

DETERMINATION OF DISTINCTIVE COMPETENCIES IN SMES: THE CASE OF VIGO AND ITS AREA OF INFLUENCE (SPAIN)

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SUMMARY

The sources of competitive advantages are characteristic of the enterprises that allow them to be placed in better position than their competitors. As from the theory of resources and capacities it is habitual to consider that those sources are in internal and external factors of the enterprises. The entrepreneur, by means of the strategy combines these factors establishing his distinctive competencies. This paper analyzes the formation of distinguishing competences. The obtained results show the form in which the small and medium enterprises (SME) organize their resources and capacities to form distinctive competencies. The SMEs of Vigo study their area of influence, a region of northwest Spain. In that case it is obtained that they form 5 great distinguishing competencies: management of human and technological resources, management of territorial resources, management of clients, management of products and innovation. These agree to a large extent with previous papers, although their contents present some differences.

KEY WORDS: Sources of competitive Advantage; Theory of resources and capacities; enterprise results; Regional SMEs.

INTRODUCTION

Prahalad and Hamel (1991) coined the term distinctive competencies to distinguish those fundamental capacities for the strategy of the enterprise. According to these authors they are those that make an out of proportion contribution to the value for the final client or to the efficiency whereupon this value is given and provide a base to enter new markets. I.e., they generate competitive advantages in the enterprise. Generally, a competitive advantage is defined as that one easily non-imitable aspect of the enterprise, with possibilities of being maintained in the future, in which it is positioned over his competitors and which makes him obtain better enterprise results (Carmeli, 2004). There are therefore three elements associated to this concept: a characteristic of the enterprise that stays in time and difficult to imitate, a comparison with the competitors and a practical utility of that characteristic that manifests itself in obtaining, somehow, better enterprise results (O' Donnell et al, 2002).

In principle, any characteristic of the enterprise could be a source of competitive advantage. This causes that the literature on competitive advantages has considered different aspects that make it difficult for a clear classification to know where these are. In order to put in order the elements that take part in this classification it is necessary to start off from a model that facilitates the study of competitive advantages (Carmeli, 2004; Hall, 1992). In general they have been considered that the sources of competitive advantages are so much in the internal as external factors of the enterprise (Grant, 2005). We will start off, therefore, from a model that connects the internal and external factors of the enterprise with its competitive advantages.

The internal factors are based on the theory of resources and capacities (Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1995). Other authors introduce among the internal factors with an outstanding role the intellectual capital of the enterprise (Bontis et al, 2000). The external factors are related to

the key factors of success of the activity (Grant, 2005). However, when considering different activities, it is not easy to detect which are those factors of success common for all of them, reason why we will consider them within a more generic concept than we will call strategic factors that generally refer to the business carried out by the enterprises. In addition, given the importance that for the SME the territory also has, we will introduce this one between the external factors (Vázquez Barquero, 1999). On the other hand those competitive advantages of the enterprises are also related to those of the surroundings (Sanfiel et al., 2006).

Although the sources of competitive advantages for the enterprises are common, the same does not happen in the form in which they organize them. This causes that at present the models of competitive advantages be different, since they are usually not directly associated to an only resource or capacity but usually they consider a combination of them (Gilmore and Carson, 1999).

The relation between resources and capacities has long been discussed in literature. In general, the majority of authors (Grant, 1991; Amit and Schoemaker, 1993) start off that the resources are inputs with which the enterprise counts to carry out its activity. Alone they do not generate any rent; it's necessary its suitable coordination to secure advantages on the competitors. In some cases they consider that the capacities are indeed the faculty to manage suitably the resources to carry out a certain task within the enterprise (Grant, 1991). According to this, the capacities are the form in which the enterprise combines its resources (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993). In that sense, one can speak of a functional classification of the capacities, that is to say, associated to the processes of the enterprise.

The strategy of the enterprise is the one that allows combining those resources and capacities, considering the external factors, to establish the competitive advantages (Grant, 2005). However, unlike Grant, in our model, that combination can also occur between resources and capacities and not only of these last ones with the external factors of the activity.

