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STRUCTURAL DYSMORPHY OF BUSINESS PROCESSES OF SERVICE ENTERPRISES: ESSENCE AND IMPACT ON COMPETITIVENESS

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Summary. *The aim of the article is to scientifically and methodologically substantiate the structural dysmorphism of business processes of service enterprises as an important characteristic of their competitiveness. Characterizing the specifics of a service as an object of market exchange from the standpoint of its consumer value, it is argued that an important component of determining this value is the way to satisfy consumer needs. Given the content of this process in the service sector, it is noted that value here is formed not only at the expense of material resources or price, but also due to the high-quality organization of processes of interaction with customers, service culture, technological flexibility, which makes it possible to ensure the necessary level of service personalization. It is proposed to consider service personalization as the result of optimizing the variability and rhythm of business processes of a service enterprise, which was designated by the term «structural dysmorphia». It is noted that its essence lies not in minimizing deviations, but in transforming the dynamism of the service into a strategic resource – the ability of the system to respond to individual requests, while maintaining stability and predictability of the result. It is emphasized that it is this property that determines the modern paradigm of the development of the service economy, in which flexibility becomes a new form of efficiency, and controlled rhythm is an indicator of the maturity and competitiveness of business processes. Taking this into account, it is proposed to consider the competitiveness of business processes of a service enterprise as an integral characteristic of its ability to ensure the sustainable creation of personalized consumer value by optimally combining the variability and rhythm of processes implemented in the environment of direct interaction between the performer and the consumer. The process of achieving a balance of variability and rhythm of business processes in the service sector is graphically modelled according to the components and methods of their optimization, coordination and in the context of the parameters of the overall competitiveness of the enterprise. It is noted that the optimization of structural dysmorphia of business processes of service enterprises can be achieved using the capabilities of digital technologies and network partnership interaction.*

Key words: *consumer value of the service, service personalization, variability of the business process structure, business process rhythm, operational flexibility, strategic adaptability, process maturity of the enterprise.*

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СТРУКТУРНА ДИСМОРФІЯ БІЗНЕС-ПРОЦЕСІВ СЕРВІСНИХ ПІДПРИЄМСТВ: СУТНІСТЬ І ВПЛИВ НА КОНКУРЕНТОСПРОМОЖНІСТЬ

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Резюме. *Метою дослідження визначено науково-методичне обґрунтування структурної дисморфії бізнес-процесів сервісних підприємств як важливої характеристики їх конкурентоспроможності.*

Характеризуючи специфіку послуги як об'єкта ринкового обміну з позицій її споживчої цінності, аргументовано, що важливою складовою визначення цієї цінності є спосіб задоволення споживчих потреб. З огляду на зміст цього процесу у сфері послуг зазначено, що цінність тут формується не лише за рахунок матеріальних ресурсів чи ціни, а завдяки якісній організації процесів взаємодії з клієнтами, сервісної культури, технологічної та операційної гнучкості, що дає змогу забезпечити необхідний рівень персоналізації послуги. Запропоновано розглядати персоналізацію послуги як результат оптимізації варіативності та ритміки бізнес-процесів сервісного підприємства, який означили терміном «структурна дисморфія». Зазначено, що її сутність полягає не в мінімізації відхилень, а у перетворенні динамічності сервісу на стратегічний ресурс – на здатність системи реагувати на індивідуальні запити, зберігаючи стабільність і передбачуваність результату. Акцентовано, що саме ця властивість визначає сучасну парадигму розвитку сервісної економіки, у якій гнучкість стає новою формою ефективності, а керована ритміка – індикатором зрілості та конкурентоспроможності бізнес-процесів. З урахуванням цього запропоновано розглядати конкурентоспроможність бізнес-процесів підприємства сфери послуг як інтегральну характеристику його здатності забезпечувати стале створення персоналізованої споживчої цінності шляхом оптимального поєднання варіативності та ритміки процесів, що реалізуються в середовищі безпосередньої взаємодії між виконавцем і споживачем. Графічно змодельовано процес досягнення балансу варіативності та ритміки бізнес-процесів у сфері послуг за складовими і методами їх оптимізації та узгодження і в контексті параметрів загальної конкурентоспроможності підприємства. Зазначено, що оптимізації структурної дисморфії бізнес-процесів сервісних підприємств можна досягти, використовуючи можливості цифрових технологій і мережевої партнерської взаємодії.

