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METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS

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Abstract. The objective prerequisites for the transition from a strategy of confrontation to partnership relations in a competitive struggle for the consumer predetermine the need for a clear definition of such concepts as partnership relations and partner networks, since it is the partnership relations that provide market participants with more competitive advantages than they could have under condition of separate activities. *The subject-matter of the study* is a methodological solution to the problem of determining the effectiveness of establishing partnership relations and the formation of partner networks. After all, the effectiveness of the partner network can only be achieved if the effectiveness of the partnership relations is achieved. Therefore, *the purpose of the article* is to develop methodological approaches to determining the effectiveness of partner networks through the evaluation of partnership relations. In order to achieve this goal, the following *research methods* have been used in the paper: analysis and generalization of theoretical sources and scientific literature; abstract-logical method in the process of theoretical generalizations and formation of conclusions; prognostic and diagnostic; general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis. As *a result of the research*, the methodology of constructing a morphological matrix of the effectiveness of a partner network based on integrated indicators of the sustainability and reliability of partnership relations was proposed. In order to determine the components of sustainability, a methodology for calculating the integrated value of the sustainability index of the partnership relations is proposed. Herewith, five interrelated components are taken into account that are equally important for strategizing partnership relations such as economic, marketing, social, environmental sustainability, and also the sustainability of partner networks in general. The algorithm of quantitative and qualitative assessment of the reliability of partnership relations involves seven stages. In particular, the definition of requirements for the reliability of partnership relations within a certain partner network, the definition and adjustment of the indicators of the rating system of the reliability of partnership relations and their importance for the partner network, the formation of the rating of partnership relations by the values of the generalized index of reliability, rating partners within a specific partner network by the level of reliability. Therefore, the proposed expert methodical approach to the assessment of the reliability of partnership relations involves the calculation of three characteristics of reliability (partner, production and economic activities, partner network in general) and is an applied instrument set for a new solution to the scientific and applied problem in the area of formation and development of partner relations in the economy of Ukraine in order to ensure a high level of management of them in resource constraints.

Key words: partnership relations, partner network, reliability of partnership relations, effectiveness of partnership relations.

JEL Classification: M30, M31

1. Introduction

The influence of globalization processes on economic activity contributed to the active search for new sources of competitive advantages. It is effectively established relations with partners that become a unique asset, which can positively affect the competitiveness of market actors.

A partnership can be defined as a type of economic relations based on joint actions and efforts of the parties, united by a common interest, aimed at achieving specific goals well understood by the participants in such relationships. In other words, partner economic relations are understood as a set of ways and forms of purposeful organization of relations between the parties to achieve common goals.

Thus, it can be argued that there are objective prerequisites for the transition from a strategy of

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confrontation to partnership relations as the basis for the interaction of business entities in the structure of the national economy. The partnership reflects:
– the natural development of relations in the market, reproducing socio-economic interconnections, which envisage joint actions and efforts of the parties, united by the common interest;
– relationships of equal subjects who are aware of the importance of their actions for the partner and build their activities in such a way as to meet the expectations and achieve the set goal; interaction in the case of mutual trust, confidence, and joint activities aimed at achieving a common result.

Partnership relationships provide market participants with access to more diverse resources than they would have had based on a stand-alone activity. Therefore, the purpose of the partnership relations is to get access to the necessary resources, markets, technologies or to the distribution channels.

At the same time, it should be noted that at the present stage of development of the domestic economy, competition in the traditional form, as a rivalry between individual enterprises, began to be replaced by a rivalry between entire production chains. Therefore, it is worthwhile to talk about the formation of partner networks as a sustainable formation of two or more market entities in order to exchange information (ideas, technologies, resources, etc.) and increase their performance. The main characteristics of partner networks are information, cooperation with partners, and industrial capacity.

The exchange of information in the network provides the participating companies with ideas for generating innovations in the production of goods and services, for increasing the efficiency of production or for finding new customers and new sales markets.

Cooperation in a partner network allows combining resources and knowledge, helps participating companies benefit from the use of assets and experience of other companies.

