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## DIRECTIONS OF SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP OF EMPLOYERS AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE SPHERE OF ECONOMIC EDUCATION IN UKRAINE

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the analysis of the possible directions of social partnership of employers and economics universities. In order to generalize the experience of partnership in the field of vocational education, the choice of partnership approaches and the assessment of the possible benefits from partnership, there was conducted a study of employers in Ukraine. The results of the study allowed us to identify the possible barriers that arise during the formation of partnerships and the most significant areas of social partnership between employers and economics universities. Successful partnership between employers and universities will ensure relative sustainable development of higher economic education, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, improve the image and reputation of enterprises, which means their sustainable development and competitiveness. This will confirm the importance and demand of the enterprise as a mandatory partner for improving the quality of higher education.

**Keywords:** directions of social partnership, economic education, employers, graduates of economics universities, sustainable development.

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**Additional disciplines:** sociology; educology

### 1. Introduction

At the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2016, Klaus Schwab (Schwab 2016) described the changes taking place in the economy as the fourth industrial revolution (industry 4.0), which is characterized by the merging of technologies and blurring the boundaries between the physical, digital and biological worlds. According to Klaus Schwab (Schwab, 2016), in the future, talent, more than capital, will represent the critical factor of production. It is a human being with his knowledge, skills and abilities will be the main resource of the digital economy. It is not without reason that in the calculations of the Bloomberg Innovation Development Index of the countries (The Bloomberg Innovation Index) in the metric «Postsecondary education» such criteria as number of secondary

graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions as a percentage of cohort; percentage of labor force with tertiary degrees; annual science and engineering graduates as a percentage of the labor force and as a percentage of total tertiary graduates are considered (The Bloomberg Innovation Index). When calculating the Global Competitiveness Index 4.0, in Pillar 6: Skills there are indicators such as «Quality of vocational training», «Skillset of graduates», «Ease of finding skilled employees» for assessment of which the following questions are used: «In your country, to what extent do graduating students from secondary education possess the skills needed by businesses?», «In your country, to what extent do graduating students from university possess the skills needed by businesses?», «In your country, to what extent can companies find people with the skills required to fill their vacancies?» (The Global Competitiveness Report 2018).

In order to be competitive in new conditions, companies will need personnel with new competencies, skills to adapt to changes and the ability to learn constantly. As the impact of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and disruptive technology grows, candidates who can perform tasks that machines cannot are becoming more valuable — and that underscores the growing importance of soft skills, which are hard for machines to emulate. Having said that, universities could substantially increase the value of the college degree, if they spent more time teaching their students critical soft skills. Recruiters and employers are unlikely to be impressed by candidates unless they can demonstrate a certain degree of people-skills (Chamorro-Premuzic & Frankiewicz, 2019).

Thus, modern education should be focused on the acquisition of skills to acquire knowledge independently, creative thinking and the ability to apply new knowledge. This can be achieved only in close cooperation with business.

As employment opportunities are important for graduates, today's university managers seek to provide their graduates with necessary knowledge and skills for employment.

Higher education in Ukraine is going through difficult periods of renewal. In such conditions, graduates of economics universities and faculties often do not find work in their specialty or are not satisfied with the work that is offered to them in the labor market. The reasons for job dissatisfaction may vary: low wages, inability to adapt to professional community, inability to re-socialize, lack of necessary communicative competence, insufficient professional knowledge, reluctance of graduates to study in the workplace, low level of practical training.

According to the National Institute for Strategic Studies, the modernization of higher education in Ukraine requires overcoming a number of problems, among which the most relevant are as follows: mismatch of the structure of training of specialists to the real needs of the economy, reduced quality of education, corruption in the higher education system, isolation from research, slow integration into the European and world intellectual space (National Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014). A similar situation in the field of higher education confirms the need to find ways of such transformation that would ensure a certain balance of demand and supply of labor force and, as a result, the development of the higher education system in general and economic education, in particular. One of the most fruitful ways to change the current situation and achieve the competitiveness of graduates of economics universities and faculties is social partnership with employers.

## **2. Theoretical background**

The problems of social partnership were considered by many Ukrainian specialists (Pokidina 2016; Tsugan 2017; Tarasenko, Demchenko 2017; Savchenko, Zbritskaya 2012; Martiakova et al. 2013; Ilich 2017). Vectors of promotion of economic educational services in Ukraine were considered by Lysytsia, Prytychenko, Gron (2017). As part of the discussions at the annual National Forum «Business-Universities» held by the Center for the Development of Corporate Social Responsibility with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of

Ukraine, the skills necessary for the development of the Ukrainian economy until 2030 are determined. The objectives of the forum are as follows: identifying gaps between the requirements of companies to the skills of young professionals and the skills that are formed by universities today and will be formed in the future (National Forum «Business Universities» 2016).

