

МІЖНАРОДНЕ ПАРТНЕРСТВО УНІВЕРСИТЕТІВ ЯК НЕОБХІДНА УМОВА ЇХ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ ПІД ЧАС ЕКОНОМІЧНОЇ НЕВИЗНАЧЕНОСТІ

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INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP OF UNIVERSITIES AS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR THEIR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DURING ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTIES

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Анотація. За останні чотири роки університети зіткнулися зі значними негативними наслідками потрясінь, пов'язаних з економічною невизначеністю, а саме пандемією Covid-19 та війною в Україні в 2022 році. Економічна невизначеність, яку за її природою важко чітко окреслити, має реальні наслідки не лише для окремого університету, але й для освітнього сектору в цілому. Сьогодні українські університети повинні адаптуватися до економічної невизначеності, використовуючи міжнародне партнерство як джерело забезпечення якісної освіти та сталого розвитку. Якісна система освіти має стати результатом процесу трансформації вищої освіти в Україні та повністю доповнювати цілі сталого розвитку. Це визначає актуальність дослідження. Метою дослідження є (а) огляд сучасного стану вищої освіти в Україні та (б) визначення шляхів сталого розвитку вищої освіти в умовах економічної невизначеності на основі університетських партнерств. Методологічною основою дослідження є сукупність загальних методів наукового пізнання, системне та комплексне використання яких дозволило обґрунтувати теоретико-методологічні засади та науково-практичні підходи до визначення необхідності міжнародного партнерства університетів як умови їх сталого розвитку в умовах економічної невизначеності. При дослідженні сутності міжнародного партнерства та аналізі економічних невизначеностей в освітній сфері використано абстрактно-логічний метод, методи системного аналізу, систематизації та узагальнення; метод синтезу - при об'єднанні отриманих в ході аналізу частин в єдине ціле. Метод індукції використано при формуванні загальних висновків за результатами дослідження. У статті обґрунтовано університетське партнерство як здатність надання сценарію адаптивного розвитку інноваційних рис та доцільність розбудови університетських партнерств в Україні. Вирішення цього завдання пов'язане з формуванням ефективної партнерської стратегії, що дасть змогу виявити нові та посилити наявні переваги закладів вищої освіти, а отже, відкриє шляхи для подальших досліджень.

Ключові слова: партнерство, взаємодія, заклади вищої освіти, інновації, економічний агент, адаптивний розвиток.

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Abstract. Over the last four years, universities have faced significant negative effects from major "uncertainty shocks", namely the Covid-19 pandemic, and in 2022 the Ukraine war. Such economic uncertainties, which are by their very nature hard to define, have real consequences not only for a separate university but also for the educational sector of Ukraine. Nowadays Ukrainian universities should adjust to economic uncertainties by considering international partnership as a source for a high-quality education and sustainable development. A high-quality education system should be the result of the process of transformation of higher education in Ukraine and fully complement the goals of sustainable development. This determines the relevance of the research. The aims of the study are (a) to provide an overview of the current state of higher education in Ukraine and (b) outline ways for sustainable development of higher education during economic uncertainties by means of university partnerships. The methodological basis of the study is a set of general methods of scientific knowledge, the systematic and integrated use of which made it possible to substantiate the theoretical and methodological foundations and scientific and practical approaches to determining the necessity of international partnership of universities as a condition for their sustainable development during economic uncertainties. When studying the essence of international partnership and analyzing economic uncertainties in the education sector, an abstract-logical method, methods of system analysis, systematization and generalization were used; the method of synthesis was used when combining the parts obtained during the analysis into a single whole. The method of induction was used in the formation of general conclusions about the study. The article substantiates university partnership as the ability to provide the scenario of adaptive development with innovative features and the expediency of building university partnerships in Ukraine. Solving this task is related to the formation of an effective partner strategy that will make it possible to identify new and strengthen the existing pros of higher educational institutions and therefore open the ways for further research.

Keywords: partnership, interaction, higher education institutions (HEIs), innovation, economic agent, adaptive development.

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Introduction. The latest news from the World Health Organization about disease outbreaks and from the European Commission about the reduction of economic opportunities in regions with lagging economies, along with the military situation in Ukraine and the gap between what is taught in universities around the world and what companies really need are the preconditions of turbulences in the field of education which have already brought about the search of alternative ways for functioning of universities by educators [2]. Due to the fact that in modern conditions it is difficult to find a fundamentally new solution to business problems, especially if it concerns the field of educational services, one of the most efficient ways for Ukrainian universities to develop is international partnership [3]. Thus, the optimal way is to study the best experience of others and adapt it to the features of the recipient's business.