Joining of participating companies into partner networks allows them to increase their industrial capacity and thus contributes to obtaining competitive advantages in the market.

Partner networks, as multidimensional production-economic systems created as a result of the activity of two or more market actors, can be considered as a focused set of processes of different nature in order to establish and consolidate the interaction between the internal elements of this system and external management structures that interact on a long-term basis in order to consider the interests of all participants in economic relations.

Today, when building partner networks, the propensity to cooperate and the constant search for the most effective partnership relations, through which the reorientation of activities is carried out in accordance with market conditions, is becoming increasingly important, that is, partnership relations allow partner companies to achieve, maintain, and enhance their competitive advantages.

Therefore, an important methodological problem of establishing partnership relations and forming partner networks is the problem of determining their effectiveness. After all, the effectiveness of the partner network can only be achieved if the effectiveness of the partnership relations is achieved. Under effective partnership relations, we understand the mutually beneficial relationship between sellers, buyers, competitors, suppliers, intermediaries, personnel, shareholders, investors, and other stakeholders, as a result of which the production and economic activity as of a specific market player so of the entire partner network, at the expense of consolidation of intersectoral and interregional interaction, allows ensuring and coordinating the economic interests of all interested market players.

2. Literature review and research methodology

In the works of well-known scholars such as R. Morgan and S. Hunt (2011), the commitment-trust theory, which in their opinion is a key factor in the success of partnership relations, is considered thoroughly and in detail. Economic rents related to network activity were considered by J. Dyer and H. Singh (1998). The formation of partnership relations in logistics channels is highlighted in the writings by B. J. LaLonde and M. C. Cooper (1989). M. Christopher (2004) studied "competition of supply chains." Issues of the monetary and non-monetary value of partnership relations were investigated in the work by M. Tewes (2003). On such an important characteristic of partnerships as a synergy, J. Bivainis (2006) emphasizes in his research (2006).

The formation of competitive advantages of the enterprise in the context of relationship management with business partners was investigated in the writings of Ya. Kryvoruchko (2010), the issues of the relationship between companies and consumers in the industrial markets were thoroughly considered in the works of S. Kushch (2006), the study of competitive advantages on the basis of partnership relations was thoroughly covered in the work by M. Porter (2005).

The following research methods are used in the paper: analysis and generalization of theoretical sources and scientific literature; abstract-logical method in the process of theoretical generalizations and formation of conclusions; prognostic and diagnostic; general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis. In particular, comparative analysis – to study and compare the factors that influence the formation and development of partnership relationships and partner networks; semantic analysis – to clarify the essence of the main categories; morphological analysis – to clarify the composition of the conceptual and categorical

framework on the problem; system – for building a system of indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of partnership relations.

3. The main characteristics of the effectiveness of partnership relations

Given the fact that the process of forming partnership relations is complex, the results, conclusions, and overall outcomes of the partnership are diverse. That is why it is necessary to approach the definition of their effectiveness in a complex way. We share the opinion of scholars (Tewes, 2003), who suggest approaching the assessment of the effectiveness of partnership relations through the definition of their monetary and non-monetary value.

The monetary value of partnership relations is the value that is shown on the basis of money value, that is, it has a fixed money form. Indicators of the monetary value of partnership relations can be indicators such as real costs and benefits of the partnership approach, in particular, reduction of production costs, productivity increase, sales growth, quantity and quality of attracted investments, etc.

However, partner networks also create for their participants a variety of non-monetary values, that is, those that are quite difficult to reflect in the money equivalent, but which significantly affect their activities. Thus, such non-monetary values can include such as improving market position, reducing the time of market promotion of a new product, improving reputation and consumer confidence, the impact of the partnership on society, etc.

However, in our opinion, sustainability and reliability of partnership relations determine the effectiveness of partnership relations most completely. Therefore, the formation of a system for evaluating the effectiveness of partnership relations should be based on the quantitative values of generalized integral indicators of the sustainability and reliability of partnership relations.

