

CONDITIONS FOR ENSURING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES MARKET

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Abstract: This article examines the importance of the competitiveness of higher education institutions in the educational services market, the features and conditions for the formation of competitiveness, the state of development of higher education institutions, and the development indicators of higher education institutions.

Keywords: higher education, educational services, competitiveness, innovation, corporate cooperation, indicators and principles.

The freedom and independent movement of economic entities as property owners and entrepreneurs is the economic basis of a competitive environment. Because each economic owner, having demonstrated his economic interest, acts in order to achieve this interest. The economic activity of an entrepreneur is aimed at this interest. Accordingly, competition clearly indicates that it consists of a clash of interests of freely operating and independent entities. One of the important conditions for the functioning of competition is the functioning of commodity-money relations in a system based on a certain level of developed market relations.

In the process of strategic planning for the development of the educational services market, the analysis of the competitive environment is divided into groups based on M. Porter's concept of competitive strategy:¹

The first group is the competitive forces of producers of similar products. This refers to the competition within the industry that arises when studying the market systems of universities specializing in providing education in a particular field.

The second group consists of suppliers of raw materials, semi-finished products, and materials. In the educational services market, this group includes educational tools and materials, technical and technological equipment of the institution, and professors and teachers.

The third group is the product buyers. These are, of course, students.

The fourth group will consist of entities that have the ability to produce similar products.

The fifth group consists of manufacturers of direct substitute products. In the educational services market, this higher education institution may prepare students for a completely different field, but it may also include an economics major. Of course, even if it is aimed at teaching the economics of that particular field, it will have the opportunity to attract potential applicants from higher education institutions focused on economics.

The activities of educational institutions do not allow us to consider the competitiveness of higher education institutions solely as an indicator of commercial efficiency. Such an approach weakens the social significance of education by encouraging the educational process to maximize profit and leads to the loss of the content of the criterion of increasing efficiency.

As a result, taking into account their specific requirements makes it possible to formulate an author's approach, namely, to consider the competitiveness of higher education institutions as an integration of resource potential that ensures competitive advantage in the process of interaction of its participants in the educational services market.

¹ Porter ME Competitive strategy. Free Press, New York 1980.

This approach reflects the integral nature of competitiveness, the source of which is the potential of an educational institution, and the basis for its formation is effective cooperation between participants in the educational services market.

Based on the above research, we have identified the potential of educational institutions as a means of effective use of resources, ensuring the competitiveness of higher education services in the domestic and foreign educational services market.

The potential of higher education institutions is determined in the following way:

1. Educational potential - the potential of higher education institutions at the national and international level.
2. Research potential - the ability of a higher education institution to conduct research activities at an international level and maintain leadership in certain areas.
3. Innovation potential - the formation of the university's ability to provide unique knowledge through the synthesis of educational and scientific activities .
4. Marketing capacity - the ability of a higher education institution to ensure the competitiveness of its educational services through marketing research ;
5. International potential – the ability of universities to occupy a favorable position in the world .
6. Investment potential - the ability of a higher education institution to develop its scientific, educational and technological base .
7. Management capacity – the ability of the management system of the HEI .
8. Commercial potential - the ability of a higher education institution to ensure commercial efficiency;
9. Financial capacity – the ability of a higher education institution to use financial resources rationally .

The assessment of potential competitors in the educational services market consists of the following stages: determining the ratio between supply and demand in the educational services market, identifying potential competitors in the higher education system, obtaining information about key competitors, and assessing their potential (Figure 1).

