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Financial risks of Ukrainian enterprises: Analysis, management, and ways to minimise them in conditions of economic instability

Abstract. The study aimed to identify the main financial risks for Ukrainian enterprises caused by economic instability. The research methodology included an analysis of secondary data for 2022-2024, in particular, statistical indicators of inflation, exchange rates and unemployment rates. The main results of the study revealed significant trends that have a substantial impact on the financial stability of enterprises in Ukraine. In 2022, inflation reached 26.6%, which significantly increased costs for enterprises. In 2023, inflation fell to 5.1%, but rising exchange rates and interest rates remained a major challenge for businesses. At the end of 2024, inflation rose again to 10.7%, causing further increases in product prices and reducing consumer purchasing power. Currency fluctuations had a particularly high impact on businesses, notably the 34.1% devaluation of the hryvnia in 2022, which created significant difficulties for export-oriented businesses. In addition, it was found that enterprises that used diversification strategies and financial derivatives were able to reduce the negative impact of currency risks. Furthermore, the study identified that currency hedging can reduce exchange rate fluctuations by 15-20% compared to other strategies. The findings of the study indicate that enterprises that use a comprehensive approach to financial risk management, in particular through hedging, diversification and effective use of state support, can maintain financial stability even in times of crisis. The practical significance of the study is determined by the development of effective recommendations for managing financial risks of enterprises in conditions of economic instability, which ensures their financial stability and adaptation to changes in the macroeconomic environment

Keywords: hedging; inflation; unemployment; interest rates; loans

INTRODUCTION

Financial risks are one of the main problems for Ukrainian businesses in times of economic instability. In particular, businesses in Ukraine are facing serious challenges due to the economic

crisis, inflation, political instability, and global economic changes. In such conditions, financial risks can significantly affect the stability and viability of enterprises, leading to increased costs,

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reduced profitability, reduced opportunities for attracting investment, and even bankruptcy. The research relevance is determined by the need to develop effective financial risk management mechanisms that will help enterprises adapt to new conditions, minimise financial losses and ensure economic stability at various stages of their activities.

The problem of managing financial risks of enterprises in conditions of economic instability is relevant due to rapid changes in financial markets and risks associated with the uncertainty of the economic environment. I. Tomashuk & I. Tomashuk (2022) studied the system of financial risk management and its impact on the financial security of enterprises, considering the nature of financial risks and their classification. The study proposed a risk assessment algorithm that includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. However, despite a significant contribution to the development of theoretical aspects, the issue of the practical application of these methods in enterprises in the context of modern economic crises requires further study.

The management of financial risks in a company undergoing transformational change is a substantial topic for scientific research, as these risks can significantly affect the financial stability and security of companies. A.V. Nechyporenko (2023) investigated theoretical and methodological approaches to financial risk management, studying the factors of financial risks and the specifics of managing them in conditions of change. The study identified the key stages of financial risk management and proposed conceptual principles for their neutralisation. However, despite the results achieved, the issue of a more in-depth analysis of the impact of external and internal factors on the financial risks of enterprises requires further research, particularly in the context of the practical implementation of the proposed concepts in various sectors of the economy.

The financial security of enterprises is a substantial aspect of ensuring stable business development in conditions of economic instability. K. Pavlov *et al.* (2022) studied the financial security of Ukrainian enterprises, in particular, their current state and main problems. The study identified the key factors affecting the financial

stability of enterprises and proposed ways to solve these problems. However, the impact of external threats, such as war and economic instability, on financial security requires further study. Financial instability and bankruptcy are substantial challenges to the sustainable development of enterprises. L. Burkova *et al.* (2023) studied financial risk management as a component of preventing financial instability and bankruptcy of enterprises. The study analysed methods of financial risk management based on the specific characteristics of enterprises in a state of financial crisis. The study developed approaches to determining maximum acceptable risks and their application in management practice. However, the issue of improving financial risk management methods in connection with new global economic challenges, such as political and environmental crises, requires further research.

Management of financial risks of enterprises in conditions of martial law is a substantial topic, as martial law creates a significant level of uncertainty and instability. L.T. Shevchuk *et al.* (2024) studied the peculiarities of financial risk management and corporate restructuring under martial law, emphasising the need to develop a comprehensive approach to identifying and minimising risks. They proposed risk management strategies such as diversification and hedging, as well as the importance of responding quickly to changes in the market environment. However, the issue of developing specific approaches to financial restructuring in conditions of high uncertainty and limited resources requires further research.

Managing financial risks and business stability is essential to ensuring economic security. Z.-M. Zadorozhnyy *et al.* (2024) determined that effective risk management depends on the ability of businesses to adapt to changing economic conditions. However, there are shortcomings in applying these strategies during global crises, especially war. The financial stability of Ukrainian enterprises in conditions of systemic instability is one of the main problems faced by businesses during war. A. Kornyliuk & R. Kornyliuk (2024) studied the impact of a full-scale invasion on the financial stability of enterprises, particularly in the agro-industrial, construction,

energy and metallurgical sectors. The study demonstrated that, despite significant losses in 2022, some sectors began to recover in 2023, demonstrating revenue growth and improved return on assets. However, low bank loan utilisation and high debt burdens remain challenges that require further research to ensure a stable economic recovery.