Reliability of partnership relations is the ability of relationships to provide an effective joint activity for a long period, characterized by mutual confidence, trust, and loyalty of partners, and the absence of negative externalities for the members of the partner network.

The reliability of partnership relations is determined by the following characteristics:

1. the *equality* of participants in partnership relations is a priori prerequisite for their effectiveness since only in partnership relations, there may be no pressure based on the force of power or position when the will of one party is compulsory for another. Equality implies the absence of privileges and powers of either party;

2. the *autonomy* of partners in the partnership, which means the isolation of the individual partner of the partnership, its independence from the potential partner, and the ability to independent, responsible decisions regardless of external pressure;

3. the *freedom of choice of partners* is possible only upon conditions of the existence of a market economy characterized by pluralism and free competition. This does not mean that in the situation of a monopoly, there is no interaction between market participants. It exists but has certain limitations, and therefore, it is rather an example of "forced cooperation". For fruitful, effective partnership relations, a "market of partners" is needed, where one can choose the one with whom the interaction is most effective.

Methodology for identification of reliability measurements of partnership relations

The introduction of the author's methodology for identifying the measurements of the reliability of partnership relations (PR) is based on the use in estimations of the method of logical design when developing a rating matrix (an example for a binary partner network (PN) – in Table 1).

To identify qualitative features of the reliability of partnership relations, we propose to determine them by three determinants: the reliability of the partner; reliability of production and economic activity; the reliability of the partner network in general. Herewith, their values are represented with a delimitation of three qualitative levels: "high" (B), "normal" (H), not relevant (HE). It should be noted that the proposed morphological matrix is constructed only for the two entities of the partner network, and, for more partners within a separate partner network, the latter will have a more complex multiplicative appearance.

We recommend performing a quantitative-qualitative assessment of reliability according to an algorithm that involves the following seven stages:

1. Determination of the requirements for the reliability of partnership relations within a particular partner network. Selection of objects of the rating assessment of the reliability of partnership relations. At this stage, one should consider the purpose of the partnership network and the type of strategy developed for managing partnership relations.

2. Identification and correction of indicators of the rating system of the reliability of partnership relations and their importance for the partner network. Given the above, in the rating estimation, the indexes of the assessment of the partner's reliability and the partnership relations between the market participants and the assessment of the reliability of the partner network, in general, are used. An expert assessment of the value of relations between partners is a key component of assessing the reliability of partnership relations.

3. Assigning a score to each local indicator of the reliability of partnership relations and determining and justifying the permissible fluctuations of their values.

4. Definition of integrated reliability indicators in each local group as the ratio of the sum of products of the score of each group indicator and its significance to

Table 1

Evaluating the reliability of partnership relations by measurements of the corresponding index

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Estimation of PR reliability index within a certain PN</td><td rowspan="2">Expert local reliability indices</td><td colspan="15">Partner 1</td></tr>
<tr><td>partner's reliability</td><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td><td>PN reliability</td><td>partner's reliability</td><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td><td>PN reliability</td><td>partner's reliability</td><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td><td>PN reliability</td><td>partner's reliability</td><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td><td>PN reliability</td><td>partner's reliability</td><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td><td>PN reliability</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Thresholds for index values</td><td colspan="3">from 0 to 6</td><td colspan="3">from 6 to 12</td><td colspan="3">from 12 to 18</td><td colspan="3">from 18 to 24</td><td colspan="3">from 24 to 30</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="15">Partner 2</td><td>partner's reliability</td><td rowspan="3">from 24 to 30</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="6" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">absolute reliability of PR *</td></tr>
<tr><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td></tr>
<tr><td>PN reliability</td></tr>
<tr><td>partner's reliability</td><td rowspan="3">from 18 to 24</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="6" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">B</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">high reliability of PR *</td></tr>
<tr><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td></tr>
<tr><td>PN reliability</td></tr>
<tr><td>partner's reliability</td><td rowspan="3">from 12 to 18</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">H</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">medium reliability of PR **</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td></tr>
<tr><td>PN reliability</td></tr>
<tr><td>partner's reliability</td><td rowspan="3">from 6 to 12</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">HE</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">low reliability of PR ***</td><td colspan="6" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td></tr>
<tr><td>PN reliability</td></tr>
<tr><td>partner's reliability</td><td rowspan="3">from 0 to 6</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">unreliability of PR ***</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="6" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>reliability of production and economic relations</td></tr>
<tr><td>PN reliability</td></tr>
</table>

