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# METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ASSESSING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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objectives. **Background** and problem of competitiveness of institutions of higher education (IHE) is one of the key tasks, the solution of which will help increase the socio-economic development of the country. In the context of Ukraine's European integration interests, competition between Ukrainian and foreign IHEs is intensifying, which encourages the former to find ways of their own competitiveness (which is largely determined by the competitiveness of its graduates and the ability to generate knowledge-based innovations) as a result of using appropriate factors that are dependent directly on increasing competitiveness in the context of its management.

**Methods.** Methods of profiles and ratings using separate methods of comparative, statistical and economic-mathematical analysis (factor analysis), with the formation of an appropriate system of indicators.

**Findings.** The results of assessing the competitiveness of KNUTD indicate a decrease in the level of competitiveness

The of IHEs. It has been estimated that during ions 2017–2019 it was at a low level (0.542, the 0.541 and 0.466, respectively), which help according to the proposed scale for nent determining the level of competitiveness ine's of IHEs (developed using the golden ratio ests, method) is in the range of 0.383–0.618.

Conclusion. Based on studying and assessing the competitiveness of IHEs to improve it in the context of management and ensure the strategic development of within **IHEs** implementation of relevant strategic alternatives and proposed generalized areas, as well as certain factors of competitiveness, it has been determined appropriate to forecast the indicators underlying the calculation of the KNUTD competitiveness, using an improved methodological approach to the main proposed measures.

**Keywords:** competitiveness; competitiveness of IHEs; methods of profiles; rating estimations; methods of comparative; statistical and economic-mathematical analysis (factor analysis).

NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER
OF REFERENCES	OF FIGURES	OF TABLES
24	2	5

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# МЕТОДИЧНИЙ ПІДХІД ДО ОЦІНЮВАННЯ КОНКУРЕНТОСПРОМОЖНОСТІ ЗАКЛАДІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

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Постановка проблеми та завдання. Проблема конкурентоспроможності закладів вищої освіти (ЗВО) є одним із ключових завдань, вирішення якого сприятиме підвищенню соціальноекономічного країни. розвитку контексті європейських інтеграційних інтересів Україні посилюється між конкуренція українськими іноземними ЗВО, що спонукає перших шукати шляхи власної конкурентоспроможності значною (це визначається конкурентоспроможністю її випускників та здатністю генерувати інновації, заснованих на знаннях) в результаті використання відповідних факторів, які безпосередньо залежать від підвищення конкурентоспроможності в контексті управління нею.

**Методи.** Використані методи профілів та рейтингів з використанням окремих методів порівняльного, статистичного та економіко-математичного аналізу (факторного аналізу), з формуванням відповідної системи показників.

 Результати.
 Результати
 оцінки

 конкурентоспроможності
 КНУТД

 свідчать
 про зниження рівня

 конкурентоспроможності
 ЗВО. За

підрахунками, протягом 2017–2019 років він був на низькому рівні (0,542, 0,541 та 0,466, відповідно), який згідно із запропонованою шкалою для визначення рівня конкурентоспроможності ЗВО (розроблених із використанням методу золотого перетину) знаходиться у діапазон 0,383–0,618.

Висновки. На основі вивчення та оцінки конкурентоспроможності ЗВО з метою її покращення в контексті управління забезпечення та стратегічного розвитку ЗВО в рамках реалізації відповідних стратегічних альтернатив та запропонованих сфер діяльності, а також певних факторів конкурентоспроможності визначено відповідним ДЛЯ прогнозування показників, на яких лежить розрахунок конкурентоспроможності КНУТД, використовуючи вдосконалений методологічний підхід до основних запропонованих заходів.

Ключові слова: конкурентоспроможність; конкурентоспроможність ЗВО; методи профілів; рейтингові оцінки; методи порівняльного; статистичного та економіко-математичного аналізу (факторний аналіз).

Introduction. The problem of competitiveness of institutions of higher education (IHEs) is one of the key tasks, the solution of which will help increase the socio-economic development of the country. In the context of Ukraine's European integration interests, competition between Ukrainian and foreign institutions of higher education is intensifying, which encourages the former to find ways of their own competitiveness (which is largely determined by the competitiveness of its graduates and the ability to generate knowledge-based innovations) as a result of using appropriate factors that are directly dependent on increasing competitiveness in the context of its management.

