

# ABSTRACT

## TITLE OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

Innovation and creativity, solutions for relaunching competitiveness in the tertiary sector

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION .....	6
CHAPTER 1. ....	8
CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY IN THE TERTIARY SECTOR .....	8
1 A. INNOVATION.....	8
A.1 Innovation-definitions and characteristics.....	8
A.2. Typologies and classifications of innovation .....	13
A.3 Sources of innovation .....	18
A.4. Famous theories in the innovation sphere.....	21
1.B. CREATIVITY .....	27
1.C. ESTABLISHING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY .....	29
1.D THE IMPACT OF INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY UPON THE TERTIARY SECTOR .....	32
CHAPTER 2. ....	38
THE BUSINESS SECTOR.....	38
2.1.TYPES OF BUSINESSES ACCORDING TO THE ECONOMIC SECTORS .....	38
2.2. THE TERTIARY SECTOR.....	39
2.2.1. Definitions and characteristics of the tertiary sector.....	39
2.2.2. The tertiary sector during the crisis.....	41
2.2.3. The situations of the tertiary sector in Romania.....	44
2.3. THE REAL-ESTATE TERTIARY SECTOR .....	47
2.3.1. Definitions and characteristics.....	47
2.3.2. The main actors in the real-estate market.....	50

2.3.3. Supply, demand and the decision making process .....	52
2.3.4. Competition i n the real-estate market .....	53
2.3.5. Trends in the global real-estate market .....	56
2.3.6. The real-estate market crisis in the specialised literature .....	60
2.3.6. A. The crisis in the real-estate market –analysis of the Web of Science database....	60
2.3.6. A.1. Systematic research planning.....	60
2.3.6.A.2. Centralization of the data .....	61
2.3.6. A.3. Interpretation of the data- thematic and content analysis .....	64
2.3.6. B. The real-estate market crisis – analysis of scientific resources of Liège University library database.....	65
2.3.7. Trends in the real-estate market at the national level .....	67
2.3.7. A. Statistical data and official reports analysis .....	67
2.3.7.B.Literature scientific resources analysis .....	69
<b>CHAPTER 3. ....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>IMPACT OF INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REAL ESTATE SECTOR .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>3.1. ESTABLISHING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INNOVATION, CREATIVITY AND COMPETITION LEVELS .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>3.2. THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND DIGITALIZATION ON CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS AND ON SECTOR COMPETITIVENESS .....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>3.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REAL ESTATE SECTOR .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>3.3.1. The impact of customer-centric innovation and customized offerings on competitiveness .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>3.3.2. The impact of innovative culture on the competitiveness and investment decision of customers.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>3.4. THE IMPACT OF INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE TERTIARY SECTOR.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4. ....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>4.1 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN .....</b>	<b>90</b>

<b>4.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>4.3. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE THESIS .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>4.4. COLLECTION AND PROCESSING OF QUALITATIVE DATA.....</b>	<b>100</b>
4.4.1. The design of qualitative data collection tools .....	100
4.4.2. Defining the sample of participants .....	102
4.4.3. Centralizing and processing the data .....	103
<b>4.5. COLLECTION AND PROCESSING OF QUANTITATIVE DATA.....</b>	<b>104</b>
4.5.1. The design of quantitative data collection tools.....	104
4.5.2. Defining the sample of participants .....	106
4.5.3. Defining the research variables .....	107
<b>CHAPTER 5. ....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>QUALITATIVE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES OF REAL ESTATE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN RELATION TO MARKET CHANGES .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>5.1. REAL-ESTATE SERVICE PROVIDERS ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>5.2. INVESTIGATION OF “OTHER RELEVANT PERSPECTIVES” FOR THE REAL- ESTATE SECTOR .....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6. ....</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>QUANTITATIVE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS ON THE NEEDS, ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFICIARIES OF REAL ESTATE SERVICES .....</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>6.1. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE SAMPLE .....</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>6.2. INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF DATA .....</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>6.3 GENERAL ASPECTS CONCERNING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR.....</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>6.4.DESRIPTIVE STATISTICS RESULTS .....</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>6.5.INFERENTIAL STATISTICS RESULTS.....</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7 .....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>CONDUCTING A TRANSVERSAL ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>7.1. INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THE TRIANGULATION ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>7.2. CORRELATION OF RESULTS WITH A PARALLEL STUDY.....</b>	<b>180</b>

<b>7.3. CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF IMBALANCES IN THE REAL ESTATE MARKET - THE "PROBLEM TREE" STRUCTURE .....</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>7.4. ANALYSIS OF MARKET COMPETITIVENESS FOLLOWING THE "5 FORCES MODEL" DEVELOPED BY M. PORTER .....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>7.5. PORTRAIT OF THE CUSTOMER FROM THE LOW-MEDIUM RESIDENTIAL MARKET IN THE BUCHAREST-ILFOV AREA.....</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>7.6. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT FOR RELAUNCHING COMPETITIVENESS.....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>236</b>

## **KEYWORDS**

Innovation, creativity, competition, tertiary sector, real-estate sector, Bucharest-Ilfov region.