The authors of the article agree with the opinion that social partnership in higher education is understood as the interaction of universities, government bodies and local governments, employers, non-profit organizations and students themselves in order to achieve consensus and meet the needs and interests of each party based on the principle of social justice (Bezvuh, Stopchak 2015; Girdzijauskaitė et al. 2019).

One more point of view, that deserves attention (Ilich 2017), that the interaction of labor markets and education is a technology for coordinating the behavior of all market actors (the state, trade unions, employers' organizations, educational institutions and students) in the process of which the matching of supply and demand for skilled labor is achieved, prerequisites are created for the reproduction of human capital and sustainable socio-economic growth is ensured.

Relations of social partnership are collective in nature and are based on the collective interest of parties. The term «social partnership» in Ukraine appeared from the end of 1991, in particular, in the regulation of social labor relations.

Social partnership in the field of vocational education is a relatively new category, which, as (Shcherbak 2008) indicates, in its essence becomes an indispensable condition for ensuring the quality of training of skilled workers in the process of transition to new educational standards based on competencies.

The first steps in this direction in Ukraine were as follows: the creation of the National Social Partnership Council under the President of Ukraine (1993), the development of the Draft Law of Ukraine «On Social Partnership» (2002) (which was never adopted). Effective approaches to improving the training of qualified workers in accordance with the requirements of social partnership were outlined in the Concept of Development of Vocational Education in Ukraine for 2005-2010 (2004). However, the concept did not receive the status of a regulatory document. The concept has not been able to effectively influence the modernization processes in the education system, namely: updating the content, introducing modern forms and methods of teaching.

Social partnership research was conducted by Russian scientists. So, (Kredenets 2018) studied social partnership in the professional training of service sector in Austria and Germany. A team of authors (Lavrinenko, Tumulavičius et al., 2016) conducted the research and assessment of the development of the triple partnership between the participants of innovation systems – universities, business, and government in the Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus cross-border region. The importance of well-established links between universities and companies in achieving economic growth is considered by some scientists (Branten, Purju 2015).

Cooperation of entrepreneurs with institutions of vocational and higher education is viewed as close interaction between the educational and the private sectors (Grinevica, Rivza 2016). It will ensure that specialists are prepared for performing specific operations and supply professionals in the industries where they are not enough. Knowledge transfer between universities and business will work best where there is a general framework of cooperation and mutual understanding, involving partnerships, joint projects and the exchange of people, respectively using social environment aspects (Aleksjeva 2016; Zemlickienė et al. 2017; Tvaronavičienė, Razminienė 2017; Peterlin et al. 2018; Razminienė, Tvaronavičienė 2018).

Thus, competitiveness will be achieved; in turn, realization of higher education goals alongside with accomplishment of business tasks involves entrepreneurs into socially responsible action providing sustainable competitiveness.

The partnership approach was based on the assertion that only through meaningful and widespread intersectoral interaction, initiatives to ensure sustainable development can be innovative and consistent, which allows scientists to solve the most complex tasks of economic and social development.

According to German Prof. Dr. Michael Jünger there has never before been such a great need for a talented, enterprising workforce in a global competitive economic environment. By being out of touch with a university, its students and young professionals, they become less attractive as prospective employers and often find it more challenging to recruit graduates and commit them for their first 2-3 professional years. It therefore seems much more effective for a company to collaborate with the academic world than not. At the same time, for effective cooperation it is necessary to understand the specific patterns of activity of each of the parties. Obviously, the core interest of both differs. When they collaborate, each party has certain expectations of the other side – the companies expect innovative and state-of-the-art lectures to secure high quality education, valuable knowledge and groundbreaking methodologies, while the universities expect their students to be given business experience e.g. through internships and opportunities to put their skills into practice. The academics also expect to be given the opportunity to transfer theoretical ideas into practical projects and to implement research in the real world (Jünger 2016).

According to the experts of IBM Institute for Business Value (King 2015) boosting the value of today's higher education system and, most important, helping prepare students for life after class, means adopting a more practical and applied approach to education. Integral to this is building and expanding partnerships between academia and the private sector to create a more valuable education ecosystem.

Foreign experts consider models of cooperation between universities and industry, their advantages and disadvantages, noting that universities are among the external partners that offer high promise, since they allow access to an enormous global pool of talent and skills (Perkmann, Salter 2012). The opinion of scientists (Raudeliūnienė, Tvaronavičienė, Dzemyda 2014) that in conditions of global economy key success factors of sustainable entrepreneurship consist of four dimensions, among which there are sustainability-driven understanding in all business processes; entrepreneurship and sustainable development competences (such as systems-thinking competence, embracing diversity and inter-disciplinarily, foresight-thinking competence, normative competence, action competence, interpersonal competence, strategic management deserves attention. Assessment of university graduates by potential employers, in terms of their mastering competencies, could be one of the factors that makes it possible to assess the effectiveness of the work of the university, thereby helping to solve a problem raised by specialists. According to (Volchik, Maslyukova 2017), it should be considered that education as a specific type of activity and institution is associated with the production of public goods and trust and performs an important social function.

