



Territorial differences in educational achievements in geography of the students of comprehensive education institutions of the Chernivtsi region (on the example of the external independent testing (EIT) in geography)

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To cite this article: Chubrey, O., Zablotovska, N., Zayachuk, O. (2015). Territorial differences in educational achievements in geography of the students of comprehensive education institutions of the Chernivtsi region (on the example of the external independent testing (EIT) in geography). *Lucrările Seminarului Geografic Dimitrie Cantemir*, Vol. 39, pp. 131-138. DOI: 10.15551/lsgdc.v39i0.13

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15551/lsgdc.v39i0.13>





TERRITORIAL DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN GEOGRAPHY OF THE STUDENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHERNIVTSI REGION

(on the example of the External Independent Testing (EIT) in geography)

Olexandra Chubrey, Natalia Zablotska, Oksana Zayachuk¹

Abstract. During the course of its existence the External Independent Testing (EIT) has received positive recognition as an innovative element of the institutional system of Ukraine and has gained an important position in the media and public information space. The citizens acknowledge that the innovations will be aimed not only at the system of education but will also influence the life of the society in general. The attempt to introduce the nationwide independent examination in Ukraine is a conspicuous step forward which is aimed at creating equal entry conditions for every applicant for higher education institutions. But despite the fact that the discussions about the EIT are tightly interwoven with the social discourse, now there is a small amount of scientific works which include the attempts to analyse the importance of the EIT in the system of educational selection, especially from the social and geographic perspective. In our research we elucidate the role and place of the EIT in the reformation of the national educational system, analyse the social and geographic factors that influence the results of the EIT and disclose the territorial differences in the quality of knowledge of the students of comprehensive education institutions of the Chernivtsi region based on the results of the EIT in geography.

Keywords: The External Independent Testing, quality of education, educational system, educational realities, applicant, comprehensive education institutions of the new type.

Introduction

The problem of the quality of education became the cornerstone in the process of the reformation of the national educational system which started at the end of the 20th century and is still in progress in many countries of the world. The indicators of education development define the effectiveness of the countries' social progress under the conditions of globalisation of the world and the rise in their competitive struggle for the quality of life of the population. One of the real priorities of the Ukrainian state policy is providing the citizens with equal access to high-quality education at all levels.

Modern education, as well as the other institutions of the Ukrainian society, undergoes significant changes caused by the drastic changes of the social and political order of the society. Besides, under the conditions of the transformation of the Ukrainian educational system and the introduction of massive reforms which have also affected the educational sphere it is necessary to carry out the analysis of the Ukrainian educational realities.

The introduction of the External Independent Testing of educational achievements as one of the elements of the system of education quality evaluation provides an opportunity to carry out an objective evaluation of the level of knowledge of future applicants. In addition, it helps to increase the intellectual level of the Ukrainian people which is required to stimulate economic growth of the country.

The aim of our research is to define the role and place of the EIT in the reformation of the national education, analyse the social and geographic factors that influence the results of the EIT and disclose the territorial differences in the quality of knowledge of the students of comprehensive education institutions of the Chernivtsi region based on the results of the EIT in geography.

Literature Review: Despite the fact that the discussions about the EIT are tightly interwoven with the social discourse, now there is a small amount of scientific works which include the attempts to analyse the importance of the EIT in the system of educational selection and the territorial differences in educational achievements in geography. Such prominent scientists as M. Bryginets', O. Zayachuck, I. Mamchych, C. Oksamytna and O. Sydorenko dedicated their scientific works to this issue.

Sources and methods of research: The official statistics of the Central Statistical Office of the Chernivtsi region, the education department of the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration, the reports of the Ukrainian centre for assessment of students' achievements are the information sources used in the study of this issue. In the process of social and geographic research of the territorial peculiarities of the results of the EIT in geography the systematic approach should be adopted. With the help of the mathematical method there have been made the calculations in order to find the grade point average of the EIT in terms of the administrative districts of the Chernivtsi region. The cartography method has enabled to elucidate the results of the EIT and create the cartographic models of the dynamic of the EIT results according to the types of educational institutions in the course of three years. The comparative geographic method has been used in the analysis of the territorial differences in the quality of knowledge of the students of comprehensive education institutions of the Chernivtsi region.

