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CONTROLLING OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY OF TRADE ENTERPRISES

Introduction. The efficiency of operational activity is a necessary condition for ensuring the sustainable economic development of trade enterprises. Therefore, the search for and implementation of innovative technologies for managing this activity is a priority task for the enterprise management.

Problem. The consequences of COVID-19 and Russian military aggression have made traditional systems for managing the operational activities of trade enterprises ineffective. The problem of adapting enterprise management to new economic conditions is crucial today.

The aim of the article is to substantiate the theoretical foundations of process-oriented controlling of the operational activities.

КОНТРОЛІНГ ОПЕРАЦІЙНОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ПІДПРИЄМСТВА ТОРГІВЛІ

Вступ. Ефективність операційної діяльності є необхідною умовою забезпечення сталого економічного розвитку підприємств торгівлі. Тому пошук та впровадження інноваційних технологій управління цією діяльністю є першочерговим завданням менеджменту підприємства.

Проблема. Наслідки COVID-19 та російської військової агресії зробили малоєфективними традиційні системи управління операційною діяльністю підприємств торгівлі. Проблема адаптації менеджменту підприємств до нових умов господарювання є на сьогодні надзвичайно актуальною.

Метою статті є обґрунтування теоретичних засад процесноорієнтованого контролю операційної діяльності.

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Methods. The following methods of scientific knowledge are used: analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, generalization.

Results. The content and main tasks of process-oriented controlling of the operational activity of a trade enterprise are formulated.

The model of operational business processes of the upper level of the trade enterprise is presented, the principles of formation of target indicators of management of operational business processes are defined, and approaches to the formation of a system of centers of financial responsibility for trade enterprises of different sizes and different basic organizational management structures are formulated.

Conclusions. The implementation of the technology of controlling operational activities based on a process-oriented approach allows to quickly adapt the management system of the enterprise to new business conditions.

Keywords: controlling, operational activity, main business processes, business model, budgeting, financial responsibility center.

JEL Classification: M19, M21, M41, M49

Методи. Використано такі методи наукового пізнання: аналіз і синтез, дедукція та індукція, узагальнення.

Результати дослідження. Сформульовано зміст та основні завдання процесно орієнтованого контролінгу операційної діяльності підприємства торгівлі.

Представлено модель операційних бізнес-процесів верхнього рівня підприємства торгівлі, визначено принципи формування цільових показників управління операційними бізнес-процесами та сформульовано підходи до формування системи центрів фінансової відповідальності для підприємств торгівлі різного розміру та з різними базовими організаційними структурами управління.

Висновки. Впровадження технології контролінгу операційної діяльності на основі процесно орієнтованого підходу дає змогу швидко адаптувати систему управління підприємства до нових умов господарювання.

Ключові слова: контролінг, операційна діяльність, основні бізнес-процеси, бізнес-модель, бюджетування, центр фінансової відповідальності.

Introduction. The ability of the enterprise for sustainable development in the long term largely depends on the efficiency of operational activities. Particularly the financial results of operational activities are an internal source of financing investments and fulfilling financial obligations. They determine the enterprise's solvency level, financial stability, investment activity and possible growth rates.

In the conditions of intense competition, maintaining the appropriate level of efficiency of the enterprise's functioning becomes a rather difficult task and sometimes requires innovative and non-standard solutions both in the organization of the operational activity itself and in its management.

Problem. The problem of ensuring the efficiency of operational activity becomes especially acute in crisis periods when the enterprise operates under conditions of strict resource limitations and opportunities. This situation is especially distinctive for Ukraine, which, having not recovered from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, has fallen into even more difficult and, in fact, catastrophic in terms of consequences for the economy and society in general, martial law conditions.

According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in 2020 (during the period of total quarantine measures), the number of trade enterprises (TE) decreased by 3.01 %, and financial results before taxation by 64.94 % compared to 2019. The share of profitable enterprises was 74.4 % of the total number of trading entities, respectively, unprofitable – 25.6 % [1]. These are the worst indicators for 2016-2020.

