# **BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY**

Faculty of Economics and Business Administration Doctoral School in Economics and Business Administration

# **DOCTORAL THESIS**

# - Summary -

# Contributions to creating, designing and implementing some expert systems

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# **KEYWORDS**

Expert System; Experts; Expertise; Architecture of expert systems; Inference; Decisional problems; Knowledge engineering; Web technologies; Rural tourism; Agricultural insurance; Advertising.

# INTRODUCTION

Considering the exponential growth of the volume of information we are assaulted with in everyday life, the fast evolution of information technology, the problem of taking quality decision has become a very difficult task. The current business environment is very complex, because of the frequent changes that take place in every area of activity. Most the information tend to be digitized. They come from many sources, circulate fast and are difficult to process, leading to increased pressure to both the individual decision makers, as well as those leading organizations, which need fast reactions in this climate. The decision makers need to acknowledge the fact that to answer back to the pressure and opportunities of the business environment, they need to turn to the aid of decisional support systems, because of the many advantages which these can bring to the decisional process.

In present context, decisional support systems are developed by using technologies from the artificial intelligence field, with the purpose of creating intelligent decision support systems, by including human reasoning in them. Thus, more complex problems are solved and the quality of the decisional processes are significantly enhanced.

The systems which integrate knowledge, techniques and development tools in the artificial intelligence area are known as intelligent decisional support systems or expert systems (ES). The kind of problems that expert systems need to solve can't be solved using algorithms, thus the design method of these systems is very different from the one used in traditional systems. For developing applications capable of bringing benefits to users, research results from the knowledge engineering area are used. The purpose of expert systems is to bring recommendations, find the meaning, and generate

solutions to identified decisional problems is accomplished by acquiring explicit knowledge, from human experts.

By making the expertise available and the acquired knowledge and experience, expert systems can come in the aid of the users, helping them find solutions to problems at an expert level.

Expert systems can be applied in every knowledge field because of the quick solving of problems, how easy it is to use and consult for taking the optimal decision. We consider that an expert system for solving decisional problems can be designed, for situations in which human experts will be able to explain the solving logic of that problem. Because of this, we decided to research expert systems, to create a development model of expert systems, a prototype which could be later used in different areas, considering the nature and particularities of decisional problems.

# **Research objectives**

"As a response to the necessities of the intelligent decisional support, expert systems were developed by combining the artificial intelligence tools with techniques from the sphere of knowledge engineering and decisional support systems" (Moisuc & Avornicului, 2014). Because of the multiple advantages, they bring to both the simple decision maker level and decision makers which oversee organizations, there is a lot of attention given to these systems.

**The main objective** of this research is to create a development model of expert systems and to validate them by designing applications meant to solve specific decisional problems, in different areas.

To meet this objective, in the first part of the paper we will create the theoreticalconceptual frame, by classifying the basic concepts and particularities of the following areas of interest: decisional support systems, expert systems, knowledge engineering and system development methodology. The theoretical study developed in the first part of the paper has the purpose to create the premises to reach the goal we've set to accomplish, which is to design a development model for expert systems. Under this practical aspect, with the development model of expert systems, the paper is presenting in its own vision three expert system applications in different areas. We point out that the proposed prototype of expert system has at its base the deep knowledge of current tendencies in the evolution process of information technology.

The areas of research picked enjoy a big interest, are very dynamic and complex and generate multiple debates, the result of which frequently didn't get a unanimous agreement.

With the research done we want to touch other objectives in the paper, some of which are:

- Doing an analysis of the decisional environment and studying the concepts from the DSS area
- Studying the DSS architecture and a general conceptual frame which could be used by a user as an aid for describing the architecture of expert systems
- The general presentation of techniques for using artificial intelligence for developing intelligent systems
- ✤ Familiarization with expert systems and technological aspects for them
- Creating a general frame for developing expert systems
- Explaining the processes which take part in each step from knowledge engineering favoring the actions taken for creating the expert systems development model.
- Presenting the methodologies used, of the steps taken in developing expert systems.
- Validating the model by creating, designing and implementing applications with the purpose of solving decisional problems in three different areas: rural tourism, agricultural insurance and advertisements.