Examining the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, it should be noted that the totality of researched works of scientists devoted to determining the essence of the competitiveness of institutions of higher education can be combined into groups. Thus, the competitiveness of institutions of higher education is considered in the following aspects:

- as a process (set of processes) of interaction and competition for the formation and implementation of competitive advantages (Tymoshenko 2014; Kravchenko, 2011);
- as a complex characteristic of the institutions of higher education, which determines the share of the relevant market of educational services, which belongs to this institution of higher education and reflects its advantage over competitors by a number of determining factors (Romanova, 2005; Lazarev *et al.*, 2003);
- as the ability to adapt to customer needs, meet and form the future ones, be separated from others through the use of competitive advantages and adaptation to changes in the market of educational services (Prus, 2006; Tardaskina *et al.*, 2013; Beztelesna *et al.*, 2017; Stebliuk *et al.*, 2018).

Based on the analysis of scientists' work, the competitiveness of institutions of higher education can be defined as its ability to identify and realize competitive advantages through a combination of potential opportunities and effective resource management in the process of interaction with the market environment in order to achieve a leading position relative to competitors through the best socio-economic indicators (price, quality, forms, teaching methods, etc.) and increase the level of satisfaction of consumer needs with goods / services (Gryshchenko, 2020; Shcherbak *et al.*, 2020).

Given the above, it should be noted that when assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, it is advisable to analyze the reasons for reducing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education and determine the factors of its increase, i.e. having a factor analysis – an important aspect of competitiveness assessment of countries, industries, institutions of higher education (Stebliuk *et al.*, 2018).

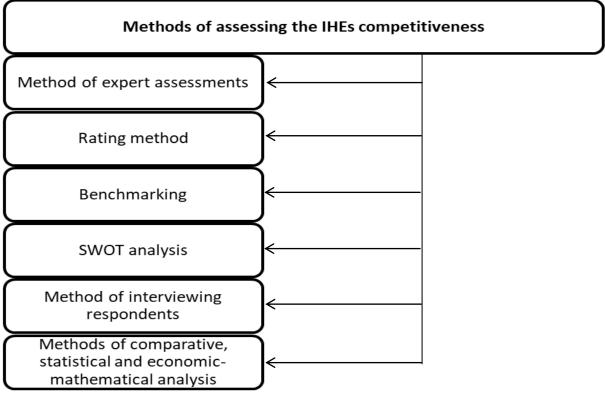
Analysis of the scientific literature shows that there is no single classification of factors for managing the competitiveness of institutions of

higher education, which determines the feasibility of forming a set of their specific list depending on the functioning of institutions of higher education, its purpose and activities, as well as competitive advantages.

Also, it should be noted that in modern conditions there is no unity in understanding the use of a universal methodological framework for assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, which is carried out using various statistical methods, economic and mathematical modeling, which, in turn, provide an opportunity to explore the current state of competitiveness in the market of educational services, identify strengths and weaknesses and conduct general monitoring of competitiveness. Therefore, the accuracy of the obtained assessment data and further actions of the institutions of higher education regarding its development and making a strategy behavior depend on the correctly chosen method.

The main aspects of competitiveness management, formation of competitive strategy and assessment of the competitiveness level, in particular institutions of higher education have been considered in the works (Breus, 2006, Breus, 2018; Breus *et al.*, 2019; Breus *et al.*, 2020).

The most common methods of assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education are shown in Fig. 1.



Source: Tardaskina et al., 2013; Beztelesna et al., 2017; Stebliuk et al., 2018; Tsarenko, 2015.

Fig. 1. The most common methods of assessing the IHEs competitiveness

Analysis of the existing methods of assessing competitiveness shows that they are used mainly to assess the competitiveness of economic entities. Methods for determining the competitiveness of products are largely one-sided, as well as a number of shortcomings that reduce the reliability of obtaining assessments of the competitiveness level.

