



# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL (VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL) EDUCATION

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## Abstract

*Relevance:* of this article is determined by the need to justify the role of social partnership in the development of vocational (vocational-technical) education through the establishment of collaborative interactions in modernizing the content, forms, methods, and technologies of vocational training for future skilled workers according to labor market demands.

*Objective:* to characterize the directions of development of vocational (vocational-technical) education on the basis of social partnership.

*Methods:* studying scientific sources, legislative and normative-legal documents, empirical data - to determine the impact of social partnership on the development of vocational (vocational-technical) education; theoretical analysis and synthesis, summarization of views regarding the researched problem.

*Results:* based on the analysis of modern educational concepts, legislative and normative-legal documents, scientific sources, empirical data, the directions of development of vocational (vocational-technical) education on the basis of social partnership have been identified through the cooperation between employers and their associations, representatives of state bodies and local self-government, work collectives and trade unions, pedagogical staff of vocational (vocational-technical) education institutions.

*Conclusions:* the directions of development of vocational (vocational-technical) education based on social partnership have been delineated: joint responsibility and fulfillment of obligations to ensure the relevance of curricula and programs to labor market needs; ensuring active participation of partners in shaping modern professional qualifications and providing workplaces for organizing production training; legal regulation of social partnership; funding educational initiatives and infrastructure modernization; implementation of innovative forms, methods, and tools of learning to adapt the educational process to rapidly changing technical and technological processes in various economic sectors; professional orientation and informing youth about the prospects of different professions, labor market needs, and opportunities for professional and career development; conclusion of long-term agreements for graduates' employment; enhancement of pedagogical staff qualifications; monitoring and evaluation of the quality of vocational (vocational-technical) education.

**Keywords:** *social partnership, vocational (vocational-technical) education, employers, students, educational process, labor market, development directions.*

**Introduction.** In today's globalized world, which seeks solutions to the crises that periodically arise in socio-political and economic spheres, there is a compelled attention towards new forms of partnership interaction among various state institutions and social groups. Global experience proves that sustainable development in any field of activity is only possible under the condition of

cooperation between state institutions and social groups in various dimensions.

In the socio-labor dimension, the term "social partnership" is interpreted as the joint activity of relationship subjects in the labor sphere, aimed at harmonizing interests and solving existing problems. The essence of these problems is primarily associated with the existence of the labor market, where there

are sellers and buyers who must negotiate the terms of buying and selling labor services. Such a "bargain" must be conducted in accordance with certain rules and norms that protect the interests of both sides, i.e., based on partnership relations and sophisticated "rules of the game." According to the communicative dimension, social partnership involves continuous dialogue between the subjects of relations in the labor sphere, ensuring negotiation and contractual processes, and harmonizing interests. Based on this, it is legitimate to assert that social partnership is a special type of communicative relations in the socio-labor sphere, characterized by the application of various forms and methods of harmonizing the interests of employees, employers, and their representative bodies, striving for joint agreements, achieving consensus, and jointly implementing measures for various aspects of socio-economic development.

In the organizational-functional dimension, social partnership should be considered as a system of legal and organizational norms, principles, structures, procedures (measures), aimed at ensuring interaction between employees, employers, state authorities regarding the regulation of socio-labor relations at the national, sectoral, regional levels, and at the level of organizations. In the social dimension, the purpose of social partnership is to ensure a balance of socio-economic interests of workers and employers, facilitate mutual understanding between them, prevent conflicts and resolve disputes to create necessary conditions for gradual economic development, and improve the living standards of professionals. Therefore, social partnership can be an effective method of regulating socio-labor relations if it is implemented in innovative forms and based on the principles validated by scientists and confirmed in practice (Bilyi, 2015).

Social partnership is usually carried out at international (mega-economic), national (macroeconomic), sectoral and regional (meso-economic), and production (microeconomic) levels. The main subjects of social partnership in professional (vocational-technical) education (hereinafter P(VT)E) are employers and their associations, as well as the state and local self-government bodies. An important condition for the development of social partnership in Ukraine is the formation and development of civil society and its institutions. Their role, as an external party to the partnership, according to O. Radkevych (2022), lies primarily in social development, thus contributing to improving the quality of P(VT)E, modernizing its

infrastructure, professional competence of pedagogical staff, and conducting analytical studies of the labor market, etc. In most countries of the European Union, these are organizations and movements of civil society (Dzhyha, 2011).

In this context, the importance of interdisciplinary research of social partnership in domestic P(VT)E is actualized, determined by a number of significant determinants: the necessity of institutionalization of social partnership practically in all spheres of society - economy, culture, politics, education.

