

**O. M. BEKETOV NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF URBAN
ECONOMY IN KHARKIV**

School of Economics and Management

Department of Economics and Marketing

EXPLANATORY NOTE

to the Master's Degree Qualification Thesis

on the topic: **"Strategic Directions for Ensuring the International
Competitiveness of Enterprises"**

Written by: 2nd year student, group M MiEk 2024-2a
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The Master's degree qualification thesis has been completed in full accordance with the assigned task and the established requirements.

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**O. M. BEKETOV NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF URBAN
ECONOMY IN KHARKIV**

Institution School of Economics and Management
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APPROVE

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October 6, 2025

**TASK
FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE QUALIFICATION THESIS**

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1. Topic of Master's degree qualification thesis	Strategic Directions for Ensuring the International Competitiveness of Enterprises
Academic Supervisor: Anastasiia Moskvina, Candidate of Economic Sciences (PhD), Docent, Associate Professor	
approved by order of the higher education institution dated September 29, 2025, № 871-03	
2. The deadline for the student to apply is December 1, 2025	
The initial data for the study include operational data of companies, including media companies providing educational services; macroeconomic statistical materials; scientific concepts; theoretical and practical contributions of leading scholars in the field of foreign economic activity of enterprises, presented in monographic and periodical scientific literature; reports and expert studies; as well as regulatory and legal acts.	
4. Content and description (list of issues to be developed): Introduction Chapter 1 Theoretical and methodological aspects of determining and implementing strategic directions for ensuring international competitiveness Chapter 2 Macro- and microenvironment for ensuring international competitiveness: a comparative analysis of competitive conditions for EdTech companies in China and Ukraine Chapter 3 Strategic directions for ensuring international competitiveness of enterprises Conclusions References Appendices	

5. List of graphic material (with precise indication of mandatory drawings):

1. Title Page.
2. Structural and Logical Diagram of Master's Degree Qualification Thesis.
3. Research Methods;
4. Key Definitions and Strategic Concepts in Competitiveness Research;
5. Model of Competition Levels and the Interrelationship of Concepts within the Competitive System;
6. The Interconnection of Competitiveness Levels;
7. The System of Competitiveness;
8. Macro- and Meso-Environment Assessment;
9. Micro-Environment and Strategic Position Assessment;
10. Conclusions and Recommendations;
11. Approbation of the Results of the Master's Degree Qualification Thesis;
12. Conclusion Slide.

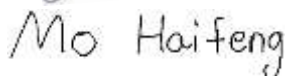
6. Date of issue of the task October 6, 2025

Academic Supervisor



Anastasiia MOSKVINA

The task was accepted by the student

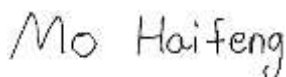


Mo HAIFENG

CALENDAR PLAN

No by/ list	Stage name applicant's qualification (Master's) thesis	Completion date of work stages	Note
1	Development of the plan for the applicant's qualification (Master's) thesis, literature review on the topic	06.10.25 – 12.10.25	Completed
2	Writing the theoretical and methodological sections of the qualification (Master's) thesis	13.10.25 – 02.11.25	Completed
3	Writing the calculation and analytical sections of the qualification (Master's) thesis	03.11.25 – 16.11.25	Completed
4	Writing the recommendation sections of the qualification (Master's) thesis	17.11.25 – 04.08.26	Completed
5	Verification of compliance with academic standards	05.08.25 – 16.08.26	Completed
6	Preparation of an explanatory note and verification of compliance with academic integrity principles	17.08.26 – 23.08.26	Completed
7	Preliminary defense and obtaining a review	24.08.26 – 25.08.26	Completed
8	Defense of the qualification (Master's) thesis	26.08.26	

Student



Mo HAIFENG

Academic Supervisor



Anastasiia MOSKVINA

Verification of compliance
with academic standards



Oksana BERVENO

ABSTRACT

The master's degree qualification thesis contains 88 pages, 9 figures, 18 tables, 55 sources used.

TOPIC OF master's degree qualification thesis: "Strategic Directions for Ensuring the International Competitiveness of Enterprises"

SUBJECT OF RESEARCH: theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of determining and implementing strategic directions for ensuring the international competitiveness of enterprises.

OBJECT OF RESEARCH: the process of ensuring enterprises' international competitiveness.

PURPOSE OF THE WORK: to generalise theoretical principles, systematise and substantiate scientific and methodological approaches, and develop practical recommendations for determining and implementing strategic directions for ensuring and enhancing the international competitiveness of enterprises.

TASKS OF THE THESIS: to examine the essence, levels, and components of international competitiveness; to identify and systematize approaches to determining strategic directions for ensuring the competitiveness of enterprises in international markets; to analyze the impact of macroeconomic factors on enterprises' strategic behavior in international markets; to assess the microeconomic environment as a basis for ensuring the international competitiveness of enterprises; to substantiate the selection of strategic directions for ensuring the international competitiveness of enterprises; to develop recommendations for the implementation of strategic directions and practical measures to enhance the international competitiveness of EdTech companies.

RESEARCH METHODS: general scientific methods – analysis and synthesis, comparison, generalization; special methods – grouping, detailing, and modelling.

The results of the qualification study can be applied in the practical activities of EdTech companies.

YEAR OF COMPLETION 2025

YEAR OF DEFENSE 2026

KEYWORDS: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT, INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION, INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS, COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES, INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGIES.

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INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the Topic. The international competitiveness of enterprises in the context of the dynamic development of the global economy is a pressing issue for every country. Under modern conditions of globalization, ensuring competitiveness is a crucial challenge, the solution to which is closely linked to improving the development of strategies aimed at forming and sustaining the competitiveness of enterprises.

For a long time, the issues of competition and ensuring the competitiveness of enterprises have been at the center of attention of many foreign scholars. The foundations of modern understanding of economic competition were laid by the works of classical political economists A. Smith and D. Ricardo, who first outlined the role of market mechanisms in resource allocation. The further development of competition theory, as well as the methodology for analyzing market structures and enterprise efficiency, was ensured by the works of A. Marshall, J. Keynes, V. Leontief, and especially M. Porter, who developed the concept of competitive advantages and international business competitiveness. A significant contribution to the development of strategic management and the formulation of strategies to enhance enterprise competitiveness was made by well-known foreign researchers such as I. Ansoff, C. Prahalad, G. Hamel, and M. Sarith, who focused on strategic planning, innovation, dynamic capabilities of enterprises, and the creation of long-term competitive advantages in a global environment. Important contributions to the study of international competitiveness were also made by Chinese scholars, including Y. Cao, S. Dai, X. Guo, X. Li, T. Tong, L. Wang, X. Xia, Y. Zhang, and Y. Zhao. Their research focuses on enterprise modernization, implementation of innovative development models, increasing the productivity of production factors, and adapting businesses to the challenges of globalized markets. A synthesis of their work forms the scientific basis for developing strategic directions to ensure the international competitiveness of enterprises and makes it possible to identify the most effective tools and development models in the modern conditions of global competition.

Despite a wide range of research directions on the problems of developing

strategies to enhance enterprise competitiveness, there is no unified approach to this process in the scientific community. A detailed study of the works of the aforementioned scholars allows us to conclude that, despite the diversity of approaches to the examined problem, there is currently no comprehensive methodology for assessing competitiveness or practical recommendations regarding the development of a competitive strategy for enterprises in the external market. Such a strategy should be based on active interaction among all stakeholders involved in the enterprise's activities: customers, personnel, intermediaries, partners, and competitors. All of this determines the need to search for new competitive advantages.

The relevance and insufficient study of these issues determined the choice of the research topic, its aim, objectives, and structure.

Relation to Scientific Programs, Plans, and Topics. The master's thesis was carried out in accordance with the research topic of the Department of Economic Theory and International Economics at Kharkiv National University of Urban Economy named after O. M. Beketov, titled "The Evolution of International Economic Relations under Global Challenges", state registration number: 0125U000177.

Object of the study: the process of ensuring enterprises' international competitiveness.

Subject of the study: theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of determining and implementing strategic directions for ensuring the international competitiveness of enterprises.

Aim of the study: to generalise theoretical principles, systematise and substantiate scientific and methodological approaches, and develop practical recommendations for determining and implementing strategic directions for ensuring and enhancing the international competitiveness of enterprises.

To achieve the stated objective, the following tasks were set in the study:

1. To examine the essence, levels, and components of international competitiveness.
2. To identify and systematize approaches to determining strategic directions for ensuring the competitiveness of enterprises in international markets.

3. To analyze the impact of macroeconomic factors on enterprises' strategic behavior in international markets.

4. To assess the microeconomic environment as a basis for ensuring the international competitiveness of enterprises.

5. To substantiate the selection of strategic directions for ensuring the international competitiveness of enterprises.

6. To develop recommendations for the implementation of strategic directions and practical measures to enhance the international competitiveness of EdTech companies.

The following methods were used in the study: analysis and synthesis for substantiating theoretical provisions and practical recommendations; comprehensive analysis to assess the level of enterprise development and its competitive positions; analytical methods (comparative, systemic, and statistical) to examine the market and factors of international competitiveness; expert evaluation methods to identify priority strategic directions; structural modelling and graphical methods to visualize the results; and strategic analysis to identify competitive factors and develop strategic directions for international competitiveness.

The information base of the study includes national and international standards, expert developments and assessments, scientific works of leading scholars in the field of enterprises' international activities (monographs, textbooks, articles from peer-reviewed academic journals), operational data of companies, including media companies providing educational services, macroeconomic statistical materials, as well as analytical reports and expert studies.

The main results of the work lies in a comprehensive study of strategic directions for ensuring the international competitiveness of enterprises in the EdTech sector under conditions of globalization and digital transformation. The study уточняет (clarifies) the concept of competitive strategy as a dynamic system of long-term managerial decisions aimed at creating sustainable international competitive advantages within the digital educational environment. The methodological approach to assessing the international competitiveness of EdTech companies has been further

developed through the integration of classical strategic analysis tools (PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces model, SPACE analysis, and the Ansoff matrix), taking into account contemporary challenges of digitalization and intensified international competition. The feasibility of combining innovative differentiation with the best-value strategy is substantiated as an effective model of competitive behavior for EdTech companies operating in highly saturated international markets. In addition, practical approaches to forming a market challenger competitive strategy have been improved, based on the utilization of intellectual capital, digital and AI technologies, and the development of partnership ecosystems.

The practical significance of the obtained research results lies in the fact that the study substantiates strategic directions for ensuring the international competitiveness of the enterprise, which will lead to more efficient operations and increased profit.

Approval of the results of the qualification work. Certain provisions, conclusions, and results obtained by the author during the research were presented at an international scientific and practical conference:

Moskvina A.O., Mo Haifeng. (2026) Strategic Directions for Ensuring the International Competitiveness of Enterprises in the Digital Economy. Collection of Scientific Papers with the Proceedings of the 5th International Scientific and Practical Conference «Scientific Innovation: Theoretical Insights and Practical Impacts» (January 19–21, 2026, Naples, Italy). European Open Science Space. 45-50 p. URL: <https://www.eoss-conf.com/en/archive/scientific-innovation-theoretical-insights-and-practical-impacts-19-01-26/>.

Structure and scope of the qualification work. The work consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, appendices, and a list of references. The full text of the work is presented on 88 pages of computer text, including: 78 pages of main text, which contains 18 tables and 9 figures; a list of references containing 55 items; and 1 appendix.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF DETERMINING AND IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR ENSURING INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

1.1 The Essence, Levels, and Components of International Competitiveness

Enterprises' competitiveness is a decisive factor in the long-term development prospects of a country's economy at the current stage of intensification of international economic relations. International competitiveness reflects an enterprise's ability to adapt to changes in the external environment, as well as its capacity to effectively utilise available internal reserves.

The study of the concept of "enterprise competitiveness" involves clarifying the essence of the category of "competition," as these concepts are closely interconnected: competitiveness can be discussed only in the presence of competition.

One of the fundamental principles of a market economy is free competition among producers. *Competition* is an economic rivalry among individual producers of goods and services aimed at satisfying interests related to the sale of products and the generation of profit; it represents a struggle among producers for consumers (and among consumers for producers), in which the ultimate success is achieved by the producer whose products are competitive.

Most scholars, including Schumpeter (1942), Porter (1980), and Teece (2007), consider competition to be a multifaceted process of interaction and rivalry among market participants for resources, markets, and advantages, which stimulates firms to innovate and improve their performance.

Competition is a highly selective and flexible mechanism for ensuring the efficiency, proportionality, and dynamism of a market economy. The market itself cannot function properly without developed forms of competition. As an integral component of the "production–market" system, competition operates in many forms. The main forms of competition include intra-industry, inter-industry, and international

competition.

In a broad sense, competitiveness is the ability of a particular object or subject to outperform competitors under given conditions. Objects possessing competitiveness can be classified into the following groups: an individual (as a combination of human capital, personal abilities, and competencies); a product; an enterprise (as a producer of competitive products); an industry (as a set of competitive enterprises within a specific field of activity); a country (as the competitiveness of all or any of the above-mentioned groups); and a region (as a district, oblast, or territorial part of a country or the world).

Thus, competitiveness is a complex economic category that can be considered at different levels. It should be noted that all the above-mentioned levels of competitiveness are interdependent, and the assessment of their condition is determined primarily by human capabilities, the ability to produce competitive products, and the capacity to ensure an adequate quality of life for the population.

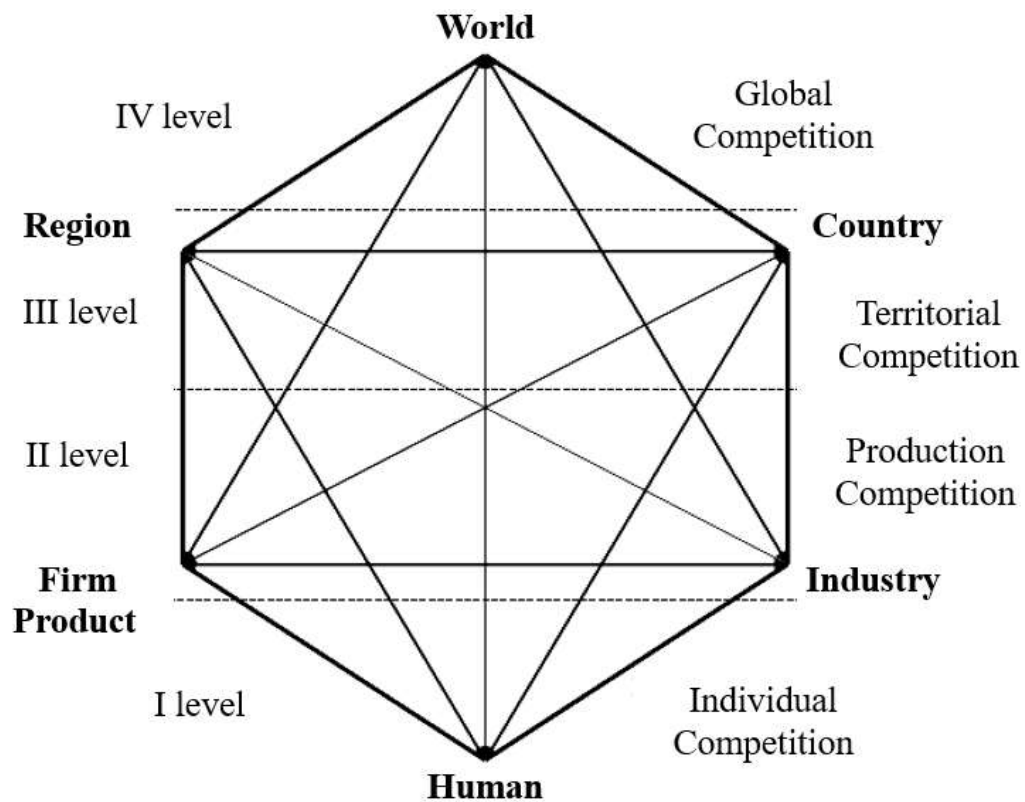


Figure 1.1. Model of Levels of Competition [23]

Competitiveness exists at various levels according to the object; however, the level of competitiveness of the enterprise itself is also significant in terms of its development. Competitiveness may be either of a high- or low-technology type, which generally corresponds to the competitiveness of wealthy and developing countries, respectively. Transitioning from one level to another changes the range of tasks and factors that contribute to enhancing international competitiveness in accordance with its level (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

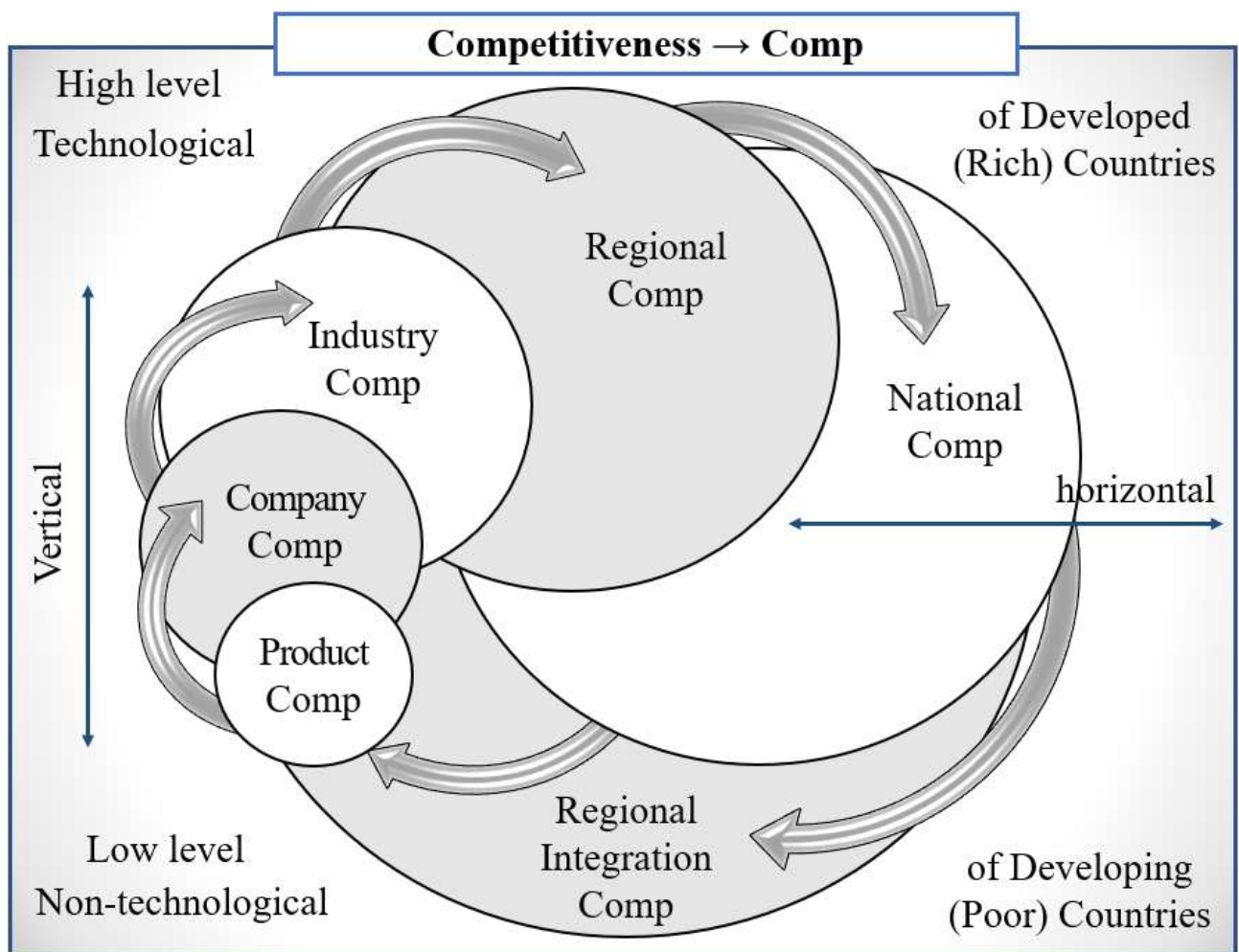


Figure 1.2. The Interconnection of Competitiveness Levels

Source: developed by the author

Competitiveness can also be classified according to various defining characteristics (see Table 1.1 and Figure 1.3).