It is understood that the methods of solving problems by one participant (state, industry, education institutions) have already been used and turned out insufficiently effective. Working separately, each participant performs separate activities, often competes with others and / or duplicates actions, wasting valuable and limited resources. Scattered efforts lead to the development of the «search for the guilty» practice, when withdrawal from solving a problem and inaction is transferred to the other side of the relationship.

Under these conditions, the partnership approach creates new opportunities for social development by better understanding the conditions of activity and the possibilities of each individual partner, as well as finding new ways to use them in order to achieve the common good. In addition to the mentioned common characteristics,

each participant has its/his own area of competence, expectations and work style. Thanks to a successful social partnership, the individual qualities and capabilities of each partner can be combined to achieve a common objective.

In the European Education Glossary «Education Eurotuning» (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe), published in 2006, the term «social partnership» is interpreted as the cooperation of all interested parties (social partners) to realize the objective of the Bologna process.

It can be concluded that one should not doubt about the necessity and expediency of developing social partnership in the sphere of education. However, the national model and possibilities of social partnership may not correspond to international practice.

**Research objectives and methodology.** Analysis of research results and publications on the partnership of domestic and foreign experts showed that although the understanding of the need for cooperation with universities is recognized by almost all business and universities representatives, there is no consistency in the company's approaches to partnerships and the clarity of reasons for choosing future partners and possible benefits from partnership that determines the relevance of this study.

The objective of the article is to determine the possible directions of social partnership between employers and economics universities. To achieve the objective, it is offered to solve the following tasks: 1) summarize the experience of research of partnerships in the field of vocational education; 2) analyze the responses of employers to the questionnaire offered to them; 3) identify barriers that arise during the formation of partnerships between universities and employers; 4) consider the directions of social partnership of employers and economics universities.

It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that Ukrainian employers are in a state of uncertainty, which cannot but affect their requirements for graduates who are looking for a job. The situation is complicated by the combination of both external and internal factors affecting the organization of the professional environment. External factors are social institutions of economics, education, science, which are forced to focus on constant changes. Internal factors are the lack of demand for graduates in the labor market due to a clear excess of economists. According to the State Employment Service of Ukraine, as of 1.02.2019 in Ukraine, the official number of unemployed is 364,271 people, while 4,6% fall on those with an economic education (Official Website of the State Employment Service of Ukraine). Let us analyze the data indicating the complexity of the situation in the labor market for graduates of economic specialties (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The situation in the labor market of Ukraine in the context of economic specialties

Indicator	Value	
	Total	Separately by economic specialties
Number of unemployed people (as of 1.02.2019)	364 271	16 557
Number of graduates, people (2018)	412 914	78 453
Number of vacancies, units (as of 1.02.2019 г.)	142 812	14 814

*Source:* compiled by the authors based on the data from the State Employment Service of Ukraine, State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2019)

Based on the data given in Table 1, it can be concluded that the number of graduates in economic specialties significantly exceeds the number of vacancies in the labor market. Discrepancies in the number of available vacancies and the number of specialists with the appropriate education indicate changing conditions and demands of the labor market.

In turn, it should be noted that according to the forecasts of the State Employment Service in 2019, the number of vacancies in Ukraine is expected to grow by 4% (Official Website of the State Employment Service of Ukraine 2019). Among the promising professions for which economic education is needed the following ones will lead: an accountant, an economist, a sales manager, a specialist in marketing.

The authors conducted a marketing research of the partnership problems of employers and economics universities that offer training in economic specialties. For the research the primary and secondary data were collected on this issue. The primary data were obtained in a survey of employers conducted in the period of January – February 2019. The respondents were 80 employers, who are experts in their industries (machine-building industry, chemical industry, food industry, light industry, service industry, banks). The criteria for the choice of experts were: 1) period of work in the company not less than five years; 2) working in a state or a private company; 3) belonging to one of the levels of management: top management, average level of management, the lowest level of management; 4) experience of work in one of the industries (machine-building industry, chemical industry, food industry, light industry, service industry and banks). Among the mentioned industries there are 16 big companies (mainly machine-building industry, chemical industry, food industry and banks), 26 middle companies (mainly light industry, food industry), 38 small companies (service industry and banks). Top management is presented by employers of big companies and middle companies, small companies. Average level management – these are employers of middle companies and small companies. The lowest level of management is presented by employers of middle and small companies. This made it possible to obtain up-to-date primary information on the state of the quality of the labor market for graduates of economic specialties. The secondary data was collected as a result of analysis of statistical information of the Employment Service of Ukraine.

### **3. Results and discussion**

Among the employers-respondents - female personnel managers dominated - 65%, compared with men - 35%. Most respondents have a total work experience of 13 to 15 years. Managers with economic education dominated – 76,3%, technical education – 25%, humanitarian education – 8,8%. An insignificant part is made up of 1,3% of respondents with legal and psychological education.