## **ABSTRACT**

The present doctoral thesis explores innovation and creativity as main catalysts for growth in the context of today's economic services markets. More specifically, the research aims to analyse how these external factors can influence the competitive level of the tertiary sector. Using the tertiary real estate services sector in the region of Bucharest-Ilfov, Romania, as an analysis area, the thesis is built on the basis of a series of objectives, as follows: establishing the current situation of the residential services industry in terms of competitiveness and identifying the main challenges facing the real estate residential market, addressing multiple perspectives in the real estate industry (triangulation method), measuring the impact of innovative practices and creative strategies on the competitiveness of service providers, identifying the factors that led to instability among the service providers and implicitly within the targeted tertiary sector, identifying market needs, exploring the perspective of the beneficiaries of real estate products, conducting a critical analysis based on the comparison and contrast of three dominant perspectives in the real estate market, developing a strategy that highlights the key elements and strategies needed to resume competitiveness in the proposed industry.

The methodology addressed in this thesis is based first on an extensive literature analysis, through the critical exploration of the scientific resources found in internationally recognized databases. This practice led to the formulation of a relevant conceptual framework, which is the basis of the research thesis, built on two relevant scientific theories: Dynamic Capabilities Theory and Value Perception Theory.

Further, the thesis brings authenticity to the research by correlating and contrasting three perspectives relevant to the proposed problem, thus obtaining what we call the triangulation method. Thus, the above mentioned objectives are achieved by covering the perspective of service providers, namely real estate intermediaries and real estate developers operating in the proposed area. The second perspective is composed of the current or potential beneficiaries of the real estate service, namely the occupied population in the Bucharest-Ilfov area. Last but not least, the third perspective was included due to its increased objectivity towards the approached problem, being thus composed of architects, construction engineers, real estate marketing specialists. Thus, the thesis manages to outline a complex approach on how the real estate market is developing, but especially on the impact that innovative factors such as innovative strategies, innovation through technology, digitalisation or even sustainability can have upon the economic recovery within the proposed sector.

The data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. The results of the interviews conducted with both service providers and the third category (referred to as „other relevant perspectives” thesis) manage to generate a complex analysis, providing important information from the actors directly involved in the development and trading of buildings, as well as from a group of participants bringing objective nuances, from outside this framework. Comparing and contrasting the two perspectives has led to a series of similarities such as barriers in the field in times of crisis, namely doubts about technology, as well as building trends in customer preferences. However, the engagement of the opinions of architects and marketing specialists revealed imbalances in the demand-supply relationship, namely at the level of trust and good relationship between the seller and the customer. Despite this, both participating groups underline the priority given to the client as being paramount in terms of maintaining competitiveness and market position, followed by the need for innovation, both at strategic level, as well as technologically and sustainably.

Detailed exploration of the expectations and perceptions of beneficiaries in the real estate sector was possible through the collection of quantitative data using the questionnaire method. Using a sample of 387 participants, the thesis outlined six hypotheses, most of which

were confirmed or partially confirmed. In other words, the statistical results support the assumptions made regarding the impact of innovative strategies, innovative technologies, creativity, and sustainability on the level of competition and customer behaviour in the residential sector. It is interesting to note that, from the cumulation of measured factors, the emotional component, composed of inter-human interaction and the experience of the service itself, occupies the first place in the decision-making process of the client, thus outperforming factors such as technology and sustainability.

Finally, based on the collected information, the research thesis manages to formulate a series of contributions that bring originality to the work, such as: customer portrayal in the targeted market, a cause-and-effect analysis using the „Problem Tree” structure, the analysis of the competitive level using the „Model of the 5 forces” formulated by Michael Porter, but also the development of possible effective strategies for relaunching competitiveness in the chosen sector.

Throughout the doctoral studies, my active academic contribution can be also noticed through to the participation to numerous national and international scientific conferences, but also by looking at the publications of research articles in reputable journals. Of these, two articles appear in the Web of Science database. I also wanted to deepen and further expand my academic knowledge, undertaking a research internship in Belgium at the University of Liège.