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## Cross-border factor of educational migration of Ukrainian youth to Poland: social-economic opportunities and threats

**Abstract. Introduction.** The features of modern higher education its Internationalisation and growth of academic mobility are some of the features of modern higher education. These processes are particularly common in Ukraine. After signing the Association Agreement with the EU, Ukraine is facing a number of challenges, along with the enormous potential of European values and living standards. Ukrainian educational migration to Poland, a neighbouring country and an EU member state, is one of the challenges. *The purpose* of the study is to assess the impact factor of the border regions on the intensity of educational migration, to identify key opportunities and threats related to Ukrainian education because of youth migration.

**Conclusions.** The results of the analysis of variance show that 75.3% of the variation in the number of foreign students in the provinces of Poland is related to their proximity to the border. The main reason for the mass migration of Ukrainian youth to Poland is the cross-border nature of the educational systems of both countries and the asymmetry of the main indicators of socio-economic development. The main opportunities of the migration of young Ukrainians to Polish universities are related to the acquisition of intercultural communication experiences, formation of new social capital at the expense of students who get cross-border education. The key threats in this regard are associated with the loss of Ukraine's social capital of youth who may not return to Ukraine after studying in Poland and reduced domestic demand in the domestic market of university education.

**Keywords:** Educational Migration; Academic Mobility; Trans-Border Regions; National System of Higher Education; Factor Analysis of Variance; Opportunities; Threats

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#### Транскордонний фактор освітньої міграції української молоді в Польщу: можливості та загрози

**Анотація.** У статті здійснено статистичну перевірку гіпотези про вплив фактора прикордонних регіонів на інтенсивність процесів освітньої міграції української молоді в Польщу. Визначено характерні особливості інституційного розвитку вищої освіти Польщі як основного експортера освітніх послуг в Україну. Обґрунтовано основні можливості та загрози, пов'язані з наростаючою динамікою міграції українських студентів до польських ВНЗ.

**Ключові слова:** освітня міграція; академічна мобільність; національна система вищої освіти; транскордонні регіони; факторний дисперсійний аналіз; можливості; загрози.

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#### Трансграничный фактор образовательной миграции украинской молодежи в Польшу: возможности и угрозы

**Аннотация.** В статье осуществлена статистическая проверка гипотезы о влиянии фактора приграничных регионов на интенсивность процессов образовательной миграции украинской молодежи в Польшу. Определены характерные особенности институционального развития высшего образования Польши как основного импортера образовательных услуг в Украину. Обоснованы возможности и угрозы, связанные с нарастающей динамикой миграции украинских студентов в польские вузы.

**Ключевые слова:** образовательная миграция; академическая мобильность; национальная система высшего образования; трансграничные регионы; факторный дисперсионный анализ; возможности; угрозы.

### 1. Introduction

One of the forms of international and cross-border cooperation in the socio-cultural sphere is educational migration and the subsequent internationalisation of knowledge this migration causes. In European documents on issues of international cooperation in education, including those in Ukraine [1], academic mobility is used to describe the processes of education in various educational institutions.

The documents of the Bologna Process consider two types of academic mobility: vertical and horizontal. Vertical mobility is interpreted as full training of students in foreign universities, while horizontal mobility is described as training for a limited period. Based on where it takes place, academic mobility is divided into domestic, in which participants implement the educational process in cooperation with partner universities within the country, and foreign academic mobility, in which the participants of the educational process get higher education outside the country.

Academic mobility and cross-border education can be considered major institutional forms of educational migration,

since the first involves moving between academic institutions, and the other presumes moving between countries (including remote learning) in the process of education.

The process of educational internationalisation and academic mobility is the main trend in the development of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As noted in the Report of UNESCO [2, 5], «Increasing internationalisation of higher education is generally speaking perceived as an objective for most governments in their higher education policies and the phenomenon contributes to diversification. Internationalisation is often seen as a contributor to educational quality, educational diversity and the general exchange of knowledge across borders».