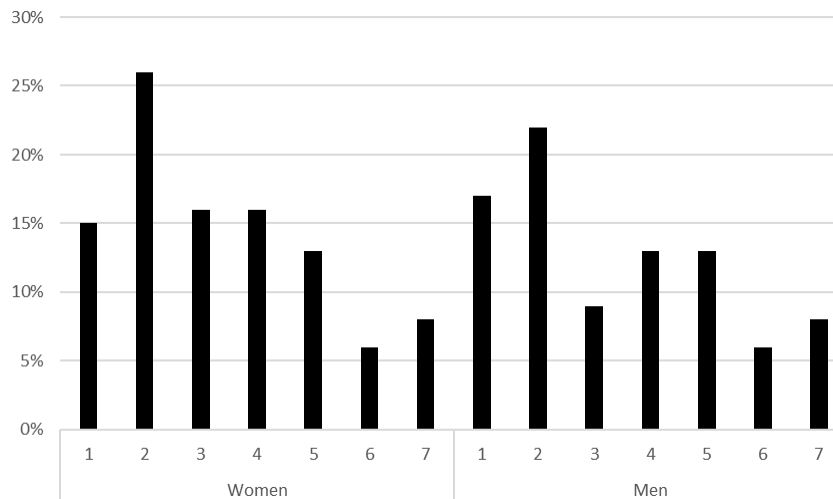
The main part of employers-respondents – 48,7%, identify themselves as «average level managers», 41,3% – representatives of top management, 10% – heads of the lowest level of management. The employers note that the highest demand – 52,5% there is in marketing specialists, management specialists – 51,2%, 30% – in economists, in finance specialists – 15%, in accountants – 17,5%. The employers, assessing the important personal qualities of applicants for the position, named 1) responsibility, 2) ability to learn in the workplace, 3) communication skills, 4) ability to work in a team. Equally important, but rated below are: creativity, non-standard thinking, emotional control. As for the competencies, the most important competences employers consider to be as follows: «analytical skills and ability to predict», «ability to quickly adapt to professional environment» and «orientation for lifelong learning», «flexibility and psychological resistance to external influence», «foreign language proficiency within professional activities».

62,5% of employers have experience of social partnership with universities, 18,8% of employers do not have experience of social partnership with universities, but they have plans to acquire it.

Thus, 81,3% show a positive attitude towards the prospects of social partnership. Unfortunately, the experience of social partnership was limited to the internship of students at enterprises, which was fixed by contracts with 43,8% of employers.

33,8% of employers take part in «job fairs». In the opinion of employers there is a clear need to work in this direction, employers say, namely: to invite employers from enterprises to deliver lectures (28,7%), invite experts from enterprises to participate in «round table talks» with students and university professors (18,8%), organize common projects of practitioners from enterprises, university professors, students (13,8%). An interesting fact is that the forms of partnership noted by employers do not significantly differ depending on the field of activity of the enterprise. From this we can conclude that 61,3% of employers are ready for partnership with universities and offer specific forms of cooperation. It should be mentioned that the potential for future partnerships was 25% of employers who had not yet decided on their intentions regarding social partnership with universities, due to the lack of such experience.

The choice of forms of partnership depending on the gender of employers is worth the scientists' attention (Fig. 1).

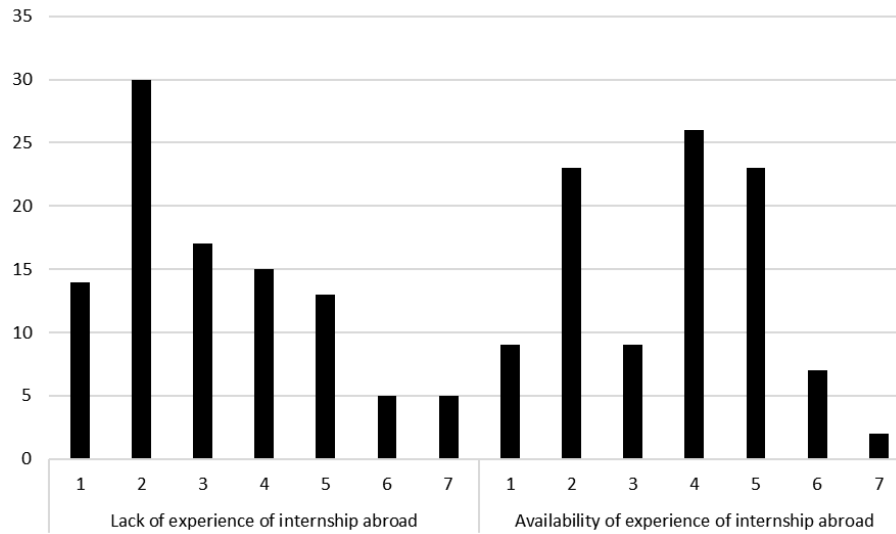


**Figure 1.** Employers' choice of forms of partnership depending on the gender of employers  
*Source:* compiled by authors