Factors that negatively affect the practical use of the existing methods of assessing the competitiveness level at the IHEs level include the following:

- 1. The calculation of indicators of competitiveness assessment does not allow the user to see the structure of the influence of all factors on the general level in order to identify "bottlenecks" in the production.
- 2. Most methods are designed to assess the competitiveness of new products. However, in market conditions there is a need to assess competitiveness in order to determine the feasibility of its use at the level of institutions of higher education.
- 3. Most of the available methods of assessing competitiveness for calculations use indicators determined by the expert ranking of the characteristics of products / services according to their degree of importance. The result of such calculations depends on the intuition and experience of the expert, his awareness of all the features of competing products and the market state.
- 4. There is no integration of the proposed methods into the information system of IHEs management, which significantly complicates the process of calculating the competitiveness of institutions of higher education and the possibility of their use to manage the competitiveness of institutions of higher education.

Thus, it is reasonable to assume that from the point of view of practical use of methods for assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, it is important to meet the relevant needs of consumers, and not just the presence of functional or other properties of the product or service.

The main goal is to systematize the theoretical and methodological provisions and methodological framework for studying the competitiveness of institutions of higher education to develop a methodological approach to its assessment.

In order to achieve this goal, the following tasks have been set and solved in the work:

- the essence of the concept of "competitiveness" has been investigated;
- theoretical aspects of studying the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, factors influencing it and competitive advantages have been considered;
- methodical approaches to assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education have been studied;

- assessment of the competitiveness of institutions of higher education using an improved methodological approach has been performed.

The research object is the process of assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education.

The initial information of the study was the data published on the official website of KNUTD (Official website of Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, 2017–2020), the rating "TOP-200 Ukraine 2020" (Independent evaluation of universities: academic rating "Top-200 Ukraine 2020", 2020) and the results of own calculations in conducting economic and statistical analysis of the main indicators that characterize the activities of KNUTD from the standpoint of financial, educational, organizational and scientific activities.

The study was conducted during 2019–2020 at Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design.

Materials and methods. In the context of the study, it should be noted that the analysis of literature sources confirmed that none of the methods is universal, they involve the use of a number of indicators that are inherently recursive and cannot be formed on the basis of data available in the institutions of higher education, given that institutions of higher education are not classic business entities, they have certain features of the business entity, but not all of their indicators may have the same value to ensure the effectiveness of IHEs activities as enterprises.

Thus, when assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education it is possible to use a number of methods, which include methods of profiles and ratings using separate methods of comparative, statistical and economic-mathematical analysis (factor analysis), with the formation of an appropriate system of indicators. In this context, the ranking positions of institutions of higher education are indicators of the quality of educational services and at the same time indicators of the competitiveness level of both institutions of higher education and higher education in general.

In the context of strategic development of KNUTD the research and realization of competitive advantages of the university acquires importance. Thus, the main advantages of KNUTD in comparison with competitors (taking into account the rating data "TOP-200 Ukraine 2020") (Independent evaluation of universities: academic rating "Top-200 Ukraine 2020", 2020) should include: image, successful experience in the market of educational services since 1930, a wide range of educational services, communication with employers, the presence of well-known graduates, international recognition. With this in mind, the following main characteristics of competitive advantage depending on their affiliation to the results of KNUTD in accordance with the content of a competitive advantage (Table 1).

Characteristics of competitive advantages of KNUTD

Table 1

Competitive advantage	Features	Content		
	Adaptability	Ability to adapt a specific competitive advantage to the conditions of IHEs performance		
Image	Ability to ensure market position	Such a market position can advantageously distinguis from competitors for a long time		
	Association	Specific market conditions and peculiarities of functioning are taken into account		
Successful experience in	Relativity	Competitive advantage is the result of comparing the performance of institutions of higher education the interact in one market		
the market of educational services	Dynamism	It is caused by changes in the factors of the external competitive environment, depends on the activity of competitors, changes in consumer demand and behavior, scientific and technological progress, etc.		
A wide range of educational services	Dependence	The influence of many heterogeneous uncontrolled factors (including modern technology) contributes to the creation of benefits in the field of quality of higher education, but can also worsen it due to the high cost of its creation / acquisition		
	Ability to be strengthened	It is determined by the ability to improve the existing activities in accordance with the chosen strategy		
Contacting employers	Significance	Compliance with key success factors (in terms of competition conditions in the industry and market requirements)		
Presence of famous graduates	Reproducibility	It is associated with the ability of competitors to identify the main characteristics of the advantage, to establish the feasibility and consequences of its copying, to determine the composition and amount of resources needed for its implementation in order to reduce the competitive status of the competitor		
	Orientation	Focus on the specific needs of real and potential consumers		
International recognition	Stability Ladvantage and its ettectiveness which allo			

Source: Formed based on the results of own research.

