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DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SUNFLOWER OIL ENTERPRISES IN UKRAINE

ABSTRACT

The relevance of the research topic is driven by the need to develop an effective strategy for ensuring the long-term growth of sunflower oil enterprises in Ukraine. The paper analyzes the current state of sunflower oil production. It establishes that, despite war-time challenges, Ukraine remains one of the world leaders in producing and exporting sunflower oil. Sunflower oil enterprises' macro-, meso-, and internal environments are analyzed and evaluated using expert methods. To assess the macro-environment of domestic enterprises, their components are identified, analyzed, and evaluated, considering their indirect yet significant influence on business performance. It is settled that the political, economic, and technological components exert the greatest influence on sunflower oil enterprises, and the overall evaluation indicates a satisfactory state of the macroenvironment. In studying the meso-environment, key elements are identified that should be considered when formulating development strategies. Competitors and consumers are the most influential components, and the integral assessment of the meso-environment indicates favourable conditions for the development of sunflower oil enterprises. The internal environment analysis is conducted using the case of a private company (PC) "Oliyar", one of Ukraine's largest sunflower oil producers. The SWOT analysis method is used to determine internal strengths, external opportunities, and threats. Based on the research findings, a matrix for selecting development strategies for sunflower oil enterprises is constructed, encompassing three types: growth strategies, market position retention strategies, and retrenchment strategies. It is determined that PC "Oliyar" is currently employing a market position retention strategy to maintain its market share, increase sales volumes, and boost profits. Considering possible future events and emerging external trends, there is a likelihood of a shift in the enterprise's strategic direction. It is emphasized that sunflower oil enterprises must continuously monitor the external environment, systematically analyze business processes, assess performance indicators, and, when necessary, develop new strategies.

Keywords: strategy, enterprise development strategy, sunflower oil enterprises, macroenvironment, meso-environment, microenvironment, matrix of enterprise development strategy

JEL Classification: C10, D40, L10, L66

INTRODUCTION

An effective development strategy is crucial for ensuring an enterprise's sustainability, renewal, and long-term growth. It must align with the enterprise's objectives and incorporate the essential elements necessary for efficient operation. The success of its implementation depends on the validity of managerial decisions.

In today's competitive business environment, a well-defined development strategy enables an enterprise to gain an advantage, secure or restore its market share amid increasing competition, adapt to shifts in consumer preferences, and integrate innovative technologies.

Choosing the right strategy helps establish a clear direction for business growth, focusing resources and processes on a unified goal. This, in turn, ensures alignment among stakeholders and employees, fostering collaboration and synchronization of efforts to achieve desired outcomes, ultimately enhancing profitability.

The relevance of this research has grown due to Ukraine's resilience in maintaining its position as a global leader in sunflower oil production and export despite wartime threats and challenges. Ukraine accounts for approximately 40% of the global market share, making an effective development strategy essential for ensuring the stability and success of domestic sunflower oil enterprises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The formation of an enterprise development strategy has been a focal point for many researchers. A review of economic and management literature reveals diverse interpretations of the term "strategy", reflecting the evolving external and internal conditions influencing modern businesses. The absence of a unified approach to defining strategy as an economic category and outlining its formation has led to various conceptual perspectives, each emphasizing different aspects of business operations and interactions with the external environment. The interpretation of "enterprise strategy" in foreign academic sources demonstrates the complexity of this concept and its transformation over time.

In his pioneering work, A. Chandler (1962) introduced the term "strategy" in business, linking it to organizational structure. He defined strategy as "the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals". According to Chandler, business development requires monitoring industry and environmental changes, including demand trends, resource supply, technological advancements, competitive behaviour, and economic fluctuations. Shifts in market conditions may necessitate the formation of a new strategy or adjustments to an existing one, requiring enterprises to establish new core objectives, refine business activities, and redistribute resources.

I. Ansoff (1990) argued that strategy involves "a set of decision-making rules for guidance of organizational behaviour." He categorized these rules into two groups: the first focusing on the enterprise's relationship with the external environment and the second ensuring internal equilibrium among organizational factors.

In the context of increasing competitive pressure, M. Porter (1980) emphasized the strategic selection of specific directions to establish a competitive advantage in the market. Porter identified three primary competitive strategies: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. He asserted that strategy formulation entails developing a comprehensive framework for competition, defining business objectives, and establishing policies to achieve them.

Renowned management scholar H. Mintzberg (1996) criticized traditional strategic planning approaches, stressing the importance of strategy adaptation during implementation. He introduced the "five Ps" concept, offering five different interpretations of "strategy": a plan, guidance, a benchmark or development direction, a path from the present to the future; a principle of behaviour or adherence to a certain pattern; a position, referring to the placement of specific products in particular markets; a perspective, representing the fundamental operational approach of an organization; or a competitive manoeuvre, an intentional tactic used to outwit a competitor. In essence, strategy can function as a plan, pattern, position, perspective, and ploy.

With the rising influence of information technologies in competitive environments, modern strategy theories are directed toward the creation of new markets free from competition through innovative business approaches (Christensen, 1997; McGrath, 2013; Kim W. Chan and Mauborgne R., 2005). Other research focuses on dynamic innovation within business models, enabling enterprises to adapt to evolving market conditions (Afuah, Tucci, 2001).

Ukrainian researchers have also contributed significantly to the study of enterprise development strategy. Their perspectives emphasize not only achieving business goals but also ensuring sustainable long-term growth. They advocate for using the term "enterprise development strategy" to capture the broader vision of stability and adaptation in a changing market environment. The summary of Ukrainian researchers' perspectives on the interpretation of the concept of "enterprise development strategy" is presented in Table 1.

In the process of developing an enterprise strategy, it is essential to focus on key national and industry-specific characteristics. This issue is particularly relevant for domestic sunflower oil producers.

Table 1. Approaches of researchers to interpreting the concept of “enterprise development strategy”.