During the war, the efficiency of the TE, as all branches of the economy, deteriorated catastrophically. Even in the absence of accurate statistical data, it is informed about large economic losses. Thus, according to preliminary estimates of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, at the beginning of April 2022, "direct one-time losses for the economy amounted to USD 565 billion. In addition, war losses have long-term effects. Thus, according to the calculations of the Ministry of Economy, this year the losses of Ukraine's GDP will reach at least USD 112 billion, by 2030 – approximately USD 1.2 trillion" [2].

According to the Retailers Association of Ukraine (RAU), at the beginning of June, the losses of Ukrainian retail exceeded UAH 50 billion [3]. This is even though the study covered only large retail chains, so potentially these losses are significantly higher and their volume can still grow.

In crisis and post-crisis (future recovery of the economy) conditions, the role of innovative management methods is growing, which will contribute to the optimal use of limited resources, ensuring their maximum effective use. Therefore, controlling and, in particular, controlling operational activities can become a relevant management tool under such conditions. Specifically concept of controlling involves clear coordination of information, analytical, planning and control functions, which is extremely important for ensuring the effectiveness of operational activities.

At the same time, the practice of the functioning of enterprises in periods of the crisis showed that those TEs that focused attention on their business processes, were able to transform and promptly optimize them, providing an effective business model for the enterprise, adapted to external conditions, were able to preserve, adjust and restore their activities.

Thus, the actual direction of both scientific research and management practice is the improvement of methodological principles, practical tools and the introduction of process-oriented controlling of the operational activities of the trade enterprise.

Analysis of recent research and publications. A powerful layer of scientific and business literature is devoted to the problem of controlling. Its analysis makes it possible to state the absence of a unified approach to the interpretation of the essence and content of controlling, as well as its transformation in the development process.

In the work of Gerald J. Preißler, Peter R. Preißler [4], the features of controlling in modern economic conditions are considered, systematization of controlling tools and the features of their application are proposed.

Z. Poberezhna disclosed the tasks and criteria of controlling the results of the development of the business model of an airline company at various stages of its life cycle [5], that is, a process-oriented approach to controlling operational activity is updated.

Scientists T. Losytka, N. Belyaeva, V. Lahutin, and T. Melnyk revealed the possibility of applying modern controlling tools to PT [6]. V. Rudnytskyi and O. Rudnytska investigate the issue of management reporting for TE, focusing attention on reports on the implementation of expenditure budgets for the main business processes of trade: procurement, transportation, storage and sale [7]. In the study of V. Kostyuchenko, the role of controlling in the implementation of the accounting function at the enterprise and the peculiarities of the formation of accounting support for controlling at TE were revealed [8].

N. Babyak, based on the study of the peculiarities of the functioning and organization of business enterprise processes in various segments of trade, reveals the main problems and peculiarities of the formation of information support for controlling trade, defines the main list of the most fundamental analytical reports required by TE to ensure an effective controlling system [9].

Despite the presence of significant improvements by scientists regarding the implementation of process-oriented controlling in the activities of TE, the issues of organizational and analytical support for controlling the processes of operational activity remain unresolved, which significantly complicates its practical implementation.

The aim of the article is to determine the essence and main tasks of process-oriented controlling of the operational activity of a trading enterprise and to justify its organizational and analytical support.

Methods. The research is based on the principles of the system approach, and fundamental works on the issues of controlling and was carried out using the methods of analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction and generalization.

Results. Transformational processes in the understanding of controlling are primarily manifested in their focus on control and optimization of operational processes. Thus, Horvart & Partners point out that in the modern sense, unlike the traditional one, controlling is not considered as a "watchdog", but as an innovative consulting system that is tied to the value chain [10]. This orientation of controlling the enterprise's main, i.e., operational business processes is followed in the writings of other researchers [11].

The relevance and demand of process-oriented controlling are evidenced by the focus on developing cost management techniques within controlling to ensure the enterprise's competitiveness based on M. Porter's theory of creating a value chain. The result of this was the emergence of the ABC costing technique [12] and the technology of process-oriented budgeting (ABB-budgeting), developed by Brimson [13].

