

**WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMIȘOARA  
MANAGEMENT FIELD**

**ANTREPRENORIAT, SUSTENABILITATE ȘI  
TRANSFORMARE DIGITALĂ - PILONI AI  
PERFORMANȚEI ORGANIZAȚIONALE. CONTRIBUȚII  
EMPIRICE ȘI DIRECȚII DE CERCETARE APLICATĂ**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SUSTAINABILITY, AND DIGITAL  
TRANSFORMATION – PILLARS OF ORGANIZATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE. EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND  
APPLIED RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

**SUMMARY OF THE HABILITATION THESIS**

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## Summary

The habilitation thesis “*Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, and Digital Transformation – Pillars of Organizational Performance. Empirical Contributions and Applied Research Directions*” is framed within the field of Economic Sciences and has as its central objective the multidimensional analysis of organizational performance, from a perspective that integrates entrepreneurship, digital transformation, and sustainability. The research aims to connect established theoretical models with the realities of emerging economies, particularly Romania and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, thus contributing to the development of international literature and to the formulation of applicable benchmarks.

The **objectives of the thesis** are structured along three dimensions:

- (i) *scientific* – developing explanatory and predictive models regarding entrepreneurial intention, financial and non-financial performance in the context of digital transformation;
- (ii) *professional* – building a consistent portfolio of impactful research capable of advancing academic expertise and facilitating involvement in national and international projects;
- (iii) *institutional* – supporting the training of new generations of researchers and contributing to the development of a competitive doctoral school.

The structure of the thesis is organized into three major chapters, complemented by conclusions, each reflecting a stage in my academic and scientific evolution.

The first chapter, *Professional and Academic Career Evolution*, presents my professional and academic trajectory, highlighting the coherence and continuity of my development within the university environment. It outlines my educational path – from Bachelor’s and Master’s studies to doctoral and postdoctoral training – including Erasmus international experiences and research fellowships. From the perspective of my academic career, the chapter details the professional stages from Teaching Assistant to Associate Professor, underlining the diversity of teaching activities carried out within the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

The second chapter, *Main Scientific Results and Professional Achievements*, synthesizes my major research contributions, grouped into three complementary directions.

*The first direction* addresses entrepreneurial intention and its determinants. The studies presented analyze the role of personality traits, empathy, and assertiveness in strengthening perceived behavioral control (PBC), as well as the impact of the pandemic context on Romanian students’ entrepreneurial intentions. The results confirm the added

value of tailored entrepreneurial education and the relevance of explanatory models based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). These results are evidenced through articles such as: *“The Association between Entrepreneurial Perceived Behavioral Control, Personality, Empathy, and Assertiveness in a Romanian Sample of Nascent Entrepreneurs”* (2020, co-authored with Elena – Loreni Baci, Delia Vîrgă, Theofild-Andrei Lazăr, and Delia Gligor) and *“Changes Regarding Entrepreneurial Intent Among Young Romanian Students in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic”* (2025, co-authored with Roxana Adriana Heteș, Delia Anca Gabriela Gligor, Mariana Predișcan, and Roxana Nadina Bucurean).

*The second direction* focuses on the impact of digital transformation on non-financial performance. Research papers (*“Exploring the Impact of Digital Transformation on Non-Financial Performance in Central and Eastern European Countries”* – 2025, co-authored with Alexandru Buglea, Irina Daniela Cismașu, and Delia Gligor; and *“Integrating Digital Technologies to Enhance ESG Performance: A Focus on Central and Eastern European Countries”* – 2025, co-authored with Eduard Mădălin Dinu, Delia Anca Gabriela Gligor, Irina Daniela Cismașu, and Alexandru Buglea) show that the adoption of digital technologies supports the implementation of ESG (environmental, social, governance) principles, increases transparency, and improves corporate governance. These studies demonstrate the relevance of digitalization in fostering sustainability and competitiveness of organizations in Central and Eastern Europe.

*The third direction* relates to economic and financial analysis in the context of sustainability. Contributions regarding the risk–return relationship in emerging markets, determinants of firms’ financial performance, and the integration of managerial incentives in sustainable development are presented, as reflected in the articles: *“Considerations regarding the enterprise value’s analysis based on patrimonial wealth and stock return”* (2014, co-authored with Marius Pantea and Delia Gligor); *“Economic determinants of Romanian firms’ financial performance”* (2014, co-authored with Marius Pantea and Delia Gligor); *“Risk and Return Analysis: Empirical Evidence from Emerging Markets”* (2014, co-authored with Marilen Pirtea and Claudiu Boțoc); and *“Management financial incentives and firm performance in a sustainable development framework: empirical evidence from european companies”* (2020, co-authored with Grațiela Noja, Mirela Cristea, Alexandru Buglea, and Ion Lala Popa). These studies bring forward innovative models for enterprise valuation and provide recommendations for both public policy and the business environment.

**Entrepreneurship** through innovation, **sustainability** through the integration of ESG principles, and **digital transformation** through the optimization of non-financial

performance constitute complementary *pillars of organizational performance*, as evidenced by the research conducted.

*The originality of the research* lies in applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to entrepreneurial intention in Romania (including longitudinal analyses pre- and post-pandemic), investigating the impact of digitalization on non-financial performance in the Central and Eastern European context, and proposing innovative models of financial and sustainability analysis, relevant both for corporate practice and for public policy.

This chapter also highlights the main dimensions of the research: *the visibility of publications, the degree of international recognition, and the influence exerted in academic and professional environments*. Through significant citation impact, international acknowledgment, and influence on managerial practices, the presented research confirms both the value and originality of the scientific endeavour. Moreover, it demonstrates the continuity and relevance of research in the field of Management, constituting a rigorous foundation for exploring new research directions and expanding professional impact at regional and international levels.

The third chapter, *Future Directions of Research and Professional Development*, outlines perspectives for the evolution of my academic career and research agenda. The future research vectors target emerging topics such as the application of artificial intelligence in economics and education, the development of circular business models, the expansion of ESG performance studies, and the elaboration of integrated predictive models.

As for the *academic and research activity*, the central objective is to contribute to the training of new generations of students capable of delivering competitive professionals to the business environment and responsible citizens to society. Achieving this aim involves the following directions:

- ✓ *continuous updating of knowledge* in areas such as economic–financial analysis and management, in correlation with complementary disciplines, in response to the needs of students, employers, and the business environment at regional, national, and international levels;
- ✓ *integration of scientific research results* (including my own) into the content of courses and seminars, while promoting critical and scientific thinking among students;
- ✓ *obtaining the habilitation certificate* in Management and supervising doctoral students in research projects, thus contributing to strengthening this field within the

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- ✓ *active involvement in national and international research teams* to conduct complex exploratory studies;
- ✓ *aligning courses* with applied dimensions by using case studies and examples drawn from the real and digital economy;
- ✓ *developing entrepreneurial competences* and encouraging responsibility and autonomy among students through their involvement in local and regional business ecosystems;
- ✓ *practicing student-centered education*;
- ✓ *participation in academic mobilities and exchanges* within Romanian universities (especially those part of the Universitaria Consortium) and abroad (particularly those included in the Unita – Universitas Montium alliance);
- ✓ *active involvement in academic management, teaching support activities, and institutional development projects*, all indispensable for the continuous adaptation of the university environment to the dynamic requirements of the labor market.

*All of the professional, scientific, and academic achievements presented in this habilitation thesis, alongside the outlined future research directions and assumed academic objectives, highlight both the capacity and the readiness to assume, in the near future, the responsibilities of supervising doctoral theses, research projects, and academic teams.*