Table 1.1

Qualitative Characteristics of Competitiveness
(compiled by the author based on [38; 40])

Category	Definition / Description	Examples
Levels (by object hierarchy)	The hierarchical scale at which competitiveness manifests	Individual, Product, Firm, Industry, Regional, National, Global
Types (by technological/resource nature)	The nature or source of competitive advantage	Technological, Non-technological, Innovation-driven, Cost-driven, Resource-based, Knowledge-based
Kinds (by area of manifestation)	The sphere or dimension in which competitiveness is expressed	Price, Non-price, Quality, Marketing, Institutional, Social, Environmental (sustainability)
Forms (by spatial/organizational aspect)	The organizational or spatial expression of competitiveness	Production, Territorial, International, Regional integration, Cluster, Network

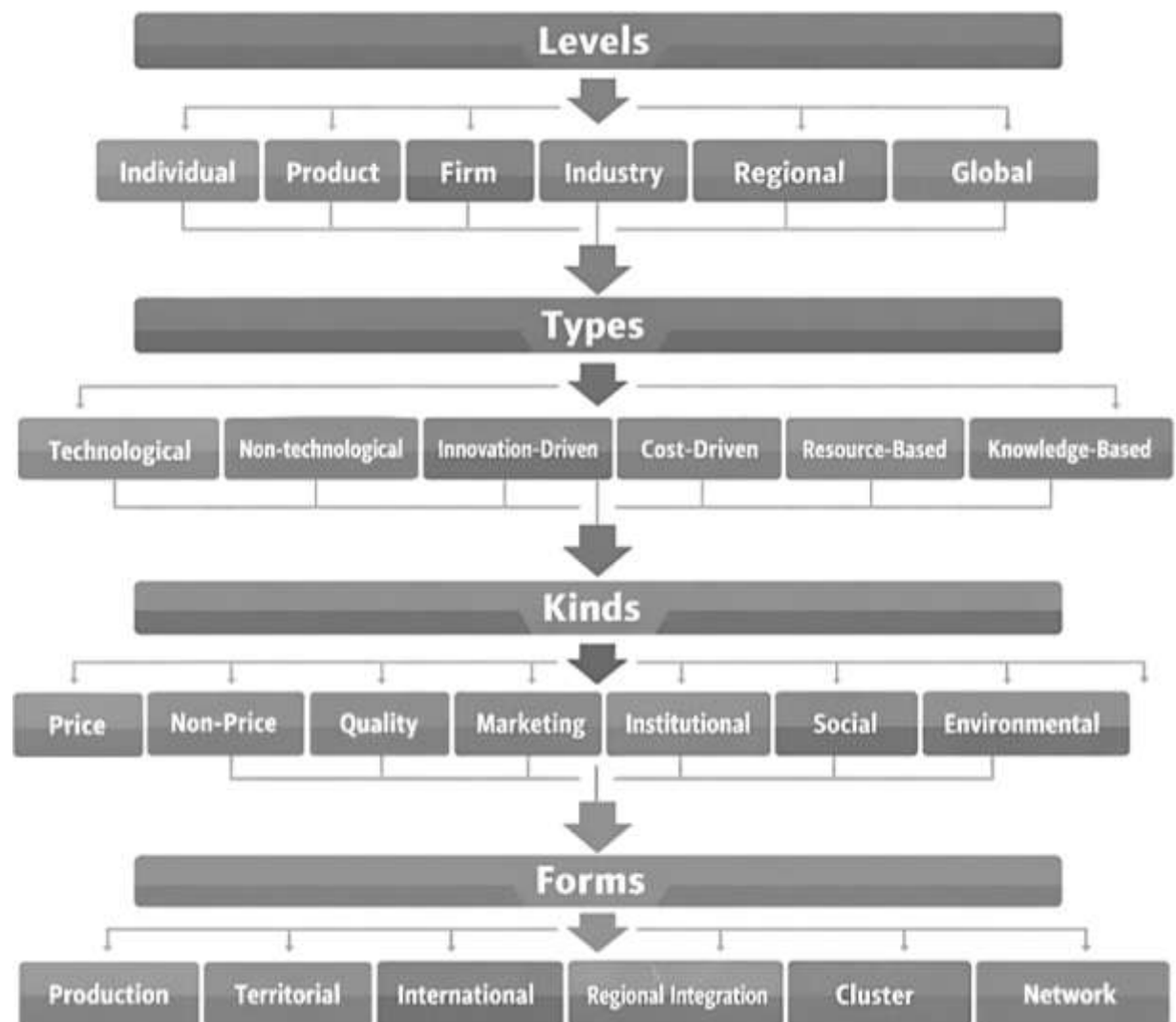


Figure 1.3. The System of Competitiveness [38; 40]

Source: developed by the author

Table 1.1 and Figure 1.3 present a structured overview of the conceptual dimensions of competitiveness. It categorizes competitiveness according to four criteria: levels, reflecting the hierarchical scale at which competitiveness manifests, from individual and product up to firm, industry, regional, national, and global levels; types, capturing the technological or resource-based nature of competitive advantage, including technological, non-technological, innovation-driven, cost-driven, resource-based, and knowledge-based forms; kinds, highlighting the spheres in which competitiveness is expressed, such as price, non-price, quality, marketing, institutional, social, and environmental (sustainability) dimensions; and forms, indicating the organizational, spatial, or territorial expression of competitiveness, including production, territorial, international, regional integration, cluster, and network forms. Competitiveness and competition also vary according to the territorial–geographical dimension, encompassing international, intra-national, and regional contexts. This multidimensional framework allows for systematic analysis and comparison of competitiveness across contexts, resources, territorial scales, and strategic focuses.

In contemporary economic literature, there is a considerable number of approaches to defining the essence of the concept of “enterprise competitiveness”. One group of researchers considers enterprise competitiveness as a category associated primarily with product characteristics, while another group focuses on the efficiency of the production process, strategic development planning of the enterprise, and its ability to implement new technologies and compete effectively with rivals in the market.

An analysis of various authors’ definitions of the concept of “enterprise competitiveness” makes it possible to identify common underlying features of this concept: 1) enterprise competitiveness may be considered at regional, national, or global markets; 2) this concept is also interpreted as the level of a company’s competitiveness and its competitive status; 3) such components of enterprise competitiveness as “labour competitiveness” and “production capacity” may characterise any component of enterprise competitiveness.

Thus, enterprise competitiveness is based on the firm’s competitive advantages; it determines the ability of the firm to withstand competition in a given market and

reflects the firm's position relative to its competitors. Competitiveness is an assessment of all business parameters and the influence of external and internal factors, which allows determining the company's place in the market. Accordingly, enterprise competitiveness is a comprehensive characteristic of a firm, encompassing efforts to improve both internal and external activities, aimed at the company's development and the strengthening of its market position.

Today, the competitiveness of enterprises as a whole is determined by its significance at the level of the international economy. Therefore, strengthening the integration of enterprises into the international space is a priority direction of national development.

It is necessary to highlight several essential characteristics by which international competitiveness can be defined [40]:

- the productive and efficient use of resources from the perspective of the international division of labor;
- the ability of national enterprises to produce goods that meet international demand under conditions of free competition;
- a key characteristic of a highly developed science and technology sector of the economy and of sustainable economic growth of the country and enterprises in particular;
- an objective process reflecting the continuity and dynamism of the development of the economic system and its integration into the international community.

The *international competitiveness* of an enterprise reflects the state of its resource-technological, spatial-temporal, institutional, socio-cognitive, and informational components within the system of the enterprise's international economic activity. This allows defining international competitiveness as an integrative property of the enterprise's foreign economic interaction potential, necessary for performing its functions as a subject of international economic activity [66].

International competitiveness of an enterprise is a multi-level and multi-faceted concept, characterized by the dynamism and manageability of the object under evaluation. It is determined by the aggregate of competitive advantages and is manifested in the enterprise's ability to withstand competition within the system of

international market relations at a given point in time.

Regarding the methods of competitive struggle, the correct choice of which is extremely important for economic agents, they include price-based, non-price, and non-economic (or unfair competition) methods.

In the context of modern competition, non-price methods of competition prevail over price-based methods. The core of rivalry among firms is the competition for differentiated demand. When developing market strategy and tactics, a firm focuses on creating products whose consumer properties meet the needs of customers. In formulating its economic policy, the firm primarily takes into account the dynamics of consumer preferences.

Non-price competition includes: 1) improving product quality; 2) utilizing advertising; 3) conditions related to the sale of goods, among others.

Examples of successful competitive global innovative companies include, in particular, American firms such as Apple, Google, Microsoft, Cisco, Intel, and Boeing; Japanese companies like Sony Corporation, Toyota Motor, and Honda; German firms BMW and Siemens; South Korea's Samsung; and Finland's Nokia. Competitive international companies possess a high innovation potential in the most critical areas of activity: marketing, product development, customer relationship management, production, logistics, human resource management, and others.

The most important area of innovative activity for competitiveness is the conduct of research and development (R&D), to which companies allocate significant financial resources. This primarily concerns transnational corporations (TNCs), which have substantial financial capacity to invest in research and development. However, other companies should not ignore this strategic direction and, whenever possible, invest resources in innovation.

The activities of enterprises in the current environment, characterized by a dynamic competitive landscape, unpredictable competitor behavior, and frequent shifts in national priorities, require the continuous formation and development of competitive advantages that enable the achievement of set objectives and the maintenance of a high level of competitiveness over the long term.

Competitive advantages are most appropriately understood as the presence within a company of unique, exclusive, and valuable attributes or factors that enable the enterprise to operate successfully in a competitive environment; specifically, to attain and maintain superior competitive positions in the market within a given industry and at a certain level. They should be based on the firm's capabilities and resources, which must be more original than those of competitors and difficult to imitate; ensure the uniqueness and resilience of the firm's products against external challenges; and meet specific customer needs in order to achieve high and sustainable competitive positions in the market [14].

The foundation for building competitive advantages in a broad sense is innovation – including technological improvements, enhancement of management methods and practices, modification of products or production processes, implementation of new marketing approaches, new distribution channels, and new competitive strategies, among others.

For an enterprise, the most effective long-term competitive advantages are characterized by the following properties: value (they provide significant benefits to consumers); uniqueness (consumers cannot obtain the offered benefits from other suppliers); sustainability (the advantage is non-replicable or difficult for competitors to copy); profitability (the firm offers goods and services whose price structure, costs, and production volume allow it to earn high profits).

Gaining and maintaining competitive advantages is a central function of a firm's activities, as organizational development is inevitably associated with significant market competition and rivalry with other producers and suppliers of similar products. Firms should carefully analyze competitors' actions and develop competitive advantages in their operations to achieve greater economic benefits and satisfy the needs of as many consumers as possible.

Achieving competitive advantages is both the goal and the outcome of formulating and implementing strategies to enhance the international competitiveness of enterprises, and represents a manifestation of leadership among competitors across all areas of activity.

Table 1.2

Key Definitions of Competition, Competitive Advantage, and Enterprise
Competitiveness (compiled by the author based on [17; 20; 26; 32; 36; 38; 41; 45])

Level	Author	Definition
Competition		
Micro	P. Kotler	The contest among firms to attract and retain customers, increase sales, and achieve sustainable market share through value creation and positioning.
	X. Xia & Y. Xiao	The economic rivalry among firms that shapes innovation strategies, performance outcomes, and market expansion under competitive pressure (<i>innovation-oriented competition at the firm level</i>).
Meso	A. Marshall	The rivalry among buyers and sellers that regulates prices, output, and the allocation of resources through market mechanisms.
	M. Porter	The intensity of rivalry within an industry shaped by its structural characteristics, including the threat of new entrants and substitutes, the bargaining power of buyers and suppliers, and the degree of rivalry among existing competitors (<i>Five Forces framework</i>).
Macro	J. Schumpeter	The dynamic process of economic change driven by innovation, in which new combinations of products, technologies, markets, and organizational forms continuously disrupt and replace existing structures, leading to creative destruction (<i>emphasis on innovation-driven dynamic competition</i>).
	V. M. Heyets	The systemic form of economic rivalry within a competitive environment that stimulates firms' adaptation, efficiency, and innovative behavior.
Mega	R. Baldwin	Global rivalry among countries, regions, and multinational enterprises (MNEs) for ownership, location, and internalization advantages in the world economy.
Competitive Advantage		
Micro	M. Porter	Arises when a firm delivers superior value to customers through cost leadership or differentiation, resulting in a favorable competitive position.
	J. Barney	Achieved when a firm implements a value-creating strategy based on resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable.
	R. Grant	Derives from the firm's ability to effectively deploy and coordinate resources and capabilities better than competitors.
	J.-J. Lambin	Stems from product or brand characteristics and market-driven capabilities that provide superiority over direct competitors.
Meso	D. Teece	Sustained in dynamic environments through the firm's dynamic capabilities to sense, seize, and reconfigure resources (<i>dynamic capabilities perspective</i>).
	E. Penrose	The firm is a collection of productive resources whose services, constrained by managerial capabilities, determine firm growth and competitive differences.
	M. Peteraf	Sustained competitive advantage arises from heterogeneous, imperfectly mobile resources under ex ante and ex post limits to competition.

Continuation of the table 1.1		
Macro	M. Porter	Arises from a nation's capacity to create, upgrade, and sustain the competitive position of its industries through the interaction of factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, and firm strategy, structure, and rivalry (<i>Diamond Model</i>).
Mega	J. Dunning	Arises from OLI (Ownership + Location + Internalization) advantages that enable firms and countries to achieve superior positions in global markets.
	X. Guo, J. Zhang, K. Chi & J. Guo	Competitive advantage of Chinese manufacturing industries in the global market, determined by innovation capacity, factor endowments, and industrial structure (manufacturing industries' international competitive advantage).
Enterprise Competitiveness		
Micro	I. V. Fedulova	Formed through innovation-driven advantages, particularly in knowledge-based and high-technology economies.
	X. Xia & Y. Xiao	Reflects the firm's relative performance, efficiency, and innovation capability compared to competitors.
	L. L. Wang & Y. Gao	The firm's ability to utilize technological and managerial resources to sustain competitive positions domestically and internationally.
	Y. Cao & M. Wan	Reflects the firm's competitiveness in China, determined by corporate entrepreneurship and employee-driven innovation (<i>innovation-driven firm competitiveness</i>).
	I. Huzhavina & D. Razdorozhna	Characterizes how effectively a firm uses its economic, managerial, and strategic resources to perform relative to rivals.
Meso	S. Dai & D. Tan	The relative international competitiveness of Chinese manufacturing industries compared with other nations, reflecting innovation, efficiency, and market expansion.
	O. Vynogradova	Reflects a firm's ability to effectively use production, labor, material, and financial resources to achieve superior market performance.
	S. Y. Kulakova et al.	The complex system of interrelated characteristics of an enterprise, including management quality, production and operational parameter, financial stability, innovation potential, efficiency of resource utilization, personnel management, distribution, and service, which determine its ability to function and develop in a competitive environment.
Macro	Y. Zhao	The relative competitiveness of Chinese industrial sectors, determined by innovation capacity, efficiency, and global market integration.
	T. Omelchenko	The firm's relative advantage over rivals, manifested through distinct competencies in conditions of wartime, turbulence, or rapidly evolving markets.
Mega	J. Dunning	The ability of firms to integrate and leverage resources across borders, adapt to international institutional environments, and sustain performance within global production and investment networks.
	R. Baldwin	Reflects firms' capacity to operate effectively within global value chains by integrating innovation, production, and market access across multiple countries.