Note: (1) Joint projects of practitioners from enterprises, lecturers and students, (2) Internship of students at enterprise, with further employment, (3) Participation of enterprises in «job fairs» held at university, (4) Invitation of practitioners for delivering lectures and practical classes, (5) Inviting experts from enterprises to participate in «round table talks» with students and lecturers of universities, (6) Exchange of internships for practitioners and lecturers, (7) Participation of enterprise experts in creating curricula for universities

Despite the unequal participation on the grounds of gender identity in the survey of employers, the options for social partnership are more the same, for example, the need for «internships of students at enterprise, with further employment», the demand for «joint projects of practitioners from enterprises, lecturers and students», the justification of «the invitation of experts from enterprises to participate in «round table talks» with students and lecturers of universities», «participation of enterprise experts in creating curricula for universities».

The forms of partnerships depending on the experience of internship of employers abroad are found significant (Fig. 2).



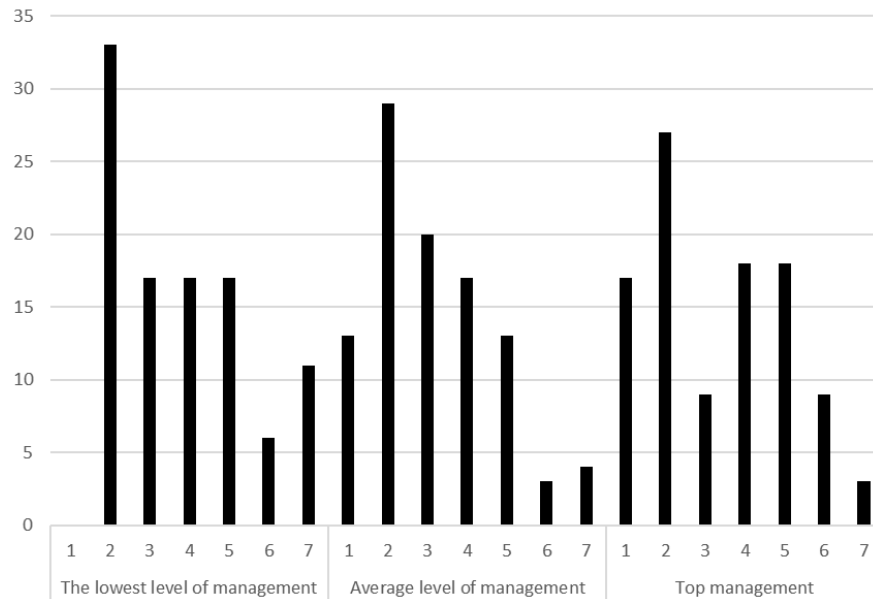
**Figure 2.** Employers' choice of the forms of partnership depending on their experience of internship abroad  
*Source:* compiled by authors

Note: (1) Joint projects of practitioners from enterprises, lecturers and students, (2) Internship of students at enterprise, with further employment, (3) Participation of enterprises in «job fairs» held at university, (4) Invitation of practitioners for delivering lectures and conducting practical classes, (5) Inviting experts from enterprises to participate in «round table talks» with students and lecturers of universities, (6) Exchange of internships for practitioners and lecturers, (7) Participation of enterprise experts in creating curricula for universities.

«The experience of internship abroad» provides a basis for choosing such forms of partnership as «invitation of practitioners for delivering lectures and conducting practical classes». This is due to the habituation of such forms of partnership in Europe and the United States, which gives positive results, namely: bringing theoretical courses at universities to practical activities, provides an orientation to the European model of education, identifying real situations and problems in the field of business that can be tied to risk, the need for quick decision making.

Various forms of partnership are given preference during the survey of employers depending on the level of management (Fig. 3).