The financial crisis in Ukraine, caused by political instability, military aggression, the devaluation of the hryvnia and inflation, significantly affected the country's economy. A. Pohrebnyak *et al.* (2024) examined these factors, analysed macroeconomic indicators and found that the decline in gross domestic product (GDP), rising unemployment, capital flight and increased public debt are the main consequences of the crisis. The study also suggested ways to overcome these consequences, in particular through stabilisation of the political situation and economic reforms. However, the effectiveness of the proposed measures in the context of the ongoing war requires further study. The study was to investigate the impact of economic instability on the financial risks of Ukrainian enterprises. The research objectives were to analyse the main financial risks faced by enterprises in conditions of economic instability and to develop recommendations for financial risk management, incorporating the specifics of Ukrainian business and current economic challenges.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the financial risks of Ukrainian companies, such as Myronivsky Hliboproduct, in conditions of economic instability, in particular, the impact of macroeconomic factors on the financial stability of the business. The analysis was based on secondary data such as fluctuations in the hryvnia exchange rate (Centre for Economic Strategy, 2023; BBC, 2023; MinfinMedia, n.d.a), inflation (National Bank of Ukraine, 2023; 2024; n.d.a), unemployment rate (Number of registered unemployed, n.d.) and interest rates (National Bank of Ukraine, n.d.b; MinfinMedia, n.d.c) to develop recommendations for minimising financial risks and ensuring business sustainability. The study covered a wide range of economic

changes that took place in Ukraine between 2022 and 2024, particularly in the context of war and economic turbulence.

The materials for this study were based on scientific works, as well as on open economic data provided by various sources. Scientific studies were used to examine the financial risks of enterprises, including works by W. Du *et al.* (2016), Y. Konchitchki & J. Xie (2023), and A.S. Atichasari *et al.* (2023), which cover the analysis of risks in the financial activities of enterprises in conditions of economic instability. In addition, data from open sources provided by the National Bank of Ukraine were considered, in particular, comments on the inflation rate for 2023-2024, which assessed changes in the macroeconomic situation in the country and its impact on business activity in times of crisis. The study examined the main types of financial risks faced by enterprises in Ukraine, such as credit, currency, inflation, liquidity and interest rate risks. To research the impact of economic instability on the financial stability of enterprises, data for 2022-2024 on currency exchange rate fluctuations, interest rates, and unemployment rates in Ukraine were collected and analysed to further describe the macroeconomic environment and its impact on business.

To study the use of financial instruments for reduction of financial risks, examples of diversification were analysed using the example of Myronivsky Hliboproduct (MHP) (MHP, n.d.) and financial derivatives using the example of Southwest Airlines (Exbase, n.d.). MHP was chosen because of its active diversification strategy, which includes expanding its business in the agricultural sector, developing ready-made food production, and international expansion. Southwest Airlines, in turn, was chosen because of its active use of financial derivatives to hedge fuel costs, which are a relevant component of the company's expenses. These companies differ in terms of industry affiliation and risk management methods. Analysis of the application of these instruments demonstrated how companies can use different methods to minimise financial risks and ensure stability in conditions of economic instability, as well as identify specific strategies for adapting to changes in global financial markets. The study also developed

ways to minimise financial risks for companies and ensure their sustainability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main types of financial risks for enterprises are key factors determining their financial stability and success. Enterprises are forced to adapt to changing internal and external conditions, which will be particularly relevant in the period 2022-2024. Economic instability includes issues such as high inflation, currency fluctuations, rising energy and material costs, and changes in legislation that directly affect the financial stability of companies. The first type of financial risk is credit risk, which arises from the possibility that a counterparty or borrower will be unable to meet its financial obligations to the company. Credit risk can be caused by the counterparty's financial difficulties, insolvency or bankruptcy. This risk is particularly relevant for companies that actively work with suppliers, partners and consumers who use credit terms to conduct transactions. A high level of credit risk can lead to significant financial losses, particularly due to outstanding debts or the need to write off bad debts (Du *et al.*, 2016).

The second relevant type is currency risk, which arises due to fluctuations in the exchange rates of the national currency against foreign currencies. Companies that conduct foreign economic activity or have obligations in foreign currency may suffer significant losses due to unpredictable changes in exchange rates. For example, if the exchange rate of the national currency against a foreign currency changes sharply, this can lead to an increase in the cost of imported goods, services or loans, as well as complicate the fulfilment of obligations to foreign creditors. This is particularly relevant for companies that work with international partners or have significant external debts (Nihro & Allawi, 2020).

Inflation risk is another type of financial risk that reflects the possibility of losses due to the depreciation of money, which causes an increase in prices for goods and services. Inflation can significantly reduce the real value of a company's assets, affect the size of salaries, increase production and supply costs, and reduce the purchasing power of consumers. In conditions of high inflation, companies are forced to

raise prices for their products or services, which in turn can lead to a decline in demand (Konchitchki & Xie, 2023).

Liquidity risk is another relevant element of financial risk. It arises when a company does not have sufficient liquid assets to meet its short-term financial obligations in a timely manner. If a company does not have sufficient cash reserves or quickly realisable assets to cover its current liabilities, this can become a significant problem. Liquidity risk can lead to delays in payments to suppliers, employees or creditors. This will negatively affect the company's image and its ability to obtain financing in the future (Ekdjaja *et al.*, 2021).

The risk of interest rate changes also significantly affects the financial stability of a company. Changes in interest rates can alter the cost of credit resources for a company with significant debt obligations. As rates rise, the cost of servicing debt increases, which can affect the company's profitability and its ability to meet its financial obligations. This is particularly relevant for companies that actively borrow to finance their activities. The last type of risk is operational risk, which arises from internal problems within a company, such as ineffective management, errors in business processes, disruptions in technological processes, or human factors. This type of risk can include both financial and non-financial aspects that directly affect the productivity and stability of the enterprise (Atichasari *et al.*, 2023). All these types of financial risks are relevant components of a company's financial stability. To manage them successfully, it is necessary to use a comprehensive approach that includes both identification and minimisation of each risk using effective financial management, insurance and hedging tools.