Table 1.2 presents the key definitions of competition, competitive advantage, and enterprise competitiveness. It reflects the multi-level nature of competition and

competitiveness and integrates classical (Marshall), strategic (Porter), resource-based (Barney, Grant), dynamic (Teece), and systemic (Heyets) perspectives, thereby enabling a comprehensive theoretical framework across the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of analysis. Ukrainian scholars (e.g., Heyets, Vynohradova) are included to capture systemic and transitional economy perspectives, which are particularly relevant in contexts of structural change, post-crisis recovery, and institutional transformation. The micro–meso–macro–mega classification reflects the analytical levels of competition and competitiveness.

The table demonstrates that the theoretical foundations of competitive advantage have evolved from the resource-based view (RBV), which emphasizes firm-specific resources and capabilities, toward the dynamic capabilities perspective, which focuses on firms' ability to adapt and reconfigure resources in turbulent environments. More recently, this framework has been extended to the international and mega-levels, where competitive advantage is shaped by national innovation systems, industrial structures, and global market dynamics.

Thus, the RBV → DC → National → International / Global / Mega-level trajectory represents the evolution of competitive advantage theory from a static firm-centered perspective toward a dynamic, globally embedded economic framework.

At the mega-level, competitive advantage transcends individual firms and national industries, reflecting systemic global dynamics shaped by innovation, global value chains, and international institutional environments.

1.2 Approaches to Determining Strategic Directions for Ensuring Enterprises' Competitiveness in the International Market

One of the conditions for ensuring an enterprise's competitiveness is the development of its growth and development strategy.

A strategy is a model that generalizes the actions necessary to achieve set goals through the coordination and allocation of the enterprise's resources [76]. The long-term development strategy of an enterprise includes a strategy for creating competitive advantages. The effective implementation of a strategy aimed at enhancing an enterprise's international competitiveness determines its competitive position in the market.

A competitive strategy involves the development of measures aimed at strengthening competitiveness and maintaining competitive advantages; the formation of mechanisms for responding to external changes; the integration of strategic actions of key functional units; and the resolution of specific business-related issues and challenges. A competitive strategy is a means of achieving sustainable competitive advantages through competitive rivalry, by satisfying diverse and changing customer needs more effectively than competitors. It specifies and defines the ways in which the corporate strategy is implemented.

An international competitiveness strategy is a set of theories, principles, and practical approaches that provide an enterprise with specific advantages at the international level over a long period of time.

A strategy for enhancing an enterprise's international competitiveness is a комплекс of measures that reflects the path from the enterprise's current position to a desired future state, aimed at ensuring high operational efficiency and successful adaptation to the competitive conditions of the international market.

Within a system of competition, it is necessary to be competitive, which is ensured by the presence of a competitive advantage; one such advantage may be the development of an effective enterprise growth strategy. At the same time, the very formation of a competitive strategy can be undertaken with the purpose of creating a competitive advantage. This interaction establishes their interrelationship and

ultimately leads to competitiveness in a competitive market.

The interconnection between the concepts of “competition,” “competitiveness,” “competitive advantage,” and “competitive strategy” is illustrated in Figure 1.4.

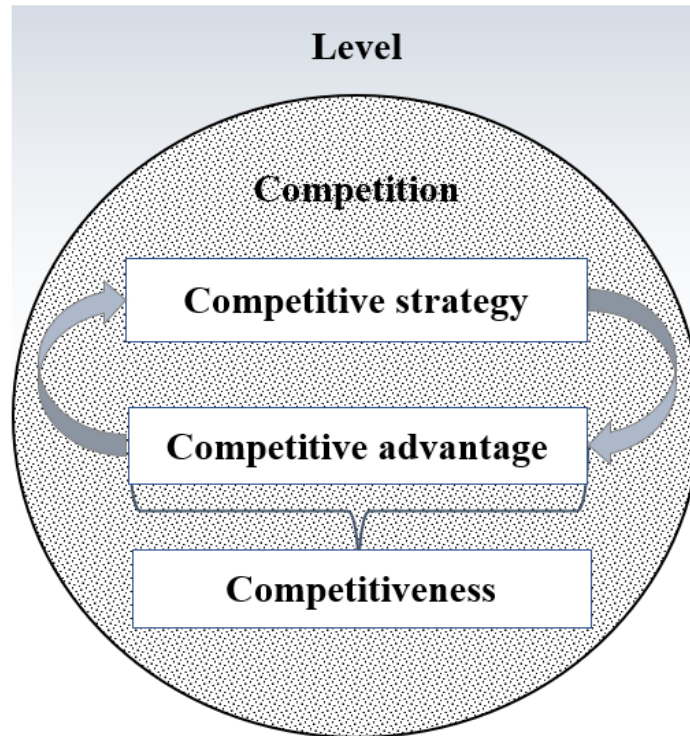


Figure 1.4. Interconnection of Concepts in the System of Competitive Relations

Source: developed by the author

Figure 1.4 illustrates the logical interrelationship among the key categories of competition theory: competition, competitive strategy, competitive advantages, and enterprise competitiveness. Competition acts as the external environment of enterprise activity, shaping the conditions of market rivalry and determining the necessity for developing a competitive strategy.

A competitive strategy is viewed as a management tool aimed at adapting the enterprise to the competitive environment and forming competitive advantages (strategy → competitive advantages → market position). It represents a system of purposeful decisions and actions focused on achieving and maintaining sustainable market positions. The formation of competitive advantages is the result of implementing a competitive strategy; at the same time, a feedback relationship exists between strategy

and advantages, emphasizing the dynamic nature of the competitive process.

In this model, enterprise competitiveness appears as an integral outcome of the interaction between the competitive environment, the competitive strategy, and the formed competitive advantages. It reflects the enterprise's ability to operate efficiently and develop under conditions of competition while ensuring stable positions in the market.

Thus, the scheme presented in Figure 1.4 demonstrates the cyclical and interdependent nature of the processes of competition and competitiveness. Competition initiates the formation of a competitive strategy; the strategy leads to the creation of competitive advantages; and the set of sustainable advantages determines the level of enterprise competitiveness. At the same time, the achieved level of competitiveness and accumulated advantages form the basis for further strategic adaptation of the enterprise in a dynamic and changing competitive environment.

Table 1.3

Key Definitions and Strategic Concepts in Competitiveness Research (compiled by the author based on [8; 16; 54])

Competition	Competitive Advantage	Competitiveness	International Competitiveness
Economic rivalry among producers to satisfy their own interests (profit) and meet consumer needs	Unique company attributes or factors that enable the enterprise to achieve and sustain superior market positions	The enterprise's overall ability to compete effectively with other producers in a given market	The enterprise's ability to deliver goods or services that efficiently meet consumer needs in domestic and international markets through coordinated and effective operations
Strategy	Competitive Strategy	International Competitiveness Strategy	Strategy to Enhance International Competitiveness
A structured approach for achieving objectives by coordinating and allocating company resources	Measures to strengthen competitiveness and preserve advantages; mechanisms to respond to external changes; alignment of functional units' actions; addressing business challenges	A set of theories and practices that provide sustainable competitive advantages at the international level	A coordinated set of actions guiding the enterprise from its current position to a desired state, ensuring high performance and successful adaptation to international competitive conditions

The main definitions used in this work are presented in Table 1.3. This table

systematizes and summarizes the key concepts in enterprise competitiveness research. The first section presents the main categories of the competitive environment – Competition, Competitive Advantage, Competitiveness, and International Competitiveness – with clear definitions of their meaning and role in business activities. The second section focuses on strategic aspects—Strategy, Competitive Strategy, International Competitiveness Strategy, and Strategy to Enhance International Competitiveness – explaining how an enterprise plans and implements actions to achieve its goals and maintain competitive advantages at various market levels. The table demonstrates the logical connection between the concepts of competition and practical strategic management tools, providing a clear understanding of how theoretical categories are transformed into concrete managerial actions.

Enhancing competitiveness involves the development and selection of appropriate, well-defined strategies. The main competitive strategy is the one that ensures the most complete and effective use of a company's available resources and opportunities. A key feature here is the adaptation of the enterprise's activities to specific market conditions through the identification of fundamental strategies for improving competitiveness. The chosen strategy for enhancing competitiveness cannot remain fundamental over a long period, as the situation in the competitive field is constantly changing. Unique advantages disappear in the course of economic development when all enterprises can utilize advanced technologies and highly skilled personnel to achieve a high level of competitiveness.

The overall strategy of an enterprise should define the main directions of activity in which it will seek to achieve its objectives. A key aspect is the development of a competitiveness strategy, which specifies the ways to implement the overall strategy and determines the approaches through which the enterprise will operate in each business area.

A competitive strategy should be developed to identify ways of achieving competitive advantages, and thus ensuring the company's success. In developing a competitive strategy, the enterprise must analyze the competitive environment, identify competitive strength and competitive position, which determine the enterprise's market

advantage across different product groups. Indicators of competitive strength, and consequently competitive advantage, include: a large market share; growing customer base; leading strategy; rapid responsiveness to market changes compared to competitors; favorable market position; product differentiation; focus on rapidly growing market segments; lower costs relative to competitors; high profitability; strong technological and innovation advantages; and a high level of management organization.

When preparing to enter international markets, the most important areas of study are potential consumers, the competitive environment, and other factors influencing the enterprise's foreign economic activity. Based on the obtained information, an appropriate strategy is formulated to enhance the enterprise's international competitiveness.

Key success factors should be determined based on the quantitative assessment of competitive strength indicators. Comparing these factors with those of competitors allows the enterprise to determine its competitive position in the market and its competitive advantages. The identification of key success factors forms the basis for developing a competitive strategy.

A successful competitive strategy is characterized by the following features: interconnection and interaction of all system components; integrity, consistency, and synchrony over time; alignment with the organization's mission and goals; adaptability and flexibility to environmental changes; autonomy of elements; multi-faceted approach; and updating in accordance with environmental changes.

The analysis of research on enterprise competitiveness indicates that, in modern science, there is a large variety of competitive strategies, particularly as proposed by P. Drucker, A. Little, P. Kotler, M. Porter, A.-J. Strickland, A.-A. Thomson, as well as influential contributions from Chinese scholars such as Yadong Luo and Mike W. Peng in the field of strategic management and global competitive dynamics. However, no classification is universal; each has its shortcomings and does not fully capture the depth of the category under study.

There are two main groups of competitive strategies: those aimed at maximizing

the satisfaction of the target consumer group and those focused on maintaining the existing market position. The first group involves radical transformations within the enterprise and is appropriate for companies that have not yet achieved significant success. Such enterprises need to create their own competitive advantages. In case of failure, options include merging with more successful companies, transferring assets for their effective use, or ceasing operations.

The second group involves partial, localized changes in problem areas of activity. These strategies are suitable for successful enterprises that have realized their potential, but not fully.

An enterprise's policy in market conditions is characterized by a unique combination of strategic ideas, and there are many paths to achieving success in competitive struggle, that is, numerous competitive strategies for enterprises.

Arthur Little identifies five competitive positions of a firm in the market: leading, strong, favorable, satisfactory, and weak, and he associates competitive strategies with these positions and the potential for their improvement.

Leading (dominant) position – a high level of influence over the market, broad strategic options for development, and the ability to affect the market activities of other firms.

Strong position – allows a company to operate independently in the market while avoiding threats to its long-term plans. This position enables the company to develop an independent strategy without losing market standing, taking into account the actions of competitors.

Favorable position – indicates that the firm has a certain competitive advantage, which it utilizes in its strategic activities. Typically, firms occupying a niche market hold a favorable position. It implies that the company maintains above-average market positions and accumulates resources to improve them.

Satisfactory position – indicates that the company operates in favorable market conditions but has limited potential to develop and enhance its market position, which is at an average or slightly above-average level; consequently, a competitor can easily disrupt its current position.

Weak position – reflects a poor market standing, low responsiveness, and a lack of necessary resources and capabilities to improve the current market position.

Based on the research of M. Porter, enterprise competitive strategies are distinguished according to the type of competitive advantage that ensures the company's success in competition. Porter proposed the main types of international competitiveness strategies: cost leadership (enables price reduction), differentiation (of product and market), and focus (see Figures 1.5).

Cost leadership strategy – involves aiming to achieve a leading position in the industry (or a large market segment) through cost savings in the production of mass products.

Differentiation strategy – focuses on creating unique products in any aspect, valued by a sufficient number of consumers.

Focus strategy – aims to increase specialization and concentration of the enterprise's activities, targeting the specific requirements of a particular market segment rather than the entire market.

The essence of Porter's strategies lies in the idea that a company's success depends on characteristics that distinguish it from others. To achieve this, the company must choose the right strategy.

		Competitive Advantage	
		Unique	Low Cost
Competitive Scope	Broad Target	Differentiation	Cost Leadership
	Narrow Target	Focus / Segmentation	

Figure 1.5. Porter's Competitive Strategies Matrix [37]

According to Philip Kotler, the distribution of a company's competitive strategies is determined by an analysis of the firm in terms of its competitive positions. Competitive strategies reflect the relationships, actions, and counteractions of firms competing in the market.

Kotler identifies four groups of competitive strategies: strategies of the market leader, challenger, follower, and nicher (companies avoiding direct competition).

When analyzing any industry, business sector, or even country, it is possible to identify *the market leader*. In addition, there are global leaders – companies that have achieved leading international positions in the market (e.g., Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, Microsoft, etc.). Leading positions have both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that the largest market share often results in high profits; the disadvantage is the presence of companies attempting to challenge the leader's position or imitate the leader's strategy, which may negatively affect the leader's image.

To maintain its leadership, a market leader should employ three main types of strategies: market capacity expansion, position defense, and market share increase within existing capacity.

The following methods are used to implement the market capacity expansion strategy: searching for new consumers, identifying new needs, and increasing product consumption. Comparing existing classifications, searching for new consumers and new needs corresponds to a market development strategy (one of the intensive growth strategies), while increasing product consumption corresponds to a market penetration strategy (also one of the intensive growth strategies).

The position defense strategy is the most important vector of strategic activity for the market leader, as high competition exerts significant pressure from other companies. Considering market volumes and resources, building a strategy to defend market positions is a complex and long-term process.

Challengers are firms occupying second or third market positions, growing rapidly, and aiming to increase their market share.

Followers are companies that successfully operate in the market but do not aim to take the leading positions (unlike challengers). Their focus is on protecting their own

market share.

Nichers are companies that concentrate on highly specialized market segments, thereby creating their competitive advantage through a niche strategy.

L. G. Ramensky identifies four main types of competitive strategies, each oriented toward different marketing environment conditions and the various resources available to the enterprise: violent, patient, commutant, and explerent strategies.

Violent (forceful) strategy – a leadership strategy that covers a significant market segment, characterized by high productivity and reduced costs, resulting in lower market prices. This strategy is typical for mass production, where the average price and quality satisfy the majority of the market, and is usually employed by large companies. Key product features include a wide assortment, constant updates, sufficient quality, and average pricing, which stimulates an increase in buyers. Large-scale advertising campaigns are also characteristic of this strategy.

Patient (niche) strategy – a strategy focused on producing a limited quantity of specialized, high-quality products. Companies following this strategy aim to create a unique market niche, thereby avoiding direct competition with market leaders. Patients complement violents by introducing uniqueness, diversity, and specific market needs. Their narrow specialization allows them to maintain a high level of scientific and technical production and highly skilled personnel. This strategy is typically adopted by smaller, medium-sized, and less large firms compared to violents.

Commutant strategy (adaptive) – a strategy aimed at rapidly satisfying small, short-term, and often changing market needs. This strategy is mainly employed by small companies that, despite limited resources, maintain high flexibility and quickly respond to short-term and fluctuating market demands.

Explerent (pioneering) strategy – a strategy characteristic of innovative enterprises that offer the market radical innovations, thereby creating new needs and demand for fundamentally new products.

A. A. Thompson and A. J. Strickland identify five types of competitive strategies:

Optimal-cost strategy – allows customers to obtain greater value for their money

by combining low costs with broad product differentiation. The goal is to ensure optimal (lowest) costs and prices relative to producers of products with similar features and quality.

Cost-leadership strategy – involves reducing the total production costs of a good or service, which attracts a large number of customers.

Focused low-cost strategy – targets a narrow customer segment where the firm outperforms competitors through lower production costs.

Broad differentiation strategy – aims to provide the company's products with specific features that distinguish them from competitors' products, thereby attracting a larger number of customers.

Focused differentiation strategy – aims to provide selected market segments with products or services that best match their tastes and requirements.

All of the above strategies are presented in Table 1.4.

Based on the research of domestic and foreign economists, a more comprehensive classification of basic strategies for enhancing competitiveness can be identified.

Cost leadership strategy. This strategy is based on achieving a cost advantage over competitors and the ability to supply the market with lower-priced goods. The main drawback of this strategy arises from constraining factors such as inflation, legislative volatility, protectionism, and limited availability of resources.

Individualization (differentiation) strategy. Individualization refers to the pursuit of making a company's products unique so that they are favorably distinguished from competitors' offerings and, as a result, become more attractive to a wide range of consumers. This strategy is successful provided that consumer needs and preferences are thoroughly analyzed.

Market niche (focus) strategy. This strategy is aimed at concentrating efforts on a narrow market segment. Its objective is to serve the customers of the selected niche more effectively than competitors.