Exposition of the main material of research

Introduction of Standardized External Testing (SET) in Ukraine was a reaction of the state on global trends of education. Even though SET is based on progressive global educational technologies, this fact cannot guarantee its unimpeded introduction in Ukraine, which in turn calls forth a socio-geographic analysis of this innovation.

Moreover, Standardized External Testing is considered to be a socially-significant innovation as state apparatus assigned a task of fulfilling a certain social goal with a help of this innovation. By "socially-significant innovation" we mean activities of creation and introduction (by agents' of management initiative) of innovations, that didn't exist on previous stages of development of the society and that cause significant changes in social practice and in different spheres of the society's vital activity. Everything, mentioned above, becomes the subject of socio-geographic researches when it is looked at from the position of territorial differences.

Such large-scale reform as introduction of Standardized External Testing of the knowledge of high school graduates, as well as introduction of entering higher educational

institutions on the basis of its results became the most significant event in the sphere of reformation of Ukrainian education since proclamation of Ukraine's independence and stirred up almost the whole society. Today Standardized External Testing is an objective and effective tool of evaluation of high school graduates' educational achievements [3].

For more detailed analysis and fulfilling our goal we chose geography as one of the most popular disciplines available for free choice of students who enter Ukrainian higher educational institutions.

In 2012 Standardized External Testing in geography was performed by 1153 high school graduates from Chernivtsi Region. 87 of them (7,5%) (in 2011 – 9,4%) received less than 124 points; 187 (16,2%) received 124 – 135,5 points (basic level of knowledge); 546 (47,4%) received 136 – 161,5 points (intermediate level of knowledge); 269 (23,3%) received 162 – 183 points (upper-intermediate level of knowledge); 64 (5,6%) received 183,5 – 200 points (advanced level of knowledge).

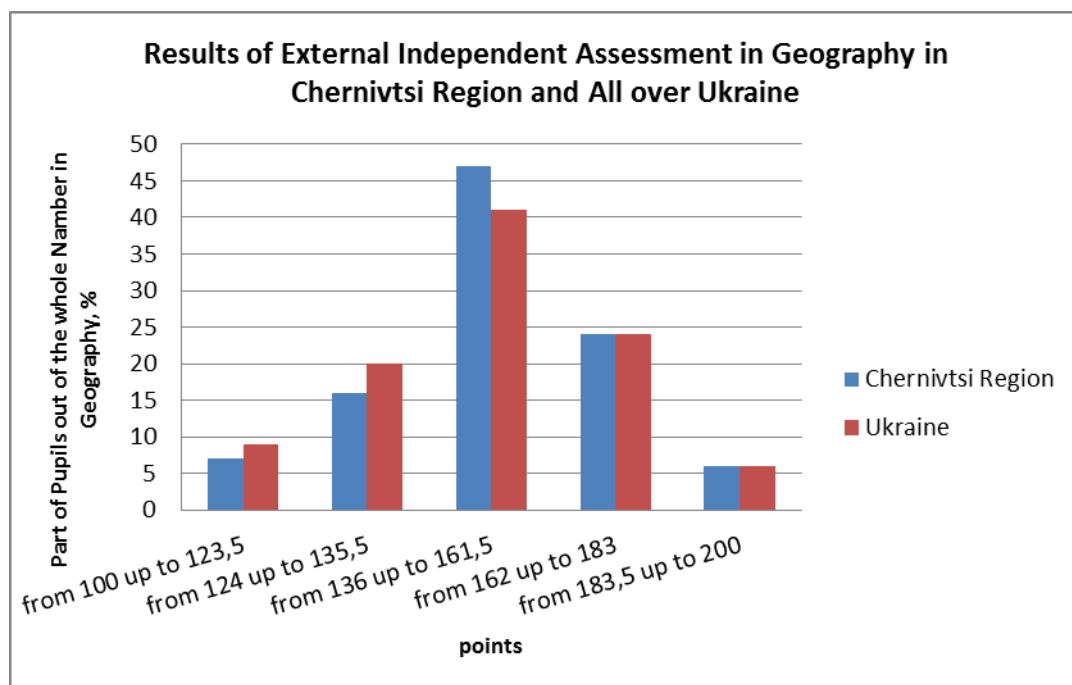


Figure 1: Results of external independent assessment in Geography in Chernivtsi Region and all over Ukraine