Ключові слова: *споживча цінність послуги, персоналізація сервісу, варіативність структури бізнес-процесу, ритміка бізнес-процесу, операційна гнучкість, стратегічна адаптивність, процесна зрілість підприємства.*

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Problem statement. A distinctive feature of the current stage of social and economic development is the growing role of service enterprises in shaping and implementing development models of modern socio-economic systems. The service sector forms the foundation of the post-industrial economy, generating the major share of gross domestic product. In the context of structural transformations, digitalization, and significant security challenges, service enterprises become key agents of change, ensuring the adaptation of national economies to new societal needs. In developed countries, the service sector provides a high level of employment, stimulates innovation activity, and creates prerequisites for sustainable socio-economic development. Today, the functions of service enterprises extend beyond traditional service provision and encompass innovative, communicative, integrative, and coordinating roles, which provides grounds to speak of the servitization of the economy and makes research into the management of service enterprise competitiveness relevant and significant.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Issues related to the formation and enhancement of the competitiveness of the service sector and its entities are currently the subject of active scholarly research. Certain aspects of addressing these issues are presented, for example, in the works of such scholars as N. Bondar, A. Koziatynska, H. Kuvika, O. Mykytyn, O. Parfentieva, I. Tymchenko, Z. Teslenko, Z. Shatska, A. Shtefan, and others [1–8]. Researchers emphasize the specificity of the service sector as an important factor that determines special approaches to the formation of competitive advantages by service enterprises. This specificity is determined by the intangible nature of service outputs, the high degree of personalization of customer demands, and customers' direct involvement in the processes of creating consumer value. As noted in our previous works, this leads to a high level of subjectivity in consumers' perception of the created value, influencing their assessment of service quality. In turn, this shapes customer loyalty to the enterprise, which is one of the key indicators of its competitiveness [8].

An analysis of foreign scholarly publications also indicates that most studies in this field are primarily focused on the marketing, behavioural, or communication aspects of service enterprise competitiveness, in particular on customer relationship management, brand building, service quality, and staff service culture [9–11]. Considerably less attention is paid to internal organizational and process-related factors that determine the ability to create and reproduce consumer value under conditions of individualized demand.

In particular, the impact of the business process structure of a service enterprise on its level of competitiveness remains insufficiently studied. In existing approaches, business processes in the service sector are predominantly viewed as standardized or weakly variable sequences of operations aimed at ensuring stability and controllability of outcomes [12–14]. Such an approach limits the ability to adapt processes to dynamic and heterogeneous customer demands, which is critically important for the modern service economy. This necessitates the further development of theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis of business processes in the service sector, taking into account their variability, rhythm, and role in the formation of long-term competitive advantages.

The purpose of the study is to provide a theoretical justification and conceptualization of the structural dysmorphia of business processes in service enterprises as a process-related characteristic of the formation of personalized consumer value, as well as to determine its impact on the competitiveness of service sector enterprises.

Objectives of the study. To achieve the stated purpose, it is necessary to: clarify approaches to interpreting the consumer value of a service as an object of market exchange, taking into account the specifics of the process of satisfying consumer needs in the service sector; substantiate the role of customer interaction organization, service culture, and technological (operational) flexibility of business processes in the formation of personalized consumer value in service enterprises; reveal the essence of service personalization from a process-based perspective, defining it as the result of optimizing the variability and rhythm of business processes; propose and conceptually define the concept of “structural dysmorphia of business processes,” outlining its content, key features, and place within the system of process management of a service enterprise; demonstrate the strategic nature of structural dysmorphia by substantiating its role as a resource for adapting enterprises to individualized consumer demands while maintaining the stability of performance outcomes; develop a graphical model for achieving a balance between variability and rhythm of business processes in a service enterprise, taking into account the main components and methods of their optimization; and determine the impact of the balance between variability and rhythm of business processes on the competitiveness of a service enterprise, considering it as an integral characteristic of the ability to sustainably create personalized consumer value.

