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Psychological mechanisms of the emergence of interests between asymmetric partners in business-ecosystems

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***Abstract.** In the modern business environment, where asymmetric partnerships are becoming increasingly widespread, the study of the psychological mechanisms for harmonizing interests between parties is particularly relevant. The purpose of this study is to identify factors that facilitate or, conversely, complicate effective interaction among partners across different resource conditions and cultural contexts, and to formulate proposals for building practical, long-term cooperation.*

The study used theoretical methods such as analysis, synthesis, abstraction, induction, and deduction to evaluate theories of the psychological mechanisms underlying conflict and cooperative behavior. Empirical methods, particularly descriptive methods, were used to collect data on the influence of cultural and social context on trust and communication between partners.

Theories of harmonization of interests based on rational choice and socio-psychological principles were analyzed. It is shown that integrating individual, interpersonal, and organizational mechanisms creates a synergistic effect that



mitigates asymmetry and promotes long-term cooperation between partners. The need for a comprehensive approach to harmonizing interests in partnership relations is noted, in which collective values serve as a key mechanism for control and mutual understanding, fostering a trustful atmosphere. It is noted that managed conflict can act as a catalyst for building trust and opening up opportunities for open dialogue, provided that the parties' cultural characteristics are taken into account. Based on the data obtained, practical recommendations for the corporate sector have been developed, including the introduction of educational programs and coaching to develop emotional competence, formalized reporting procedures and transparent communication channels. The importance of digital platforms for regular interaction and active listening practices as a means of harmonizing interests in partnership relations in conditions of role asymmetry is noted.

It has been proven that shared values and strategic goals are the basis for building trust and mutually beneficial partnerships, and that psychological mechanisms are an effective tool for mitigating the negative consequences of asymmetry and creating conditions for identifying and implementing mutually beneficial points of intersection of interests.

Keywords: *empathy, mutual trust, social exchange, constructive conflict, cultural context, communication, shared values, adaptability, motivation for cooperation.*

Психологічні механізми узгодження інтересів між асиметричними партнерами у бізнес-екосистемах

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***Анотація.** У сучасному бізнес-середовищі, де асиметричні партнерства набувають усе більшого поширення, особливої актуальності набуває вивчення психологічних механізмів узгодження інтересів між сторонами. Метою даного дослідження є виявлення чинників, що сприяють або, навпаки, ускладнюють ефективну взаємодію партнерів у різних ресурсних умовах і культурних контекстах, та формування пропозицій для побудови ефективної та довготривалої співпраці.*

У дослідженні застосовано теоретичні методи, такі як аналіз, синтез, абстрагування, індукція та дедукція для оцінки теорій, що описують психологічні механізми конфліктної та кооперативної поведінки. Емпіричні методи, зокрема опис, використано для збору даних про вплив культурного та соціального контексту на довіру та комунікацію між партнерами.

Проаналізовано теорії узгодження інтересів, що ґрунтуються на принципах раціонального вибору та соціально-психологічних аспектах. Показано, що інтеграція індивідуальних, міжособистісних і організаційних механізмів створює синергетичний ефект, що пом'якшує асиметрію та сприяє довгостроковому співробітництву партнерів. Зазначено необхідність комплексного підходу до гармонізації інтересів у партнерських відносинах, де колективні цінності стають ключовим механізмом контролю та взаєморозуміння, сприяючи створенню атмосфери довіри. Зазначено, що керований конфлікт може виступати каталізатором для побудови довіри, відкриваючи можливості для відкритого діалогу, за умови врахування культурних особливостей сторін. На основі отриманих даних розроблено практичні рекомендації для корпоративного сектору, що включають запровадження освітніх програм і коучингу для розвитку емоційної компетентності, формалізованих процедур звітності та прозорих каналів комунікації. Зазначено важливість цифрових платформ для регулярної



взаємодії та практик активного слухання як засобів гармонізації інтересів у партнерських відносинах в умовах рольової асиметрії.

