

СЕКЦІЯ 1 ЕКОНОМІКА ТА УПРАВЛІННЯ ПІДПРИЄМСТВАМИ

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STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF FOOD INDUSTRY ENTERPRISES

The article explores current strategies for enhancing the competitiveness of food industry enterprises amid the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine. The war has significantly transformed the economic environment, disrupted logistics chains, limited access to resources, and altered consumer priorities – all of which have directly affected the operations of food sector enterprises, particularly in the confectionery industry. The study substantiates the need to adapt traditional development strategies to the new realities. Theoretical aspects of the concept of competitiveness in the food industry are examined, and key factors shaping it under conditions of uncertainty and high risk are identified. An analysis of the current state of the confectionery industry in Ukraine is presented, highlighting key challenges, including reduced consumer purchasing power, destruction of production facilities, complications in export logistics, and threats to enterprises energy security. A comprehensive set of strategic directions to enhance competitiveness is proposed: implementation of innovative production and processing technologies, development of new products oriented toward shifting consumer preferences (particularly the demand for healthier food), optimization of production processes to minimize costs, digitalization of business operations, and intensified marketing efforts focused on both domestic and international markets. Particular emphasis is placed on flexibility and adaptability strategies that enable confectionery enterprises to respond quickly to external challenges. The article emphasizes that maintaining competitiveness in the current context requires a consolidated effort by businesses, the state, and international partners, as well as active investment in production modernization. As a result of the study, practical recommendations have been formulated for food industry enterprises to improve their resilience and ensure long-term competitive advantages during wartime and post-conflict recovery.

Key words: food industry, competitiveness, confectionery industry, development strategy, innovation, martial law, business adaptation.

Драган О.І. СТРАТЕГІЇ ПІДВИЩЕННЯ КОНКУРЕНТОСПРОМОЖНОСТІ ПІДПРИЄМСТВ ХАРЧОВОЇ ПРОМИСЛОВОСТІ

У статті досліджено актуальні стратегії підвищення конкурентоспроможності підприємств харчової промисловості в умовах військового конфлікту в Україні. Війна суттєво змінила економічне середовище, ускладнила логістичні ланцюги, обмежила доступ до ресурсів і призвела до зміни споживчих пріоритетів, що безпосередньо вплинуло на діяльність підприємств харчового сектору, зокрема кондитерської галузі. Обґрунтовано необхідність адаптації традиційних стратегій розвитку відповідно до нових реалій. Розглянуто теоретичні аспекти поняття конкурентоспроможності підприємств харчової промисловості та визначено ключові чинники її формування в умовах невизначеності та високих ризиків. Проведено аналіз сучасного стану кондитерської промисловості України: виявлено основні виклики, серед яких зниження купівельної спроможності населення, руйнування виробничих потужностей, ускладнення експорту та загрози енергетичній безпеці підприємств. Запропоновано комплекс стратегічних напрямків підвищення конкурентоспроможності: впровадження інноваційних технологій виробництва і переробки, розвиток нових продуктів з орієнтацією на зміну споживчих вподобань (зокрема, запити на здорову їжу), оптимізація виробничих процесів з метою мінімізації витрат, цифровізація бізнес-процесів та активізація маркетингової діяльності з фокусом на внутрішній і зовнішній ринки. Особлива увага приділяється стратегіям гнучкості та адаптивності, що дозволяють підприємствам кондитерської галузі швидко реагувати на зовнішні виклики. Зазначено, що ефективна підтримка конкурентоспроможності в сучасних умовах потребує консолідації зусиль бізнесу, держави та міжнародних партнерів, а також активного залучення інвестицій для модернізації виробництва. У результаті дослідження сформульовано практичні рекомендації для підприємств харчової промисловості щодо підвищення їхньої стійкості та забезпечення довгострокових конкурентних переваг в умовах війни та постконфліктного відновлення.

Ключові слова: харчова промисловість, конкурентоспроможність, кондитерська галузь, стратегія розвитку, інновації, воєнний стан, адаптація бізнесу.