To achieve the stated objectives, a process-based approach and a set of general scientific methods were applied, including analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, analogy, graphical modelling, and generalization.

Presentation of the main research findings. The modern service economy imposes new requirements on the management of enterprise efficiency and competitiveness. Considering that the main form of service delivery is the business process, there is a need for a theoretical and methodological justification for managing its competitiveness. The initial stage of such justification is clarifying the essence of the category of “competitiveness” in the context of a process-based approach, which views the enterprise not as a collection of resources but as a system of interrelated value-creation processes.

First, it should be noted that the term “competitiveness” has evolved from being associated primarily with product characteristics and a firm’s market position to a more comprehensive concept encompassing an organization’s ability to effectively develop, implement, and renew its business processes in accordance with environmental requirements

and consumer expectations. In previous studies [8; 15], we emphasized that, within a process-oriented approach, competitiveness should not be viewed as a static attribute, but as a dynamic capability of the system to ensure the consistent creation of value through the coordinated functioning of processes oriented toward customer needs. This perspective allows competitiveness to be understood as a derivative of the maturity of business processes and their harmonious integration in generating stable, tangible value for the client.

A business process in the service sector begins with a consumer request. This request can take various forms: for instance, in services related to temporary accommodation or transportation, it may involve booking a place or purchasing a ticket; in consulting or repair and construction services, it may involve signing an agreement and making an advance payment; in tourism services, it typically entails reviewing the tour in advance, signing a service contract, and making a prepayment. Signing an agreement with the consumer allows the service provider to reduce uncertainty in evaluating the expected outcome by introducing greater structure into the value-creation process during service delivery and by aligning the anticipated result with the resources required to achieve it.

It should be emphasized that each act of service is unique (even when established standards are followed) because the outcome is determined not only by the technological sequence of actions but also by the customer's emotional and cognitive perception. This variability simultaneously represents both a challenge and a resource for competitiveness: the resilience of an enterprise's market position depends on its ability to ensure the consistency and rhythm (timeliness) of its processes while maintaining the personalized nature of service. In this context, analysing the structure and rhythm of business processes in the service sector becomes particularly important, as it helps to understand how flexibility and controlled variability of business processes can serve as a source of enhanced efficiency and competitiveness for service enterprises.

In the theory of Business Process Management (BPM), variability is understood as the ability of a process to alter its structure, sequence, and execution pace depending on environmental conditions, the specifics of a customer request, or internal resource constraints [16; 17]. In manufacturing systems, variability is generally regarded as a deviation that needs to be eliminated, whereas in the service sector it is an inherent property, determined by the nature of service activities. Therefore, it can be argued that the specificity of business processes in the service sector is defined by a combination of high variability, technological complexity, and personalized interaction, which requires specialized methods for organizing, monitoring, and optimizing their execution.

In our view, the main factors contributing to variability include:

1. The human factor. During service delivery, personnel not only perform technological operations but also engage in communicative interactions with the customer. Each such interaction is unique, as it depends on professional skills, emotional state, client behaviour, and the service situation. Consequently, no service can be fully replicated according to the same scenario.

2. The context of the customer request. A service is created «on demand», that is, under specific conditions of time, place, resources, and customer expectations. This gives rise to numerous variations in process execution, even if its structure is formally standardized.

3. The intangible nature of the outcome. Unlike a tangible product, a service has no physical manifestation; therefore, quality control shifts from objective parameters to the realm of customer perception and satisfaction. This renders the process flexible, adaptive, and open to improvisation.