Some authors defend that what interests so that an aspect can be considered competitive advantage is that it be successful in some process of the enterprise. (Ray et al., 2004).

In this case we would find out that it was not going to be easy to distinguish from the practical point of view, between the competitive advantage and the result obtained with it. Therefore, to facilitate the exposition, we will make a distinction between the competence obtained as a combination of the internal and external factors and that competence when it really has effect on the enterprise results. Following Prahalad and Hamel (1991) we will denominate distinct competencies to that combination of resources and capacities. When they really produce impact on the results these would be competitive advantages.

Numerous papers exist that detail the distinctive competencies in the enterprise (Rubio and Aragon, 2008). Nevertheless a common methodology to all of them does not appear and that makes the comparison between one and another difficult. In this paper one proposes an open methodology, based on techniques of analysis of the main components, to detect the association that the entrepreneurs realize of the resources and capacities, along with the external factors of their enterprise to settle their distinctive competencies. This technique determines what variables are more related to each other according to the entrepreneur's opinion and, consequently it can be supposed that this relationship is fruit of the real association that the entrepreneurs do at the time of constituting their competencies. This methodology is applied to SMEs of a zone of the northwest of Spain.

We will divide this article into three sections. First, the basic model is established that includes the set of sources of competitive advantages. Next the distinctive competencies are elaborated. For that one uses a sample of SMEs of Vigo and its area of influence, a region located in the southwest of Galicia near the border of Spain with Portugal. Finally the conclusions section.

DEVELOPMENT

Sources of competitive advantage in SMEs

The first step to construct a competitive advantage consists of defining the possible sources that allow it to be placed in a better position with respect to their competitors to obtain

better results (O' Donnell et al., 2002). That demands to raise a theoretical model that serves as bases to detect those possible sources. In order to determine we set off from the model enunciated by Grant (2005), adopted generally for management. This model considers that the resources are the productive assets of property of the enterprise whereas the capacities are what the enterprises can do. The resources do not confer competitive advantage, must work together to create organizational capacities. Those capacities are the essence of a higher yield. A relationship between the resources, competitive capacities and advantages exists. This relationship comes through the strategy. This one considers the factors key of success of the industry and, from its organizational capacities it determines its competitive advantages.

In this paper some differences with respect to Grant's model are included. In the first place one generalizes the concept of key factors of success of the activity. These factors refer to those external elements in which the industry competes. Other authors define them as those minimum capacities that an enterprise must dominate to participate in the competence (Ketelhohn, 1998). This causes that this concept takes associate with it something of confusion, which worsens when working with enterprises of different activities. For that reason, we have decided to call them strategic factors and they will essentially refer to those general elements of definition of a strategy in relation to the competence. Those elements demand to analyze the product or service and the market at which the enterprise is aiming. The product or the service indicates what it is what the enterprise does. The market refers to those who want to sell their product or service. All these are elements which are affected by the size of the enterprise, since the proximity to the market allows them a greater knowledge of it, which facilitates the knowledge of the client and a fast answer to their needs (Pelham, 1997; Pil and Holweg, 2003). The product or the strategies of production have been studied as competitive advantage in a global way by Zahra and Das (1993) that applies to the Theory of Resources and Capacities to the formulation of the production strategies and analyzes their impact in the enterprise competitiveness. The market also has been analyzed from manifold points of view as competitive advantage of the enterprise (Carson and Gilmore, 2000). The SME presents characteristics in the use of this

resource in comparison with the large enterprises. On the one hand, the capacity to generate products and to compete in costs is inferior, but its proximity to the client, allows him to differentiate himself in a more specific way and to adapt better to the needs of the market (Pelham, 1997).

On the other hand, the SMEs compete in a certain zone, in which they develop their activities of purchase, production and sale. This causes that the territory is a fundamental element at the time of establishing their strategy, since it conditions great part of its activity due to its size. Due to that reason, it is interesting to introduce among the external factors the possible contribution of the territory (Vázquez Barquero, 1999). The scheme of the value chain allows selecting the basic processes of the enterprise that are essentially to buy, to produce and to sell. We will consider those three processes associated to the zone to determine the impact of this one.