Assessment of macroeconomic factors affecting financial risks is an essential component of corporate financial management strategy. In conditions of economic instability and global crises, Ukrainian enterprises in various industries, particularly in the agricultural, manufacturing and energy sectors, face numerous problems that require constant adaptation to changing macroeconomic conditions. Enterprises in the agricultural sector are forced to cope with changes in raw material prices, currency fluctuations and

instability in foreign markets, which leads to difficulties in exporting products and an increase in the cost of production materials. Industrial companies, in turn, face high energy costs and the need to modernise their production facilities to remain competitive in the context of global changes in the energy market. In addition, inflationary processes and changes in legislation often necessitate adjustments to business strategies and reassessment of financial plans to ensure stable operations (Nehrey & Trofimtseva, 2022).

Inflation is one of the most relevant macroeconomic factors affecting the financial risks of enterprises. High inflation leads to an increase in production costs, which negatively affects the margins of enterprises. Rising prices for raw materials, energy and other resources automatically increase costs, which can be difficult for many enterprises, especially those that are unable to quickly raise prices for their products. In addition, inflation reduces the real purchasing power of consumers, which can lead to a decrease in demand for the enterprise's goods and services. This creates additional financial risks, as enterprises may suffer losses due to a decrease in sales or the need to adjust prices (Nowicki *et al.*, 2024). In December 2022, consumer inflation stood at 26.6% year-on-year, which significantly increased costs for many businesses (National Bank of Ukraine, 2023). Inflation in Ukraine fell to 5.1% in 2023 (National Bank of Ukraine, 2024). However, in 2024, core inflation accelerated to 10.7% (National Bank of Ukraine, n.d.a), which again poses new challenges for businesses in terms of increased costs and the need to adjust their financial strategies. Figure 1 shows inflation fluctuations in Ukraine for the period 2022-2024.

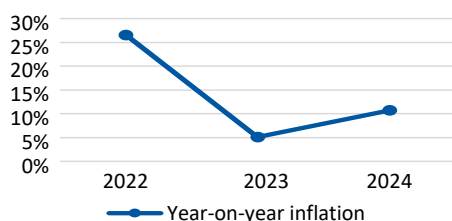


Figure 1. Annual inflation in Ukraine for 2022-2024

Source: compiled by the author based on National Bank of Ukraine (2023; 2024; n.d.a)

Currency fluctuations are another significant macroeconomic factor affecting the financial risks of enterprises, especially those engaged in foreign economic activity. Companies that have foreign currency liabilities or work with international partners may face serious difficulties due to exchange rate fluctuations. If the national currency depreciates, the cost of imported products or services may increase significantly, which increases the overall financial costs of the company. For example, the Ukrainian metallurgical company ArcelorMittal is forced to import natural gas, ligature materials and specialised equipment (GMK Centre, 2024). In 2023, MinfinMedia (n.d.b). On the other hand, changes in exchange rates can also create opportunities for companies that have export revenues in foreign currency, but the risk of significant fluctuations also remains (Nihro & Allawi, 2020). Figure 2 below shows the dynamics of the hryvnia exchange rate against the USD for the period 2022-2024.

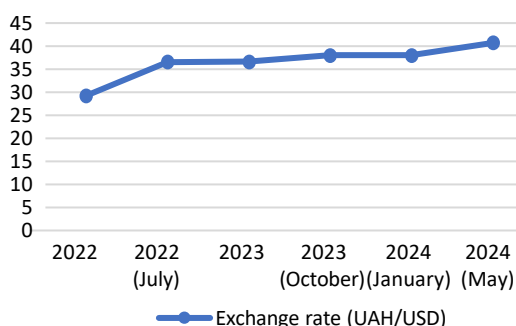


Figure 2. Exchange rate of the hryvnia to the USD for 2022-2024

Source: BBC (2023), MinfinMedia (n.d.a)

In 2022, at the start of the Russian full-scale invasion, the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) fixed the exchange rate at 29.25 UAH/USD. In July 2022, the exchange rate was lowered to 36.57 UAH/USD due to market destabilisation and increased demand for currency. Overall, the UAH devalued by 34.1% over the year (MinfinMedia, n.d.a). In 2023, the exchange rate remained at 36.6 UAH/USD for most of the year, which was lower than the forecasts of the government (42.2 UAH) and experts (37.9 UAH) (Centre for Economic Strategy, 2023). In October 2023, the NBU switched to a managed flexibility regime,

which led to a gradual decline in the exchange rate to 38 UAH/USD by the end of the year. Overall, the UAH depreciated by 3.9% in 2023 (Centre for Economic Strategy, 2023). At the beginning of 2024, the exchange rate was 38 UAH/USD. By May 2024, the exchange rate had reached 40.7 UAH/USD, which is in line with budget forecasts. The UAH devalued by 9.1% in the first half of 2024, which is associated with an increase in demand for currency and intensive interventions by the NBU (BBC, 2023).

Interest rates are another critical factor affecting the financial risks of enterprises. Changes in interest rates can significantly alter the cost of credit resources for an enterprise. High interest rates increase debt servicing costs, which in turn reduces the financial flexibility of the enterprise and its ability to invest. When interest rates rise, enterprises with significant debt obligations may experience difficulties in making payments, which can lead to default. At the same time, low interest rates can increase demand for credit, but the risks increase if companies unreasonably increase their debt obligations (Msomi, 2023). In June 2022, the NBU's discount rate was raised to 25% due to economic turmoil caused by the Russian full-scale invasion (National Bank discount..., n.d.a). In 2023, the NBU's discount rate fell to 15.5% in March 2023 as a result of the stabilisation of the economic situation. Commercial bank deposit and lending rates also gradually declined, reflecting the NBU's policy of reducing the burden on businesses (National Bank of Ukraine, n.d.b). In 2024, the NBU's discount rate remained at 15.5% until March 2024, when it was raised again to 18.5% for overnight loans and to 15.5% for overnight deposit certificates. Commercial bank deposit rates continued to decline, indicating a gradual recovery of confidence in the economy (MinfinMedia, n.d.c).