Table 1.4

Classification of Strategies for Building Competitive Advantages

(compiled by the author based on [16; 37; 53])

Author	Classification Criterion	Types of Competitive Strategies
A. Little	Firm's competitive position and its potential for improvement	Leader strategy Strong-position strategy Favorable-position strategy Satisfactory-position strategy Weak-position strategy
M. Porter	Firm's competitive advantage in the market	Cost-leadership strategy Differentiation strategy Focus strategy
P. Kotler	Firm's competitive position and marketing orientation	Market leader strategy Challenger strategy Follower strategy Nicher strategy
L. Ramensky	Market segment and fundamental characteristics of the company	Violent strategy Patient strategy Communtant strategy Explerent strategy
A.-A. Thompson & A.-J. Strickland	Firm costs, marketing differentiation, and customer segment	Optimal-cost strategy Cost-leadership strategy Focused low-cost strategy Broad differentiation strategy Focused differentiation strategy
Yadong Luo	Internationalization strategy and competitive interaction in global markets	Global expansion strategy Co-opetition strategy (competition & cooperation) Strategic alliance strategy Emerging-market competitive strategy
Ming-Jer Chen	Competitive dynamics and firms' strategic actions	Competitive action–response strategy Rival-based strategy Strategic rivalry management Dynamic competitive positioning strategy

Best-value strategy. Under this strategy, it is essential to combine low costs with high quality. To become a best-value producer, an enterprise must ensure a high level of product quality and provide the required product attributes while maintaining lower costs compared to competitors.

Innovation strategy. Innovation is a social, technological, and economic process that, through the practical application of ideas and inventions, leads to the creation of improved products and technologies.

Focus strategy. This strategy is most commonly used by small and medium-sized enterprises that organize their activities within a single market segment and

operate in limited geographic areas; thus, their activities are directed toward a specific group of customers.

Strategies for enhancing competitiveness are grouped and supplemented in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5

Strategies for Enhancing Competitiveness
(compiled by the author based on [16; 37; 52])

Strategy	Key Characteristics
Cost Leadership Strategy	Characterized by the creation of sustainable cost advantages over competitors and the pursuit of offering products at prices that are most attractive to a broad range of consumers.
Differentiation Strategy	Based on the aspiration to make products unique so that they are favorably distinguished from competitors' offerings and, as a result, become more attractive to a wide range of customers.
Market Niche Concentration Strategy	This strategy focuses on a narrow market segment. It emphasizes offering products tailored to the tastes and needs of a specific niche. The target niche may be defined by regional characteristics, special requirements, or unique product attributes attractive only to participants within this segment.
Best-Value Strategy	Emphasizes delivering greater real value to consumers by combining low costs with quality differentiation. To become a best-value producer, an enterprise must ensure high product quality and provide essential attributes at lower costs than competitors.
Focus Strategy	Typically used by small enterprises that identify a specific market niche and direct all efforts toward serving it. This choice is often driven by limited resources or high entry barriers to broader markets. Many small foreign enterprises adhere to this strategy.
Innovation Strategy	Can provide a firm with competitive advantages in achieving monopoly or super-high profits and rapid economic growth. The advantage is based on being the first in a business, territory, market segment, or in offering a new product. Competitive advantage arises from product, technological, organizational, and other innovations.
Rapid Response Strategy	Firms implementing this strategy aim to satisfy emerging market needs as quickly as possible across various business areas. The core principle is selecting and implementing projects that are most profitable under current market conditions. Such enterprises are ready to rapidly reorient production and adjust scale to maximize short-term profits despite high unit costs.

In the scientific literature, numerous criteria are used to classify a firm's competitive strategies. Accordingly, an alternative classification of international competitiveness strategies can be proposed:

– *Basic strategies*: cost leadership; broad differentiation; optimal-cost strategy; focused differentiation strategy; focused low-cost strategy;

- *Strategies leading to the achievement of competitive advantage*: broad differentiation; market niche concentration; cost leadership; creative offensive strategies; large-scale frontal attack; capturing unoccupied market spaces; preemptive attack; attacking competitors' strengths and attempting to outperform them; attacking competitors' weaknesses;
- *Market leader strategies*: aggressive offensive strategy based on differentiation; forcing competitors to follow the leader; active defense; positional defense; flank defense; preemptive strikes; mobile defense;
- *Challenger firm strategies*: offensive strategies; frontal attack; flank attack; guerrilla warfare; attacks on competitors' weaknesses and attempts to surpass them;
- *Follower firm strategies*: vacant niche strategy; specialization; optimal-cost strategy; following the leader; growth through acquisitions; individual image strategy;
- *Strategies in emerging industries*: creative aggressive offensive strategies; large-scale attack; multiple niche strategy; frontal attack; differentiation-based strategy;
- *Strategies in mature industries*: broad differentiation; acquisition strategy; entry into international markets; cost leadership; optimal-cost strategy;
- *Strategies in stagnant and declining industries*: concentration strategy through the creation of new segments within the industry; optimal-cost strategy; cost leadership; rapid retrenchment; harvesting strategy;
- *Strategies in fragmented industries*: market niche concentration; cost leadership; forward and backward integration; specialization by customer type; specialization by product type;
- *Global competition* across a broad product range, involving worldwide competition among producers within an industry, where advantage is achieved through differentiation or cost leadership;
- *Global focus* on a specific competitive segment of the industry in which the firm competes on a worldwide scale;
- *National focus* strategies, involving the exploitation of national market advantages to create a concentrated approach to a specific domestic market, enabling

the firm to achieve either differentiation or cost minimization in serving national market consumers or their segments;

– *Protected niche strategy*, applied in countries where governments restrict the activities of global competitors; firms are forced to build strategies focused on specific national markets while taking such constraints into account [32].

In the process of strategy formation, it is also necessary to pay attention to the stage of the industry life cycle – emergence, maturity, decline, or stagnation – since this condition largely determines the type of development strategy selected.

The competitiveness assurance strategy is an element of the system of competitive strategies, which also includes the strategy for forming competitive advantages and the strategy of competitive behavior. The competitiveness assurance strategy consists in implementing measures related to product–market, resource–market, technological, social, financial–investment, and managerial strategies. Thus, it integrates comprehensive management across all areas of the enterprise’s activities.

List of strategies ensuring enterprise competitiveness:

The product–market strategy is a set of strategic decisions that determine the assortment, product range, and volume of production (or service provision), as well as the specifics of their commercialization and issues related to launching new products or discontinuing obsolete ones [6].

The resource–market strategy involves the selection of the assortment, volume, and quality of raw materials and semi-finished products consumed, as well as the corporation’s behavior in the procurement sphere.

The technological strategy is a fundamental strategic option that largely determines all other types of strategies. The choice of technology predominantly defines the enterprise’s subsequent behavior at any stage of its life cycle.

The social strategy is a set of decisions that determine the type and structure of the corporation’s workforce, as well as the nature of relations with shareholders; a key determining factor is the level of development of corporate culture.

The financial and investment strategy of the corporation is a set of decisions that define the methods of accumulating, attracting, and allocating financial resources.

The managerial strategy is a set of decisions that determine the nature of enterprise management during the implementation of the selected strategy.

Thus, in practice, ensuring competitiveness involves the development of effective measures aimed at achieving or enhancing the competitiveness of various objects (management, personnel, production, products, the enterprise as a whole, etc.), which, in accordance with strategic objectives, contribute to the attainment of a specific level of enterprise competitiveness within a given industry.

A well-conceived and properly formulated strategy indicates the most effective path and the most productive ways to achieve objectives, ensures the enterprise's selection of promising and profitable areas of activity, high demand for its products, and a favorable market position among competitors. Each enterprise develops its own strategy based on its goals and specific market conditions. Therefore, every enterprise must understand and take into account the objective processes of a market economy, in which stability is ensured through a strategic vision of the future.

The first chapter examines the main theoretical foundations concerning the essence and specificity of enterprise international competitiveness, clarifies the key concepts, analyzes classification characteristics and various types of competitiveness, and evaluates competitive strategies. Basic strategies for ensuring competitiveness are identified, which make it possible to enhance enterprise competitiveness at the global level and achieve the desired outcomes.

CHAPTER 2

MACRO- AND MICROENVIRONMENT FOR ENSURING INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPETITIVE CONDITIONS FOR EDTECH COMPANIES IN CHINA AND UKRAINE

2.1 The Influence of Macroeconomic Factors on Enterprises' Strategic Behavior in International Markets

This study will analyze the impact of macroeconomic and microeconomic environments on enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises using Huaxia Qihan (Beijing) Education Technology Co., Ltd as a case study. Headquarters: Room 907, Building A. Delta Center. Qingnian Road, Pinglang Township. Chaoyang District: Beijing, 100094, China.

Company Profile: Huaxia Qihan is an educational company that provides educational and intermediary services, including online learning platforms, distribution of educational content, and coordination of educational programs. The company is part of a corporate group of three enterprises, which ensures branches and offices throughout China, contributing to a network structure, scaling of educational services, and implementation of innovative solutions.

EdTech (Education Technology) is a broad field that applies technology to improve teaching and learning processes, encompassing both digital tools (platforms, apps, AI solutions, VR) and innovative methodologies. It aims to make education more accessible, personalized, interactive, and effective for all ages, from school students to corporate training.

Key characteristics affecting the international competitiveness of Huaxia Qihan:

1. *Innovation and intellectual capital:* Focus on digital educational platforms, development of learning content, and potential use of artificial intelligence technologies for personalized learning.

2. *Investment and growth potential:* Being part of a corporate group allows efficient resource allocation for strategic development, research, and entry into new markets.

3. *Adaptation to the macroenvironment:* Location in Beijing provides access to government programs supporting innovation, modern technological infrastructure, and strategic educational initiatives such as “Internet+Education.”

For comparative analysis with Ukrainian companies, EdEra and Preply can be considered as leading operators of online educational platforms and digital learning content in Ukraine.

Company Profile: EdEra specializes in developing electronic educational resources for schools, creating online courses, and interactive learning materials. The company actively implements digital technologies, which enhances learning efficiency and adapts the educational process to contemporary requirements.

Key factors of international competitiveness of EdEra:

1. *Innovative potential:* Use of digital platforms for interactive learning and personalized educational solutions.

2. *Flexibility and adaptability:* Ability to respond quickly to changes in the macroenvironment and educational needs in the context of the pandemic and military actions in Ukraine.

3. *Investment attractiveness:* Openness to international partnerships and the attraction of financial and technological resources for the development of educational projects.

Company Profile: Preply is an online platform for finding tutors and learning foreign languages, operating globally, including in Ukraine. The platform combines innovative remote learning technologies with a wide selection of individual and group courses, ensuring personalized learning for users worldwide.

Key factors of international competitiveness of Preply:

1. *Digital platform and innovation:* Use of technologies for online classes, algorithms for tutor matching, and analytics of student performance.

2. *International presence:* Access to the global user market and the ability to rapidly scale educational services.

3. *Flexibility and adaptability:* Quick response to changes in demand for online education and integration of new educational technologies.

Thus, a comparative analysis of the macro- and microeconomic environments of Huaxia Xingtian, EdEra, and Preply allows identifying key factors that contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of educational enterprises under conditions of globalization, digital transformation, and market instability.

In the context of globalization and digital transformation, the macroenvironment determines both opportunities and constraints for enterprise development:

Political and legal factors shape regulatory conditions, government programs supporting innovation, and educational initiatives, which are particularly important for companies in the education sector.

Economic factors affect access to financial resources, investment opportunities, customers' purchasing power, and market stability.

Sociocultural and demographic factors influence demand for educational products and affect the effectiveness of communication with clients.

Technological factors define the level of access to modern digital platforms, automation, and intelligent systems that provide competitive advantages.

Thus, analyzing the macroenvironment allows an enterprise not only to identify risks but also to leverage strategic opportunities to enhance its competitiveness in national and international markets.

The macroenvironment significantly influences *the strategic competitiveness* of enterprises by shaping opportunities and constraints for development. A comparative analysis of China and Ukraine highlights differences in external conditions that affect the operations of educational companies.

Macroeconomic Conditions. China is characterized by strategic predictability in economic policy, a structural transition toward a knowledge-based economy, and large-scale state investments in scientific and technological development as well as the modernization of the education sector. These factors create a favorable environment for companies operating in the educational technology sector, including Huaxia Qihan Education Technology Co., Ltd., providing access to financial resources, innovation ecosystems, and partnership networks.

In contrast, Ukraine faces macroeconomic instability caused by war-related

risks, limited investment resources, and high dependence on international aid. At the same time, the Ukrainian economy features significant human capital, a developed digital infrastructure, and growing demand for educational and technological innovations. This creates niche windows of opportunity for EdTech and IT enterprises.

The macroenvironment of an enterprise includes external factors that are not directly controlled by the company but significantly influence its strategic competitiveness. These factors encompass economic, political, sociocultural, technological (PEST analysis), environmental, and legal aspects (PESTEL analysis) (See Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and Figure 2.1).

Table 2.1

PEST Analysis: Huaxia Qihan (China) and Ukrainian Educational Technology
Companies (compiled by the author)

Factor	China (Huaxia Qihan)	Ukraine (Comparative EdTech Companies)
Political	• Strong government support for education and innovation • Strategic national programs for the digitalization of education • Stable regulatory framework for EdTech development and R&D investment	• Gradual support for startups and innovative educational platforms • Regulatory uncertainty due to political and geopolitical factors • Development of partnerships through international grants and development programs
Economic	• High economic growth rates • Large domestic market • Strong investment activity in education and technology • Easier access to venture capital	• Economic instability caused by war and recession • Limited funding for innovation • Reliance on external investment and international grants • Development of digital education platforms through private investment and donor programs
Social	• Strong cultural emphasis on education and lifelong learning • High demand for personalized and online courses • Growing educational mobility and expansion of distance learning	• Need for modernization of the education system • High demand for online education and innovative teaching methods • Increasing importance of digital skills and adult education
Technological	• Active digitalization of educational processes • Advanced use of AI, big data, and online learning platforms • Strong government and corporate support for EdTech R&D	• Gradual digitalization of schools and universities • Growing EdTech startup ecosystem • Use of cloud solutions, LMS platforms, and basic AI technologies • Limited R&D funding, offset by active international cooperation

Table 2.2

PESTEL analysis of the macro environment for China and Ukraine
(compiled by the author)

Factor	China (Huaxia Qihan / Educational + Innovative Enterprises)	Ukraine (EdTech / Innovative Educational Companies)
Political (P)	- Stable strategic governance with long-term policies: state programs for digitalization, education, and innovation (e.g., “Digital China,” “Internet +Education” EdTech support programs). - Tax incentives, grants, and subsidies for innovative and educational initiatives. - Support for exporting educational services and entering international markets. - Predictable regulatory environment enables long-term strategic planning.	- Eurointegration path, harmonization with international education and digital standards. - Legislative reforms, digitalization of education, support for remote learning (reinforced by the pandemic and military actions). - Efforts to create a stable institutional environment for IT and EdTech through state reforms and startup support.
Economic (E)	- Large domestic market; stable growth allows scaling internally before entering export markets. - Investor-friendly climate, access to venture capital, grants, and R&D funding for innovation projects. - Growing demand for educational and innovative services. - Opportunities for investment strategies and accumulation of intellectual capital.	- Rising demand for online education and EdTech due to military actions, relocation, and globalization of education – creating scaling opportunities. - Some macroeconomic volatility, but IT and EdTech sectors receive investment support – e.g., IFC and EBRD investments in Preply [21]. - Availability of highly skilled labor and relatively low costs – attractive for innovative and educational projects.
Social (S)	- High educational aspirations, strong demand for quality education and innovative learning solutions. - Emphasis on intellectual capital encourages knowledge accumulation, skills development, and R&D. - Social support for education and human capital development as a strategic resource.	- High IT competency and readiness for online and remote learning. - Military actions and the pandemic increased demand for retraining, distance formats, and international education. - Societal mobility and the pursuit of education as a pathway to stability and growth.
Technological (T)	- Advanced technological infrastructure: AI, Big Data, cloud computing, digital platforms – enabling innovative educational products. - Access to R&D infrastructure, tech parks, and innovation hubs. - Favorable conditions for digitalization of education, scaling of educational services, and integration of technology into learning processes.	- Developed IT sector, expertise, technologies, and human resources – foundation for EdTech and startups. - Example: Preply & EdEra – an international online platform leveraging IT, algorithms, and scalable services [10]. - Growing demand for educational modernization, adoption of digital technologies, and new teaching methods.

Continuation of the table 2.2		
Environmental/ Sustainability (E)	- “Green” digitalization initiatives, eco-responsibility, support for green IT (e.g., energy-efficient cloud services). - Integration of environmental standards into educational and innovative projects enhances international competitiveness.	- Military actions reduce environmental priority, but international standards and Eurointegration trends remain relevant. - Combining education, environmental awareness, and technology can become a niche competitive advantage.
Legal / Institutional (L)	- Stable legislation on education, digital economy, and intellectual property protection – provides a solid base for EdTech and innovation-driven enterprises. - Clear rules for international market entry, compliance with standards – essential for corporate international competitiveness.	- Eurointegration efforts, harmonization of standards (e.g., data protection, GDPR) – critical for entering international markets. - Institutional instability and regulatory risks due to military actions – require flexible strategies and adaptive management.

Table 2.3

Simultaneous assessment of the macro-environment characteristics and their favorability for corporate international competitiveness (compiled by the author)

PESTEL Factor	China (Huaxia Qihan)	Rating (1–5)	Ukraine (Preply)	Rating (1–5)
Political	Stable strategic policy, state support for EdTech, tax incentives, facilitation of international market entry	5	Eurointegration-oriented course, digital and educational reforms, military actions create risks	3
Economic	Large domestic market, high investment activity, financing of innovations, accumulation of intellectual capital	5	Rising EdTech demand due to military actions, international financial aid, highly skilled workforce	3
Social	High educational culture, demand for innovation, development of human capital	5	Expansion of remote learning, workforce reskilling, improvement of IT competencies	4
Technological	Leadership in AI, Big Data, IoT, digital platforms, R&D centers	5	Advanced IT sector, readiness for innovation, remote education platforms	4
Environmental	Green digitalization, energy-efficient technologies	4	Low priority due to military actions, but EU-aligned environmental standards exist	2
Legal	Intellectual property protection, digital education regulation, stable legislation	5	GDPR, digital reforms, regulatory instability due to military actions	3

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 present PEST and PESTEL analyses for *strategic directions* of ensuring the international competitiveness of enterprises: the case of Huaxia Qihan (Beijing) Education Technology Co., Ltd. and Ukrainian Comparative Enterprises

(e.g., Educational Technology Companies). Tables 2.3 and Figure 2.1 illustrate the evaluation of macroenvironmental characteristics and their favorability for enhancing corporate international competitiveness.