Internationalisation of higher education takes place along with the intense dynamics of the relevant process, which is academic mobility. According to special studies conducted in 2015 in OECD countries, the share of international students made up 8% of students who studied in the sector of tertiary education. This share is higher among students at the master's level (13%) and the doctoral level (22%). 55% of international

students were studying to earn a doctoral degree in engineering or other sciences [3, 14-15]. On the global map of educational migration, Poland is one of the leaders by the indicators of growth of foreign students (6.5 times during 2005-2015), of which more than half (53.5%) in 2016 were students from Ukraine.

## 2. Brief Literature Review

A considerable number of scientific papers are dedicated to the issue of educational migration in Ukraine and in the world. A comprehensive research study of globalisation in education and cross-border mobility of students was conducted by N. Varghese (2011) [4] under the auspices of UNESCO.

Recent publications on the globalization of educational area and academic mobility are a result of studying various socio-cultural, psychological and historical aspects of these processes (D. Killick (2014) [5]; J. Knight (2014) [6]; D. Deardorff, H. Wit, J. Heyl & T. Adams (2012) [7]) and their institutional environment, experience of certain countries and organisations in international educational and research activities (J. Hudzik (2014) [8], as well as of focusing on new opportunities and challenges related to the development of various forms of academic mobility and its goals (R. Choudaha & H. Wit (2014) [9]; L. Hawthorne (2012) [10]).

Executive director of the «Perspektywy» Education Foundation Dr. Bianka Siwinska represents in her special report (2016) [11] the Polish experience in implementing national education strategies related to a new understanding of the concept of internationalisation of higher education.

Characteristic features of international collective scientific papers on the subject studied are paying attention to regional trends in cross-border education [7], designing an analytical framework to assess the internationalisation of higher education in each country [12] and developing a system of data collection on cross-border education to analyse and use it in national educational management are [13].

The main resources for the empirical research which includes a comparative analysis of national systems of higher education are databases of international and regional institutions such as the Institute of Statistics UNESCO (UIS UNESCO), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat. For example, the UIS UNESCO has created a special interactive informational and analytical resource «Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students» [14] which provides data about incoming and outgoing students in the countries that are members of UNESCO.

A comprehensive assessment of national systems of higher education in the countries was published by OECD: «Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators» [15], in which a particular chapter is devoted to answering the following questions: who studies abroad and where? Trends in student mobility in the European educational space in terms of implementation of the main objectives of the Bologna process were covered in the analytical report of European researchers «The European Higher Education Area in 2015: Bologna Process Implementation Report» [16] performed within EACEA P9 Eurydice (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency).

In Ukraine, the publications of the Analytical Centre CEDOS [17] are focused on the study of educational processes of migration and public policy on those issues regulation. One of the most recent comprehensive studies on these topics at the regional level is a migration survey of students studying at universities in Lviv [18], the city which is one of the five largest scientific and educational centres of Ukraine. The aforementioned research was conducted within the framework of the Regional Programme of Cooperation with Foreign Ukrainians, Migrant Workers, and Re-emigrants for 2013-2015 approved by the Lviv Regional Council (Decision No. 737 from April 26, 2013).

Numerous publications on socio-cultural, historical, cultural, economic and educational aspects of regional migration suggest that this kind of social mobility is increasingly becoming the focus of scientific attention. However, studies on the identification of opportunities and threats related to the educational migration process and the impact of these factors on the CBC are rare. In this context, it is relevant to study the educa-

tional migration processes of Ukrainians to Poland. According to the international experts, including the President of Higher Education Strategy Associates Alex Usher (2016) [19, 6], Poland has become the leader in terms of attracting foreign students, especially from border regions of Ukraine. This is confirmed by official statistics of Poland, which makes special urgency studies of new challenges, opportunities and threats related to the intensity of Ukrainian migration to Poland.

**3. The purpose** of the present study is to assess the impact factor of the border regions in the intensity of educational migration, to identify key opportunities and threats related to Ukrainian education because of youth migration. The object of the study is educational migration of Ukrainian university students to Poland.

