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**WAYS TO IMPROVE THE COMPANY COMPETITIVENESS
IN THE CONDITIONS OF ECONOMY DIGITALIZATION**

E. P. Troshina (a), Yu. V. Levashova (b), V. V. Mantulenko (c)*
*Corresponding author

- (a) Samara State University of Economics, Soviet Army Str., 141, 443090, e-troshina@yandex.ru
(b) Samara State University of Economics, Soviet Army Str., 141, 443090, e-troshina@yandex.ru
(c) Samara State University of Economics, Soviet Army Str., 141, 443090, mantoulenko@mail.ru

Abstract

Nowadays, the choice of the right strategy for the development of the organization and ways that can increase the competitiveness plays a huge role in strengthening position of the company in the market. It is very important that the chosen development path corresponds to current trends under conditions of the economy digitalization and informatization of services used in the management and operation of enterprises. The authors analyze opinions of students and graduates of universities in the Samara region in order to identify their attitude to digitalization and the main factors affecting the competitiveness of enterprises in these digital environment. The research was carried out using survey methods, in-depth interviews, mathematical methods and specialized software products. The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of digitalization on the efficiency and effectiveness of methods to improve the competitiveness of modern enterprises and identify the attitude of young representatives of our society to this issue. To achieve this goal, the author set the following research tasks: to study the attitude of students and graduates of HEIs in the Samara Region to the influence of informatization on the competitiveness of companies; to determine the main factors that may affect the efficiency of organizations in modern conditions; to find out specific features of the change process in Russian companies in the conditions of the economy digitalization.

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1. Introduction

There are a lot of approaches to the concept of "competitiveness of the enterprise" in modern management theory. If we analyze them, we can say that competitiveness refers to the ability of an organization to resist companies-producers of similar products both in terms of customers' satisfaction with goods produced by the company and the efficiency of production, marketing and financial activities, as well as to have a certain position in the market. To date, the problem of improving the competitiveness of the enterprise is becoming more urgent. The market situation largely depends on the state and results of the competition. The market economy development determines the necessity of formation of a production potential and increase in the competitiveness of the company is defined (Zhelezovskaya, Polyakova, Stepanenko, & Krylova, 2016; Troshina & Mantulenko, 2020). Competitiveness is one of the fundamental concepts of modern market relations. In the economic theory, this concept has received many interpretations. In our opinion the most complete interpretation is the following one: competitiveness is an individual characteristic of a participant of competitive market relations, which reflects his capabilities and advantages of a certain market segment. In the modern world, the competitiveness indicator is determined by comparing generalizing indicators of product quality at the consumer level and costs of achieving this level (Babkin & Chistyakova, 2017).

All factors affecting the competitiveness degree of the enterprise can be divided into internal and external ones. The basis of internal factors is formed by objective criteria that determine capabilities of an economic entity in terms of ensuring its competitive potential. These may include the financial and economic condition of the enterprise, human resources and potential of marketing services, material and technical support of production, etc.

External factors should include organizational and socio-economic relations that allow enterprises to produce goods and services more attractive in their characteristics (in both price and non-price terms) than the products of competitors. However, it should be noted that in modern conditions of informatization and introduction of digital technologies in the activities of companies, some of the factors begin to have an impact on the activities of companies and their competitiveness to a greater extent, others, on the contrary, lose their influence.

One of the main obstacles to the development of the digital economy is the lack of confidence in new technologies among employees of organizations because of their low skills and the lack of measures to improve it at most enterprises (Mantulenko, Mantulenko, Troshina, & Vorotnikova, 2020). Thus, we can say that the most effective way to improve the competitiveness of the organization in the era of the economy digitalization is to motivate employees to adopt information technology and retraining. Of course, the competitiveness of the company at all times will be strongly influenced by the competitiveness of products, the availability of an effective marketing strategy, as well as the quality of goods and services of the company (Beregovaya, 2015).

2. Problem Statement

In the context of the economy digitalization, it is necessary to constantly implement changes to maintain competitiveness, improve the customer service and ensure the proper technological level, if organizations want to develop successfully (Ashmarina, Mantulenko, & Troshina, 2019). At the same time, it is important for the organization to respond quickly and adequately to changes in its external environment. Organizations have to constantly adapt to conditions in which they exist, while they themselves also generate changes in the external environment, developing and launching new products and technologies that become dominant and widespread (Kozyrev & Bachurin, 2016).

The fashion for the digital economy has generated a wide range of publications over the past two decades. These publications are devoted mostly to such concepts as "knowledge economy", "information economy", "electronic economy" and "knowledge management". At the same time, articles on "knowledge management" could refer to both management and computer science. The choice of a particular title was largely determined by the authors' considerations, his belonging to a certain scientific school or group, the subject of the journal, where the article was submitted, or other reasons. For example, Keshelava, Budanov, and Rummyantsev (2017), studying some digitalization aspects, often use the concepts of "digital economy" and "electronic economy" as synonyms. And in the digital economy according to Tapscott (1997) the main driver of progress and competitiveness is knowledge, including formalized knowledge and implicit knowledge, which is possessed by management and personnel, but it is not always even realized by them. The topic of knowledge possessed by management and personnel is discussed in the theory of intellectual capital, developed mainly by specialists in the theory of knowledge management. In the work by Kozyrev and Bachurin (2016) a fairly complete review of scientific publications on the creation of knowledge management systems in organizations is given.