**Sources.** Social partnership in the field of P(VT)E is a relatively new category that emerged in connection with the change of ownership forms in our country. The purpose of social partnership is to ensure a special type of interaction between P(VT)E institutions and central and local executive bodies, employers' associations, trade unions, enterprises of various forms of ownership and subordination, employment services, and other interested partners, aimed at maximizing the harmonization of interests of all participants in this process (Shcherbak, 2008).

New forms of partner social interaction are especially in demand in modern Ukraine. In previous years, the production sectors of the economy experienced a significant shortage of skilled professionals due to their outflow to the countries of the European Union, where better working conditions were offered. This problem became particularly acute in construction and related industries. With the onset of the war, the number of skilled workers decreased both due to evacuation abroad and due to mobilization into the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Post-war reconstruction, in addition to colossal financial and material resources, will also require a significantly larger number of qualified professional personnel.

The legal regulation of social partnership in Ukraine is carried out in accordance with the Laws of Ukraine "On Public-Private Partnership" (2010), "On Social Dialogue in Ukraine" (2011). There exists a certain practice of partnerships between executive authorities, trade unions, and entrepreneurs' associations. Consultations on the formation and implementation of socio-economic policy are systematically conducted on a bi- or tripartite basis, agreements are concluded to ensure employment, improve work organization and motivation, and social guarantees at all levels (national, regional, sectoral). Within the framework of the General Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and trade union associations, about 70

sectoral, 27 regional, and 55,000 collective agreements are concluded annually. Their implementation is a real stabilizing factor in societal development.

The National Strategy for the Development of Education in Ukraine for the period up to 2021 (2013), approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine of June 25, 2013, No. 344/2013, outlined the problems, challenges, and risks in the development and reform of VET (Vocational Education and Training). Social partnership in the development of VET gained a new impulse under modern conditions. In 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the composition of the National Agency for Qualifications, whose main activities include monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of state policy in the field of qualifications, coordinating stakeholders, developing professional standards, forming a legislative base for the operation of qualification centers, and forecasting labor market needs in professional qualifications.

The Concept of the State Targeted Social Program for the Development of Professional (Vocational-Technical) Education for 2022-2027, approved in 2021, envisages creating conditions for quality training of qualified personnel in VET institutions in line with state policy priorities. The Program's goal is to create conditions for quality training of qualified specialists in line with state policy priorities, focused on personal development and integration into social life, and equal access to VET.

In 2021, in fulfillment of the Decree of the President of Ukraine "On Priority Measures for the Development of Professional (Vocational-Technical) Education" (2021), the Council for the Development of Professional (Vocational-Technical) Education was established as an advisory body to the President of Ukraine. The Council's sessions discuss issues of VET financing, including changes in financing approaches, prospects for increasing teachers' salaries, updating the mechanism for forming state orders for the training of qualified specialists, etc. In 2022, the procedure for approving regional orders during martial law was simplified. Now, regional orders are not coordinated with regional councils of vocational education but are approved only upon submission by local departments of education and science of regional state administrations (Key achievements of vocational education up to the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation and under martial law conditions, 2022).

The research on the problem of state management of the functioning and development of the VET system is evidence of considerable attention of scientists to issues of improving the training of qualified workers in demand in the labor market (Hren, 2009). The conditions of interaction between the labor market and key stakeholders were defined by L. Ilyich (2017), and L. Shevchenko (2008) considered the impact of vocational education on the quality and competitiveness of the workforce and proposed measures to improve the interaction between the labor market and the market of educational services. O. Doronina (2016) identified the main problems of VET development in Ukraine and directions for its reform. V. Radkevich (2022) substantiated the principle of social partnership, according to which, in the scientist's opinion, the maximum coordination of interests of all partnership participants is ensured to overcome the mismatch of labor resources to labor market needs, reduce risks associated with socio-economic changes in society, improve the structure and management of VET institutions, and develop new directions for training qualified specialists, etc.

Of scientific interest are the research results of Y. Tsarova (2022) on the state of development of social partnership in VET institutions; S. Kravets (2022) on the regulatory support for the development of social partnership in the field of VET; O. Radkevich (2023), which substantiated the stages and technology of applying electronic means of internal control and quality assessment of VET, etc.

**Objective:** To characterize the development directions of VET (Vocational Education and Training) based on the principles of social partnership.

