



BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

HABILITATION THESIS

**PARADIGMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION
IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITALIZING ACTIVITIES IN THE
TOURISM, HOSPITALITY, AND LEISURE INDUSTRY**

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Bucharest

2024

ABSTRACT

The habilitation thesis titled “*Paradigms of Organizational Communication in the Context of Digitalizing Activities in the Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure Industry*” results from nearly fifteen years of intensive research by the author. This research focuses on the *Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure Industry*¹, a field both fascinating and underutilized in contributing to national wealth.

The motivation for choosing this topic was driven by at least *three considerations*:

- *The undeniable importance of this field*, which is as fascinating, interesting, and culturally enriching as it is useful due to the enduring nature of its complex message that passionately encourages continuous personal knowledge and development, interculturality, and universality.

- *The necessity of moving from enthusiastic empty words regarding the development of national tourism*, as an important means of increasing our country's prestige internationally and our national wealth, to *concrete actions* demonstrating our empathy, professionalism, talent, and skill in building a sustainable future for a nation who undoubtedly deserve to be on the path to performance and excellence.

- *The need to develop a mindset based on rigorous knowledge and the faithful reflection of its results*. In this context, I reiterate my proposal to extend the current name given to the tourism and hospitality industry to “*the tourism, hospitality, and leisure industry*,” a name that more accurately reflects the extremely complex and heterogeneous content of the specific activities carried out.²

In my habilitation thesis, I present the most significant results obtained in scientific research and teaching activities, achieved after obtaining the scientific title of “*Doctor in Management*” at the end of 2015.³

The habilitation thesis is structured into two parts, within which the succession of chapters reflects, on the one hand, the *essential milestones characteristic of professional and scientific activities and, on the other hand, the most important directions of the evolution of my academic career*.

¹ the name of this industry is henceforth referred to in the content of the habilitation thesis by the abbreviation ITOA - n.a.

² an opinion expressed eight years ago in my doctoral thesis - n.a.

³ with the distinction „*Summa cum laude*” - n.a.

Part I brings together, over *four chapters*, the major areas of expertise on which I have focused my activity after completing my doctoral studies. In this context, in accordance with my scientific research interests (reflected in the second part of my habilitation thesis), materialized in articles published in journals indexed in international databases, *the four chapters are focused on the following directions*:

The first chapter addresses the complex issue of *improving the management of organizational communication as an essential way to increase excellence and entrepreneurial performance in the tourism, hospitality, and leisure industry (ITOA)*. I have reviewed the delimitation of organizational communication between theory and practice, and as a firm advocate of applying the principle of theoretical practice, I have highlighted the significant importance that the organizational communication process has for the excellence and performance of sustainable business processes in *ITOA*. The final part of this first chapter is dedicated to addressing the essence of the habilitation thesis topic, namely, the paradigms of organizational communication in general and specifically within *ITOA*.

In the second chapter, I present *the importance of volunteering for the activities of social economy entities as a potential source of human capital for ITOA*. In this context, I have added to the general considerations on volunteering, corporate volunteering, and corporate social responsibility the positive influences exerted by volunteering within *ITOA*, also known as “*voluntourism*”.

The third chapter is dedicated to presenting aspects regarding *the significant importance of improving the quality of training for future specialists as a basis for performance and excellence within ITOA*. I have emphasized specific aspects that generate vulnerabilities in the educational process in the *ITOA* field, both from a curricular perspective and from the perspective of practices that are susceptible to significant improvements to substantially increase the contribution of tourism and hospitality to the creation of the gross domestic product.

Finally, **the fourth chapter** addresses the general issue of *sustainable and viable development in an increasingly unpredictable environment*, highlighting the confusions that still exist between sustainability, sustainable development, durability, and durable development, and insisting on the need to focus on actions that ensure greater predictability for the *ITOA* field.

The originality of the thematic approach in these four chapters lies in the fact that the entire content of the first part of the habilitation thesis is approached from the perspective of justifying my research interests, particularly in the thematic areas addressed in the content of articles published throughout my academic career.

The second part of the habilitation thesis presents *the essential coordinates of my academic, scientific, and professional career*.

Chapter five provides a *synthesis of my professional and research activities and elements characteristic of the recognition and impact of my work*.

In the final chapter, *chapter six*, I present *both the main objectives and strategic options, as well as the research directions on which I will focus my future activity*.

In the conclusion of the habilitation thesis, I have included the *references* used for its drafting, which comprise:

- 29 books;
- 465 articles published in journals indexed in international databases, most of them in ISI (*Web of Science - WoS*);
- 96 websites;
- 11 articles published in the proceedings of international conferences;
- 7 doctoral theses;
- 1 article published in non-indexed databases;
- 4 publications by international organizations;
- 8 dictionaries.