Definition of Enterprise Development Strategy	Authors
“The enterprise development strategy is a general comprehensive program of actions expressed in both quantitative and qualitative forms, providing a clear vision of the future parameters of business growth, taking into account set goals and the resources needed to achieve them.”	Khacer M.V. (2014)
“The enterprise development strategy is determined as a result of studying the external environment and potential internal prospects for its activities, taking into account unforeseen market conditions. An enterprise’s strategy must always combine a planned and well-thought-out course of action with the ability to respond to new developments.”	Boyarska M.O. (2015)
“The enterprise development strategy can be characterized as a long-term flexible action plan with an innovative focus and an appropriate level of risk. It is based on a detailed analysis of the internal and external environment of the enterprise, depends on human factors, and requires investments to achieve effective results, enhance product competitiveness, and strengthen the enterprise’s market position.”	Hydz O.I. (2018)
“The enterprise development strategy is a set of actions and measures that must be taken to ensure the enterprise’s stability in the market, gain and maintain long-term competitive advantages in its operations, and determine the course of action and allocation of resources needed to achieve goals aimed at securing leadership positions and sustainable business presence.”	Klochkovskyy O.V., Hutsol D.S. (2022)
“The enterprise development strategy is a long-term plan that includes a series of quantitative and qualitative decisions regarding the selection of business directions. These decisions aim to improve the enterprise’s condition by increasing its potential, adapting to the external environment, and fostering internal integration.”	Filina S.V., Dryga O.V., Kuzhel O.V. (2024)
“The development strategy for an enterprise consists of well-thought-out goals and objectives. Achieving these goals ensures the formation of the necessary resource potential while considering the enterprise’s competitive position in the market for products or services.”	Piletska S.T., Klyus I.S., Bilous N.P. (2024)

On the one hand, the strategic importance of the sunflower oil industry in ensuring the country’s food security and its significant export potential; on the other hand, the uncertainty of the macroeconomic situation and the ongoing military actions in Ukraine, with all their negative consequences, necessitate considering these factors when formulating development strategies for enterprises in the sunflower oil industry. This has become the subject of research by several domestic authors.

Stavska Y.V. (2020) notes that strategic planning in the sunflower oil industry should be aimed at long-term development and achieving high rates of economic growth.

Bozhenyova I.M. (2014) emphasizes that the main task of enterprises in the sunflower oil industry is to adapt their activities to the generally recognized concept of sustainable development, taking into account the current state of the national economy, the system and nature of development management, contemporary business conditions, and the state of the industry.

Industry competition features, the level of market concentration, and export potential – examined in the works of Shandrivska O.Ye., Pytulyak N.S., and Hreb O.I. (2024) – are key aspects that enterprises in the sunflower oil industry should consider when developing their strategy.

Seliuchenko N.Ye. and Kosar N.S. (2018) analyzed the various development strategies implemented by sunflower oil producers to gain a competitive advantage.

Thus, Ukrainian scholars indicate that an enterprise development strategy is a complex process that includes defining long-term goals, analyzing internal and external environmental factors, developing and implementing action plans, and adapting to market changes. They also highlight the importance of investments, innovations, and the efficient use of resources in the strategic development of enterprises. When researching the development strategy of the sunflower oil industry, they consider the specifics of the national economy and its integration into the global economic space, as well as the industry conditions and the internal potential of business entities.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The paper’s objective is to study the external and internal environment in which enterprises in the sunflower oil industry form their development strategy. To achieve this, the following tasks have been identified:

1. Analyze the state of Ukraine’s sunflower oil industry under wartime challenges.
2. Examine the macro- and meso-environment of sunflower oil enterprises and assess their impact on business operations.

3. Evaluate the performance of PC "Oliyar" as a representative of Ukraine's sunflower oil industry.
4. Analyze the internal potential of the enterprise.
5. Propose recommendations for defining strategic directions for the development of sunflower oil enterprises using a strategy matrix.

METHODS

The research relies on both primary and secondary data sources. The study process includes analyzing the state of the sunflower oil industry, assessing macro- and meso-environment components that define its current condition and development trends, and evaluating the financial state of enterprises within the industry. All external and internal environmental components of the enterprise have been identified, thoroughly examined, and assessed to obtain both qualitative and quantitative results. The analytical levelling method was used to determine general trends in consumer price changes for sunflower oil and to generate predictive data. The expert method allowed for obtaining reliable qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the macro- and meso-environment of the research object, which, combined with a general financial assessment, provided a comprehensive evaluation of the enterprise's environment. To justify strategy types and determine future development directions for sunflower oil enterprises, the matrix method is applied.

RESULTS

A development strategy is a kind of management algorithm aimed at ensuring the sustainable development of an enterprise. Its implementation strengthens the enterprise's market position, meets consumer needs, and helps achieve set objectives. The need to develop an enterprise strategy under the state of the external environment, business goals, and available resource potential is driven by its ability to maintain competitive advantages and respond promptly to external challenges and threats.

The process of developing an enterprise strategy is a long-term endeavour that must, through analytical research and logical justification, propose multiple scenarios for future development and alternative paths to achieving desired objectives. The effectiveness of this process depends on the ability of responsible individuals to anticipate and assess future trends in a dynamic external environment as well as objectively evaluate and account for the specific characteristics of the enterprise's internal environment. Each enterprise's operations are characterized by unique production and management features based on industry affiliation.

Strategic business development requires the fulfilment of several key stages in the strategy formulation process (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Stages of enterprise development strategy formulation. (Source: compiled by the authors based on Dem'yanenko, 2018; Hudz, al. 2022; Korobka, 2024; Piletska et al., 2024)

The presence of an effective development strategy for enterprises in the sunflower oil industry is one of the most important conditions for their success in the market. To develop such a strategy, it is necessary to have information about the state of the sunflower oil industry, analyze the components of the macro- and meso-environment, and assess their internal potential.