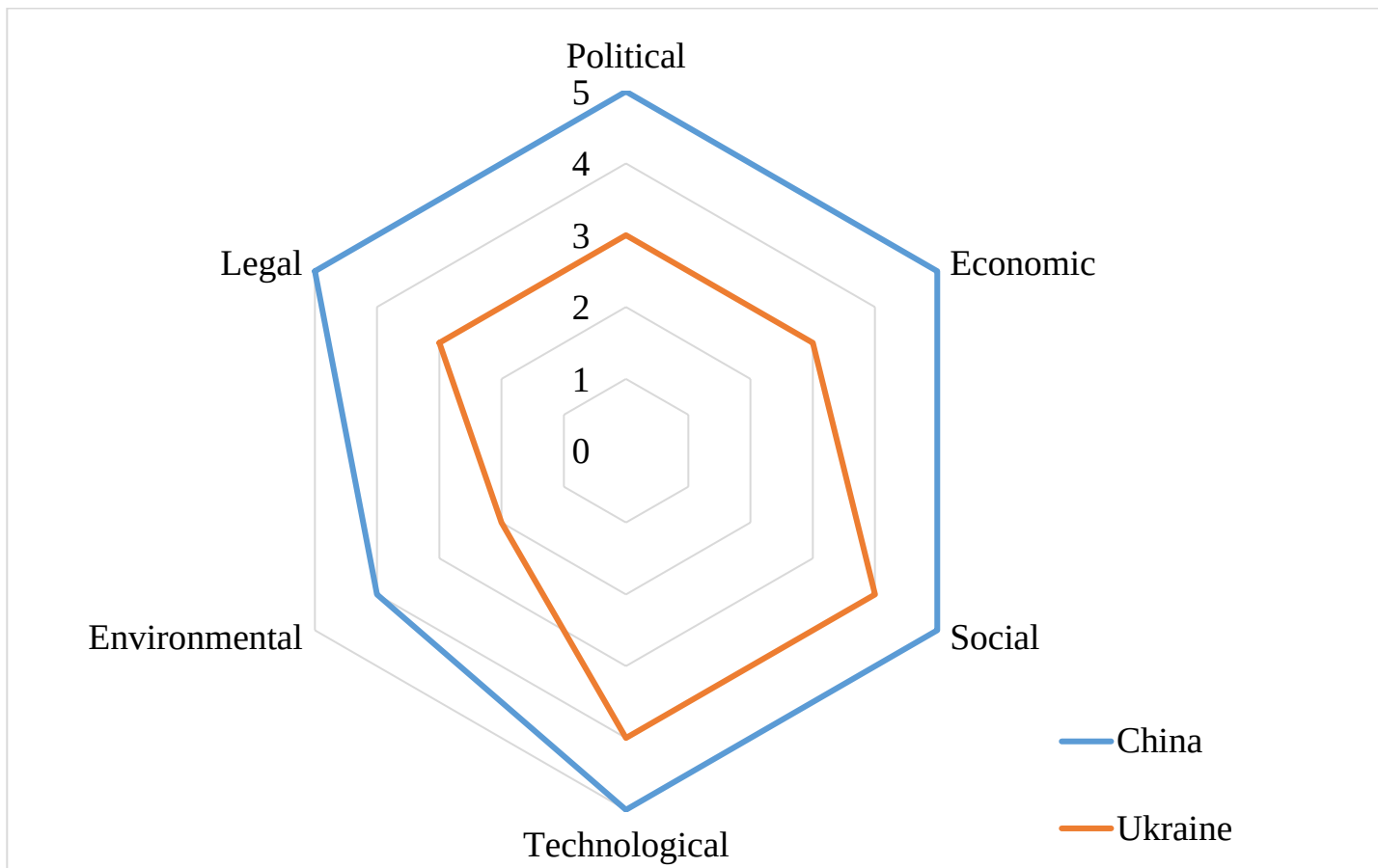


Figure 2.1. PESTEL-analysis of the Macro-environment (Comparative analysis of China and Ukraine)

Source: developed by the author

Political and Legal Factors. China: The government actively supports digital education and innovation through programs such as “Internet+Education,” providing a stable regulatory framework and reliable intellectual property protection.

Ukraine: The regulatory environment is in the process of reform, aimed at improving the education sector, implementing digital technologies, and fostering innovation. However, legislative uncertainty and military risks create additional operational challenges.

Economic Factors. China: China’s economy demonstrates stable growth, predictable economic policies, and substantial government support for technological

and educational initiatives. Access to capital and government grants facilitates investment in innovative educational platforms.

Ukraine: Ukraine's economy is undergoing transformation and faces challenges due to political instability and the consequences of military actions. At the same time, there is growing demand for digital education and opportunities for international partnerships and investment.

Sociocultural and Demographic Factors. China: High demand for online education among students and professionals seeking skill development drives the growth of personalized and interactive learning solutions.

Ukraine: The shift to online education is accelerated by pandemic restrictions and military actions, increasing interest in flexible and remote learning formats.

Technological Factors. China: Advanced IT infrastructure, widespread use of artificial intelligence, and support for educational technologies allow the implementation of personalized learning platforms and scalable digital services. China is a leader in artificial intelligence, cloud platforms, and big data processing, enabling companies like Huaxia Qihan to rapidly scale digital products, integrate adaptive educational algorithms, and compete in the global market.

Ukraine: Technological development is gradually increasing, with widespread adoption of digital educational platforms. Companies often need to engage international technology partnerships to maintain competitiveness. In Ukraine, the level of technological competence among specialists is one of the highest in Europe, making the country a strong partner for outsourcing and cooperative projects in educational technologies. This creates opportunities for international EdTech companies to establish joint R&D teams or content hubs.

Environmental Factors. China: Emphasis on sustainable development encourages the use of digital educational solutions, reducing resource consumption.

Ukraine: Digitalization of learning also supports environmental sustainability by minimizing the use of paper-based materials.

Institutional and Legal Condition. China has a large-scale innovation support system (Made in China 2025, Digital China, Internet+Education), which encourages

companies to invest in new technologies, improve the quality of educational products, and enter foreign markets.

Ukraine is actively moving toward European integration, reforming the education sector, developing digital governance, and creating favorable conditions for innovative companies (particularly in IT). However, institutional instability and regulatory risks remain significant restraining factors.

China represents a systematically favorable macroenvironment for education, innovation, accumulation of intellectual capital, and the development of EdTech, characterized by stable policies, strong financial resources, advanced technologies, and support for innovation. For Huaxia Xingtian, this means the company has every opportunity to become a major player not only in the domestic market but also internationally.

Ukraine has its own strengths despite existing challenges: a qualified workforce, flexibility, IT competencies, and high demand for education and innovation form a solid foundation for the development of competitive educational companies on the global stage. The example of Preply demonstrates that Ukrainian EdTech can attract investment, scale, and compete in international markets [46].

For strategies aimed at enhancing the international competitiveness of enterprises, it is crucial to leverage the strengths of both macro- and microenvironments while neutralizing weaknesses through adaptability, innovation, international partnerships, and a flexible business model.

China provides a highly favorable macroenvironment for educational enterprises such as Huaxia Xingtian due to stable economic growth, government support, and advanced technological infrastructure. Ukrainian companies, such as EdEra and Preply, face greater external challenges but simultaneously gain opportunities for innovation, adaptation, and the formation of international partnerships. Comparative analysis allows for the identification of strategic approaches to enhance international competitiveness in each context.

2.2 The Microeconomic Environment as a Basis for Ensuring Enterprises' International Competitiveness

The microenvironment of an enterprise encompasses a system of immediate, controllable factors that directly influence its operational efficiency, competitive behavior, and long-term strategic positioning. Unlike macroeconomic forces, which impose broad contextual constraints, the microenvironment forms the *primary platform* from which firms derive strategic impulses, leverage internal capabilities, and develop adaptive competitive responses.

Key components of the microenvironment – including suppliers, customers, competitors, internal resources, and business partners – create a dynamic interaction space where strategic decisions are tested and refined. The quality of supplier networks determines stability of resource flows and cost advantages; customer expectations guide product differentiation and innovation trajectories; competitor strategies shape the need for repositioning, strategic renewal, or niche specialization. Internal elements such as managerial competence, organizational culture, technological capabilities, and innovation potential serve as the fundamental drivers of sustainable competitive advantages.

Thus, the microenvironment is not merely a set of operational constraints but a *strategic source* from which enterprises extract signals, opportunities, and pressure points that guide the shaping of long-term competitiveness. Effective interpretation of microenvironmental dynamics enables firms to strengthen their market position, enhance value creation, and maintain resilience under conditions of increasing global competition and technological change.

1. Resource Potential and Intellectual Capital. For Huaxia Qihan, the main sources of competitive advantage are: 1) the presence of highly qualified pedagogical and technical staff; 2) extensive partnerships with Chinese and foreign educational institutions; 3) access to databases, teaching materials, and learning platforms; 4) established competencies in combining traditional Chinese pedagogy with digital technologies.

Ukrainian EdTech and IT companies stand out for their creativity, rapid product development, and international market orientation, which creates potential for

collaboration and mutual enhancement of competitive positions.

2. Innovation Potential and Transformational Capability. Chinese enterprises, including Huaxia Qihan, operate in an environment where innovation is supported at the state level, and R&D investments are a systemic requirement. This encourages companies to continuously update their product portfolios, develop intelligent platforms, and create high value-added educational products.

Ukrainian companies, even under crisis conditions, demonstrate high adaptability, flexibility, and experimentation with business models, enabling them to compete in global markets within niche segments.

3. Marketing and International Positioning. Entering foreign markets requires international competitiveness determined not only by product quality but also by the ability to: 1) adapt educational solutions to the cultural, linguistic, and regulatory specifics of the target market; 2) build a strategic brand identity; 3) establish partnership networks within the global educational ecosystem.

Huaxia Qihan has an advantage in access to Chinese educational diplomacy and international cultural exchange programs, providing a foundation for the development of transnational projects.

Ukrainian companies face different challenges. Their international positioning depends on: 1) leveraging national expertise in digital education and innovative learning solutions; 2) adapting products quickly to regional European standards and English-language requirements; 3) forming strategic partnerships within European and global educational networks despite limited state support compared to Chinese counterparts.

This comparison highlights how macro- and microenvironment factors in China and Ukraine shape distinct international competitiveness strategies.

Methods for assessing the microeconomic environment are analytical tools that make it possible to evaluate the immediate competitive environment of an enterprise, including customers, competitors, suppliers, partners, and market mechanisms. Methods for assessing the microeconomic environment are aimed at analyzing factors that affect the activities of a specific enterprise, industry, or market. The main method:

Competitor Analysis – examining the strengths and weaknesses of direct and

indirect competitors, their strategies, market share, and pricing policies.

Consumer Analysis – studying demand structure, customer preferences, purchasing power, and product choice factors.

Supplier Analysis – evaluating their influence on costs, quality, and delivery times.

Industry Analysis – investigating industry structure, entry barriers, threat of substitutes, and buyer power (e.g., using Porter's model). Analysis of entry and exit barriers is a strategic analysis method that allows evaluating the difficulty for new competitors to enter the market and for existing companies to exit it, as well as the impact of these barriers on the competitive stability of the enterprise.

Porter's Five Forces Model is a strategic analysis model proposed by Michael Porter that is used to assess the level of competition and the attractiveness of an industry. The five competitive forces are: 1) threat of new entrants; 2) bargaining power of suppliers; 3) bargaining power of buyers (customers); 4) threat of substitute products or services; 5) intensity of competitive rivalry within the industry.

Value chain analysis is a strategic analysis method that allows identifying the sources of an enterprise's competitive advantage through a detailed examination of all stages of product or service creation – from resources to customer interaction.

Benchmarking is a strategic analysis method that involves the systematic comparison of an enterprise's performance indicators, processes, and practices with the best results of competitors or industry leaders in order to identify reserves for improving efficiency and competitiveness.

SWOT Analysis – identifying internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats.

TOWS is an extended version of SWOT analysis that focuses not only on identifying factors but also on developing strategies based on them.

Data Collection and Statistical Analysis – studying prices, sales volumes, profitability, market trends, and dynamics.

Narrative analysis is a research method that interprets data through a sequential description of the logic of actions, context, causal relationships, and meanings that shape the behavior of organizations, markets, or actors.

Table 2.4

Comparative SWOT Analysis: China vs Ukrainian EdTech Companies
(compiled by the author)

SWOT Dimension	Huaxia Qihan (Beijing) Education Technology Co., Ltd. – China	Ukrainian EdTech Companies
Strengths (S)	- Access to China's advanced technological ecosystem (AI, Big Data, cloud infrastructure). - Extensive partnerships with educational institutions and research centers. - Strong financial support from national innovation programs. - High qualification of technical and pedagogical teams. - Strong brand reputation within the domestic market.	- High adaptability and flexibility due to operating in a volatile environment. - Strong IT expertise and globally competitive developers. - Rapid digitalization during and after military actions, accelerating EdTech adoption. - Growing integration with European standards (GDPR, data protection, QA standards). - Lower operational costs compared to Western competitors.
Weaknesses (W)	- Limited presence international markets: insufficient adaptation to regulatory and pedagogical standards, cultural and linguistic barriers. - Strong domestic competition from Chinese EdTech giants (e.g., TAL, New Oriental). - High dependence on tech infrastructure, vulnerability to government policy shifts.	- Institutional instability and regulatory unpredictability due to ongoing military conditions. - Limited long-term investment resources for large-scale R&D. - Fragmented domestic market and uneven digital infrastructure in some regions. - Lower international visibility and weaker branding globally.
Opportunities (O)	- Expansion through global educational cooperation projects. - Collaboration with Ukrainian IT firms for joint R&D and product localization. - Growing global demand for online and hybrid learning. - Integration of advanced AI-driven adaptive learning systems. - Participation in international grants and cross-border innovation programs. - Collaboration with public institutions.	- European integration and harmonization with EU digital standards (GDPR, EdTech quality frameworks). - Increasing demand for digital learning tools due to reconstruction and reskilling needs. - Access to international donor funding, EU programs, and global foundations. - Potential to partner with global EdTech platforms for content co-creation. - Rising global interest in Ukrainian STEM and IT education.
Threats (T)	- Geopolitical tensions affecting international expansion. - Growing global regulation of digital platforms and data governance. - Intense competition from global giants (Coursera, Udemy, Byju's). - Market volatility caused by global economic disruptions. - Rapid tech changes.	- Continued military-related risks slowing investment and scaling. - Strong competition from both global EdTech leaders and Chinese platforms. - Brain drain and migration of specialists. - Cybersecurity risks due to hybrid threats and critical infrastructure attacks. - Unstable purchasing power affecting domestic demand.

Table 2.5

TOWS MATRIX: Huaxia Qihan (China) vs Ukraine (EdTech Sector)
(compiled by the author)

Strategies	Huaxia Qihan (China)	Ukraine (EdTech Companies)
SO Strategies (using strengths to pursue opportunities)	1. Using China's strong AI infrastructure to build adaptive educational platforms for the global market. 2. Developing joint innovation centers with Ukrainian IT companies (EPAM, SoftServe). 3. Participating in international educational projects through an extensive partner network.	1. Leveraging the high qualification of Ukrainian IT specialists to create EdTech innovations. 2. Using opportunities of digital transformation in education to expand service markets. 3. Using partnerships with EU universities to enter new markets.
WO Strategies (overcoming weaknesses by leveraging opportunities)	1. Adapting educational products to EU standards through cooperation with Ukrainian and European universities. 2. Investing in localization of content for various cultural markets. 3. Using international grants to finance new product development.	1. Overcoming limited investment through EU funds and international grants. 2. Using demand for remote learning to develop domestic EdTech platforms. 3. Creating partnerships with Asian companies to adapt content for global audiences.
ST Strategies (using strengths to counter threats)	1. Expanding the product portfolio to increase resilience to market fluctuations. 2. Using Chinese state support for innovation to strengthen positions in foreign markets. 3. Actively building a brand image as a reliable international partner.	1. Using the strong reputation of Ukrainian IT specialists to reinforce competitive advantages. 2. Diversifying EdTech products to reduce dependence on the domestic market. 3. Engaging in digital security programs to reduce cyber threats.
WT Strategies (minimizing weaknesses and avoiding threats)	1. Establishing a risk-management system for operating in unstable markets. 2. Implementing corporate data-security standards to comply with international regulations (e.g., GDPR). 3. Building multicultural teams to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers.	1. Developing data-security systems to meet EU regulatory requirements. 2. Creating financially sustainable business models to survive in unstable market conditions. 3. Improving teachers' digital competence to reduce technological gaps.

Let's conduct a narrative analysis: Porter's five forces and the value chain for Huaxia Qihan, EdEra, and Preply (See Tables 2.6, 2.7 and Figure 2.2).

The competitiveness of educational enterprises today is shaped by a combination of macroeconomic factors, microeconomic dynamics, and the internal structure of the value-creation process. Using Huaxia Qihan (Beijing) Education Technology Co., Ltd as the central case, and comparing it with Ukrainian EdTech companies EdEra and

Preply, it becomes possible to trace how strategic advantages emerge in different national contexts and organizational models.

