveness. The text also highlights the importance of economic transformation and structural changes in the ECE in the transition from socialism to a market economy and integration into the global economy.

Concerns regarding the competitiveness of the tourism industry persisted even after the publication of our article in 2018. In 2023, Dempere and Modugu cited this article in a work that discusses the issue of tourism competitiveness during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also in 2023, Pan, An, Li, Weng, and Li referenced our work in an article about optimizing cooperation in the tourism field, with examples from the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. The analysis conducted in our article is also mentioned by Correa and Franco in their 2023 article, which also addresses tourism competitiveness. Radukica and others discuss the relationships between tariffs, arrivals, and departures in European countries in their 2023 article. Lusticky and Stumpf reference our article in their 2021 work, which utilizes a model to integrate various factors leading to high competitiveness in tourist destinations. In 2019, Vershinina and Orlova conducted an analysis of tourism in Russia, citing our article on tourism competitiveness and its major determinants, demonstrating the importance and breadth of the topic.

The article *Econometric Models in Romanian Tourism under the impact of Sustainable Development* (Authors: Delia Popescu, Andreea Săseanu, Daniel Bulin, and Grazia Calabro) provides a detailed presentation of the content and methodology used in a research paper that explores the relationship between tourism and sustainable development in the post-1989 context in Romania. This paper appears to be well-structured and uses multiple linear regression models to analyze the impact of sustainable development on tourism.

Sustainable development is addressed in detail, defined as meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The importance of

quantifying sustainable development is emphasized, with mention of international organizations that have proposed sets of indicators for this purpose.

It is highlighted that tourism can influence sustainable development through various aspects, including the coefficient of tourist accommodation capacity utilization (CUC), average length of stay, and the number of tourists. The authors use multiple linear regression models to analyze the relationship between these factors and their impact on tourism. The results of the models indicate the importance of economic, social, and ecological variables in explaining CUC variation.

In conclusion, this research paper argues that sustainable development and tourism are closely interconnected, and considering the economic, social, and ecological aspects of sustainable development is crucial for tourism development strategies in Romania. The paper also acknowledges the limitations of the research and suggests future directions for expanding the study.

This interdisciplinary approach to the relationship between sustainable development and tourism brings a valuable perspective and could provide important guidance for tourism development and management policies in Romania.

Our article, written in 2014, has been utilized as a source by several researchers who have delved into the impact of sustainable development on tourism. Thus, in 2023, Fauzel and Tandrayen-Ragoobur published an article on the impact of sustainable development on tourism in small islands, with a case study on Mauritius. Bădulescu, Bădulescu, and Simut published an article on the complex relationships that exist between international tourism demand and economic growth, with a focus on sustainable development. In 2016, Ionciță, Ionciță, and Petrescu also published an article on sustainable development in tourism, referencing, among other valuable sources, our article. In 2015, Prochazkova examined sustainable business management, citing our article in the bibliography as a link between global issues that could be addressed through sustainable development and the practical application of this concept in service sector enterprises.

Demand for Vacations/Travel in Protected Areas – Dimension of Tourists' Ecological Behavior (Authors: Rodica Minciu, Mihaela Pădurean, Delia Popescu, and Remus Hornoiu) is the next article included in this part of macro-sustainability. Tourism has a significant impact on the environment and threatens its sustainable development. To address this issue, it is necessary to

promote low-impact forms of travel, such as ecotourism and rural tourism, and educate tourists about responsible behavior in protected areas.

Global studies show increased interest among tourists in sustainable travel, but the supply is limited due to a lack of understanding and additional requirements for tourists.

The purpose of this study is to identify tourists' behavior in protected areas and the factors that determine it to promote a responsible attitude toward the environment and its conservation. The research involves informing and educating tourists, essential elements for the sustainable management of tourism in protected areas.

Tourism has the potential to counteract the negative effects by developing within the optimal carrying capacity limits of the areas and promoting sustainable tourism forms.

The study addresses tourists' behavior in protected areas and highlights the importance of educating tourists about responsible behavior.

Tourism in protected areas is on the rise, driven by the demand for nature experiences and adventure activities. Tourists' behavior in such destinations must be considered in the development of sustainable tourism programs.

Environmental education plays a crucial role in raising awareness and understanding the relationship between humans and nature, ensuring a balance between present and future needs.

Recommendations and trends in environmental education include using protected areas for outdoor education and developing environmental education programs in schools and universities.

In conclusion, informing and educating tourists are essential for environmental protection in protected areas and ensuring their sustainable development. Environmental protection policies and the promotion of responsible tourism play a crucial role in achieving these goals.

