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THE METHOD OF DETERMINING THE RESOURCE COMPETITIVENESS

Introduction

Assets that are utilized by activities and processes of the organization are called resources. Resources can be created within the organization or can be obtained externally. Resources can be divided, in accordance to the role they play, into specific or non-specific, tangible or intangible. In the same time companies possess competences, which are characteristics that allow to compete with other organizations in the marketplace. Competences are strictly combined with resources. As companies operate on the marketplace, their position in the supply chain is crucial. It comprises a system of different activities, people, organizations, information, and resources together with competencies involved to get a product or service to a customer. So the right combination between resources/competences and position in the supply chain can lead to attaining competitive advantage. This is very important especially nowadays, when the situation has forced companies to apply new solutions in the field of work performance. We are dealing with hybrid enterprises, in which employees perform some of their activities remotely having constant contact with the company and its resources. Therefore, the aim of the article is to propose a method of determining the resource competitiveness basing on the assessment of organization's position in the supply chain and the assessment of the competitive potential based on resources/competencies.

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1. The idea of resources and competencies

Resources possessed by a firm are the primary determinants of its performance [Tokuda, 2005: 129]. Resources are defined as stocks of available factors that are owned or controlled by a firm [Amit, Schoemaker, 1993: 35], that enable it to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness [Barney, 1991: 101].

Company's resources include a set of all the elements that shape the market value and co-create its competitive position [Kosińska, 2008: 116]. The implementation of the assumed goals, existence and development require from an organization to collect and utilize the necessary resources, which include, among others, material resources (raw materials, machines, devices), financial resources (capital, income, profits), personal resources (employees and their qualifications), information resources (all kinds of data needed to make decisions) [Machaczka, 2001: 7]. Tangible resources coexist with intangible resources in the organization, because without intangible resources supporting material resources, every strategy and advantage of the company are temporary and uncertain [Obłój, 1996: 92]. Resource management is the comprehensive process of structuring the firm's resource portfolio, bundling the resources to build capabilities, and leveraging those capabilities with the purpose of creating and maintaining value for customers and owners [Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland, 2007: 273]. A resource-based approach to strategic management focuses on costly-to-copy attributes of the firm as sources of economic rents and, therefore, as the fundamental drivers of performance and competitive advantage [Conner, 1991: 121]. Resources and skills to constitute a strategic advantage of the organization [Lichtarski, 2001: 37–38], should be valuable, rare, non-imitating and have no substitutes [Peteraf, 1993: 182, 184].

In terms of the resource concept, the source of competitive advantage is a rare strategic resource and the unique ability to use it on the market [Romanowska, 2006: 91], and organizations that have been successful have achieved it because they have unique resources [Porter, 1991: 108], which prevent customers from turning to competitors to meet their needs [Combs, Ketchen Jr., 1999: 869].

Competitive advantage, whatever its source, ultimately can be attributed to the ownership of a valuable resources that enable the company to perform activities better or more cheaply than competitors [Collis, Montgomery, 1995: 120] that enable a firm to conceive of or implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness [Barney, 1991: 106] and that are the source of superior profitability [Bowman, Ambrosini, 2003: 291], because buyers are willing to purchase the resources' outputs at prices significantly above their costs [Combs, Ketchen Jr., 1999: 869].

Competency is the ability to maintain a coordinated deployment of resources in a way that helps the organization achieve its goals (creating and distributing

value to customers and owners) [Sanchez, Heene, 2004: 7]. Competences constitute a complex bundle of resources, processes and abilities [Bratnicki, 2000: 64]. The scope of resources affected by competences is wide, as it includes both tangible and intangible resources inside the organization or in its environment [Czakon, 2008: 135]. Competency building is the development of new competences required to compete in both the existing market undergoing changes and a new market [Stiglitz, 2004: 99]. Systematic work on the competences of the organization provides a strategic advantage, because they determine the specificity of the enterprise, they are difficult to imitate by competitors and are the result of the organization's learning – its development [Kossowska, Sołtysińska, 2002: 12].