Literature review. The analysis of the literature on the problem under the study showed that the activities of individual universities in Western Europe are the object of individual historical, pedagogical, philosophical, sociological, economic studies, both in Ukraine and in European countries, at a time when the issue of partnership interaction is not fully disclosed and needs further study and approval. Since the educational process belongs to the social category, analysis of sociological research on the interaction of the economic agent with the surrounding reality is obvious. The values and principles of partnership are laid down in the basis of the standard of education, updated system of professional development of a teacher, modern state of educational and personnel policy in Ukraine. Investigating the process of interaction, O. Marukhlenko believes that the subject that interacts with others is able not only to change specific circumstances, but also to create themselves again in the process of its implementation [4]. S. Pakulin distinguishes 5 stages of strategy formation of HEIs, one of which is benchmarking, a process connected to cooperation of universities on different levels [5].

Aims. The main objectives of the study are (a) to provide an overview of the current

state of higher education in Ukraine and (b) outline ways for sustainable development of higher education during economic uncertainties by means of university partnerships.

Results. An analytical review of 176 state higher education institutions (HEIs) of Ukraine of university, academy, and institute types, which form the basis of national higher education and prepare more than 80% of applicants, conducted by leading scientists of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, revealed current problems in the field of higher education and their causes. The results of this study showed that the network of HEIs needs to be optimized, because: (a) the system of higher education of Ukraine contains both powerful institutions that participate in leading international ratings, and a significant number of weak, ineffective HEIs; (b) high mass education has led to the devaluation of received qualifications; (c) the number of jobs for the increasing number of graduates of HEIs is not going up, despite the statements of the ministries, which can lead to increased competition and the spread of unemployment; (d) participants in the educational process have a low level of digital competence; (e) educational policy is inconsistent and discontinuous; (f) reduction of state spending on higher education and budgetary places in HEIs; (g) decrease in population incomes, and a significant increase in "educational migration". The above-mentioned reasons and the war in Ukraine can cause a significant decrease in demand for Ukrainian higher education with corresponding consequences for teachers, administration, and the network of higher education institutions.

On the other hand, the war rapidly accelerated the course of natural trends in the development of the higher education system regarding the optimization and correction of its structure, scope, and content. Thus, (a) an unprecedented outflow of scientists abroad without centralized registration of their location; (b) significant destruction of the premises of schools and HEIs; (c) frequent blackouts; (d) air strikes destroying the country's economy and (e) threats of shelling

and bombing forced the authorities to react to the contingencies quicker and in more organized mode.

Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned reasons are influencing drastically on universities and will lead to significant changes in the higher education system of Ukraine. To change the situation of the improper connection between the structure of training of specialists in HEIs and the demands of the economy, to raise the problem of bringing the state order for the training of specialists in line with the real needs of the national economy, especially in the conditions of the war and post-war recovery periods, to return scientists and students to universities in post-war Ukraine, and to attract potential investors to the restoration and development of educational facilities an innovative approach which provide organization and management of existing resources at the level of universities should be suggested. Thus, there are all the arguments to prove that there is an expediency of supporting and strengthening partnership interaction of universities on the path of innovative development of the country; prerequisites for transforming the higher education system into a system capable of influencing the sustainable innovative development of the country's economy.

The new stage, which began in 2014, after signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU (2014), was marked by the intensification of the European vector of Ukraine's development and the synchronization of the dimensions of Ukrainian education with European characteristics [1]. The progressive movement of Ukrainian education in the direction of its transformation into competence-based education continues. Double degree programs as a product of a new model and scheme of educational activity organization in Ukraine, which provided the opportunity for Ukrainian students to simultaneously do integrated educational programs in two educational institutions of different countries, now interact not only in the field of joint educational programs, but help using "offline" and "online" modes to (a) continue studies under the

circumstances of military operations; (b) train apprentices during industrial practices.

Such partner interaction is directly related to the search and implementation of new opportunities for the development of HEIs, increasing their well-being and competitiveness through the creation and management of platforms [6]. It is especially important to use partner interaction in international educational business projects, in which it can be implemented at several levels:

- state: through standardization of the content of educational activities and diplomas in accordance not only with national, but also with international quality standards

- regional: due to new requirements for the competencies of the population, which set the task of HEIs not just to adapt to the changing labor market, but to become a dynamic system with the functions of a source of innovative ideas, solutions, and technologies, which considers the peculiarities of the economy of the country and the region, including in the war and post-war period

- separate educational organization or educational discipline: through double diplomas, dual education. We note that in these requirements there is traditionally a deep gap between the tasks of the Ukrainian HEIs and the tasks of the European and American HEIs, which can be resolved through concerted actions of the participants of the partnership.

