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**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO  
ASSESSING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF  
HOSPITALITY ESTABLISHMENTS**

**Ganna KUVIKA<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Lutsk,  
Ukraine*

**INTRODUCTION.** In the fiercely competitive landscape of the hospitality industry, the success and sustainability of establishments are contingent upon their ability to distinguish themselves in the market. This distinction, often referred to as competitiveness, encompasses a multitude of factors ranging from customer satisfaction and service quality to innovation and financial performance. Assessing and understanding these factors is fundamental for businesses striving to thrive in an ever-evolving market. This article delves into the intricate web of hospitality competitiveness, aiming to provide a comprehensive methodology that amalgamates qualitative and quantitative measures. By addressing this multidimensional concept, this research endeavors to shed light on the nuanced aspects that underpin the competitive advantage of hospitality establishments.

**PURPOSE OF THE ARTICLE.** The primary purpose of this article is to propose a robust and versatile methodology for evaluating the competitiveness of hospitality establishments. Through an extensive review of existing literature and an integration of various qualitative and quantitative metrics, this research aims to offer a holistic approach to businesses, policymakers, and researchers. By outlining the key dimensions of competitiveness and delineating practical methods of assessment, the article seeks to empower stakeholders in the hospitality industry with actionable insights. Furthermore, this research intends to bridge the existing gap in knowledge, providing a structured framework for understanding the dynamics of competitiveness in the contemporary hospitality landscape.

**RESULTS.** The results of this study unveil a multifaceted understanding of hospitality competitiveness. Through an amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative data, several key insights have emerged. Firstly, establishments that prioritize customer satisfaction and consistently deliver high-quality services tend to outperform their competitors.

Secondly, a strong emphasis on innovation, encompassing both technological advancements and unique service offerings, significantly contributes to the competitive edge. Additionally, financial stability, efficient operations, and a commitment to sustainable practices emerged as pivotal factors in determining the long-term competitiveness of hospitality businesses. By integrating these diverse elements, the proposed methodology offers a comprehensive view, enabling establishments to identify their strengths and areas needing improvement.

**CONCLUSIONS.** In conclusion, this research underscores the vital importance of adopting a multidimensional approach when assessing the competitiveness of hospitality establishments. The findings emphasize that a singular focus on any one aspect, be it customer satisfaction or financial performance, is insufficient in capturing the complexities of the industry. A holistic strategy that integrates customer-centric practices, innovative solutions, financial stability, and sustainability efforts is imperative for long-term success. Moreover, the study reaffirms that the adaptability of establishments in response to changing consumer preferences and technological advancements is paramount. As businesses navigate the competitive terrain of the hospitality industry, they must recognize that competitiveness is not a static attribute but a dynamic quality that necessitates continuous evaluation and evolution. By embracing the multifaceted methodology proposed in this research, establishments can position themselves strategically, anticipate market trends, and enhance their offerings, ensuring not only their survival but also their prosperity in the ever-competitive hospitality sector.

**KEYWORDS:** competitiveness; hospitality establishments; methodology; evaluation criteria; industry analysis; customer satisfaction; service quality; innovation; sustainability.

| NUMBER OF REFERENCES | NUMBER OF FIGURES | NUMBER OF TABLES |
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## МЕТОДИЧНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО ОЦІНКИ КОНКУРЕТОСПРОМОЖНОСТІ ЗАКЛАДІВ СФЕРИ ГОСТИННОСТІ

Ганна КУВІКА

*Волинський національний університет імені Лесі  
Українки, Луцьк, Україна*

**ВСТУП.** У гострому конкурентному середовищі індустрії гостинності успіх і сталість закладів залежать від їх здатності виділитися на ринку. Ця відмінність, яку часто називають конкурентоспроможністю, охоплює безліч факторів, починаючи від задоволеності клієнтів і якості послуг до інновацій і фінансових показників. Оцінка та розуміння цих факторів є фундаментальним для компаній, які прагнуть процвітати на ринку, що постійно розвивається. Ця стаття заглиблюється в складну мережу конкурентоспроможності гостинності, маючи на меті надати комплексну методологію, яка поєднує якісні та кількісні показники. Розглядаючи цю багатовимірну концепцію, це дослідження висвітлює нюанси, які лежать в основі конкурентної переваги закладів гостинності.

**МЕТА СТАТТІ.** Основна мета цієї статті – запропонувати надійну та універсальну методологію оцінки конкурентоспроможності закладів гостинності. Завдяки обширному огляду існуючої літератури та інтеграції різноманітних якісних і кількісних показників це дослідження має на меті використання цілісного підходу до компаній, політиків і дослідників. Окреслюючи ключові аспекти конкурентоспроможності та практичні методи оцінки, стаття прагне надати зацікавленим сторонам індустрії гостинності практичні ідеї. Крім того, це дослідження має на меті подолати існуючу прогалину в знаннях, забезпечуючи структуровану основу для розуміння динаміки конкурентоспроможності в сучасному ландшафті гостинності.

**РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ.** Результати цього дослідження розкривають багатогранне розуміння конкурентоспроможності гостинності. Завдяки об'єднанню якісних і кількісних даних з'явилося кілька ключових ідей. По-перше, заклади, які надають пріоритет задоволенню клієнтів і постійно надають високоякісні послуги, як правило, перевершують своїх конкурентів. По-друге, сильний акцент на інноваціях, що

охоплюють як технологічні досягнення, так і унікальні пропозиції послуг, значно сприяє конкурентній перевазі. Крім того, фінансова стабільність, ефективна діяльність і прихильність екологічним практикам стали ключовими факторами, що визначають довгострокову конкурентоспроможність підприємств гостинності. Інтегруючи ці різноманітні елементи, запропонована методологія пропонує комплексне уявлення, що дозволяє установам визначити свої сильні сторони та сфери, які потребують вдосконалення.

**ВИСНОВКИ.** Дане дослідження підкреслює життєво важливе застосування багатовимірного підходу до оцінки конкурентоспроможності закладів гостинності. Можна відмітити, що єдиної уваги до будь-якого одного аспекту, будь то задоволеність клієнтів чи фінансові показники, недостатньо для охоплення складності галузі. Цілісна стратегія, яка об'єднує практики, орієнтовані на клієнта, інноваційні рішення, фінансову стабільність і зусилля щодо сталого розвитку, є обов'язковою умовою для довгострокового успіху. Крім того, дослідження ще раз підтверджує, що адаптивність закладів у відповідь на зміну споживчих уподобань і технологічний прогрес має першочергове значення. Оскільки підприємства орієнтуються в конкурентному середовищі індустрії гостинності, вони повинні визнати, що конкурентоспроможність – це не статична характеристика, а динамічна якість, яка потребує постійної оцінки та розвитку. Застосовуючи багатогранну методологію, запропоновану в цьому дослідженні, заклади можуть позиціонувати себе стратегічно, передбачати ринкові тенденції та покращувати свої пропозиції, забезпечуючи не лише своє виживання, але й процвітання в постійно конкурентному секторі гостинності.

**КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА:** конкурентоспроможність; заклади гостинності; методологія; критерії оцінки; галузевий аналіз; задоволеність клієнтів; якість обслуговування; інновації; стійкість.

**Formulation of scientific problem and its significance.** The scientific problem which forms the basis of this study is to carefully study the complex dynamics of competitiveness in the field of hospitality. In today's globalized economy, hospitality establishments face unpredictable challenges that arise from changing consumer preferences and ending with the impact of technological progress and sustainability issues. The primary challenge lies in the absence of a thorough and cohesive approach to evaluating the diverse aspects of competitiveness within this industry. Current studies frequently concentrate on isolated factors like customer satisfaction or financial performance, neglecting a comprehensive viewpoint. Consequently, scholars and industry experts face a deficiency in a well-organized framework that comprehensively embraces the myriad elements influencing the development of competitive advantages for hospitality establishments.

**Solving this problem has important implications.** Entities in the hospitality sector, including hotels, dining establishments, and travel services, play a noteworthy role in the worldwide economy. It is imperative for them to adeptly evaluate and enhance their competitiveness, as this is vital not only for their own prosperity but also for overall economic advancement. In the contemporary age, characterized by heightened consumer expectations, the comprehension and anticipation of these expectations are crucial for maintaining customer retention and fostering loyalty. Thus, solving the scientific problem of developing a comprehensive methodology for assessing competitiveness in the field of hospitality is of great importance both for academic research and for practical application.

**Analysis of recent studies of the problem.** A great contribution to the study of methodological aspects of competitiveness analysis was made by domestic scientists such as G.L. Azoev, N.K. Moiseyeva, R.A. Fathutdinov, V.E. Shershnyova, A.Yu. Yudanov and others. Among foreign researchers, it is worth noting the works of F. Kotler, M. Porter, A.J. Strickland, A.A. Thompson and others. The development of methods for assessing the competitiveness of tourist enterprises is reflected in the works of S.P. Gavrylyuk, V.G. Gerasimenko, N.M. Kuznetsova, S.G. Nezdoyminov and other authors.