The analysis and generalization of modern approaches to the interpretation of control, and the study of the theory of process management made it possible to determine the process-oriented controlling (POC) of the operational activity of the enterprise (OAE) as an integrated system of information formation, analysis, planning and control of operational business

processes to optimize the chain of value creation and business models of the enterprise. That is, the POC of operational activity is aimed at solving the following main tasks:

- assessment of the cost of operational business processes;
- identification of "weak places" in the chain of value formation;
- increasing the flexibility and adaptability of the enterprise's business model through transformation and reengineering of business processes of operational activity;
- assessment of the effectiveness of operational business processes.

The implementation of these tasks should contribute to the overall optimization of the enterprise's business model and the growth of its value. The effective implementation of the POC of operational activity of TE requires the creation of appropriate support systems: organizational, informational and analytical, planning and control. The starting point for their development is the identification of the operational business processes of TE according to the segment in which the company operates and specific features of its activity (sales channels, supply channels, etc.).

Currently, there is no unified approach to modelling the main top-level business processes. The list of the most famous and popular reference models of business processes is given in *Table 1*. The specified models are considered a reference and are used as a basis for building a model of business processes of a specific enterprise, the process of its formation is individual.

Table 1

Approaches to modelling the main business processes of the enterprise

Approach	Types of the main top-level business processes
M. Porter's model	Internal logistics, production, external logistics, marketing and sales, after-sales service, logistics
The IBL model (The International Business Language) of PriceWaterhouseCoopers company	Marketing, product (service) development, product (service) production, supply and distribution, sales and customer service
13-process model of the International Benchmarking Chamber of the American Center for Productivity and Quality (<i>American Productivity & Quality Center – APOC</i>)	Market research and consumer needs; development of vision and strategy; products and services; marketing and sales; production and supply of products and services (production enterprise); production and supply of products and services (enterprises in the service sector); billing and service

Source: compiled by the authors for [14–18].

A feature of the presented approaches is the inclusion of a marketing component in the main business processes of the enterprise. On the other hand, in many studies highlighting the problems of information support for controlling operational trade processes [8; 9], marketing is not included in the main processes and, accordingly, this process is not taken into account when substantiating information support. However, the marketing component occupies an important place in the formation of the value chain, which makes it necessary to include it in the operational business processes.

Summarizing and developing the existing approaches to the selection of operational business processes of the enterprise, taking into account the peculiarities of TE activity, its main upper-level business processes are presented in *Figure 1*.

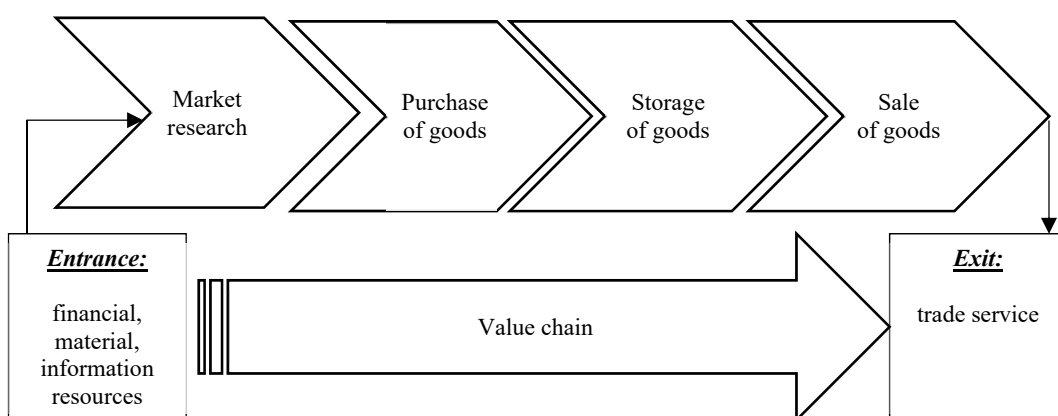


Figure 1. Model of operational business processes of the upper level of a trading enterprise

Source: developed by the authors.

By the identified business model of the main processes, all subsystems providing the POC of operational activity are formed. First of all, its organizational support is created. The implementation of control involves the formation of the financial structure of the enterprise, which becomes an important component of its organizational support.