Unemployment is another significant macroeconomic factor that directly affects the financial stability of enterprises. High unemployment reduces the purchasing power of the population, leading to a decrease in demand for goods and services. Furthermore, high unemployment can lead to social tensions, which can negatively affect the business climate and create additional financial risks for enterprises. For example, an increase in social spending by the state to support

the unemployed may contribute to an increase in the tax burden on enterprises. According to the results for 2024, the average unemployment rate in Ukraine fell to 14.3%. In 2023, the unemployment rate was 17.4%, and in 2022, it was 18.5%. Figure 3 shows the fluctuations in the unemployment rate in Ukraine for 2022-2024 (Number of registered unemployed, n.d.).

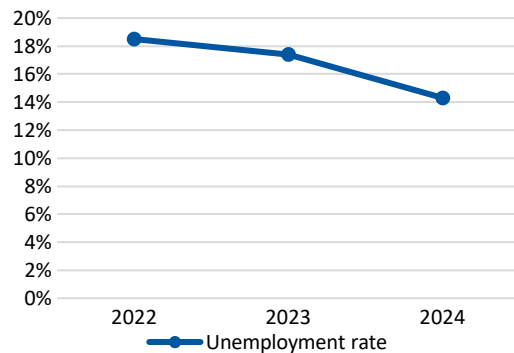


Figure 3. Unemployment rate in Ukraine for 2022-2024

Source: compiled by the author based on the Number of registered unemployed (n.d)

Figure 3 illustrates the dynamics of the unemployment rate in Ukraine for the period from 2022 to 2024. In 2022, the unemployment rate was about 18.5%, which was caused by economic instability and the negative impact of the war on the labour market. In 2023, there was a decrease in the unemployment rate to 17.4%, which may indicate a partial recovery of the economy and improved employment conditions. The continuation of the downward trend in unemployment to 14.3% in 2024 indicates a gradual improvement in the labour market situation. High unemployment has a significant impact on demand for companies' products. High unemployment leads to a decrease in the purchasing power of the population, as most consumers do not have a stable income. This, in turn, reduces demand for goods and services produced by enterprises, which can lead to a decrease in production and job losses. This situation creates a negative cycle that delays economic recovery and worsens the overall state of the labour market.

Political and social instability also significantly affects the financial stability of businesses.

Changes in the political situation, such as increased political instability due to military conflicts in eastern Ukraine or changes in the country's leadership, can lead to significant costs for businesses as they are forced to adapt their strategies to new conditions or spend resources on security and asset protection. Changes in legislation, such as the introduction of new tax laws or reforms in corporate taxation, can result in additional costs for businesses, as they will need to change their financial reporting, increase their legal expenses, or implement new business processes to comply with the new requirements. The introduction of new regulations, such as changes in environmental standards or occupational safety requirements, may require businesses to invest in new equipment, technologies, or change production processes to comply with the new requirements, which entails additional costs.

Sanctions imposed on individual companies or industries can significantly increase costs, as companies have to find new suppliers, change supply chains, and cover financial losses from restricted access to international markets. For example, after sanctions were imposed on Russian companies and their partners in Ukraine, many Ukrainian enterprises were forced to seek alternative sources of raw materials, which increased production costs. In addition, high levels of political instability can undermine investor confidence, making it more difficult for enterprises to access finance. This, in turn, may limit their development opportunities or even lead to financial problems (Tan, 2024). Thus, macroeconomic factors have a significant impact on the financial stability of enterprises. Changes in the economic situation can create both new opportunities and additional risks for businesses. To operate successfully, enterprises need to continuously assess these factors and adapt their financial strategies to new conditions to ensure long-term stability and competitiveness.

The present study, by S. Zhou (2023), examined the impact of external factors on stability, particularly economic factors. S. Zhou addressed the impact of sanctions on political stability, while the present study focused on the impact of macroeconomic factors such as inflation, currency fluctuations, interest rates and

unemployment on the financial stability of enterprises. A common feature was that both studies analysed external factors and their impact on stability. S. Zhou used a two-phase analysis to assess the impact of sanctions, while this study focused on internal economic changes. S. Zhou addressed political sanctions and their impact on public policy and the economy, while this study analysed macroeconomic factors at the enterprise level.

The present study and the study by Z. Virglerova *et al.* (2022) addressed the impact of macroeconomic factors on the financial stability of enterprises. However, the study by Z. Virglerova *et al.* emphasised a systematic approach to financial risk management, especially in crises. The study highlighted hedging and risk diversification strategies as the main methods of adaptation for enterprises. In contrast, this study addressed a broader range of macroeconomic factors, such as unemployment and political instability, and analysed their impact on demand and the financial strategies of enterprises. This study and the study by S.A. Athari *et al.* (2023) analysed different aspects of the impact of economic factors on financial stability. The study by S.A. Athari *et al.* examined the impact of macroeconomic and political risks on the stability of the banking sector, analysing the relationship between economic instability and access to credit. In turn, this study emphasised the impact of financial risks, such as credit, currency, inflation and liquidity risks, on enterprises in Ukraine, especially in the context of war and economic instability.

