

VALAHIA UNIVERSITY, TARGOVISTE

HABILITATION THESIS
SUMMARY

**COMPANIES 'BEHAVIOR IN AN INTERNATIONAL
COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT: BETWEEN
THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Field: Management

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The concept of scientific researcher implies on the one hand the scientific competence validated through studies and scientific debates, corroborated with the need of a continuous professionalisation at the highest level, and on the other hand, according to the option and the high quality to practice a teaching profession, which cannot exist without the vocation of a teacher, willing to make sacrifices on behalf of some satisfaction hard to quantify and which can be seen only on a long term.

The habilitation thesis entitled “Behavior of companies in an international competitive environment: between theory and practice”, aims at highlighting the scientific, professional and academic achievements of the author - Assoc. Dr. Croitoru Gabriel. To highlight this synthesis, the main scientific achievements resulting from the activity of teacher after obtaining the title of doctor in economics were outlined (Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, 2015). In the holistic formation of the thesis, a career development plan was conceived, based on scientific, didactic and administrative achievements so far.

The results of the research activity which the construction of this habilitation thesis was based on took into account the activity relied on books and monographs, ISI Web of Science articles and articles published in indexed journals in databases, participation in conferences, being oriented towards two main directions: - research in the field of entrepreneurship and business management as well as research in the field of business economics and management. All the research activity in the post-doctoral period was marked by the interdisciplinarity of the quadrangle Entrepreneurship - Enterprise Economics - Management - Corporate Social Responsibility (AEIMR). All research activity was built both individually, taking into account scientific concerns and areas of interest in scientific research (quadrilateral), and in research teams set up together with colleagues in the Marketing Management Department of the Faculty of Sciences. Economics - Valahia University of Tîrgoviște, with colleagues from other universities in the country (Lower Danube University of Galați, Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest, Ovidius University of Constanța, University of Craiova, University of Oil and Gas of Ploiești, Romanian Academy, ASEM) or from abroad (Greece, Italy, Belgium).

The scientific results obtained in a university career of 23 years have led me to use new ideas that meet the growing demands of the university environment, by explaining notions in the university courses I have printed as an author or co-author. The research directions I approached and the ideas we started from were debated within the Center for Research and Applied Studies in Management and Marketing at the University of Wallachia in Tîrgoviște, both as a member and as its director.

A graduate of the Faculty of Economics, from the University of Wallachia in Târgoviște, in 1998 the author of the habilitation thesis began his professional activity within the same institution, at the Marketing Management Department where he still activates.

The choice of the topic approached in this habilitation thesis represents the scientific, professional and academic achievements of the author because the topic addressed represents his major field of continuous, professional and scientific activity, a topical topic, related to the continuous activity in the field of management and administration. Personal experience in entrepreneurship is materialized both by research and education carried out at the University of Wallachia in Targoviste but also by management in the Center for Research and Applied Studies in Management and Marketing as director and the Association of Young Entrepreneurs in the Virtual Environment and Student Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Management where I am its president. The main purposes of the studies and research carried out after obtaining the scientific title of doctor, are focused on two major thematic directions: company management and entrepreneurship. True to the principle that in order to be an excellent teacher, along with his/her inclination, dedication and selflessness for the work done it is also necessary a sustained activity of scientific research for which I have developed and published a series of articles and studies that represent original scientific contributions extenso in journals ISI or BDI listed internationally recognized (Scopus, EBSCO, REPEC, EconLit DOAJ, Cabells, ProQuest, etc.) and in the volumes of ISI proceedings or international indexed conferences held in the country or abroad (with ISSN / ISBN) for which the indicators made throughout the career are as follows: Scholar - h-index 6; Webofsciences - h-index 2 and Scopus - h-index 1.

Together with colleagues from the Management - Marketing department I supported the development of student scientific circles for Management, from 2013 to 2021, some coordinated works managed to obtain the grand prize of the session, and in 2014 even we participated in the Management Olympics in Târgu Jiu, organized several crowdfunding events, entrepreneurial pitch workshops, simulated business fairs, online business gaming, Future Makers Workshop, Blended Learning - JA Start-UP, Romanian Business Challenge in which students and pupils were involved to strengthen the matching entrepreneurship for better inclusion.

