

## THE CONCEPT OF FORMING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SMALL BUSINESS ENTITIES AND ITS ESSENCE

**Akhmedov Oybek Turgunpulatovich**  
*Namangan Engineering Construction Institute*

**Abstract:** *In this article, the concept of forming the competitiveness of small business entities and its essence and the concept of Competitiveness are discussed about such aspects as competitive advantage, price competition, strategic management and other historical and socio-cultural aspects, and Competitiveness is also an independent variable, an intermediate variable or a complete variable depending on the approach in research. considered as a dependent variable, consisting of different dissimilar factors depending on the field of activity, and the competitiveness of small and medium-sized hotels in the hotel sector compared to their competitors in terms of price, service quality, gross profit, planning and achieving business goals.*

**Key words:** *small business, product, firm, industry, competitiveness, small business entities, capital resources.*

The current development of the economy of our country directly depends on the activity of small business and private entrepreneurship operating in the territories of the republic, which, according to the data of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, accounted for 55.7% of the gross domestic product in 2020. If we take into account the fact that in 2020 this is being done by 411,200 small business entities operating in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the products produced by small business entities face a very strong competition not only among local production, but also with the products of other countries.

In recent years, competitiveness among enterprises has been a topic of interest among scholars, businesses, and government agencies. In this regard, Porter emphasizes the existence of four levels of competitiveness: product, firm, industry and nation, and considers competitiveness from the point of view of region and territory. Regarding the product, Goldberg et al. they emphasize<sup>1</sup>. In addition, it is appropriate to keep in mind corporate competitiveness in terms of price, service quality, gross profit, and ability to plan and achieve business goals relative to industry competitors.

Competitiveness for an industry refers to the ability to maintain or increase market share in terms of low cost or product characteristics compared to similar industries in different countries. There is also national competitiveness in practice, which is the competitiveness of a national economy to achieve and maintain high growth based on sustainable policies and institutions.

Small business entities differ in their organizational structure, capital capacity, labor, technology, environmental responsiveness, management style, and most importantly, the fashion in

<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, A., Cohen, G. and Fiegenbaum, A. (2003), "Reputation building: small business strategies for successful venture development", Journal of Small Business Management, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 168-186.



which they compete with other businesses<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, competitiveness studies that focus only on large corporations may not be directly applicable to small businesses<sup>3</sup>. The competitiveness of enterprises is seen as the ability to respond through the level of interaction, use of potential, implementation or financial strength through continuous improvement of service quality of customer satisfaction groups and shareholder value.

Research on factors influencing the competitiveness of small business entities, which play an important role in the country's economy, has increased significantly in recent years. As Robinson pointed out, the assessment of the competitiveness of small business entities should be considered in a broader interaction or in the context of constant changes in the business environment, and the ability to access capital sources and its internal capabilities should be taken into account. It is worth noting that internal resources play a more important role than external factors to achieve competitive advantage<sup>4</sup>.

Based on the scope of the topic, based on data reliability and experiences, this research is more based on Porter's theory of enterprise competitiveness and competitive advantage. Many studies have been conducted in terms of Porter's theory of competitiveness and competitive advantage to develop conceptual and empirical research on the competitiveness of enterprises. In developing his theory, Porter begins with the following points<sup>5</sup>:

- the nature of competition and the sources of competitive advantage vary greatly between sectors and even between the same industry segments, and this can affect the acquisition of competitive advantage within a certain sector of the industry of a given country;
- the globalization of competition and the emergence of multinational companies do not eliminate the effect of a specific country having a competitive advantage, but may offer different competitive advantages for the company, whether it is the country of origin or the host country.

In this regard, Schumpeter "competition has a dynamic character"<sup>6</sup>- states that. Innovation plays a leading role in this constant change and defines the companies that invest in order not to be excluded from the market. Based on these principles, Porter builds a system of determinants called "diamonds". Based on Porter's theories, it is possible to express the system of determinants that are the basis for gaining competitive advantages (Figure 1).

<sup>2</sup> Chawla, S.K., Pullig, C. and Alexander, F.D. (1997), "Critical success factors from an organizational life cycle perspective: perceptions of small business owners from different business environments", *Journal of Business Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 47-58.