The sunflower oil industry is a significant component of Ukraine's agro-industrial complex, as the processing of sunflower seeds and the production of sunflower oil are crucial in terms of both food security and economic significance. Within the structure of the sunflower oil industry, the sector of sunflower seed processing and sunflower oil production holds the leading position.

Until 2020, the sunflower oil industry experienced rapid growth, which allowed Ukraine to occupy leading positions in the production and global export of sunflower oil (Figure 2). However, under wartime conditions, Ukraine's sunflower oil industry has faced many challenges, including power outages, difficulties in oil exports due to the grain corridor, reduced sunflower harvests and rising sunflower seed prices, and the partial replacement of sunflower oil with other types of oils in industries where it is used as a raw material.

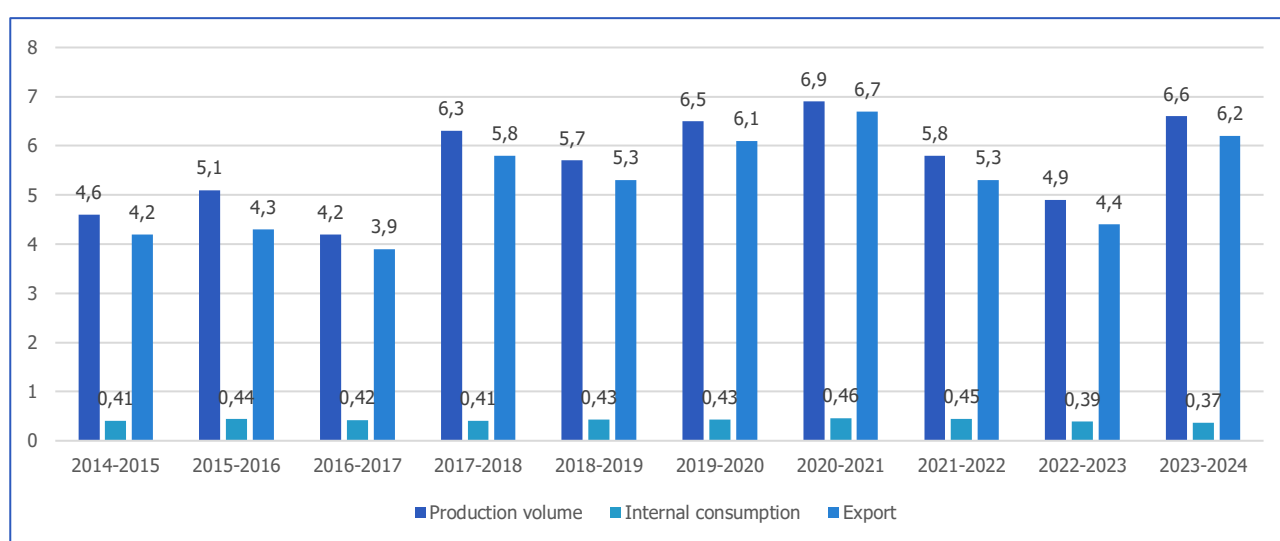


Figure 2. Dynamics of production volume, internal consumption, and export of sunflower oil in Ukraine for 2014-2024, million tons.
(Source: compiled by the authors based on the Official website of the Association "Ukroliaprom", 2025; the Official website of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2025)

According to the Association "Ukroliaprom", in Ukraine in 2024, compared to the pre-war year of 2021, sunflower oil production volumes increased by 13.7%, and exports grew by 17%, reaching 6.6 million tons and 6.2 million tons, respectively. Increased sunflower seed processing drove the positive trend in sunflower oil production: in 2024, compared to 2023, an additional 1.3 million tons of seeds were processed, totalling 14.8 million tons.

Despite challenging conditions, enterprises in this sector face significant limitations in competing for the raw material market with sunflower seed exporters, both for sunflower seeds and oil. At the beginning of 2023, there was a significant increase in sunflower seed exports to European Union countries, which greatly affected Ukraine's overall production and export volumes of sunflower oil. Among all sunflower oil exports, two groups of countries stand out as the largest importers: 57% of exports went to EU countries, while 43% were directed to Asian countries.

In 2024, the largest volumes of Ukrainian sunflower oil were exported to India, Spain, and Romania, accounting for 13.9%, 11.5%, and 9.2% of total exports, respectively (Manuilov, 2025).

Forecasts indicate that in 2025, due to the reduction in sunflower planting areas and expected yields, production will decrease to 12-12.5 million tons, representing a decline of 2-3% (Yalivets, 2024). This downturn is expected to negatively affect domestic production and export volumes of sunflower oil. "In February 2025, sunflower oil exports fell by 14% compared to the previous month, reaching 325,000 tons – marking the lowest level for this month in the past 10 years" (Ukrinform, 2025).

Starting in April 2024, global prices for sunflower oil and average consumer prices for it in Ukraine began to rise due to the increasing cost of sunflower seeds. Specifically, at the beginning of 2024, compared to early 2023, domestic sunflower

seed prices increased from UAH 13-14 thousand per ton to UAH 25-26 thousand per ton, or by USD 250, "while global sunflower oil prices increased by USD 130" (Agro Perspektiva, 2024).

To determine trends and forecast changes in average consumer prices for sunflower oil in Ukraine, a third-order polynomial function was used. Figure 3 graphically represents actual and projected sunflower oil prices in Ukraine, obtained using this function:

$$y = 0,0042x^3 - 0,352x^2 + 8,8731x - 0,2848$$

The determination coefficient is $R^2 = 0.93$, indicating that the trend curve corresponds to the input data by more than 93%. Consequently, the predicted average monthly consumer price increase is expected to be 0.4%.

Experts forecast a continued rise in sunflower oil prices in Ukraine and globally. As a result, in November-December 2024, retail prices gradually increased to UAH 70-80 per litre of oil. High sunflower seed and oil prices have supported the industry on the one hand, while on the other, many producers have been forced to limit raw material sales due to anticipated further increases in sunflower seed prices.