The financial structure is understood as a hierarchical system of responsibility centres, which determines the order of formation of financial results and the distribution of responsibility for achieving the overall result of the enterprise [19–23].

In modern scientific literature [19–23] and practical recommendations on the formation of a financial structure, the following types of centres of financial responsibility are distinguished (*Table 2*).

Table 2

A brief description of centres of financial responsibility

Centre for financial responsibility	Brief description	Structural subdivisions that form centers of responsibility
Profit centre	Units whose personnel are authorized to make decisions affecting the company’s profit; control the income and expense parts	Enterprise trade in general; Separate division (business unit): a store unit
Cost centre	Units responsible for the performance of certain functions and the formation of certain types of expenses	Accounting; financial department; planning and economic department; general services department; legal department; security service; transportation department
Revenue centre	Units responsible for the formation of the company’s income	Trading hall (in retail trade); sales department (in wholesale trade); own production
Marginal profit centre	Structural units responsible for the amount of marginal profit (income)	Own production; a separate business area (can be separated by product groups) – trade sections
Investment centre	The unit responsible for investment performance	The enterprise in general; the main office of the holding company
Venture centres	Units characterized by a high level of risk	Separated structural units that should ensure efficient functioning, but have not reached the break-even point

Source: compiled by the authors according to [19–24].

The first four types of centres of financial responsibility from *Table 2* directly relate to the operational activities of TE.

In the modern theory and practice of designing management structures, three basic approaches to the formation of a financial structure are distinguished: simple, integrated and disintegrated.

Applying a *simple* approach, the financial structure completely duplicates the organizational structure of the enterprise, that is, individual organizational units are determined by centres of responsibility and interact in the order determined by the organizational structure. Thus, N. Shulga notes that such an approach is accompanied by lower implementation costs, as management accounting is simplified, there is no need to prepare special methodological support, etc. However, it is characterized by some shortcomings, in particular: it makes it impossible to identify financial results for various products, to determine irrational costs [19, p. 261]. The specified approach to the separation of centres of financial responsibility can be used in small TEs, where the number of management personnel is limited, and financial support for the implementation of complex management projects is insufficient.

The *integrated* approach involves the independent construction of a financial structure but is maximally coordinated with the organizational structure of the enterprise due to their mutual adjustment. Usually, the financial structure is formed at an operating enterprise with a certain organizational structure. With a responsible approach to its creation, it is difficult to ensure the complete identity of the structures (unless a simple approach is taken as a basis), given the different criteria for distinguishing units: the financial structure is built based on financial relations between centres of responsibility, and the organizational structure is built based on functional specialization.

Thus, most management experts believe that financial and organizational structures should not be fundamentally different, because this can lead to the loss or deterioration of the level of enterprise management.

In light of the development, popularization and implementation of process management, more and more specialists indicate the need to harmonize the organizational and financial structure of the enterprise with the model of its business processes. The need to establish a relationship between responsibility centres and key processes that add value to the enterprise is especially emphasized [19–21].

The *disintegrated* approach consists of the separate construction of a financial structure, which has significant differences from the organizational structure of the enterprise and is not tied to business processes. Such an approach is undesirable, given the complexity of vertical and horizontal connections between individual structural units, which can lead to unjustified costs and deterioration of the level of coordination of management.

Thus, the integrated approach is the most appropriate for the formation of organizational support for process-oriented controlling of operational processes at medium and large enterprises. For small businesses, the simple approach is acceptable, but coordination of financial responsibility with responsibility for the execution of individual business processes is desirable.

Summarizing and developing the work of scientists, it is possible to determine the following basic requirements for the formation of organizational support of the POC of operational processes at the TE: flexibility and adaptability, which provide for its ability to quickly respond to changes in the external environment; relevance – compliance of the organizational support with the size of the trade enterprise, its business model, the scale of operational activity; cost-effectiveness – reasonableness of costs for its creation and operation.

The organizational support of controlling is differentiated depending on the size, organizational structure of the enterprise, and the chosen approach to the formation of the financial structure (*Table 3*).