<sup>3</sup> Man, T.W.Y., Lau, T. and Chan, K.F. (2002), "The competitiveness of small and medium enterprises A conceptualization with focus on entrepreneurial competencies", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 17 No. 2002, pp. 123-142.

<sup>4</sup> Zainudin R., Mahdzan A.N. and Leong, E. (2018), "Firm-specific internal determinants of profitability performance: an exploratory study of selected life insurance firms in Asia", *Journal of Asia Business Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 533-550.

<sup>5</sup> Porter M.E. (1990) - *The competitive advantage of the nations*, Ed. The Free Press, A Division of MacMillan Press Ltd., New York.

<sup>6</sup> Schumpeter, *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, supra note 17, at 83.

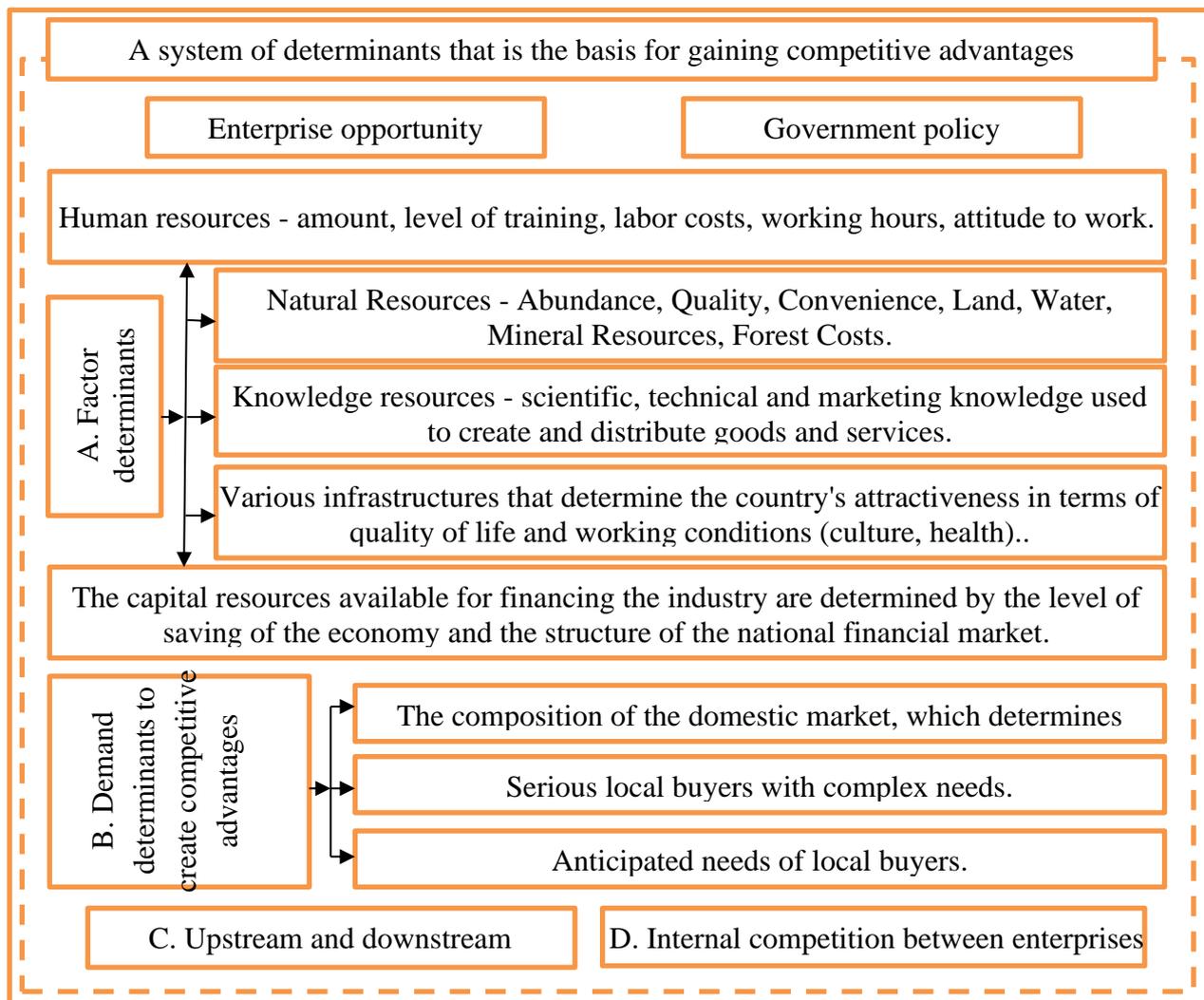


Figure 1. A mechanism for ensuring that small business entities have competitive advantages<sup>7</sup>

