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# THE CONCEPT OF "PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN THE SPHERE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION" IN THE DRAFT LAW OF UKRAINE "ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION"

### Roman Fryz

Postgraduate Student, Institute of Vocational Education of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine, <a href="https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1902-3634">https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1902-3634</a>, e-mail: <a href="mailto:roman.fryz@gmail.com">roman.fryz@gmail.com</a>

### Abstract

Relevance of this article lies in the necessity of defining the concept of "public-private partnership in the sphere of vocational education" to construct prospective and effective models of collaboration between public and private partners in vocational education. This is essential to enhance the quality of training for future specialists tailored to the demands of the wartime labor market and to accelerate post-war recovery in the country.

*Purpose*. The purpose of the article is to analyze how the concept of "public-private partnership in the sphere of vocational education" is represented in the draft Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" as a distinctive framework for the development of vocational education.

*Methods*. The research methodology includes theoretical methods (analysis to identify the set of characteristics of public-private partnerships in vocational education; abstraction to highlight essential features and distinguish them from other attributes; synthesis to ensure consistency in defining the concept; comparison to establish a generic concept and differentiate specific features; generalization to formulate the definition) and empirical methods (studying literary sources, scientific works, and regulatory documents).

*Results*. Based on the analysis of regulatory documents and scientific sources, the study identifies the essential characteristics of public-private partnerships in the sphere of vocational education and formulates a definition of "public-private partnership in the sphere of vocational education."

Conclusions. In the context of the provisions of the draft Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education," the concept of "public-private partnership in the sphere of vocational education" is defined as a collaboration between public partners (state or municipal vocational education institutions) and private partners (enterprises, institutions, organizations, excluding economic entities in the public and municipal sectors of the economy). This partnership is carried out under a contractual framework to enhance the quality of vocational training, retraining, and advanced training for youth and adults.

**Keywords:** Public-private partnership, vocational education, vocational education institutions, concept definition, characteristics, purpose, draft Law "On Vocational Education"

Introduction. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as a phenomenon is the result of a prolonged evolution in the interaction between the state and private capital. The intensive institutionalization of PPP in developed economies occurred during the second half of the 20th century. The beginning of the 21st century is characterized by the structural and functional diversification of PPP models and the

increasing complexity of PPP relations. From classical concession agreements to progressive forms of joint management and innovative partnerships, each model is adapted to specific needs and conditions. Consequently, at the national level, we observe a diverse interpretation of PPP, even when the relationships between partners remain similar. The practice of implementing PPP across

industries and sectors further complicates the system of relationships between participants and necessitates a more adaptive approach to management and regulation. Such typical challenges have also affected the development of PPP in Ukraine.

The scope of PPP project implementation is critical, as it influences the choice of partnership models, the mobilization of appropriate resources, and the establishment of specific project goals and objectives. The scope determines how relationships between public and private partners are structured, what legislative requirements are applied, and how the interests of all stakeholders are considered.

Thus, the application scope defines the essential characteristics of PPP in vocational education. One notable feature is the unique objective of collaboration, which combines the interests of public and private partners with societal interests—improving the quality of vocational training for future skilled workers. Therefore, it is inappropriate to define "public-private partnership in vocational education" as a derivative of the generic terms "public-private partnership" or "public-private partnership in education."

The development directions of PPP in vocational education are determined by the corresponding foundations of state policy, principles, and concepts enshrined in legislative acts. The central legislative framework is the specialized Law of Ukraine "On Vocational (Vocational-Technical) Education." The draft law "On Vocational Education" may replace the current law in the future, institutionalizing a certain vision of the essence of PPP in vocational education for a prolonged period and establishing the potential for implementing its prospective models. Thus, in this study, the draft law "On Vocational Education" is viewed as a kind of concept for the development of PPP in vocational education.