Financial risk management is an essential aspect of any company's operations, as it reduces the potential negative impact of financial fluctuations and ensures the stability and sustainability of the enterprise. For example, effective currency risk management through hedging can reduce financial losses from exchange rate fluctuations by 20-30%, depending on the level of risk and the instruments used. The establishment of clear credit risk control mechanisms can reduce the probability of late payments and reduce the level of unpaid loans by 15-25%. At the same time, the success of these measures depends on the timeliness of their implementation, the correct choice of hedging instruments,

and the company's ability to adapt to changes in the economic environment (Arenas & Scudiero, 2023). The main strategies for managing financial risks include the use of various instruments and methods for reduction of the impact of risks on the company's financial results. The main strategies include hedging, diversification, the use of financial derivatives, insurance, and active monitoring of financial risks.

The first hedging strategy involves using financial instruments to minimise risks associated with fluctuations in exchange rates, interest rates or commodity prices. This can be done by entering into contracts to buy or sell currency, commodities or financial assets at a fixed price in the future. Hedging is used by companies to fix the level of risk at a certain stage and protect themselves from unpredictable financial losses. For instance, an exporting company can use currency futures or options to fix the exchange rate to avoid losses in the event of a depreciation of the national currency (Arenas & Scudiero, 2023).

Another popular strategy is diversification, which involves spreading investments or assets across different financial instruments or markets. This reduces risk by ensuring an offset of losses in one market or business area by gains in another. Diversification can be conducted both within a single country and on international markets. It reduces dependence on individual markets or products and decreases the likelihood of significant financial losses due to local or global economic shocks. Myrivsky Hliboproduct (MHP) is actively implementing a strategy of geographical and product diversification, which reduces its dependence on individual markets and industries (MHP, n.d.). During 2018-2023, MHP expanded its presence in the international market, in particular through the acquisition and development of subsidiaries. For example, Perutnina Ptuj, MHP's subsidiary in South-Eastern Europe, increased its production from 88,000 tonnes in 2018 to 146,000 tonnes in 2023, while its revenue grew from 271 million EUR to 532 million EUR, an increase of 96% over this period. As of 2024, MHP has production facilities in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other EU countries, further enhancing its geographical presence and financial stability. Product diversification has also

become a substantial aspect of MHP's strategy. The company has transformed itself from a poultry producer into a competitive producer in the food industry, expanding its range to include grain crops, vegetable oils, semi-finished products and high-value-added products, which has been a strategic focus. At the end of 2024, MHP's export revenue amounted to 1.7 billion USD, which is 42.5% of Ukraine's total food exports, underscoring its leadership in the industry (Propozitsiya, 2024). This demonstrates the successful implementation of the diversification strategy and the company's stable financial growth. Technological innovations, in particular the transition to the production of premium-segment branded products, have reduced dependence on fluctuations in raw material prices, which is a substantial factor in ensuring long-term financial stability. In addition, MHP is developing its ready-made food line, offering consumers value-added products such as minced meat, cutlets and other semi-finished products. The company is actively expanding abroad, opening new enterprises in Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the Middle East and North Africa. In 2024, the company entered into a partnership with a Saudi company to build a poultry farm in Saudi Arabia (Ekonomichna pravda, 2024). MHP is also involved in vegetable growing, cultivating potatoes, beets, carrots and onions, which is a new stage in the company's development for expansion of product range (Tarasovsky, 2024).

The use of financial derivatives is another substantial strategy for managing risk. Derivatives, such as futures contracts, options and swaps, concluding agreements that provide the right, but not the obligation, to conduct transactions with financial assets in the future under certain conditions. These instruments reduce the risks associated with changes in market prices, interest rates, exchange rates, and so on. Derivatives can be useful if a company wants to protect itself against price fluctuations in raw materials or financial assets (Arenas & Scudiero, 2023). Southwest Airlines is a prime example of a company that effectively uses financial derivatives to hedge its fuel costs. The use of fuel derivatives significantly reduces costs and mitigates the impact of fuel price fluctuations. In

2024, the company saved 1.2 billion USD by hedging its fuel costs. This result was made possible by the work of Southwest Airlines' team of traders, who forecast oil price fluctuations and entered into agreements with banks to fix optimal fuel prices. In the second quarter of 2024, Southwest expected to pay 3.30-3.40 USD per gallon of jet fuel, while its competitors paid 3.70-4.02 USD per gallon (Inc, 2022). This provided a significant competitive advantage in the market, as the company was able to lock in more favourable fuel prices, reducing its operating costs. This helps the company maintain stability in its financial operations and protect itself from risks associated with fuel price fluctuations (Exbase, n.d.).

Insurance is another tool for minimising financial risks. It can cover businesses for potential losses from accidents, natural disasters, or other unexpected situations. Insurance companies offer different types of insurance that can cover risks from fires, theft, technical failures, and third-party liability. The choice of insurance depends on the specifics of the company's activities and the types of risks it may face. Monitoring financial risks is a substantial part of a risk management strategy. This includes continuous analysis of financial indicators, tracking market changes, assessing current risks, and forecasting future changes. Companies use specialised software tools to analyse and forecast risks, which can be used to respond to changes in a timely manner and make corrective decisions. One example of such tools is @Risk (Lumivero, n.d.) from Palisade, which can be used for risk analysis and Monte Carlo simulation to assess the probabilities of different scenarios and make informed business decisions. This software is used to manage financial and operational risks in areas such as finance, energy, and manufacturing. Another example is Risk-Watch (n.d.), which is used to assess and manage corporate risks, safety and health in enterprises. It can be used by organisations to integrate risk management into decision-making processes and ensure more effective monitoring of changes in the external environment (Kagan, 2024).

