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THE RESEARCH ON COMPETITIVENESS OF ROAD TRANSPORT ENTERPRISES: LITHUANIAN CASE

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In the paper, various opinions of Lithuanian and foreign authors of scientific publications are reviewed and the criteria for assessing competitiveness of road transport are discussed upon. On assessment of competitiveness of services provided by Lithuanian road transport enterprises, not only technical options are taken into account. It is proposed to assess competitiveness of enterprises upon taking into consideration the total set of services provided as well as their quality and the marketing level of the enterprise. In the paper, the factors impacting competitiveness of road transport are discussed upon and the research works required for objective assessment of competitiveness of road transport are foreseen. A model for assessing competitiveness of road transport enterprises realized by the authors is provided. In the end of the paper, conclusions and recommendations are provided.

Keywords: competitiveness of enterprises, competitiveness assessing, concordance, AHP method

1. Introduction

After joining of Lithuania to the European Union (EU) in the year 2004 and the subsequent changes of the business environment, the problems of competitiveness and foreign trade are becoming more and more topical, because the membership in the EU increases the importance of economic and institutional relations with other countries. In the period of economic recession, a considerable number of enterprises (in particular, those involved in providing transport services) could not hold out their position in the market and a still larger number of them obtained no profit from their activities because of the reduced level of consumption and needs in transport services. In course of the recovery of economy, effective using the competitive potential is of a great importance.

The key element of the competitive environment is enterprises. A competitiveness of an enterprise in the world market is bound with its ability to respond to immediate changes of the market and to hold out the position of the enterprise in it. The idea of competitive advantage starts from creation and distribution of the value. An enterprise is recognized competitively advantageous; when its influence predetermines economic changes in the market where it has a certain share [1]. The concept of economic equilibrium is interpreted as an ability of an enterprise to hold its end up and to withstand the negative impact of its rivals. So, an enterprise should be capable to overcome the barriers of strategic difficulties. According to scientist Piccoli, both its ability to defend its position of competitive advantage and an ability to provide a successful response to its rivals become the ones of a great importance [2]. The core of competition is a necessity to contend that is important for competition in the market. Researcher Lobanova emphasized that a market, as an open system (space or territory), cannot be imagined without organizations competing in the said space [3].

According to researcher Gerard de Villiers [4], commercial activities in competitive environment should be focused only to the spheres where they can preserve or obtain competitive advantage. Five factors of six traditional ones included in the service marketing mix (price, promotion, product, humans and process) leave a too little space for introduction of innovations.