Key competences include those resources and skills of the company which, due to their level and uniqueness, contribute to the implementation of products and processes that provide the company with a competitive advantage on the market [Trocki, 2001: 78].

2. The matrix of determining the resource competitiveness

In order to assess the competitiveness of resources, it is necessary to estimate the position of the organization in the value chain and assess the competitive potential.

For the assessment of organization's position in the supply chain one takes into account the position of the organization in relation to suppliers and customers. When determining the position in relation to suppliers and customers, the following possibilities and values assigned to them are taken into account [Konieczna, 2018: 78–79]:

- Lack or very weak bargaining power – 0
- Weak bargaining power – 0.25
- Average bargaining power – 0.5
- One of the key partners – 0.75
- Leader of the supply chain – 1

The following formula can be used to determine the organization's position in the supply chain [Konieczna, 2018: 79]:

$$K = M(k_s + k_c)$$

wherein:
K – position in the supply chain,
M – mean,
k_s – position in relation to suppliers,
k_c – position in relation to customers.

Similarly, one can assess the competitive potential based on resources/competences [Konieczna, 2017a: 76–77; Konieczna, 2017b: 17]. The following formula can be used for this:

$$CP = \frac{\sum_{p=1}^{n} p}{n \cdot m}$$

wherein:
CP – competitive potential,
p – average rating of the elements from particular areas taken into account,
n – number of areas,
m – maximum value of the scale, where the maximum value means the best situation in the assessment from the point of view of the organization.

The evaluation is made by using a three-point Likert scale, where 3 indicates the better state, 2 – the similar state, and 1 – the worse state of resources/competences in comparison to the competition.

The optimal use of resources/competences in the creation of competition instruments creates the competitive potential of the enterprise, which is the basis for gathering sources of competitive advantage. Having resources/competences, which are better or at least the same as those of the competition allows to achieve a competitive advantage and maintain it.

It seems that one should analyze 9 spheres of activity (areas), which comprehensively describe the resources/competences used in the organization. Among these resources/competences one finds those that in the higher range build and sustain the competitive advantage, however all of them are important because they shape the competitive advantage no matter if the range is wide or not. These include: R&D area, production area, quality management area, procurement logistics area, marketing area, finance area, employment area, organization and management area, and general resources area (Table 1).

Table 1. Resources/competences of the organization

R&D area
Having own R&D units
The amount of the budget for R&D activities
Modernity of technical equipment of R&D units
Knowledge of the staff involved in R&D activities
Cooperation with scientific and / or scientific-research institutions
The ability to create new products
The ability to create new technologies
The ability to predict changes in technique and technology
Degree of computerization of R&D works

Production area
Status of machinery
The flexibility of the machinery
Modernity of applied technologies
The extent of vertical integration of production activities
The level of automation and robotization of manufacturing processes
Development opportunities of production capacity
Knowledge and abilities of production managers
Technical culture of employees
The level of computerization of production processes
Quality management area
Owned quality assurance systems
Owned certificates of quality of products
The use of "philosophy" of total quality management (TQM)
Motivation systems used for high-quality performance
The use of systems of quality improvement of processes and products
Awareness of "pro-quality" of employees
The degree of involvement of top management in the implementation of a high quality assurance programs
Knowledge and abilities of personnel responsible for the improvement and control of the quality
The level of computerization of applied quality management systems
Procurement logistics area
Access to the supply sources
The convenience of the location in terms of supply sources
Knowledge of current situation on the supply markets
The ability to anticipate changes in supply markets
Knowledge and abilities of logistics staff
Ways of relationship with suppliers
The range of backward integration
The scale of supply optimization
The level of computerization of the logistics activity
Marketing area
Budget for marketing activities
A budget for promotional activities separated from the budget for marketing activities
The possibility of price formation for the final recipient
The possibility of applying a flexible pricing policy
Density and coverage of the available distribution network
Sales representatives possession
The degree of activation of sales of own products in distribution channels
The degree to which the company controls the products in the distribution channels
After-sales network density and coverage