**Data Description.** The study of the processes observed in the field of higher education and their impact on the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, along with the existing trends and patterns involves the search for the relationship of quantitative and qualitative indicators and the optimal direction of their development using economic and mathematical modeling.

The methodological approach proposed for use is, in essence, an improved methodological approach to assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education and an instrumental basis for its evaluation model. It takes into account indicators that characterize the scope of its management (in the context of financial and organizational support, student and research staff), taking into account the principles of developing one of the tools of strategic management – Balanced Scorecard (BSC) (Kaplan *et al.*, 2005), adapted to the needs of institutions of higher education. The stages of formation of an improved methodological approach to assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education (developed on the basis of (Breus, 2018; Breus, 2019) are shown in Fig. 2.

The competitiveness of Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design has been assessed using separate methods of comparative, statistical and economic-mathematical analysis (factor analysis) by the principal components method.

Considering that competitive advantages are formed, in particular, by comparative and dynamic character and the factors causing them, and also on the considered factors of management of IHEs competitiveness for research and its estimation the group "managed" has been selected, taking into account which groups of indicators have been formed characterizing the impact of these factors on the competitiveness of institutions of higher education.

Taking into account the data that characterize the activities of KNUTD both from the standpoint of the education institution and the business entity and the assessment of financial stability, the assessment of the competitiveness of institutions of higher education according to the data published on the official website of KNUTD (Official website of Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, 2017–2019). The initial data (indicators) for assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education were divided into four groups: finance (indicators that characterize the management of financial flows of institutions of higher education); internal processes (indicators, the increase of which will help increase the efficiency of institutions of higher education); students (indicators that can be used to characterize the attitude of students to institutions of higher education in general); development and training of academic staff (AS) (indicators that can be used to determine the main directions of improving the quality of educational services provided by institutions of higher education).

Based on the components of the BSC, the indicators were normalized by groups (due to the lack of reference or standard values of indicators for assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, the basis for comparison were maximum / minimum values) based on their deviation on the scale of variation and division of evaluation indicators into indicators-

stimulators (their rise leads to an increase in the level of competitiveness of institutions of higher education) and indicators-disincentives (their rise leads to a decrease in the level of competitiveness of institutions of higher education).

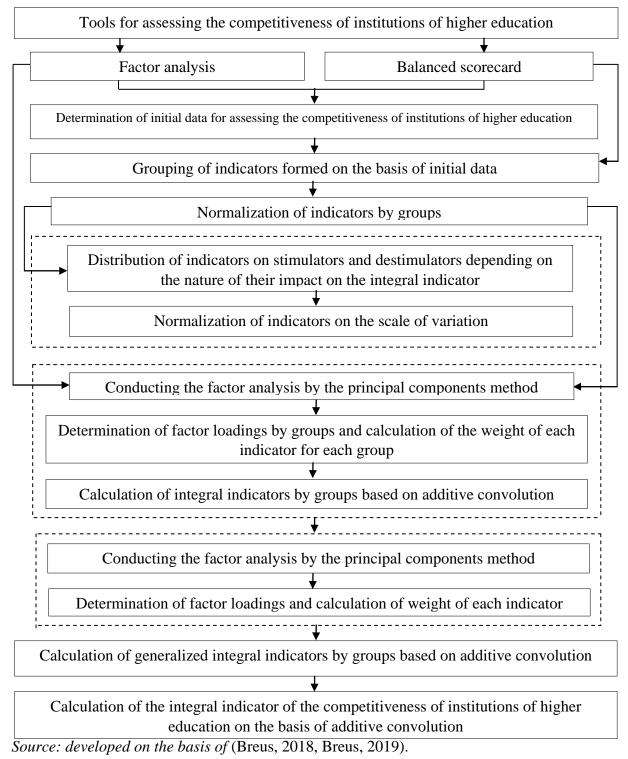


Fig. 2. Stages of formation of an improved methodological approach to assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education

To assess the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, integrated indicators were constructed by groups of indicators and an integral indicator as a whole for KNUTD by determining the weight values of indicators by groups in the process of factor analysis (calculation procedure involves the use of software Statistica) based on the results of factor loadings for each group of indicators.