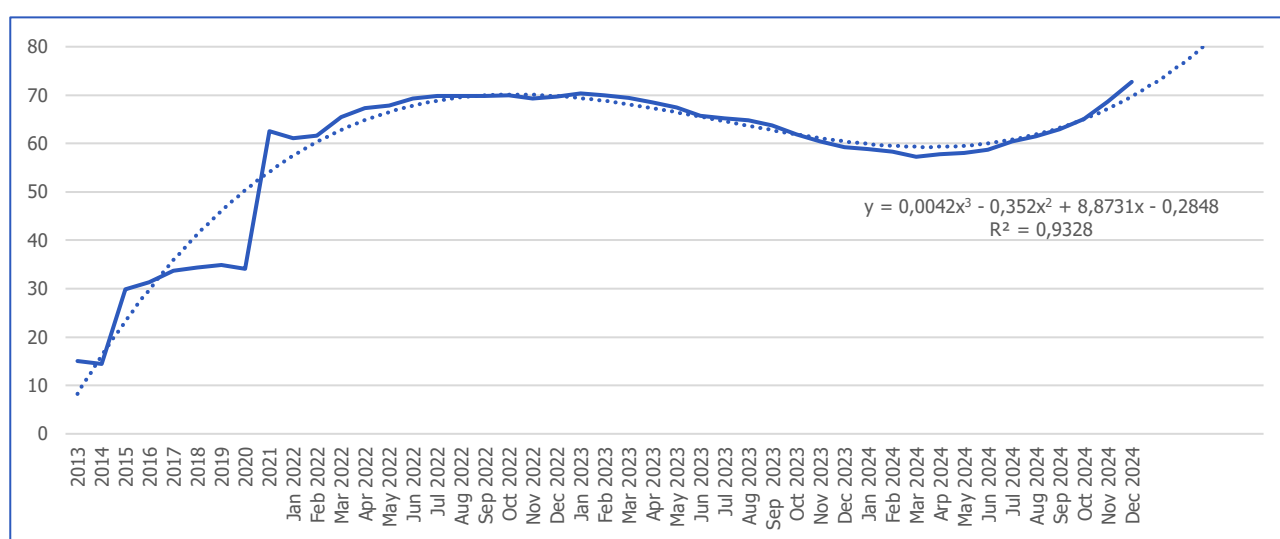


Figure 3. Trend of actual and forecasted average consumer prices for sunflower oil in Ukraine from 2013 to 2024. (Source: compiled by the authors based on the Official website of the Association "Ukrolyaprom", 2025; Official website of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2025)

Based on the conducted analysis, it can be stated that the sunflower oil industry in Ukraine is a promising direction for the development of the agro-industrial sector and represents a successful model that, under favourable economic and political conditions, will undoubtedly restore its pre-war potential. Despite the war, our country has preserved its sunflower oil production capacities and still has significant export opportunities.

A detailed examination of the environment of sunflower oil-producing enterprises is necessary to determine their current state and outline strategic directions for their development. The categorization of environmental components of sunflower oil enterprises allows us to distinguish two levels: the external and the internal environment.

The external environment of sunflower oil enterprises consists of a set of elements, trends, and events occurring outside the enterprise. It is divided into two segments: the macroenvironment and the mesoenvironment.

The macroenvironment includes political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, ecological, and legal components that indirectly influence the activities of enterprises.

Elements of the political component include those that illustrate changes in the political sphere and state policy, specifically:

1. Political situation – over 3 years of war, the political system has gradually freed itself from russian influence. However, some decisions are delayed due to the political indecisiveness of certain representatives and authorities. This slightly undermines the stability of pro-Ukrainian positions both within the country and on the international stage.
2. Corruption and bureaucracy – according to Transparency International's corruption perception index (2024), Ukraine ranked 122nd in 2021. During the full-scale war, its ranking improved as follows: 116th in 2022, 104th in

2023, and 105th in 2024. The loss of ranking in 2024 occurred due to a formal approach to implementing many reforms or intentional delays in their execution. This suggests that merely meeting programmatic obligations is insufficient, and the realization of initiated reforms is not proceeding as efficiently as planned.

3. State support for enterprises in critical economic sectors, particularly the agro-industrial complex, which suffered significant losses during the war. These measures may include risk insurance tools, grants for recovery and updating technology infrastructure damaged by the war, as well as preferential lending to improve the investment climate for small and medium-sized producers.

The economic component of the enterprise's macroenvironment includes the following elements:

1. Economic growth rates – in 2022, due to Russian aggression, Ukraine's economy contracted by 28.8%. In 2023, it recovered by 5.3% and in 2024 by 3.6%. The International Monetary Fund forecasts Ukraine's economy will grow by 2.5-3.5% in 2025, assuming the cessation of hostilities. However, if the war continues, GDP may decline by 2.5%.
2. Purchasing power of the population – from 2022 to 2023, Ukraine's minimum wage remained at UAH 6,700. As of January 1, 2024, it increased to UAH 7,100, and as of April 1, 2024, to UAH 8,000. Inflation rates were 1.27 in 2022, 1.05 in 2023, and 1.12 in 2024. As a result, purchasing power declined, and by 2024, Ukrainians could afford 37% fewer food products than before the war.
3. Pricing in the energy market – due to damage to Ukraine's energy infrastructure in 2024, electricity costs nearly doubled, leading to increased production costs and, consequently, higher food prices.
4. Unemployment – according to the National Bank of Ukraine, the official unemployment rate was 21.1% in 2022, 18.2% in 2023, and 13.9% in 2024. Before 2022, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine regularly conducted household surveys to assess unemployment. However, due to the war, these surveys ceased, complicating the accuracy of estimates. Therefore, actual unemployment figures may be significantly higher.