Another difference appears in the classification of the resources of which one is going to make use of. Grant (2005) identifies three main types of resources: tangible, intangible and human. The tangible resources are the easiest to identify and to evaluate. They include the financial resources and the identified and valued physical assets in the financial statements of the enterprise.

The human resources of the enterprise are the experience and the effort offered by their employees. They do not appear in the balance of the enterprises by the simple reason that the people are not their property: they offer their services by virtue of work contracts. Nevertheless, the capacity of the employees to harmonize their efforts and to integrate their abilities separately not only depends on their interpersonal abilities, but also on the organizational context. This context affects the internal collaboration. It is determined by an intangible key resource: the culture of the organization. This term refers to the values of an organization, the traditions and social norms (Barney, 1996). This interaction between the valuation of the employees and the organizational culture actually makes difficult, in practice, the distinction between the human and intangible resources. In addition, from the point of view of the intellectual capital (Bontis et al.,

2000) one tends to consider that one as the other can be unified within that concept, since both are source or comprise the intellectual capital of the enterprise. It seems to us that that approach, also adopted by other authors (Hall, 1992; Wernerfelt, 1995) and considering that the intellectual capital is a source of competitive advantage (Wang and Chang, 2005; Jardon and Martos, 2008; Bontis and Fitz-Enz, 2002), simplify the exposition so we will assume it in this paper.

Within the intellectual capital one usually distinguishes three components (Bontis and Fitz-Enz, 2002): the human capital, the structural capital and the relational capital. The first includes most of the elements associated to the human resources proposed by Grant. The structural capital gathers many of the elements that this author includes among the intangible resources, although it represents some differences. Also included within this one are the management elements that potentiate competitiveness (Tański et al., 2007). The relational capital appears new with respect to this model since it includes the relation with the clients and suppliers, and the social media in which the activity evolves.

Hatch and Dyer (2004) consider the human capital like competitive advantage in global terms. Other authors analyze more specific aspects like a suitable direction of the human resources of the enterprise (Koch and McGrath, 1996), the attitude that the managers and workers have (Kamoche, 1996), the generic formation of these (Pfeffer, 2005) or those of the personnel of the enterprise (Barney, 1996). Besides from the human capital, also other associate intangible resources to the structural capital are included that can be source of competitive advantage (Villalonga, 2004). These usually take shape in the enterprise culture that summarizes the set of existing values in the enterprise (Flatt and Kowalczyk, 2008) or the enterprise technology (Nelson, 1994). Finally in a SME it is fundamental to consider its relational capital, i. e., its relations with suppliers and clients and the existing cooperation in the enterprise (Altuzarra, 2009). The suppliers will be considered as a competitiveness factor (Porter, 1985) and in some cases as a competitive advantage of the enterprise (Wagner, 2006). The relationship with the clients is also key for the competitiveness of the enterprises (Carson and Gilmore,

2000).

The resources alone are not productive. In order to carry out a task a team of resources is necessary that must work together. From there arises the idea of organizational capacity. This is defined as the capacity of an enterprise to unfold resources for a desired final result (Helfat and Lieberman, 2002).

The traditional theory of international trade was based on the idea of comparative advantages between the nations (Ricardo, 1817), where the physical resources of the countries were the key to compete. Although the evolution of the economy has made this idea lose weight, the physical capital has always continued being as a source of results. Generally the tangible assets have been included among the sources of competitive advantages, since these sources are constituted from these, either in a joint way (Mata et al., 1995) or some of them in a more specific way (Kaleka, 2002).