The weight of each indicator was calculated using data (Breus, 2019; Kharazishvily *et al.*, 2013; On Approval of the Methodology for Calculating Integral Regional Indices of Economic Development (2003); Methodical recommendations for calculating the level of economic security of Ukraine, 20013) as following: the maximum values of factor loadings are selected from the factor loading tables for each row; the selected maximum values (loadings) are multiplied by the fractions of the total variance for each indicator; the sum of the received products on all factors is defined; the weight of each indicator is calculated by dividing the product of the maximum value and the share of the total variance for each indicator by the sum of the obtained products for all indicators assigned to one or another group.

According to the indicators for calculation, their normalized and weight values (based on the study of factor loadings) by groups, the calculation of integral indicators of IHEs competitiveness by groups of indicators and IHEs competitiveness as a whole according to formulas 1–2 taking into account data (Breus, 2019; Kharazishvily *et al.*, 2013; On Approval of the Methodology for Calculating Integral Regional Indices of Economic Development (2003); Methodical recommendations for calculating the level of economic security of Ukraine, 20013).

$$I_m = \sum_{i=1}^n d_i \times y_i, \tag{1}$$

where  $I_m$  – integral indicator for a group of indicators, where m = (1, 2, 3, 4);  $d_i$  – the weight of the indicator that determines the degree of contribution of the i<sup>th</sup> indicator to the integral indicator of the component (group of indicators) of the competitiveness of institutions of higher education;

 $y_i$  – normalized value of the i<sup>th</sup> indicator;

n – the number of indicators used to assess the i<sup>th</sup> indicator in the integral indicator for a group of indicators;

$$\sum d_i = 1, \ 0 \le d_i; \ y_i \le 1$$

$$II_{KC} = \sum_{m} d_m \times I_m, \tag{2}$$

where <sup>II</sup>kc – integral indicator of IHEs competitiveness;

 $d_m$  – the weight of the indicator, which determines the degree of contribution of the indicator to the integral indicator of the competitiveness of institutions of higher education;

$$I_m$$
 – integrated indicator, where  $m = (1, 2, 3, 4)$ ;  $\sum d_m = 1$ ;  $0 \le d_m$ ;  $y_m \le 1$ .

Based on formulas (1)–(2) with the use of normalized and weight values of indicators, the calculation (normalized and weight values of indicators were used) of integral indicators by groups has been calculated.

**Results and discussion.** The results of the calculation of generalized integral indicators of KNUTD competitiveness for each group are given in table 2.

**Integrated indicators for each group** 

Table 2

Years	Integral indicator for the group ''Finance''	Integral indicator for the group "Internal processes"	Integral indicator of IHE for the group "Students"	Integral indicator for the group "Development and training of AS"
2017	0,504	0,391	0,495	0,757
2018	0,607	0,600	0,657	0,337
2019	0,446	0,702	0,556	0,169

Further research of factor loadings on KNUTD has been carried out and weight of each indicator has been calculated (table 3).

Table 3

**Factor loadings** 

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Weight
Integral indicator for the group "Finance"	-0,235	0,972	0,183
Integral indicator for the group "Internal processes"	-0,919	-0,393	0,279
Integral indicator for the group "Students"	-0,832	0,555	0,253
Integral indicator for the group "Development and training of AS"	0,937	0,350	0,285
Total variance	2,470	1,530	_
The proportion of total variance	0,617	0,383	
Total	_	_	1,0

The data of the table 3 indicate the influence of each factor on the input 4 features of the model. Based on formulas (1)–(2), the generalized integral indicators by groups and the integral indicator of KNUTD competitiveness by years were calculated. The results of the calculation are given in table 4.