The concerns of the authors of this article, written in 2012, are still relevant today for many researchers in the vast field of protected natural areas and, in particular, the demand for vacations in such areas. Roblek (and others) mentions our work in an article written in 2021, which presents an evolution of the concept of sustainable tourism. Also in 2021, Yu, Ma, and Ren cite our article in a study aiming to map the landscape and research the evolution of pro-environmental behavior of tourists. Verkuleviciute-Kriukiene, Buciene, and Cepiene reference our article in 2021 in a paper that addresses the depopulation of the coastal rural areas of Lithuania and attempts to answer whether regional parks are a solution to stabilize this situation. Another citation appears in an article from 2021 written by Grgic (and others) that presents Lonjsko Polje, the largest protected

wetland area in Croatia and one of the largest in the entire Danube basin. In 2016, Ionciță, Ionciță, and Petrescu mention our article in a study on sustainable development in tourism. Also in 2016, Felicetti cites the same article in his work on tourists' perception of the impact of climate change on ecotourism in protected areas. In 2015, Zamfir and Corbos wrote an article on sustainable tourism development in urban areas and cited our article. The last citation I will mention here refers to an article from 2014 about promoting ecotourism among local communities in the Sibiu area, written by Nicula and Spânu.

The last article of this first part, *Commercialization of Holidays in the Protected Natural Areas – Form of the Sustainable Development in Tourism* (Authors: Rodica Minciu, Delia Popescu, Mihaela Pădurean, Remus Hornoiu, and Andreea Băltărețu) it was conducted at the Romanian Tourism Fair in 2009 highlighted that, although travel agencies recognize the benefits of travel in protected areas, their offering of specialized packages was limited or created upon tourists' request. This emphasizes the need for greater involvement of travel agencies and administrations of protected natural areas in promoting, exploiting, and sustainably developing these zones.

In the future, considering the advantages of travel in protected areas and the increasing interest of tourists in this type of experience, it is essential to create a richer and more diverse tourism offering, as well as to develop partnerships between travel agencies and protected area administrations to ensure responsible and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources in these areas.

The article also highlights the importance of sustainable development in the context of the contemporary global economy and underscores that tourism, as one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy, must be integrated into the process of sustainable development. This involves adopting responsible tourism practices to minimize environmental impact and contribute to the equitable development of local communities.

Furthermore, the article discusses various forms of sustainable tourism, such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, and geotourism, and emphasizes their contribution to environmental protection and improving the quality of life in local communities while promoting the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

In conclusion, the sustainable development of tourism in protected areas is essential to ensure long-term sustainable development that combines economic growth, social equity, and

environmental protection, taking into account the present and future needs of society. The article underscores the importance of the involvement of all stakeholders and close collaboration between all actors in the tourism industry and protected area administrations to achieve this goal.

This article, written in 2010, has had echoes in various scientific works over time, indicating the consistent concern of researchers worldwide regarding the sustainable development of tourism. For example, in 2022, Chenavaz and Leocata reference our article in a paper discussing various issues related to sustainable tourism development. In 2018, Surjono, Maulidi, and Sitanggang cite our article in a study addressing the acute issues of local community poverty in Sumatra Province, Indonesia, and the potential for resolution through sustainable tourism development. In 2016, Feliceti mentions our work in an article on tourists' perceptions of climate change, and in 2015, Zamfir and Corbos reference our article in a study on sustainable tourism in urban areas. Furthermore, the topic of ecotourism and local communities is discussed in an article from 2014 by Nicula and Spânu, which also references our 2010 article. In 2012, Ahmad, Ali, Grigore, and Stancu also recall our article in a comparative analysis of eco-tourism consumer behavior in Romania, Malaysia, and Pakistan. In the same year, together with my colleagues Minciu, Pădurean, and Hornoiu, we authored a paper on vacation demand in protected areas, building on the research initiated in the 2010 article. In 2011, Savoiu, along with other authors, used our article as a source in their work on a sustainable transformation model for small and medium-sized enterprises into corporations. Also in 2011, Nizic, Golja, and Vodeb mentioned our article in a paper addressing social responsibility and its implementation in the tourism industry.

B. MICRO –SUSTAINABILITY

The article *The Green Deal – Dynamizer of Digitalization in Tourism: The Case of Cluj-Napoca Smart City* (Authors: Delia Popescu, Monica Maria Coroș, Iuliana Pop, Cristina Bolog) presents a study on the adaptation of hotels in Cluj-Napoca to the new requirements of sustainable development and digitalization in the context of the European Green Deal and the COVID -19 pandemic. The study focuses on the following aspects:

1. Global context: prior to the pandemic, international tourism experienced significant growth, but suffered a sharp decline in 2020. Tourism has a significant impact on the environment

and there is a need to align with the goals of the European Green Deal in order to become more sustainable.