Recently, scientists, specializing in hospitality management, deeply study the problem of assessing the competitiveness of hospitality establishments. In this direction, many studies have been conducted, each of which contributes its unique views and important conclusions regarding various aspects that determine competitiveness in this industry. One of the main themes running through these studies is the recognition of various factors that influence the success of host businesses, ranging from customer orientation to technological integration and sustainable practices (Kuznetsova and Nezdoyminov, 2010).

A significant part of the latest research focuses on the important role of customer satisfaction in shaping the competitiveness of guest establishments. Scientists considered the complex relationship between the impressions of guests and the overall level of satisfaction (Kutsenko, 2012). Research in this context not only emphasizes the importance of personalized service and guest engagement, but also highlights the impact of customer feedback on service improvement. In today's world, where online reviews and social media discussions can make or break a business, the ability to understand and respond to customer sentiment has become key to maintaining a competitive advantage (Borisova, 2012).

Another important area of research is service quality and its relationship with competitiveness. Researchers have studied the dimensions of service quality in detail, dividing it into a material component, reliability, speed of response, guarantees and empathy (Simenko and Kosova, 2013). General conclusion of these studies is clear: hospitality establishments that consistently provide high-quality service on all these criteria usually outperform their competitors. In addition, the concept of service innovation has become popular, and studies examine how innovative approaches and service significantly contribute to customer satisfaction and, consequently, competitiveness (Bohdan and Ferliy, 2016).

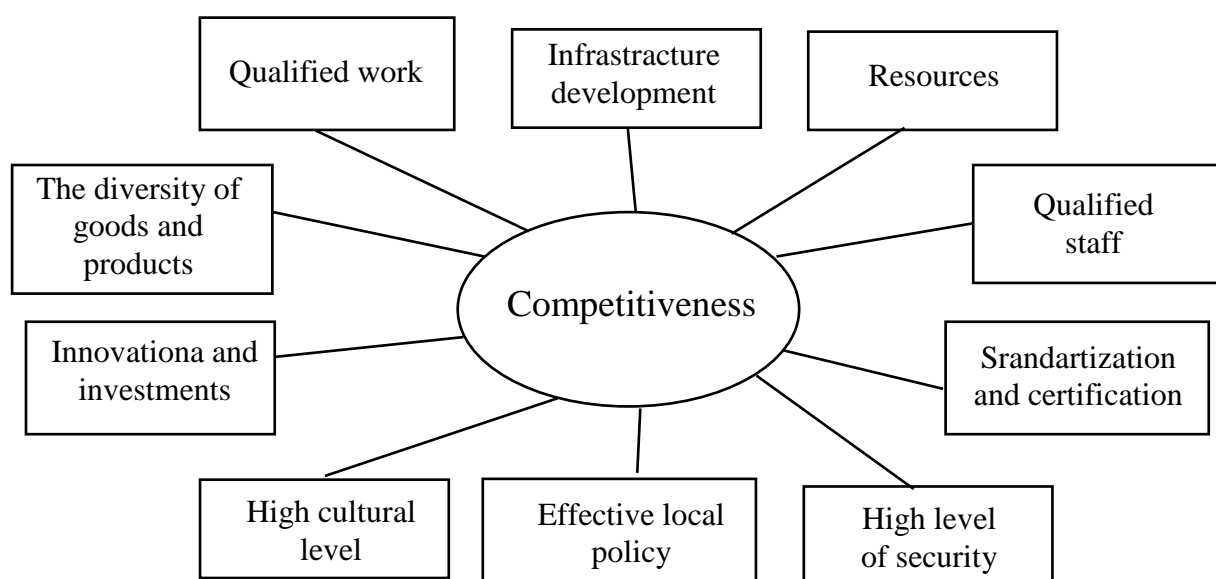
At the same time, research is aimed at understanding the impact of technology on the competitiveness of hospitality. The integration of digital tools, mobile applications and artificial intelligence in the hospitality industry is in the spotlight (Gerasimenko, 2010). Research shows how technologies such as chatbots improve guest interactions, simplify booking processes and provide personalized recommendations, thereby improving the overall guest experience.

Sustainable development as a determining factor of competitiveness also attracts considerable attention in modern literature. Hospitality establishments that implement green practices, energy-efficient measures and responsible sourcing not only contribute to the preservation of the environment, but also attract a growing segment of environmentally conscious consumers (Bohdan and Ferliy, 2016). Research shows that guests are increasingly choosing establishments that demonstrate a commitment to sustainable practices, creating a positive correlation between sustainability initiatives and competitive advantage.

