

COMPETITIVENESS, COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE ORGANIZATION: CONCEPTS, FACTORS OF ENSURING COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

Competitiveness is not an abstract concept, but a set of interrelated factors that provide an organization with a certain advantage over other market participants. The key element here is competitive advantages – unique characteristics of an enterprise or its products that allow it to occupy a more advantageous position in the market and receive higher profits. Competitiveness is a direct characteristic of a business entity and is achieved through the possession of competitive advantages. In essence, competitive advantage and competitiveness are two interrelated concepts. They have common features: competitive advantages are a factor condition of competition, and competitiveness is the degree of success in the competitive struggle.

Improving competitiveness is a strategic goal of an enterprise, and competitive advantages are the tools and resources that allow achieving this goal and ensuring sustainable development in the conditions of fierce market competition.

The article considers approaches to defining the essence of the concept of "competitiveness of an organization": resource, which is based on the study of production factors to improve competitiveness; managerial, the authors of which paid special attention to effective government policy; investment, considering the direction of investment resources in scientific, technical and human capital; innovation, which is based on determining the influence of such a factor as innovation; combined, combining theories of several approaches. The relationship between the concepts of "comparative advantages", "competitive advantages" and "competitiveness" is analyzed. A classification of factors ensuring competitiveness according to various characteristics is given: basic and developed, general and specialized, natural and created; external and internal factors; depending on the intended purpose of the created labor product; success factors and others.

Keywords: competitiveness, approach, theory, competitive advantages, factors, organization.

КОНКУРЕНТОСПОСОБНОСТЬ, КОНКУРЕНТНЫЕ ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ: ПОНЯТИЯ, ФАКТОРЫ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЯ КОНКУРЕНТОСПОСОБНОСТИ

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Реферат

Конкурентоспособность не является абстрактным понятием, а представляет собой комплекс взаимосвязанных факторов, которые обеспечивают организации определённое превосходство над другими участниками рынка. Ключевым элементом здесь выступают конкурентные преимущества – уникальные характеристики предприятия или его продукции, позволяющие ему занимать более выгодную позицию на рынке и получать более высокую прибыль. Конкурентоспособность выступает непосредственной характеристикой субъекта хозяйствования и достигается за счет обладания конкурентными преимуществами. По своей сути, конкурентное преимущество и конкурентоспособность являются двумя взаимосвязанными понятиями. Они имеют общие признаки: конкурентные преимущества представляют собой факторное условие конкуренции, а конкурентоспособность – степень достижения успеха в конкурентной борьбе.

Повышение конкурентоспособности является стратегической целью предприятия, а конкурентные преимущества – это инструменты и ресурсы, позволяющие достичь этой цели и обеспечить устойчивое развитие в условиях жесткой рыночной конкуренции.

В статье рассмотрены подходы к определению сущности понятия «конкурентоспособность организации»: ресурсный, основой которого является исследование факторов производства для повышения конкурентоспособности; управленческий, авторы которого особое внимание уделили эффективной правительственной политике; инвестиционный, рассматривающий направление инвестиционных ресурсов в научно-технический и человеческий капитал; инновационный, который основывается на определении влияния такого фактора, как инновации; комбинированный, сочетающий в себе теории нескольких подходов. Проанализировано соотношение понятий «сравнительные преимущества», «конкурентные преимущества» и «конкурентоспособность». Приведена классификация факторов обеспечения конкурентоспособности по различным признакам: основные и развитые, общие и специализированные, естественные и созданные; внешние и внутренние факторы; в зависимости от целевого назначения создаваемого продукта труда; факторы успеха и другие.

Ключевые слова: конкурентоспособность, подход, теория, конкурентные преимущества, факторы, организация.

Introduction

Competitiveness is a complex indicator showing the combined expression of many factors – from the sustainability of the national economy to the ability to plan and manage the business process of production within the enterprise. In the modern economy, the category of "competition" reflects the essence of the laws of market relations, but its modern understanding has other aspects: organization, interdisciplinary, complexity, multi-level, interconnectedness, etc. In general, competition manifests itself only in the process of competition and market relations and is characterized by the competitive advantages of the object under study, i. e. the level of satisfaction of customer needs in comparison with similar products on the market. Based on the satisfaction of personal and social

needs in conditions of limited resources, the competitiveness of an enterprise allows it to make a profit and develop. The competitiveness of an enterprise is determined by the presence of competitive advantages in comparison with other business entities, i. e. superiority of competitiveness in the field of efficiency of activities, management, quality of goods and services, competence and professionalism of personnel. If increasing competitiveness is the goal, then competitive advantages are the means to achieve the goal. Practice, first of all, focuses on ensuring competitive advantages of enterprises and goods.