In general, effective financial risk management requires a comprehensive approach that includes both internal strategies and external tools to minimise risks. The use of hedging,

diversification, financial derivatives, insurance and active monitoring ensures that companies remain financially stable and can successfully adapt to market changes. Assessing the effectiveness of management approaches in a crisis is a substantial aspect of ensuring the stability and development of enterprises in difficult economic situations. Crisis phenomena, such as economic, political or natural disasters, require company management to adapt quickly, be flexible in decision-making and be ready to implement new strategies to remain competitive. The effectiveness of management approaches during this period is determined by how quickly a company can respond to changes, preserve its resources, and adapt to new market conditions (Nalçacıoğlu & Özyilmaz, 2020).

One of the key aspects of assessing the effectiveness of management approaches is the ability to make quick decisions based on an analysis of the current situation and future trends. In times of crisis, it is necessary to employ a set strategy that includes both short-term and long-term goals. Companies usually resort to crisis management methods that involve both minimising risks and the possibility of using the crisis to their advantage. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure effective communication within the company and with other external partners, which helps maintain trust and ensure stability. Financial risk management can be used to maintain liquidity and avoid financial difficulties (Mizrak, 2024). During a crisis, it is necessary to maintain flexibility in financial operations, ensure the availability of reserves, and take measures to minimise debt obligations. Risk management includes not only financial strategies, but also the assessment and minimisation of other risks, such as reputational or operational risks.

The introduction of innovative technologies can also be a substantial management approach during a crisis. The use of new technologies improves the ability of companies to adapt to change, reduce costs, improve productivity, and maintain competitiveness. The digitisation of business processes, automation of production, and use of online platforms can be used by companies not only to survive during a crisis, but also to become more efficient and flexible.

For example, the use of online platforms for sales and customer interaction can be used by companies to quickly change sales channels and reach a wider audience, which is a crucial strategy for maintaining revenue during a crisis. In addition, process automation using ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) systems can be used for effective management of inventory, finances, production processes, and interaction with suppliers and customers. The use of big data and analytics can also be used by companies to predict market changes, adapt their strategies, and reduce the risks associated with economic fluctuations. All these technologies not only help minimise the negative impact of the crisis but also create new opportunities for the company's growth and development in a constantly changing market (Värzaru & Bocean, 2024). The effectiveness of management approaches in crisis conditions depends on the ability of the enterprise to adapt to new challenges, maintain stability and find new development opportunities even in unfavourable conditions. Smart resource management, strategic planning, timely decision-making and the application of innovative approaches are key factors for ensuring success in times of economic instability.

The present study and the study by L. Kulhanek & A. Sulich (2018) had similarities and differences in their approaches to financial risk management. Both studies emphasised the importance of effective risk management for business stability, but from different perspectives. This study emphasised practical tools such as diversification, hedging, the use of derivatives, and active monitoring to mitigate risks during financial shocks. At the same time, the study by L. Kulhanek & A. Sulich focused more on a strategic approach to risk management and the analysis of internal and external factors affecting the financial stability of enterprises. The main difference was that this study focused on specific risk mitigation techniques, while L. Kulhanek & A. Sulich analysed broader strategic management, including macroeconomic factors. Both studies agreed on the need for financial risk management but had different approaches to its implementation.

The present study and the study by R. Abaidoo & E.K. Agyapong (2023) had common aspects, but also significant differences. Both

studies analysed the impact of macroeconomic factors on financial stability. The study by R. Abaidoo & E.K. Agyapong highlighted inflation uncertainty and macroeconomic instability, particularly their impact on the efficiency of financial institutions. The study examined how inflation and economic instability can affect the ability of financial institutions to function properly, increasing the risks of a decline in real purchasing power and the growth of financial difficulties. The main similarity between the studies was the analysis of macroeconomic risks affecting the stability of financial systems. At the same time, the main difference was in their focus: one study focused on climate risks, while the other analysed inflationary and economic factors affecting financial institutions.

Ways to minimise financial risks and ensure business stability are a substantial topic for managers and business owners, especially in times of economic instability. To achieve stability in changing macroeconomic conditions and internal crises, enterprises must implement a number of strategies to minimise the impact of financial risks, adapt to new conditions and ensure sustainable development. In this regard, the following strategies can be recommended to minimise financial risks and ensure business sustainability.

The assessment of a company's financial risks is the first step in ensuring its financial stability and taking measures to minimise these risks. Liquidity management is relevant as a company's ability to pay on time determines its reputation and ability to continue operating. This requires compliance with financial regulations and regular monitoring of liquidity. Risk hedging is a substantial strategy as it protects the company from changes in exchange rates, interest rates or the cost of raw materials. The use of financial derivatives such as options, futures contracts and swaps can reduce the impact of these changes on the company's financial results. Companies can also use diversification, which can be used to spread risks across different areas of their business. Expanding the product range or entering new markets can reduce dependence on a single source of income and minimise financial losses in the event of negative changes in one of the markets. A

substantial aspect is ensuring financial flexibility. To do this, companies should develop reserve funds and use access to inexpensive sources of financing, including loans and investments. This will ensure the necessary level of cash to cover expenses in crises without having to stop operations. In times of economic instability, managers must respond quickly to changes in the market environment and adapt management strategies to new conditions. One substantial approach is flexibility in decision-making. Organisations must be prepared to adapt quickly, both at the strategic level and in operational management.