In the first part of the habilitation thesis there were presented in a concise form the most important results regarding the study of some particularities that represent the basis of the analysis of the behavior of companies in a competitive environment from the aspect of the AEIMR quadrilateral. The company, before making the decision to promote a strategy, must understand and analyze the market it is in in terms of structure, dynamics and possible

developments. The aim of this approach is to make a very important analysis tool for studying the strategies to be promoted by the behavior of firms in an oligopoly situation (quantity competition: Cournot and Stackelberg oligopoly; price competition: Bertrand and Edgeworth oligopoly) or the behavior of companies in a monopoly situation (Classic monopoly, Natural monopoly, Legal monopoly) the dominant enterprise and the competitive segment, in the case of the closed branch, or the situations of enterprises in competitive segments which rely on the comparison between their production costs and those of the dominant company. Another behavior taken into account is the game theory by conducting a study of non-cooperative games that permit the shaping of strategic interactions between different players who do not want to cooperate or the study of cooperative games that study coalitions between players. Thus, aspects related to developed games were clarified: backward induction but also a development of Nash type balance.

In the second chapter the factors of internalization and the opportunity of internalization are analyzed, tackling the importance of the internalization impact on the strategic process, the competences and the key resources of the enterprise, the internalization of the firms and their results, the diagnosis of the international position, ways of internalization of the firms, the global effectiveness and local adaptation - basic elements in the formulation of international strategies, internationalization of companies - evolutionary process, sequential but also the choice of internationalization.

The third chapter continued the analysis of the behavior of the contemporary company through an analysis of international strategies that can allow its logical highlighting, as a response to the need for economic globalization of the company and adaptation to new challenges on the market and consumer. This response can be adapted through a systematic study of the environment and the structural specificity of the industry, the emphasis on the global / local dialect, the characteristics of international competition, the classification of different strategic options and the importance of Europeanization, elements which are susceptible and contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of the international competitive environment which is becoming more and more challenging.

The outcomes of the research present within the thesis possible actions both at local / regional, national and international level. In addition, recommendations are presented as a result of the various activities in terms of teaching and research, field observations and discussions with various public and private actors, as an expression of ongoing involvement in developing a visibility of actions taken for companies. and other successful organizations recognized by the entrepreneurial community, the elite of entrepreneurship managers,

consultants and trainers interested in developing and increasing the performance of entrepreneurial knowledge.

The outcomes of the research presented in the first part of the thesis, outcomes which led to useful conclusions for the expected outcomes have been published in ISI Web of Science indexed journals or indexed in recognized international databases or a series of books were written. In the second part, the perspectives of the professional and academic research are pinpointed by revising the evolution plan and the one of personal career development.

1. The evolution of the professional career

The directions of future development of the university career must be a continuation of the professional preoccupations of 23 years within the Valahia University of Târgoviște. My entire professional career is related to this university.

My professional activity took place within the team of the Management Department (currently the Management - Marketing Department) of the Faculty of Economic Sciences from the University of Wallachia in Târgoviște, where I participated in different teaching activities, scientific research and / or collaboration with other institutions / management companies. I had the opportunity to meet the staff of the Management - Marketing Department, a dynamic team, in which I find many values and which since 2020 I have been leading as director. Within this team, I propose to organize my future career, and the aim for which I realize this plan for the development of my university career is to obtain the qualification as well as the scientific title of university professor. The didactic activity materialized, during the period in which I went through the steps of the mentioned didactic hierarchy, in support of the classes and seminar in the discipline "Enterprise Economics" at the sections "Accounting and management informatics", "Company management", "Finance Banks", "Marketing" and "Trade and Tourism Economics", second year day and ID), within the Faculty of Economics, as well as the course of "Industrial Economics" at the section "Company Management", (master MMO and MMK) and "Entrepreneurship and business management" at the sections "Accounting and management informatics", "Company management", "Banking Finance", year III as well as "Marketing" and "Trade and Tourism Economics", year II.

From the academic year 2004 until now, I have been involved in the development of the bachelor's exam, dissertation within the Management-Marketing department, where I have been able to find topics that refer to the three subjects taught. I have also coordinated and coordinate bachelor's theses as a supervisor, given the interdisciplinary nature of the subject

taught, being at the same time a member of commissions to support bachelor's and dissertation papers.

The activities supported were those provided in the curricula and according to my job description as a university lecturer: teaching activities, seminar activities, guidance (management) of graduation projects, evaluation activities, activities on the promotion of teachers in education, consultations granted to students. Together with colleagues from the Management - Marketing department I supported the development of student scientific circles for Management, from 2013 to 2021, some coordinated works obtaining the grand prize of the session, and in 2014 even participating in the Management Olympics in Târgu Jiu, organizing several crowdfunding events, entrepreneurial pitch workshops, simulated business fairs, online business gaming, Future Makers Workshop, Blended Learning - JA Start-UP, Romanian Business Challenge in which students and pupils were involved to strengthen the matching entrepreneurship in the view of a better inclusion.