The ability to integrate the use of marketing-mix instruments
Knowledge of the current situation on the served markets
The ability to forecast changes on the served markets
Knowledge of competitors and instruments used by them to compete
The ability to predict the behavior of competitors
Knowledge of the customers' needs, preferences and behavior
The ability to predict customers' future needs, preferences and behavior
Possibility of influencing by marketing on products' shaping
Knowledge, experience and skills of the staff managing marketing activities
Knowledge, experience and skills of the distribution management staff
Knowledge, experience and skills of sales staff
Knowledge, experience and abilities of employees responsible for promotion
Knowledge, experience and skills of product management staff
The degree of computerization of marketing activities
Finance area
Financial potential of the enterprise
The share of technical cost of manufacturing in total cost
The level of total unit costs
The level of fixed unit costs
The level of labor unit costs
The possibility of financing the development from equity
Access to external financing sources
Possibilities of the debt collection
Abilities in planning the revenues and costs
Applied systems of managerial accounting
The knowledge and abilities of financial and accounting services
Employment area
Employees' education level
Motivational systems
Applied employee recruitment and selection systems
Training systems used
Work productivity
Innovation and creativity of employees
Openness of employees to changes
Employees' willingness to improve their qualifications
Employee' loyalty to the enterprise
Employees' trust in the company's management board
Knowledge of the company's strategy by employees
Results orientation
Competitive tendency

Existence of a "collaborative spirit"
Respect for the client and his needs
Belief in success
Knowledge of foreign languages by employees
Organization and management area
Size of the enterprise
Leadership abilities of managerial staff
Clarity (transparency, comprehensibility) of the organizational structure
Owned development strategy
Strategy formulation skills
Strategy implementation skills
Ability to communicate the content of the strategy to employees
The ability to focus activities on the company's strategy
Knowledge of the sources of competitive advantages of competitors
Abilities in the field of monitoring the international environment
Ability to monitor other elements of the company's macro-environment
The scope of internationalization of the enterprise
Efficiency of operational management
The scope of application of integrated IT management support systems
The use of group problem-solving
The degree of formalization of activities
Efficiency of the internal information flow system
The ability to integrate individual activities and functions into efficient systems and processes
Ability to use modern decision making methods
Applied management staff motivation systems
The ability to take risks
Knowledge, experience and managerial skills of managerial staff
Knowledge management skills
Knowledge of foreign languages among managerial staff
Interpersonal relations determining the working climate
Collaboration with scientific and research institutions specializing in organization and management
General resources area
The credibility of the enterprise
Organizational culture of the enterprise
Cumulative knowledge (patents, trade secrets, databases, etc.)
The enterprise's ability to retain customers
Loyal customers possession
The reputation of the company's brand
Product brand reputation
The enterprise's ability to learn

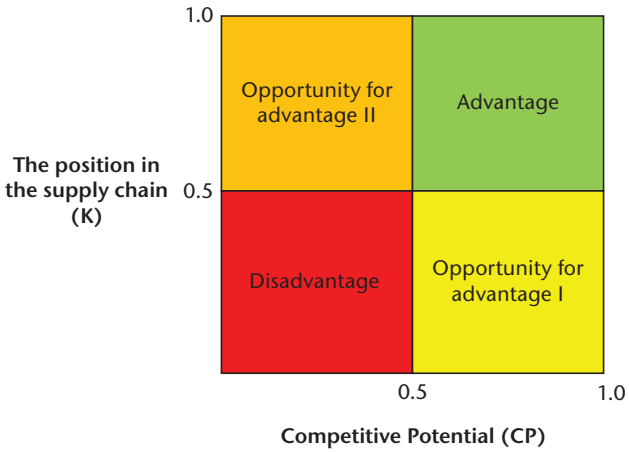
The speed of adapting to market changes
The tendency to active competition (non-avoidance of competition)
Knowledge of legal regulations
Convenience of location in terms of local legal norms and economic operating conditions
The ability to create company-friendly informal relations with decision-making centers in the environment
The ability to create a lobby supporting the company's activities
Own chain of stores
Distribution centers
Participation in strategic alliances

Source: Stankiewicz [2002: 119–124].