**Methods:** The study of scientific sources, legislative and normative-legal documents, empirical data - to determine the state of social partnership's influence on the development of VET; theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization of views regarding the researched problem.

**Results and Discussion:** The formation of an effective system of social partnership in the field of VET under contemporary socio-economic conditions is a complex process, influenced by a wide range of subjective and objective reasons. State authorities and public institutions, as management subjects, must jointly create an effective state-public mechanism capable of solving existing problems in VET. Social partnership in the VET market is effective when representatives of all interested parties work

together, recognizing its benefits for each participant and society as a whole. Addressing these issues ensures the prestige of working professions, the quality of professional training of skilled specialists, and their competitiveness in the labor market.

Simultaneously, social partnership in VET requires mutual responsibility and fulfillment of obligations from all participants. Particularly, VET institutions should ensure the relevance of curricula, and employers should actively participate in forming professional qualifications and provide places for industrial training, internships, and student practices. The state, in turn, should create a legislative base and incentives for developing such partnerships. Consequently, state bodies play a role in coordinating and regulating the professional training process, forming a normative-legal base that regulates the interaction between all participants in the educational process and ensures funding for educational initiatives, including PPP projects. The state can also initiate special programs to support employers who actively cooperate with VET institutions, contributing to their development.

It is noted that public associations can act as intermediaries or advocates for student interests, engage in educational activities, promote awareness of the importance of VET, and influence educational policy. Initiatives arising from such interactions can include the development of educational modules and programs, organizing joint events, and preparing methodological materials. This not only enhances the quality of training of skilled professionals but also adapts the VET system to dynamic technical-technological changes in the economy. Specifically, social partners' participation in developing training programs for various professional profiles is a key aspect of modern VET. For instance, large manufacturing companies can participate in developing curricula focused on skills for operating modern equipment and solving real production tasks. In this context, teachers engage in dialogue with business representatives to understand the qualifications and specializations most in demand in the labor market. Employers, in turn, participate in forming professional standards and provide workplaces for internships and industrial practice.

It is remarked that social partnership enables VET institutions to respond more flexibly to changes in production technologies. For this purpose, enterprises assist VET institutions in updating their material-technical base, providing

access to high-tech equipment, and placing it at the educational-practical centers of the institutions.

Social partnership initiatives in VET include creating joint educational-practical centers and are one of the most effective ways to ensure the practical component of professional education. Such centers are established with the participation of VET institutions, employers, and, if necessary, state bodies, providing financial and regulatory support. They offer students a unique opportunity to gain practical experience, working with real equipment and in real production conditions. These centers enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, which helps to better understand the learning material and develop professionally important skills. For example, in such centers, conditions of real production can be reproduced, where students can learn to assemble, adjust or repair equipment, perform technical measurements, or work with high-tech systems.

Additionally, joint educational and practical centers often implement mentorship programs, where experienced professionals from various fields share their knowledge and professional experience with students. This not only contributes to the development of professional competencies, but also enables students to understand the culture and values of a specific industry or company. Furthermore, these centers can serve as platforms for innovation, where students and teachers collaborate with business representatives to develop new products, technologies, and solutions. This not only enriches the educational process, but also fosters the development of entrepreneurial skills and innovative thinking in future professionals. It is important in the activity of these centers to ensure that the educational process meets the real needs of the labor market, which is key to achieving a high level of employment for graduates of Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions and meeting the needs of employers for qualified specialists.

To adapt the educational process to rapidly changing technical and technological processes in economic sectors, the implementation of innovative pedagogical technologies is crucial. This involves the use of interactive methods such as virtual and augmented reality, gamification of the learning process, and the use of online platforms for distance learning. Such approaches help increase students' motivation to assimilate educational material. Social partnership is important for maintaining a high level of professionalism of pedagogical workers

throughout their professional life. In this context, long-term professional culture development programs are widely used, implemented through corporate training courses, online platforms, and other forms of education. This enables teachers to familiarize themselves with the latest achievements in relevant industries, as well as modern teaching methodologies during professional training, webinars, master classes from industry experts, and internships in industrial companies, etc. The effectiveness of social partnership depends on the systematic and strategic approaches to the development of VET. In this context, the development of long-term programs that include career guidance work, subsequent employment of graduates, and their continuous education is important. One of the key elements of long-term programs is career guidance work, which begins even before students enter VET institutions. This activity aims to inform young people about the prospects of various professions, labor market needs, and opportunities for professional development. Career guidance can be implemented through general secondary education institutions, career centers, job fairs, webinars, and other information campaigns. One of the main goals of social partnership is the employment of graduates of VET institutions. Long-term programs should include mechanisms for cooperation with employers to provide students with their first jobs. This can be achieved through agreements between the VET institution and companies, the creation of joint educational and practical centers, educational-industrial clusters, etc. Clear mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the results of social partners' cooperation are necessary to ensure effectiveness and adjust long-term programs. In particular, monitoring should involve collecting data on the employment of VET institution graduates, their satisfaction with the acquired profession, and employer feedback. Evaluation can be carried out through regular surveys, interviews, and analysis of graduates' professional development trajectories. Such mechanisms enable the identification of strengths and weaknesses of educational programs,