I also consider that the achievements in the didactic and scientific sphere were facilitated by the fact that in 2008 I benefited from a scholarship obtained through the ERASMUS Program, doing a one-week internship at the University Degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza", in Italy, studying issues related to the importance of communication within the enterprise as well as Kavala Institute of Technology - School of Business and Economics, where I taught a course in Management and Entrepreneurship. The informational opportunities offered by the programs undertaken were useful to me in terms of preparing analytical programs harmonized with European and national demands, in collecting documentary material that I used during my doctorate, but especially in applying specialized knowledge during the courses.

2. Scientific and journalistic research activity

True to the principle that in order to be an excellent teacher, apart from inclination, dedication and selflessness for the work done one also needs a sustained activity of scientific research, we have developed and published a series of articles and studies which represent original scientific contributions in extenso in journals ISI or BDI listed internationally recognized (Scopus, EBSCO, REPEC, EconLit DOAJ, Cabells, ProQuest, etc.) and in the volumes of ISI proceedings or international indexed conferences held in the country or abroad (with ISSN / ISBN) for which the indicators made throughout the career are as follows: Scholar - h-index 6; Webofsciences - h-index 2 and Scopus - h-index 1. Published books and articles aim at a wide range of fields, taking into account the interference of the discipline taught (Enterprise Economics) with other disciplines, namely: finance, economic integration, management, marketing, statistics, political economy, etc. In principle, the topics tackled in these papers took

into account both the theoretical aspects, but especially the practical ones, trying to combine them as efficiently as possible, so as to address not only students but also practitioners in companies, as far as possible, as long as the topics addressed stirred their interest.

Carried out during the 23 years of activity in higher education, the research activity materialized both in participating in the elaboration of the necessary documentation in order to receive some grant projects (considering the position of secretary of the Center for Research and Studies in Management and Marketing and from 2020 as director) for the competition, but at the same time in participating as a member in the research team of research with funding provided by local and national bodies (Dâmbovița County Council, Ministry of Health, POSDRU, etc.), but also as a project manager for European funds as well as local and national business environment (Junior Achievement Romania). From 2005 to 2021 I was and I still am a member of the research team of 27 projects (as seen in the CV), of which 19 are national and 7 are international. In some of these projects I also hold the position of director. Since 2015 I have been the director of the Student Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Management and since 2020 director of the Center for Research and Studies in Management and Marketing.

The theoretical and practical results gained from the research activity were concretized in:

- publishing scientific materials (articles in specialized journals - Romanian Academy (AROMAR), books - publishing houses such as Harmatan Paris, Bibliotheca Târgoviște, ProUniversitaria Publishing House, papers presented at scientific communication sessions in the country and abroad);

- the elaboration of a very useful SWOT analysis for investors who want to rely on investments in Dâmbovița County, showing at the same time the importance of elaborating a project initiative to establish a clear and coherent strategy at the central level and then involving local authorities in this strategy would be a first step in the right direction (organization of different entrepreneurial events, eg: the first fair of simulated enterprises TIMV 2014-2019). To this there should be added a data collection system that could allow any area or locality to get the information it wants - in our case especially information on economic agencies that form the internal market of Dâmbovița County. The theoretical results were disseminated to be used by interested companies in workshops (eg Crowdfunding Start, Entrepreneurship Matching Event), editing two volumes for interested businesses, used later to present concrete situations and real to the students during the seminar classes and which is also a real source of information for future research. In addition to setting up the database necessary for the study, another purpose we started was the Working Paper magazine following the cooperation of the

research team and students, being involved in the selection process and trying to raise the level of contribution. articles proposed for publication, listed C CNCSIS.

3. The development of my future university career

The plan of development of my professional career is linked to the vision, mission and the objectives of the Valahia University from Targoviste and I am determined to achieve as many of the necessary imperatives which are in my responsibility as a professor, director of the Management-Marketing department. The didactic activities which I will be in charge with in the future will be a continuation of those already presented and I propose the following objectives for the orientation of the didactic activity linked to the university curricula.

