

ABSTRACT

INNOVATION ACTIVITY OF ENTERPRISES AND THEIR COMPETITIVE POSITION – DETERMINANTS AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS

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Innovativeness and competitiveness of enterprises constitute complementary categories whose mutual relations and interdependencies are fundamental in the process of building sustainable competitive advantage. Innovativeness, conceived as an enterprise's ability and readiness to create and implement new solutions, is recognized as one of the key factors determining the competitive position of economic entities. Understanding the mechanisms that link these two categories is of considerable significance from both theoretical and practical perspectives, as it enables the identification of conditions that directly or indirectly shape the ability of enterprises to achieve and sustain competitive advantage within a dynamically evolving economic environment.

The aim of the thesis was to assess the relationship between the implementation of product and process innovations and the competitive position of the enterprises, with particular emphasis on the relations between innovations and economic outcomes, as well as the interdependencies between innovative activity and key internal and external determinants. The empirical study was conducted between March and October 2023 across the entire territory of Poland, covering all administrative regions of Poland (i.e., voivodeships). The research sample comprised all groups of enterprises classified by size – i.e. micro, small, medium and large – from the service and industrial sectors, which had implemented at least one innovation in one or several of the following research periods: 2014–2016, 2017–2019 and 2020–2023. The study employed the diagnostic survey method using a questionnaire technique based on the standardized set of questions. The empirical research was supplemented with an analysis of the literature and the findings

of previous empirical studies in the field of enterprise innovativeness and competitiveness.

In the research process, eight research hypotheses were tested. The propensity of enterprises to engage in innovative activity was analysed, methods for measuring innovation were presented, and its determinants were identified. The relationship between innovation barriers and innovation processes was examined, as well as the role of cooperation with business environment institutions in the process of implementing innovations. The propensity of entities to continue innovative activity in the future was also assessed.

The research findings indicate the existence of a relationship between enterprises' innovative activity and their competitive position, confirming the dependence between product and process innovations and the economic outcomes reflecting resultant competitiveness, expressed in particular through increased sales and profit margins in the case of product innovations, and reduced costs and increased sales in the case of innovations in business processes.

An assessment of innovation policy in Poland was carried out, taking into account its evolution, the support instruments applied, and the implementation of the assumptions of smart specialisation strategies. The available instruments supporting enterprises' innovative activity, including financial, regulatory, and institutional instruments, were analysed, and contemporary innovation trends were addressed as potential directions for further development. On this basis, recommendations were formulated for both economic practitioners and entities shaping innovation policy in Poland. The dissertation constitutes a new source of knowledge on the innovativeness of enterprises and its relationship with competitive position, enriching the existing scientific output with the results of original empirical research conducted on a representative group of Polish enterprises.

Keywords: innovation, product innovations, business process innovations, competitive position, enterprise competitiveness, enterprise innovativeness, innovation barriers, innovation policy