* corresponds to a quality level of high reliability (B)
** corresponds to level of reliability (H)
*** corresponds to level of unreliability (HE)

the sum of the materiality of each indicator in this group. At this stage, figures-indicators of the reliability of each group are analysed, comparing the obtained values. The overall reliability indicator is found by summing up the group figures.

5. Formation of the ranking of partnership relations by the values of the generalized reliability index. The final result of the rating assessment is the list, in which the partners of the partnership will be classified according to the quantitative value of the indicator (the higher its value, the higher the place that the partner occupies in the overall rating).

6. Ranking partners within a certain partner network by the level of reliability. According to the results of the rating assessment of the reliability of partner relations in the partner network, they are divided into 5 groups: absolute reliability, high, medium, low, lack of reliability. For this, we get recommendations for high (B), normal (H) or unstable (HE) prospects for partnership. Types of partner networks for these characteristics are given in Table 1. The indicated quantitative and qualitative values of the reliability index of partnership relations – are the starting point for calculating the integral indicator of reliability index.

7. The selection of the elemental composition of substrategies and the development of the appropriate type of the Partnership Management Strategy with a permanent transition to the execution of the tasks provided for in stage 1 (to clarify the requirements for the reliability of the partnership relations' functioning within the partner network).

Table 2
Instruments for the strategic management of PN development by integrated reliability index

Network type	Reliability evaluation	Content of strategic instruments for the strategic management of PN development
Type of PR management strategy – system		
I type Partner networks with an absolute level of reliability	*Quantitative* 24-30 points *Qualitative* B – high *PR reliability* absolute reliability of partners	PNs are built based on the principles of long-term, synergy, trust, the formation of common information networks, and the use of mutual competencies. They have the highest monetary and non-monetary value. They are implemented in the form of strategic alliances, organization of relations with a partner on the basis of complete trust, the establishment of long-term PR. Strategic instruments are aimed at achieving goals by all objects and spheres of business activity.
II type Partner networks with a high level of reliability	*Quantitative* 18-24 points *Qualitative* B – high *PR reliability* high reliability of partners	Formation of PR, assessment of their reliability level, exchange of information and intellectual property, use of mutual competencies. Search and attraction of new reserves for value increase to production and economic activity. Strategic instruments are aimed at achieving goals by all objects and spheres of business activity.
Type of PR management strategy – target		
III type Partner networks with a medium level of reliability	*Quantitative* 12-18 points *Qualitative* H – normal *PR reliability* medium reliability of partners	Formation of long-term PR, control over the level of reliability, application of correction measures, use of collateral/guarantees of the bank; the creation of marketing research and R&D departments that realize common goals will allow increasing the level of necessary stocks, involve advertising campaigns to expand the sales markets, and ensure the use of effective methods of product distribution. Search for internal reserves to increase value and trust.
Type of PR management strategy – program		
IV type Partner networks with a low level of reliability	*Quantitative* 6-12 points *Qualitative* HC – unstable *PR reliability* low reliability of partners	Control over the compliance with contractual obligations, using the prepayment, applying guarantees, searching for a partner with a higher level of reliability. Strategic instruments of process management are directed to objects and activation of activity by subjects of PN reliability programs.
V type Partner networks with an extremely low level of reliability	*Quantitative* 0-6 points *Qualitative* HC – unstable *PR reliability* lack of reliability of partners	The termination of the PR and the search for a more promising partner with a higher level of reliability. Strategic instruments of process management are directed only to own objects of activity, elaboration of the program of elimination of destructive influence of events, which caused a breach of reliability within a certain PN.