Problem statement. The modern food industry of Ukraine is undergoing a period of significant challenges associated with the ongoing military conflict. Changes in the economic environment, disruptions in logistics chains, destruction of production infrastructure, reduced domestic demand, and limited access to external markets have substantially complicated the operating conditions for enterprises in the sector. Under such circumstances, ensuring competitiveness has become critically important for maintaining the viability and further development of food industry enterprises.

These issues are particularly pronounced in the confectionery sector, which constitutes one of the key components of the food industry. Competition in the confectionery market remains extremely high both domestically and internationally. At the same time, shifting consumer preferences, a growing focus on healthy nutrition, stricter quality requirements, and the need to comply with European standards are imposing new demands on manufacturers.

The war has forced confectionery enterprises to seek new business models, adapt technological processes, optimize costs, and rethink their development strategies. Innovation, digitalization, and environmental responsibility are playing an increasingly important role in building sustainable competitive advantages. However, despite some successful examples, most producers face difficulties in implementing effective strategic solutions under unstable conditions.

In this context, there is a pressing need for a systematic study of the theoretical and practical aspects of forming competitiveness in the food industry, with a particular focus on the specifics of confectionery sector operations during wartime. The relevance of this issue is driven by the urgent need to develop effective strategies that will support the stabilization and development of enterprises both during the military conflict and throughout Ukraine's post-conflict economic recovery.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issue of enhancing the competitiveness of food industry enterprises has been widely addressed in the works of both domestic and international scholars. Theoretical foundations of competitiveness – its essence, structure, and influencing factors – are revealed in the studies of M. Porter [7], Ph. Kotler [3], and P. Balan [1], who have

substantiated conceptual approaches to defining enterprise development strategies in a dynamic market environment. In Ukrainian academic literature, significant contributions to the development of competitiveness-related issues have been made by V. Heiets [2], L. Fedulova [8], S. Illiashenko, N. Reznik, and others.

In the context of the food industry, Ukrainian researchers have studied the peculiarities of improving enterprise efficiency, the impact of innovation, modernization of production processes, the formation of logistics strategies, and the development of export potential. In particular, the works of O. Popova [6], T. Mostenska, and V. Boiko [5] examine directions for improving product quality and enhancing enterprise management within the food sector.

Some studies focus specifically on the confectionery industry. These works explore issues of production adaptation to changing consumer needs, the implementation of innovative technologies, and compliance with international food safety standards. For example, in the studies of L. Marycheva and I. Diadiura [4], the directions of development for confectionery enterprises in the context of globalization are analyzed, while O. Chorna [9] discusses issues of marketing positioning of confectionery products in both domestic and foreign markets.

However, it should be noted that most existing studies were conducted under relatively stable economic conditions or prior to the full-scale war in Ukraine. Today, the war has significantly altered the factors influencing competitiveness, creating new threats and, at the same time, opening up new opportunities for business transformation. The development of adaptive strategies for food industry enterprises, taking into account wartime conditions and post-conflict recovery, remains insufficiently covered in the academic literature.

Thus, there is an objective need for further research into the mechanisms for ensuring the competitiveness of food industry enterprises, particularly within the confectionery sector, considering the current economic challenges. This substantiates both the relevance and novelty of the chosen research topic.

The purpose of the article is to substantiate theoretical principles and develop practical recommendations for strategies aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of food industry enterprises under the conditions

of military conflict in Ukraine, taking into account the specific operational characteristics of the confectionery sector.

Presentation of the research material and its main results. Competitiveness is one of the key characteristics of a business entity that determines its ability to operate successfully in the market, withstand competitive pressure, and ensure sustainable growth in a constantly changing environment. The scientific literature lacks a unified definition of the concept of "competitiveness," which can be attributed to the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon.

In general, enterprise competitiveness is viewed as a complex, integral characteristic that reflects the level of operational efficiency in comparison with other market participants. M. Porter [7] defines competitiveness through the firm's ability to create and sustain competitive advantages that allow it to achieve superior results compared to its rivals. Ukrainian scholars such as V. Heiets and L. Fedulova [2, 8] emphasize that competitiveness is a dynamic process dependent on internal resources, management quality, and external market conditions.

For the food industry – and in particular, for confectionery enterprises – competitiveness is determined by the ability to rapidly adapt to changing consumer preferences, ensure high product quality, maintain innovation activity, and manage costs efficiently. Figure 1 presents the main

factors influencing the competitiveness of food industry enterprises.

