

REVIEW

for a dissertation

QIN GUOHE

on the topic: "STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF COMPETITIVENESS OF PRODUCERS OF AGRO-FOOD PRODUCTS",

applied for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

specialty 073 – Management

Relevance of the dissertation topic

A key influence on the competitiveness of economic entities is the ability to adapt to a changing external environment. The multi-vector nature of development inherent in economic structures provides a request for making proactive decisions that contribute to the acquisition of sustainability of functioning with the development of mechanisms for their implementation in economic practice. Increasing competitiveness is the core of the development of the economic system both at the level of individual enterprises and the level of sectors of social production. The achievement of this goal becomes a reality with the introduction of modern forms and methods that meet the challenges of the modern economy, among which strategic management demonstrates the most excellent efficiency. The author's integrated approach, which is declared in the formulated topic, fully meets the needs of today when the emphasis is shifted from the analysis of the activities of an abstract enterprise to the study of interaction in value chains because competitive interaction moves from the plane of interfirm positions to the sphere of competition of supply chains. Within the framework of the global economy, united by the international division of labor, Ukraine has replaced a raw material appendage, which could be more favorable in the long run. Thus, the strategic goal of economic development at the macro level is the formation of competitive advantages not only in the agricultural sector but in all sectors of the agri-food value chain.

Thus, an effective solution to the problem of increasing enterprises' competitiveness in the agri-food sector requires further development of the

theoretical and methodological foundations and principles of strategic management with an emphasis on developing mechanisms for their practical implementation.

The main results of the research, their scientific novelty

The following provisions of scientific novelty, submitted for defense, create a significant increase in scientific knowledge:

- the primary vector of the strategic mission of sectoral transformation in the agri-food sector has been determined. Considering the critical importance of environmental factors in forming a strategy for acquiring competitive advantages, identifying trends in the transformation of the socio-economic space, carried out by the author at the macro- and microeconomic levels, is of particular importance. This approach made it possible to outline ways to implement environmental and humanistic ethics in the activities of agri-food enterprises based on ESG principles;
- an adaptive methodology for responding to environmental challenges, based on control by weak signals, has been proposed. The presented conclusion was a logical continuation of the processes of developing an algorithm for strategic management of the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, which, in the author's concept, is represented by a system of interdependent stages connected by a feedback mechanism;
- the architectonics of the financial mechanism for increasing the competitiveness of enterprises in the agri-food sector is presented, which reflects the main trends in the inclusiveness of economic processes. Its distinctive feature is the algorithms for achieving a balance of values and interests in all elements of the value chain of the agro-product sector based on the inclusion of sustainable development targets and the principles of mixed finance. Have been further developed methodical approaches to the organization of leasing financial relations in the agri-food sector, which provide for the prolonged purchase (replacement) of the leased object;
- the strategy for increasing the competitiveness of the agri-food sector is considered as a mechanism for using the tools for strategic forecasting of the transformation of consumer tastes, as well as assessing and comparing the practice

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of adaptation of direct competitors with the allocation of benchmark indicators of effective functioning in order to implement the tested methods in management at the level of an individual economic entity;

- strategic drivers for increasing the competitiveness of agri-food sector entities have been identified, including innovation and smart agriculture 5.0; digitalization of the industry; environmental standards and certification; organic agricultural production and development of circular business models; socially responsible marketing policy and branding;

- methodological approaches to the system for assessing the competitiveness of the agri-food sector have been developed. The set of criteria is supplemented by a qualitative criterion of balancing the actions of economic entities that embody the spheres of business and public administration, where the latter form the institutional foundations of organizational, political, legal, and social dimensions.

The degree of validity and reliability of scientific provisions, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the dissertation

The peer-reviewed research is complex and represents a structurally holistic work. The logic of the presentation of the material is consistent and justified by the research's object, subject, and purpose.

The content of the dissertation fully reflects its main provisions and corresponds to a particular structure. The information base of the study consisted of data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the Main Department of Statistics in the Kharkiv region, current reports of agri-food enterprises, data from empirical research, and Ukraine's regulatory legal acts. The comprehensiveness of the analysis is confirmed by enough scientific, informational, and legal sources used by the author.

The content of the dissertation is characterized by a high theoretical, scientific, and methodological level of solving the tasks. With the help of clear definitions of concepts, classifications, etc., the author expressed his opinion on the currently

available debatable issues regarding the strategic management of competitiveness of agri-food producers.