Table 3

Recommended principle types of organizational support for process-oriented controlling of operational activities at trade enterprises

Type of organizational structure/Enterprise size	Small	Medium	Large
Linear arrangement	Type A		
Linear and functional arrangement		Types B	Type B
Divisional structure		Type V	Type V
Departmentation matrix		Type C	Type C
Project structure		Type C	Type C

Source: [24].

Type "A" is characteristic of small trade enterprises, which mostly have a linear organizational structure of management. Since at small trade enterprises the staff is limited to a few people, the owner (or director) is responsible for all business processes, and one centre of responsibility "Profit Center" is singled out – the enterprise as a whole. In retail trade, it is possible to separate the "Revenue Center" – a trading hall. At such enterprises, general financial management is carried out by the owner or director. The controlling function, as a rule, is entrusted to the accountant (if he is on staff).

For medium-sized and large trade enterprises with a linear functional organizational structure, the organizational support of type "B" controlling is recommended, which involves the design of financial responsibility centres (FRCs) for key processes and functional units, within which the person responsible for the process works (*Figure 2*).

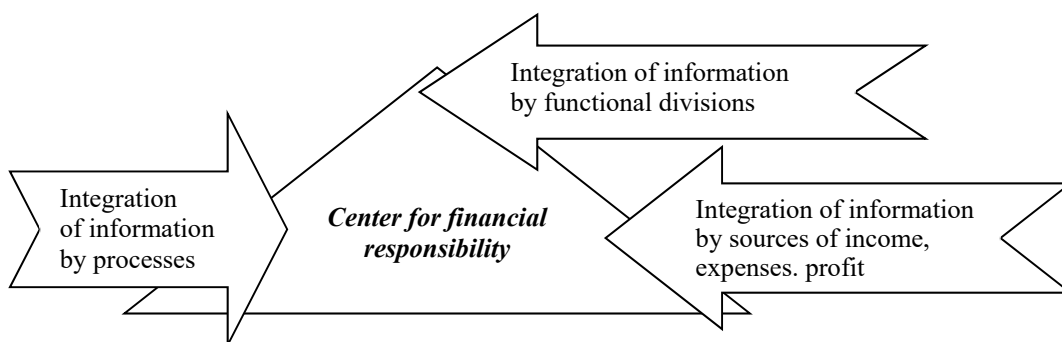


Figure 2. Conceptual representation of the centre of financial responsibility at the trade enterprise

Source: [24].

Recommended FRC for type B organizational support is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Recommended centres of financial responsibility in type "B" organizational support

Business processes / Structural units	Purchasing department	Sales department (trading hall)	Marketing department	Storage
Market research and consumer needs			RC	
Purchase of goods	RC			
Transportation of goods*	RC			
Storage of goods				RC
Sale of goods		CP		

* Can be projected onto the transport department if it exists at the enterprise.

Source: [24].

Some FRCs interact with each other in the process of exchanging and accumulating information, planning, and agreeing on individual plan indicators. Coordination, summarization of analytical information and formation of synthetic budgets is carried out by the controlling department/controller.

In Figure 3 it is presented the system of interrelationships of the FRC. Thus, the controlling service, in cooperation with the planning and economic/financial services, forms the target indicators of the enterprise's activity. Synchronously, each FRC justifies the budget indicators within its responsibility for processes, functional departments, sources of income, and expenses, i.e., the process of synchronous budgeting takes place, within which there is a constant exchange of information and communications between individual FRCs and external stakeholders. The system of such connections functions at all stages and phases of controlling operational activity.