This chart illustrates the key factors that determine the competitiveness of food industry enterprises. Among them, product quality, innovation, and adaptability to changes in the market environment carry the highest weight. Slightly less important, yet still significant, are product price, brand strength, and logistics efficiency.

The analysis of the presented data indicates that, in order to maintain and enhance competitiveness, enterprises must focus on continuously improving quality, developing new products, responding promptly to changing consumer demands, and optimizing both internal and external business processes. These factors become particularly relevant in the context of instability caused by the war in Ukraine, where an enterprise's ability to adapt quickly is critical for its survival and future growth.

To further examine scientific approaches to defining the essence of competitiveness, they are summarized in Table 1.

The analysis of the presented approaches leads to the conclusion that competitiveness is a multifactorial phenomenon shaped by both internal enterprise resources (production, technology, human capital) and external conditions (market dynamics, consumer behavior, and the level of competition).

In the context of the food industry, critical factors include product safety and quality, compliance with international

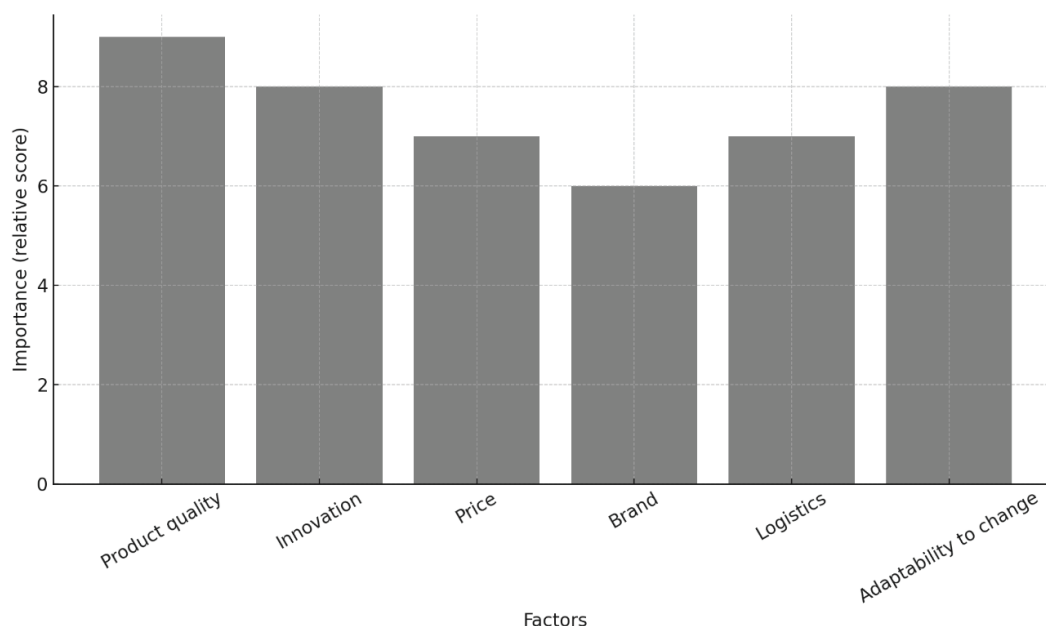


Figure 1. Key Factors of Competitiveness of Food Industry Enterprises

Source: developed by the author

Table 1

Main Approaches to Defining the Concept of “Enterprise Competitiveness”

Author	Definition	Approach Features
P. Balan	The firm's ability to create sustainable competitive advantages	Focus on cost leadership, differentiation, and focus strategies
Ph. Kotler	The enterprise's ability to meet consumer needs better than competitors	Emphasis on consumer orientation and marketing policy
V. Heiets	A dynamic characteristic of enterprise development in a market environment	Highlights the role of innovation and resource potential
L. Fedulova	An integral indicator of the enterprise's operational efficiency	Considers both internal and external influencing factors

Source: compiled by the author based on data from [2; 3; 7; 8]

standards, implementation of innovative production technologies, adaptability to changing market demands, and the ability to effectively promote products on domestic and international markets.