# **Paper structure**

Taking into consideration the objectives of the thesis stated above, the paper has the following structure: introduction, six chapters for each researched area, general conclusions and research perspectives, bibliography references.

With the purpose of obtaining an overview of the content and the structure of the paper with the subject: "Contributions to creating, designing and implementing expert systems" we created a schematic for the general structure of it (Figure 1):



Figure 1. The general structure of the paper Source: Author

The logic used for realizing the objectives can be associated with inference (the process of using knowledge to generate solutions), the strategy used in this paper being that of a combined control. This strategy is defined by the fact that at the beginning is using reductive methods to divide the problem in sub problems (the backward control strategy), which are then solved also by reductive methods, or by productive methods (the forward control strategy). The representation of the logic will provide the detailed structure of the paper (Figure 2).

The description of this paper, in terms with the combined strategy control is as it follows: the problems are broken down - the objective (creating the expert systems development model) in sub problems (approaching the four concerned areas) using the backward control strategy, and after verifying that the objectives have been completed we realize the development and applications model using the forward control strategy (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Detailed structure of the paper Source: Author

# CHAPTER SUMMARY

The first chapter called "Theoretical aspects about decision support systems" includes the study of decision support systems and their current context. As such, definitions, characteristics, advantages and disadvantages and the system limits, their classification for determining the place and the purpose of expert systems in the evolution of DSS are presented. Also, a generic conceptual frame of DSS is presented, which will be used as a starting point in approaching the expert systems architecture. The objectives of this chapter are: summarizing the important theoretical aspects needed for continuing the research and present our vision about the identified theoretical concepts; determining the place and purpose of expert systems in DSS; identifying the architectural components of the DSS.

The second chapter called "Expert systems" has as the main objective the study of techniques used in artificial intelligence, especially of expert systems. In this respect, at the beginning artificial intelligence concepts and definitions are presented and after characteristics of their most recent use. Categorizing these concepts allow us to continue using expert systems and defining their particularities. Furthermore, a study of the expert systems architecture is realized and an architectural model is created seen from our point of view. The chapter ends with the presentation of the evolution of these systems, the newest trends in developing them and highlighting their advantages and limits. The objectives of this chapter are: realizing a summary and expressing our own opinions; identifying architectural components of expert systems; create an architectural model of expert systems (in our opinion); highlighting the place and purpose of the WBES category (web based expert systems).

In chapter three, "Knowledge engineering" we are trying to describe every step of the knowledge engineering process from the detailed perspective: acquiring the knowledge, displaying the knowledge, validating the knowledge, inference, explaining and justifying. The objectives followed in these chapter are: clarifying and explaining the processes which take place at every step in knowledge engineering, thus promoting the steps done to create de development model of expert systems and its applications.

Chapter four, "Expert systems development methodologies" covers the study of the traditional development cycle of conventional systems and highlighting the similarities and differences between it and the development cycle of expert systems. The main objective of this chapter is to establish the methodology which will be used for creating the expert systems, presenting the steps which will be done for developing them.

In chapter five, "Expert systems development model" we touch the main objective of the thesis, which is creating the development model, using the theoretical conceptual frame created in the first chapter, creating connections between the knowledge from the studied areas. The objective is thus carried out by: establishing the most important aspects which need to be followed at each stage of the development of expert systems; creating (using our opinion) an expert systems architecture which uses generators and after of an architecture for these systems after implementation; presenting the knowledge engineering stages from the detailed perspective for the prototype developed by us; presenting the templates defined in the system conceptualization stage; highlighting the changes made in the management of expert systems after their implementation.