It should be noted that Europe is a leader in the promotion of joint programs, double degree programs, and dual education. The institutional landscape of cooperation of European HEIs is diverse and covers several models because national legislation and institutional norms of states are highly fragmented [7]. This is a response to changes in the educational environment, replacing the old model of conducting educational activities at the macro- and meso-levels, where HEI participants unite into HEI-partners. The main point is the sequence of actions. The existence of a rather extensive classification of types of partnership interaction relates to the fact that their formation depends on the conditions under which they are created, the participants and the goals they set for themselves [13]. The types of partnership interaction may depend on

the term for which they are concluded, the degree of coverage of the market and the field of production, the type of market structures, residency and the number of participants, the

goals and the main goal of the partnership as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of forms of partnership interaction of HEIs

Feature	Forms	Characteristic
by field of implementation	Interaction in the field of education	training of certified specialists; retraining; development of educational programs; internships, supervision of coursework and final papers (projects); publication of educational materials
	Interaction in the field of science	conducting research; acceleration of commercialization of scientific developments (participation in projects financed by European foundations; creation of science and technology parks, business incubators)
by degree of universality	Universal	organization of interaction between HEIs
	Specific	organization of interaction between HEIs taking into account the specifics and requirements of interaction participants (lectures on certain specific topics, specialized courses, etc.)
by duration of implementation	Short-term	recurring forms of interaction on agreements concluded for up to one year (several lectures, specialized courses, publication of educational materials)
	Long-term	recurring forms of interaction based on agreements concluded for a period of several years (scientific laboratories; basic departments; training of specialists acc.to order; science and technology parks; business incubators; organization of practices and internships at basic partner enterprises, etc.)
	Non-system	individual lectures, joint holding of non-system events
by number of members	Bilateral	interaction of two HEIs during the solution of common problem
	Multilateral	interaction is more than two HEIs participating in the implementation of joint projects and solving tasks
by the result of cooperation	Material	production of experimental samples and batches of materials; educational equipment modernization; publication of educational or scientific literature
	Financial	sponsorship in organization of conferences; charitable monetary assistance; targeted contributions for the development of HEIs (endowments)
	Informational and consulting	provision of expert assistance and consulting services; conducting work on diagnostics, standardization, certification, technical protection of information, joint use of information databases, etc.
by content of cooperation	Educational	training and retraining of specialists; conducting courses, seminars, workshops, trainings; practices and internships
	Innovative	development of new methods and technologies (as a result of joint work or at the request of a business) and their commercialization
method of relations	Legally established contractual relations	conclusion of a contract for the provision of certain services, where the content of the service, scope, term and conditions of provision are noted
by the nature of mobility	Academic mobility	involvement of teaching staff and researchers to work in the educational environment of the HEI-partner on a permanent or temporary basis
	Student mobility	training and internships to gain practical experience and exchange experience
by the nature of the parties involved	International	partnerships formed with HEIs from different countries
	National	participants of the interaction are HEIs of the same country
	Regional	participants of interaction are HEIs of the region
	local	participants are HEIs of one city (territory)

Source: developed by the author on [6, 8-10]

The presented classification lays the foundations for the further development of theoretical foundations and practical recommendations for the formation of effective partnerships of higher education institutions in Ukraine and abroad and for achieving high standards of their innovation and competitiveness.

The most common form of cooperation between higher education institutions is academic and student mobility [11]. At the moment, the form of partnership at the state level has begun to develop actively, forming a new approach in which cooperation and feedback are a component of the development of new quality educational services, attracting consumers and constant dividends. The HEI-partner-recipient does not strengthen the existing rules, norms, laws, but on the contrary builds them around common ideas that arise due to the relationship with the HEI-partners. For example, the Ukrainian Global University (UGU), which includes leading Ukrainian institutions and organizations with the support of the Office of the President, Ministry of Education and Culture and the Embassy of Ukraine in the USA, created a network that united world educational institutions and aims to provide access for Ukrainian students, scholars, scientists, and teachers to educational institutions around the world, as well as new scholarships and postdoctoral programs. Another example is the "Ukrainian Science Diaspora" Initiative, created to promote cooperation between representatives of the Ukrainian scientific diaspora and Ukrainian scientists working in foreign HEIs, scientific institutions, laboratories, etc., with scientific institutions and HEIs of Ukraine and institutional cooperation between Ukrainian and foreign HEIs and scientific institutions.

