

ABSTRACT

The habilitation thesis entitled "Trends in Business Administration, Between Contemporary Opportunities and Challenges" was developed per the requirements of O.M. 6129/2016 and O.M. 5229/2020 regarding the organization and development of the process for obtaining the habilitation certificate. The thesis presents the candidate's main scientific contributions in the field of business administration published after obtaining the doctorate in economics, the development of the academic, scientific and professional career and its main directions of development, and the candidate's ability to coordinate research teams and facilitate learning and research. Therefore, the thesis is divided into three parts, in which these aspects are discussed in detail, followed by the bibliographical references used.

In the introduction of the thesis, the complexity of business administration is presented, starting from the numerous facets that an organization has. This richness of facets is reflected in the content of business administration, which thus becomes a multi- and interdisciplinary process, making it a very attractive field of research.

In the section devoted to justifying the topicality of the subject, some of the most observable trends in business administration today have been identified. These trends have been analyzed from the point of view of the impact they can generate, i.e. opportunities and challenges.

The section devoted to achievements in academic research presents a selection of scientific papers published after obtaining the Ph.D. degree in economics and relevant to business administration. This section is organized according to **two major research areas**: administration of enterprise resources and business administration mechanisms. All ten selected articles can be classified into these areas, as it can be seen in Table 1 in conjunction with Table 2 in the main body of this paper.

The main enterprise resources considered are: customers, considered as market resources, arguing that they are the essential resource of a company without being part of its heritage; human resources and technology. Of course, a company's resources also include other categories (information resources, financial resources...), but these have not yet been considered in research, although they could represent valuable research directions for the future. The main research on each type of resource is organized in such a way as to highlight the most important aspects studied, as it can be seen in the contents of the paper.

Thus, with regard to *customers*, aspects related to the importance of *price* in the purchase decision are highlighted, with a particular focus on the perception of fairness of

pricing in the hotel industry. The research found that prices in the hospitality industry are perceived as fair when they are aligned with competitors' prices.

A second strand of research related to customers is *the role of social media* in purchasing decisions, particularly when choosing a destination based on health and safety considerations. This article was published "in the middle" of the 2020 health crisis and therefore captures "ongoing" rather than hypothetical behavior.

A third strand of research on consumer behavior looked at the factors that influence *the purchase of green products*. A summary of the main conclusions shows that higher levels of education and older age are factors that influence the purchase decision, and that income contributes to such a purchase only in a prohibitive sense (the absence of income reduces the purchase, but its presence does not stimulate it).

In the field of *human resources*, research has taken two main directions: telework and cyberloafing. The research on *telework* was conducted in 2018, shortly after the first law regulating telework was passed in Romania. Considering that teleworking was not very widespread at that time, the study investigated Romanian workers' opinions on how they would imagine working "from home". In this context, telecommuting proved to be a very attractive option. The second topic studied, *cyberloafing*, sheds light on the behavior of Romanian workers regarding surfing the Internet during working hours for purposes other than those related to work. The merit of this article is to have identified three types of behaviors, as presented in this thesis in section 2.1.2.2.

The third resource, *technology*, was addressed in the context of commercial technologies. At the time of the research, the results indicated that the level of awareness among shoppers is relatively low, as they have little exposure to advanced technologies in retail, but that there is a high level of adoption in the purchasing process. The information obtained pointed to the impact of innovative retail technologies on store image and customer loyalty.

The second research focus deals with different **mechanisms of business administration**, the most important of which is the strategic approach. This approach can be understood both as an independent mechanism among other mechanisms and as an integrative mechanism that includes the others.

Strategy was analyzed through qualitative research as a mechanism for travel agency survival in times of crisis and adoption of change. The results showed that all managers made decisions to counteract the crisis. The first actions taken were mostly economic, but cost-cutting measures had limited impact. Most managers recognized the need to take more complex, i.e., strategic measures, such as introducing new tourist programs and destinations,

targeting a different customer segment, strengthening advertising, or making better use of employees' skills. In other words, the prolongation of the crisis has led managers to discover the importance of strategy in all its dimensions.

Sustainability and social responsibility have been addressed through research on the implementation of "green" marketing in hotels, which also falls within the scope of the strategic business approach, as well as through research addressing students' opinions on the expected and perceived social responsibility in retail actors.

Regarding *business development mechanisms*, an article has been dedicated to tourism business incubators, highlighting the good practices that these entities must support.

This part of the thesis ends with brief conclusions that refer to the trends identified at the beginning and include a synthetic table that relates these trends, the impact they have and the scientific articles published on these topics.

The third part of the thesis retrospectively analyzes the professional development to date and the future directions of action, especially with regard to research activity.

At the end of the thesis, the bibliographic references are summarized in two different lists: one list contains the bibliographic resources used ad hoc for writing the thesis, and the second list contains the references corresponding to the articles selected and included in the thesis.