Table 2.6

Porter's Five Forces Analysis of Huaxia Qihan, EdEra, and Preply
(compiled by the author)

Force	Huaxia Qihan (China)	EdEra (Ukraine)	Preply (Ukraine/Global)
1. Threat of New Entrants	Barrier: Medium–High • Strict regulation of EdTech in China (licensing, data protection). • Government programs (“Internet+Education”) support existing companies. • Corporate group membership increases financial resilience and scalability.	Barrier: Medium • Market entry requires moderate investment. • Market is open but faces competition and limited public funding. • Partnerships with Ministry of Education, schools, and NGOs create reputational barriers.	Barrier: High • High technological investment required (AI, analytics, UX). • Network effects – large tutor and student base create a high entry barrier.
2. Bargaining Power of Suppliers	Medium • Suppliers include developers, content creators, and technical services. • Corporate group reduces dependence on external suppliers.	Medium • Depends on experts, content creators, and grants. • Specialized talent increases supplier power.	Medium • Platform is not dependent on suppliers: tutors are independent and numerous.
3. Bargaining Power of Buyers	Medium • Large Chinese market, but high competition among alternative EdTech solutions. • Government contracts may reduce buyer power.	Medium–High • High price sensitivity due to economic conditions. • Frequent use of free educational content.	High • Users can easily switch to Duolingo, Italki, Cambly, etc. • Price transparency strengthens buyer power.
4. Threat of Substitutes	Medium • Private schools, government platforms, alternative EdTech services.	High • Free online courses, YouTube content, government educational projects.	High • Language apps, AI tutors, MOOCs – strong substitutes.
5. Competitive Rivalry	High • Highly competitive market (TAL, New Oriental, Yuanfudao). • High R&D investments intensify competition.	Medium–High • Competition with Ukrainian EdTech projects and NGOs. • Niche specialization in school content reduces competitive pressure.	Very High • Competitors: Italki, Verbling, Cambly, Babbel, Duolingo. • Competition in UX, algorithm quality, and tutor diversity.

Table 2.7

Porter's Five Forces (Education / EdTech) (compiled by the author)

Competitive Force	Huaxia Qihan (China) (EdTech)	EdEra (Ukraine)	Preply (Ukraine / Global)	Ukraine (EdTech)
Threat of New Entrants	4	3	5	4
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	3	3	3	3
Bargaining Power of Buyers	3	4	5	4,5
Threat of Substitutes	3	5	5	5
Competitive Rivalry	5	4	5	4,5

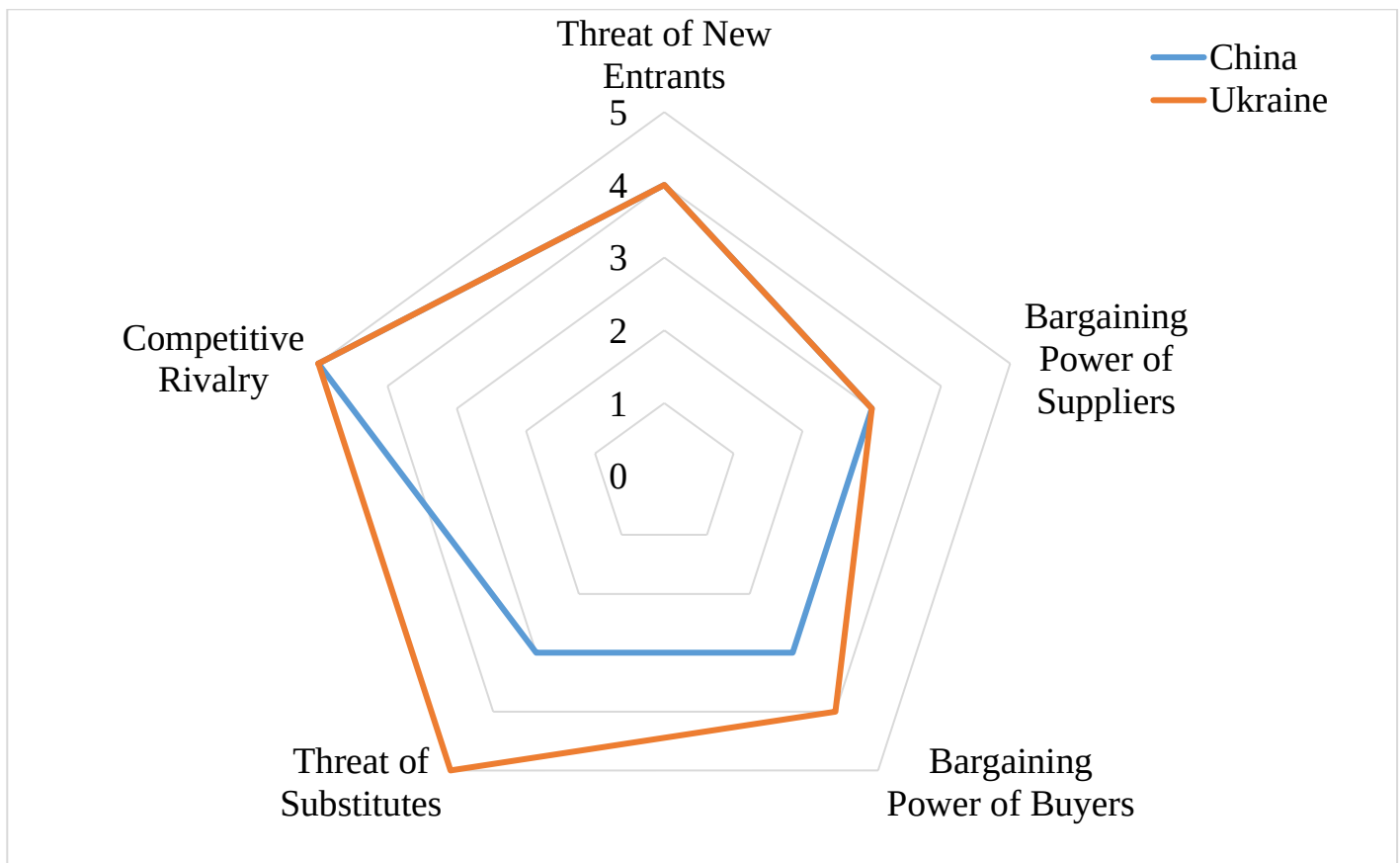


Figure 2.2. Porter's Five Forces Analysis of the EdTech Sector: China and Ukraine
Source: developed by the author based on industry analysis

Huaxia Qihan operates within the technologically advanced Beijing EdTech ecosystem, where state-supported initiatives such as “Internet+Education,” modern digital infrastructure, and innovation-oriented policies create a favorable environment for the development of educational platforms. This significantly strengthens its competitive position and reduces vulnerability to market shocks.

From the perspective of Porter's Five Forces, Huaxia Qihan functions in a highly competitive environment typical for the Chinese EdTech market. Rivalry among firms is intense due to the presence of large players capable of investing heavily in research and development. Although the threat of new entrants remains moderate to high because of high licensing requirements and substantial technological costs, the company's integration into a corporate network raises barriers for competitors. Suppliers, which include content creators and technical specialists, have relatively limited influence owing to the internal resource pool available through the corporate structure. Buyers, meanwhile, exhibit moderate bargaining power: the Chinese market is massive, yet users have many alternatives and are increasingly demanding personalized digital content.

In contrast, EdEra operates in the more volatile Ukrainian environment, where military conflict, economic instability, and ongoing reforms create both challenges and opportunities. The company's competitiveness arises largely from its flexibility and innovative character. EdEra quickly adapts to societal needs by offering interactive digital courses for schools, collaborating with educational institutions, and participating in international grant programs. Rivalry in the Ukrainian EdTech sector is moderate, but the availability of free online materials and NGO-led educational projects increases the threat of substitutes. At the same time, barriers to entry are comparatively low, which makes innovation and quality the central factors that allow EdEra to sustain its competitive position.

Preply, in turn, represents a fundamentally different model because it operates globally and competes with well-known international platforms. Its competitiveness is strongly influenced by high buyer power, as students can easily switch to competitors such as Duolingo or Italki. The threat of substitutes is significant due to the expansion of AI-driven learning tools and mobile language-learning applications. Nevertheless, Preply's algorithmic matching system, global tutor network, and ability to scale quickly provide the company with strategic resilience. The global platform structure also significantly reduces dependence on suppliers, since tutors act as independent contractors and are numerous across markets.

The radar chart (See Figure 2.2) illustrates the comparative intensity of Porter's Five Competitive Forces in the EdTech sector of China and Ukraine. The Chinese market demonstrates higher entry barriers due to regulatory control and state involvement, while the Ukrainian market faces stronger substitute pressure and higher buyer power. Competitive rivalry remains intense in both markets, though it is structurally driven by different institutional and market factors.

Key points of value chain analysis.

1. Primary activities: 1) inbound logistics; 2) operations; 3) outbound logistics; 4) marketing & sales; 5) service.

2. Support activities: 1) firm infrastructure; 2) human resource management; 3) technology development; 4) procurement.

Evaluating these enterprises through the lens of *value chain* analysis reveals different approaches to creating and distributing value. Huaxia Qihan builds its competitive advantage on strong technological operations, the development of digital educational platforms, and the ability to integrate content and technology across its corporate group. Its infrastructure is supported by access to advanced technological resources, skilled IT specialists, and centralized management practices. This allows the company to coordinate large-scale educational services and continuously improve the quality of digital learning products.

Value Chain of Huaxia Qihan: Inbound resources (educational data and language corpora, AI infrastructure, regulatory compliance) → Core operations (AI model training, development of adaptive learning programs, content localization) → Outbound operations (B2B/B2G deployment, integration with national and regional education systems) → Marketing and sales (institutional partnerships, government pilot projects, ecosystem reputation) → Service (continuous AI optimization, analytical dashboards for clients) → Value creation (scaling intelligence rather than the number of teachers).

Competitive advantage is formed through the scaling of intelligent solutions via AI technologies, which makes it possible to increase the efficiency and quality of educational services without a proportional increase in human resources, particularly the number of teachers.

EdEra's value chain, by contrast, emphasizes content creation and social impact. Its operations center on producing high-quality videos, interactive materials, and electronic textbooks that align with modern educational standards and respond to social demands-particularly during the pandemic and wartime disruptions. Supported by a lean organizational structure and external partnerships, the company channels its innovative potential into developing accessible educational tools for Ukrainian schools.

Value Chain of EdEra: Inbound resources (expert knowledge, state educational standards, grant and donor support) → Core operations (development of courses tailored to Ukraine's needs, digital pedagogy and assessment) → Outbound operations (distribution of content among citizens, schools, and communities, open educational programs) → Marketing and engagement (communication of social impact, partnerships with public authorities and civil society institutions) → Service (learner support, regular course updates) → Value creation (social trust and national significance).

Preply's value chain demonstrates the logic of a global digital marketplace. Its core operations revolve around optimizing platform algorithms, ensuring efficient tutor-student matching, maintaining video communication tools, and providing uninterrupted online learning. Marketing, customer support, and international outreach constitute key activities that enhance Preply's visibility and attractiveness to global users. The company's technological sophistication and international infrastructure allow it to operate beyond any single national macroenvironment and rapidly scale its services worldwide.

Value Chain of Preply: Inbound resources (tutor onboarding, digital infrastructure, payment systems) → Core operations (AI-based tutor matching, scheduling and lesson management) → Outbound operations (global online access, scalable transactions) → Marketing and sales (performance marketing, SEO and recommendations, referral programs) → Service (safety and trust, dispute resolution, user analytics) → Value creation (reduction of transaction costs in global education).

In summary, the competitiveness of Huaxia Qihan, EdEra, and Preply is shaped by a combination of microenvironment factors, national economic contexts, and internal strategic capabilities. While Huaxia Qihan leverages technological leadership,

state-supported innovation, and corporate integration, EdEra relies on flexibility, agility, and innovative educational content. Preply's advantages emerge from its global operational model, platform scalability, and advanced digital technologies. Through the complementary lenses of Porter's Five Forces and the Value Chain, we can see how each company transforms macroeconomic opportunities and microeconomic pressures into strategic directions that enhance their long-term competitiveness in the global digital education landscape.

Huaxia Qihan competes through systemic integration and AI-driven personalization rather than through standalone courses. EdEra's strength lies in contextual relevance and social mission rather than scale. Preply must retain users through superior UX, trust, and AI-based matching rather than price competition.

In the second chapter, the macro- and microenvironment of enterprises' international competitiveness is analyzed through a comparative study of educational companies in China and Ukraine. The chapter examines macroeconomic conditions as a foundation for strategic positioning and competitiveness in international markets, highlighting how factors such as economic growth, inflation, exchange rates, and government policies shape strategic opportunities and risks. Within this framework, *PEST and PESTEL analyses* were conducted to systematically assess political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors influencing the overall market environment. Additionally, the study explores how firm-level elements, including market structure, competition, consumer behavior, and supply chain dynamics, affect enterprises' strategic behavior and decision-making in global markets. In this context, *SWOT and TOWS analyses* were applied to evaluate internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats, while *Porter's Five Forces model and value chain analysis* were employed to compare educational companies and assess their competitive positions and operational efficiency. Collectively, these analyses provide a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external factors shaping international competitiveness across different national and market contexts.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR ENSURING INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OF ENTERPRISES

3.1 Justification for the Selection of Strategic Directions to Ensure International Competitiveness of Enterprises

In the contemporary context of globalization and digital transformation, enterprises face the necessity of adapting their business models to the dynamic changes of the external environment. International competitiveness is increasingly determined not by material factors, but by the quality of intellectual capital, innovative capacity, digital maturity, global adaptability, and resilience to external risks. In this context, enterprises in the educational and technological sectors play a special role, as they shape human capital, generate new knowledge, and develop competencies essential for economic growth.

Huaxia Qihan (Beijing) Education Technology Co., Ltd., operating at the intersection of education, innovation, and digital technologies, demonstrates significant potential for entering international markets through the combination of traditional pedagogy, modern digital tools, and a strategic vision of development. To formulate effective strategic directions for competitiveness, it is essential to integrate the results of macro-environmental analysis of China and Ukraine, as well as an assessment of the company's internal potential.

Необходимо обратить внимания на следующие приведенные ниже стратегічні напрями забезпечення міжнародної конкурентоспроможності підприємств.

I. Development and Accumulation of Intellectual Capital.

Intellectual capital is becoming a key resource that determines enterprises' capabilities at the international level. For HuaxiaQihan, the following strategic directions are advisable:

1. Systematic staff development – investment in training educators, technical

specialists, and managers of international projects.

2. Formation of internal R&D teams – establishment of digital didactics laboratories, AI analytics units, and multimedia content groups.

3. International certification – compliance with ISO, CE, and GDPR standards to enhance partner trust.

4. Engagement of foreign experts – involvement of international specialists in the joint development of courses, programs, and platforms.

The development of intellectual capital is directly linked to the enterprise's innovative capacity and its ability to compete in the global EdTech market.

II. Innovation Strategies and Digital Transformation.

Innovation determines the speed of enterprise adaptation to market changes and shapes the added value of educational products. Key directions include:

1. Creation of adaptive AI-based educational platforms: personalized learning; automatic adjustment of individual learning trajectories.

2. Integration of Big Data and analytical modules: tracking learning performance; forecasting educational outcomes; content optimization.

3. Development of cloud-based solutions for international clients: global accessibility of educational products; scalability of platforms.

4. Creation of mobile applications for distance education: increased accessibility; engagement of younger audiences.

An innovation-driven strategy enables the transition from a traditional educational model to a digital ecosystem, significantly expanding competitive opportunities.

III. Strengthening Investment Activity and Expanding Ecosystem Linkages.

EdTech enterprises require substantial investments in content, technology, software, and marketing. Strategically important directions include:

1. Attracting strategic investors and venture capital.

2. Establishing partner R&D centers with Ukrainian IT companies.

3. Forming educational and technological consortia.

4. Participation in international programs such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe,

and UNESCO EdTech.

Partnership networks allow enterprises to access new markets and engage in joint innovation projects.

IV. International Positioning and Brand Development.

An effective international competitiveness strategy requires:

1. Adaptation of products to local markets (linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical adaptation).
2. Creation of a unique value proposition for different countries.
3. Formation of a global branding strategy – participation in forums, conferences, and international educational exhibitions.
4. Building a network of international partnerships with universities, schools, and business structures.

V. Enhancing Resilience to External Risks and Ensuring Sustainable Development.

Under unstable global market conditions, the following become particularly important:

1. Risk management systems.
2. Diversification of sales markets.
3. Cybersecurity and compliance with data protection requirements (GDPR, China DSL).
4. Multicultural teams and management of international projects.

Resilience ensures long-term competitiveness and minimizes the impact of external shocks.

One of the most effective tools for identifying the type of competitive development strategy is the SPACE analysis methodology.

This analysis makes it possible to assess the strategic position of an enterprise and determine further directions of its development based on two groups of factors: the internal condition of the enterprise and its external position. This method allows for a simultaneous evaluation of both the firm's position and the state of the industry. The method is based on the SPACE strategic position and action assessment matrix, which

is carried out according to four groups of criteria (a system of four coordinates) that characterize the strategic position of the enterprise.

According to the selected methodology, it is possible to determine the condition of enterprise and its strategic position along the following vectors:

1. Financial strength (stability) of the enterprise;
2. Competitiveness (competitive advantages) of the enterprise and its market position;
3. Attractiveness of the economic sector (industry);
4. Stability of the macroeconomic environment in which the firm (industry) operates.

For each vector, there is a specific set of criteria according to which the assessment is conducted. Each criterion is evaluated on a scale from 0 to 6, after which the arithmetic mean value of the corresponding indicator of the enterprise's strategic position is calculated.

After assessing the value of each factor, the average value of the factors within each group is calculated. The obtained values are then plotted on the coordinate axes of the SPACE matrix. Depending on how far the calculated values are from the center of the coordinate system, the strategic vector is determined. The list of factor groups and key criteria for SPACE analysis is presented in Table 3.1.

The SPACE analysis methodology belongs to expert evaluation methods.