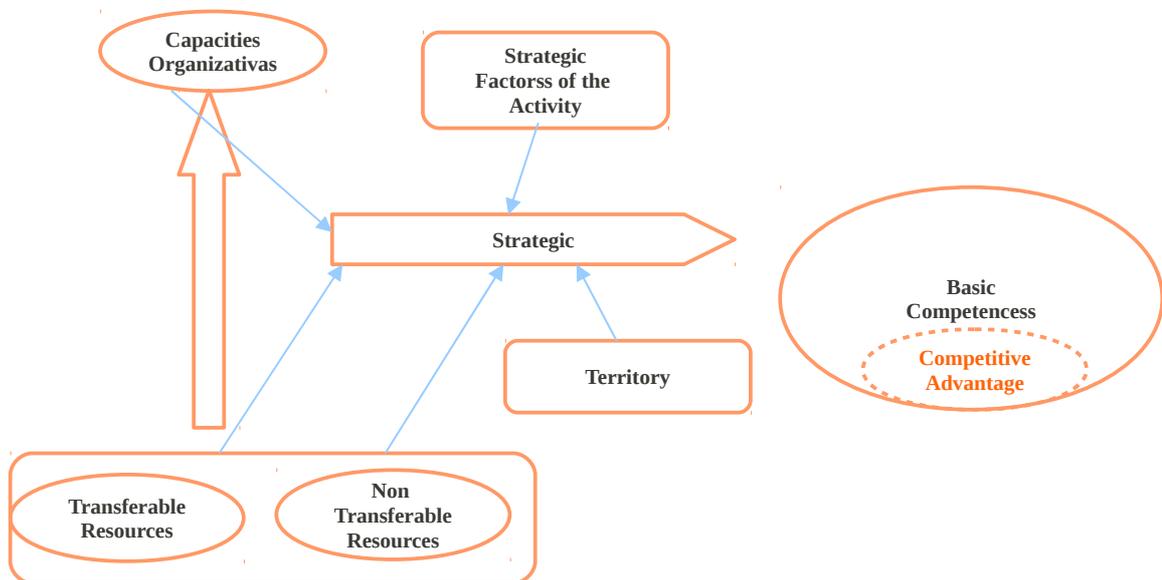
The organizational capacities are very varied and, as a whole, they have been implicit sources of competitive advantages (Grant, 2005). The organization capacity requires the experience of several individuals to be integrated with capital goods, technology, and other resources. The organizational capacities of the enterprise can be classified according to the value chain since they are oriented to generate value for the final client (Grant, 2005). Thus some can be considered as primary, since they are the tasks that generate value in a direct way for the client and others of support, since they are common to all the process of value generation. Among the support capacities literature has made special mention to the management capacities that in addition present special characteristics for the SME (Rubio and Aragon, 2008). On the one hand, the directive practice is more complicated, as they usually have less strategic mentality, more orientated in the short term, predominance of culture oriented to the functions, difficulty to delegate, insufficient professionalism of the management and little habit of continuous learning (Camisón, 1997). Nevertheless, the fact that on the management the majority of the decisions in the matter of management fall on him, confers on him a deep knowledge of the business that makes agile the decision making (Camisón, 1997).

Even although there are other systems of support, that allow a greater generation of competitive advantages.

Thus are structured the subjects in which the set of elements integrated to analysis elements, facilitating the classification of the sources of competitive advantages considered by the entrepreneurs of a certain zone: the intellectual capital, the tangible resources, the organization capacities and the factors key of success along with the territory where the enterprise develops its activity (see Figure 1).

Our main interest concentrates in the capacities that can offer a base for the competitive advantage. Many authors use the term distinctive competiveness to describe the things that an organization does especially well in relation to its competitors (Selznick, 1957; Prahalad and Hamel, 1991). We will maintain this annotation.

Figure 1 Model of elaboration of competitive advantages



Source: Own elaboration

Distinguishing competencies in Vigo and its influence area

The objective of the paper consists of verifying if the different types of aspects analyzed form distinct competencies for the enterprise that can be considered as competitive advantage.

Therefore, it interests us to determine how the different sources of competitive advantages are combined to construct their distinct competencies.

In the first place we indicate how the population of study and the selected sample is. Next the competencies obtained from the analysis are exposed.

The population and the sample

Vigo and its metropolitan area more specifically, in the zone the northwest of Spain, and in the southwest of Galicia. The enterprises of that region present their own characteristics. It is a region with one long enterprise tradition that was fortified at the beginning of the XX century with the rise of the canners and which was reinforced in mid 60s with the implantation of an automobile multinational in the zone. These facts have meant that the activities associated to the sea, as much fishing as feeding or shipyards and those that are oriented to the means of transport have acquired great importance in the zone. This has undergone several industrial reconversions that have tested their capacity of recovery and have demonstrated the great existing enterprising spirit. By these reasons it appears as a suitable place to resist some of the theories elaborated on competitive advantages.