The main objectives of the study are the following:

- 1) to determine the characteristics of the institutional development of higher education in Poland as of a major importer of educational services in Ukraine;
- 2) to assess the impact factor of the border regions in the intensity of educational migration of foreign students to Poland;
- 3) to identify the major opportunities and threats associated with the increasing migration dynamics of Ukrainian students at Polish universities.

## 4. Results

The study of institutional features and trends in higher education in Poland in the context of international educational processes of migration gives rise to the following conclusions:

1. The analysis of the number of students in Polish universities for the period of 1990-2015 points to the fact that in the 2005/2006 academic year enrolment peaked at 1,953,832 persons [20-22]. Since 2006, Polish higher education has begun to record an annual gradual decrease in the number of students. In the 2014/2015 academic year, the number dropped to 1,469,386 persons or by 24.8%. Obviously, the reducing domestic demand for universities in terms of clear benefits for Poland (as an EU member since 2004) in terms of socio-economic development in Eastern Europe was one of the determining factors of the implementation of active marketing policy to attract foreign students. Such a policy was implemented by Poland to attract foreign students from Eastern European countries, especially from Ukraine and Belarus.

During the period of 2005-2014, the number of Ukrainian students in Poland increased over tenfold, and this dynamic continues in the 2015/2016 academic year (Figure 1).

In the 2014/2015 academic year, according to official statistics [20, 139], 23,392 students from Ukraine, or 50.7% of all foreign students who studied at Polish universities. Among the Ukrainian students in Poland, 2,549 (10.9%) are of Polish origin.

Ukrainian students rank first in the number and proportion of foreign students in Polish universities (Figure 2).

The second place among the foreign students in Poland is occupied by students from Belarus - 4,118 people, of whom 1,818 are of Polish origin [20, 142].

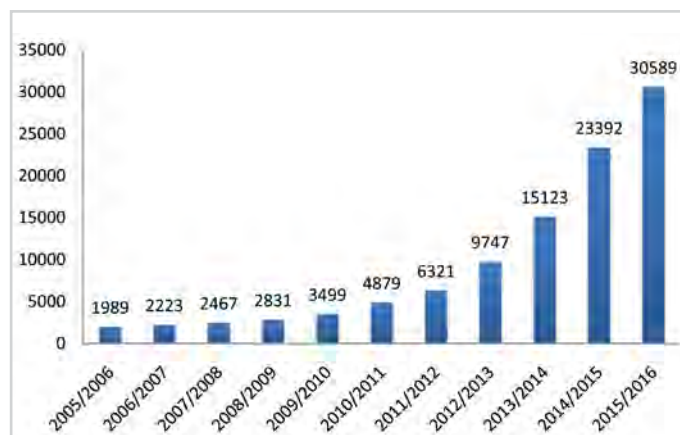


Fig. 1: The number of Ukrainian students in Polish universities  
Source: [23]

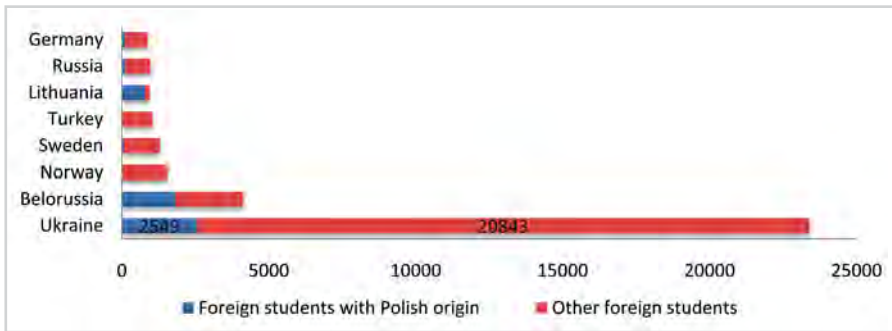


Fig. 2: Distribution of foreign students in Poland by countries and origin  
Source: Compiled by the author according to [20]

The key figures describing the number and geography of origin of foreign students in Ukraine and Poland are shown in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, Ukraine and Poland are equally attractive to foreign students, and the number of foreigners in Ukrainian universities is greater than the number of foreign students in Polish universities. However, there is a huge imbalance in the number of Ukrainians studying in Poland (2,329) and the number of Poles studying in Ukraine (689). It is clear that Poland is the prevailing choice for Ukrainian students to continue education abroad.