The first indicator of the company's competitive position – the “financial strength” vector – is calculated as an arithmetic mean by dividing the sum of the factor values by their number. The “competitive advantage” indicator is calculated as an arithmetic mean by dividing the sum of the factor values by their number, minus 6, to appropriately represent the factor on the coordinate plane. The “industry (market) attractiveness” indicator is calculated as an arithmetic mean by dividing the sum of the factor values by their number. The “environmental stability” indicator is calculated as an arithmetic mean by dividing the sum of the factor values by their number, minus 6, to appropriately represent the factor on the coordinate plane.

Table 3.1

Criteria System for SPACE Matrix Analysis

SPACE Dimension	Direction in Matrix	Key Criteria (Characteristics)	Typical Indicators
Financial Strength (FS)	Positive (+)	Cost efficiency; return on invested capital; stability of profit generation; return on investment; liquidity; debt structure; ability to increase capitalization and attract financial resources.	– financial leverage (dependence); – liquidity ratios; – capital adequacy; – return on investment; – ease of market exit; – business risk; – cash flow, turnover.
Competitive Advantage (CA)	Negative (–)	Market size and dynamics; firm's market share; breadth of product range; marketing capabilities; ability to influence prices and costs; customer relationships; sales profitability.	– market share; – product quality; – product life cycle stage; – customer loyalty; – capacity utilization; – technical innovations; – degree of vertical integration.
Industry Attractiveness (IA)	Positive (+)	Competitive intensity within the industry; stage of industry life cycle; dependence on market conditions; public and social attractiveness of the industry; inter-industry use of products.	– growth potential; – profit potential; – financial stability of the industry; – resource utilization; – capital intensity; – technological level; – market entry ease; – productivity and capacity utilization.
Environmental Stability (ES)	Negative (–)	Length and stability of the industry life cycle; volatility of profitability; marketing and advertising conditions; degree of foreign capital influence; macroeconomic sensitivity.	– rate of technological changes; – demand volatility; – price range of competing products; – competitive pressure; – market entry barriers; – price elasticity of demand; – inflation rate.

After calculating all the indicators, they are plotted on the SPACE matrix. The four vectors of the matrix correspond to the following directions: financial strength, industry (market) attractiveness, competitive advantage, and environmental stability (See Tables 3.2).

As a result, four quadrants are formed, reflecting the company's strategic position in the market. After plotting the calculated values on the vectors, a quadrilateral is constructed, the longest side of which determines the company's strategic position in the respective market and suggests a specific set of actions (See Figure 3.1).

Table 3.2

Criteria System for SPACE Matrix Analysis for Huaxia Qihan with Porter's Five Forces overlay (compiled by the author)

Vector	Factors	Scores	Average Calculation	Final Vector Value	Analysis result	Porter Insights
Financial Strength (FS)	Financial dependence, Liquidity, Capital adequacy, Return on investment, Ease of market exit, Business risk, Turnover	3, 5, 2, 0, 1, 3, 3	$(3 + 5 + 2 + 0 + 1 + 3 + 3) / 7$	2.43	The company has moderate financial strength	Medium supplier power Corporate group support Government programs
Competitive Advantage (CA)	Market share, Product quality, Product life cycle stage, Customer loyalty, Capacity utilization, Technical innovations, Vertical integration	5, 6, 6, 3, 5, 5, 3	$((5 + 6 + 6 + 3 + 5 + 5 + 3) / 7) - 6 = 4.71 - 6$	-1.29	Competitive advantages are limited; there are weaknesses in the market	Strong rivals (TAL, New Oriental, Yuanfudao) Medium-high buyer power High rivalry intensity
Industry Attractiveness (IA)	Growth potential, Profit potential, Financial stability, Resource utilization, Capital intensity, Technology level, Market entry ease, Productivity	6, 5, 4, 5, 2, 5, 1, 3	$(6 + 5 + 4 + 5 + 2 + 5 + 1 + 3) / 8$	3.88	The industry is attractive, with high growth potential	High market growth Medium threat of substitutes Large Chinese market
Environmental Stability (ES)	Technological changes, Demand volatility, Price range of competing products, Competitive pressure, Market entry barriers, Price elasticity of demand, Inflation rate	2, 5, 4, 1, 4, 5, 3	$((2 + 5 + 4 + 1 + 4 + 5 + 3) / 7) - 6 = 3.43 - 6$	-2.57	The environment is unstable, with high risks and strong competition	High competitive rivalry Regulatory pressure Market volatility

The conducted analysis of the internal and external environment of Huaxia Qihan allows for the identification of a number of strengths and weaknesses that determine the company's strategic position in the EdTech market.

Government educational programs and regulatory support in China contribute to greater market stability and reduce the threat of new entrants, thereby strengthening the company's competitive resilience. An additional advantage is the large scale of the Chinese market, which mitigates the relative bargaining power of buyers despite the high level of competition.

At the same time, Huaxia Qihan faces several significant challenges and threats. The most critical among them is intense competitive rivalry with major EdTech players such as TAL, New Oriental, and Yuanfudao, which significantly limits the company's ability to build sustainable competitive advantages. In addition, there exists a moderate threat of substitute products, including alternative digital learning platforms and private educational institutions, which increases pressure on pricing and differentiation strategies. The moderate bargaining power of suppliers, particularly developers and content creators, also creates a certain degree of dependency that may affect cost structures and innovation capacity.

The interpretation of these findings within the framework of the SPACE analysis provides a coherent strategic picture. The Financial Strength (FS) indicator demonstrates a moderately positive value (+2.4), confirming the company's relative financial stability and institutional support. The Competitive Advantage (CA) indicator is weakly negative (−1.3), reflecting strong competitive pressure and the limited uniqueness of the company's offerings in a saturated market. The Industry Attractiveness (IA) indicator shows a high positive value (+3.9), indicating that the Chinese EdTech market remains attractive and growth-oriented. Conversely, the Environmental Stability (ES) indicator is negative (−2.6), which points to an unstable external environment characterized by intense competition, regulatory complexity, and rapid technological change.

The combined application of the SPACE matrix and Porter's Five Forces model makes it possible to establish a clear link between internal capabilities and external competitive forces, including the threats posed by new entrants, buyers, competitors, and substitute products. Overall, Huaxia Qihan operates in an environment of high competitive intensity, which necessitates the implementation of strategies aimed at strengthening competitive advantages and diversifying educational offerings.

The Strategic Position of the Enterprise According to the SPACE Analysis Method is presented in Figure 3.1. Based on the data presented in Figure 3.1, the strategic position of the enterprise can be characterized as *competitive*, as the orientation of the resulting quadrilateral is directed toward the lower-right quadrant of

the SPACE matrix.

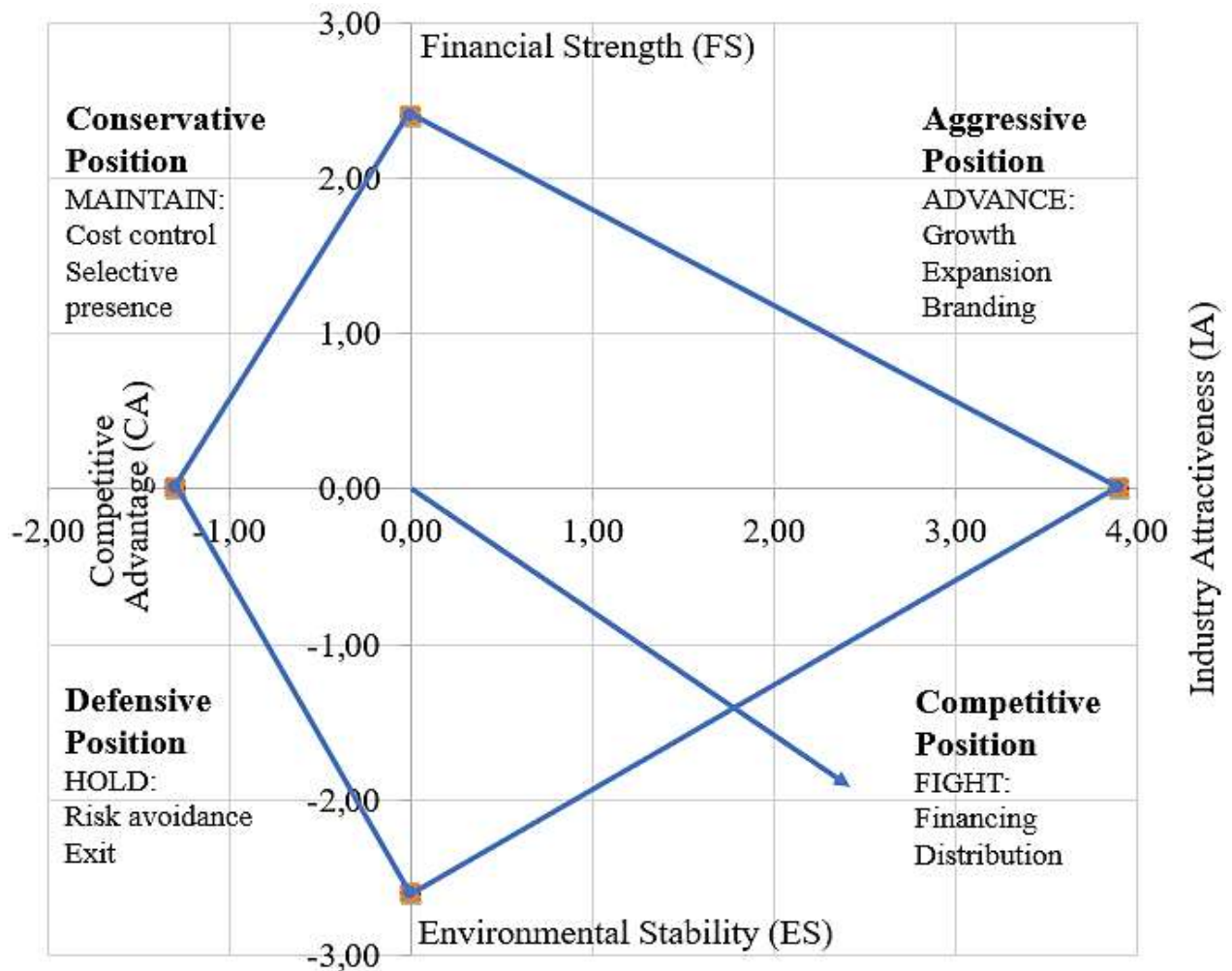


Figure 3.1. SPACE Matrix of Huaxia Qihan (with Porter's Five Forces Overlay)

Source: developed by the author

Based on the analysis of the enterprise's internal and external environment, strategic alternatives are evaluated, a system of strategies is justified, and a project of decisions is developed.

The most appropriate groups of mechanisms of the enterprise's competitive behavior strategy are presented in Table 3.3.

According to Table 3.3, the following recommendations are proposed within the framework of the enterprise's competitive strategic position:

1) in terms of securing financial resources – accumulate additional financial resources to strengthen market potential;

- 2) in terms of developing distribution networks – reinforce the sales and distribution function;
- 3) expand and adjust the product assortment;
- 4) invest in improving productivity;
- 5) reduce costs;
- 6) implement measures to protect and maintain competitive advantage in the market.

If the enterprise is able to strengthen its financial position, its strategic position may shift toward the Aggressive quadrant, as indicated by the development vector, which aligns closely with the Industry Attractiveness vector.

Table 3.3

Groups of Mechanisms of Enterprise Competitive Behavior Strategies

Strategic Position	Groups of Strategy Mechanisms
Aggressive	Strong financial position and high industry attractiveness enable active expansion, market penetration, innovation, and brand strengthening.
Competitive	The enterprise has competitive advantages but operates in a less attractive or unstable industry, requiring a focus on efficiency, financing, and distribution development.
Conservative	Financially stable enterprise in a mature or declining industry, emphasizing cost control, quality improvement, and selective market presence.
Defensive	Weak financial position and low industry attractiveness necessitate risk minimization, retrenchment, or market exit strategies.

Systematic comparison of companies' strategic positions in the EdTech market, where each company is evaluated across four key dimensions – advantage, risk, value driver, and strategic logic – is presented in Table 3.4 and Figure 3.2.

Table 3.4

Comparative Strategic Synthesis (compiled by the author)

Dimension	Huaxia Qihan		EdEra		Preply	
Core Advantage	AI system scale	3	Social legitimacy	2	Marketplace efficiency	1
Main Risk	Regulation & rivalry	2	Financial sustainability	1	Disintermediation	3
Value Driver	Intelligence & integration	3	Context & mission	2	Network effects	1
Strategic Logic	Ecosystem control	3	National resilience	2	Global matching	1

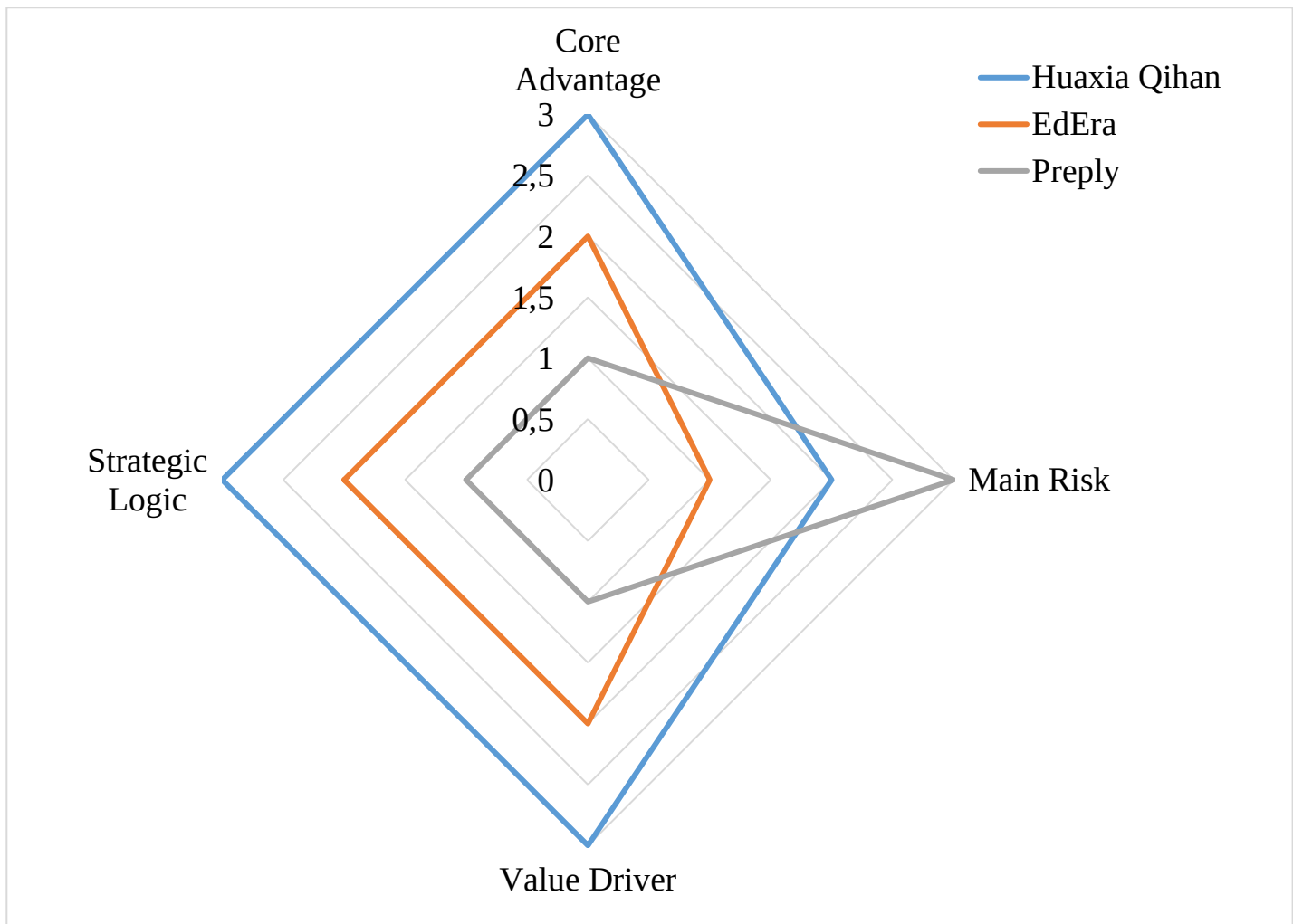


Figure 3.2. Comparative Strategic Synthesis

Source: developed by the author

Based on the SPACE matrix, it is possible to identify the most appropriate type of competitive strategy for the enterprise. Taking into account the determined strategic position of the company and the previously reviewed classifications of competitive strategies, a set of feasible and complementary competitive strategies can be proposed that the enterprise may effectively adopt.

3.1 Recommendations for the Implementation of Strategic Directions and Practical Measures to Enhance the International Competitiveness of EdTech Companies

Based on the strategic position of the enterprise identified in the previous section, as well as the previously reviewed classification of competitive strategies by A. Little, M. Porter, F. Kotler, L. Ramensky, A. Thompson, and D. Strickland (See Table 1.4), the following set of competitive strategies can be proposed for the enterprise:

1. Strategies for firms occupying a favorable position, since the competitive position is advantageous (A. Little);
2. Differentiation strategy (M. Porter);
3. Challenger strategy (F. Kotler);
4. Patient strategy (L. Ramensky);
5. Broad differentiation strategy (A. Thompson and D. Strickland).
6. Based on other classifications, additional strategies can be suggested:
7. Strategies aimed at achieving competitive advantage;
8. Challenger company strategies;
9. Strategies for mature industries, including broad differentiation, entry into international markets, cost leadership, optimal cost strategy, expansion into new geographic regions, acquisition of smaller competitors, and guerrilla marketing tactics.

Although the selected strategies are defined differently, they are united by a common goal: to strengthen the enterprise's strategic position, create competitive advantages, and enhance its ability to compete with other market participants.

In practice, a combination of competitive strategies is most often used in the form of a rational mix. Experts argue that no enterprise can achieve superiority over competitors in all parameters simultaneously. Therefore, it is essential to clearly prioritize and develop competitive strategies that best correspond to the market conditions and contribute to the development of the enterprise's strengths – its competitive advantages.