**Sources:** The term "public-private partnership" was first defined in Ukrainian legislation by the Law of Ukraine "On Public-Private Partnership" (2010) as cooperation between state authorities, local self-government bodies, and legal entities (excluding state and municipal enterprises) or individual entrepreneurs based on a contract (Paragraph 1, Part 1, Article 1). In essence, the law primarily focuses on the concession of

existing, reconstructed, or newly created large property complexes, infrastructure facilities, and natural resources. Only on May 24, 2016, was the scope of PPP extended to include the provision of educational services, along with the clarification of PPP characteristics, which were incorporated into the definition of "public-private partnership" (On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine to Remove Regulatory Barriers for the Development of Public-Private Partnership and Stimulate Investment in Ukraine (First Edition), 2016, Subparagraph 1, Paragraph 5, Section I).

On September 28, 2017, the new Law of Ukraine "On Education" (2017) recognized PPP as a foundation of state policy in the field of education (Paragraph 33, Part 1, Article 6) and specified the directions for implementing PPP in education (Part 3, Article 81). However, this list does not allow for a clear understanding of the content and scope of the concept of PPP in education. The new Law of Ukraine "On Education" (2017) also created a legal conflict by limiting the range of public PPP partners in education solely to state authorities (Part 2, Article 81). On October 20, 2019, with the entry into force of the new Law of Ukraine "On Concessions" (2019), the term "public-private partnership" was further specified (Paragraph 2, Subparagraph 19, Paragraph 1, Section XII). The public partner is the state body authorized to manage the corresponding state-owned object. Private partners no longer include individual entrepreneurs. However, this law did not resolve the aforementioned legal conflict.

On April 2, 2024, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine presented a draft law "On Vocational Education" (Ministry of Education and Science presents a draft of the new law "On Vocational Education," 2024), which proposes significant changes to the regulatory framework for public-private partnerships (PPP) in the field of vocational education. These changes will, in turn, affect the definition and scope of the concept of "public-private partnership in vocational education." The draft law "On Vocational Education" introduces the following innovations:

 Exclusion of PPP in vocational education from the regulation of the Law of Ukraine "On Public-Private Partnership" (Draft Law "On Vocational Education," 2024, subparagraph 15, paragraph 4, Section X). As a result, PPP in vocational education will lose mandatory attributes, such as the creation or reconstruction of a partnership object and/or its management; the long-term nature of the relationship; the transfer of part of the risks to the private partner; and the private partner's investment in the PPP object. This also applies to the principles of public-private partnership, including the principle of ensuring greater efficiency than if the activity were carried out by the public partner without private partner involvement.

- Clarification of the list of PPP areas in vocational education in the Law of Ukraine "On Education" (paragraph 39, subparagraph 20, paragraph 4, Section X).
- Establishment of a broad list of PPP areas in vocational education (Part 4, Article 69).
- Narrowing or changing the range of public partners exclusively to vocational education institutions (VEIs) (Part 10, Article 69).
- Removal of the prohibition on transferring state and/or municipal property to private partners for operational management, lease, or concession (paragraphs 42, 52, subparagraph 20, paragraph 4, Section X).
- Preservation of the principle of competitive selection of a private partner in cases where there are two or more applicants, with the terms of the competition approved by the supervisory board of the VEI (paragraph 14, Part 4, Article 44, Part 3, Article 69).
- O. Slobodyanyk (2022, p. 168), based on an analysis of a wide range of foreign and domestic scientific sources, defines the essence of "public-private partnership in vocational (vocational-technical) education" as "the interaction of vocational education institutions and business structures based on mutual interests to achieve common goals; as cooperation between the state and business to implement educational projects based on legislative acts and special agreements." Z. Ryabova (2022, p. 248) interprets PPP in vocational education as "cooperation between an educational institution and private organizations in the implementation of an investment project in a specific area of societal activity and achieving a specific social effect during

the project's implementation; as a combination of the joint efforts of an educational institution and private organizations to implement specific projects, resulting in the development of a competitive specialist."