Socio-cultural elements of the macroenvironment include:

1. Trends in consumer composition – due to Russian aggression, significant changes have occurred in the population structure. Emigration has reduced the number of working-age individuals and families with minor children, while mobilization and male casualties have led to a negative population growth trend (mortality exceeding birth rates).
2. Trends in alternative product consumption – certain population groups are increasingly consuming organic food products, which serve as substitutes for traditional products. Cold-pressed oils, such as olive, sunflower, hemp, and flaxseed oil, are gaining popularity.

Elements of the technological component of the macroenvironment include innovative technologies and products. Today, most domestic agro-industrial enterprises use automation software to manage technological processes, ensuring high product quality for consumers. The production facilities meet Western standards, enabling the production of globally competitive goods.

Ecological aspects of the macroenvironment account for changes in environmental conditions affecting enterprises in Ukraine. Many companies use modern equipment from leading global manufacturers, which prioritizes energy efficiency and minimizes environmental harm while maintaining high productivity and quality. Their products comply with multiple international food safety and quality certifications.

Legal elements include aspects formed within Ukraine's regulatory business policies, governed by legislation and normative acts. This covers the application of European standards for raw material quality control, personnel qualification improvements, changes in labour law and hiring practices, adherence to occupational health and safety standards, and local regulatory requirements.

Expert evaluation of the macroenvironment components for sunflower oil enterprises is presented in Table 2. The impact of each macroenvironment element on businesses is assessed on a 5-point scale. The integral score is calculated as the product of the weight coefficient and expert assessment, interpreted using the 5-point scale (where: 1 – entirely negative, 2 – negative, 3 – satisfactory, 4 – positive, 5 – entirely positive). The final step is calculating the summary (general) assessment: if the overall score falls between 1.0 and 2.0, the macro-environment is negative (crisis); if the score is between 2.1 and 3.7, the macro-environment is satisfactory; if the score is between 3.8 and 5.0, the macro-environment is positive (favourable for business development).

Table 2. Assessment of the macro-environment of sunflower oil enterprises.

Components and elements	Weight coefficient	Expert evaluation	Integral assessment
Political	0.257		0.701
Political stability in the country	0.070	3	0.210
Corruption and bureaucracy	0.070	2	0.140
Tax policy in business	0.070	3	0.210
The threat of expanding military actions in the country	0.047	3	0.141
Economic	0.257		0.771
Economic growth rates	0.023	3	0.069
Inflation and interest rates	0.047	3	0.141
Unemployment	0.047	3	0.141
Purchasing power of the population	0.070	3	0.210
Energy costs	0.070	3	0.210
Socio-cultural	0.116		0.371
Changes in the composition of consumers	0.070	3	0.210
Trends in alternative consumption	0.023	3	0.069
Lifestyle and consumption habits	0.023	4	0.092
Technological	0.187		0.537
Innovative and technological development	0.070	4	0.280
Research and development costs	0.023	3	0.069
Access to cutting-edge technologies	0.047	4	0.188
Ecological	0.093		0.349
Environmental standards for product manufacturing	0.047	4	0.188
Presence of genetically modified raw materials	0.023	3	0.069
Attitude toward the production of environmentally friendly products	0.023	4	0.092
Legal	0.094		0.423
Legislative and regulatory acts on enterprise regulatory activities	0.047	4	0.188
International quality standards for finished products	0.047	5	0.235
General summary	1		3.152

Based on the analysis and assessment of the macroenvironment components, it can be concluded that the greatest influence on the activities of sunflower oil enterprises comes from political, economic, and technological components, with integral scores of 0.701, 0.771, and 0.537, respectively. In the overall structure of the integral macroenvironment assessment, political (22%), economic (24.5%), and technological (17%) components hold the largest weight. Given the war in Ukraine, the evaluation of the corruption factor is negative, while assessments of the political situation, tax policy, economic growth rates, inflation, unemployment, and purchasing power are satisfactory. Due to domestic producers gaining access to international markets, there is increased interest in producing high-quality products using advanced technologies, adhering to environmental standards, and receiving government support through preferential loans, grants, and risk insurance tools, leading to positive evaluations of these components. The overall macro-environment assessment stands at 3.152 out of 5 points, indicating that despite the war, the macro-environment of sunflower oil enterprises remains satisfactory.

The meso-environment of sunflower oil enterprises is characterized as a direct-action environment, where its elements directly influence the functioning of all businesses. Thus, any enterprise in this sector must consider these components and respond promptly to potential changes. The key elements of the meso-environment include competitors, consumers, suppliers, intermediaries, and contact audiences. Consumer demand, supplier reliability, the competitive environment, distribution channels, and societal perception significantly affect product sales, market share, productivity, and profitability.

The “competitor” component holds particular weight, as it shapes the meso-environment through offensive and defensive strategies in the battle for dominant market positions. Since sunflower oil is one of Ukraine’s export products, its production volumes and scales are considerable, requiring substantial capital investment in the manufacturing process. Furthermore, the profitability of sunflower oil production is 30-50%, making it an attractive industry for new competitors.

Consumers of sunflower oil include both small-scale and wholesale customers. Considering their requests is a necessary condition for the effective operation of enterprises in the industry. The collaboration policy of enterprise management with consumers determines the implementation of various strategies regarding customers. Specifically, sunflower oil producers can choose from the following strategies:

- selling products already in production;
- producing goods that meet consumer needs;
- shaping consumer demand, which involves persuading consumers of the necessity of purchasing products that will be manufactured soon.

As a result of cooperation between enterprises and consumers, a system of business relations is formed, which is one of the most important characteristics of the direct impact environment.

The functions of suppliers consist of meeting the enterprise’s needs for material, labour, financial, and informational resources. Material supply includes raw materials, semi-finished products, components, equipment, and energy according to the required volume and structure within the established timeframe. Financial supply involves determining the necessary resources, relations with investors, financial and commercial institutions, the budget, and private entities. Information supply has become increasingly important, ensuring high-quality data about market trends, competitors’ strategies, government policies, and product innovations. Labour supply is essential in providing personnel with the appropriate quantity, qualifications, and professional training.