The author's achievements are presented in 8 scientific papers with a total volume of 2.4 (printed pages): 4 articles and four abstracts of conference materials are published in scientific journals.

In general, the dissertation, made in the form of a specially prepared manuscript, is a holistic and fully completed scientific study with clear conclusions and proposals for deepening the theory and improving the practice of managing competitiveness by agri-food producers in a strategic context.

Structure and content of the work

The dissertation is presented on 207 pages, of which 176 are the main text. The work contains 25 tables, 27 figures, and 1 appendix. The list of references includes 201 titles. The content of the dissertation includes an introduction, three sections, and conclusions.

In the first section, the scientific and theoretical foundations of strategic management of competitiveness of enterprises in the agri-food sector are studied. In contrast, the critical points in achieving the goals defined in the work about this direction of scientific research are analysis of the essence and features of strategic management of competitiveness, the structure of factors for forming competitive advantages, and methodology for assessing competitiveness at the sectoral level.

The second section of the dissertation focuses on assessing the current State of competitiveness of the agri-food sector to identify triggers and opportunities that open in response to changes in the external and internal environment of industries that have become the subject of analysis. Modern views on assessing the efficiency of the agri-food sector are presented.

The third section discloses the features of the mechanism of financial support for the competitiveness of the agri-food sector; in particular, attention is paid to the optimization of leasing relations through the diversification of their forms, ways to

increase the competitiveness of agri-food business structures are proposed the possibilities of optimizing the influence of the State on this process are identified.

The importance of the results obtained for science and practice

The practical significance of the results of the study is confirmed by the certificates provided by the SE DG "Elitne" of the Yuriev Institute of Plant Production of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, AGRO-NOVA LLC of the Zolochiv district of the Kharkiv region, which implemented the author's mechanism for increasing the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, as well as the algorithm of strategic competitiveness management. The author's theoretical and methodological provisions and developments are used in the educational program of SBTU.

Discussion provisions and comments on the dissertation

It should be noted that the work is not without certain shortcomings and contradictory provisions that require additional explanations and clarifications, giving an overall positive assessment of the dissertation research:

1. Among strategic management methods, the author highlights the aspect of the early warning system based on the system of methodological approaches to management by weak signals. At the same time, this thesis is declared without the use of comparative characteristics of the methods of strategic management proposed in the scientific literature. The author notes their existence but does not delve into the advantages and disadvantages.

2. The publication pays considerable attention to the methods of assessing the competitiveness of both individual enterprises and branches of social production, which made it possible to identify the factors influencing the level of competitiveness with the allocation of internal and external factors. The applied component of the study could be significantly increased by moving away from the

purely descriptive principle, with the inclusion of parameters for assessing the weight of each factor in the system of influencing elements.

3. The assessment of the competitiveness of agri-food sectors carried out in the work is fragmentary and covers only some of the value chains in the agri-food sector, which narrows the possibilities of a comprehensive analysis. The authors' focus on the statistical data of the Kharkiv region has a logical explanation. However, it only allows for highlighting its specifics, advantages, and disadvantages with comparison with similar data in other regions and in Ukraine as a whole.

4. The algorithm for implementing the strategy of sustainable financial provision of competitive agricultural production includes blocks of what needs to be done, but the practical mechanisms for achieving the goals are not sufficiently specified; in our opinion, the motivational mechanisms for the participation of economic entities in the processes of mixed financial provision of participants in agri-food value chains are not reflected.

5. The publication emphasizes the need for digitalization in the agri-food sector but needs to reflect the definition of the current state of digitalization at the sectoral level.

6. Today, Ukraine is facing the challenges of a full-scale war. In these conditions, the state's role is being transformed, particularly considering the priority areas for directing financial flows. At the same time, this needs to be presented systematically in the work.

General conclusion

Qin Guohe's dissertation on the topic: " Strategic Management of Competitiveness of Producers of Agro-Food Products", which was submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the specialty 073 – Management, is an independent, completed scientific research, meets the requirements of the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 40 dated 12.01.2017 "On approval of the requirements for the design of the dissertation", «The procedure for awarding the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and the cancellation of the decision of

the one-time specialized council of the institution higher education, a scientific institution on awarding the degree of Doctor of Philosophy» (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated January 12, 2022 No. 44), and its author deserves to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the specialty 073 – Management, field of knowledge 07 – Management and Administration.

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