Having calculated the competitive potential (*CP*) and the position in the supply chain (*K*), it is possible to determine the resource competitiveness by placing the obtained results on the matrix.

A two-dimensional matrix is used to present the results of the interaction of the assessment of the state of owned resources/competences in comparison to the competition and the position in the supply chain. The position in the supply chain is on the ordinate axis, and the state of owned resources/competences is on the abscissa axis (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The matrix of resource competitiveness

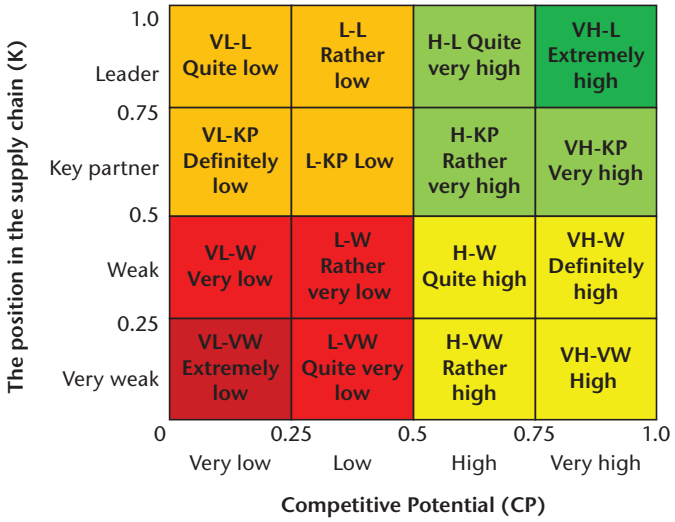


Source: own study.

The matrix is divided into four main areas, which are further divided into sixteen precise areas (Figure 2). These four areas show the level of resource competitiveness of the particular company. The best situation is represented by the green field, which

means that company has a resource competitive advantage. On the other hand, the worst situation is represented by the red field, which shows a lack of resource competitive advantage. Orange and yellow fields are the sign for the company that it has an opportunity to reach the resource competitive advantage.

Figure 2. The detailed matrix of resource competitiveness



Source: own study.

Matrix locates resource competitiveness in four areas, separated on the basis of the assessment of the state of owned resources/competences in comparison to the competition and the position in the supply chain. These areas are:

1. **Disadvantage** in case of resource competitiveness, which occurs when the indexes *CP* and *K* reach the values less than or equal to 0.5;
2. **Opportunity for advantage I** in case of resource competitiveness, which occurs when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.5, and the *K* index reaches value lower than or equal to 0.5;
3. **Opportunity for advantage II** in case of resource competitiveness that occurs when the *CP* index reaches value lower than or equal to 0.5 and the *K* index reaches value above 0.5;
4. **Advantage** in case of resource competitiveness, which occurs when the indexes *CP* and *K* reach the values higher than 0.5.