A significant number of scientific, theoretical and applied works are devoted to the study of the problems of analysis and management of competitiveness of enterprises. Such authors as N. I. Berezov,

M. Sh. Gabibov, A. S. Golovachev, I. M. Lifits, N. V. Nemogay, R. A. Fatkhutdinov and others made a significant contribution to the formation of theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis and management of competitiveness of enterprises.

Methodological issues of assessing and managing the competitiveness of enterprises are studied in the works of scientists E. A. Andreeva, I. I. Butsenko, O. A. Dumchina, M. I. Tertyshnik and others.

Despite the large number of scientific works devoted to the problems of ensuring the increase of the competitiveness of an organization, the following issues remain insufficiently studied in the scientific and practical literature: management of competitiveness and competitive advantages, problems of analyzing the competitiveness of business entities, the use of digital technologies in ensuring the increase of the competitiveness of enterprises, etc.

Analysis of approaches to defining the essence of the concept of “competitiveness of an organization”

In economic literature, there are different approaches to interpreting the concept of "competitiveness of an organization". This category remains multifaceted and does not have a universal definition. Studying the essence of competitiveness allows us to determine its role and place in competitive relations. The concept of "competitiveness" is embedded in a number of economic theories, which are classified in economic literature in terms of five approaches (Table 1) [1, 2, 3, 4, 5].

Table 1 – Basic approaches to defining the concept of “competitiveness”

Approach	Theories
Resource	A. Smith's theory of absolute advantage (1776); D. Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage (1817); E. Heckscher and B. Ohlin's theory of the relationship between production factors (1918–1933); P. Samuelson's theory of price equalization for production factors (1948)
Management	The national economy system of F. List (1841); The growth pole theory of F. Perroux (1950); The “balanced scorecard” model of R. Kaplan and D. Norton (1992)
Investment	The theory of "new growth" by P. Romer and "human capital" by R. Lucas; The eclectic OLI paradigm of J. Dunning (1981–1993)
Innovation	Theory of economic development by J. Schumpeter (1912); Theory of economic growth factors by J. Kendrick, E. Denison, R. Solow (1957–1969); The concept of intellectual leadership by G. Hamel and K. Prahalad (1994); Theory of ecosystems and coevolution by J. Moore (1996); Theory of complementary factors by R. M. Kanter; Blue ocean theory by K. Chan (2007).
Combined	Mercantilist theories (15th–18th centuries); German historical school – W. Roscher, B. Hildebrand, K. Knies, G. Schmoller, J. Brentano (1852); Theory of industrial regions (specialized production) A. Marshall (1890); Theory of national competitive advantages M. Porter (1990); Model of the art of dominance and creation of competitive advantages M. Tracy, F. Wiersema (1995); Theory of co-competition A. M. Brandenburger and B. J. Nalebuff; Concept of sustainable development (2002)

I. I. Butsenko in his work “Competitive Advantages: Theoretical Aspects” [6] writes that “representatives of the resource-based approach (A. Smith, D. Ricardo, E. Heckscher and B. Ohlin, P. Samuelson) focused on the fact that the basis for forming a company’s competitiveness is the

study of production factors. Factors that contribute to increasing the competitiveness of countries are their competitive advantages. Representatives of the management approach (F. List, F. Perroux, R. Kaplan, D. Norton) paid special attention to the analysis of additional influencing factors, namely, effective government policy and the influence of government regulation” [6].

The basic assertion of the investment approach (P. Romer, R. Lucas, J. Dunning) “is a fundamentally new hypothesis of economic growth, within the framework of which scientific and technological progress was considered as an endogenous factor. The main factor of both economic growth and the formation of competitive advantages is the direction of investment resources into scientific, technical and human capital. Theories have proven that a country that has so-called "ownership advantages" attracts foreign investment, and "location advantages" and "internationalization advantages" create favorable conditions for national investors abroad” [6].

The main provisions of the innovation approach – not everything in the formation of the competitiveness of economic entities and nations can be explained by the productivity of production factors. The study of growth factors is based on the definition of a significant influence of such a factor as innovation. Representatives of this approach (J. Schumpeter, J. Moore, R. M. Kanter, K. Chan and others) believed that at the "microeconomic level, innovations can ensure the growth of production profitability, and within the boundaries of the national economy – stimulate the transition of the economic system to a new equilibrium position, thereby ensuring its development. Particular attention is paid to the emergence of a new component of the competitive position – intellectual competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is considered as a derivative of human thinking: those who are unable to change their paradigm and do not become bearers of the newest will not be able to win in the future competitive struggle” [7].

In general, scientists consider competitiveness from the point of view of the formation of sources, determination of its qualitative and quantitative characteristics and proposals for the formation and maintenance of competitive advantages. Each author brings his own perspective depending on the objectives of the research.

