



**BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES
DOCTORAL SCHOOL IN ECONOMICS - MARKETING**

HABILITATION THESIS

MARKETING RESEARCH

FOR ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The habilitation thesis entitled "**Marketing Research for Enhancing Organizational Performance**" presents the results of scientific and academic activities carried out by the candidate after getting the PhD in Marketing (2011). The work reflects concerns and contributions in the investigated areas, following the *principle of complementarity and interdisciplinarity*¹.

The thesis contains three main sections. **Section I** highlights author's **SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS**, structured in **two chapters** dedicated to marketing research studies conducted in two main directions: (1) **performance of organizations implementing the work-from-home arrangements** and (2) **performance of research-development activity in higher education institutions**. This habilitation thesis is based on the scientific results published in **five journals indexed in Clarivate Analytics database**. Each of the two chapters is further on structured into **two subchapters**: one explores the **literature that is relevant** to understanding the dedicated topic and the second one reflecting **personal contribution** with respect to theoretical background and empirical research on the topic.

The first chapter - The Impact of Work from Home Arrangements on Employees' Job Performance and Personal Satisfaction is based on a research project (involving one qualitative and two qualitative marketing studies) carried out by an interdisciplinary team. COVID-19 came with challenges and lessons learned regarding flexible working systems innovations. The findings of these marketing studies offer practical implications for organizations and managers in addressing internal marketing strategies with the objective of gaining employees' support and increase their engagement:

- ***Perceptions, Attitudes and Behaviors towards Teleworking and Work Productivity in Working from Home Systems***. The qualitative marketing research investigates experiences of employees and middle managers in relation to the transition from working from office to working from home, in the context of Covid-19 pandemic in Romania. The study analysed how the contextual factors of the telework service influenced the perception and behavior of the "consumer" (employee). Three online focus groups were conducted to explore working experience in the new mode of work. The conclusions are multifaceted, covering four dimensions: time, spatial, social and technical, and point out how employees and middle managers understand the transition and what impact telework

¹ The current habilitation thesis makes references researches conducted by interdisciplinary teams of academic staff and researches, with focus on those parts of the studies where the author had a significant contribution.

had on their job satisfaction and work productivity. There are differences among segments of employees, in terms of combination and prioritization of these five dimensions, and these differences have an impact on the way the organizations should design their working from home models.

- ***Employees' Satisfaction and Performance in Working from Home Arrangements.*** The quantitative marketing research investigates the impact of remote workplace factors on employees' social and technical self-assessed performance during the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of the variables belonging to the employee's profile, organizational environment and work-life balance categories on social and technical performance were analyzed, based on a survey of 801 Romanian employees, using ordinary least squares and quantile regression techniques. Job autonomy, engagement, communication skills, trust in co-workers, occupational self-efficacy and family-work conflict significantly influence both social and technical performance. PhD education and trust in management significantly influence social performance, while motivation, stress, the share of time spent in remote work, organizational commitment, children in the household and household size influence only technical performance. Factors that are influencing technical and social self-assessed performance are influencing differently the employees at average performance level and the employees self-assessed with higher or lower performance. From a marketing perspective, the results are of particular interest for researchers and for the managers of organizations. Once these factors are understood, the managers could find better tools to adapt to these new challenges and create an environment where employees perform better.
- ***The Habits of Spending the Working Time by Teleworking Employees.*** The quantitative marketing research analyzes the habits of teleworking employees based on their interaction with the computer: how the employees are involved in different types of activities (actual work, recreation, documentation) and which are the most intensive periods. A conceptual framework for workforce analytics was developed for this purpose, together with tools and applications, that can provide useful information on different categories of activities where employees are involved. Research in an IT company was performed, where two categories of employees, developers and software consultants, were monitored for 114 days, with 3.5 million events being generated and processed. The results showed different habits for consultants and developers, in terms of working activity structure, working schedule, inactivity time and interaction with the computer. Differences were also identified when the results were compared with previous research that monitored software developers working in-house: remote workers tend to organize their program for a longer period during the workday and spend less time on meetings but

longer time for programming. On the other hand, both categories of employees (in-house and teleworkers) show highly fragmented work, switching windows after very short periods of activity, with a potential negative impact on productivity, progress on tasks, and quality of output. From the perspective of marketing, the research results can be used both for the development of IT products for monitoring employees' working time, but also in market segmentation studies when searching answers to the question - why are some employees more productive than others?