Research by scholars has also revealed that PPP in vocational education is "a system of longterm relationships between public and non-public entities, enabling the expansion of their capabilities determining assuming for jointly goals, responsibility for decision-making, attracting additional investments to improve the quality and accessibility of vocational (vocational-technical) education, modernizing educational infrastructure, improving management technologies, developing the professional competencies of employees of enterprises and institutions" (Radkevych, Popova et al., 2023, p. 175).

V. Radkevych (2022, p. 110), exploring the principles of PPP development in vocational education, defines PPP in vocational education as "a system of long-term, mutually beneficial contractual economic and organizational relationships between public and non-public entities to attract additional investments for the development of vocational education, increase the level of shared responsibility for decision-making in the public interest, and achieve pedagogical, social, and economic effects."

S. Kravets (2022, p. 132), analyzing the effectiveness of the legal framework for PPP in the development of vocational education, concludes that updating the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational (Vocational-Technical) Education" with the implementation of innovative partnership models and developing a PPP development concept in vocational education based on updated legislation are key pathways for reforming this system.

Thus, scientific research primarily focuses on establishing the essence of the concept of "public-private partnership in vocational education." However, insufficient attention has been paid to identifying a set of attributes for this concept to ensure the consistency of its definition. Moreover, the concept of "public-private partnership in vocational education" has not been studied in the context of prospective changes to special laws regulating the field of vocational education.

**Purpose**: To analyze the conceptualization of "public-private partnership in vocational

education" as presented in the draft Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" as a distinctive framework for the development of vocational education.

Methods: The study employs theoretical methods, including analysis (to identify the set of characteristics of public-private partnerships (PPP) in education), abstraction (to highlight essential features and differentiate them from others), synthesis (to ensure coherence in defining the concept), comparison (to establish a generic concept and specific distinctions), and generalization (to formulate the concept of PPP). Empirical methods were also used, such as the examination of literary sources, scientific works, and regulatory documents. The method of analysis was applied to distinguish the characteristics of PPP in vocational education, abstraction was used to isolate essential features, synthesis facilitated the alignment of the definition, comparison identified general and specific aspects, and generalization enabled the formulation of the concept. Empirical methods supported the analysis of relevant literature, scientific studies, and legal frameworks.

Results and Discussion: PPP can be viewed both as a process and a phenomenon, depending on the context and perspective. As a process, PPP is characterized by dynamism, continuous sequences of actions, and interactions between public and private sectors aimed at achieving a common goal. As a process, PPP unfolds in developmental stages: initiation, planning, implementation, operation and management, evaluation, and closure.

PPP as a phenomenon represents a socioeconomic construct—a broad concept reflecting general trends in state-private sector interactions, established models and forms of collaboration, and the social significance of partnership. PPP exists as an influential factor shaping societal and economic structures.

In scholarly literature, the relationships between public and private partners are predominantly characterized by collaboration, cooperation, and interaction. Collaboration and cooperation are often used synonymously (Busel, 2005, p. 1367). The term "interaction" is broader and may refer to relationships between objects and phenomena (Busel, 2005, p. 125). In comparison, "cooperation" implies: a shared goal among

participants, complementary contributions utilizing unique resources for better outcomes than individually possible, coordination of actions and responsibilities, ongoing open communication, and conflict resolution. In this context, PPP should be regarded as a process of cooperation—a sequence of actions by public and private entities to achieve a shared goal. Therefore, cooperation is the closest generic concept for refining the meaning of "public-private partnership in vocational education."

The essence of "public-private partnership in vocational education" lies in the set of characteristics defining PPP as a cooperative process, distinguishing it from other forms of cooperation and rendering it unique. These characteristics should sufficiently unify various PPP processes in vocational education as elements of a single class. The concept encompasses the following key features: the foundation for cooperation, participants, and the purpose of cooperation.