**Figure 3.** Forms of partnership depending on the level of management of employers

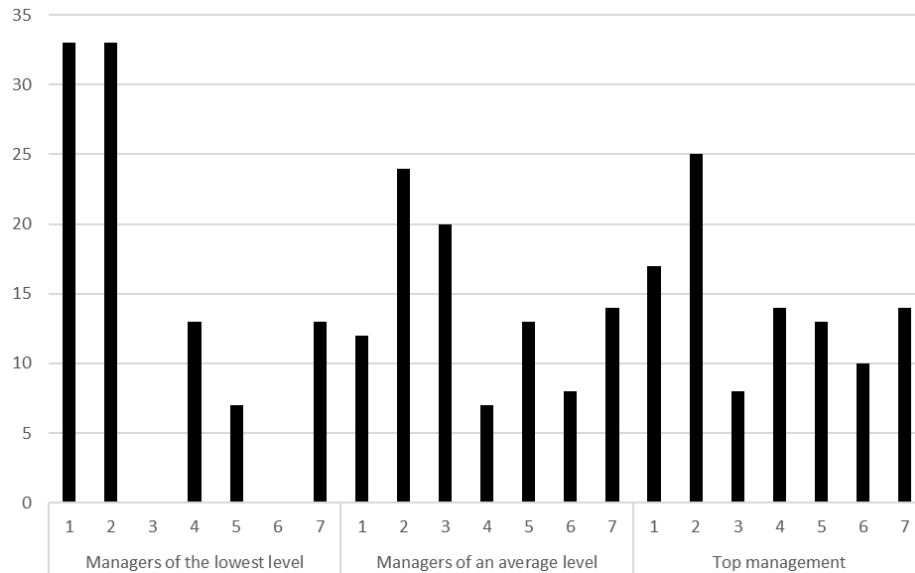
Source: compiled by authors

Note: (1) Joint projects of practitioners from enterprises, lecturers and students, (2) Internship of students at enterprise, with further employment, (3) Participation of enterprises in «job fairs» held at university, (4) Invitation of practitioners for delivering lectures and conducting practical classes, (5) Inviting experts from enterprises to participate in «round table talks» with students and lecturers of universities, (6) Exchange of internships for practitioners and lecturers, (7) Participation of specialists of enterprise in creating curricula for universities

All respondents consider the necessary form of social partnership between universities and employers «internship of students at enterprise, with further employment». The lowest level managers do not comment on such a form of partnership as «joint projects of practitioners from enterprises, lecturers and students», since this decision is not within their competence. Average level managers make decisions about «participation of enterprises in «job fairs» held at university», as representatives of top management delegate these powers to them. Due to sufficient professional experience, confidence in the legitimacy of their decisions, representatives of top management choose and justify such forms of partnership as «inviting experts to participate in «round table talks» with students and lecturers of university», «invitation of practitioners for delivering lectures and conducting practical classes».

Employers named the main barriers to social partnership with universities: 1) «lack of information about possible forms of partnership of university/employers» (33,8%), 2) «lack of interest from one of the participants in a potential partnership» (52,5%), 3) «impossibility of financing this process by one of the partners» (28,7%), 4) «distraction of personnel from performing basic duties» (26,3%), 5) «possibility of disclosing confidential information» (18,8%), 6) «imperfection of the legislative base» (28,7%) and 7) «level of organization of the partnership does not meet the requirements of one of potential partners» (22,5%) despite the level of management and sphere of activity.

As the analysis of the problems arising in the way of interaction between employers and universities shows, there appears a number of barriers to cooperation, which are directly dependent on the level of management (Fig. 4).



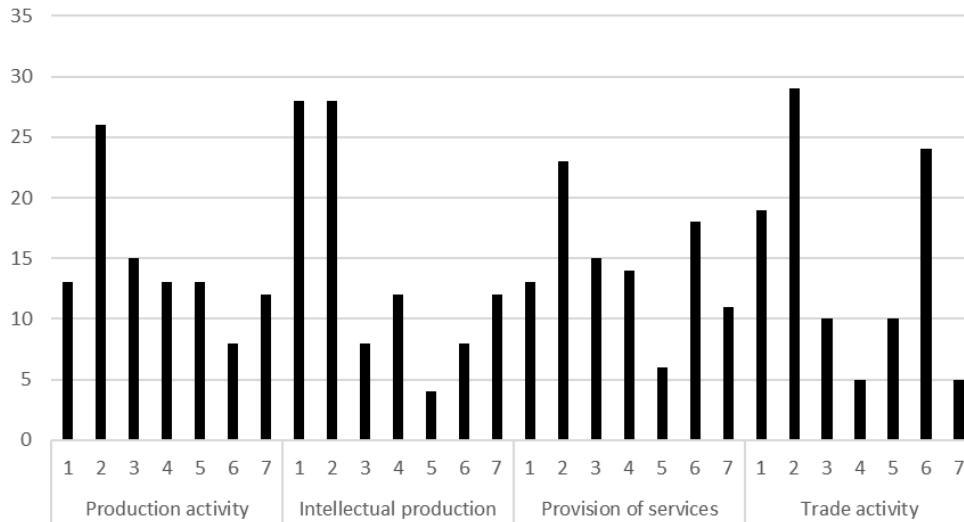
**Figure 4.** Barriers to partnership depending on the level of management of employers

Source: compiled by authors

Note: (1) Lack of information about possible forms of partnership of university / employers, (2) Lack of interest from one of the participants of potential partnership, (3) Impossibility of financing this process by one of the partners, (4) Distraction of personnel from performing basic duties, (5) Possibility of disclosing confidential information, (6) Imperfection of the legislative base, (7) Level of organization of the partnership does not meet the requirements of one of potential partners