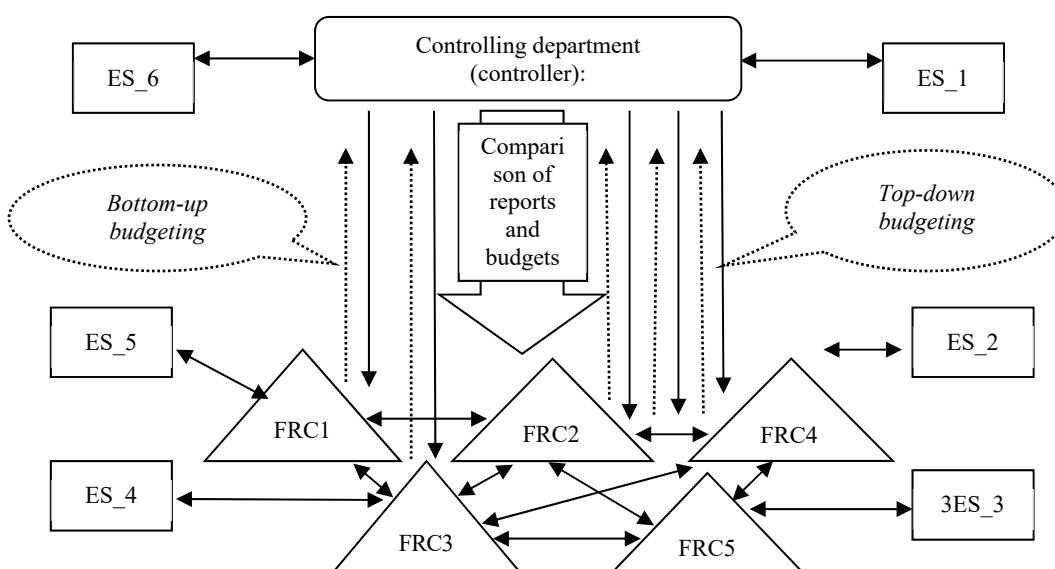


Figure 3. Interconnections of financial planning centres

FRC – Financial Responsibility Center; ES is an external stakeholder.p.

Source: [24].

Large trade enterprises, characterized by regional or product diversification, can use a divisional organizational structure that is significantly more complex than a linear-functional approach and, accordingly, has a more complex set of financial statements, which, in turn, is projected on the person responsible for a certain business process and the structural unit to which it belongs. However, the presence of divisions automatically increases the number of such centres and the system of their interrelationships, which collectively determines the type B organizational support.

Divisions, having a high level of autonomy, can duplicate structural subdivisions created at the enterprise level. Thus, the FRCs are projected onto the organizational structure of each division, and the integrative function of controlling is performed by the corporate-wide controlling department.

Enterprises with project and matrix organizational structures are characterized by partial duplication of individual management functions at the enterprise level and within the project, which complicates the organizational support of control.

The matrix organizational structure combines the functional structure with the project structure, which determines the existence of two types of FRCs: the first type is similar to the centres that are distinguished in the functional structure, and the other is project centres, given that operational activity is controlled within each project. The controlling service coordinates the work of these centres.

The order of interaction between individual FRCs is regulated by special documents that determine the regulation of operation and control procedures of individual FRCs.

Making balanced management decisions by centres of financial responsibility regarding the improvement of business processes of operational activity is based on timely and relevant information. The formation of information support should be based on the target indicators of operational activity that the FRC seeks to monitor. It is for this system of indicators that the information collection subsystem and the nomenclature of budgets should be adjusted.

The unification of such indicators is impossible for all TEs. It is formed individually for each enterprise, taking into account the scale, types and characteristics of its operational activity. However, it is worth highlighting the main principles of forming a system of such indicators, which include: the principle of rationality (the system of indicators should not be too cumbersome); the principle of combining financial and non-financial indicators; the principle of conditionality of financial and non-financial indicators (the financial indicator is considered as a result and the non-financial indicator as a potential influencing factor that can improve or worsen the financial indicator); the principle of relevance (indicators are differentiated by centres of responsibility and provide for the possibility of influence of the centre of responsibility on the selected indicators).

A variant of the system of such indicators for a retail enterprise is presented in *Table 5*.