On the whole territory of Ukraine we have such situation: Standardized External Testing in geography was performed by 87618 high school graduates. 7596 of them (8,67%) received less than 124 points; 17974 (20,51%) received 124 – 135,5 points (basic level of knowledge); 35909 (40,98%) received 136 – 161,5 points (intermediate level of knowledge); 21104 (24,09%) received 162 – 183 points (upper-intermediate level of knowledge); 5035 (5,6%) received 183,5 – 200 points (advanced level of knowledge). Such data indicate that results of SET in Chernivtsi Region are similar to average results of SET on the whole territory of Ukraine (scheme 1).

If we examine the results of SET in geography with regard to administrative districts of Chernivtsi Region, we will get such results. 183,5 – 200 points received graduates of Berehomet Secondary School №2 and Korytne Secondary School (Vyzhnytsia District),

Petrashivtsi Secondary School (Hertsavitsi District), Ivanivtsi Secondary School (Kelmentsi District), Storozhynets Gymnasium, Perebykovtsi and Rukshyn Secondary Schools (Khotyn District), Chernivtsi Gymnasium №4 and Chernivtsi Secondary School №1. SET in geography was performed successfully by one student of Doroshivtsi Teaching and Educational Complex (Zastavna District) and one student of Kitsman Gymnasium. High school graduates from Putyla district didn't receive high points. This fact can be explained by the influence of socio-geographic factors on poor quality of geographical education in Putyla District (poor transport availability, relatively low level of qualification of specialists who work in rural areas etc.).

According to the rating scale SET in geography in 2011 was successfully passed by 1012 people. 105 (9,4%) participants received less than 124 points (on the whole territory of Ukraine – 9,4%). 170 high school graduates (15,2%) showed basic level of knowledge; 501 (44,9%) showed intermediate level of knowledge; 270 (24,2%) showed upper-intermediate level of knowledge. 71 people (6,3%) received 183,5 – 200 points (advanced level of knowledge).