The data in the table 4 generally show a decrease in the level of competitiveness of institutions of higher education, however, given that this methodological approach provides the possibility of achieving the maximum value of competitiveness at level 1, it is worth noting that the competitiveness of KNUTD in 2017–2019 was low. Competitiveness levels are determined using the golden ratio method, according to which the golden ratio is 1.618. To use

this method, it is proposed to divide the possible levels of competitiveness of institutions of higher education into 5 segments (intervals), each of which characterizes a certain state of competitiveness. The scale for determining the level of competitiveness of institutions of higher education is given in the table 5.

Table 4
Generalized integral indicators of indicators by groups and integral indicator for KNUTD

	Integral	Integral	Integral	Integral indicator	Integral
Years	indicator for	indicator for the	indicator for	Ŭ <b>1</b>	indicator of
1 cars	the group	group "Internal	the group	"Development and	KNUTD
	"Finance"	processes''	"Students"	training of AS"	competitiveness
2017	0,092	0,109	0,125	0,216	0,542
2018	0,111	0,168	0,166	0,096	0,541
2019	0,082	0,196	0,141	0,048	0,466

Table 5
Scale for determining the level of competitiveness
of institutions of higher education

No	Intervals of values of the integral indicator of	Competitiveness levels of	
745	competitiveness of institutions of higher education	institutions of higher education	
1.	0,855–1	High	
2.	0,619–0,854	Average	
3.	0,383–0,618	Low	
4.	0,147–0,382	Crisis	
5.	0-0.146	Critical	

The introduction of an improved methodological approach into the practice of assessing the competitiveness of institutions of higher education and using the proposed levels of competitiveness as thresholds at certain intervals allows economic interpretation of the results of the calculation of the integral indicator and comparison of assessment results in dynamics.

Conclusion. Taking into account the data of the rating "TOP-200 Ukraine 2020" the main competitive advantages of KNUTD have been formed, their main characteristics have been outlined and taking into account the economic and statistical analysis to determine and analyze indicators of financial and economic activity of institutions of higher education, the results of which generally indicate an increase in negative trends in the activities of institutions of higher education, while the identified changes have a negative impact on the financial and economic activities of institutions of higher education and contribute to the reduction of its competitiveness.

The assessment of the competitiveness of institutions of higher education according to the data of KNUTD using an improved methodological approach,

which is based on the proposed binary use of methods of profiles and ratings, involves the use of factor analysis by the method of main components hierarchically with division into groups (by adapting a balanced system of indicators to manage the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, taking into account the main approaches to its development, which formed the basis for choosing evaluation indicators to determine integral indicators of competitiveness by groups and institutions of higher education in general).

The results of the assessment of the competitiveness of KNUTD indicate a decrease in the level of competitiveness of institutions of higher education, it was calculated during 2017–2019 at a low level – corresponds to 0.542, 0.541 and 0.466, respectively, which according to the proposed scale for determining the level of competitiveness of institutions of higher education (developed using the method of the golden ratio) is in the range of 0.383–0.618.

Based on the study and assessment of the competitiveness of institutions of higher education to improve it in the context of its management and strategic development of institutions of higher education within the implementation of relevant strategic alternatives and proposed generalized areas, as well as certain competitiveness factors, it is appropriate to forecast indicators based on competitiveness.

**Acknowledgement.** The authors thank the management and administration of the website of Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design and the Center for International Projects "Euroeducation" for the opportunity to use the information published on the official websites in the calculations.

Conflict of interest. S. Breus developed a methodological approach to assess the competitiveness of institutions of higher education, which was tested during the leadership of scientific work of the student I.I. Suhoniako, who took first place in the second round of the All-Ukrainian competition of student research in the specialty "Management in economic competition" (2020) and Master's thesis of the student I.I. Suhoniako. The main results have been highlighted in the publications on the relevant data on the subject of the article, participated in the formation of the main competitive advantages. Y. Khaustova and M. Denysenko participated in the adaptation of the main competitive advantages to the activities of KNUTD and in the generalization of the research results. S. Bondarenko participated in the adaptation of the main competitive advantages to the activities of KNUTD. N. Kyrylko participated in collecting the input information for analytical calculations.

## **Abbreviations:**

IHE Institution of higher education

KNUTD Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design

BSC Balanced Scorecard

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