Therefore, given the characteristics of the reliability of a particular partner network that characterizes an integrated reliability indicator, the appropriate system, target or program strategic management instruments are proposed.

Determining the sustainability component and calculating the integrated value of the sustainability index of partnership relations

In the strategic perspective, for the purpose of long-term implementation of partnership relations, it is expedient to determine the parameters of *sustainability of partnership relations*. Thus, the *sustainability of partnership relations* is an indicator that reflects the ability of a partner network to maintain activity parameters and their functional activity at a level that ensures compliance with the interests of the members of the partner network in the conditions of the negative influence of environmental factors.

Sustainability of partnership relations characterizes:
– consideration and coordination of economic interests of individual market players. Each market participant is the bearer of particular interest – a set of benefits that it seeks to gain by entering into economic relations with other participants;
– partnership relations should create conditions for simultaneous fulfilment of various economic interests of each partner, that is, the realization of interests at the expense of partners' achievement of specific economic goals (income growth, profit maximization, improvement of living standards, etc.).

For this purpose, five interrelated components should be distinguished that are equally important for strategizing partnership relations. These include: economic, marketing, social, environmental sustainability, and also the sustainability of partner networks in general.

We propose the following list of implementation of valuation procedures defined within the framework of the author's methodical approach to assessing the sustainability of partnerships: in order to calculate the aggregate indicator – the Partnership Sustainability Index ($I_{СПВ}$), we form a database of integrated indicators

(I_{EC}, I_{MC}, I_{CC}, I_{Ec}, I_{CM}) in the composition of economic, marketing, social, and environmental sustainability, sustainability of the regional socio-economic system (the latter will be clarified by the consequences of incorporation into the existing database of a generalized integrated indicator of the scale of sustainable development potential), and the sustainability of the partner network.

A generalized indicator of the sustainability of partnership relations in the corporate sector is calculated based on the geometric mean of complex indicators of economic, marketing, social, and environmental sustainability and, accordingly, the sustainability of the partner network in general, having the form of the formula (1):

$$I_{СПВ} = \sqrt[5]{I_{EC} * I_{MC} * I_{CC} * I_{Ec} * I_{CM}} \quad (1)$$

We propose to interpret thresholds and quantitative changes of the generalized sustainability indicator and the characteristic of its correspondence to qualitative parameters of the partner network development by using estimation of each of the components of sustainability (generalized indicators of sustainability of partner relations at high (B), normal (H), and unstable (HC)), which is respectively given in Table 3.

In accordance with the proposed methodology for evaluating the reliability and sustainability of partnership relations, we consider it expedient to substantiate the methodology of constructing a morphological matrix of the effectiveness of the partner network by integrated indicators of the sustainability and reliability of partnership relations.

The given matrix proposes the subjects of partnership relations to choose the most priority development direction for partnership relations according to three qualitative characteristics: Б – desirable partnership relations (contribute to the synergy of partner resources and improvement of the level of sustainability and reliability associated with low risk);

М – possible (in the case of availability of resources of a partner to improve the level of sustainable development and reliability associated with the medium risk level);

Н – unreasonable (in the case of availability of resources of a partner to improve the level of sustainable development and reliability associated with high risk).

4. Conclusions

For the most complete assessment of the effectiveness of partnership relations, the sustainability and reliability of partnership relations must be taken into account. In turn, in order to identify qualitative signs of the reliability of partnership relations, it is worth defining