Доведено, що спільні цінності і стратегічні цілі є підґрунтям для формування довіри та побудови взаємовигідних партнерств, а психологічні механізми є дієвим інструментом пом'якшення негативних наслідків асиметрії та створення умов для виявлення і реалізації взаємовигідних точок перетину інтересів.

Ключові слова: *емпатія, взаємна довіра, соціальний обмін, конструктивний конфлікт, культурний контекст, комунікація, спільні цінності, адаптивність, мотивація до співпраці.*

Problem statement. The problem of aligning interests between asymmetric partners in business ecosystems is exacerbated by the growing interdependence among participants and the growing role of platforms as coordinators. Asymmetry manifests itself in unequal access to resources, information, market power, and reputation, undermining the effectiveness of formal institutions and creating systemic risks for long-term cooperation.

At the psychological level, this causes distrust, forms defensive strategies, and leads to cognitive simplifications and changes in motivational priorities, which are reflected in the peculiarities of partners' perceptions of procedural and distributive justice. In such conditions, cooperation is often based on indirect signals, reputational markers and social identity. At the same time, algorithmic and digital tools further change the parameters of asymmetry and risk assessment mechanisms.

Therefore, businesses need integrative approaches that combine micropsychological processes with network dynamics, as well as applied solutions for developing transparent procedures, incentives, and reputation mechanisms on platforms. At the same time, there are methodological gaps in implementing these approaches, including the lack of comprehensive models, long-term comparative



data, and studies of the impact of algorithms, which require interdisciplinary research and empirical verification.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Asymmetry in business manifests itself in various dimensions, such as disparities in resources, knowledge, and influence. It requires developing effective management strategies that account for psychological factors in stakeholder interactions. The article by I. P. Derevianko explores asymmetry in international relations, focusing on the dynamics of power inequality, information asymmetry, economic interdependence, and institutional divergences that shape how actors negotiate and manage their interactions. It argues that diplomacy plays a key role because diplomatic practices – communication, norm-setting, trust-building, and dispute resolution – directly influence the psychological mechanisms (trust, sense of fairness, risk assessment, and motivation) that allow participants in business ecosystems to align interests and cooperate in asymmetric relationships [1]. L. M. Achkasova studies the psychological processes that increase employee productivity, which is crucial for ensuring the competitiveness of an organization (enterprise). Her findings on cognitive aspects and psychological regulation can serve as a basis for developing strategies to harmonize interests between asymmetric partners [2]. O. Yu. Bochko and I. P. Taranskyi provide a thorough analysis of partnership strategies in the energy sector, assessing their respective advantages and disadvantages. Their findings contribute to understanding how asymmetric partners can identify common interests through various strategic approaches [3]. V. I. Dubnytsky, T. S. Mishustin, O. V. Ovcharenko and N. Yu. Naumenko conceptualizes business ecosystems as adaptive collaborations, prioritizing customer experience while acknowledging the risks inherent to this approach. This perspective emphasizes the importance of adapting to the needs of both partners and customers, which is essential for achieving psychological alignment of interests [4]. V. O. Protsenko emphasizes the relevance of the ecosystem approach for the sustainable development of enterprises in Ukraine,