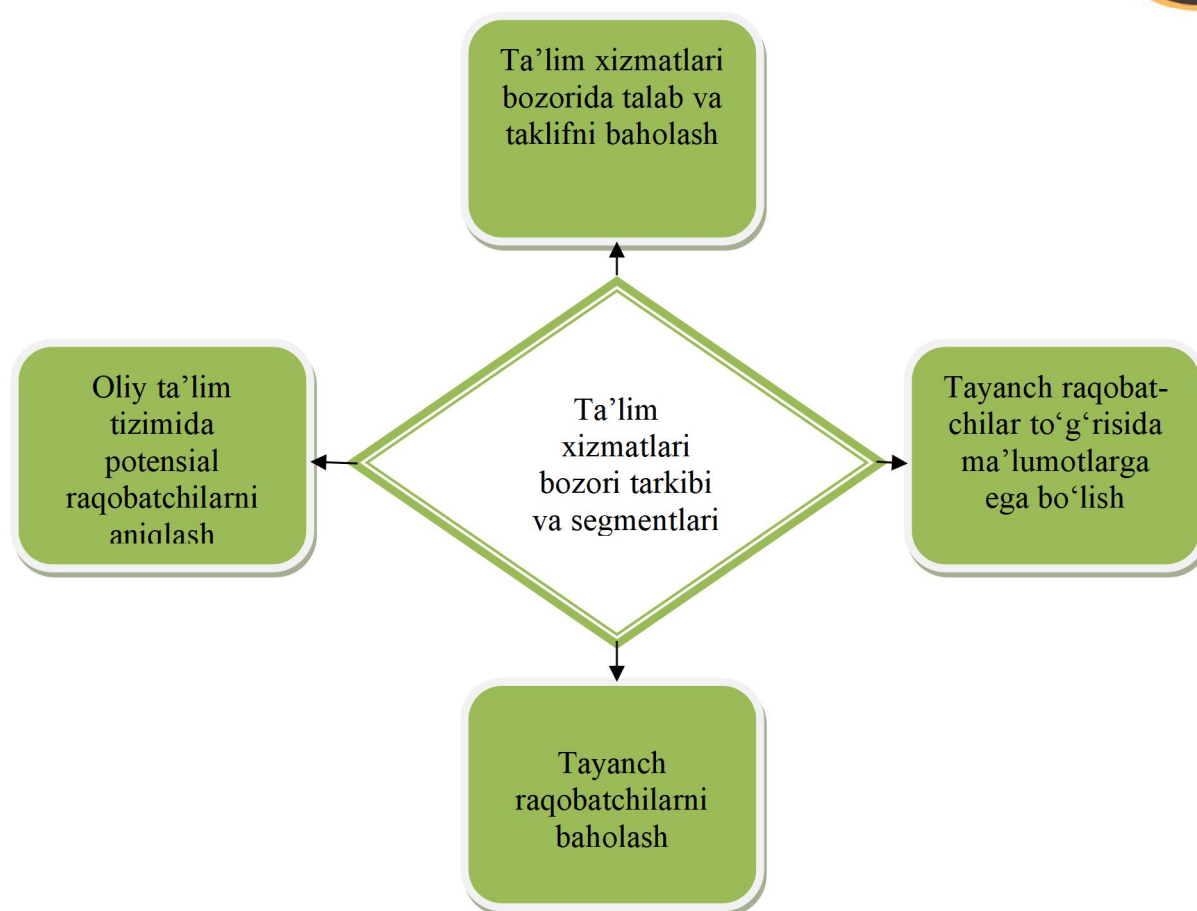


Figure 1. Assessment of potential competitors in the educational services market²

The competitiveness of an educational institution as a result of the integration of its capabilities, the concepts of competitiveness of educational services and competitiveness of an educational institution are different from each other. In our opinion, **the competitiveness of educational services** is the result of the realization of educational potential, and each type of potential of an educational institution serves as a source of the corresponding type of competitiveness and forms competitive advantages. At the same time, an educational institution can gain significant competitive advantages by increasing its potential.

We have developed an author's definition of the competitiveness category based on the specific characteristics of the functioning of higher education institutions: **The competitiveness of higher education institutions** is a multifaceted economic category consisting of a conflict of economic interests of subjects of the higher education services market, manifested through a certain type of potential aimed at increasing their position, and implying a struggle to achieve high social efficiency and greater profitability. It reflects the complex relationships that arise between subjects of the educational services market.

A comprehensive approach to assessing competitiveness implies the need to classify its types, systematically carried out attempts to do so according to various characteristics. At the same time, researchers often equate the types of competitiveness and competitive advantage, which, in our opinion, is not entirely correct from a methodological point of view. Thus, HMGumba and

²Developed by the author.

MIMamaev propose an approach to classifying the competitive advantages of business entities, the distinctive feature of which is a system of classification signs ³.

VDJarikov and PMTrofimov “consider the main factors of success and distinguish such groups as marketing, technological, production and management” ⁴.

MNIvannikov interprets this as the market and resource aspects of competitiveness formation as an original classification of important factors of success ⁵.

AS Golovachev formulates a classification of competitiveness according to various criteria: subjects and objects of management and economic results ⁶. The author tries to classify the dependence of various factors on competitiveness. The disadvantages of this point of view are that it analyzes only the factors of production.

Thus, the competitiveness of a higher education institution is divided into international (if the position of the organization in the relevant international ranking allows for such a conclusion), regional (if the institution has a place in the educational services market of its country), territorial (if competitive positions in the region are analyzed) and, accordingly, local (if the competitiveness of specific educational programs is assessed).

Classification of competitiveness by sales and sales object allows us to identify both "competitive service" and higher education institutions as a sales object, since in this case all educational services with their own unique characteristics are manifested.

The activities of educational institutions involve the use of all factors of production. Depending on the time factor, the competitiveness of an educational organization is dynamic, and classification by growth rate allows us to define it as synergistic.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the review of existing approaches to defining the concept of competition and competitiveness of higher education institutions shows that there is extensive discussion on the use of various criteria depending on the specific object of research. In general, it allowed us to formulate an author's definition of the category of competitiveness of higher education institutions, based on views on the nature of the competitiveness of organizations.

Our clarification of the essence of the category of university competitiveness implies a comprehensive approach to assessment, which determines its study in interaction with the external environment.

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