Intermediaries in the sunflower oil market include firms that assist enterprises in promoting, selling, and distributing products to end consumers. Depending on their functions, intermediaries can be divided into three groups:

1. **Trade intermediaries** – marketing intermediaries who purchase goods, acquire ownership rights and resell them. They ensure convenience for consumers in terms of location, timing, and purchasing procedures.
2. **Agents** – functional intermediaries who collect orders, prepare and sign contracts on behalf of producers, suppliers, or consumers, depending on their employer. Agents include brokers, commission agents, and representatives working directly for product manufacturers.
3. **Facilitating structures** – marketing intermediaries that assist in promoting goods from producers to consumers but do not purchase the goods themselves or participate in sales contract negotiations. These include trade organization enterprises, marketing service agencies, and financial intermediaries.

Contact audiences are entities that arise from the integration of interests (both actual and potential) and influence an enterprise’s ability to achieve its goals. They include financial circles (banks, brokerage firms, shareholders, sponsors), mass media (television, radio, print publications, online news portals, social networks), government institutions, public organizations (trade unions, civic associations), and the public (local or regional contact audiences).

The assessment of the meso-environment of sunflower oil enterprises in Ukraine is presented in Table 3. The calculation mechanism and evaluation criteria are similar to previous assessments.

Based on the meso-environment evaluation results, it can be stated that among all participants in the sunflower market, competitors (0.945) and consumers (0.864) have the greatest impact. The overall integral assessment of the meso-environment is 3.375 out of 5 points, which is quite favourable for the development of sunflower oil enterprises under current conditions (Table 3).

Thus, studying the state of the external environment allows sunflower oil producers to adapt to changes, create opportunities for innovation, anticipate potential risks and minimize their impact, and develop unique competitive strategies in the long term for stability, resilience, and the creation of unique offerings for their customers.

Table 3. Assessment of the meso-environment of sunflower oil enterprises.

Components and elements	Weight coefficient	Expert evaluation	Integral assessment
Competitors	0.324		0.945
The scale of production in the industry	0.054	4	0.216
Product differentiation	0.054	3	0.162
Flexible pricing	0.054	3	0.162
Strong brands in the industry	0.081	2	0.162
Investments required to enter the industry	0.081	3	0.243
Consumers	0.243		0.864
Share of consumers with large purchase volumes	0.054	3	0.162
Brand recognition and loyalty	0.081	4	0.324
Consumer price sensitivity	0.081	4	0.324
Consumers tendency to switch to substitute products	0.027	2	0.054
Suppliers	0.162		0.594
Number of key suppliers	0.054	4	0.216
Volume of resource supply	0.081	4	0.324
Costs associated with changing suppliers	0.027	2	0.054
Intermediaries	0.162		0.648
Number of intermediaries	0.027	3	0.081
Conditions of cooperation with intermediaries	0.054	3	0.162
Availability and collaboration with logistics companies	0.081	5	0.405
Contact audiences	0.108		0.324
Industry-related public organizations	0.027	2	0.054
Mass media	0.054	3	0.162
Local authorities	0.027	4	0.108
General summary	1		3.375

The internal environment of an enterprise includes elements and components that determine its internal state, strengths, and weaknesses, and significantly influence operational efficiency.

The next stage in the development strategy process is analyzing and assessing the enterprise's internal potential. The subject of this study is PC "Oliyar", one of the largest producers of refined sunflower oil in Ukraine. The enterprise's production facilities are located in the Lviv region and include an oil extraction plant, a refining and deodorization plant, and a packaging workshop. In terms of refined sunflower oil production volumes in 2023-2024, the enterprise ranked third in Ukraine. The share of oil sales in foreign markets accounted for 4% of global sunflower oil exports, with geographical diversification covering about 50 countries worldwide.

Before the war, the market share of PC "Oliyar" in refined sunflower oil production in Ukraine was 8.2%, while in rapeseed oil production, it was 27.7%, securing 6th and 2nd places, respectively, in the TOP-10 and TOP-5 rankings of sunflower oil producers. However, throughout 2023-2024, the enterprise did not sell rapeseed seeds, oil, or meals, which impacted its position in Ukraine's rapeseed oil market rankings.

To determine the strategic directions for PC "Oliyar" development, an analysis of the dynamics of key financial indicators in 2023 is conducted, including liquidity ratios, financial independence, financial stability, financial risk, and profitability. Additionally, expert assessment methods were applied to evaluate these indicators' trends throughout the year (Table 4).

Table 4. Calculation of weighted integral assessments of the financial condition of PC "Oliyar".

Indicator	Weight coefficient	Expert assessment at the beginning of the year	Expert assessment at the end of the year	Integral assessment at the beginning of the year	Integral assessment at the end of the year
Current liquidity	0.2	3	4	0.6	0.8
Financial independence	0.2	2	3	0.4	0.6
Financial risk	0.2	1	3	0.2	0.6
Financial stability	0.2	1	3	0.2	0.6
Net sales profitability (%)	0.2	2	3	0.4	0.6
General summary	1.0			1.8	3.2

Based on the calculation of integral financial indicators, it can be concluded that the financial condition of the enterprise at the beginning of the year was classified as critical (1.8 points), while by the end of the year, it was characterized as stable (3.2 points). To validate expert assessments of PC "Oliyar" financial condition, an evaluation of its financial sustainability was conducted using a three-component indicator, which characterizes the degree of inventory security by sources of formation (Table 5).

Table 5. Assessment of financial stability and determination of the financial condition type of PC "Oliyar".