advocating cluster models for increasing competitiveness [5]. This analysis illustrates the integration of social and economic dimensions, which is crucial for harmonizing interests. N. I. Sytnyk, S. A. Perminova and M. O. Chuprina investigate the evolution of startups in conditions of military conflict, emphasizing the role of the state in shaping the startup ecosystem [6]. Their study offers a new understanding of how to support asymmetric partners under challenging circumstances. I. Derevianko also explores triangular asymmetry in international relations through the prism of China, Australia and New Zealand. The study notes that the unequal potential of these countries affects their strategic interaction, providing valuable insight into how asymmetric relationships can affect cooperation and conflict within business ecosystems [7]. L. V. Osipova examines the problems associated with the harmonization of economic interests, focusing on their dynamic nature in socio-economic development [8]. She outlines the forms and methods by which economic interests influence economic processes, emphasizing that these interests are subject to change and require adaptability, which is vital for achieving psychological coherence. The article by A. V. Kozhyna [9] proves that in the digital age, competition is turning into ecosystem competition, so businesses need to move to an ecosystem strategy – defining the essence, characteristics, types and prerequisites of ecosystems, the roles of participants (organizer, supplier, complementor), using structural modeling in the development and implementation of the strategy, aligning it with corporate and competitive strategies, taking into account the opportunities for diversification and the ecosystem life cycle, as well as phased action (design, engagement, scaling, management and renewal). In the study by A. Iutkina [10], the scenario approach is used to increase the effectiveness of management strategies and mitigate the effects of adverse external factors. The analysis emphasizes the importance of regional characteristics and resource constraints, while recognizing the difficulties of forecasting. It is separately noted that the implementation of digital tools serves as a critical mechanism for operational



adaptation, contributing to the coordination of interests in asymmetric relations between partners.

Therefore, mechanisms for coordinating interests between asymmetric partners in business ecosystems have attracted the attention of many researchers, who argue for the need to develop practical recommendations for the corporate sector that account for psychological factors of interaction.

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the general problem. A review of the literature suggests that many existing models of cooperation focus on economic and organizational factors while neglecting the importance of individual and group psychological factors, such as perceptions of fairness, cognitive biases, and emotional reactions. It creates a significant gap in understanding how asymmetry in resources and market power can affect the psychological climate of cooperation. The lack of comprehensive approaches that integrate these aspects limits the development of effective strategies for managing interactions amid the increasing complexity of business ecosystems. The proposed study aims to fill these gaps by studying the psychological mechanisms that influence the formation of interests between asymmetric partners. In particular, it will be analyzed how distrust and defensive strategies can change the dynamics of cooperation and what algorithmic tools can be used to improve transparency and fairness in interaction processes. This study not only emphasizes the importance of accounting for psychological factors in business ecosystems but also opens new horizons for interdisciplinary research, offering practical recommendations for managers and policymakers in the modern economy.

Formulation of the objectives of the article (task statement). The purpose of the study is to examine the psychological mechanisms that influence the harmonization of interests between asymmetric partners in business ecosystems, with an emphasis on identifying factors that facilitate or hinder practical cooperation across different resource bases and cultural contexts.



The objectives of the article:

1. To evaluate existing theories and models that describe the psychological mechanisms of harmonization of interests between partners, with a special emphasis on asymmetric relationships.
2. To study the influence of cultural and social contexts on the formation of trust and communication between asymmetric partners in business ecosystems.
3. To develop practical recommendations for the corporate sector that contribute to the harmonization of relations in conditions of role asymmetry, taking into account psychological factors of interaction.

Presentation of the primary material of the study. A business ecosystem is a complex network of interactions among actors, such as enterprises, suppliers, consumers, and government agencies, who exchange resources, information, and services within a shared economic environment. The dynamics of these relationships affect actors' ability to adapt to change [11].

In this context, special attention should be paid to asymmetric partnerships that arise when actors have unequal access to resources or market power. Asymmetric partnerships arise when actors have unequal access to resources or market power. Liberal theory of international relations emphasizes the importance of cooperation even in conditions of inequality, highlighting the advantages of asymmetric partnerships that enable less powerful actors to access resources that would otherwise be unavailable. It creates a favorable environment for the development and growth of all parties involved [12, p. 352].

The mechanisms of such partnerships are explained by theories of interest coordination, which can be divided into two categories: the first are based on rational choice principles, and the second take into account psychological and social factors. Table 1 provides an overview of these theories, helping to understand the various approaches to conflict resolution better and compromise in social and economic contexts.