The second chapter - Institutional Drivers of Research Productivity in Higher Education Institutions presents the results of two marketing research studies carried out by two interdisciplinary teams of academic staff. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of research engagement and productivity of academics, particularly those from developing country contexts that are currently not well-represented in the literature. Thirty-seven Romanian public universities grouped into three categories: research-intensive, teaching and research, and teaching, were analyzed regarding their scientific output based on their institutional and bibliometric data for a period spanning between 2006 - 2019. The main contributions to the state of art are in the following directions:

- ***Evolution of Research Production Market in Romanian Higher Education (2011 – 2019)***. The findings of this marketing research study reveal that there was significant growth in research production of Romanian universities during the first years following the 2011 Education Law. However, this growth could not be sustained beyond 2014, except for Teaching & Research Universities and medical universities. The number of citations per article more than doubled between 2007–2012 and 2013–2018. Similarly, Romanian scholars witnessed improvements in the average percentile of their published articles and the percentage of articles in the top 1% and top 10% in terms of citations. From a marketing perspective, the study is a descriptive, desk research and can be included in the category of “industry analysis studies” (understanding the competitive dynamics of the research production industry) and “impact studies” (evaluating the effects of the 2011 Education Law on research production). The analysis was conducted at the university level and was based on two main indicators: number of publications and citations - the most important indicators for policy purposes (university development), since they can be manipulated (more or less successfully) by academic leaders. Although these indicators are offering a realistic image of how research performance evolved after the application of Education Law, more analyses at university level based on “quality” indicators (articles in the top 1% and top 10% journals) could be useful to offer a broader image of this evolution. The researchers did not disaggregate the universities based on

their scientific fields and this can lead to advantages for some universities, having fundamental sciences and other fields better represented in bibliometric databases, and disadvantages for universities from social sciences and humanities field, where the books and book chapters are representing important research outputs.

- ***Institutional Drivers of Research Productivity of Romanian Public Universities.*** From a marketing point of view, the study is a causal (explanatory), desk research. It explains the specific development, in time and space, of the research production in Romanian public universities, the variables on which its evolution depends, the functional form of the phenomenon's dependence on the explanatory variables considered and the direction and intensity of the influence of these variables. The results of this marketing research show that the most important predictor for research productivity is the university category, associated with prestige. The institutional public budget has no significant impact on faculty research productivity (in case of lack of national or institutional policies). The teaching workload has a negative influence on research results, while the PhD students proved to be a significant predictor of all the scientific output indicators when considered as an absolute number. Although the findings are specific to the Romanian context, many of them may contribute to a better understanding of the institutional drivers of research productivity and can be replicated in other contexts. The results of this study, along with all other similar work, need to be viewed with an appropriate amount of caution due to following limitations. Research productivity is a multidimension concept and we explored parts of its determinants, belonging to institutional characteristics, based on objective data. Due to objective limitations (e.g., lack of information sources), we have ignored measures that relate to some important dimensions of departmental culture, staff evaluation mechanisms, reward and incentive systems, research infrastructure and facilities. Including other factors, especially at individual level, could bring more insights on how different determinants influence the research productivity.

Section II of the habilitation thesis entails the current **ACADEMIC CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN**, highlighting those aspects (educational, scientific, lifelong learning) that the candidate will pursue in the next years. The last paragraph of this section emphasizes candidate's capacity to coordinate research teams and to organize educational activities.

Section III of the thesis lists the literature (**REFERENCES**) that was studied by the candidate when developing his ideas and writing all papers.