Thus, the managers of the lowest level, name «lack of information about possible forms of partnership of university / employers» and «lack of interest from one of the participants of potential partnership» as the main barriers. At the same time, this category of managers does not mention such barriers to partnership as «impossibility of financing this process by one of the partners» and «imperfection of the legislative base». This is explained by the fact that they are not included in the process of organizing partnerships and cannot independently make decisions on stimulating the interest of participants of partnership. Average level managers name such barriers as «lack of interest from one of the participants of potential partnership» and «impossibility of financing this process by one of the partners». The decision on partnership and possibility of financing is in the competence of top management, therefore, «who» should be interested in partnership and «for what purpose» are up to the top managers to decide. According to representatives of top management, the main barriers to partnership are «the lack of interest from one of the participants of potential partnership» and «distraction of personnel from performing basic duties», «lack of information about possible forms of partnership of university / employers». Representatives of top management, as a rule, are responsible for the final result of professional activity and this directly affects their reputation and ensures the preservation of the prospects for «career growth».

When considering the barriers named by representatives of various fields of activity, the following dependence was noted (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** Partnership barriers depending on the employer's sphere of activity

Source: compiled by authors

Note: (1) Lack of information about possible forms of partnership of university / employers, (2) Lack of interest from one of the participants of potential partnership, (3) Impossibility of financing this process by one of the partners, (4) Distraction of personnel from performing basic duties, (5) Possibility of disclosing confidential information, (6) Imperfection of the legislative base, (7) Level of organization of the partnership does not meet the requirements of one of potential partners

Regardless of the field of activity, all respondents marked, as the most significant, such barrier to partnership as «lack of interest from one of the participants of potential partnership», which confirms the fact, that employers believe that universities do not seek partnership with business.

Employers in the field of «provision of services» and «trade activity» marked as significant such a barrier as «imperfection of the legislative base», which indicates that it is important for these employers to maintain the existing competitiveness within the framework of the legitimate field of activity, since they are largely dependent on the higher structures regulating their activities. For employers in the fields of «intellectual production» and «trade activity», the main barriers are «lack of information about possible forms of partnership of university / employers» and «lack of interest from one of the participants of potential partnership». The enterprises of these industries do not have a long experience of partnership with universities in comparison with the enterprises of the «production activity» and «provision of services». This can be explained by the fact that they are not fully aware of the benefits of partnership, do not see a variety of prospects for themselves, being focused on their work.

«Impossibility of financing this process by one of the partners» was marked as one of the significant barriers for partnership between enterprises by the spheres of «production activity» and «provision of services», which can be explained by the scarcity of free financial resources of enterprises or universities.

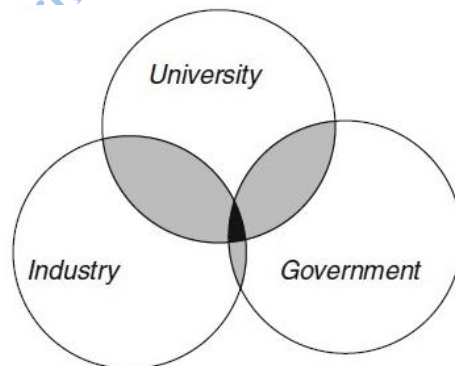
In fact, overcoming these barriers will ensure the success of social partnership between employers and universities and, as a result, it is possible to predict the improvement of curricula and their compliance with the needs of the market. As a result of the above, competences demanded by employers will be provided, it will make possible the target job placement for graduates who, on the one hand, are already familiar with the work of the enterprise, and, on the other hand, have developed loyalty to it, as to the value that future employees want to save. As a result, a possible guaranteed employment of university graduates will be provided, as 67,5% of employers note. Employers consider the «common projects of practitioners of enterprises, lecturers and students» to be promising

(42,5%). «Inviting practitioners to deliver lectures», in the opinion of 41,3% of employers, will allow raising practical classes to a higher level, bringing them closer to actual production, providing real services, which will allow future employees to adapt to the professional environment. Most likely, it is thanks to this form of cooperation that an opportunity will arise to learn how to work in a team and understand the significance of the need of lifelong learning.

It is not surprising that the main incentive to build a social partnership with universities is the possibility of selecting potential employees. This is noted by 85% of employers. Another incentive naturally coincides with this incentive: «the possibility of employers to participate in the development of university curricula to adjust students' competencies so that they meet the expectations of employers as much as possible». 30% of employers found this important and are willing to cooperate.

The survey of employers showed that they rather highly assess the theoretical training of graduates, considering practical training and communicative competence of graduates of economics universities rather low. 51,2% of employers associate disadvantages in the training of graduates in economics with an exaggeration of their own professional competencies, which, as a result, does not encourage them to learn new things. The employers explain the reasons for the poor quality of university training in different ways. For example: «orientation of graduates only to high wages» (55%) rather than self-development, «exaggeration of their own professional competencies when targeting a position that interests them» (47,5%), «lack of interaction between universities and employers» (43,8%), «lack of interest in the future profession» (41,3%), «insufficient motivation of students to work in the specialty» (38,8%).