as well as their adaptation to dynamic technical and technological changes in economic sectors.

Conclusions. Based on the above, it can be concluded that social partnership in the field of VET is an important tool for the professional training of qualified specialists and ensuring their competitiveness in the labor market. Accordingly, the state is a guarantor and regulator of this process, creating a legislative basis for social partnership in the field of VET. This includes legislative acts that regulate issues of internships, tax incentives for companies investing in the development of VET, and state support programs for educational institutions that actively cooperate with industry. Such incentives can include subsidies for equipment upgrades, grants for educational projects, and funding for additional professional development programs for pedagogical workers of VET institutions. Directions for the development of VET based on social partnership include: ensuring joint responsibility and fulfillment of obligations regarding the relevance of curricula and programs to labor market needs; forming modern professional qualifications and providing jobs for organizing production training with active participation of partnership subjects; legal regulation of social partnership; financing educational initiatives and modernizing infrastructure; introducing innovative forms, methods, and means of learning to adapt the educational process to rapidly changing technical and technological processes in economic sectors; professional orientation and informing young people about the prospects of various professions, labor market needs, and opportunities for professional and career development; concluding long-term agreements for graduate employment; improving the qualifications of pedagogical workers; monitoring and evaluating the quality of professional (vocational-technical) education. Thus, social partnership in the field of VET positively affects the formation of a quality educational environment, establishing interaction between educational institutions, employers, state bodies, and public organizations (associations) to develop professional and educational standards, curricula, technologies, and teaching methodologies.

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## РОЛЬ СОЦІАЛЬНОГО ПАРТНЕРСТВА У РОЗВИТКУ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ (ПРОФЕСІЙНО-ТЕХНІЧНОЇ) ОСВІТИ

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### Реферат:

*Актуальність* статті зумовлена необхідністю обґрунтування ролі соціального партнерства у розвитку професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти шляхом налагодження партнерської взаємодії у модернізації змісту, форм, методів і технологій професійної підготовки майбутніх кваліфікованих робітників відповідно до вимог ринку праці.

*Мета:* схарактеризувати напрями розвитку професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти на засадах соціального партнерства.

*Методи:* вивчення наукових джерел, законодавчих і нормативно-правових документів, емпіричних даних – для з'ясування стану впливу соціального партнерства на розвиток професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти; теоретичний аналіз і синтез, узагальнення поглядів щодо досліджуваної проблеми.

*Результати:* на основі аналізу сучасних освітніх концепцій, законодавчих і нормативно-правових документів, наукових джерел, емпіричних даних визначено напрями розвитку професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти на засадах соціального партнерства шляхом налагодження співробітництва між роботодавцями та їхніми об'єднаннями, представниками державних органів та місцевого самоврядування, трудовими колективами й професійними спілками, педагогічними працівниками закладів професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти.

*Висновки:* виокремлено напрями розвитку професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти на засадах соціального партнерства: спільна відповідальність та виконання зобов'язань щодо забезпечення релевантності навчальних планів і програм потребам ринку праці; забезпечення активної участі партнерів у формуванні сучасних професійних кваліфікацій та наданні робочих місць для організації виробничого навчання; правове регулювання соціального партнерства; фінансування освітніх ініціатив та модернізації інфраструктури; впровадження інноваційних форм, методів і засобів навчання для адаптації освітнього процесу до швидкозмінних техніко-технологічних процесів у галузях економіки; професійна орієнтація та інформування молоді щодо перспектив різних професій, потреб ринків праці та можливостей професійного і кар'єрного розвитку; укладання довгострокових угод для працевлаштування випускників; підвищення кваліфікації педагогічних працівників; моніторинг та оцінювання якості професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти.

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**Ключові слова:** педагогічні умови, формування професійної компетентності, державно-приватне партнерство в легкій промисловості України, кваліфіковані кадри швейної галузі.

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