4. Technological and organizational flexibility. The use of digital systems, CRM platforms, online services, and multichannel (omnichannel) communication enables service providers to rapidly modify the sequence of stages, the order of operations, or even the mode

of interaction with the customer (which is particularly evident in the tourism industry). This generates structural variability, while simultaneously enhancing both efficiency and the personalization of service delivery.

5. The cognitive-emotional component of value creation. Since the customer perceives a service as a combination of impressions, comfort, aesthetics, and trust, the business process effectively adapts to their psychological response. Consequently, variability is not only organizational but also perceptual – it exists at the level of customer perception, where standards cannot be rigidly applied.

Thus, the variability of business processes in the service sector reflects an enterprise's adaptive capacity to respond to fluctuations in demand, as well as the context and behaviour of customers. It has a dual nature: on the one hand, it generates uncertainty and complicates standardization; on the other hand, it serves as a source of innovation, personalization, and competitive advantage. The task of enterprise management is not to eliminate variability entirely, but to manage it optimally by combining the structured component of the process, which ensures stability and reproducibility of outcomes, with the flexible component, which guarantees adaptation to individual customer expectations. In our view, it is precisely this balance that determines the mature level of competitiveness of business processes in the service sector. The variability of business processes in service enterprises (as both a source of competitive advantage and, at the same time, a complicating factor for their rational organization in terms of economic efficiency) is further complemented by a feature unique to the service sector: the absence of a fixed rhythm in their execution. The concept of the rhythm of business processes in management can be understood as the degree of coordination, repeatability, and synchronization of actions that ensure the continuous creation of value over time. While variability reflects the spatial flexibility of a process's structure, rhythm pertains to its temporal organization, that is, the ability of the process to operate at a stable, predictable, and controllable pace. In classical manufacturing systems, rhythm is associated with the uniformity of product output, whereas in the service sector, it relates to the coordination of interactions among service stages, performers, and customers, which determines the continuity of a positive customer experience.

In our view, the rhythm of business processes in the service sector has a multidimensional nature and encompasses: operational rhythm, which implies the regularity and predictability of core service operations (response time, service duration, speed of feedback); communicative rhythm, which is understood as the sequence of interactions between personnel and the customer, ensuring a sense of control, attention, and trust on the part of the client; organizational rhythm, referring to the coordination of actions among departments and performers within a single process or service chain (for example, coordinating the work of the reception, technical staff, and booking department in a hotel); emotional-behavioural rhythm, which relates to the consistency of tone, pace, and intonation in interactions, influencing the psychological perception of service quality.

Disruptions in the rhythm of a business process manifest as delays, inconsistencies in actions among departments, excessive idle time, staff overload, or breakdowns in communication with the customer. Such disruptions negatively affect the perceived value of the service, even if its technological component is executed correctly. This is logical, as the customer perceives quality as a holistic experience of the process. Delays, service failures, or breaches of service standards (such as the absence of the expected “star-level” attributes in hotel rooms) are perceived as irritants. Conversely, maintaining process rhythm ensures stability in the emotional tone of interactions, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. At the same time, excessive standardization of rhythm can reduce flexibility and responsiveness to changes in customer requests. Therefore, rhythm management in the service sector should be based on the principle of controlled flexibility, whereby a basic temporal framework of the business process is maintained, while allowing for controlled deviations to respond in a

personalized manner to specific situations. In practice, service enterprises achieve this through digital modelling of customer flows, staff workload monitoring systems, service time analytics, and dynamic (flexible) scheduling technologies.

The author's position is that the rhythm of business processes in the service sector can be considered an indicator of an enterprise's process maturity, reflecting its ability to ensure service consistency while maintaining high adaptability to the environment. Balanced rhythm creates conditions for resource optimization, increased predictability of service quality, and the building of customer trust; thus, it serves as one of the key factors in the competitiveness of business processes.

The above-mentioned considerations regarding the high level of variability and the lack of rhythmic predictability in business processes in the service sector provide grounds for referring to their so-called «structural dysmorphia». Dysmorphia (from the Greek *dys* – disorder, deviation, and *morphē* – form, structure) is a scientific term denoting a structural mismatch or asymmetry that results in variability or instability. In both natural and social sciences, it is used to describe unsettled, evolutionarily open structures capable of self-adjustment and transformation in response to external conditions.