Polish higher education is actively using a variety of marketing tools in foreign markets to achieve the goals of strategic management. These strategies include advertising Polish universities on billboards along Ukrainian streets, creating special counselling centres in major cities of Ukraine with representatives from Ukrainian universities, various programs of financial support for Ukrainian students, especially those who received the Polish Card and facilitating employment conditions for foreigners. One of the best examples of so-called «soft powers» [17] in the Polish educational policy was a special program of the Polish government through which over 500 Ukrainian students went to the country for annual studies. According to Polish media [25], in the 2016/2017 academic year universities in Poland, including prestigious public institutions, are going to halve the cost of education in a number of specialties just for Ukrainian students.

2. Along with the traditional characteristics of educational activity indicators (the number of institutions by type, students, their distribution by sector knowledge, etc.), Polish higher education is characterised by a significant amount of information on the activities of universities as a special type of economic units. Despite the fact that the amount of public financing of Polish universities was two times the amount of private funding, Polish statistics operate using categories such as university income and expenses, financial data,

	Ukraine	Poland
The number of students, including foreigners	1,689,300	1,469,386
The number of foreign students	56,933	46,101
Share of foreign students, %	3.4	3.1
The number of foreign students from Polish/Ukraine	689	23,329
TOP-5 countries importing educational services of Ukraine/Poland	Turkmenistan (13,485), Azerbaijan (9257), India (3925), Nigeria (3328), Iraq (2611).	Ukraine (23,392), Belarus (4,118), Norway (1,538), Sweden (1,290), Turkey (1,024).

Source: Compiled by the author according to [20; 24]

investments, distribution of operating income (not only on teaching students (77.9%) but also on research (13.7%)), other business activities (0.6%), sales of goods and other types of operations (0.1% and 7.4% respectively). Such diversification of activities significantly contributes to the development potential of Polish financial institutions and, in turn, the financial capacity to support the different categories of students, including foreign ones [20, 184].

A comparative analysis of the funding policy of Polish and Ukrainian universities demonstrates the dominance of funding from the central and local budgets in both countries. In Ukraine,

the share of public sector in the financing of the first stage of higher education in 2014 was 77.5% [26, 74], and in Poland it was 65.4% [20, 180]. Nevertheless, the following fact comes as a surprise: the ratio of higher education cost to GDP in Poland in 2012 amounted to 1.3% [27, 235] while in Ukraine it was 3.1%. Thus, the financial problems of higher education in Ukraine, and hence its quality, are largely related to the absolute value of financial resources and their effective allocation rather than the lack of attention of the state to use budget resources to finance higher education.

3. An analysis of the geography of origin of foreign students in Poland indicates that the asymmetry and socio-economic development of cross-border regions contribute to the dominance of students from Ukraine among foreigners. This finding confirms the results of the analysis of variance between border proximity of Polish provinces and the number of foreign students (Table 2).

Tab. 2: The results of the analysis of variance between border proximity of Polish provinces and the number of foreign students

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Column 1/The border provinces	11	25,388	2,308	3,979,867		
Column 2/Provinces without border areas	4	6,599	1,649.75	1,579,013		
Column 3/The metropolitan province	1	14,114	14,114	0		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	135,855,812.7	2	67,927,906	19.82819	0.000113	3.805565
Within Groups	44,535,712.75	13	3,425,824			
Total	180,391,525.4	15				

Source: Compiled by the author according to [28]

The results of analysis of variance for Poland show that the variation averages and variances of the number of foreign students in groups of provinces depend on the presence and absence of potential cross-border cooperation. On the basis of the analysis of variance, it can be argued that 75.3% of the variation in the number of foreign students in the provinces of Poland is related to proximity to the border.