Therefore, for food industry enterprises to function successfully under current conditions, it is not enough to simply maintain a certain level of competitiveness; it is essential to continuously improve its components in response to evolving market conditions, especially during wartime, which significantly complicates the strategic planning process.

The competitiveness of food industry enterprises is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Key external factors include the economic environment, market development level, state regulation, international competition, shifting consumer preferences, and globalization processes. In particular, under the military conflict in Ukraine, external factors have become increasingly important due to restricted access to resources, destruction of logistics routes, changes in demand structure, and intensified competition in the domestic market.

Internal factors include the enterprise's production and technological potential, level of innovation activity, human resources, financial stability, managerial decisions, marketing efficiency, and adaptive capacity. Product quality, compliance with international food safety standards, and alignment with modern consumer expectations remain essential components of competitiveness.

Innovation in production, digitalization of business processes, environmental responsibility, and the ability to respond quickly to changes in consumer demand and market conditions also have a significant impact. Enterprises that effectively integrate innovation, adapt their business models to new realities, and actively develop their brands

are more likely to retain and strengthen their market positions amid growing instability.

Confectionery products hold a significant place in the structure of the food industry due to their broad product range, high demand across consumer segments, and substantial export potential. However, competitiveness in this segment has its own specificity, determined by the unique features of the products and market.

One of the key characteristics is the high level of product differentiation. Consumers select confectionery items not only based on price but also on factors such as taste, ingredients, packaging, and the presence of functional properties (e.g., sugar-free products or items enriched with vitamins). As a result, manufacturers are compelled to constantly update their product range, introduce new recipes, and align with healthy eating trends.

Another important feature is the high sensitivity to branding. Brand recognition, producer reputation, and consumer loyalty are decisive factors in maintaining competitiveness in a saturated market.

Storage and transportation specifics of confectionery products also place additional demands on logistics processes, which, under wartime conditions, require rapid adjustments and the development of alternative delivery routes.

Furthermore, the confectionery segment is characterized by intense competition, both among domestic producers and with imported goods. Survival and development in this sector are only possible through innovation, active marketing strategies, adherence to high product quality standards, and continuous improvement in customer service.

Enhancing the competitiveness of confectionery enterprises requires a systematic approach to strategic planning, proactive adoption of new technologies, and the ability to adapt to shifting market

conditions, particularly in the face of today's economic and social challenges.

The specific features of competitiveness in the confectionery industry are shaped by several factors, including a wide product range, high brand sensitivity, innovation in recipes and packaging, orientation toward healthy eating trends, and increased logistics and storage requirements. These core factors and their characteristics are illustrated in Figure 2.

The analysis of Figure 2 shows that the successful operation of confectionery enterprises requires a comprehensive approach to competitiveness management. Constant product range renewal, aligned with evolving consumer preferences, is a prerequisite for maintaining market positions. Brand development plays a crucial role, enabling the formation of strong consumer loyalty even under conditions of high competition.

Innovation activities aimed at improving recipes and packaging have become essential

for creating a unique market offer that aligns with modern demands, particularly the growing interest in healthy food. At the same time, confectionery enterprises are forced to adapt their logistics processes to meet specific requirements for the storage and transportation of products – especially under wartime conditions that restrict access to traditional supply routes.

The high level of internal and external competition necessitates continuous improvement in product quality, optimization of production costs, and the implementation of differentiation strategies – all of which contribute to the long-term strengthening of enterprise competitiveness.

Thus, understanding the key influencing factors and the specific operational characteristics of the confectionery industry makes it possible to define the primary directions for developing enterprise strategies. Under wartime conditions in Ukraine, where traditional mechanisms for