An example of regional partnership is the COOPERA pilot project, which is implemented as part of Erasmus+ and provides an opportunity for employers to cooperate with universities. During the implementation of the pilot project, a number of educational events took place in Poland and Spain, namely observing lectures, educational trainings, participation in meetings with employers, etc. Even though the number of students who

participated in the programs was mostly small, the benefits for the participants are significant.

Another example is partnership at the university level. In wartime, it has, in our opinion, two models - temporary and permanent since the trend of academic mobility in the system of higher education of Ukraine changed radically with the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Temporary partnership interaction consists in providing an opportunity for temporarily displaced students to continue their studies in HEIs. Thus, universities in Poland, Germany, Canada, the Czech Republic, Italy, the USA, Spain, Austria, France, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Australia offer a temporary partnership module at the university level. According to the educational platform Erudera.com., newly arrived Ukrainian students have the opportunity to apply for help to 14 HEIs in Great Britain, in the USA - up to 10, in Germany - 9, in Australia - 8, in Bulgaria, in Canada, Finland, France - 3, in the Czech Republic, Sweden, Switzerland - 2, in Austria, Denmark, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain - 1 [14]. On the other hand, many Ukrainian universities allow temporarily displaced students from other institutions to study at them. Also, online education is offered at Dnipro State Medical University, Poltava Pedagogical University, Lviv Polytechnic University, etc.

A sustainable model allows combining studies abroad and in Ukraine. Thus, double degree programs provide students with the opportunity to study in Ukraine and abroad on a semester basis and avoid the mass exodus of students, especially during hostilities. This model has been working since Ukraine signed the Bologna Declaration in 2005 and undertook to fulfill the tasks outlined in it in a few HEIs of Ukraine [8]. Vinnytsia National Agrarian University is a vivid example. As part of the partnership agreement with Shanxi Agrarian University, the Vinnytsia National Agrarian University opened its office in China. For the Vinnytsia National Agrarian University, the prospect of cooperation with Chinese partners lies in the achievements and high level of development of the economy of

China. In turn, Shanxi University students will receive high-quality distance educational services at the Vinnytsia National Agrarian University.

On the other hand, there are not so many really functioning programs, as the payment is often too high. The study showed that the payment ranges from €700 to €13,000 for a student and reaches €10,000 for HEIs to pay for services and it can differ for offline and online learning, where the latter is flexible, mobile, and cheaper.

Therefore, to resist uncertainties in educational sector and overcome a number of problems, in particular:

- (a) a low level of digital competences of participants in the educational process
- (b) outdated content in educational subjects of the information field
- (c) insufficient amount of computer equipment and lack of broadband access to the Internet in HEIs
- (d) lack of high-quality digital educational content for obtaining an education
- (e) lack of up-to-date, reliable information about education seekers, pedagogical and scientific-pedagogical workers, as well as scientists for making management decisions and monitoring the effectiveness of policies
- (f) bureaucratization of the processes of internal document circulation of institutions and institutions of education and science
- (g) inconvenience of obtaining services in the education system
- (h) unavailability of scientific resources and infrastructures, etc., a platform is needed not

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only in the "offline", but also in the "online" mode [12].

Conclusion. Therefore, because of new requirements for the competencies of the population, and the changed labor market, universities in Ukraine by means of interaction should:

- (a) become a dynamic system with the functions of a source of innovative ideas, solutions, and technologies, which considers the peculiarities of the country's economy
- (b) standardize the content of educational activities and diplomas in accordance with international quality standards
- (c) change the forms of knowledge transfer and the areas of its distribution, since the content of specialized knowledge becomes the property of any participant in the learning process due to the global trend of informatization of education, that is, the spread of information technologies and Internet tools, and
- (d) respond to changes caused by pandemics, wars, other cataclysms, which means to:

- help with admission or transfer to foreign HEIs, provided that graduates return to the country after their studies

- provide internships and jobs for applicants after returning to Ukraine.

Taking everything into account, the international partnership for all participants of the process during economic uncertainties will make it possible to reform the education system in accordance with already existing and new challenges and realize the main strategic goals of HEIs.

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