Financial indicators remain a constant theme for research examining hospitality competitiveness. The researchers scrutinized various financial metrics, including revenue per room (RevPAR), average daily rate (ADR), and rate of return. Analyzing the financial condition of hospitality enterprises, researchers were able to identify patterns and trends that distinguish financially stable establishments from their counterparts. This financial perspective

provides a critical understanding of the economic sustainability of hospitality enterprises, thereby shaping their competitive positioning in the market (Gerasimchuk, 2003).

The **article aims** to present a thorough and cohesive approach for evaluating the diverse competitiveness of hospitality establishments. It seeks to address current research gaps while offering valuable insights for both industry professionals and policymakers. Presentation of the main material and substantiation of the obtained research results. Studying the presentation of the main material and the justification of the research results, it becomes obvious that the integration of different dimensions in the assessment of the competitiveness of the hospitality sector provides a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of the industry. One of the main findings centers around the critical importance of customer satisfaction. Several studies highlight that satisfied customers not only contribute to positive online reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations, but also become loyal customers, ensuring repeat orders. Based on customer feedback, hospitality establishments can identify specific areas that need improvement, leading to improved guest experience and increased competitiveness (Bosovska and Vedmid, 2011).



Source: developed by the author.

**Fig. 1. Characteristics of destination competitiveness**

In addition, the study highlights the importance of service quality as a key component of competitiveness. Research shows that guests perceive high-quality service as a sign of a well-run establishment, leading to increased trust and satisfaction. Measuring service quality, covering factors such as responsiveness, reliability and empathy, allows businesses to identify gaps in service and implement targeted training programs for staff. This continuous

cycle of improvement not only improves the overall guest experience, but also strengthens the establishment's reputation, increasing its competitiveness in the market.

Another key aspect is the introduction of innovations in the field of hospitality. Research shows that innovative offerings, whether in the form of unique menu items, creative space design or advanced technology, attract customers and increase the overall appeal of the establishment. The introduction of innovations not only attracts technically literate customers, but also positions the business as a trendsetter in the industry (Simenko and Kosova, 2013). Such differentiation helps increase customer loyalty and strengthens the institution's competitive position among many options.

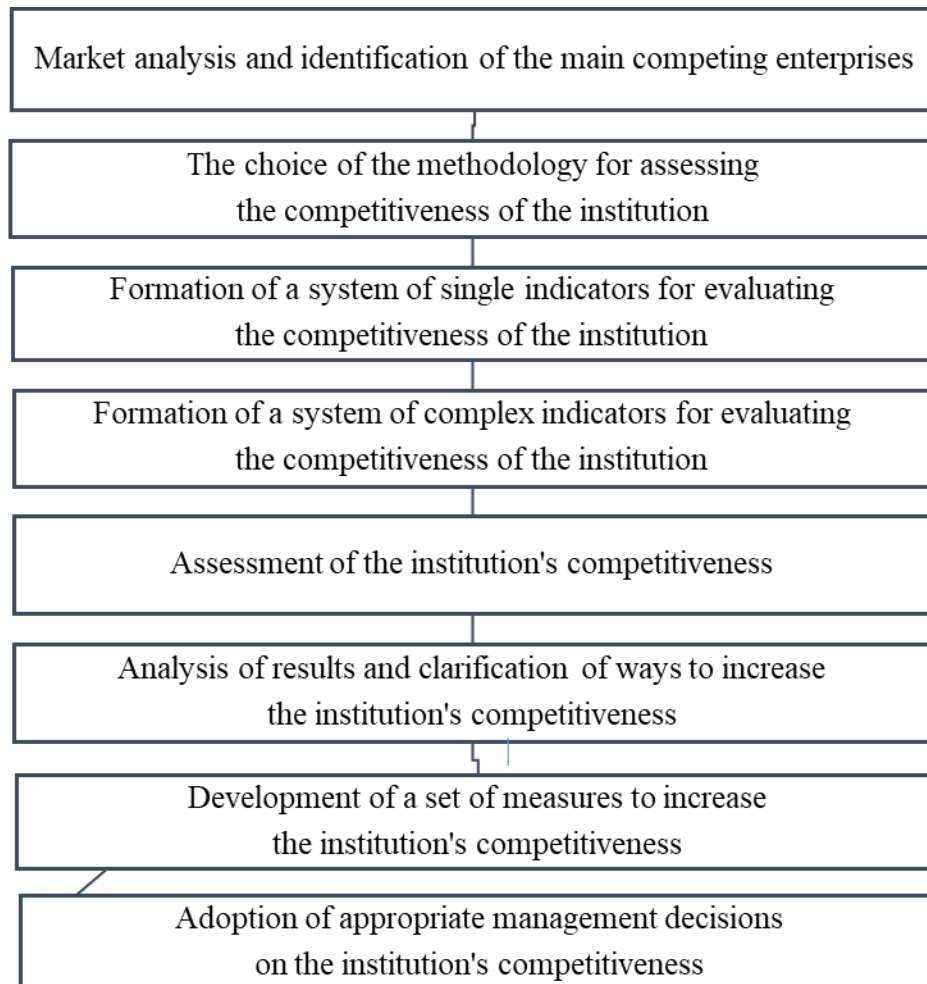
Financial analysis serves as an important substantiation of research results. Examining financial indicators such as RevPAR, ADR and profit margin provides valuable information about the economic health of hospitality establishments. Strong financial performance not only ensures business sustainability, but also facilitates strategic investments in staff training, technology upgrades and sustainability initiatives. By maintaining a strong financial foundation, institutions can survive economic instability and invest in the long-term competitiveness of their offerings (Borisova, 2012).