We explain the system of determinants that are the basis for having competitive advantages of small business entities presented in Figure 1 as follows. In the picture A) factor determinants - the country is provided with factors; B) demand determining factors - internal market characteristics; C) upstream and downstream networks; D) strategy and structure of small business entities and competition between them - internal competition; These four factors are significantly influenced by two other opportunity and government policy factors. All these determinants are interconnected. According to Porter, countries "where the national diamond is most profitable" are succeeding<sup>8</sup>. As

<sup>7</sup> Author development

<sup>8</sup> Porter M.E. (1990) - The competitive advantage of the nations, Ed. The Free Press, A Division of MacMillan Press Ltd., New York.

complex and dynamic as a country's economic environment is, some businesses fail if they fail to adequately capitalize on the demands of this environment.

A. Factor determinants represent the starting point necessary for entry into competition. Classical economic theory defines labor, land and capital as factors of production. Porter's theory shows that even the availability of factors is undoubtedly important, and an important element of a country's competitiveness is the creation of new factors and the improvement of existing ones. Competitive advantage must be created, not inherited. Generally, it is appropriate to divide production factors into the following categories:

- 1) human resources - amount, level of training, labor costs, working hours, attitude to work;
- 2) natural resources - abundance, quality, amenity, land, water, mineral resources, forest costs;
- 3) knowledge resources - provision of scientific, technical and marketing knowledge used for the creation and distribution of goods and services. This knowledge resides in universities, research institutes, information systems, data banks, commercial associations, etc.;
- 4) capital resources - the level and value of capital available to finance industry, determined by the economy's level of savings and the structure of the national financial market, capital markets differ from country to country even though we are participating in the processes of globalization;
- 5) infrastructure - includes not only transport systems, postal, communication, payment systems and systems used for money transfer, but also various infrastructure elements that determine the attractiveness of the country in terms of quality of life and working conditions (culture, health).

Taking into account the current conditions in which the mobility of production factors is constantly increasing, direct access to them is not so important, especially in increasing the economic and financial efficiency in their distribution and use. In this regard, there are two categories of production factors:

- a) primary factors: include natural resources, climate, geographic location, skilled or unskilled labor, and occur in varying proportions in all countries;
- b) advanced factors include: modern informatics infrastructure, highly skilled workforce, competitive research institutes, and most of these factors are created by significant investments in time. Currently, these factors are also the most important for achieving competitive advantage. But it is often necessary to pay attention to the fact that advanced factors are based on basic factors. As another classification of production factors, factors are divided into the following according to their characteristics:

- generalized factors (transportation and communication system, banking system, educated and motivated labor) can be applied in many industries existing in many countries;
- specialized factors located in a limited number of economic sectors (highly skilled workforce, special infrastructure). Their creation implies large investments with a high level of risk, starting from the presence of generalized factors. They are rare but essential for creating and maintaining various forms of competitive advantage.

B. Demand determinants play an important role in creating competitive advantages. They influence the acquisition of competitive advantage by mixing internal demand. If domestic demand is so strong, countries gain a competitive advantage if they force companies to innovate faster than foreign competitors in order to stay in the market. It is possible to distinguish three characteristics of internal demand that influence the acquisition of a competitive advantage:

- composition of the domestic market, which determines the level of product quality;



- serious local buyers with complex needs;

- expected needs of local buyers. A large country with a large domestic market encourages development and can invest to produce goods on a large scale, while a small country with a shrinking domestic market has the only option to go international to achieve economies of scale. A domestic market can develop competitive advantages by internationalizing domestic demand and bringing national products to the international market. When customers include foreigners, whether they are occasional customers (tourists or businessmen) or regular customers, their needs are severe, which forces national enterprises to improve their products. The bottom line is that the domestic market can determine a competitive advantage based on its own characteristics. But its effect depends on other determinants of "diamond".