Normally, the enterprise structure of a zone shows some of its characteristics. For that reason it was convenient to design the sample considering such structure. There are different alternatives to analyze. In this paper, one is going to follow an approach of enterprise chains, i.e., the activities associated to a same chain of value of a product will be analyzed in a joint way or service and those other activities that serve as support or are necessary for the accomplishment of the set of previous activities. This approach allows to evaluate the interrelations between enterprises and to facilitate the constitution of enterprise clusters that is one of the strategies of competitiveness adopted by the regions (Porter, 1990). It seems, therefore, a logic structures for the SME regional study. (Gonzalez et al., 2006).

The study zone has a high enterprise interest. Altogether one esteems that the gross added value (GAV) generated by the enterprise productive system of the private sector was around in 2006 the 10,374 million Euros. (Gonzalez et al., 2006). According to the estimations

realized in this paper, following the data of the National Institute of Statistic of Spain (NSI) there exist more than 30,000 enterprises in this zone. Making use of previous papers (Gonzalez et al., 2006) and considering the situation specific of this study 11 enterprise chains have been found.

In order to obtain the empirical data a survey in that zone in 2005 was carried out. Given the high strategic content of the survey and not to affect in an important way the representativeness of the results considered in terms of production, those enterprises which were very small were eliminated. Consequently, they were not considered as part of the population's objective those which were autonomous and micro-enterprises, i. e., enterprise with less than 10 workers. In a similar way enterprises with more than 250 workers were not included either, i. e. that in the samples only the SME remained.

Initially a sample of 400 enterprises was selected, that with a level of confidence of 95.5% would give us a maximum error in the case of a dichotomizing question of 5% in all the set. One looked that there was only a mini number of enterprises in each enterprise chain, to assure the representativeness of the sample. That is why 20 enterprises in each chain were selected and the rest of the sample was distributed proportionally according to the combined structure. The answer rate was of 59%, reason why finally 236 valid answers were obtained with which the study was elaborated. It was verified that the final structure of enterprise chains of the sample adjusted the population of study by means of a test of homogeneity of populations (Newbold et al., 2002). Therefore the fact did not imply a substantial slant to have that rate of answer. Nevertheless, the error sample was increased up till 6.35%.

Determination of the distinctive Competencies

In order to construct the competitive advantages the enterprises make use of external factors and internal, i. e., all that referred to enterprise resources, its organizational capacity, the strategic factors and the territory. In this way those that were associated would indicate the distinguishing competences that a set of enterprises would make use of to compete. In order to determine how the entrepreneurs associate the different competitive advantage sources we

made use of the analysis of main components (Hair et al., 2006). After several tests following Kaiser's criterion combined with the sedimentation graph 5, components have been chosen that explain more than 50% of the variation of the data. The coefficients obtained in this analysis show that a sufficiently high adjustment sample exists (see table 1). The factorial loads of these five components gather in Table 2, what indicates the importance of each variable in each one of them. As commented previously we associated a competency to each component.

Table 1 KMO and Bartlett's test

Measurement of sample adjustment of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's		.888
Bartlett's sphericity Test	Chi-squared approximate	5154,74
	gl	703
	Sig.	0

Source: Own elaboration

The first competency is associated to the tangible resources and the processes associated to the territory or directly related to them. On the one hand are the zones where the enterprise carries out its activities. Together with that one, especially in the SME we find the processes related to the suppliers (kind, logistic process of and supplying, etc.) and the processes related to the sale (the distribution network, the commercialization process and sale, etc....) that other authors include in the commercial resources (Camisón, 1997). The cooperation like an attitude of the enterprise, very much related to in a SME with its clients and suppliers is also included with a certain importance in this factor. Also there appear the natural resources that are the tangible resources more directly related to the territory. Other tangible resources such as the financiers and those of equipment appear with importance in this basic competence, although not in a unique way. Associated to them there are the existing capacity of evaluation of risks and technologies in the enterprise. Since those tangible resources also are directly associated to the territory, because in the case of the SME even the financial resources usually are obtained in the nearby territory, we denominate this competency management of the territory or territorial resources. These factors have been introduced in the different distinctive defined competencies in other papers. The financing necessity is key in a SME (Birley and Westhead, 1990) as much