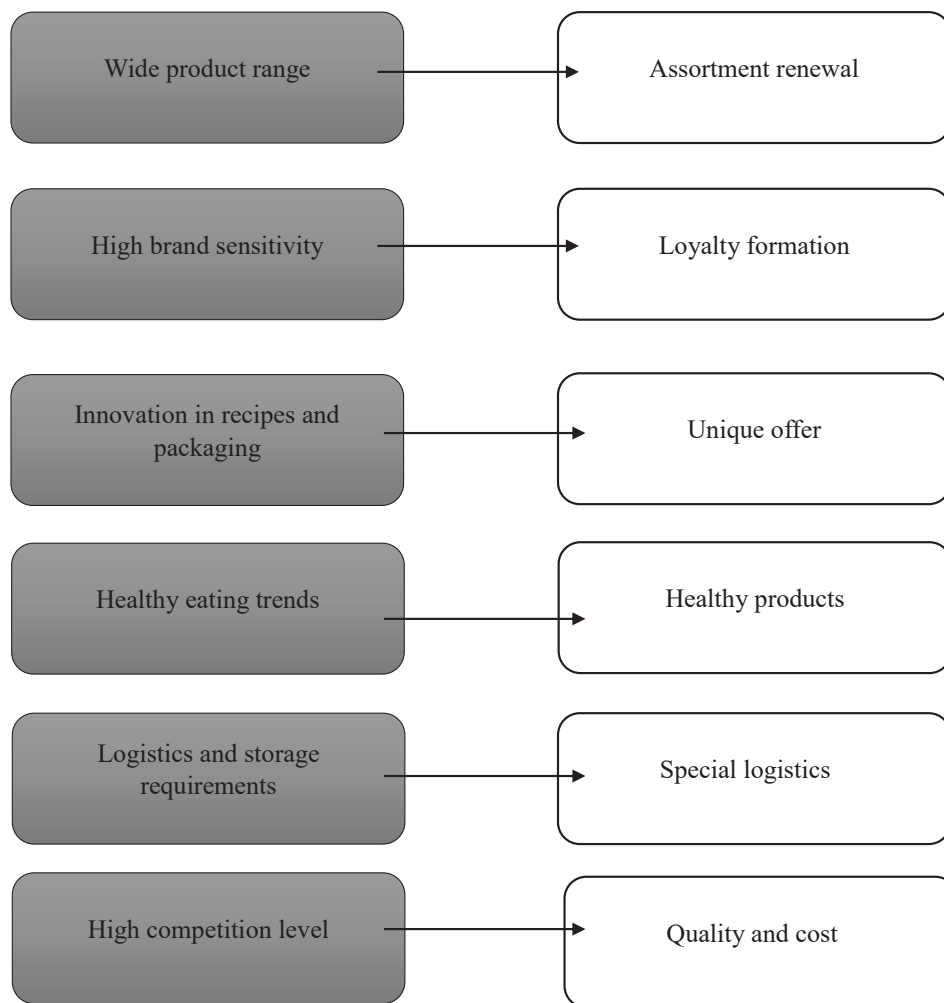


Figure 2. Specific Factors of Competitiveness in the Confectionery Industry

Source: developed by the author

ensuring stability have lost effectiveness, adaptive and innovative strategies acquire particular importance.

In this regard, it is appropriate to further analyze strategic approaches aimed at increasing the competitiveness of food industry enterprises, with a focus on the specific features of confectionery products.

In a context of dynamic market changes and growing risks associated with the war in Ukraine, food industry enterprises – particularly those in the confectionery sector – require the development and implementation of effective competitiveness enhancement strategies.

For better clarity, Figure 3 illustrates the main types of strategies for improving the competitiveness of food industry enterprises.

The presented figure illustrates the main types of strategies employed by food industry enterprises to enhance their competitiveness. The key strategic directions include: innovation strategy, focused on the development of new products and improvement of technological processes; differentiation strategy, aimed at creating unique value for consumers; cost leadership strategy, which ensures resource optimization and efficiency; marketing strategy, which strengthens the brand and improves product positioning in the market; adaptive strategy, which enables flexible responses to changes in the external

environment. The integrated implementation of these strategies enables confectionery enterprises to effectively withstand competitive pressure and ensure sustainable development even under crisis conditions.

Enhancing the competitiveness of confectionery enterprises amid wartime challenges requires a systematic application of a range of practical measures.

A top priority is increasing innovation activity. Enterprises should focus on creating value-added products, such as healthy confectionery, new recipes, and improved packaging features. Innovation should cover both production technologies and distribution channels.

Another essential direction is strengthening product differentiation. Ensuring clear quality distinctions from competitors, improving safety, and considering environmental aspects will help build strong consumer loyalty.

Cost optimization is equally important. In the current environment, it is vital to implement energy-saving technologies, reduce logistics expenses, and localize the sourcing of raw materials to lower supply costs.