2. Cluj-Napoca as a case study: the city of Cluj-Napoca in Romania stands out for its efforts to become a smart city with investments in digitalization and sustainable development.

3. Study objectives: the study has two main objectives: to investigate the level of awareness of the concept of sustainable development among hotel employees in Cluj-Napoca and to evaluate the actions taken by hotels to implement sustainable development, focusing on reducing energy consumption and waste management. It also analyzes the impact of the pandemic COVID -19 on the digitalization process in the hotel industry.

4. Methodology: for the study, a questionnaire with 12 questions was used, which was filled out by hotel employees in Cluj-Napoca. Different statistical analysis methods were used to evaluate the results and to study the development of the hotel industry in the region.

5. The main results:

- Most hotels have heard about sustainable development and have taken measures to implement it, focusing on reducing energy consumption and waste management;
- The pandemic COVID -19 has accelerated the process of digitalization in the hotel industry in Cluj-Napoca;
- Internationally connected hotels and 4-5 star hotels tend to use local suppliers for procurement and introduce digital services;
- Tourist education on sustainable development is less developed among Romanian tourists compared to international tourists.

6. Recommendations: the study highlights the need for closer collaboration between hotels and local producers and the importance of involving the sector IT in the sustainable development of hotels. It also suggests improving communication with staff and customers regarding sustainable development goals and adopting digital solutions related to sustainability.

7. Limitations and future directions: the article acknowledges its limitations, including the lack of a concrete evaluation of the participation of the IT sector in the solutions developed for the hotel industry and the reluctance of respondents to participate in the research. It is suggested that this study be extended to other cities in Romania to provide a more comprehensive picture of the hotel industry's adaptation to sustainability and digitalization.

Overall, the article shows the efforts and progress made by hotels in Cluj-Napoca in adopting sustainable development and digitalization practices, as well as the challenges and opportunities in these important areas for the hotel industry.

Our article, published in February 2022 in the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal, was cited in February 2023 in the *Sustainability* journal by Cherecheș, Arion, Mureșan, and Gaspar. Their article analyzes the impact of reduced mobility on air quality during the COVID-19 pandemic. The investigation was conducted in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, using 15 air monitoring stations to assess concentrations of various types of air pollutants. In September 2023, Gheorghe, Tudorache, and Roșca mentioned our article in a paper published in the *Sustainability* journal, examining the relationship between green marketing and the development of sustainable destinations, aiming to identify stakeholders interested in green tourism or sustainable development to anticipate future trends. Additionally, several authors have recently addressed the Green Deal and its impact on tourism, including those who have further developed the ideas presented in our article.

The article *Bioeconomy and Social Responsibility in the Sustainable Hotel Industry* (Authors: Claudia Gabriela Baicu, Iulia Monica Oehler-Sincai, Olimpia State and Delia Popescu) deals with the study of bioeconomy strategies and practices applied by hotels in Romania in the context of increasing corporate social responsibility (CSR) at the global level. The research included several phases:

1. Conceptual context and rationale: the authors presented the importance of CSR in the hotel industry, highlighting the negative impact of mass tourism on the environment, the bioeconomy strategy of the European Union, and the important role of the hotel industry in tourism.

2. Research methodology: the research used a mixed methodology that included a review of literature, statistical analysis of hotel data, research on hotel websites, and semi-structured interviews with hotel representatives.

3. Differences between 4-5 star hotels and other categories: it was found that four and five star hotels, which often belong to international chains, have better defined sustainable development and CSR strategies, while hotels in the smaller category face greater challenges in implementing these practices.

4. Conclusions: the study concluded that without legal regulations, the number of practices for bioeconomy development in the hotel industry in Romania would be limited. It suggested the

introduction of legislative measures to promote non-financial reporting and to promote awareness and education in the field of bioeconomy.

The article also highlights the importance of corporate social responsibility in the context of the bioeconomy and sustainable development, arguing that CSR can be an important tool to achieve these goals in the hotel industry. The work also highlights the need to improve sustainability practices, management systems and employee training in the field of bioeconomy in Romanian hotels.

In conclusion, this article is an important study on CSR and bioeconomy in the hotel industry in Romania, highlighting the close link between these concepts and the importance of promoting sustainable practices in the sector.