for technological resources as for innovation, reason why the authors locate united those elements (Rubio and Aragon, 2008; Esteban et al., 2003). The cooperation also appears associated to those aspects as strategy of optimization to obtain them (Klofsten and Scheele, 2003). The territory has been less studied as a field of basic competence, although the enterprise cluster theories (Porter, 1990) consider it fundamental (Vázquez Barquero, 1999). There also appear some aspects related to the innovation; we suppose that referred to those aspects of cooperation with other near partners, of strategies of product, and support systems to the value chain (Altuzarra, 2009). By all this it seems to be one of the main distinguishing competencies of a SME since it is related in a direct form to its surroundings and the advantage of this one for the development of its strategy (Sanfiel et al., 2006).

Table 2: Rotated Components Matrix

	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5
The supply process	0.71	0.44	0.46	0.49	0.35
The geographic areas in which it produces	0.68	0.20	0.41	0.28	0.13
The geographic areas in which it buys	0.67	0.22	0.41	0.23	0.23
The logistic production system//storage/distribution	0.64	0.27	0.33	0.39	0.32
The process of commercialization and sale	0.63	0.61	0.40	0.52	0.23
The financial resources/financial economic structure	0.63	0.48	0.15	0.41	-0.10
The geographic areas in which it sells	0.59	0.40	0.22	0.31	0.12
The type of suppliers	0.58	0.36	0.45	0.46	0.43
The distribution network	0.57	0.63	0.46	0.32	0.28
The capacity of evaluation of risks of the investments	0.56	0.41	0.37	0.51	-0.21
The natural resources	0.55	0.27	0.41	0.19	0.26
The attitude of cooperation and alliances on the part of the enterprise (with other enterprises. the AA.PP. the surroundings)	0.54	0.28	0.42	0.38	-0.11
Penetration capability in new international markets	0.54	0.18	0.59	0.24	0.27
The information system. the system of costs. the command chart	0.54	0.35	0.46	0.65	0.31
The quality system/environmental management/prevention of labor risks	0.53	0.24	0.39	0.47	0.29
The technological resources of facilities and equipment	0.52	0.55	0.40	0.58	-0.16
The system of loyalty of clients	0.34	0.78	0.21	0.38	-0.08
The attention to the client	0.29	0.77	0.14	0.56	-0.04
The post sales Services	0.42	0.63	0.38	0.24	0.01
The direct relation with the final clients	0.20	0.63	0.18	0.25	0.02
The knowledge of the market	0.36	0.61	0.21	0.47	0.21
The response time to the needs of the client	0.29	0.58	0.15	0.47	0.07
The type of clients	0.37	0.56	0.23	0.39	0.25

The promotion of products/services	0.44	0.56	0.44	0.30	0.51
The research process/development/innovation	0.47	0.36	0.84	0.37	0.13
The design process	0.43	0.41	0.78	0.34	0.15
The capacity of innovation of processes, products or markets	0.48	0.35	0.69	0.57	0.01
The process technologies of processes and products used	0.50	0.43	0.58	0.57	-0.16
The professionalism and attitude of the managers and the workers	0.30	0.44	0.14	0.76	-0.08
The formation of the managers and workers	0.27	0.33	0.17	0.74	-0.07
The internal communication	0.47	0.40	0.29	0.73	0.17
The culture of the enterprise	0.35	0.39	0.33	0.72	-0.03
The direction system (strategic process, system of operative management)	0.30	0.31	0.30	0.71	0.09
The human resources	0.34	0.44	0.16	0.67	-0.29
The quality of products/services	0.33	0.44	0.22	0.51	0.19
The price that products/services have	0.45	0.35	0.24	0.41	0.59
The amplitude of the portfolio product /services	0.42	0.41	0.26	0.28	0.58
The exclusivity feature of products/services	0.40	0.42	0.42	0.28	0.55