Cost optimisation is one area of focus. Reviewing production costs, managing inventory efficiently and finding more cost-effective suppliers can all be part of this. In times of economic uncertainty, it is necessary to maintain control over costs and improve operational efficiency. Investing in innovation is another substantial element. Businesses that use innovative technologies and digitise their operations gain a competitive advantage in times of instability. The use of internal business management, digital platforms for customer interaction, and production automation can significantly reduce costs and increase profitability. Managers must also monitor macroeconomic changes and their impact on the company's activities. Regular assessment of risks arising from changes in legislation, the political situation and macroeconomic conditions can be used to react more quickly to threats to the financial stability of the enterprise.

For businesses, government support and structural reforms are significant means of reducing financial risk. In Ukraine, several programmes and initiatives for supporting businesses, especially in times of economic instability, in particular through financial support, tax breaks and access to cheap loans. One of the most effective programmes is the "Affordable Loans 5-7-9%" programme (PrivatBank, n.d.b),

which was introduced to support small and medium-sized businesses. It can be used by businesses to obtain loans with state subsidies on interest rates, which significantly reduces financial risks and facilitates access to financing. The programme covers a wide range of enterprises, including the agro-industrial sector, manufacturing and infrastructure. Another significant programme is the "ERDF – European Regional Development Fund" (Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, 2024), which provides grants and investments for infrastructure development, production modernisation and innovative projects. Support programmes within this fund help enterprises attract investment for modernisation and improve competitiveness in the international market. There is also a programme to support exporters through UkrExport (PrivatBank, n.d.a). It provides preferential loans and insurance for export contracts, which can be used by enterprises to expand their sales markets abroad while minimising the risks associated with foreign operations. These programmes have become effective in reducing financial risks for Ukrainian enterprises, helping them adapt to changing economic conditions and ensure financial stability in difficult times.

In times of crisis, the government can help businesses maintain financial stability and continue operating by providing subsidies, preferential loans or tax holidays. Reforms in the financial sector are also relevant. This includes improving the banking system and lowering interest rates on loans for small and medium-sized businesses. This will reduce the financial burden on the company and ensure access to the resources necessary for development. In addition, tax reforms can help companies adapt to new economic circumstances. Transparent and stable tax rules will help companies plan their finances and minimise tax risks. Table 1 highlights strategies for minimising the financial risks of enterprises.

Table 1. Strategies for minimising financial risks for businesses

Strategy	Strategy description	Application examples
Hedging	Use of financial instruments to minimise currency and other risks	Reduction of currency risk by 15-20% using futures
Diversification	Distribution of investments among different products or markets	10-15% increase in income through expansion of investment portfolio

Table 1, Continued

Strategy	Strategy description	Application examples
Cost optimisation	Cost control and reduction of inefficient expenditure	10-15% reduction in costs through lower raw material or energy expenses
Innovation investments	Introduction of new technologies to reduce costs	20-25% increase in production efficiency through automation
Macroeconomic changes monitoring	Assessment of the impact of changes in market conditions on the company's activities	Assessment of the impact of economic changes on company revenues and expenses by 5-10%
Government support	State programmes to support businesses in times of crisis	Reduction of costs by 10-15% through government subsidies or tax breaks

Source: compiled by the author

Table 1 shows that hedging is one of the most effective strategies, as it reduces currency risk by 15-20%. For companies operating in international markets or with significant import costs, the use of currency futures can be critical to the stability of financial performance. This reduces the impact of exchange rate fluctuations and ensures a more predictable financial situation. Diversification reduces financial risks by spreading assets or expanding markets. Increasing revenues by 10-15% by expanding the investment portfolio is a significant factor that reduces corporate dependence on a single market segment and avoid significant losses when market conditions change. This strategy provides flexibility and adaptability to new economic conditions. Government support is also a relevant strategy, especially for businesses in times of crisis. Subsidies, tax breaks and preferential loans can reduce costs by 10-15%. In times of economic instability, these programmes are relevant tools for maintaining the financial stability of companies and helping them adapt to changing conditions.

Cost optimisation and investment in innovation are also effective strategies, but their impact is more long-term. Cost optimisation can reduce raw material or energy costs by 10-15%, which has a positive impact on profitability. However, this strategy requires constant monitoring and updating of processes to achieve sustained efficiency. Investing in innovation reduces costs and increases production efficiency, but this process requires significant initial investment and time to implement. Monitoring macroeconomic changes is a substantial strategy for assessing potential risks, but its effectiveness depends on the ability to respond quickly to changes in

market conditions. This strategy helps identify threats to the enterprise in a timely manner, but it requires regular updates and analysis to make the right management decisions.

Therefore, hedging, diversification and state support are the most effective strategies for minimising financial risks and ensuring the sustainability of enterprises in conditions of economic instability. Cost optimisation and investment in innovation are also relevant, but their effect is more pronounced in the long term. Thus, effective management of financial risks of enterprises requires a comprehensive approach that includes both internal risk minimisation strategies and active interaction with the state to obtain the necessary support. Financial risk management is not only a task for enterprise management but also essential for ensuring macroeconomic stability.

The present study and the study by H. Ahmad *et al.* (2023) shared a common emphasis on business sustainability, but their approaches to the topic differed. The study by H. Ahmad *et al.* focused on the impact of ESG (environmental, social and governance) factors on business stability and financial performance. The study emphasised the importance of transparency in reporting on these factors, which can improve investment performance and help build sustainability through technological change and gender diversity in management structures. Both studies agreed that adapting to changes in the external environment is relevant for maintaining business stability. However, one concentrated on integrating ESG factors into business strategy, while the other addressed financial risk management to minimise economic losses. The study by A. Loi (2023) emphasised the role of

investment strategies, particularly diversification and innovation, in enhancing the economic potential of enterprises and reducing risks. In the context of Ukrainian realities, this complements the present study, as alongside hedging and derivatives, attracting investment can ensure long-term business sustainability in conditions of economic instability.