In this study, the term «*structural dysmorphia*» is used to denote a property of business processes in the service sector characterized by a variable, unsettled form of action organization that ensures a combination of structural variability (or operational flexibility) and stability. Unlike the terms «*instability*» or «*deformation*», the concept of *dysmorphia* has an evolutionary connotation and reflects the natural ability of service processes to dynamically adapt to the context of customer service. In our view, the term «structural dysmorphia of business processes» should be understood as a systemic property of service activities, which consists in the integration of variability (flexibility) and rhythm (stability), the interaction of which ensures the adaptability and predictability of service creation processes. In this context, it is not the temporal or content-related parameters that gain stability, but the key elements of the business process that ensure the outcome meets customer expectations. These elements are formally secured through standards, contracts, or regulatory requirements and ensure the reproducibility of service quality under conditions of the constant variability in its content, configuration, and execution pace. Table 1 presents the main characteristics of structural dysmorphia in service business processes and their managerial context.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Components of Structural Dysmorphia in Service Enterprise Business Processes

| <i>Component Characteristics</i> | <i>Manifestation in the Service Sector</i> | <i>Managerial Significance</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Variability is the ability to modify the content of a process, its sequence, and temporal parameters depending on the service delivery conditions, as well as the needs and expectations of the customer | Individualized service adjustment, modification of action sequence, personalization of interaction | Provides adaptability, enhancement of perceived value, and customer experience |
| Stability is the ability to reproduce predictable process outcomes and maintain the consistency of operations over time | Repetition of standard procedures, compliance with regulatory parameters, coordination of actions among departments and partners | Ensures quality, reliability, and trust of customers and partners in the service enterprise |
| Institutional Stabilizer is the legal codification of the service's essence and its parameters as a means of standardizing variable processes | Legally established service requirements, contractual specification of service conditions, legal formalization of the outcome | Serves as a mechanism for coordinating variability and rhythm, ensuring predictability and protection of parties' rights |
| Balance between flexibility and stability enables the competitiveness of business processes | Optimal response to demand changes without loss of quality, ability for collaborative interaction | Shapes the network competitiveness of the service enterprise |

In our view, structural dysmorphia is an inherent property of business processes in the service sector and highlights the need to address the optimization of these processes based on such characteristics. The proposed concept allows for a novel interpretation of the organization of service business processes – not as a trade-off between flexibility and stability, but as their complementary unity. This provides a foundation for modelling service processes in dynamic environments, where managerial decisions are directed not at eliminating variability, but at aligning it with regulatory requirements and technological standards. In practical terms, this opens up opportunities for developing adaptive management mechanisms that simultaneously ensure service personalization, quality control, and legal certainty of outcomes.

However, the optimization of business processes in the service sector is not so much a matter of eliminating variations and standardizing actions as it is a search for a balance between stability and flexibility, between the technological reproducibility of processes and the need for their personalization in accordance with individual customer expectations. In this sense, managing variability and rhythm becomes a central instrument for enhancing enterprise competitiveness, since these parameters determine a service organization's ability to ensure quality, speed, and predictability of service delivery without compromising the uniqueness of the customer experience.

In our view, optimizing variability from a process management perspective implies a shift from rigid standardization to controlled adaptability. This is achieved through the application of modern digital technologies specifically designed to manage business process flexibility. Traditional management tools within quality management systems (e.g., TQM, Six Sigma) are primarily oriented toward eliminating deviations in manufacturing systems; however, in the service sector, excessive formalization may undermine service authenticity and reduce the emotional component of value. Contemporary practice, by contrast, emphasizes the integration of flexible process models (Flexible Process Design), which incorporate both mandatory standardized operations (the process core) and variable elements that depend on context, customer characteristics, or the interaction channel.