The integration of sustainable development practices becomes a convincing justification for the research results. In an era of growing environmental awareness, hospitality establishments that support environmental initiatives are greatly increasing their appeal. Research shows that guests are increasingly inclined to support businesses that demonstrate social and environmental responsibility. By implementing sustainable practices such as energy conservation, waste reduction and ethical purchasing, establishments are not only helping to preserve the environment, but also attracting a discerning customer base. This double benefit meets public expectations and strengthens the institution's competitiveness on the market.

Human resource management is a vital component of research outcomes. Research highlights the key role of well-trained and motivated staff in providing exceptional customer service (Bosovska and Vedmid, 2011). Employee satisfaction, training programs and a positive workplace culture directly impact service quality and guest experience. Organizations that invest in the well-being and professional development of employees create a dedicated workforce, which results in the provision of services of the highest quality. Satisfied employees are more likely to interact sincerely with guests, creating unforgettable impressions that increase the reputation and competitiveness of the establishment (Bortnyk, 2013; Kutsenko, 2012).

The main principles of assessing the competitiveness of a hospitality company are integrity, systematicity, objectivity, dynamism, continuity and

optimality. The diagram of the general order of research of the process of assessing the competitiveness of a hospitality enterprise is shown in Figure 2.



Source: developed by the author.

**Fig. 2. Stages of assessing the competitiveness of a hospitality enterprise**

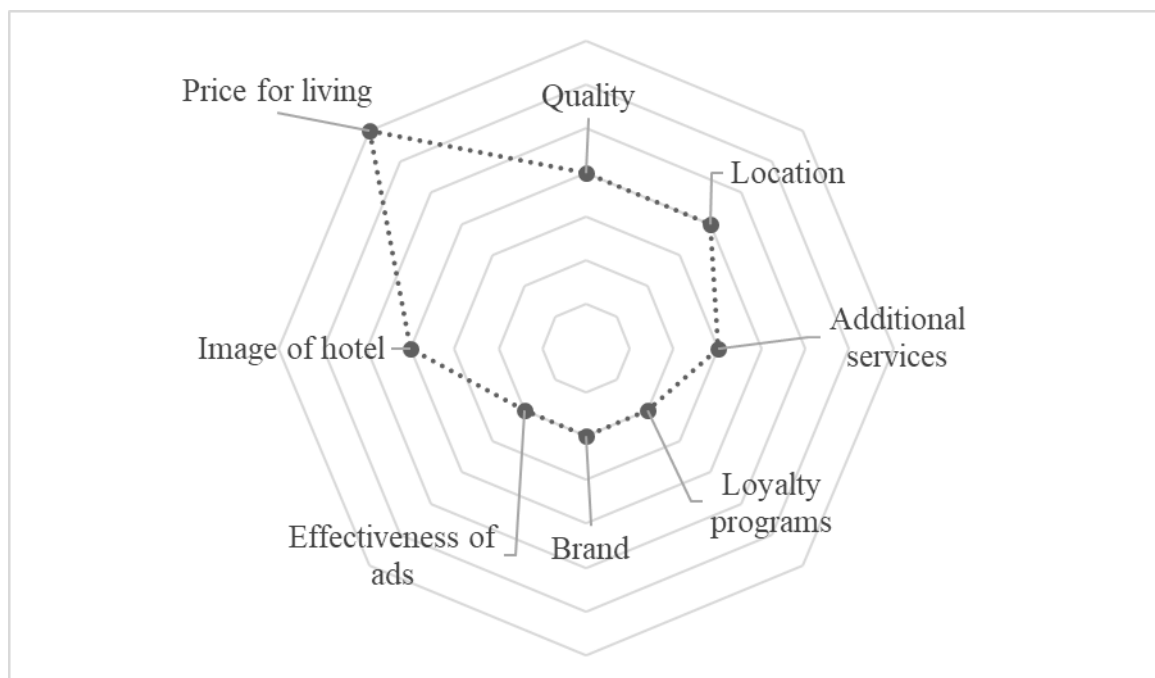
The evaluation of an enterprise's competitiveness relies on the selected assessment approach, and the specific set of indicators varies accordingly. There are nine broad categories encompassing generally accepted methods for assessment. These include methods focusing on comparative advantages, those grounded in the equilibrium theory of the firm and the industry, analyses of the market and identification of primary competitors, approaches derived from the theory of product quality, graphical methods, matrix methods, an expert-driven approach, methods assessing the enterprise's position from a strategic potential standpoint, and those comparing against established standards (Gavrilyuk, 2006).