**Table 1**

Overview of existing theories of interest alignment

Group of theories	Theory	Description
Rational choice theories	Game Theory	Explains how rational actors make decisions in situations where the outcome depends on the choices of others
	Rational Choice Theory	Assumes that people act to maximize their own benefit
	Collective Action Theory	Considers how people come together to achieve a common goal and the free rider problem
Theories that take into account psychological and social factors	Social Exchange Theory	Considers relationships as an exchange of resources where a balance is maintained between costs and rewards
	Social Constructionism	Emphasizes the formation of understandings of reality through social interaction
	Equity Theory and Social Justice Theory	Investigates the sense of justice and the equitable distribution of resources
	Emotional Intelligence and Empathy Theory	Emphasizes the role of emotions and empathy in conflict resolution

Source: created by the author based on [13, p.212; 14]

The first group of theoretical approaches is based on the postulates of rational choice, which emphasize the logic of decision-making in situations of strategic interaction. The basis of this paradigm is game theory, which models behavioral scenarios where the choice of one participant directly affects the outcomes of others. Rationalist models analyse decision-making by comparing expected benefits and possible costs, emphasizing the importance of justifying actions to achieve the best results. The theory of collective action complements these concepts by explaining the conditions under which cooperation is possible and ways to overcome the «free rider» problem, in which participants seek to benefit without contributing their own resources [13, p. 212]. However, rational decision-making approaches cannot always fully capture the complexity of social interactions.

Therefore, the second group of theories describes the psychological and social determinants of interest coordination. The theory of social exchange treats interaction as a process of resource turnover, in which the desire to maximize



benefits and minimize costs is combined with the importance of trust and mutual benefit. The realistic social construction emphasizes the role of shared beliefs and social norms in shaping behavioral expectations and significantly affecting the likelihood of reaching an agreement. At the same time, the critical role of emotions in coordinating business partners' interests should be recognized. A separate segment comprises theories of justice that focus on subjective assessments of equality and balance in the distribution of resources and outcomes. The feeling of inequality or unjustified advantage on the part of one of the parties can cause tension and complicate cooperation. The concepts of emotional intelligence and empathy highlight the influence of emotions on interpersonal interaction, arguing that the ability to recognize and consider the emotional states of other participants significantly improves the process of reconciling interests [14].

Asymmetrical relationships in business ecosystems are characterized by one party having significantly superior resources, influence, or status over the other. Within such dynamics, psychological mechanisms are considered as a tool for mitigating the negative consequences of asymmetry and creating conditions for identifying and implementing mutually beneficial points of intersection of interests. The effectiveness of the relevant mechanisms is assessed not only through participants' individual characteristics but also through their incorporation into the ecosystem's interpersonal practices and organizational structures. At the individual level, great importance is attached to the processes of perception and interpretation, which allow clarifying the motivations, limitations, and logic of the partner. Reducing cognitive biases, in particular stereotypes that automatically label the «strong» as experts and the «weak» as unreliable, contributes to a more accurate assessment of the fundamental interests and risks of cooperation. Practices that smooth out these contradictions include individual training sessions and coaching on considering the partner's perspective, as well as the analysis of specific cases, which allows for reflecting on the real limitations of dominant players.



Motivational factors, especially those related to internal orientation and focus on long-term benefits, are seen as a critical resource for investing in sustainable relationships. Identifying shared values and incentives increases the willingness to compromise and reduces the desire to sacrifice long-term cooperation for short-term benefits. In practice, this is implemented through work on personal value orientations within the ecosystem, mentoring programs, and the formulation of individual goals aligned with the common mission [15].

Emotional regulatory skills are considered a fundamental prerequisite for constructive behavior under conditions of dominance or pressure [16]. The ability to control emotional reactions in negotiation situations, apply self-regulation techniques, and prepare for responding to provocations reduces the likelihood of impulsive actions and contributes to building a productive dialogue rather than chaotic protest.