In chapter six called "Creating and implementing applications" we validate the created development model, by designing expert systems, as case studies, with applicability in different areas as: rural tourism, agricultural insurance and advertisements. We present the development steps for every application by identifying the decisional problems which will be solved and formulating the purpose for creating the systems, describing the way how we acquire the knowledge and the systems conceptualization, presenting the stages of formalizing, inference, validation specific to the picked generator. The conclusions are made for the designed applications and their efficiency is presented.

The current research ends with the presentation of the general conclusions and personal contributions; the perspectives of the research. For validating the conducted studies, we present the dissemination of the research results.

# GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH PROSPECTS

The key points of this paper were researching the expert systems field, discovering opportunities and gaps which this field could have, creating a development model of expert systems and using this model for creating new applications.

In the performed research, we had as a starting point theoretical concepts from these fields: decisional support systems, artificial intelligence, knowledge engineering and system development methodologies.

# **Contribution summary**

We consider that the main contributions made are:

- Expressing own views about the researched area, creating the theoretical conceptual frame of expert systems, by clarifying basic concepts and areas of interest domains.
- Formulating in a synthetically manner of research and practices in the expert systems field.
- Presenting an expert system (ES) architectural model and then a web based expert system (WBES) architectural model in our own vision.
- Presenting the expert systems development methodologies.
- Using the researched done by creating an expert system development model.
- Identifying new application areas of expert systems, on segments which were less addressed like: rural tourism, agricultural insurances and advertisement.
- Creating and implementing the applications in the identified fields, underlining the benefits which these applications could bring.
- Presenting the efficiency of the designed expert systems.

In the first two chapters, we identified basic concepts: decision support systems, artificial intelligence and expert systems. Important theoretical aspects were summarized for continuing the study: characteristics, classifications, advantages and limits and problems types were highlighted with problems that can be solved with the help of expert systems and applications areas of them. We identified architectural components of decisional support systems and then expert systems. Starting from these conceptual frames we proposed two architectural models in our own vision, firstly the one of expert systems and then the one of web based expert systems.

By presenting and explaining all the processes which take place in the steps from the knowledge engineering process, from the third chapter and then establishing the expert systems development methodologies (chapter 4) the premises for creating and designing the development model and the applications implemented based on them were created.

In chapter five the focus was on the practical aspects and using the theoretical aspects described in the previous chapters, by achieving the main objective of the research, which is creating a development model of expert systems. In this chapter, essential aspects were established which needed to be achieved in the development phases and we presented in our own vision architectures of expert systems and the steps from the process of knowledge engineering for the developed prototype. We investigated types of possible development tools and concluded that expert system generators have the biggest advantages. Ways of acquiring knowledge were presented in detail and then the expert systems conceptualization. At the end of the chapter we highlighted the changes which need to be done after implementing expert systems, and their management way.

The validation of the development model was realized in chapter six by creating and implementing the applications on the next segments: rural tourism, agricultural insurances and advertisement. We analyzed the three fields and identified decisional problems for which expert systems can help solve. Thus, we materialized the proposed development model by designing the applications. We demonstrated that the systems can solve the problems for which they were designed, giving recommendations (in the first two cases) and interpreting (in the third case), thus accomplishing their goal. The analysis of the economic efficiency of the designed applications have highlighted the need of implementing these systems and the benefits which they can bring.

We can say that the success of applying the expert systems in the studied fields depends on acknowledging the importance of these systems, of the availability and capacity of the tenderers of tourism products, of insurance agencies and advertisement agencies to support this field.

The contributions brought with this paper were disseminated in a number of twelve articles published in BDI indexed journals, one article in ISI graded international conferences, two articles in international scientific conferences/volumes with BDI indexed editors.

# **Research prospects**

The expert systems field is in continuous development. In the current decisional environment, there is a tendency for all the information to be digitized and transformed in data, which will generate the appearance of a global data warehouse. Business information and personal information of individuals will be translated in enormous data blocks. But, these giant warehouses of data will be useless and unusable if there won't be any way to process and interpret them. Expertise is needed in every field to be able to overcome the existent challenges, both at the organizational and individual level.