Source: Own elaboración

The second competence is associated with the clients, since they appear as very important the items related to the market and the clients in a direct way. With less importance appear the items associated to the policies of marketing and the technology of the enterprise. Generally, it is possible to say that they are the set of resources and capacities of the enterprise necessary to create value for the client, through products and services (Narver and Slater, 1990). Consequently, it will be called clients' management. This basic competence contains a great part of the elements included by what other authors call commercial management (Rubio and Aragon, 2008). In the SME, this resource is fundamental because it facilitates the direct relationship with the clients and allows taking advantage of that interconnection to generate more value for this client (Pil and Holweg, 2003).

The third competence is related to the processes of innovation of the enterprise, the necessary technologies for it and the penetration capability in new markets that the innovation of markets indicates. With less importance are aspects associated to the cooperation, possibly with suppliers and clients and oriented to innovation. Usually it is understood by innovation the change or improvement in the processes, products or markets (North et al., 2001). Therefore, assuming the criteria of other authors we will call innovation to this factor (Rubio and Aragon, 2008). The SME have minor bureaucratic complexity, greater communication between all the levels of the enterprise and major proximity to the market which facilitates the innovation, given

its capacity of responding to the needs of the clients (Lloyd-Reason et al., 2002).

The fourth competence refers to the human and technological resources of the enterprise, including the system of management and technology, reason why we will call it the management of the human and technological resources. The human resources present specific characteristics of the SME in relation to the big enterprises (Renuka and Venkateshwara, 2006). Some authors consider that the small size is a source of competitive advantages since it facilitates to reach a good labor environment, it has less organizational complexity, majors flexibility levels, allows to motivate the employees better and to identify them with the objectives of the enterprise (Wilkinson, 1999). Others consider that this size is worse since the leadership is more customized. The decisions are more centralized, there exists more discretion in the promotion and retribution to the employees, worsening the labor environment and the possibilities of professional development of the workers (Hornsby and Kuratko, 2003) and have more difficulties to retain the best professionals (Klass et al., 2002). The technology has traditionally been associated to the success of the large enterprise, although some authors have also associated it with the SME (Camisón, 1997). It includes distinctive competencies defined by other authors (Rubio and Aragon, 2008) respectively called technological resources and management and direction of the human resources, although in this case there appear associate elements of other distinctive competencies considered traditional, such as the culture of the enterprise (Ritchie and Brindley, 2005) and aspects associated to the quality.

Finally the fifth competence refers to aspects related to the product and the policies of marketing of the enterprise, reason why we will call it product management. In the majority of the papers it is united to the management of the clients because together they form the strategies of marketing of the enterprises (Narver and Slater, 1990) to satisfy its clients in a superior way to the competition (Pelham, 1997). However, some authors identify a part of the aspects included in this resource with the quality of the product or service, especially those aspects associated to adapt the product or service with the needs of the client. The fact that the product and the market appear in different competencies, makes us suspect that among the

entrepreneurs of the zone there exists a different typology according to his orientation towards the client or the product.

Altogether 5 great distinguishing competencies of the enterprise have been obtained, although the combination of variables is slightly different from the obtained ones in other papers, they have a certain similarity and, it is verified that practically all the resources and capacities, like the external factors, participate in each of them in greater or lesser extent. That measurement indicates to us the importance of each one of the elements at the time of constituting the basic competence necessary to compete.

CONCLUSIONS

Generally it is observed that in the SME studied, five great referred distinct competencies to the management of the human and technological resources of the enterprise are generated to the relations with the territory and tangible resources, to the management of the clients, the product and to innovation. On one hand, Grant's model is corroborated (2005) which shows strategy as a key element to determine the competitive advantages of the enterprise, since it is the way to associate the set of resources and capacities with the key factors of success to compete. As these resources have been defined it seems that there are three of them more associates to external aspects such as the management of the territorial resources, of the clients and product and two to internal aspects like the management of the human and technological resources and innovation. Generally all the defined items are incorporated up to a certain extent to some of the distinctive competencies.