These areas can be divided into sixteen subareas, which are showing more precisely the resource competitiveness:

1. **VL–VW** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **extremely low** occurs when the indexes *CP* and *K* reach the values less than or equal to 0.25;
2. **L–VW** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **quite very low** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.25 to 0.5, and the *K* index reaches value lower than or equal to 0.25;
3. **VL-W** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **very low** occurs when the *K* index reaches value above 0.25 to 0.5, and the *CP* index reaches value lower than or equal to 0.25;
4. **L-W** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **rather very low** occurs when the indexes *CP* and *K* reach the values above 0.25 to 0.5;
5. **H-VW** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **rather high** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.5 to 0.75, and the *K* index reaches value lower than or equal to 0.25;
6. **VH-VW** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **high** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.75 to 1, and the *K* index reaches value lower than or equal to 0.25;
7. **H-W** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **quite high** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.5 to 0.75, and the *K* index reaches value above 0.25 to 0.5;
8. **VH-W** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **definitely high** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.75 to 1, and the *K* index reaches value above 0.25 to 0.5;
9. **VL-KP** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **definitely low** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value less than or equal to 0.25, and the *K* index reaches value above 0.5 to 0.75;
10. **VL–L** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **quite low** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value less than or equal to 0.25, and the *K* index reaches value above 0.75 to 1;
11. **L-KP** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **low** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.25 to 0.5, and the *K* index reaches value above 0.5 to 0.75;
12. **L–L** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **rather low** occurs when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.25 to 0.5, and the *K* index reaches value above 0.75 to 1;
13. **H-KP** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **rather very high** occurs when the indexes *CP* and *K* reach the values above 0.5 to 0.75;
14. **VH-KP** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **very high** when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.75 to 1, and the *K* index reaches value above 0.5 to 0.75;
15. **H-L** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **quite very high** when the *CP* index reaches value above 0.5 to 0.75, and the *K* index reaches value above 0.75 to 1;

16. **VH-L** subarea when the resource competitiveness is **extremely high** occurs when the indexes *CP* and *K* reach the values above 0.75 to 1.

Placing a given enterprise in the appropriate field on the matrix shows the competitiveness of its resources and allows the managing directors to shape its competitiveness properly through activities aimed at improving its position on the market and / or improving its competitive potential. The awareness of the competitiveness of resources has an impact on making both operational and strategic decisions, and thus leads to the competitiveness of the enterprise as a whole. The competitiveness of resources is essential for creating value for both the customer and the enterprise. Organizations that insist on creating value for the customer and which use the resources and capabilities are in the best position to attract the necessary capital to expand the scale and scope of activities [Slater, 1997: 164], which is the key to an organization's long-term survival and success [Slater, 1997: 164]. Creating value for the customer as one of the sources of competitive advantage is a strategic weapon in attracting and retaining customers in order to achieve profitability and development [Slater, 1997: 164].

3. Evaluation of resource competitiveness of dairy cooperatives

Empirical verification of resource competitiveness was developed on the basis of results of direct interviews conducted with representatives of the senior management of dairy cooperatives with the help of interview questionnaire. There were invited for the research the representatives of all cooperatives from section 10.5 of the Polish Classification of Activities (PKD 2007) from south-east Polish provinces, i.e., Świętokrzyskie, Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Małopolskie and Śląskie. Finally, 33% of cooperatives agreed to participate in the study. Sample distribution is therefore representative. Sample selection was purposeful and had a random character. Purposefulness of sampling included the assignment of the type of business by a particular cooperative in accordance with the PKD, as well as the location of cooperatives in the specified area covered by the research. Respondents in the context of the interview gave direct answers to structured questions.

First, the K index was calculated, and the results are presented in Table 2 and then the CP index. The results of calculation are presented in Table 3.

After having calculated the competitive potential (*CP*) and the position in the supply chain (*K*), the obtained results were placed on the matrix to determine the resource competitiveness (Figure 3).

Table 2. The calculation of K index

Cooperative	*ks*	*kc*	*K*
1	0.5	0.5	0.5
2	0.5	0.5	0.5
3	0.5	0.5	0.5
4	0.5	0.5	0.5
5	0.5	0.5	0.5
6	0.5	0.5	0.5
7	0.5	0.5	0.5
8	0.5	0.5	0.5
9	0.5	0.5	0.5
10	0.5	0.5	0.5
11	0.5	0.5	0.5
12	0.5	0.5	0.5
13	0.5	0.5	0.5
14	0.5	0.75	0.625
15	0.75	0.75	0.75
16	0.5	0.5	0.5
17	0.5	0.5	0.5
18	0.5	0.5	0.5
19	0.5	0.5	0.5
20	0.5	0.5	0.5

Source: own study and Konieczna [2018].