- acquiring new knowledge, skills and competencies according to the educational activity within the Management - Marketing department;
- active involvement of students in courses and seminars, volunteer activities in projects: Crowdfunding Start, Pluriva, Simulated Enterprises, CESIM business simulator, entrepreneurial pitches, using teaching methods focused on learning by discovery, team learning and learning in group;
- diversification of interactive teaching methods, based on collaborative creativity and educational partnership using high-performance equipment (eg smartboard, video projector, platform, computer, etc.);
- designing a teaching strategy appropriate to the knowledge in the field that must be acquired by students and that motivates students in the complex learning process;
- anticipating the results obtained by students from the perspective of future insertion on the labor market, in order to be able to implement in the teaching process, new study techniques / methods, which lay the foundation of an approach of assimilating the knowledge taught to undergraduate and master students;
- orientation and centering of university teaching and learning activities on the level of student development, use of actively participatory management strategies, diversification of evaluation techniques with orientation towards student performance and on the skills formed in entrepreneurship;
- the axiological orientation of the educational process by individualizing the didactic process according to the age and individual peculiarities of the student; the accessibility of the professional-scientific language used, which eases the understanding through examples, conclusive demonstrations;

- updating the subject sheets and republishing the revised course and seminar materials, taking into account the trends manifested in the field, by reporting to similar study programs within the prestigious universities in the country and abroad.

Future directions for action for this component of the university career aim at the:

- development of the scientific research activity within the “Center for Research and Studies in Management and Marketing” of the Faculty of Economic Sciences, “Valahia” University and the other centers by participating in continuous training and permanent training programs.
- participation in teams for organizing conferences and other scientific events;
- participation in prestigious national / international scientific events (minimum 5 articles per year);
- publication of articles in ISI journals with an impact factor greater than 0 (ISI Tompson listed) in Romania or abroad and / or in journals indexed in multiple international databases and participating in well- known national / international scientific events, (minimum 3 articles per year;
- publication of a specialized book, “A new vision on the behavior of companies on the market”, “Entrepreneurship and business management”, in a national publishing house recognized by CNCS and CNATDCU, which is intended to be a continuation of the three already written and a "Entrepreneurship" book;
- publication of chapters in specialized books, especially in foreign publishing houses or in national publishing houses recognized by CNCS and CNATDCU (under the aegis of SAMRO).
- participation in team building training programs, summer schools, which would allow me to develop new interuniversity relationships.
- identification of internal / international partners to lay the foundations of partnerships to ensure the success of projects carried out by the Center for Research and Studies in Management and Marketing as well as the Student Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Management but also in domestic and international competitions to win grants research in the entrepreneurial field.

The coordinates in the future construction of my university career are: openness to the new, transparency, continuity and feedback.

The reopening is necessary both from the perspective of the fact that I teach in the field of education and must transmit to students the latest information, and due to the economic field, especially management, which has a high dynamic. Paradigm changes - such as the evolution and continuous adaptation of entrepreneurship, etc. - is just one of the challenges that make it necessary to open anew for any professional.

Transparency must be a quality of any researcher or teacher. It is the foundation of teamwork, having a fundamental role in effective communication between team members and working groups. Transparency offers a relaxed atmosphere within the work teams, possible dissatisfaction, divergent points of view being openly discussed within the team.

Continuity ensures the increase of professional skills. This is reflected and will be reflected in my teaching and research activity. My future activities within the department will be a continuation of the present and the past.

The feedback provides the necessary framework for self-evaluation and continuous improvement of professional activity, the development of professional relations with the members of the department, with the students and with the professional bodies and the economic environment. I will keep on working in the professional bodies whose member I am and I will apply for affiliation with new ones as well as for attracting new members within the center I lead.

Relying on what has been mentioned before, as member of the Marketing-Management department, I wish I could develop my academic career and all these coordinates to build my future professional career, which will be found in my didactic process with the students and my colleagues, professors -researchers. Aware of the fact that a university career and scientific research characterized by some constant and long-term success needs/ implies a successful potential, I propose as a permanent task an “advance management” of the entire portfolio of key-competences, which can ensure me competitiveness and relying on this the affirmation of some long-term performance.

The quality of professor in university education also implies a high degree of involvement in administrative activities with the clear objective of ensuring both students and the university as a whole a better connection with the economic environment and the labor market. In this sense, I propose that, together with my colleagues, I should continue to be involved in organizing extra-curricular activities with students, in different projects involving the university, in evaluating the professional insertion of graduates, in order to better correlate teaching and research activities in the faculty / university with the labor market.