The study by A.C. González Calzadilla *et al.* (2022) and the present study shared a common focus on risk management, but the approaches and contexts were different. The study by A.C. González Calzadilla *et al.* addressed the risks arising from the international activities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Spain, particularly economic, political and legal risks. The study emphasised the significance of internationalisation strategies for improving business performance. Although both studies examine the impact of external factors on business stability, A.C. González Calzadilla *et al.* prioritised the risks of international operations, while this study emphasised financial risks in the context of the domestic economic environment. Both studies emphasised the importance of effective risk management for maintaining business stability. They also highlighted the need to develop strategies for adapting to change, but each addressed different aspects of risk management, particularly through diversification and innovation.

Research has confirmed that effective financial risk management is the basis for ensuring business stability in times of economic instability. Consideration of macroeconomic factors such as inflation and currency fluctuations has become a crucial element in the development of adaptive financial strategies to support business resilience in a changing economic environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The study showed that effective financial risk management is critical for businesses in times of economic instability. In conditions of high inflation, currency devaluation and rising interest rates, businesses face serious challenges in maintaining their financial stability. In particular, the inflation rate in Ukraine in 2024 was 10.7%, which led to a significant increase in production costs and the need to adjust product

prices, creating additional difficulties for businesses. In addition, the 34.1% devaluation of the national currency in 2022 significantly complicated the foreign economic activity of enterprises, increasing the cost of imported goods and raw materials. Interest rates, which were raised in crises, also had a significant impact on the ability of enterprises to obtain loans, increasing debt servicing costs.

Diversification, hedging and state support are substantial tools for reducing the impact of negative factors on business activities. Diversification reduces dependence on a single market or product, helping to increase revenues by 10-15% by entering new markets or expanding the investment portfolio. Hedging, in particular through futures contracts or options, reduces currency risk by 15-20% and ensures stable financial results in export and import operations. State support, in particular through subsidies, tax breaks and preferential loans, makes it possible to reduce costs by 10-15%. Successful adaptation of enterprises to market changes and timely strategic decisions makes it possible not only to maintain stability, but also to ensure sustainable growth even in difficult economic conditions. Enterprises that effectively use risk management tools can not only overcome financial difficulties but also reach new levels of development and strengthen their market positions.

A substantial element is liquidity management, which can be used by companies to ensure access to the necessary financial resources in times of crisis. Flexibility in financial operations, the availability of reserves and the minimisation of debt obligations help companies avoid defaults and maintain stability in difficult economic conditions. The introduction of innovative technologies has also become a crucial strategic approach for enterprises during the crisis. The use of new technologies can be used for cost reduction, increased productivity, and improved quality of products and services. The digitalisation of business processes, automation of production, and implementation of online platforms for product sales help companies maintain contact with customers and quickly adapt to market changes.

In general, to ensure stability in conditions of economic instability, it is necessary to implement

a comprehensive approach to financial risk management, which includes both internal strategies and cooperation with government agencies to obtain support. Interaction with the state may include financial support programmes for small and medium-sized businesses, which ensure financial stability even in times of crisis. Successful adaptation of enterprises to market changes and timely strategic decisions makes it possible not only to maintain stability but also to ensure sustainable growth even in difficult economic conditions. Enterprises that effectively use risk management tools can not only overcome financial difficulties but also reach new levels of development and strengthen their market positions. The prospects for research lie in a deeper

study of the impact of financial risks on the long-term sustainability of enterprises, particularly in the context of global economic turmoil. One limitation is the possibility of changes in external economic factors, which may affect the application of the proposed financial risk management strategies.

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Фінансові ризики українських підприємств: аналіз, управління та шляхи мінімізації в умовах економічної нестабільності

Анотація. Метою дослідження було визначення основних фінансових ризиків для українських підприємств, спричинених економічною нестабільністю. Методологія дослідження включала аналіз вторинних даних за 2022-2024 роки, зокрема статистичних показників інфляції, валютних курсів та рівня безробіття. Основні результати дослідження виявили важливі тенденції, що суттєво впливають на фінансову стійкість підприємств в Україні. Протягом 2022 року інфляція досягла 26,6 %, що призвело до значного зростання витрат для підприємств. У 2023 році інфляція знизилася до 5,1 %, проте підвищення валютних курсів та процентних ставок залишалося важливим викликом для бізнесу. В кінці 2024 року рівень інфляції знову збільшився до 10,7 %, що спричинило подальше зростання цін на продукцію та знизило платоспроможність споживачів. Особливо високий вплив на підприємства мали коливання валютних курсів, зокрема девальвація гривні на 34,1 % у 2022 році, що створило значні труднощі для експортно-орієнтованих підприємств. Додатково було виявлено, що підприємства, які використовували стратегії диверсифікації та фінансові деривативи, змогли знизити негативний вплив валютних ризиків. Крім того, виявлено, що хеджування валютних курсів може знизити коливань курсів на 15-20 % у порівнянні з іншими стратегіями. Висновки дослідження вказують на те, що підприємства, які використовують комплексний підхід до управління фінансовими ризиками, зокрема через хеджування, диверсифікацію та ефективне використання державної підтримки, можуть зберегти фінансову стійкість навіть у кризові періоди. Практичне значення дослідження полягає у розробці ефективних рекомендацій щодо управління фінансовими ризиками підприємств в умовах економічної нестабільності, що дозволяє забезпечити їхню фінансову стійкість і адаптацію до змін у макроекономічному середовищі

Ключові слова: хеджування; інфляція; безробіття; процентні ставки; кредити