C. Upstream and downstream industries, if they have a strong position in the international market, are another crucial factor in achieving competitive advantage. A country can be competitive if it has more concentrated and specialized horizontal and vertical industries, which can bring more information, innovation, but the determinants of demand are the growth of international productivity among economic sectors and the resulting competitive advantage among other determinants of the "diamond" determinants. depends.

D. The strategy and structure of small business entities, the competition between them is the fourth decisive factor of the diamond determinant, they affect the international competitiveness of the country with the organization and management of the company, the proposed goals and the applied strategies. Of course, there are differences between countries in the level of education, goals, work style and approaches of managers. The goals and strategies depend on the ownership structure, the motivation of the owners and the incentives of the managers. It is important to coordinate the goals of small business owners with the goals of shareholders and managers for competitive advantage.

In order to gain and maintain competitive advantages, individual motivation of employees is important in improving professional training. Achieving and maintaining competitive advantages is closely related to the presence of real and strong competition in the domestic market, which encourages small business entities to open new markets to promote new products and stimulate growth. Domestic competition is at least as important as international competition because the presence of many competing companies is favorable because domestic companies are as strong as foreign competitors.

The adoption of certain regulations by the government that encourage the establishment of new enterprises determines the growth of competition and thus helps to maintain a competitive advantage. As mentioned above, these four determinants of a diamond evolve closely with two other factors: opportunity and government policy. "Opportunity" - Porter states that most industries with a competitive advantage have been of great importance in the evolution of wars, major changes in the international financial market, and changes in the costs of factors of production..

Government policy can influence the acquisition of competitive advantage as it is the most important determinant. This is due to the fact that the government can influence the local market through subsidies, investments in education, regulation of the domestic market, creation of competitive infrastructure to reduce the costs of input to factors. The state is also an important buyer for some sectors such as the defense industry, aeronautics, and telecommunications. It is important to approach the system of competitive conditions with consistent action of the state in order to create or improve national competitive advantages..

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Experiments show that small business entities that have only a functional "diamond" and some elements are positively reinforcing each other have national competitive advantages in the long term, and in turn help to achieve competitiveness at the international level. It should be noted that no country is competitive in all areas. This, in turn, means that it is impossible to achieve competitiveness among enterprises in all areas. Only the small business entities that first overcome through strong internal struggle can create competitiveness at the international level.

National economies go through several stages of development, which reflect both the sources of a country's advantage in international competition and the nature and size of successful industries. Based on the above-mentioned considerations, four stages of the development of competitive advantages in the evolution of the economy can be given.:

- stage of preferences based on factor supply;
- stage of benefits based on investments;
- stage of advantages based on innovation;
- stage of national wealth-based preferences. In the first stage, advantages based on factor supply, industries with international success believe that their advantages depend almost exclusively on the main factors of production. At this stage, the country's economy is highly sensitive to global economic cycles and changes in exchange rates that determine demand and relative prices.

In the next phase of investment-led growth, national competitive advantage is based on the willingness and ability of the country and its enterprises to invest in large-scale directions. In the third stage of innovation-based growth, a country's competitive advantages come not only from adapting and improving new technologies and methods of production, but also from creating new ones..

These stages of competitive economic growth involve continuous improvement of competitive advantages and are associated with continuous growth of economic prosperity. In contrast to these stages, the stage of economic growth based on national wealth is the stage that eventually leads to recession. The wealth-based economy of the past is unsustainable, as the motivations of investors, managers, and individuals divert sustainable investment and innovation. The goals are social goals that take precedence over others, including those that support economic development. In this regard, Fota Constantin notes that "as a rule, countries go through these stages one by one, but it is not excluded that some stages are suppressed or extended more".