In modern management theory, international studies on human capital are conducted by many experts. It was revealed exactly how companies adapt to the informatization and digitalization processes in the economy. The study is based on a survey of more than 10,400 CEOs and HR services in 140 countries. Among the areas of the company digitalization, they identified the following: strengthening the importance of human resources, the implementation of cognitive recruitment, the development of digital leadership, continuous training of employees (Levchenko, 2018; Chudaeva, Mantulenko, Zhelev, & Vanickova, 2019).

3. Research Questions

The most relevant research question are:

- what is the attitude of students and graduates to the level of influence of informatization on the competitiveness of companies;
- what are the main factors affecting the efficiency of companies;
- what is the evidence base confirming the specifics of the change process in Russian companies in the conditions of the economy digitalization.

4. Purpose of the Study

In the conditions of informatization of different processes in the modern society and the economy digitalization, ways with which companies increase their significance and strengthen their positions in the market are changing. The purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis about the severity of the impact of digitalization of the economy on the activities of Russian companies.

5. Research Methods

The research was carried out using survey methods, in-depth interviews, mathematical methods and specialized software products. The authors of this article conducted a qualitative analysis of the opinions of 530 respondents, based on the basic principles and rules of the sociological survey and analysis of its results. The main part of the respondents consisted of students and employed graduates of the HEIs of the Samara region, in order to identify their attitude to digitalization and determine factors that affect, according to respondents, the competitiveness of the company in terms of technical and technological changes.

6. Findings

According to the survey, presented in the form of a chart (figure 01), it can be concluded that the largest number of respondents believe that the greatest impact on competitiveness in the modern world is realized with a set of traditional methods of increasing competitiveness together with the introduction of new information systems in the company.

Having analyzed the answers to this question, it can be argued that, despite the emergence of new ways for improving the competitiveness of the company, the predominant factor is and will remain for a long time traditional methods and tools.

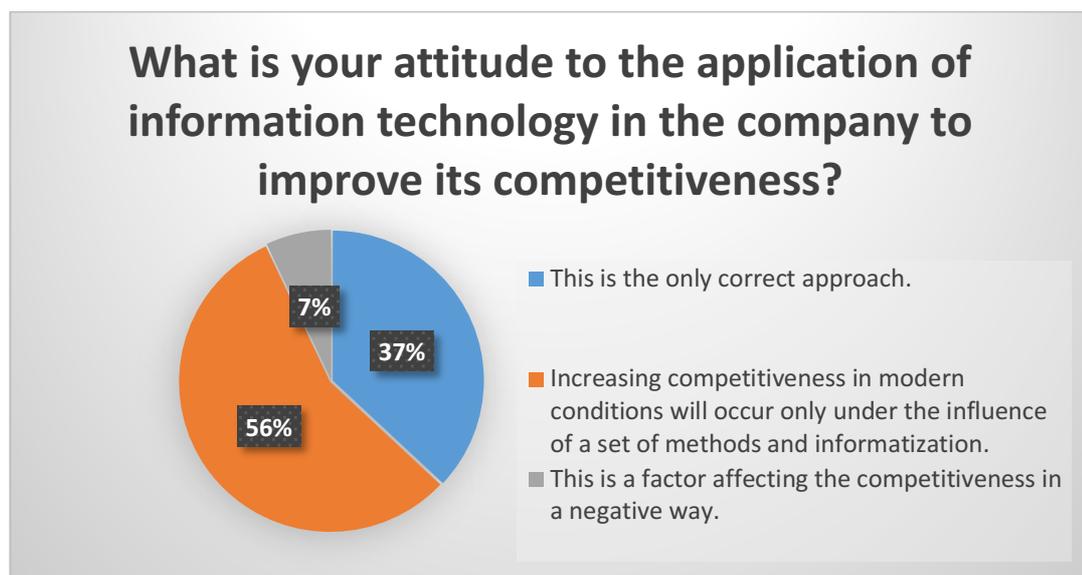


Figure 01. Identification of the attitude of HEIs students and graduates to the application of information technologies in the company

To identify what methods, according to students and graduates, most effectively affect the competitiveness of the company in terms of the economy digitalization and informatization of our society, respondents were asked a question, the answers to which are presented in the histogram (figure 02).



Figure 02. Identification of methods to improve the competitiveness of the company in the digitalization conditions

Based on the answers of students and graduates of Samara state University of Economics, we can conclude the respondents believe that the most effective methods to improve the competitiveness of the company in the conditions of digitalization of the economy are to improve the quality of products and the application of new technologies in different processes of the company (production and management system of the company, its management).

According to the results of the survey on the methods of increasing competitiveness, we can say that students and graduates of HEIs in the Samara region consider the combination of traditional methods and the application of information technologies is to be more effective in the modern digital conditions. While we see a greater priority among the traditional ways to improve the competitiveness of the company is given to improving the quality of products, as well as methods for improving the quality of the company management in the conditions of the economy digitalization.

7. Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature analysis and the conducted survey of students and employed graduates, we see the compliance of conclusions with the international practice in the terms of adaptation to information changes and the economy digitalization and within the real practice of the Samara region. However, there are some specific features. Among them we can highlight the lack of a centralized program to help employees adapt to the application of digital technologies, as well as focus on improving the quality of goods and services of the company by applying new technologies in the organization. Thus, in the modern world, one of the primary tasks of the enterprise development is to develop a new program

to improve its competitiveness by combining the methods of traditional management and latest results of the digitalization era.

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