Table 3. The calculation of CP index

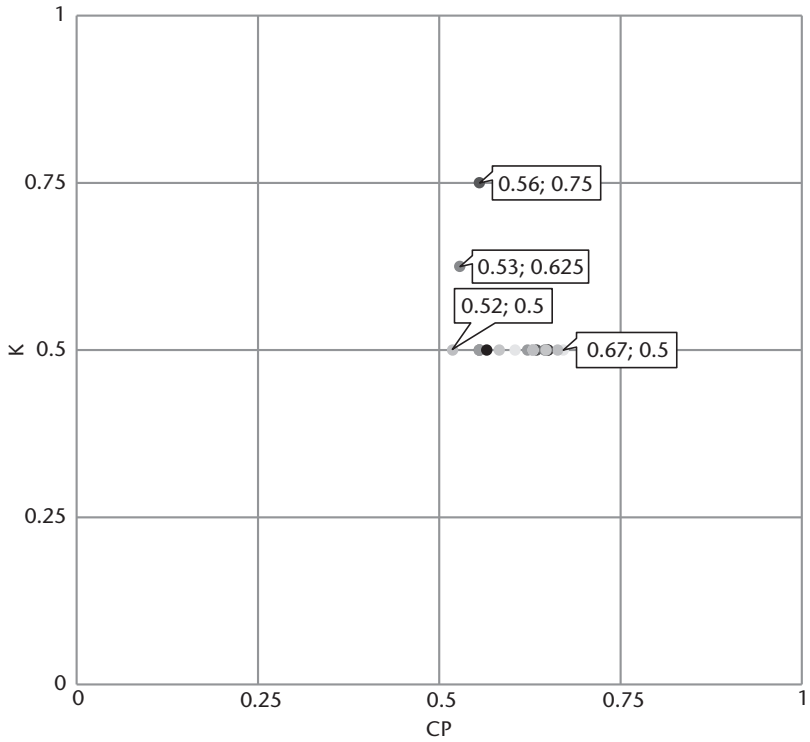
Cooperative	p_1	p_2	p_3	p_4	p_5	p_6	p_7	p_8	p_9	*CP*
1	1.83	2.00	1.78	1.78	1.78	2.18	2.00	1.77	2.00	0.63
2	1.67	1.67	1.44	2.11	1.74	1.64	2.00	1.77	1.71	0.58
3	2.00	1.89	1.44	1.89	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.76	0.63
4	2.00	1.56	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.65
5	2.17	2.00	1.78	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.18	2.00	2.00	0.67
6	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.91	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.66
7	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.78	2.00	2.00	1.88	1.77	2.00	0.65
8	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.87	2.00	1.76	1.88	2.00	0.65
9	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.91	1.76	1.81	2.00	0.65
10	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.91	2.00	1.88	2.00	2.00	0.62
11	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	0.56
12	0.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.83	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.60
13	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.52

Cooperative	p_1	p_2	p_3	p_4	p_5	p_6	p_7	p_8	p_9	*CP*
14	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.27	2.00	0.53
15	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	0.56
16	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.56
17	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	0.56
18	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.27	2.00	0.57
19	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.63
20	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	0.63

p_1 – R&D area,
p_2 – production area,
p_3 – quality management area,
p_4 – procurement logistics area,
p_5 – marketing area,
p_6 – finance area,
p_7 – employment area,
p_8 – organization and management area,
p_9 – general resources area.

Source: own study.

Figure 3. The matrix of resource competitiveness of dairy cooperatives



Source: own study.