Indicator	Value at the beginning of the year	Value at the end of the year
Surplus or shortage of own sources for inventory formation	0	0
Surplus or shortage of own and long-term sources for inventory formation	0	1
Surplus or shortage of the total amount of the main sources for inventory formation	0	1
Three-component indicator	(0; 0; 0)	(0; 1; 1)
Type of financial condition	Crisis	Normal (stable)

According to the calculation methodology, the values of all three indicators at the beginning of the year were below 0 (coefficient "0"), which indicates a crisis-type financial condition of the enterprise. By the end of the year, the situation improved, as evidenced by positive values for two of the listed indicators (coefficient "1"). Accordingly, the financial condition of PC "Oliyar" was determined to be normal (stable).

Based on the analysis and assessment of PC "Oliyar" financial condition, it can be concluded that at the beginning of 2024, the enterprise was profitable and had a certain level of market stability, while management took necessary measures to maintain a stable economic position and business development.

To provide a structured description of PC "Oliyar" strategic challenges, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of its meso- and macro-environment have been identified (Table 6). The SWOT analysis method aims to align the internal capabilities of the enterprise with external market dynamics while highlighting the complexity and flexibility of business growth.

Table 6. SWOT Analysis matrix of PC "Oliyar".

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Internal Environment	Strengths	Weaknesses
	Use of high-oleic sunflower seeds	Insufficient market research
	Availability of own and leased land for sunflower cultivation	Limited technical capacity for expanding sunflower seed processing
	Stable demand for products and strong consumer brand loyalty	Loss of industry position due to discontinuation of rapeseed oil production
	Waste-free production	Limited credit resources
	Own logistics infrastructure	Presence of strong brands in the industry
	Proximity of the enterprise to European markets	
External Environment	Opportunities	Threats
	Growing demand for oil in the global market	Competition from multinational corporations
	Production of new types of eco-friendly products and expansion into new markets	Increase in raw material costs
	Creation of favourable investment conditions by the country	Rising costs of energy and fuel
	Attracting grants in the sunflower processing sector for reconstruction and technological upgrades	Risk of destruction of storage terminals during wartime
	Alternative use of processing waste for enterprise energy supply	Loss of enterprise personnel due to further stages of mobilization into the Armed Forces of Ukraine
		Population declines due to emigration and reduced purchasing power
		Instability of tax policy

The study of the external and internal environment of PC "Oliyar" using the SWOT analysis has allowed for the following conclusions regarding positive developments:

1. The availability of own raw materials and logistics infrastructure will enable the enterprise to reduce production costs for sunflower oil and ensure competitive advantages in the Ukrainian sunflower oil market.
2. Attracting grant programs for the modernization and implementation of innovative technological equipment provides an opportunity for the enterprise to optimize production costs and increase profitability.
3. Favourable climatic conditions in recent years in the western and central regions of Ukraine, along with the use of high-oleic sunflower varieties for processing, will increase the output of finished products, creating a more competitive environment in the sunflower oil market.
4. The high profitability of sunflower oil production, along with additional processing products (sunflower meal and husk), which can be used in animal feed and heating (as pellets), will stimulate the development of organic farming approaches in agriculture.
5. Annual global population growth will lead to an increasing demand for sunflower oil, thereby deepening and expanding foreign markets while increasing the enterprise's export share.
6. The application of innovative technologies and digitalization processes in production will contribute to higher profitability of sunflower oil production in Ukraine, providing a boost for establishing and developing farms specializing in sunflower processing.

To summarize and visualize these research findings, a matrix approach has been applied, allowing for an assessment of the current position and the formation of strategic directions for the development of sunflower oil enterprises. The parameters of the matrix, tested on the example of PC "Oliyar", are based on the external and internal environment (Table 7).

Table 7. Strategy matrix for the development of sunflower oil enterprises.

State of the External Environment	State of the Internal Environment of PC "Oliyar"		
	Growth	Stability	Crisis
Positive	Growth Strategy	Selective Growth Strategy	Position Retention Strategy
Satisfactory	Selective Growth Strategy	Position Retention Strategy	Retrenchment Strategy
Negative	Position Retention Strategy	Retrenchment Strategy	Retrenchment and Liquidation Strategy

The strategy matrix developed identifies 9 strategic positions for sunflower oil enterprises, along with their respective development strategies:

1. Growth strategy (combination "positive external environment" / "enterprise growth") – includes measures to secure leadership positions in the industry, sustain and create new competitive advantages, maximize investment attraction, and expand production through geographical diversification.
2. Selective growth strategy in specific segments (combination "positive external environment" / "enterprise stability") – focuses on identifying competitive advantages, enhancing strengths, overcoming weaknesses, and making moderate investments in rapidly growing market segments to compete for segment leadership.
3. Position retention strategy (combination "positive external environment" / "enterprise crisis") – entails stabilizing the enterprise's position, overcoming weaknesses, and implementing radical product elimination changes.
4. Selective growth strategy in specific segments (combination of "satisfactory external environment" / "enterprise growth") – involves increasing investments in growing product segments, reinforcing strengths, overcoming weaknesses, and making moderate changes, such as geographical diversification and competition for segment leadership.
5. Position retention strategy (combination of "satisfactory external environment" / "enterprise stability") – includes maintaining existing market positions, focusing on growing segments, protecting existing competitive advantages, and making moderate investments in technology, marketing, or logistics.
6. Retrenchment strategy (combination "satisfactory external environment" / "enterprise crisis") – applies a "harvest strategy", cuts unnecessary expenses, minimizes investments, and implements radical changes in the product portfolio or technology.

7. Position retention strategy (combination "negative external environment" / "enterprise growth") – focuses on defending market share, stabilizing operations, and finding attractive market niches, with moderate changes aimed at meeting new consumer needs.
8. Retrenchment strategy (combination of "negative external environment" / "enterprise stability") – includes "harvest strategy", minimal investment, niche market exploration, cutting unnecessary expenses, and radical restructuring.
9. Retrenchment and liquidation strategy (combination of "negative external environment" / "enterprise crisis") – entails selling part of the business, eliminating unprofitable products, reducing production costs, zero investment, radical changes, and enterprise liquidation.