Gaining a competitive advantage equally presupposes the risk of losing it. Porter argues that national advantage will be lost if the "national diamond" does not stimulate innovation and investment in the direction the market is developing, and if the industry does not correctly perceive the demand. Studies show that some changes that occur at the national level lead to a loss of competitive advantage. Including:

- unexpected damage of factor determinants and domestic needs not matching the world demand;
- absence of wider and more complex needs of domestic buyers compared to foreign buyers;
- the presence of disadvantages such as lack of human capital and inefficient or non-existent infrastructure in relation to technological changes or specific factors or supporting industries;
- the investment rate is limited and enterprises lose their flexibility in achieving the set goals;
- high concentration in the domestic market, reduction of competition as a result of state intervention to protect non-competitive competitors;

- the deterioration of the competitive environment and the emergence of unpredictable situations that fundamentally affect political and economic stability (in such cases, opportunities arise for other competitors). Like any other theory, even the theory of competitive advantage has its supporters and opponents. This, in turn, causes deficiencies in the theory of competitive advantage.

Critics of this theory cite the inadequate foundation of the concept of competitive advantage and the confusion between firms and nations. In this regard, it can be noted that the theory of competitive advantage appears in a moment, in which the model of comparative advantages does not correspond to economic reality and causes negative consequences for countries lagging behind in economic competition. Thus, if the classical theory is closely related to the availability of factors of production, many critics argue that the theory of comparative advantage is associated with the underdevelopment of many countries rich in natural resources..

However, research shows that the existence of factors of production in Porter's theory provides a basis for new industrial and trade policies. Competitive advantage allows enterprises and small business entities to find the best solutions to the problems that arise and, taking into account the current conditions of regionalization and globalization, to succeed in the path of economic development and wealth..

It should be noted that the concept of competitiveness was developed at three levels: enterprise, industry and country, and it is the basis for the development of many small business entities. It is appropriate to apply the theory of competitiveness and competitive advantage to study the factors that contribute to the competitiveness of enterprises. In this sense, in our opinion, it is appropriate to include the leadership factor in the above-mentioned Porter's "diamond" system of determinants, and the leadership factor is important in increasing the competitiveness of small business entities. Therefore, in the context of the Republic of Uzbekistan, it is necessary to conduct research in order to form a comprehensive opinion about the leadership factors affecting the competitiveness of small business entities. Leaders of small business entities play an important role in shaping business goals, strategies and decisions. In this regard, Clarke, Asree et al. have recognized that "Leadership skills are critical factors in business success."<sup>9</sup>

The process of leadership refers to the creation of social influence to ensure the voluntary participation of subordinates in the implementation of the organization's vision, goals and mission. Leadership is a combination of knowledge, skills, experience, behavior and attitudes to make organizations or businesses a cohesive body to ensure successful competition in the market. In the case of small businesses, leaders play an important role in mobilizing social resources to increase competitiveness and employee incomes, create jobs, and invest in business development..

However, most small business leaders, even those with higher education, do not have in-depth knowledge of economics, business management, business law, and other important areas. These limitations, Chawla et al., note "significantly affect the vision, goals, strategies, and ability of companies to cope with risks." It should be said that, due to their small size, small business entities are particularly vulnerable to unfavorable business environment and competition. In fact, it is possible

<sup>9</sup> Asree, S., Zain, M. and Razalli, M.R. (2010), "Influence of leadership competencies and organizational culture on responsiveness and performance of firms", International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 500-516.; Clarke, N. (2010), "Emotional intelligence and its relationship to transformational leadership and key project manager competences", Project Management Journal, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 5-20.

to cite small business entities that are suspended or bankrupt in our country every year (in particular, 10.6% of newly established enterprises in 2020 were liquidated enterprises).

In this regard, one of the main causal factors is the weakness of human resource management, especially the low leadership skills of the management team and managers, which makes it necessary to develop it. Inadequate attention to this aspect leads to difficulties in the development of small business. As the chief executive of the enterprise, the leader of small business entities must perform comprehensive and practical leadership activities. In addition, he should directly implement the production process and business operations, as well as take the lead in human resource management..

In order to effectively fulfill his role, it is desirable for a small business leader to have strong leadership skills, sufficient knowledge and skills, attitudes and qualities to effectively manage not only himself, but also the team and the entire organization. It serves to ensure the competitiveness of small business, to achieve the final goal, that is, to maintain and develop the position of the enterprise in the market, and to make it possible to obtain legitimate income for the interested parties and the leader himself..

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