Our colleagues Iorgulescu (twice), State, and Tănase have cited our 2019 article from the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal and furthered it as research in their papers presented at the 2020 BASIQ International Conference. Additionally, in 2023, Rinn, Kalabova, and Jarsky delved into the theme addressed in this article in the *Frontiers in Environmental Science* journal, while Tandon, Dhir, Madan, Srivastava, and Nicolau explored it in the *Tourism Management* journal. Tourism has been one of the fastest-growing sectors in recent years, according to the first cited article written by Rinn, Kalabova, and Jarsky.

Another article, *Corporate Social Responsibility – an European Approach through the Tourism SME's Perspectives* (Authors: Gabriela Țigu, Delia Popescu, and Remus Ion Hornoiu) deals with the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the tourism sector and analyzes the opinions of tourism stakeholders. A quantitative methodology was used for the study with a sample of 305 micro, small and medium enterprises from eight European countries. The results show that CSR in tourism is becoming increasingly important and most companies have adopted or intend to adopt CSR practices in the future.

Characteristics of the sample include a predominance of sole proprietorships and limited liability companies operating both internationally and nationally. Most respondents work in travel agencies or in the hotel industry, and most companies are micro-enterprises, either in terms of number of employees or turnover.

There is a strong understanding of the concept of CSR among respondents, with most seeing CSR as a way to gain visibility and conduct public relations. More than half of the respondents have implemented the CSR concept in their company.

The results show that companies in the tourism sector see their main role as providing goods and services, generating profits, and contributing to prosperity and economic growth while adhering to ethical standards. The main CSR areas are research and development, education, environmental protection, arts and culture, employee benefits, and professional development.

Companies use methods such as supporting educational programs, knowledge transfer, sponsorship, donations and volunteering to contribute to social development.

Corporate motivation for CSR includes attracting and retaining high-performing employees, marketing and public relations programs, and gaining a competitive advantage.

To create a fair tourism product, emphasis is placed on optimal pricing, compliance with labor standards, careful selection of accommodations, involvement of local communities, and environmentally friendly travel.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of CSR in the tourism industry and the need to combine economic goals with social and environmental objectives.

Our article, published in November 2016 in the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal, has had a significant impact and received confirmation through references in prestigious scientific journals. In 2017, our work was mentioned by Bădulescu, Bădulescu, Bac, Saveanu, Florea, and Petricas in an article titled 'Education and Sustainable Development: From Theoretical Interest to Specific Behaviours.' In 2018, Tescasiu, Epuran, Tecau, Chitu, and Mekinc included references to our article in a paper published in the *Sustainability* journal. The same mention was made by Nicula and Popsa in the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal in the same year. In 2020, our work was discussed twice in the *Sustainability* journal: in February by Grah, Dimitrovski, and Peterlin, and in December by Ibarnia, Garay, and Guevara. In 2021, our article was cited by Wut, Xu, and Wong, as well as by Liu, Wu, and Chen, highlighting the ongoing global interest of researchers in the social responsibility of firms, including in the context of tourism.

Another article is *Quality and Competitiveness: a Lean Six Sigma approach* (Authors: Irina-Virginia Drăgulănescu and Delia Popescu). The Lean Six Sigma model is a methodology originally developed to improve industrial production, but now widely used in various economic sectors, including finance, commerce and tourism. This methodology combines Six Sigma techniques, which focus on reducing production defects, with lean manufacturing principles that promote faster processes, lower costs and higher quality.

While Lean Six Sigma has although the method has been successful in many companies and has delivered impressive results, it does not always produce the expected results. However, there are examples of companies, such as the courier company mentioned above, that have achieved significant benefits by applying this methodology.

Lean Six Sigma is an increasingly used methodological approach to efficiently manage human resources in an organization. Key benefits include:

1. Objective measurement of inefficiencies: this methodology provides tools and methods to objectively evaluate inefficient processes through data analysis and metrics.

2. Identification of non-value-added activities: it helps identify and eliminate activities that consume time and resources but do not add value to the end product or service.

3. Improving process quality: it focuses on improving the quality of production processes by identifying and fixing problems, thereby reducing the number of defects in the final products.

Lean Six Sigma is a combination of two successful models: Six Sigma, which focuses on reducing defects, and Lean Manufacturing, which was developed by Toyota and focuses on efficiency, shorter lead times and customer focus. The main goal of Lean Six Sigma is to efficiently manage human resources, satisfy customers, and achieve maximum performance by eliminating defects, improving responsiveness, and adapting to change.

This methodology focuses on meeting customer demand and reducing variability in all phases of production or service delivery, using data and statistical analysis to achieve two strategic goals: improving the quality of products and services and reducing production costs. The seven types of waste include activities that do not add value, errors, production without demand, unnecessary operations, unnecessary movements, waiting times, and products that do not meet customer requirements. Eliminating these types of waste leads to significant improvements in quality, productivity and efficiency.