At the interpersonal level, communicative mechanisms are key to reducing information asymmetry and identifying points of intersection in interests. The emphasis is on active listening practices, terminological framing, and transparent transmission of intentions, which allows for the coordination of expectations and the reduction of uncertainty in cooperation [17]. The introduction of agreed-upon reporting formats and regular updates helps synchronise partners' actions. In practice, this is manifested, in particular, in the relations between traders and marketplaces, where compliance with formalized rules of communication and technical integrations reduces conflicts and equalizes the positions of less influential sellers.

The effectiveness of the mentioned mechanisms is assessed not only through participants' individual characteristics but also through their implementation in the ecosystem's interpersonal practices and organizational structures. Special attention is paid to the processes of perception and interpretation, since social perception and cognitive empathy contribute to awareness of the partner's motives, limitations, and



logic. The importance of reducing cognitive biases, in particular stereotypes that lead to automatic attribution of expertise to strong actors or unreliability to weak ones, is highlighted. The practical implementation of this approach includes individual training activities, vision coaching and analysis of empirical cases that demonstrate the real limitations of dominant participants. It is confirmed by the model of relations between developers and large platforms: developers who invest in understanding the platforms' rules, their priorities for quality and security, and who offer technically sound solutions achieve better alignment of interests with the platform [18].

Thus, integrating individual, interpersonal, and organizational mechanisms creates a synergistic effect that mitigates asymmetry and promotes the formation of long-term cooperation in business ecosystems. This approach involves the simultaneous development of personal competencies, such as emotional regulation skills, internal motivation, and a willingness to compromise, as well as interpersonal practices, in particular transparent communication, active listening, and agreement on interpretive frameworks. Organizational procedures are also necessary, including formalized rules of interaction, verification mechanisms, and standardized reporting. As a result of such complex work, uncertainty is reduced, the risk of impulsive conflicts is reduced, and participants' ability to identify points of intersection in their interests is increased. The emphasis on active listening is not limited to providing answers; it also includes clarifying the semantic nuances that shape respondents' motivational structure [19, p. 38]. This practice allows you to identify hidden contradictions and potential points of tension that may affect subsequent interactions, and it also provides a clearer understanding of partners' intentions and limitations. Combined with methodological flexibility, this increases the validity of the conclusions and the practical applicability of the recommendations, making them more effective for implementation in the modern business environment.

The social context significantly determines the formation of trust in asymmetric partnerships. Networks of contacts, interpersonal ties and reputational



factors affect the quality of relationships, while group norms and social identity form a sense of community or antagonism. Group values serve as a basis for increasing mutual trust and the effectiveness of joint activities. At the same time, social identity can limit communication and cooperation between partners from different cultural backgrounds. Constructively overcoming such barriers is possible through the coordination of value orientations, mentoring programs and cross-cultural learning practices.

Cultural aspects play an essential role in building trust in asymmetric partnerships, where “collective values” serve as a key mechanism for control and mutual understanding. Shared values, which can be deeply rooted in partners' cultural traditions, help create an atmosphere of trust, even in cases where more formally stringent control mechanisms could be applied. Managing conflict that arises in the process of cooperation can become a catalyst for building trust between partners, as it opens opportunities for open dialogue and joint problem-solving [20, p. 325]. At the same time, it is essential to consider that conflicts can have different meanings in different cultures: the ways of resolving them and attitudes towards them can differ significantly [21]. Understanding cultural differences is critical for effective trust-building and maintaining the stability of the alliance. It is through the prism of cultural values that partners can find a common language and build reliable relationships, thereby contributing to successful cooperation. Examples confirm the importance of cultural and value adaptation in business. For example, the successful cooperation between Toyota and Subaru was based on a shared focus on innovation and high quality, which ensured the sustainability and productivity of their partnership.

In contrast, Walmart's unsuccessful integration in Germany demonstrated the consequences of ignoring local cultural features and business practices, resulting in financial losses and the closure of operations [22]. These examples emphasize the



importance of taking cultural contexts into account for achieving success in international cooperation.