Foundation for Cooperation: The basis of cooperation is an agreement. Legislation establishes that PPP cooperation occurs based on a contract (On Public-Private Partnership, 2010, para. 2, Part 1, Art. 1; On Education, 2017, Part 2, Art. 81). The draft law "On Vocational Education" proposes not only to maintain this approach in vocational education but also to advance it by introducing model PPP agreements specific to vocational education. Developing and approving these agreements would fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (Draft Law "On Vocational Education," para. 9, Art. 56, para. 1, 3, Part 1, Art. 69). O. Vynnyk (2023, p. 1, 3) emphasizes that while the contractual form of PPP dominates, international experience underscores the effectiveness of institutional forms. The absence of institutional PPP forms and conditions for their application is considered a shortcoming of Ukraine's current PPP regulatory framework. The draft law "On Vocational Education" proposes amendments to the Law "On Education," introducing coownership of educational institutions and legal entities involved in educational activities within PPPs (Draft Law "On Vocational Education," para. 41, subpara. 20, p. 4, Sect. X). Establishing joint educational institutions constitutes the institutional form of PPP (Radkevych, 2024, p. 4). However, this formulation in the draft law may lead to legal contradictions rather than expand PPP implementation beyond contractual forms.

Participants: The participants are public and private partners, representing the contracting parties in PPPs for vocational education. According to O. Radkevych, the PPP structure comprises public, private, and community sectors. Public sector representatives include authorized state agencies capable of entering into PPP contracts. Private sector participants are legal entities, such as private companies and consortia. The community sector involves financiers, operational consultants, and the general public (Radkevych, 2022, pp. 215–217). Since community sector involvement is optional, only public and private partners are considered essential characteristics of the PPP concept in vocational education.

Legislation categorizes public partners as state bodies managing state assets and local government authorities, while private partners include legal entities other than state and municipal enterprises, institutions, and organizations (On Public-Private Partnership, 2010, para. 2, Part 1, Art. 1). The draft law "On Vocational Education" limits public sector representation to vocational education institutions and includes enterprises, institutions, and organizations without specification in the private partner category (Draft Law "On Vocational Education," para. 1, Part 1, Art. 69). This broad formulation blurs the distinction between public and private sectors, hindering the clear classification of subjects as public, private, or ineligible PPP partners in vocational education. Clarifying the scope of "private partner" requires excluding entities from the state and municipal economic sectors (Commercial Code of Ukraine, 2003, Part 2, 3, Art. 22, Part 3, Art. 24). Similarly, the category of public partners (vocational education institutions) should be limited to state and municipal institutions.

Purpose of Cooperation: The diverse forms of PPP collaboration in vocational education make defining its essence complex, particularly by listing actions or forms of cooperation. The interaction of partners in cooperation aims to achieve a shared goal. While initiating cooperation, each partner pursues individual goals and interests, but some overlap, resulting in a common goal for cooperation.

The cooperation of a private partner with vocational education institutions (VEIs) may be of interest for the following reasons:

- Training employees for their own needs: VEIs prepare workers to meet the specific needs of the private partner's activities, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills from the very first day of employment.
- Preparing workers to work with their products: During their training, workers acquire specialized competencies for handling materials, equipment, or technologies produced or supplied by the private partner.

The goals of VEIs, as public partners, are limited to their primary statutory activity—education. Cooperation within the framework of public-private partnerships (PPP) enables VEIs to improve the organization, provision, and implementation of the educational process by utilizing the means prescribed by law and specified in agreements.

Thus, by cooperating with private partners, VEIs aim to enhance the quality of their educational activities, defined as the level of organization, provision, and implementation of the educational process that ensures individuals receive quality education in compliance with the requirements established by legislation and/or the contract for the provision of educational services (*On Education*, 2017, para. 30, part 1, article 1).

The means of improving the quality of educational activities include: funding VEIs by private partners; updating and modernizing the infrastructure and material-technical base of VEIs; revising standards and curricula to align with labor market needs; introducing modern forms, methods, and technologies of teaching and practical training; and ensuring industrial practice or internships are provided by private partners (Lulkova, 2023, pp. 123-125).

Therefore, the shared goal of cooperation between public and private partners in vocational education is to enhance the quality of vocational training, retraining, and skills upgrading for youth and adults.

