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PUBLIC–PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION OF CHINA: PROSPECTS FOR UKRAINE

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the governance of public–private partnership (PPP) in the system of higher education of the People’s Republic of China and outlines possible directions for its adaptation within the Ukrainian context. In the conditions of global transformation of higher education, financial constraints, technological modernization, and increasing expectations regarding graduate employability, universities are required to develop new governance mechanisms that enable effective cooperation between public institutions and private sectors. In this regard, public–private partnership is increasingly considered not only as a financial instrument for infrastructure development but also as an institutional mechanism that strengthens strategic interaction between universities, industry, and the state.

The study is based on the theoretical principles of public governance and institutional theory, which emphasize the importance of coordinated interaction among stakeholders in the implementation of long-term development strategies. The concept of policy transfer is also applied to analyze how elements of international experience can be adapted within specific national contexts.

The results demonstrate that PPP governance in Chinese higher education is systematically integrated into national modernization strategies, including the “Education Modernization 2035” framework, the Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan, and the policy of deepening industry–education integration. These policy instruments institutionalize enterprise participation in applied educational programs, joint research laboratories, innovation platforms, and digital infrastructure development within universities.

The study argues that the Chinese experience may serve as an important reference point for Ukraine in the context of implementing the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education (2022–2032). In particular, the development of sectoral PPP guidelines, strengthening university–industry cooperation, and integrating digital transformation into higher education governance may contribute to modernization and institutional development of Ukrainian universities.

Keywords: *public–private partnership, higher education governance, China, Ukraine, education reform, institutional cooperation.*



УПРАВЛІННЯ ДЕРЖАВНО-ПРИВАТНИМ ПАРТНЕРСТВОМ У СИСТЕМІ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ КИТАЮ: ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ДЛЯ УКРАЇНИ

АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті здійснено аналіз особливостей управління державно-приватним партнерством у системі вищої освіти Китайської Народної Республіки та визначено можливості використання відповідного досвіду в умовах реформування української системи вищої освіти. У сучасних умовах глобальної трансформації освітнього простору, фінансових обмежень, цифровізації та посилення вимог до якості підготовки фахівців університети змушені шукати нові механізми управління, що забезпечують ефективну взаємодію між державою, бізнесом та закладами вищої освіти. У цьому контексті державно-приватне партнерство розглядається не лише як інструмент залучення фінансових ресурсів для розвитку освітньої інфраструктури, але і як важливий механізм управління, спрямований на посилення інституційної взаємодії між університетами, підприємствами та органами державної влади.

Теоретичною основою дослідження є положення теорії публічного управління та інституційної теорії, які підкреслюють значення координації діяльності різних суб'єктів у процесі реалізації довгострокових стратегій розвитку. У дослідженні також використано концепцію трансферу політики, що дозволяє проаналізувати можливості адаптації міжнародного досвіду з урахуванням національних особливостей розвитку системи освіти.

Встановлено, що механізми державно-приватного партнерства у сфері вищої освіти Китаю інтегровані в національні стратегії модернізації, зокрема у програму «Освіта – 2035», Програму середньо- та довгострокового розвитку освіти, а також політику поглиблення інтеграції освіти і виробництва. Зазначені документи сприяли інституціоналізації участі підприємств у розробленні прикладних освітніх програм, створенні спільних наукових лабораторій, розвитку інноваційних платформ та цифрової інфраструктури університетів.

Доведено, що досвід Китаю може бути використаний в Україні в межах реалізації Стратегії розвитку вищої освіти (2022–2032), зокрема для посилення університетсько-промислової взаємодії, розроблення галузевих рекомендацій щодо державно-приватного партнерства та інтеграції цифрової трансформації в систему управління закладами вищої освіти.

Ключові слова: державно-приватне партнерство, управління вищою освітою, Китай, Україна, реформа освіти, інституційна співпраця.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of higher education systems in the twenty-first century is closely linked to processes of economic restructuring, digitalization, and global competition for knowledge and innovation. Universities are increasingly expected to combine academic excellence with applied research, technological transfer, and responsiveness to labour market demands, particularly in knowledge-based economies (OECD, 2023). Under such circumstances, cooperation between higher education institutions and business entities becomes not merely desirable but structurally necessary.

Public-private partnership (PPP) has gradually evolved from an infrastructure financing mechanism into a broader governance instrument facilitating coordination between the state, educational institutions, and private actors (World Bank, 2017). In



governance literature, such coordination is interpreted as a shift from hierarchical administration toward network-based interaction between public and private stakeholders (Osborne, 2010). In the field of higher education, PPP contributes to curriculum modernization, development of research laboratories, digital infrastructure renewal, and the integration of applied training elements.

The People's Republic of China demonstrates a systematic approach to embedding PPP into higher education governance. Educational modernization strategies adopted at the national level have positioned universities as key actors in innovation-driven economic growth. Within this framework, cooperation with industry has become institutionalized and strategically coordinated.

For Ukraine, which is implementing the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education (2022–2032) and facing the challenges of post-war reconstruction, the analysis of international experience is of particular relevance. The Chinese model offers insights into how coordinated governance and structured partnership mechanisms may contribute to educational modernization.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this article is to analyze the governance of public–private partnership in the system of higher education of China and to determine prospects for its contextual adaptation within the Ukrainian higher education system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

The theoretical foundation of the research is grounded in public governance theory, which emphasizes coordination among public authorities, private sector actors, and educational institutions in achieving long-term development objectives (Osborne, 2010). Institutional theory is also relevant, as it highlights the importance of regulatory frameworks and organizational structures in shaping partnership mechanisms (North, 1990).