Table 5

The system of target indicators of operational activity according to the main business processes of the trade enterprise

Upper-level operational business processes/financial responsibility centre/ functional department	Main financial indicators	Main non-financial indicators
Market research/cost centre/marketing department	The amount of marketing research costs. The total cost of the "market research process". The ratio of the increase in NSR* to the costs of marketing research and the cost of the process	Growth of new regular customers (with loyalty cards). Frequency of transactions with one loyalty card
Purchase of goods/cost center/purchasing department	The amount of expenses for the purchase of goods by product groups and suppliers. The total cost of the "purchase of goods process". The ratio of the rates of increase in costs for the purchase of goods and NSR	The average date of performance by product group. Frequency of violation of terms and conditions of order fulfilment. The number of procurement transactions that were not completed on time
Transportation of goods/ cost center/ transport department	The amount of transport expenses. The level of transport expenses to the cost of transported goods	The average term of transportation of goods by product groups/transport companies (if the goods are not transported by the supplier). Frequency of violation of terms of transportation of goods
Storage of goods/cost centre/warehouse	The amount of costs for storing goods. Average costs for storing goods by product group. Average inventory turnover period by product group	The average time of unloading and warehousing goods by product group. Percentage of spoilage of goods during storage. Average time for internal logistics (movement from warehouse and merchandising))
Sale of goods/ revenue centre/ sales hall (commercial department)	The amount of NSR. The rate of growth of NSR by product groups/sales channels. Average amount of one check. The average amount of one order by other sales channels. Average level of trade allowance by product group/product portfolio	The average time of service of one customer by a cashier. Share of turnover by sales channels (offline, online). Share of turnover by self-service terminals. The average time to complete one order for online sales

*NSR – net sales revenue.

Source: compiled by the authors.

The profit centre, which is the enterprise in general, can be created within the planning and economic department, and financial service, depending on the organizational structure of the enterprise. Accordingly, these services form generalized target indicators of the efficiency of operational activity, among which it is advisable to single out the amount and levels of marginal income, EBITDA, EBIT and indicators of profitability of NSR, operating assets according to these profit indicators.

According to the target indicators, a system of reports and budgets is being developed. Their formation must comply with four *principles*:

- the identity of the reporting forms and budgets, that is, the nomenclature of the report indicators, their list and number must be coordinated with the relevant parameters of the budgets;

- the combination of financial and non-financial indicators in the system of reports and budgets, where the latter is presented as an appendix to micro- or synthetic reports/budgets. For example, the report/budget of online sales by product groups will contain the indicator of the average order fulfilment time, the number of orders, and the average cost of the order in the last line for reference;

- continuity and flexibility. Continuity involves the constant process of accumulating information about the business processes of operational activity, the possibility of tracking it in real-time, which is possible when using modern ERP systems, and constant adjustment of the budget system by the conditions of the external and internal environment. Flexibility involves the possibility of modifying the settings for deepening, changing the analytical sections of information collection and the formation of budgets;

- counter-process and communication activities, which involve the development of budgets simultaneously "from below and from above", their coordination in the process of communication action between individual FRCs and the controlling service, which corresponds to the most modern concept of communication planning.

The implementation of these principles during the development of reports and budgets will allow ensuring the assessment of deviations in the operational, tactical and strategic contours of management, to quickly respond to changes in the external environment, to make corrections in the nomenclature of reports/budgets, to form effective personnel motivation systems aimed at constant upgrade and improvement of processes operational activity.

Conclusions. The high level of competition and the instability of the external environment imposes new requirements on the management of the company's operational activities. This requires the introduction of management technologies capable of constantly monitoring the perfection of the business model, initiating measures for its continuous improvement to maintain competitiveness, optimize the use of resources, and increase the value of the enterprise. It becomes especially relevant in crisis conditions when the survival of the enterprise depends on the adaptability of the business model.

The introduction of the POC of operational activity requires the creation of the necessary organizational and analytical support, which should be based on the target indicators of business processes that the trading company seeks to monitor. Their formation is an individual process and is determined by the specifics of the operational activity of the TE, however, it must follow the outlined principles of formation. An approximate list of such indicators for a retail trade enterprise is presented. An important element of such provision is the FRC system, which should be projected onto the person responsible for the main business processes. Differentiated approaches to such projection are proposed depending on the basic organizational structure of the PT, the mechanisms of interaction between the FRC and the controlling service are revealed, the principles of forming reports and budgets of the TE

and within the process-oriented controlling of operational activities are defined, which creates a methodical basis for its introduction into the practice of enterprise management trade.

Further research will be aimed at revealing modern tools that can be used to implement process-oriented controlling of operational activities at trade enterprises, given that most of such recommendations are rather general.

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