However, it is important to note that these methods, which are used to assess competitiveness, are mainly developed for manufacturing enterprises.

When analyzing enterprises in the field of hospitality, the peculiarities of their intangible activity should be taken into account. Hospitality enterprises provide temporary accommodation services with mandatory maintenance, which distinguishes them from manufacturing enterprises.

One of the effective tools for comparing the capabilities of a hospitality company and its main competitors is the creation of a “competitiveness polygon”. This method consists in the graphic display of assessments of the state of the enterprise and its competitors according to the main areas of activity, presented in the form of vectors-axes.

The number of axes corresponds to the number of selected criteria, and they have a certain measurement scale (most often in the form of point estimates). The farther from the center of the coordinates the values of the criteria are, the higher they are. For each enterprise, a broken line is drawn, which forms a polygon, showing the difference between hotels according to individual criteria, as can be seen in Figure 3. The described method makes it possible to clearly display the difference between establishments, taking into account their main characteristics.



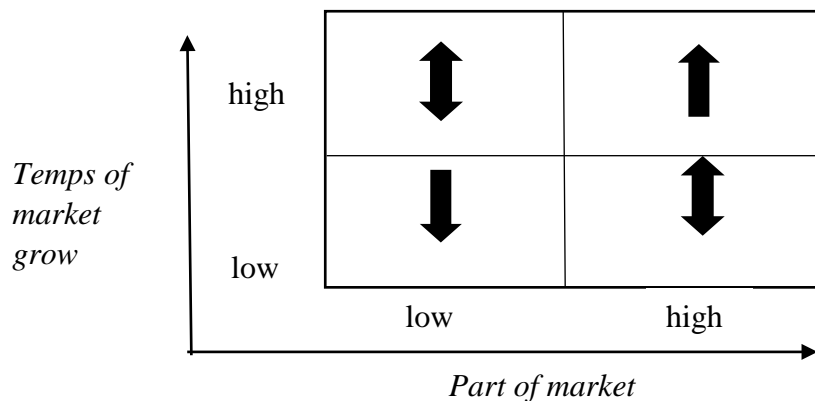
Source: (Bortnyk, 2013b).

**Fig. 3. "Polygon of competitiveness" of hospitality establishments**

From my point of view, the graphic method of assessing the competitiveness of an enterprise is impressive for its simplicity and visibility. However, it has a certain drawback – it does not provide an opportunity to determine the value of the general criterion of the enterprise's competitiveness.



Matrix methods of assessing the competitiveness of hospitality enterprises are based on the use of matrices, i.e. tables, where elements are arranged in rows and columns (Andreeva and Andreeva, 2009). This can be illustrated by a matrix created according to the principle of the "Boston Consulting Group" coordinate system (see Figure 3). In this matrix, market growth rates are displayed along the vertical, on a linear scale, and the hotel's relative market share is displayed along the horizontal, on a logarithmic scale.



Source: developed by the author.