The concept of policy transfer provides an analytical lens for examining how elements of Chinese experience may improve reform processes in Ukraine while taking into account national institutional specificities (Stone, 2012).

The research methodology includes analysis of strategic and regulatory documents of the People's Republic of China related to education modernization and industry–education integration, review of academic literature on PPP development, and comparative generalization for identifying directions of possible adaptation in Ukraine.

RESULTS

Normative and Strategic Foundations of PPP in China

The development of public–private partnership in Chinese higher education is embedded in national modernization strategies. The Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020) emphasized improving the relevance of educational programs to socio-economic needs and strengthening practical training components (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2010).

Later, “Education Modernization 2035” defined innovation-driven development and digital transformation as central priorities of educational policy (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2019). Within this strategic vision, universities are expected to cooperate closely with industry in research, applied programs, and technology transfer.

The “Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Industry and Education,” adopted by the State Council in 2017, provided concrete mechanisms for systematic enterprise participation in curriculum development, joint laboratories, and dual training formats (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2017). These initiatives contributed to



institutionalizing partnership at national and regional levels. Recent empirical studies confirm that PPP implementation in China has gradually shifted toward structured governance models linking universities with industrial innovation clusters (Zuo et al., 2024).

The 14th Five-Year Plan further reinforced the integration of higher education into industrial and digital development strategies, linking university research capacity with high-tech industries and regional innovation clusters (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2021).

Institutional Forms of University–Industry Cooperation

PPP in Chinese higher education is implemented through several institutional forms. One of the most widespread is the creation of joint research platforms. Universities cooperate with enterprises in establishing laboratories focused on artificial intelligence, information technologies, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing (World Bank, 2017; UNESCO, 2025).

Enterprises actively participate in designing applied undergraduate programs. Representatives of companies are involved in developing curricula, supervising student projects, and delivering practical modules. Such cooperation ensures alignment between educational content and labour market needs, reflecting global trends in outcome-oriented higher education reforms (OECD, 2023).

Another significant dimension is digital transformation. Technology corporations collaborate with universities in creating smart campus infrastructure, cloud-based educational platforms, and digital management systems. During the COVID-19 pandemic, coordinated interaction between universities and technology providers ensured continuity of learning processes.

Financial cooperation is typically based on co-investment models. Enterprises provide funding, equipment, or technological expertise, while universities contribute research capacity and human capital. Government incentives, including innovation grants and policy support, encourage enterprise engagement.

Governance and Organizational Embeddedness

The sustainability of PPP mechanisms in China is supported by internal university governance structures. Many institutions have established specialized departments responsible for industry cooperation. These units coordinate agreements, supervise joint projects, and ensure compliance with academic standards.

The state maintains a coordinating role in aligning partnership initiatives with national priorities. PPP is not reduced to financial contribution but operates as a governance instrument linking educational development with industrial policy (World Bank, 2017).

However, certain structural challenges exist. Scholars note potential tensions between applied orientation and fundamental research. Additionally, regional disparities influence the distribution of partnership opportunities, as leading universities in economically developed regions benefit more from cooperation with major corporations (Sychova & Samofalova, 2023)

Prospects for Adaptation in Ukraine

Ukraine possesses a legal framework for public–private partnership through the Law of Ukraine “On Public–Private Partnership” (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2010). Nevertheless, PPP projects have predominantly been concentrated in infrastructure sectors rather than higher education, and sector-specific mechanisms in the educational sphere remain insufficiently institutionalized (Moskvichova, 2016; Dmytryshyn, 2019).



The Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine (2022–2032) emphasizes modernization, digitalization, and strengthening links with the labour market (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2022). However, sector-specific mechanisms for systematic enterprise participation remain underdeveloped, despite growing recognition of PPP as a modernization instrument in Ukrainian higher education (Kruhlov, 2025).

Drawing from Chinese experience, Ukraine may consider:

- developing sectoral guidelines for PPP in higher education;
- strengthening enterprise involvement in curriculum design;
- promoting joint research platforms in priority economic sectors;
- integrating digital transformation initiatives through structured cooperation with

technology companies.

Adaptation must be consistent with Ukrainian legal traditions, principles of university autonomy, and European integration commitments. Therefore, international experience should serve as a reference model rather than a direct template.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The analysis demonstrates that public–private partnership in Chinese higher education functions as an institutionalized governance instrument integrated into national modernization strategies. Cooperation between universities and enterprises contributes to applied training, digital infrastructure development, and research commercialization, which corresponds with international recommendations on PPP governance in education.

For Ukraine, strengthening university–industry cooperation may become an important factor in modernization and post-war reconstruction. In the context of post-war recovery, scholars emphasize the importance of public–private cooperation for rebuilding infrastructure and strengthening institutional capacity. However, successful adaptation requires regulatory clarity, transparency, and gradual implementation.

Further research may focus on empirical analysis of PPP practices in Ukrainian universities, evaluation of pilot initiatives, and assessment of digital–PPP integration mechanisms.

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