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Verification of the relationships between the elements of an integrated model of competitiveness of the company

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Abstract

The process of globalization of the economy that has been made in recent years, requires a new perspective on the development of enterprises and a more professional management of these entities. Therefore, the concept of competitiveness has become particularly important for companies and at the same time also quite popular among entrepreneurs, managers and business organizations. The paper presents a variety of approaches to the competitiveness of enterprises in the current state of art, an integrated model of competitiveness of the company, verification the relationships between the elements of an integrated model of competitiveness of the company using a sample of 992 enterprise from Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

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1. Introduction

The mutual relations between companies in a market economy, which are considered to be the normal condition, are the competition. The word "competition" means at the same time a condition that occurs when subjects compete. The biggest challenge, which managers running an enterprise must cope with in the global environment - in conditions of a "generalized uncertainty" (Kozłowski, 2004) - is the growing market competition, which implies the need to constantly improve own competitiveness.

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A large number of companies in the sector creates a variety of situations in which companies compete with one another. At the same time, enterprises are striving for the same pool of demand, and in fact the money held by the purchaser (Wilkinson, 2005). "Potential buyers are sovereigns, and their demand is the value of limited availability. The essence of competition consists precisely in lobbying for the availability of this demand, and then to maintain own (competitive) market position. (...) It is a continuous process. Those companies that have mastered the art of competing for customers remain on the market." (Strużycki, 2002).

In the current state of art, the view is present that "the competition means the contradictions, which are revealed between market players within the overlapping goals. These goals are commonly associated with a specific group of customers. (...) It is important for the competitive struggle that the achievement of the intended objective (usually an economic effect) happens at the expense of other rival (on the supply side) market entities." (Kramer, 2000). Other authors recognize that competition is "a rivalry or antagonism between two or a bigger number of more or less equal rivals." (Penc, 1999). However, narrowing the competition phenomenon only to companies which are in a way similar to one another seems inappropriate. Competition occurs also certainly in the case of companies with a large asymmetry in the existing resources, core competencies and market shares (Theoriot et al., 2009).

Competition is, therefore, a process in which market subjects, seeking to fulfill their interests, try to provide a more favorable offers from others in terms of price, quality or other characteristics affecting the decision to make the transaction. (Wattanapruittipaisan, 2002). It should be emphasized that the theory of competition in the market, was largely influenced by the theory of evolution. In the simplest model of the evolution the principle is that the one who is stronger survives. It applies to individuals of a given species, and points to the need to fight within the species for the chances of survival (Vromen, 2013).

Competition may exist in different types of economies. (Obłój and Sosnowski, 1998). In the case of a market economy it is a continuous activity, and as a result, the companies that master the art of competition better, are able to demonstrate the superiority of their products and services over the goods of other market subjects, and remain on the market. (D'Aveni, 1995). At the same time, competition between companies is a race for the position on the market. Firms compete by the means of the characteristics of competitiveness, but the real problem is to distinguish which are the key and which secondary features of competitiveness (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994).

Competition and competing can therefore be considered to be two inherent features of companies. In this process, the companies which select the key aspects of competing become more competitive than others and can succeed.

The purpose of this article is to verify the integrated model of competitiveness of the company, presented in previous publications of the authors (Flak and Głód, 2009; Flak and Głód, 2012), based on the research conducted in 2014, as a part of the Company Competitiveness Barometer – Barometer24. The study was conducted in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the period from 1 March to 30 October 2014.

The specific objectives of this article are as follow:

- to present a variety of approaches to the competitiveness of enterprises in the current state of art,
- to indicate different models illustrating the competitiveness of enterprises and their components,
- to present an integrated model of competitiveness of the company,
- to verify the relationships between the elements of an integrated model of competitiveness of the company,
- to compare the results of the verification with the results of other studies on the competitiveness of enterprises.

In the Company Competitiveness Barometer 2014 the questionnaire method was applied in 5 areas of company's competitiveness research. These areas are: competitive potential, competitive strategy, competitive advantage, competitive position and platform of competition (business environment). In addition, what is important in the case of empirical research by the means of a survey, knowledge of the components of these areas of the company's competitiveness is quite widespread among employees. Most of the research questions do not require detailed financial, personal or technical information. The questionnaire used in the Company Competitiveness Barometer 2014 had 45 questions. The questionnaire can be found on the website www.konkurencyjniprzetrwaja.pl.

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