Taking into account the specificity of the service sector, it can be argued that variability and rhythm of business processes are interrelated characteristics that determine the level of competitiveness of service enterprises. Their interaction forms a dynamic balance between stability and flexibility, between the standardization of operations and the personalization of the customer experience. On the one hand, variability reflects the ability of a service process to adapt to changing market conditions, individual customer requests, and the context of service delivery. Without this capability, an enterprise loses sensitivity to environmental changes and the ability to differentiate its offering. On the other hand, rhythm ensures the reproducibility, coherence, and predictability of processes over time, thereby creating a foundation for quality control, rational resource utilization, and the development of customer trust.

The competitiveness of business processes in the service sector emerges when an enterprise succeeds in integrating variability and rhythm into a unified value management system, in which:

- process flexibility ensures the ability to respond to individual customer needs (*the adaptive component of competitiveness*);
- process rhythm provides stability and predictability of outcomes (*the operational component of competitiveness*);
- their alignment achieves a balance between economic efficiency and perceived quality (*the value-based component of competitiveness*).

Figure 1 presents the authors' graphical model for achieving a balance between variability and rhythm of business processes in the service sector, structured according to their components and the methods of their optimization and alignment, and interpreted within the framework of enterprise competitiveness parameters.

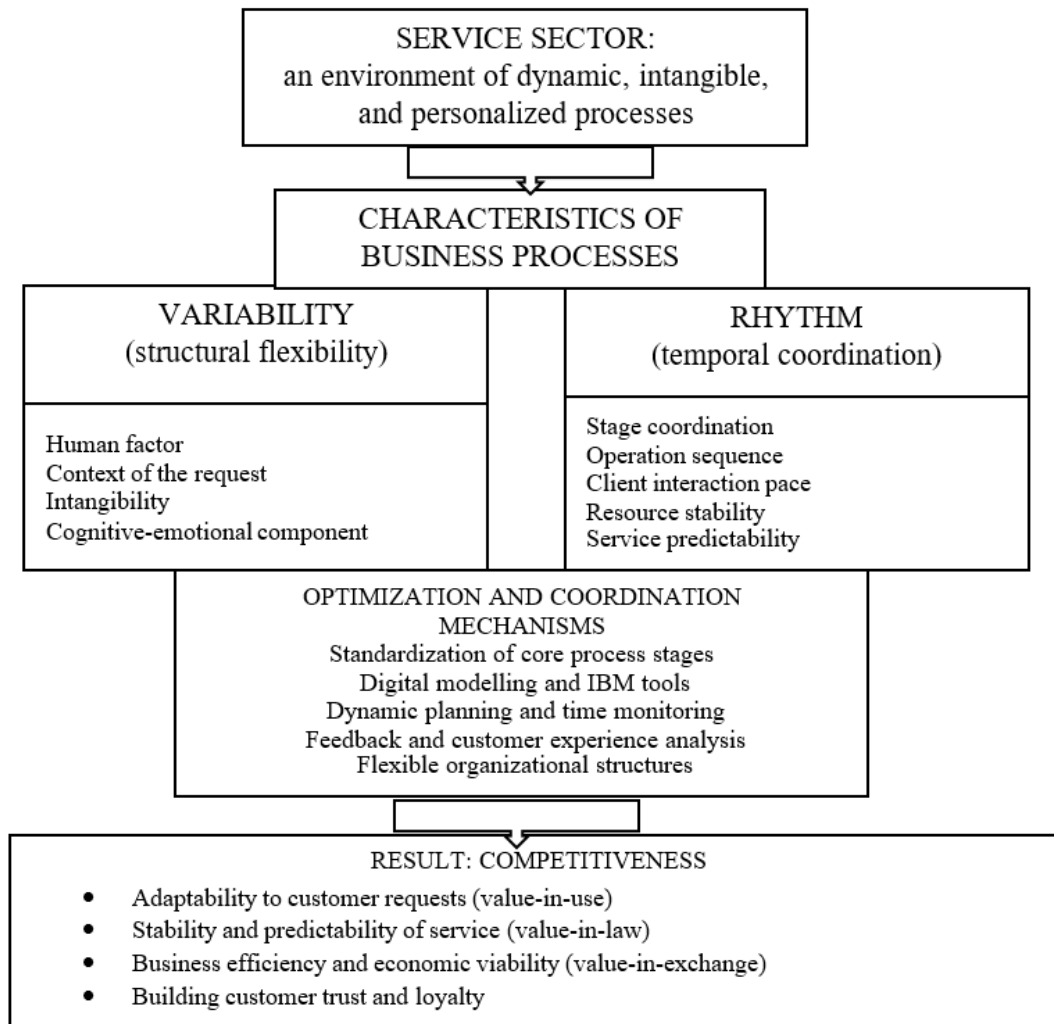


Figure 1. Model for Achieving a Balance between Variability and Rhythm in Managing the Competitiveness of Service Enterprise Business Processes

In our view, the contemporary understanding of efficiency in the service sector lies precisely in an enterprise's ability to simultaneously maintain the pace and the required level of flexibility of its key business processes. Optimal variability, combined with stable rhythm, transforms a business process from a set of discrete operations into an integrated system for creating and sustaining customer value. This perspective corresponds to the concept of a value-oriented economy, in which it is essential to ensure such business process dynamics that the temporal boundaries of value creation remain comfortable for the customer. The presented framework reflects the systemic nature of the relationship between variability and rhythm in service business processes. The balance between them ensures the alignment of technological, organizational, and cognitive-value components of service delivery, enabling enterprises to maintain process stability while exhibiting a high degree of flexibility in responding to customer needs. Thus, optimized variability and controlled rhythm emerge as key determinants of the competitiveness of contemporary service systems.