Marketing efforts should aim to expand brand presence through digital channels, develop e-commerce, and leverage online platforms to access international markets.

Special attention should be given to the development of adaptive management

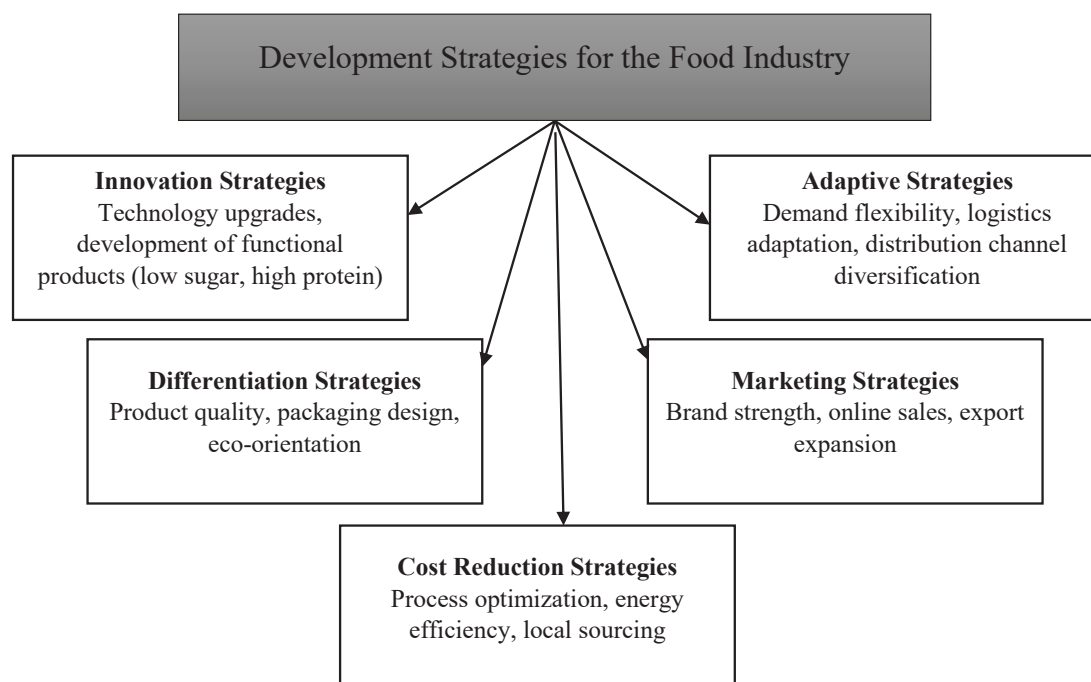


Figure 3. Main Types of Strategies for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Food Industry Enterprises

Source: compiled by the author based on data from [1; 7]

strategies. Flexible responses to market changes, diversification of sales channels, and the creation of crisis management scenarios will help minimize risks and ensure long-term stability.

Overall, the implementation of the above measures will contribute to strengthening the resilience of confectionery enterprises, preserving competitive positions, and laying the groundwork for sustainable development in the post-war period.

Conclusions. The competitiveness of food industry enterprises, particularly in the confectionery sector, is determined by the complex interaction of internal and external factors. Under wartime conditions in Ukraine, these factors have undergone significant changes, requiring a reassessment of traditional development strategies.

The theoretical analysis revealed the main factors influencing enterprise competitiveness: product quality, innovation activity, pricing policy, brand strategy, logistics efficiency, and adaptability. The specific characteristics of the confectionery industry necessitate constant product range renewal, a focus on healthy nutrition, a high level of product differentiation, and increased demands on marketing and logistics.

The proposed strategies for enhancing competitiveness – innovation, differentiation, cost reduction, marketing, and adaptability – reflect modern requirements for enterprise development under challenging economic conditions. The practical recommendations formulated through this research aim to create sustainable competitive advantages, ensure enterprise stability, and build potential for future growth during the post-conflict recovery period.

Thus, strengthening the competitiveness of food industry enterprises, with a particular focus on the confectionery sector, is one of the key factors in ensuring food security, economic stability, and Ukraine's integration into the global market.

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