V. N. Belkin notes that “the evolution of the concept of "company competitiveness" was initially considered from the point of view of cost savings. Since the mid-19th century, more attention has been paid to resource conservation. In the 20th – 21st centuries, knowledge and intellectual potential came to the fore” [2].

Based on the above approaches to the interpretation of the economic category of "competitiveness of an organization", we can conclude that there is no single approach to the interpretation of the concept. Depending on the angle from which the term "competitiveness" is considered, we can only highlight the key elements of analysis and the search for sources of their formation.

A. S. Golovachev interprets this concept as follows: "Competitiveness is a real value that a business entity has, and which ensures its superiority over competitors" [8].

Competitiveness has a hierarchy and can relate to:

- a product;
- a functional area of activity (research, production, management, marketing, etc.); – to the enterprise, industry, region, country’s economy, society as a whole.

The question of the relationship between comparative and competitive advantages and competitiveness remains open: from essential comparative advantages – through certain competitive advantages – to competitiveness criteria (Table 2).

Competitiveness in a market economy is a direct characteristic of an economic entity. As M. Sh. Gabibova notes, “competitive advantage and competitiveness are closely interconnected and complementary concepts, the essential symptoms of which are that competitive advantages are a factor condition of competition, and competitiveness is the level of success achieved in the competitive struggle” [9].

Accordingly, the essence of competitiveness is defined as “a set (unique combination) of differentiated real or potential factors capable of influencing the achievement of success in the competitive struggle, determining the competitive behavior of economic entities” [9].

Table 2 – The relationship between the concepts of “comparative advantages”, “competitive advantages” and “competitiveness”

Comparative advantages	Competitive advantages	Competitiveness
Abstract category, used to characterize the advantageous position of one market entity compared to another, which gives it the opportunity to win in the competitive struggle	The result of the existence of comparative advantages, a concept that corresponds to real market practice, is linked to real market opportunities (relative to costs or differentiation) and therefore takes on a concrete practical form	The form of realization of competitive advantages, the result of the search and use of new opportunities by a market entity
Essential concept	It represents a real manifestation of the essence, characterizes the conditions of market behavior	Expresses the result of the market behavior of the subject
To identify comparative advantages, relative characteristics of the efficiency of using production factors are used	It is expressed in specific indicators that can be taken into account and quantified (availability of a cheaper resource, economies of scale, the presence of a product of special quality), which indicates a certain source of a leading position	An empirical category that has certain quantitative indicators

There are many approaches to defining the essence of the term “competitiveness”, which has led to the emergence of various classifications. One of the classifications is given in the work of A. A. Sergeev “Strategic approach and methodology for managing the competitiveness of an organization” [10], the main criterion of which is “a basic agreement that determines the nature of the source of competitiveness:

1. Competitiveness based on innovation.
2. Competitiveness based on economic factors.
3. Competitiveness based on regulatory and legal acts exists by virtue of laws, regulations, special privileges and other decisions of government and management bodies.
4. Competitiveness of a structural nature.
5. Competitiveness caused by administrative measures.
6. Competitiveness determined by the level of development of the market infrastructure.
7. Technical (technological) competitive advantages.
8. Competitiveness determined by good information.
9. Competitiveness based on demographic factors.
10. Competitiveness based on geographic factors” [10].

Based on the results of examining the essence of the concept of “competitiveness of an organization”, we can conclude that it is a system-forming category that acts as a driving force for the development and formation of competitive relations. On the one hand, the state of competitiveness is achieved through the possession of a competitive advantage, which acts as a factor of competitiveness. On the other hand, a competitive advantage is an object of competition and can be achieved in a competitive struggle. In general, the economic nature of the category of “competitiveness of an organization” is expressed in the fact that it can simultaneously act as a means and a consequence of competitive struggle and arises where there is competition.

Factors ensuring competitiveness

M. Porter classifies factors of competitiveness into: “basic and developed, general and specialized, natural and created” [11].

Basic factors are natural resources, climatic conditions, geographical location of the company, labor force.

Developed factors are a modern infrastructure for information exchange, highly qualified personnel and research institutes, departments of universities engaged in high-tech areas.

General factors can be used in a wide range of industries, they, as a rule, provide competitive advantages of a limited nature, and are available to organizations in many countries. A competitive advantage based on a combination of basic and general factors is a lower-order advantage that is short-lived and unstable.

Specialized factors are factors used in one industry or in a limited number of industries, they form a long-term basis for ensuring the competitiveness of an organization.

Natural factors are related to lower-order factors.

Created factors are an accumulation process, i. e. Each generation inherits factors from the previous generation and creates its own, adding them to the previous ones.

When classifying factors ensuring competitiveness, external and internal factors are distinguished. External factors are considered in the light of state influence of both an economic nature and administrative measures. These actions “determine the formal rules for the activities of business entities in the national or global market” [12].