The defining characteristics of cooperation in the field of vocational education are the set goal of cooperation and the specific category of public partners—vocational education institutions.

Other characteristics of PPPs, such as "longterm relationships, combining the assets and managerial skills of public and private partners, mutual benefits, risk distribution, maintaining public or communal ownership of PPP facilities, ensuring the provision of high-quality and cost-effective services (as an indicator of PPP efficiency), and meeting public interests" (Dutko, 2020, p. 111), are not considered essential attributes of the concept of public-private partnerships in vocational education. Additionally, the long-term nature of relationships as a characteristic must have quantitative parameters proportionate to different forms of cooperation. The integration of assets and management skills (resources) of public and private partners, mutual benefits, and risk sharing are attributes partially encompassed by the broader concept "cooperation" and are material terms of PPP agreements. Ensuring the provision of high-quality and cost-effective services, as well as meeting public

interests, is incorporated into the defined goal of partnership in vocational education.

Conclusions: Summarizing the concept of "public-private partnership in vocational education" within the context of the draft law On Vocational Education, we define it as cooperation between public partners (state or communal VEIs) and private partners (enterprises, institutions. organizations, excluding business entities in the state and communal sectors of the economy) based on a contract aimed at enhancing the quality of vocational training, retraining, and skills upgrading for youth and adults. This specific definition allows for the construction of promising and effective models of cooperation between VEIs and private partners in the context of their practical implementation and enables a comparative analysis of theoretically defined conceptual directions for the development of PPPs in vocational education.

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## ЗМІСТ ПОНЯТТЯ «ДЕРЖАВНО-ПРИВАТНЕ ПАРТНЕРСТВО У СФЕРІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ОСВІТИ» У ПРОЄКТІ ЗАКОНУ УКРАЇНИ «ПРО ПРОФЕСІЙНУ ОСВІТУ»

## Роман Фриз

Aспірант, Інститут професійної освіти НАПН України, <a href="https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1902-3634">https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1902-3634</a>, e-mail: roman.fryz@gmail.com

### Реферат:

Актуальність статті зумовлена необхідністю визначення змісту поняття «державно-приватне партнерство в сфері професійної освіти» для побудови перспективних та ефективних моделей співпраці державних і приватних партнерів у сфері професійної освіти для підвищення якості підготовки майбутніх фахівців для воєнного ринку праці і прискорення повоєнного відновлення країни

*Мета*: проаналізувати представлення поняття «державно-приватне партнерство у сфері професійної освіти» у змісті проєкту Закону України «Про професійну освіту» як своєрідної концепції розвитку професійної освіти.

*Методи:* теоретичні (аналізу — для виділення сукупності ознак державно-приватного партнерства у сфері професійної освіти, абстрагування — для виділення істотних ознак і відокремлення їх від інших характеристик, синтезу — для забезпечення співмірності визначення поняття; порівняння — для встановлення родового поняття і видової відмінності; узагальнення — для формулювання поняття), емпіричні (вивчення літературних джерел, наукових праць, нормативно-правових документів).

*Результати:* на основі аналізу нормативно-правових документів і наукових джерел визначено сутнісні ознаки державно-приватного партнерства в сфері професійної освіти, сформульовано поняття «державно-приватне партнерство у сфері професійної освіти».

Висновки: в контексті положень проєкту закону «Про професійну освіту» поняття «державно-приватне партнерство у сфері професійної освіти» визначено як співпрацю між державним партнером (державними або комунальними закладами професійної освіти) та приватними партнерами (підприємствами, установами, організаціями, крім суб'єктів господарювання державного та комунального сектора економіки), що здійснюється на основі договору з метою підвищення якості професійної підготовки, перепідготовки та підвищення кваліфікації молоді та дорослого населення.

**Ключові слова:** державно-приватне партнерство, професійна освіта, заклади професійної освіти, зміст поняття, ознаки, мета, проєкт закону «Про професійну освіту».

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