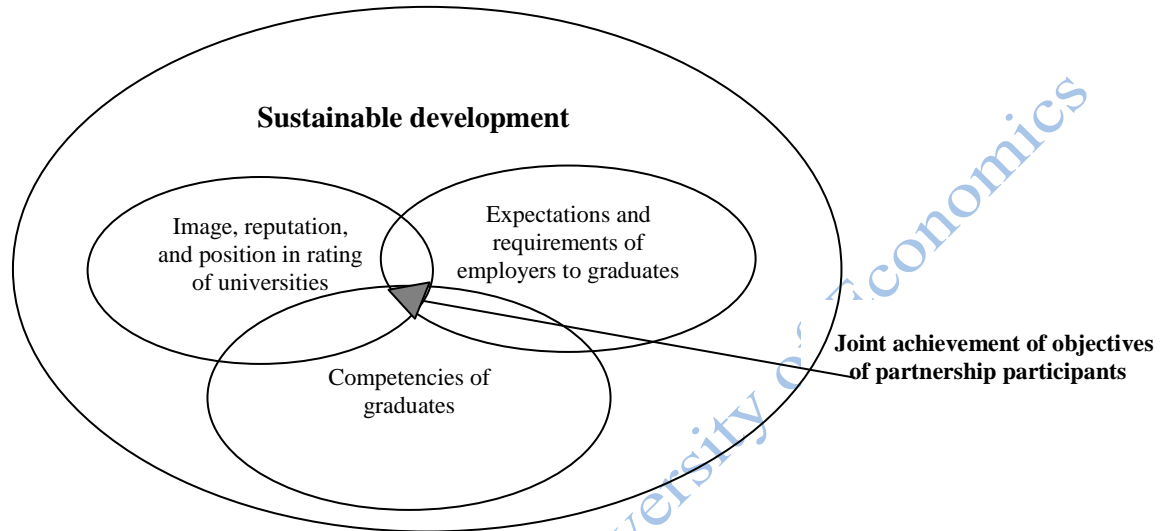
Back in the mid-90-ies, the famous scientists Henry Etzkowitz (USA) and Loet Leydesdorff (Netherlands) developed a triple helix model (Fig. 6), the essence of which is that the potential for innovation and economic development in today's knowledge-oriented society lies in the more important role of universities and close cooperation of university, private enterprises and the state to create new institutional and social forms of production, transformation and application of knowledge. One of the key roles is assigned to universities, which not only perform the functions of a training institution, but also focus on the capitalization of knowledge (Etzkowitz, 2008).



**Figure 6.** A triple helix model

Source: Etzkowitz, 2008

The authors of this article suggest the following model of partnership between universities and employers, the result of the successful implementation of which will be to meet the needs of graduates, employers and universities (Fig. 7).



**Figure 7.** Model of social partnership of universities and employers

Source: developed by the authors

Cooperation in the form of partnership of all participants (employers and universities) will ensure the joint achievement of the objectives of partnership participants. This, as a result, will lead to the formation of competencies of graduates demanded by employers; positive image and reputation; high ratings of universities and meeting of expectations and requirements of employers. Positive image and reputation of universities will become the basis for sustainable development of higher education in Ukraine, inadmissibility of reducing its quality.

## Conclusions

The article further developed the analysis of the directions of social partnership of employers and universities in the sphere of economic education in Ukraine.

As the research showed, the average level employers will find attractive the following:

- joint projects of practitioners from enterprises, lecturers and students to become aware of business problems and problems in the academic environment;
- organization of trainings for practitioners in the role of lecturers with «case studies» as close as possible to the specifics of production;
- exchange of internships for practitioners and lecturers in order to develop such problem tasks for students which will help to form the necessary competencies that are in demand in a particular field of activity;

For employers representing top management, the following directions may be significant and real:

- inviting of experts from enterprises to participate in «round table talks» with students and university lecturers, which will contribute to adjustment of graduates' values, awareness of the detailed specific characteristics of business, leading to the success of a particular business. This will help graduates to choose a model of behavior in situations of risk that are fraught with loss of profits, and sometimes bankruptcy of the enterprise;
- organization of PR events by enterprises to improve their reputation, informing about partnership with universities, demonstrating readiness to contribute to improving the quality of higher education in Ukraine.

Systematic and long-term cooperation of universities with employers, monitoring the specifics of not only the goals of employers, but also their various models of behavior, analysis of information about employment of graduates and problems associated with adaptation of graduates to the professional community, will allow universities to carry out the process of accompanying the orientation to a professional career during training of students.

In order to provide consumers with a wide range of educational services, it is necessary to offer them competencies, which are in demand among employers and provide an opportunity for decent wages. This will be the basis for the self-improvement of graduates and will be in line with current trends in the labor market and will contribute to sustainable development of higher education. In addition, an advantage for employers will be the opportunity to improve sustainable development of the enterprises that will confirm their importance and relevance as mandatory partners.

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