Starting from the important conclusion of our study that "in every field, in the case that human experts can specify the steps and reasoning from which a problem can be solved an expert system can be created to solve that problem", we are convinced that the area of applications fields of expert systems will expand.

We propose that the expert system development model and implement applications form a starting point for subsequent research. We can verify the implementation of these systems by using other expert systems generators, or other development tools.

The tendency already exists to integrate into expert systems other artificial intelligence tools such as fuzzy logic, neural networks, processing natural language, robots, thus resulting remarkable results.

## Disseminating the results of the research

In terms of disseminating the results obtained and the research done for creating the current paper, these were materialized with published articles in the studied field, in different BDI indexed journals, papers in ISI graded international conferences, international scientific volumes with BDI indexed editors. I was a member in research collectives of two grans (PCCA Associated Projects) and three POSDRU projects.

#### Published articles in BDI indexed journals

1. Moisuc Diana-Aderina, Steliac Nela, *The importance of the implementation of integrated information systems in the restructuring and european integration process of organizations*, The Annals of the University of Oradea, Economic Sciences, Tom XIX 2nd Issue / December 2010, P.1219-1225.

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1. Pop Ciprian-Viorel, Moisuc Diana-Aderina, Steliac Nela, Nan Anca - Petruta, Expert Systems as Adjuncts in Assessing the Interpretation of Print Advertisements by Potential Customers, 13th WSEAS International Conference on Mathematics and Computers in Business and Economics, 978-1-61804-098-5, 2012, P. 186-191

Published papers in international scientific conferences/volumes with editors, ISBN, BDI indexed

1. Moisuc Diana-Aderina, Avornicului Mihai-Constantin, Architectural model of *expert systems*, V International Symposium Engineering Management and Competitiveness 2015 (EMC 2015), University of Novi Sad, Technical Faculty "Mihajlo Pupin", Zrenjanin, Đure Đakovića bb, 23000 Zrenjanin, 978-86-7672-256-3, Index Copernicus, 2015, P. 307-312

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## Institutional project - team members:

1. Membru în grantul Proiect Parteneriate PCCA 2013, "Sistem inteligent de management, monitorizare și mentenanță a pavajelor și drumurilor folosind tehnici imagistice moderne - PAV3M" PN-II-PT-PCCA-2013-4-1762, nr.contract 3/2014, Unitatea contractantă: Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca, COMPETITIA 2013. Director de proiect Prof.dr.Lucia Rusu. Parteneri: Centrul IT pentru Știință și Tehnologie, CCEE, Universitatea Politehnica din București, Universitatea Tehnica din Cluj Napoca, Universitatea Galați,Univertitatea Târgoviște. Suma: 1.250.000 RON, perioada de desfășurare: 1 iulie 2014 – 30 septembrie 2017.

2. Membru in grantul Proiect Parteneriate PCCA 2013, PN-II-PT-PCCA-2013-4-0619, nr.contract 315/2014 Asistent pentru persoane vârstnice bazat pe modele de mobilitate, Mobile@Old, Coordonator Universitatea Politehnica Bucuresti, Director de proiect: Conf.dr.Irina Mocanu, Unitatea contractantă: Universitatea Politehnica din București, COMPETITIA 2013. Parteneri: Centrul IT pentru Știință și Tehnologie, Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca, Universitatea Ștefan cel Mare Suceava. Suma: 1.250.000 RON, perioada de desfăşurare: 1 iulie 2014 – 30 septembrie 2017.

3. Perfectionarea cadrelor didactice care predau limba română în învățământul preuniversitar în evaluarea competențelor de comunicare ale elevilor, Contract POSDRU/157/1.3/S/133900, membru echipă.

4. Perfecționarea cadrelor didactice din învățământul preuniversitar care predau disciplina Religie", Contract POSDRU/157/1.3/S/134267, membru echipă

5. "Perfecționarea cadrelor didactice, din învățământul liceal, care predau discipline economice", Contract POSDRU/87/1.3/S/63908, membru echipă

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