Table 3

Integrated partnership sustainability index within a certain network

Sustainability class	Indicator value	Components of sustainability and characteristics
Absolutely sustainable development	$0,9<I_{СПВ}\leq 1$ **B**	It is characterized by highly effective economic development, stable competitive advantages, market growth, stable wages and working conditions; all environmental issues are solved; increasing the effectiveness of all PN participants, obtaining synergetic effects from cooperation.
Highly sustainable development	$0,8<I_{СПВ}\leq 0,9$ **B**	It is characterized by a steady increase in technical and economic indicators within the planned values; sustainable competitive advantages in the target market; high level of social security of employees; effective projects of environmental safety of the enterprise; high probability of fulfilment of contractual obligations by participants in partner networks.
Normal sustainable development	$0,7<I_{СПВ}\leq 0,8$ **H**	It is characterized by a uniform positive trend of indicators, but values are below the planned ones; the maintenance of competitive advantages shows the probability of retaining the market share; social and material satisfaction of the collective; minimization of harmful influence of the activity on the environment; the probability of fulfilling all main obligations.
Medium sustainable development	$0,6<I_{СПВ}\leq 0,7$ **H**	The economic situation is ensured by stable technical and economic indicators; there may be some difficulties in maintaining competitive advantages and market share; issues of social security and staffing are resolved; network members may have some difficulties in meeting their contractual obligations.
Weakly sustainable development	$0,5<I_{СПВ}\leq 0,6$ **HE**	The economic situation is unstable; there may be some difficulties in maintaining competitive advantages and market share; social security of the staff is provided; slight pollution of the environment beyond the limit; participants in the partnership may face difficulties in meeting their contractual obligations.
Unstable development	$0,4<I_{СПВ}\leq 0,5$ **HE**	Maintaining competitive advantages and market share is unstable and requires constant attention; social security of the staff is not ensured; destructive impact on the environment; participants in the partnership are prone to unsustainable development and deterioration of the fulfilment of their obligations.
Critical position	$0,3<I_{СПВ}\leq 0,4$ **HE**	Economic indicators are at the low level, there are problems in production or sales; the maintenance of competitive advantages and market share is problematic but is still possible; the level of social sustainability is critical; the level of waste is high; fulfilment of the main obligations of network participants is still possible.
Crisis position	$I_{СПВ}\leq 0,3$ **HE**	Production is carried out irregularly, sales of previously manufactured products are not carried out; stable competitive advantages are absent, holding market share is impossible; job cuts, arrears in wages; critical negative impact on the environment with the inability to counteract it; network participants are not able to fulfil contractual obligations.

Table 4

Morphological matrix for evaluating the effectiveness of the partner network by integrated indicators of sustainability and reliability of partnership relations

Qualitative values of the basic PR characteristics by sustainability and reliability parameters		The level of sustainability of the partner network							
		absolutely sustainable development	highly sustainable development	normal sustainable development	medium sustainable development	weakly sustainable development	unstable development	critical state	crisis state
Qualitative ranking		**B**		**H**		**HC**			
The reliability level of partnership relations	absolute reliability level	**B**	Б	Б	Б	M	M	M	H	H
	high reliability level		Б	Б	Б	M	M	M	H	H
	medium reliability level	**H**	Б	Б	Б	M	M	H	H	H
	low reliability level	**HE**	Б	M	M	M	M	H	H	H
	extremely low reliability level		M	M	M	H	H	H	H	H

them according to three determinants: the reliability of the partner; the reliability of production and economic activity; the reliability of the partner network in general.

Therefore, the methodology of constructing a morphological matrix of the effectiveness of a partner network is based on integrated indicators of the sustainability and reliability of partnership relations. In order to determine the components of sustainability, a methodology for calculating the integrated value of the sustainability index of the partnership relations is proposed. Herewith, five interrelated components are taken into account that are equally important for strategizing partnership relations such as economic, marketing, social, environmental sustainability, and also the sustainability of partner networks in general.

The proposed expert methodical approach to the assessment of the reliability of partnership relations involves the calculation of three characteristics of reliability (partner, production and economic activities, partner network in general) and is an applied instrument set for a new solution to the scientific and applied problem in the area of formation and development of partnership relations in the economy of Ukraine in order to ensure a high level of management of them in resource constraints.

Thus, the evaluation of the effectiveness of partnership relations by qualitative and quantitative parameters objectively reflects the degree of achievement of the goals by the participants of the partner network, the level of satisfaction of partners with the relationship, their development potential, allows establishing further expediency and effectiveness of the implementation of partnership relations and, by justifying rational managerial decisions, developing partnership management strategy of an appropriate type.

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