ACADEMIA DE STUDII ECONOMICE DIN BUCUREȘTI

Școala doctorală Administrarea Afacerilor I

TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT

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Titlul tezei de doctorat:

STRATEGII DE CREȘTERE A COMPETITIVITĂȚII ÎN SECTORUL TERȚIAR

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București, 2026

SUMMARY

The thesis *"Strategies for Increasing Competitiveness in the Tertiary Sector"* highlights the essential role of Competitive Intelligence (CI) as a strategic resource for business performance in a context marked by economic volatility and technological progress. The work defines CI both as an operational process and as a strategic tool, tracing its evolution from traditional methods to AI- and big data–driven platforms.

The doctoral dissertation investigates the role of Competitive Intelligence as a key strategic instrument for strengthening the competitiveness of companies in the tertiary sector, with a focus on the particularities of the Romanian business environment. Its main objective is to assess the real and perceived impact of CI on organizational performance and to propose a model for integrating it into the strategies of large companies, in order to support managerial decision-making and ensure sustainable development.

The current economic context, shaped by globalization, accelerated digitalization, and strong competitive pressures, has turned the tertiary sector into a driving force of the global economy. In Romania, the formalized application of CI is still in an early stage, but trends show a growing interest in professionalizing this field, especially in telecommunications, IT, financial services, and retail. Within this framework, the thesis underlines how CI can become a catalyst for organizational performance and adaptability.

The research methodology combined literature review with qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire addressed to a sample of 21 large companies in the tertiary sector, selected for their relevance and market position. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and hypothesis testing via simple regression, supplemented by a netnographic analysis of discourses on Competitive Intelligence. This mixed approach captured both organizational leaders' perceptions and the actual degree of CI implementation.

The empirical findings show that while most respondents are familiar with the concept of CI, only some companies have formalized strategies in this area. CI is perceived as playing a significant role in competitor analysis, product development, risk management, and strategic decision-making. At the same time, there is growing interest in future investments in dedicated CI departments, though companies face barriers such as lack of specialists, limited financial resources, and integration difficulties within existing structures. Statistical analysis confirmed a positive correlation between the use of CI and organizational performance, showing that companies adopting CI tools and practices are better able to adapt, innovate faster, and respond more effectively to environmental changes. Netnography also revealed that online discourse on CI is

increasing, yet still marked by conceptual confusion and the absence of a strong data-driven organizational culture.

The conclusions confirm that Competitive Intelligence acts as a catalyst for organizational performance and competitiveness. By integrating CI, companies transform scattered data into strategic knowledge, become more agile and innovative, and strengthen their resilience. However, in Romania, the level of application remains limited, pointing to significant potential for development through the adoption of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, or the Internet of Things.

The original contributions of the thesis include clarifying the concept of CI and distinguishing it from Business Intelligence and Knowledge Management, analyzing the Romanian specific context and the gap compared to Western practices, correlating CI with multidimensional organizational performance, and proposing a model of a CI department adapted to tertiary sector companies. This model encompasses strategic objectives, organizational structure, technological tools, and ethical guidelines, providing a practical framework for institutionalizing this function.

Therefore, the thesis demonstrates that Competitive Intelligence can no longer be considered an optional tool, but a strategic necessity for companies seeking to remain competitive in an unstable, globalized environment. It proves to be a vector of innovation, agility, and organizational adaptability, bridging the gap between theory and practice and contributing to the consolidation of sustainable performance in the Romanian tertiary sector.