The enterprise's competitive strategy can be formulated as a market challenger

strategy, occupying a favorable position in the market and focused on differentiation based on competitive advantages such as high product quality and uniqueness, a wide product range, and low prices. The strategy to enhance the international competitiveness of our enterprise is a competitive behavior strategy through the creation of competitive advantages, combining innovative differentiation with a best-value approach, which integrates low costs and high quality.

The innovative differentiation strategy involves the enterprise's activities in developing innovative products, which ensure a sustainable competitive advantage and attract a large number of consumers. The company possesses all the necessary resources and capabilities to design and implement an innovation-driven strategy instead of a risk-minimizing or cost-cutting strategy, which aligns most effectively with current market realities.

The specific measures within the chosen direction for developing the enterprise's competitive strategy are outlined in *Ansoff's product–market matrix* [24], presented in Table 3.5. Table presents the proposed measures to strengthen the *enterprise's strategic position* in the market:

- enhancement of the company's communication policy, including participation in thematic exhibitions and fairs in various cities around the world;
- price incentive measures: reducing costs through consolidation—cutting expenses related to office maintenance and consumables, implementing resource-saving technologies, and consequently lowering prices for the company's products and services;
- improvement of personnel performance: expanding the pool of qualified staff and establishing new departments focused on specific markets;
- organization of effective enterprise management;
- expansion of the product and service range based on a “price–quality” approach through unique developments;
- active use of modern technologies, equipment, and materials in operations.

The proposed measures are designed to minimize costs, generate additional revenue, and increase market share in a highly competitive and unstable environment.

Table 3.5

Recommended Measures for Implementing the Selected Type of Competitive
Strategy (compiled by the author)

Strategy Market	Product	
	Existing	New
Existing	Best-Value Strategy – combining low costs and high product quality Measures to strengthen the company's strategic position in the international market: 1. Enhance communications: advertising, exhibitions, fairs, branding, etc. 2. Pricing measures: discounts through cost consolidation, implementation of resource-saving technologies. 3. Improve company management and organizational structure. 4. Differentiate offerings based on a price-quality ratio. 5. Expand presence in the domestic market.	Innovative Differentiation Strategy Measures to secure a competitive position through development and promotion of a new product: 1. Expand the product range based on price-quality ratio through unique developments. 2. Expand qualified personnel. 3. Actively implement advanced technologies in operations.
New	Best-Value Strategy Measures to ensure a competitive strategy through market development: 1. Establish new departments focused on specific markets. 2. High product/service quality and low prices (compared to competitors) and unique services (niche competitive strategy). 3. Improve export structure. 4. Enter international markets: European markets, expand presence in Africa, the East markets. 5. Focus on specific market sectors. 6. Monitor solvent demand and map consumer networks. 7. Increase commercial interest from investors and partners	Innovative Differentiation Strategy Measures to ensure a competitive strategy through diversification: 1. Create competitive advantages through investment in R&D. 2. High-quality and unique products/services. 3. Monitor advanced technologies and invest in new knowledge-intensive products, technologies, and developments.

The enterprise can also implement a series of measures to support the chosen type of *competitive strategy* through market development:

- expansion of presence in the domestic market. high service quality will allow the enterprise to withstand competition from other companies;
- entry into international markets, including european markets, as well as expanding presence in africa, the middle east, and capturing markets in the far east, where, due to high product quality and relatively low prices compared to competitors, the enterprise can secure a favorable competitive position and implement a niche strategy based on the uniqueness of certain services developed in-house;

- creation of competitive advantages through investment in research and development.

The enterprise should focus on initiatives aimed at strengthening its market position, and, if resources allow, it can begin implementing these measures.

In the future, upon achieving the set goals of entering new markets and securing competitive positions within them, the enterprise will continue to develop measures for new product development, expand its product range, increase production capacities, and implement other growth initiatives. The formulation and implementation of a strategy to enhance the international competitiveness of the enterprise ensures the long-term preservation or improvement of its performance relative to competitors. Achieving specific advantages requires the ability to select the most appropriate competitive strategy. The multiplicity of potential positioning directions within a competitive environment underscores the need for systematic strategic planning to ensure sustained competitiveness [14].

The choice of a competitiveness strategy, aligned with the market situation, involves assessing its advantages and risks, analyzing its suitability for current market conditions, and evaluating the organization of production and management within the enterprise [14]. When selecting a core strategy, the primary consideration is its capacity to stimulate the adaptation of the enterprise's capabilities to specific market conditions. This reflects the essence of a core strategy as an overarching economic foundation for practical enterprise actions.

There are numerous strategic directions available to the enterprise, including price reduction, product assortment renewal and differentiation, and quality improvement. Today, one of the key components of enhancing international competitiveness is the quality of final products and services, as well as their technological sophistication. To maintain a leading market position, it is strategically critical to outpace competitors in developing and mastering new products, technologies, production cost levels, pricing structures, and innovations in distribution and sales systems.

The main measures for achieving these objectives include effective

management, production modernization, and the adoption of resource-saving technologies. Attaining high levels of scientific and technological development, improving production efficiency, and optimizing resource use while ensuring environmental sustainability should be the outcomes of these strategies, ultimately contributing to business profitability. Therefore, strategies to enhance the enterprise's competitiveness must be formulated within the paradigm of innovation-driven development, focused on customer needs [25]. A correctly chosen and substantively well-developed innovation strategy – as a comprehensive set of decisions aimed at enhancing enterprise competitiveness – is a guarantee of long-term success and a means to secure both competitiveness and resilience in the international market.

Recommended Measures for Implementing the Selected Type of Competitive Strategy. The following measures are proposed to effectively implement the chosen competitive strategy for Huaxia Qihan:

1. Enhancement of Communications and Branding – Active participation in advertising campaigns, thematic exhibitions, fairs, and other promotional events to increase brand visibility in domestic and international markets.

2. Pricing Measures – Reducing costs through consolidation, implementation of resource-saving technologies, and subsequently offering competitive prices for products and services.

3. Organizational Improvement – Strengthening company management, optimizing internal structures, and expanding qualified personnel to support strategic initiatives.

4. Product and Service Differentiation – Expanding the range of offerings based on a price–quality approach and unique developments, ensuring competitive advantage and market relevance.

5. Market Development – Expanding presence in domestic and international markets, including Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East, with a focus on high-quality, low-cost, and niche-oriented offerings.

6. Investment in Innovation and R&D – Developing unique, knowledge-intensive products and services, monitoring advanced technologies, and leveraging innovation to create sustainable competitive advantages.

7. Monitoring and Market Analysis – Tracking solvent demand, mapping consumer networks, and analyzing competitive dynamics to adapt strategies effectively.

8. Enhancing Commercial Appeal – Increasing attractiveness to investors and strategic partners through consistent quality, innovation, and market positioning.

These measures aim to strengthen the strategic position, enhance competitive advantages, and increase market share in highly competitive and dynamic environments.

In order to maintain sustainable competitiveness and preserve customer loyalty, an organization's strategy should include a set of strategic initiatives with different implementation time horizons. Focusing exclusively on a single competitive strategy shortens the life cycle of the achieved competitive advantage.

Recommendations for Huaxia Qihan:

1. Scaling the volume of “production and delivery” through the expansion of educational services, including:

- increasing the number of educational programs, courses, and learning modules;
- scaling the online learning platform;
- expanding the user base across B2C, B2B, and government contract segments.

2. Diversification of the educational portfolio and quality enhancement, involving:

- development of new educational products (AI-driven courses, microlearning solutions, corporate training programs);
- adaptation of content to different market segments (schools, universities, adult and lifelong learning);

– compliance with international educational standards and digital learning requirements.

3. Cost control and optimization, including:

- optimization of IT infrastructure;
- reduction of non-productive and overhead costs;
- adoption of cloud-based solutions and EdTech platforms with lower marginal costs.

4. Improving the efficiency of asset utilization, focusing on:

- effective use of the digital platform, educational content, and AI models;
- increasing average revenue per user (ARPU);

- enhancing the utilization rate of digital assets.

In addition, the following strategic initiatives are recommended:

5. Continuous market and user behavior research, including:

- analysis of user experience (UX);
- assessment of learners’ and corporate clients’ preferences;
- monitoring of key competitors (TAL, New Oriental, Yuanfudao).

6. Development of marketing and brand positioning, through:

- digital marketing initiatives;
- educational brand building;
- partnerships with universities and government institutions.

7. Enhancement of workforce productivity, through:

- training and professional development of instructors and developers;
- implementation of motivation and incentive programs;
- use of AI technologies for content automation and learning support.

Key conclusions for Huaxia Qihan:

1. Leverage the strengths of China’s innovative ecosystem to scale products and improve service quality.

2. Adapt international strategies for the Ukrainian market, considering economic and social limitations.

3. Focus on digital transformation, AI, and Big Data to maintain competitive advantage.

4. Develop partnerships with Ukrainian IT and educational organizations for joint international market expansion.

5. Integrate macro- and micro-analysis into strategic decision-making to minimize risks and strengthen competitive positioning.

The Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Ukrainian EdTech Companies with Conclusions and Recommendations for Huaxia Qihan is presented in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Ukrainian EdTech Companies with
Conclusions and Recommendations for Huaxia Qihan

Factor / Parameter	China (Huaxia Qihan & other EdTech)	Ukraine (comparative EdTech companies)	Conclusions & Recommendations for Huaxia Qihan
Political Environment	Strong government support for education and innovation; national digitalization programs; predictable policies	Limited government support, high geopolitical risks, regulatory instability	Leverage Chinese government programs to accelerate scaling; adapt strategies for Ukrainian partnerships considering risks
Economic Environment	High EdTech investment, fast-growing market, access to financing and strategic investors	Limited financial resources, lower purchasing power, inflation and currency risks	Strengthen financial stability through diversified revenue streams and strategic partnerships; localize products for Ukrainian market
Socio-Cultural Factors	High demand for online learning, digital culture, readiness for innovation	Diverse needs, limited digital infrastructure, cautious adoption of new educational platforms	Localize content for cultural context, personalize learning, run educational campaigns to build trust
Technological Capabilities	Access to AI, Big Data, cloud solutions; developed R&D centers	Limited resources for large-scale technology; less experience with AI and digital analytics	Continue developing digital platforms and AI integration; collaborate with Ukrainian IT companies for joint innovation
Competitive Environment	High competition, need for differentiation through quality, unique products and services	Less intense competition, but limited opportunities for international expansion	Apply a challenger strategy with innovative differentiation and value optimization; use international experience to strengthen competitive advantages
Investment & Partnerships	Active strategic investor engagement; integration into global ecosystems; joint R&D projects	Limited investments; mostly local partnerships	Develop partnership networks in Ukraine to test new solutions and expand international presence
Regulatory Environment	Clear regulatory frameworks; support for international certification	Often unstable legislation; geopolitical and legal risks	Ensure compliance with international standards, increase operational transparency, adapt to local regulations

In the third chapter, based on the SPACE analysis methodology, it was determined that the enterprise occupies a competitive strategic position in the market. Based on the identified strategic position and the systematization of competitive strategies, the company's competitive strategy has been formulated as a challenger strategy: the enterprise holds a favorable market position and is focused on

differentiation, leveraging competitive advantages such as high quality and uniqueness of products, a wide product range, and low prices. This represents a strategy of competitive behavior through the creation of competitive advantages, combining innovative differentiation and best-value strategies – merging low costs with high quality. The recommended measures for implementing the chosen competitive strategy are based on Ansoff's product–market matrix, emphasizing deeper penetration into existing markets and their further development.

CONCLUSIONS

The qualification thesis provides a comprehensive study of the process of selecting and ensuring a competitive strategy of an enterprise in the context of globalization and digital transformation of the educational market. The research is based on a combination of fundamental principles of strategic management theory and an applied analysis of the activities of Huaxia Qihan, which ensured the integrity and practical orientation of the study.

In the course of the research, modern theoretical approaches to the interpretation of competitive strategy and international competitiveness of an enterprise were generalized and systematized. It was substantiated that a competitive strategy represents a dynamic system of long-term managerial decisions aimed at forming and maintaining sustainable competitive advantages in the global environment. Particular attention was paid to the growing role of intellectual capital, innovation, and digital technologies as key factors of competitiveness of EdTech companies in international markets.

The study reveals the specific features of competitive strategy formation in educational companies in China and Ukraine, which made it possible to identify significant differences in strategic priorities, institutional conditions of operation, and models of state support. This provided a basis for substantiating the feasibility of adapting classical strategic management approaches to the specifics of the digital education business.

The novelty of the theoretical and methodological developments lies in the updated application of traditional strategic analysis tools, including PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces model, SPACE analysis, and the Ansoff matrix, taking into account modern global challenges such as digitalization, intensified international competition, and macroeconomic instability. The feasibility of combining innovative differentiation with a best value strategy was substantiated, which corresponds to contemporary approaches to the formation of flexible competitive strategies in saturated markets. The proposed integrated approach to assessing the strategic position of an enterprise, which combines external environment analysis with the evaluation of internal strategic

potential, represents a development of modern strategic management concepts.

The practical part of the study confirmed that, according to the results of the SPACE analysis, Huaxia Qihan occupies a favorable competitive strategic position and has the potential for active growth under conditions of effective risk management and rational resource utilization. It was established that in an environment of intensified competition, the formation and implementation of a competitive strategy is a key task of enterprise management, as it ensures adaptation to changes in the market environment, strengthening of competitive advantages, and growth of market share.

The research substantiates that the formation of a competitive strategy should be based on a systematic analysis of the macro- and microenvironment, which enables timely responses to deviations from strategic benchmarks and ensures long-term development stability. For Huaxia Qihan, priority directions of the competitive strategy were identified, including the scaling of educational services, innovative differentiation, digital transformation, cost optimization, effective marketing, and continuous monitoring of the competitive environment.

It was proven that enhancing the international competitiveness of the company is possible through the development of intellectual capital, active implementation of digital and AI technologies, formation of partnership ecosystems, particularly with Ukrainian IT companies, as well as effective interaction with governmental and institutional structures. The analysis of the macro- and microenvironment confirmed that international competitiveness is formed through the combination of national innovation factors and the internal strategic potential of the enterprise.

As a result of the study, it was substantiated that the enterprise's competitive strategy should be formed as a market challenger strategy, which implies active competitive behavior focused on differentiation based on high quality and uniqueness of products, a wide product range, and an optimal price–quality ratio. The strategy for enhancing the international competitiveness of Huaxia Qihan is defined as a strategy of creating competitive advantages by combining innovative differentiation with a best value strategy, which integrates low costs and high quality.

The analysis of the external environment and internal capabilities of enterprises

demonstrates that international competitiveness is formed through a coherent combination of intellectual capital development, innovation-driven strategies, digital transformation, and adaptive organizational models. In the context of globalization and increasing uncertainty, sustainable competitive advantages emerge not from isolated technological solutions, but from the systemic integration of knowledge, technology, and institutional partnerships.

The strategic logic of ensuring international competitiveness is based on the alignment between macro-environmental conditions (political, economic, social, and technological factors), industry-level dynamics, and firm-specific resources. Enterprises that successfully integrate advanced digital technologies, particularly AI-driven solutions, with context-sensitive educational content and scalable platforms are better positioned to enter and sustain their presence in global markets.

Strategic Implications: Huaxia Qihan benefits from scale, state-supported digital infrastructure, and AI-driven personalization, positioning knowledge as a strategic infrastructure. Ukrainian EdTech companies gain competitiveness through contextual relevance, social trust, adaptability, and integration into international educational ecosystems.

International competitiveness for both models depends on balancing innovation, regulation, resilience, and global adaptability.

Huaxia Qihan represents a manifestation of noonomics, where knowledge functions as infrastructure. EdEra exemplifies a human-centered resilience economy. Preply reflects platform capitalism under pressure from AI.

For companies such as HuaxiaQihan, international competitiveness is reinforced through state-supported innovation ecosystems, strong R&D capabilities, and the ability to scale intellectual solutions across markets. In contrast, Ukrainian EdTech enterprises strengthen their competitiveness through contextual relevance, social trust, flexibility, and international cooperation. Despite differences in national environments, both models highlight the importance of adaptability, ecosystem thinking, and long-term investment in human and intellectual capital.

Overall, the strategic directions for ensuring international competitiveness

follow a clear logic: continuous development of intellectual resources, technological innovation, global market adaptation, risk resilience, and the creation of value through scalable knowledge-based solutions rather than through extensive growth in material or human inputs.

The strategic directions for ensuring international competitiveness are formed through the consistent integration of external environmental conditions and the internal capabilities of the enterprise. The logic of these directions is based on aligning macro-environmental opportunities and constraints with the firm's intellectual, technological, and organizational potential.

In the context of global digital transformation, sustainable international competitiveness increasingly depends on the ability of enterprises to develop and scale intellectual capital, implement innovation-driven strategies, and adapt business models to diverse institutional and cultural environments. For educational and technology-oriented enterprises, competitiveness is shaped not by cost advantages alone, but by the creation of high-value digital solutions, personalized services, and ecosystem-based partnerships.

The general strategic logic includes:

1. Transformation of knowledge into a scalable digital asset through AI, data analytics, and platform-based models;
2. Integration into international innovation ecosystems via partnerships, joint R&D, and participation in global programs;
3. Localization combined with global standardization, ensuring both market relevance and international credibility;
4. Risk resilience and sustainability, achieved through diversification, regulatory compliance, cybersecurity, and flexible organizational structures.

Thus, international competitiveness emerges as a dynamic capability rooted in intellectual capital, technological sophistication, and strategic adaptability, enabling enterprises to sustain long-term value creation in global markets.

The results of the study can be used in the activities of EdTech companies that operate in or plan to enter international markets.

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APPENDICES



Figure A1. Approbation of the Results of Qualification Work