4. Despite the apparent dominance of Poland in the competition for foreign students, especially among Ukrainians, Ukraine is on par with Poland to compete in international rankings of universities. The World University Rankings 2015/2016 included six Polish universities and the same number of Ukrainian universities [29]. This means that despite all financial and material issues Ukrainian universities have sufficient scientific and educational potential to compete on equal terms with their wealthier European neighbours. This conclusion, to some extent, is confirmed by the results published in the 2016 International report comparing national systems of higher education. Ukraine and Poland appeared to share a similar summary of the measure of educational systems. The biggest advantage of higher education in Poland is the ratio of the financial capacity of universities that were in the

QS World University Rankings to GDP per capita in the country (Table 3).

Despite the annual increase in the number of young Ukrainians studying at Polish universities, Ukrainian experts do not tend to assume that such migration threatens the Ukrainian outflow of good minds. According to Iegor Stadniy (2015), «a very small proportion of students (from Ukraine) go on to study engineering, natural sciences or physics and mathematics abroad, which typically boast higher quality. Most choose social sciences and humanities, where the value of a degree depreciates at much higher rates» [17]. The lack of aptitude tests or entrance tests allows acceptance without any regard to scholastic ability.

However, more alarming, in our opinion, is the trend of the loss of qualified Ukrainian youth who intend to stay abroad after graduation. According to the results of the study of migration attitudes of students in Lviv in 2014 [18, 14], 82% of the students expressed a desire to go abroad for work, 72% wanted to go abroad for education, and 37% for permanent residence. Given the desire for migration among Ukrainian youth, especially in the border regions, the important task of strategic management of higher education in Ukraine is to identify opportunities and threats related to the increasing educational dynamics of migration. The analysis of opportunities and threats associated with the migration of young Ukrainians to Polish universities are presented in Table 4.

### 5. Conclusions

The results of the study of migration process of Ukrainian youth studying at Polish universities give grounds for the following conclusions.

1. Expanding access to higher education, its internationalisation and academic mobility are a global trend in the market of international education, which, under the conditions of worsening problems of economic reforms and European integration processes, enhances the desire for migration among Ukrainian youth.

2. The main reasons for the mass migration of Ukrainian youth to Poland is the cross-border nature of the educational

Tab. 3: Comparing of national higher educational systems in Poland and Ukraine in 2016

	Overall	System strength	Access	Flagship institution	Economic context
Poland	43	44	36	41	31
Ukraine	45	45	46	49	46

Source: Compiled by the author according to [30]

Tab. 4: Migration of young Ukrainians to Polish universities: opportunities and threats

Opportunities	Threats
The acquisition of intercultural communication experiences by Ukrainian students and teachers, use and promotion of those graduates who returned to Ukraine.	The loss of social capital among students (mainly of Polish origin, 10.9% as of 2014/2015 academic year) studying in Poland and intend to remain in that country.
Formation of new social capital at the expense of students who get cross-border education and can use it to create and implement international (Ukrainian-Polish) social and business projects	The loss of financial capital as a result of import of Polish universities educational services (more than 9 million USD annually given that an average cost of education per student in Ukraine is UAH 10,000, or approximately USD 500)
Using the experience of Ukrainian teachers working at the Universities of Poland in the development of national and local strategies for the development of university education in Ukraine.	Reduced domestic demand in the market of university education (in the period of 2005-2015 there have been nearly 3,000 students who choose to study in Poland every year), resulting in job losses in Ukrainian universities.

Source: Compiled by the author

systems of these countries and the asymmetry of the main indicators of socio-economic development. These indicators are predominantly income and standards of living.

3. A particularly urgent task for Ukraine is to use the potential of border regions not only to rapidly integrate into the European educational space, but also to improve the competitiveness of national, regional higher education systems and specific universities. In this context, the recommendation of UNESCO to provide the international character of higher education both through external academic mobility and internal internationalisation is crucial for Ukraine. The recommendation is about the development of international training programs, educational publications, summer schools, etc. In such circumstances, the leading national universities, which are actively implementing programs of academic mobility and located in border regions, are becoming more attractive to young people from other regions of Ukraine. The processes of internal interregional academic mobility are beginning to reduce the serious problem of educational migration of young people from the western regions of Ukraine, which puts the new topics for research on the agenda.

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