The results suggest to us a series of implications for the enterprise management. In the first place the competitive advantages of the SME are constituted by the combination of resources and capacities of the enterprise considering external factors associated to the activities themselves (Gilmore and Carson, 1999). Generally the enterprises make use of all of them (Roth and Morrison, 1992) to generate distinctive competencies. In a certain way Grant's

amplified model is confirmed which is the strategy the one that allows it to establish the competitive advantages from the internal and external factors of the enterprise, but it also indicates to us that a competitive enterprise must know how to take advantage of all the resources and capacities available in some way since combining them efficiently they can improved their situation in the market,

For the SMEs it is important to consider the territory (Vázquez Barquero, 1999) as they assign to it one of the distinguishing competencies. Although that resource is not directly a common competitive advantage to all the analyzed enterprises, if it does that in an indirect way, through the innovation, clearly fomented by means of cooperation and the relation with clients and suppliers (Verhees and Meulenberg, 2004). In that sense it is important for the SME to foment the constitution of cluster enterprise that facilitates the innovation of the enterprises (Porter, 1990).

The intellectual capital of the enterprise is assigned to different distinctive competencies but a great part of it is concentrated in the management of the human and technological resources and in the innovation. Consequently and, in agreement with numerous authors (Bontis et al., 2000), the investment in intellectual capital on behalf of the enterprise is going to be key in the development of its competitive advantages.

The tangible resources are essentially associated to the territory and they behave like those covering the basic needs with the enterprises to generate innovations (Donovan, 1996).

The organization capacities of the enterprise participate in almost all the distinct competencies since they are going to serve as accelerating of the fusion of the elements introduced within each resource (Grant, 1997). In that sense one approaches the idea that one associates to the organization capacities with the form in which the resources are used to improve the results (Grant, 2005). Nevertheless, not only the organization capacities allow generating competitive advantages, but these must also be combined with the resources of the enterprise, because these are those that feed them and make them efficient. It is not a matter of organizing them and to let the process follows its channel, but the continuous contribution of the

resources is necessary so that the capacities are effective.

Finally, the elements considered like strategic factors in an activity related to the product and the client, they are also structured as distinct enterprise competencies.

Limitations and possible advances

The paper presents a theoretical model of analysis of the resources and capacities of the enterprise as sources of competitive advantage in a certain zone, considering other associated external factors to the factors of success of an activity. The territory is analyzed as a support for the suppliers, the enterprise or the clients and not like a source of culture or labor market, or legislation, etc..., all of them attraction factors. In that sense the model could be improved considering those complementary aspects. The model presents a scheme of resources and capacities following the characteristics studied in other models (Wernerfelt, 1995; Bontis et al., 2000; Grant, 2005) although they are themselves analyzed in a joint way and are oriented towards the study zone. That also limits its outreach, since other characteristics exist that can be included as possible sources of competitive advantages.

Another aspect that is due to be clarified refers to the form to measure when an aspect can be considered as a competitive advantage or not. The fact to make use of a subjective valuation can condition the results. A possible alternative would be to resist the validity of those measurements with some objective indicator of each one of them. There also exists a limitation by the type of sample selected. The necessity to work with strategic questions demanded to be looked for within the enterprises, the most professionalized enterprises that implied a slant towards the bigger within this scope. Due that the conclusions could not be generalized to micro-enterprises. In addition, being data of a time of expansion of the economy, it is possible to condition the election of the competitive advantages and the situation of the valuation of the enterprises. Despite all the factors being in equal situation for the enterprises and to gather a non temporal vision, the results can be generalized to the set of the economy. In that sense, a pursuit of the sample of enterprises by means of panel data to evaluate the evolution of the competitive advantages would be interesting.

Finally the classification of enterprise chains that facilitate the integration between enterprise and territory that was used for the design of the sample implies some limitations, since it is not a standardized concept and its construction depends on each zone, making the comparisons between zones difficult. Nevertheless it seems a more logical criterion of analysis of enterprises and territory and since its theoretical planning is common for all the zones it maintains its generality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please refer to articles Spanish bibliography.