To increase the stability of relationships in the business ecosystem, it is advisable to implement measures to minimize information asymmetry, reduce the risk of conflict, and lay the foundations for long-term cooperation. Each measure provides a straightforward task and performance criteria, which ensures the manageability and accountability of the system.

In particular, educational programs and coaching can significantly contribute to the development of emotional competence and forward-looking thinking among representatives of weaker parties. It will increase individual resilience, compromise, and empathetic communication, which, in turn, will reduce impulsive reactions in crises. Indicators of satisfaction with interaction, a decrease in the number of conflict incidents and the success of coaching sessions can assess the effectiveness of this direction.

Formalized reporting procedures, verification, and transparent communication channels also play an essential role in reducing uncertainty and increasing the predictability of partners' behavior. Standardization of information flows reduces the risks of misunderstandings. Performance criteria in this case may include timeliness and completeness of reports, compliance with verification, and the level of complaints about information discrepancies.

In addition, the creation and maintenance of digital platforms, along with regular interactions such as meetings and working groups, make information exchange channels more accessible and streamlined. It contributes to prompt issue resolution and minimizes the risk of misunderstandings. The assessment of this direction's effectiveness can be based on indicators such as partner coverage, the frequency of working sessions, and compliance with data protection policies.

Methodological flexibility during research and evaluation of partnerships is another essential aspect. Adaptation of data collection and analysis tools enables the



identification of hidden patterns and the avoidance of oversimplified interpretations. The quality of analytics, positive reviews by external experts, and the accuracy of partnership risk forecasts can serve as criteria for the effectiveness of cooperation.

Developing active listening and dialogue facilitation practices is essential for clarifying semantic nuances, which not only improves communication but also helps achieve consensus more quickly in meetings. The assessment of the effectiveness of these practices can be based on the proportion of meetings with a facilitator and the number of documented discrepancies in expectations.

Creating platforms for aligning shared values and practices, such as mentoring programs and multi-stakeholder working groups, helps build a common identity and norms. It facilitates the coordination of interests and reduces barriers associated with social identity. Performance criteria can include participation in programs and changes in the trust index between groups.

Integrating psychological tools into coordination processes, particularly through emotional awareness training and psychometric assessments, helps harmonize processes and increase the sustainability of interactions. An essential aspect of ensuring psychological balance is the use of mechanisms to compensate for asymmetry, thereby creating conditions for equal participation by all parties in decision-making. Providing expert roles to less powerful partners not only increase trust but also enhances communication.

Delegating decisions and creating joint committees help to achieve consensus and reduce the likelihood of conflict. The introduction of “protected discussion” regimes, in which the weaker party has the opportunity to express its views first, fosters open dialogue and reduces pressure on participants. Pilot initiatives, such as mentoring programs, allow testing of new interaction strategies, which in turn provide the opportunity to adapt to changing conditions.



Maintaining feedback is a key element in assessing participants' trust and satisfaction, which contributes to the development of healthy relationships and increases the overall effectiveness of cooperation.

Thus, implementing these recommendations can significantly improve alignment of interests in the corporate sector, reducing emotional tension and ensuring transparency of information. It will create a productive business environment where each partner feels important.

Conclusions. The study confirmed the importance of a comprehensive approach to harmonizing interests in partnership relations. Based on the analysis of the psychological mechanisms underlying harmonizing interests in business partnerships, measures to harmonize cooperation were proposed, including the implementation of educational programs and coaching to develop emotional intelligence, formalizing reporting procedures, and creating transparent communication channels. It was shown that the formation of shared values and strategic goals is crucial to the successful integration of diverse resource bases and cultures within business ecosystems. Prospects for further research include studying the specifics of how cultural and social context influence communication in asymmetric partnerships, as well as developing tools to monitor and assess the effectiveness of these mechanisms in real time.

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