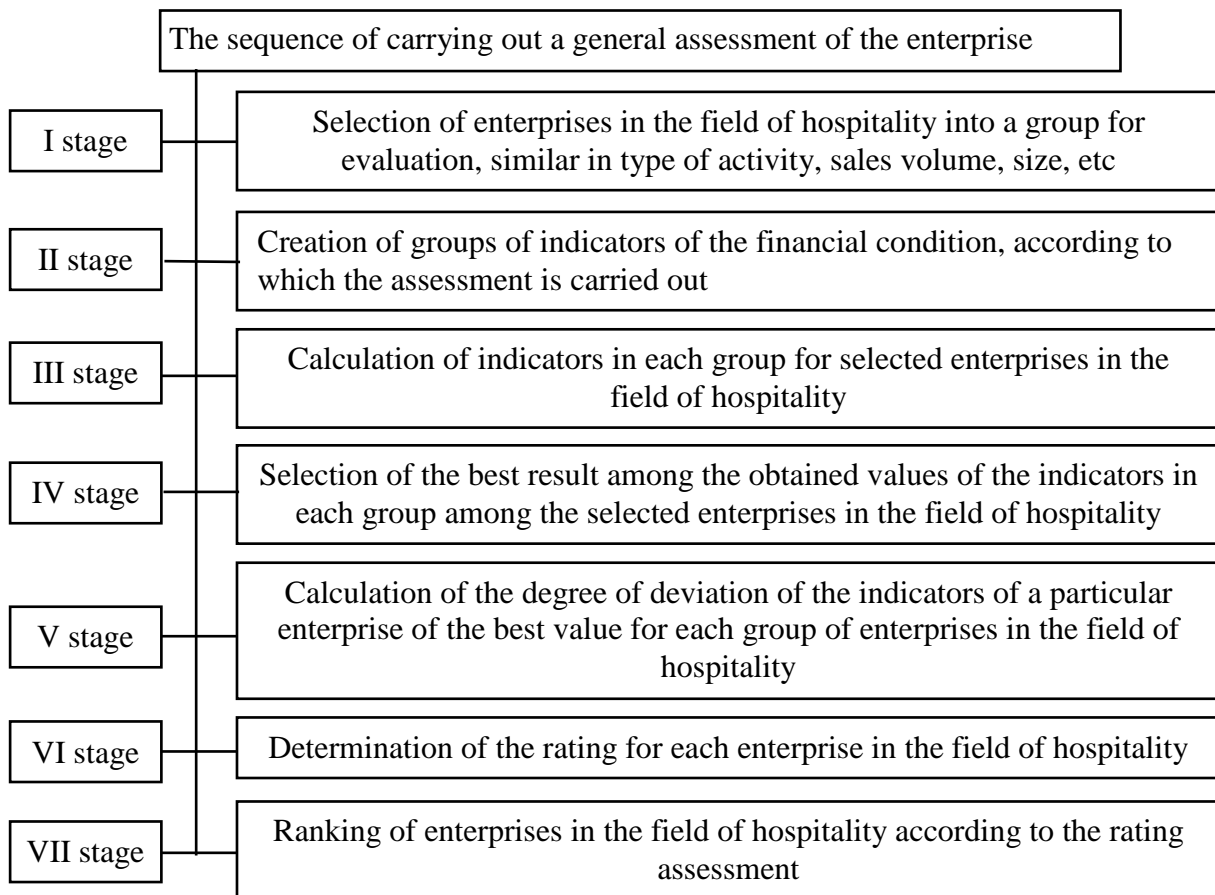
**Fig. 4. General view of the Boston Consulting Group matrix**

The most competitive are those enterprises that hold a significant share in the rapidly developing market. Various matrices can be used to assess the level of competitiveness of hospitality enterprises, such as the "Market Attractiveness/Competitiveness" matrix according to the GE/McKinsey model, the "Industry Attractiveness/Competitiveness" matrix according to the Shell/DPM model, the "Market Development Stage/Competitive Position" matrix according to by the Hofer/Schendel model, and the "Stage of the product life cycle/Competitive position" matrix by the ADL/LC model, and so on (Kuznetsova and Nezdoyminov, 2010).

The use of matrix methods for assessing competitiveness allows studying the dynamics of competition in the hospitality industry and provides an opportunity to obtain high-quality and representative results. However, it is important to note some shortcomings, in particular, the simplification of methods and the impossibility of conducting an in-depth analysis of the causes of specific phenomena, which can complicate the process of making management decisions.

Among the methods of evaluating the competitiveness of hotels, the rank method, the difference method, and benchmarking are distinguished. The ranking method allows you to determine the general position and strengths and weaknesses of enterprises in comparison with competitors. This method is based on the ranking of the achieved values of the indicators for each competitor

enterprise according to each evaluation parameter. It helps to determine in which criteria a hospitality business is ahead of its competitors and in which it is behind, although there is no quantitative assessment of lagging or ahead.



Source: developed by the author.

**Fig. 5. Algorithm for general assessment of the financial condition of hospitality enterprises**

To determine the best enterprise based on the criterion of the minimum number of ranks obtained, the places (ranks) are summed up according to all evaluation indicators. The main advantage of this method is its ease of use. However, this approach provides only an approximate result and does not allow assessing the exact level of the company's lagging behind the competitor.

In the method of difference, the advantages and disadvantages of enterprises in the field of hospitality are determined according to individual indicators. The company being analyzed is compared with one competitor. For each compared indicator, not only the company's position is determined, but also the quantitative gap in the achieved values. Based on the obtained data, it is possible to build a competitive profile of the hotel (Table 1).