The arguments presented above provide grounds for refining our previously formulated definition of the competitiveness of business processes in service enterprises by conceptualizing it as an integral characteristic of an enterprise's ability to ensure the sustainable creation of individualized customer value through the optimal combination of process variability and rhythm, implemented in an environment of direct interaction between the service provider and

the customer. This competitiveness manifests itself in the balance of technological, organizational, communicative, and cognitive-emotional components of business processes, their adaptability to changes in demand, and their capacity to maintain predictable service quality while preserving a personalized mode of service delivery.

Modern information technologies can serve as instruments of controlled flexibility that enable the simultaneous maintenance of service individualization and execution stability. They not only support the operational flexibility of business processes, but also enhance the efficiency of network-based interaction among service enterprises within customer value creation chains. The application of IT solutions makes it possible to harmonize process variability and rhythm by creating conditions in which technological predictability is combined with a personalized approach to the customer. As a result, enterprises achieve not only higher efficiency and controllability of business processes, but also an increased level of perceived service value among customers, thereby strengthening competitiveness both of the business processes of individual enterprises and of their networks.

Conclusions. As a result of the study, the approaches to interpreting the consumer value of a service as an object of market exchange have been refined. It has been demonstrated that the decisive factor in its formation is not limited to resource-based or price characteristics but is primarily determined by the way consumer needs are satisfied in the process of service delivery. It is substantiated that in the service sector, consumer value is formed through the organization of customer interaction processes, the level of service culture, and the technological (operational) flexibility of business processes, which together ensure the possibility of service personalization. A conceptual approach is proposed that interprets service personalization as the result of optimizing the variability and rhythm of the business processes of a service enterprise, which is generalized through the introduction of the term «structural dysmorphia». It is proven that the essence of structural dysmorphia lies not in eliminating or minimizing deviations in service processes, but in transforming service dynamism into a strategic development resource – namely, the system’s ability to adapt to individualized consumer demands while maintaining the stability and predictability of outcomes. The research findings are summarized in the form of a graphical model that illustrates the process of achieving a balance between variability and rhythm of business processes according to their key components and optimization methods, within the context of the overall competitiveness parameters of a service enterprise. Further research in this area will focus on substantiating the tools and directions for optimizing the structural dysmorphia of service enterprises’ business processes by leveraging the capabilities of digital technologies and network-based partnership interactions.

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