Figure 3 shows that the resource competitiveness of cooperatives is rather good as 18 out of 20 cooperatives have low position in the supply chain with high competitive potential. These cooperatives have an opportunity for advantage. They occupy H-W position on the matrix which means that their resource competitiveness is quite high. Two cooperatives are key partners in the supply chain and have high competitive potential. They have advantage in resource competitiveness. Their position in the matrix is H-KP, which means that their resource competitiveness is rather very high. Only one cooperative is a key partner with high competitive potential [0.56; 0.75]. This cooperative has a huge probability to become a leader in the supply chain, which will put it in the next part of the matrix. It should improve its position in the supply chain in relation to suppliers and/or customers. Additionally, if it improves in the same time its resources/competencies, it will jump into the best place of resource competitiveness, namely it will become a leader in the supply chain and have very high competitive potential. Among different areas of resources/competences it should especially concentrate on R&D area, finance area and general resources. There is also one cooperative among 18 cooperatives which has better competitive potential than others [0.67; 0.5]. It has also very high probability to step into the better area of the matrix. As the cooperative mentioned above, it should improve its resources/competences to jump into the VH-W position. To reach and maintain the better position it should also improve its position in the supply chain. On the other hand, there is as well one cooperative, which has a high probability to fall into L-W position of the matrix, because it is in the worst position in the H-W cell on the matrix [0.52; 0.5].

Conclusion

Resource competitiveness is a very important element in maintaining a competitive advantage especially nowadays when we have more hybrid companies. It is important for organizations to identify this advantage, which is possible through the proposed method. Adopting the method of determining the resource competitiveness helps managers and entrepreneurs to assess their firms' resources/ competences precisely in comparison to the competition and the position in the supply chain. As can be seen, the matrix clearly shows the resource competitiveness of companies. Placing itself on the matrix the company can see what should be improved to jump into the better position and to gain a real competitive advantage. When preparing the data for a matrix, companies can see, which area of the resources/competences is the weakest one. Companies can also see if they should strengthen their position in the supply chain in relation to suppliers and/or customers. Having a knowledge of these elements is crucial for gaining a competitive advantage. The implementation of the

proposed method can be important source of information and decision making, particularly during periods of change and high uncertainty.

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THE METHOD OF DETERMINING THE RESOURCE COMPETITIVENESS

Abstract

Competitiveness of resources is a very important element in maintaining a competitive advantage, especially nowadays, when more and more hybrid enterprises operate on the market. It is important for organizations to be able to identify this advantage. Therefore, the aim of the article is to propose a method for determining the competitiveness of resources

based on the assessment of the organization's position in the supply chain and the assessment of competitive potential based on resources/competencies. The application of the method of determining the competitiveness of resources is to help managers and entrepreneurs assess precisely the resources/competences of their organization against the competition and the position in the supply chain.

Keywords: competitiveness, resources, position in the supply chain, strategic management

JEL classification codes: M2, O20, L1, L21

METODA OKREŚLANIA KONKURENCYJNOŚCI ZASOBÓW

Streszczenie

Konkurencyjność zasobów jest bardzo ważnym elementem utrzymania przewagi konkurencyjnej, zwłaszcza w dzisiejszych czasach, gdy na rynku działa coraz więcej przedsiębiorstw hybrydowych. Ważne jest, aby organizacje potrafiły zidentyfikować tę przewagę. Dlatego celem artykułu jest zaproponowanie metody określania konkurencyjności zasobów opartej na ocenie pozycji organizacji w łańcuchu dostaw oraz ocenie potencjału konkurencyjnego na podstawie zasobów/kompetencji. Zastosowanie metody określania konkurencyjności zasobów ma pomóc menedżerom i przedsiębiorcom precyzyjnie ocenić zasoby/kompetencje ich organizacji na tle konkurencji i pozycji w łańcuchu dostaw.

Słowa kluczowe: konkurencyjność, zasoby, pozycja w łańcuchu dostaw, zarządzanie strategiczne

Kody klasyfikacji JEL: M2, O20, L1, L21