Determining priorities makes it possible to highlight specific characteristics that the company should pay special attention to. One of the options for comparison, which is based on comparison with the ideal, is benchmarking (Gerasimenko, 2010). This process includes finding the most efficient competitive enterprise in order to adapt its best practices.

Table 1

**Competitive profile of the hotel enterprise**

| Characteristics          | Valuable % | Bad or better |    |    |   |    |    |    | Score | Priority                          |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-------|-----------------------------------|
|                          |            | -3            | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |       |                                   |
| Price for living         | 30         |               |    |    | ● |    |    |    | -30   | 1 <sup>st</sup> level of priority |
| Quality                  | 25         |               |    |    |   | ●  |    |    | 0     |                                   |
| Location                 | 15         |               |    |    |   |    | ●  |    | +15   |                                   |
| Additional services      | 10         |               |    |    |   |    | ●  |    | 0     |                                   |
| Efficiency of management | 15         |               |    |    |   |    | ●  |    | -15   | 2-nd level of priority            |
| Ads efficiency           | 5          |               |    |    |   |    | ●  |    | -5    | 3-d level of priority             |
| Total                    | 100        |               |    |    |   |    |    |    | -35   |                                   |

Source: (Bortnyk, 2013b).

The application of benchmarking can be divided into three main stages:

- 1) selection of an ideal competitor, determination of parameters for comparison and collection of necessary information for analysis;
- 2) comparison with an ideal hotel, identification of shortcomings in the studied benchmarking object and identification of their causes;
- 3) development and implementation of strategies to compensate for identified weaknesses of the enterprise.

Comparing various operating parameters and results of the enterprise with its main competitors through benchmarking allows not only to analyze the state of affairs at a certain moment in a strategic group of competitors, but also to predict possible development scenarios and develop appropriate strategies to strengthen positive aspects and reduce negative trends.

While studying the methods of assessing the competitiveness of enterprises, we came to the conclusion that the most objective result can be obtained with the help of a comprehensive assessment.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** To end up with, in this article, we considered different methodologies for assessing the competitiveness of hospitality establishments. The research examined the complexity of factors affecting competitiveness, from market analysis and strategic positioning to

benchmarking and comprehensive assessments. Obviously, these methodologies provide invaluable information that allows businesses to identify their strengths and weaknesses and make informed decisions.

One of the main conclusions is the need for a multifaceted approach. Quantitative data, while important, must be complemented by qualitative insights, including aspects such as customer satisfaction and brand perception. In addition, in the conditions of technological progress and changes in consumer preferences, the implementation of innovative technologies and sustainable practices becomes mandatory.

Competitiveness in hospitality is no longer limited to local or national markets; it is becoming more and more global. Thus, institutions must be tuned to international trends, cultural nuances and diverse customer expectations. In addition, the importance of social responsibility and environmental sustainability cannot be overstated. Business must demonstrate a commitment to ethical practices not only for the sake of competitiveness, but also as a responsible corporate citizen.

Despite the fact that some steps in the direction of assessing the competitiveness of enterprises in the hospitality sector have already been taken, to date scientists have not developed a universal methodology for comprehensive assessment of the competitiveness of enterprises. Growing trends in the development of the hospitality industry require additional research aimed at forming approaches to assessing the competitiveness of hospitality enterprises.

Several areas of future research can be distinguished:

**Environmental Sustainability:** Explore the role of sustainable practices in increasing competitiveness by considering environmental initiatives, waste reduction and energy efficiency in the hospitality business.

**Consumer Behavior Analysis:** Conducting in-depth research on the evolution of consumer preferences and consumer behavior, especially in the context of post-pandemic travel, to understand how these changes affect the competitive strategies of hospitality businesses.

**Cross-Cultural Competence:** Exploring the importance of cultural competence in hospitality and how establishments can adapt their offerings to effectively serve diverse international markets.

**Policy Implications:** To examine the impact of government policies, such as taxation, regulation and incentives, on the competitiveness of hospitality businesses in order to provide recommendations for policy makers and industry stakeholders.

**Economic Impact:** To analyze the economic impact of competitive hospitality establishments on the local and national economy, taking into

account factors such as job creation, revenue generation and tourism development.

By exploring these research perspectives, academics and industry experts can contribute to a deeper understanding of the changing nature of hospitality competitiveness, enabling businesses to thrive in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

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#### AUTHOR (S) BIOSKETCHES



**Kuvika Ganna**, Postgraduate student, Department of Management and Administration, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Lutsk, Ukraine.

**<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3469-8756>**

*E-mail:* [kuvika.hanna@vnu.edu.ua](mailto:kuvika.hanna@vnu.edu.ua)

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