As V. V. Timofeev notes, “the most significant external factors ensuring the competitiveness of a company are:

- competitive environment and level of competition, degree of privatization of enterprises in the industry;
- competitiveness of the industry;
- characteristics of demand for the company's goods (services) (size and dynamics of demand, market requirements for price and quality of goods, elasticity of demand for price and income level);
- development and competitive advantages of those industries (enterprises) that provide the analyzed company with the necessary resources, materials and information tools;
- random events (technological breakthroughs, fluctuations in resource prices, significant changes in global financial markets, political decisions of their own and foreign governments);
- economic and organizational-administrative forms and methods of state regulation of the behavior of producers in the industry and buyers” [13].

Internal factors of ensuring the competitiveness of an organization are characterized by the potential capabilities of the company itself to ensure its own competitiveness. According to T. I. Marchenko, “this is the potential of marketing services, scientific and technical, production and technological, financial and economic, personnel, environmental; the level of design and technological preparation and development of production processes; the level of material and technical support, storage, packaging, transportation of goods; the effectiveness of production control, testing and inspection; the level of provision of commissioning and installation work; the level of technical, service and warranty service, the effectiveness of advertising” [14].

Factors of ensuring competitiveness can be classified depending on the intended purpose of the created product of labor. According to U. D. Namyslov, the competitiveness of enterprises producing consumer goods is “influenced by the following factors:

- commercial conditions (the ability of an enterprise to provide customers with consumer or commercial loans, discounts from the list price, the return of goods previously purchased from the enterprise that have used up their economic resources; concluding barter transactions));
- organization of a distribution network (location of a chain of stores and supermarkets in a place accessible to a wide range of customers, display of products in the company's showrooms and demonstration halls, as well as with trade intermediaries, at exhibitions and fairs; the effectiveness of advertising campaigns; influencing customers through public relations);
- organization of technical maintenance of products (increasing the volume of services provided and the terms of warranty repairs; reducing the cost of post-warranty service);
- providing consumers with information about the enterprise (facts confirming reputation, information about the range of products and ser-

vices, advertising of the trademark as a means of attracting the attention of buyers to the product);

– taking into account the impact of the market situation on the position of the enterprise" [15].

Success factors are indicators of competitive advantages, which, according to A. Strickland and A. Thompson, "include:

- product quality;
- reputation (image) of the organization;
- production capabilities;
- technological level;
- dealer network (distribution system);
- marketing and advertising;
- financial stability of the organization;
- relative cost position;
- customer service" [16].

According to M. Porter, the factors of a company's competitiveness "are the four main determinants of the diamond: company strategy; structure and competition; production factors; demand and the presence of competitive related or adjacent industries and enterprises" [17].

The factors of production that determine the competitiveness of organizations in the industry can be represented in the form of the following groups: labor resources; physical resources; knowledge resources; monetary resources; infrastructure.

The classification of factors of a company's competitiveness developed by R. A. Fatkhutdinov is of practical significance, "which includes the following groups: structural; resource; technical; managerial; economic and financial" [18].

The factors of an organization's competitiveness contribute to the transformation of its capabilities into reality. They determine the means and methods of using reserves to increase the company's competitiveness. But "the presence of the factors themselves is not sufficient to ensure competitive advantages. "Obtaining a competitive advantage based on factors depends on how effectively they are used and where, in what industry, they are applied" [19].

Thus, the main areas of ensuring competitiveness are: increasing the efficiency of innovative activities of organizations, ensuring resource potential and its effective use to achieve set goals, introducing new production technologies, ensuring energy and resource conservation, developing and implementing a strategy for finding and maintaining competitive advantages, which will allow the organization to create a certain superiority over its direct competitors [20, 21].

Conclusion

A study of scientific literature allows us to conclude that the competitiveness of an organization is a complex economic concept that does not have a single acceptable, comprehensive description that would satisfy all stakeholders. Each author, depending on the goals and objectives of the study, the nature of the object to which this concept relates, and the requirements of market participants, gives his or her own definition of the competitiveness of an organization. Competitiveness is considered: at the level of goods and enterprises – microcompetitiveness, at the level of individual industries – mesocompetitiveness, at the level of the national economy of the country – macrocompetitiveness. Moreover, there is a close external and internal dependence between the concepts of these three levels. The competitiveness of an organization is its ability to successfully confront competitors in the market and occupy a stable position, ensuring profitability and growth. It is not a static indicator, but is dynamically formed under the influence of many factors, including the efficient use of resources, the development and implementation of competitive advantages. Competitiveness is based on skillful management of all aspects of the organization's activities: efficient use of labor resources, financial resources, intellectual property, information; optimization of the use of material resources; increasing the level of technological equipment of production; implementation of automated systems for managing technological processes; reduction of the cost of production due to optimization of production and implementation of lean manufacturing tools, etc.

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