By applying the Lean Six Sigma methodology, companies can optimize their human resources, identify and eliminate inefficiencies, and continuously improve processes to achieve strategic goals, regardless of their nature.

Our article, written in 2015 and published in the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal, has been cited over time in various scientific works. In 2017, Androniceanu and Drăgulănescu mentioned it in a paper presented at an international conference on globalization. In the same year, at the BASIQ Conference, Onete, Vlad, and Voinea referenced our article in their presentation. In 2019,

our work was included in the bibliography of Ibrahim, Mahdy, and Dawood. Also in 2019, Valter, Drăgulănescu, and Androniceanu presented a paper at the IBIMA Conference, citing our article. In 2020, our article was mentioned in four separate papers written by Guttenberg, Shokri and Li, Burell, Courtney-Dattola, Burton, Nobles, Springs, and Dawson. The last mention in 2020 comes from Vallejo, Antony, Douglas, Alexander, and Sony. In April 2022, our work was cited by Panayiotou, Stergiou, and Chronopoulos, and in September of the same year, by Clancy, Bruton, and Cloonan. Many of the articles referencing our work are published in the International Journal of Lean Six Sigma, a recognized publication specializing in the issues addressed in our article.

The last article mentioned in this paper is The Responsibility of Organisations towards Customers. Case Study – Romanian Travel Agencies (Authors: Olimpia State, Claudia Gabriela Baicu and Delia Popescu). This article highlights the importance of corporate responsibility to consumers and consumer rights in a competitive and complex market for goods and services. In a world where technology is rapidly evolving, the population is growing, and the range of goods and services is becoming more diverse, modern organizations must pay special attention to consumer protection, sustainable consumption, efficient complaint resolution, and consumer education. They know that maintaining the market depends on meeting customer needs.

An important aspect highlighted in the article is the tourism sector, which is competitive and constantly growing, with the protection of tourists becoming increasingly important, especially in the context of the development of the Internet.

The research presented in this article focuses on the responsibility of tourism agencies in Romania towards customers, considering this issue from two perspectives: that of the industry's employees and that of tourists. The research findings provide recommendations for tourism agencies to improve customer relations strengthen customer protection and promote sustainable consumption in the sector.

The article also highlights that increasing competition in the market for goods and services has forced organizations to take more responsibility toward consumers, including protecting their health and safety, promoting sustainable consumption, providing comprehensive and accurate information, resolving complaints effectively, and educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities.

The article highlights the importance of sustainable consumption and environmental protection, as well as initiatives in these areas at the level of OECD member countries. Consumer

protection in the financial sector is also a major concern, especially in the context of the global financial crisis.

The studies mentioned in the article examined the level of responsibility that tourism agencies in Romania have assumed toward tourists and how they perceive it. This type of research provides valuable insights for improving services and consumer protection.

In conclusion, the article highlights the importance of consumer responsibility in a competitive and complex market and offers recommendations for organizations, especially tourism agencies in Romania, to adapt to these challenges and promote sustainable consumption in the tourism sector.

Our article, published in February 2014 in the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal, continues to influence the specialized literature to this day. In the year 2022, Toker and Kalipci refer to our article in a bibliometric study on the sustainable development of tourism agencies, focusing on the achievement of goals outlined in the Agenda 2030. In 2015, Moisescu mentions our work in an article dedicated to the implementation of social responsibility within tourism agencies. Additionally, in 2014, Atanase and Schileru cite our article in a publication in the *Amfiteatru Economic* journal, thus highlighting the importance of the subject and the continuity of research in the field.

PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND ACADEMIC CAREERS

The habilitation thesis also outlines plans for the development of professional, scientific, and academic careers, outlining professional development and scientific research activities, demonstrating the ability to coordinate research projects and disseminate research results in prestigious Web of Science – listed journals. Future contributions to research and teaching activities in the field of business administration will be reflected in the following research directions: motivations and intentions of ecotourists to visit national protected areas in crisis situations; use of natural and cultural heritage through the creation of tourist experiences. Regarding the didactic activity, I will continue the engagement within the Department of Tourism and Geography, the Faculty of Economics and Tourism, the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies and the integration of technology in the learning process of students as a tool to implement innovation in education. in the blended learning system of courses and case studies.

My entire teaching career, and therefore my academic career, is based on collaboration with my colleagues and professors, to whom I am grateful and with whom I would like to continue working in the coordination of doctoral theses. I also count among my colleagues the co-authors from renowned universities in Romania and abroad, with whom I would like to strengthen scientific relations.