Based on the analysis of PC "Oliyar" external and internal environment, it can be concluded that in 2023, the enterprise shifted from the quadrant "satisfactory external environment" / "enterprise crisis" (reduction strategy) to the quadrant "satisfactory external environment" / "enterprise stability" (position retention strategy). This strategy enables the enterprise to maintain market share, increase sales volume, and boost profitability. Considering ongoing external environmental changes, the future trajectory of the enterprise may shift, necessitating the development of a new strategy.

To ensure an effective development strategy, sunflower oil enterprises must continuously monitor market events and trends, systematically analyze processes, and evaluate performance indicators of their activity.

DISCUSSION

The results of the conducted research indicate that the formation of an effective enterprise development strategy requires a comprehensive approach to analyzing and assessing the components of its internal and external environment. Such an approach allows for the development of alternative event scenarios and corresponding decisions necessary to achieve defined strategic goals.

In discussions on enterprise development strategies, researchers prioritize issues of adaptability and flexibility in conditions of uncertainty, competitiveness, and corporate social responsibility. Some authors emphasize the importance of investment, innovation, and the efficient use of resources in the enterprise's strategic development.

At the same time, the conditions that have arisen in Ukraine during Russia's military aggression create new challenges and risks for sunflower oil enterprises. This necessitates identifying and analyzing the macro- and meso-environment components of the sunflower oil enterprises and assessing their impact on economic entities when formulating development strategies.

An important component of the discussion is the use of tools and methods for evolving a development strategy. A narrow approach, based on the use of a specific tool, does not allow for consideration of the interdependence between the internal and external environment of an economic entity when forming a development strategy. Instead, implementing a comprehensive approach based on the integration of expert and matrix methods will allow for an assessment of external and internal environmental components and the determination of strategic development directions for sunflower oil enterprises.

Thus, the discussion around the development strategy of sunflower oil enterprises remains open. Further research should take into account that an enterprise position and development strategy are not static and may change depending on trends in the external environment. Moreover, a development strategy that corresponds to the current quadrant of the matrix may include elements of strategies from adjacent quadrants due to the high dynamism of the external environment or may be more complex.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that an enterprise development strategy enables the formation of a future activity concept, aligns internal capabilities with external environmental conditions, and develops a set of measures to achieve established goals.

The use of expert methods for studying the external environment allows for an assessment of the key factors influencing the choice of strategic development direction, which includes improving functional and business processes, optimizing quantitative and qualitative indicators, and ensuring sustainable enterprise operations in a competitive environment.

One of the strategic directions for developing the sunflower oil enterprise is the diversification of geographical presence to capture a larger share of local and global markets and mitigate market risks. The key measures for ensuring strategic

growth include further expansion and strengthening of market positions, profit maximization, and ensuring high product competitiveness in both domestic and global markets.

Promising areas for further research include the study of current issues facing sunflower oil enterprises in Ukraine, as well as the trends and prospects for the development of the global sunflower oil market. Another critical research direction involves examining modern development strategy concepts and the potential for their implementation in Ukrainian sunflower oil enterprises to ensure sustainable long-term growth.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have contributed equally.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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СТРАТЕГІЯ РОЗВИТКУ ПІДПРИЄМСТВ-ВИРОБНИКІВ СОНЯШНИКОВОЇ ОЛІЇ В УКРАЇНІ

Актуальність теми дослідження обумовлена необхідністю формування ефективної стратегії для забезпечення розвитку підприємств-виробників соняшникової олії в Україні в довгостроковій перспективі. У статті проаналізовано стан олійної галузі та встановлено, що, незважаючи на воєнні виклики, Україна залишається одним зі світових лідерів із виробництва та експорту соняшникової олії. Аналіз і оцінку макро-, мезо- та внутрішнього середовища підприємств олійної галузі здійснено з використанням експертних методів. Для визначення стану макросередовища вітчизняних підприємств ідентифіковано, проаналізовано та оцінено вплив його складових, які опосередковано, але помітно впливають на результати діяльності суб'єктів господарювання. Установлено, що найбільший вплив на діяльність підприємств олійної галузі мають політична, економічна й технологічна складові, а узагальнювальна оцінка макросередовища відображає його задовільний стан. У процесі дослідження мезосередовища визначено елементи, безпосередній вплив яких доцільно враховувати при формуванні стратегії розвитку. Установлено, що найбільший вплив мають конкуренти й споживачі, а узагальнювальна інтегральна оцінка мезосередовища вказує на задовільні умови для розвитку підприємств-виробників соняшникової олії. Дослідження внутрішнього середовища підприємств-виробників соняшникової олії здійснено на прикладі ПП «Оліяр», яке є одним із найбільших виробників соняшникової олії в Україні. Для визначення внутрішніх переваг, зовнішніх можливостей і загроз використано метод SWOT-аналізу. За результатами проведеного дослідження побудовано матрицю для вибору стратегії розвитку підприємств-виробників соняшникової олії, яка містить такі три її види: стратегія зростання, стратегія збереження позицій і стратегія скорочення. Установлено, що ПП «Оліяр» протягом поточного періоду використовує стратегію збереження позицій на ринку задля утримання частки ринку, збільшення обсягів продажу та прибутку. У зв'язку з можливими майбутніми подіями та новими тенденціями в зовнішньому середовищі існує ймовірність зміни вектора стратегічного розвитку підприємства. Наголошено, що підприємства-виробники соняшникової олії повинні постійно відстежувати стан зовнішнього середовища, систематично аналізувати бізнес-процеси, оцінювати показники своєї діяльності та за потреби розробляти нову стратегію.

Ключові слова: стратегія, стратегія розвитку підприємства, підприємства-виробники соняшникової олії, макросередовище, мезосередовище, мікросередовище, матриця стратегій розвитку підприємства

JEL Класифікація: C10, D40, L10, L66