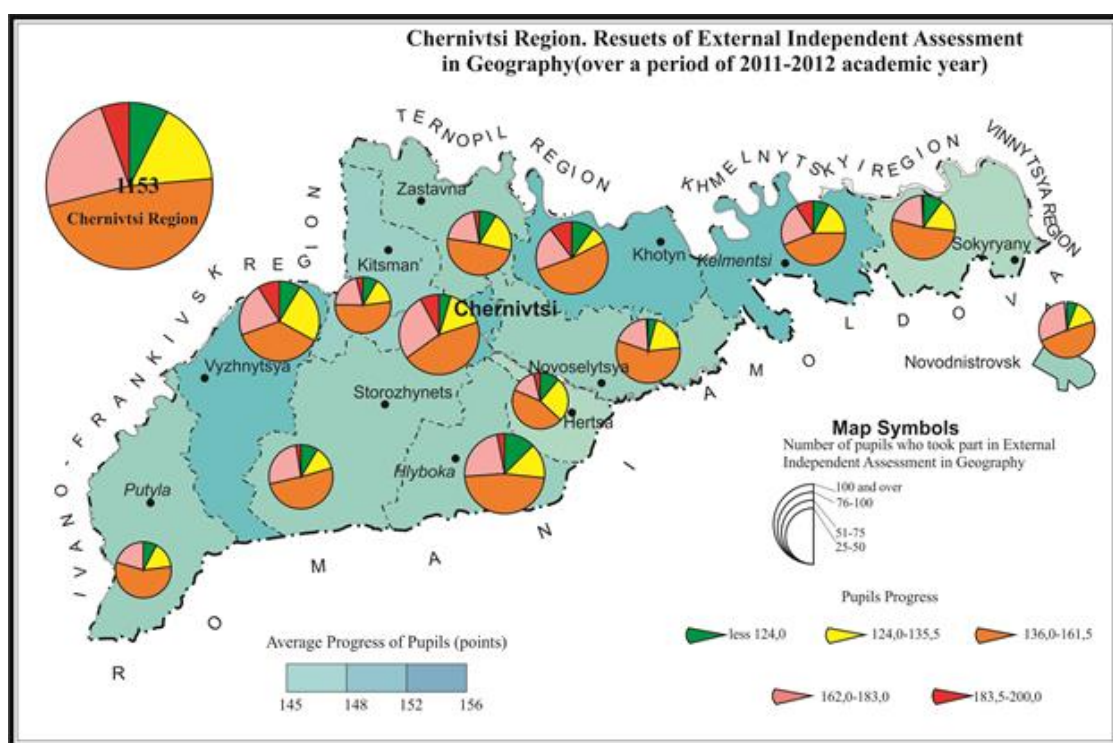


Figure 2: Chernivtsi Region. Results of external Independent Assessment in Geography (over a period of 2011-2012 academic year)

Students of Mamayivska school № 2 and Brusnytska school of Kitsmanskyy district, of Perebykovetska and Shylovetska school of Khotyn district got below 124 points. Students of Hertsavitsi (27.4%), Hlybotskiy (23.9%), Kitsmanskyy (23.3%) and Storozhinetskiy (19.0%) districts showed an elementary level of knowledge. Graduates of gymnasium № 2, school № 38 (comprehensive secondary school № 38), gymnasium № 1 Chernivtsi; of Petrashivska school of Hertsavitsi district, Hrozhynetska school of Khotyn district, Ridkivska school of

Novoselytskyi district and graduates of Storozhinetskiy district lyceum got points of high level.

One student of Suhoverhivska school of Kitsmanskiy district was willing to pass a test in geography and got high points (from 190.5 to 195.0 p.). Only graduates from Novodniestrovsk town got no points of high level [5,6,7].

The applicant's level of training for the IET is stipulated not only by his/her individual abilities and motivation for further education, but also by a number of socio-economic and cultural factors. Such factors may affect both directly (for example, the ability of parents to ensure tutoring for their child, training courses or to pay for his/her tuition on a contract basis) or indirectly (for example, the ability of parents to send their child to a better school, that will provide a higher level of training for the education in the educational establishments of the next level). The ability to send their child to a school of new type - lyceum, gymnasium or college - contains both the financial component (parents' contributions to the fund of the educational establishment, funds for buying books for an advanced study of subjects, etc.) and the cultural component, because the admission of students to study is carried out on the basis of the interview results with a future first-graders during which the child demonstrates a level of training and the ability to communicate. Accordingly, a future student / a student to be must receive this knowledge from his/her parents at home, which provides an opportunity for a father or mother not to get involved in social production, but to be engaged in household or requires training on training courses, studying on which requires additional financial costs). Thus, one can assume, that the differentiation of children between different types of schools is more socially stipulated, rather than randomly.

Due to different funding opportunities the schools of a new type offer resources for learning of various quality - both material and human. At the end of their schooling, graduates of various types of schools, mainly have different levels of training/preparation for external testing and therefore the unequal opportunities of getting high results.

We analyzed the results of applicants' external evaluation according to the type of school they graduated from, and the type of inhabited locality, where the comprehensive educational institution is situated. Type of school is considered to be an indirect factor of social origin and the differentiation of individuals by type of inhabited locality is closely related to the differentiation by the type of institution, as in large, medium and small cities and also in rural areas there is a different ratio of types of schools. We conducted a comparison of what proportion of graduates from schools of new types (gymnasiums, lyceums, colleges), on the one hand, and graduates from comprehensive secondary schools in the Chernivtsi region, on the other, got one or another points for testing in/during independent external testing in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Grading scale (from 100 to 200 points) is divided into 9 intervals. According to our data, the proportion of graduates from gymnasiums, liceums, special schools in comparison with the proportion of comprehensive secondary school graduates, in all cases is higher among those who got the highest points and, conversely, is lower among those who got the lowest points (Fig. 3). So the percentage of students who got less than 150 points for IET in geography and study in common secondary schools of Chernivtsi region is 52% and only 35% - are students of gymnasiums and lyceums.

We can admit that the high rate of EIT of geography (over 150 points) belongs to schools of new type and is 65 %. The percentage of students of secondary schools that scored 150 points out of EIT is 58%. Students enrolled in lycees and high schools in Chernivtsi region, and also gained 150 points is only 37% and in the range of 150 to 200 points the number of students in schools of a new type is 63% [8].

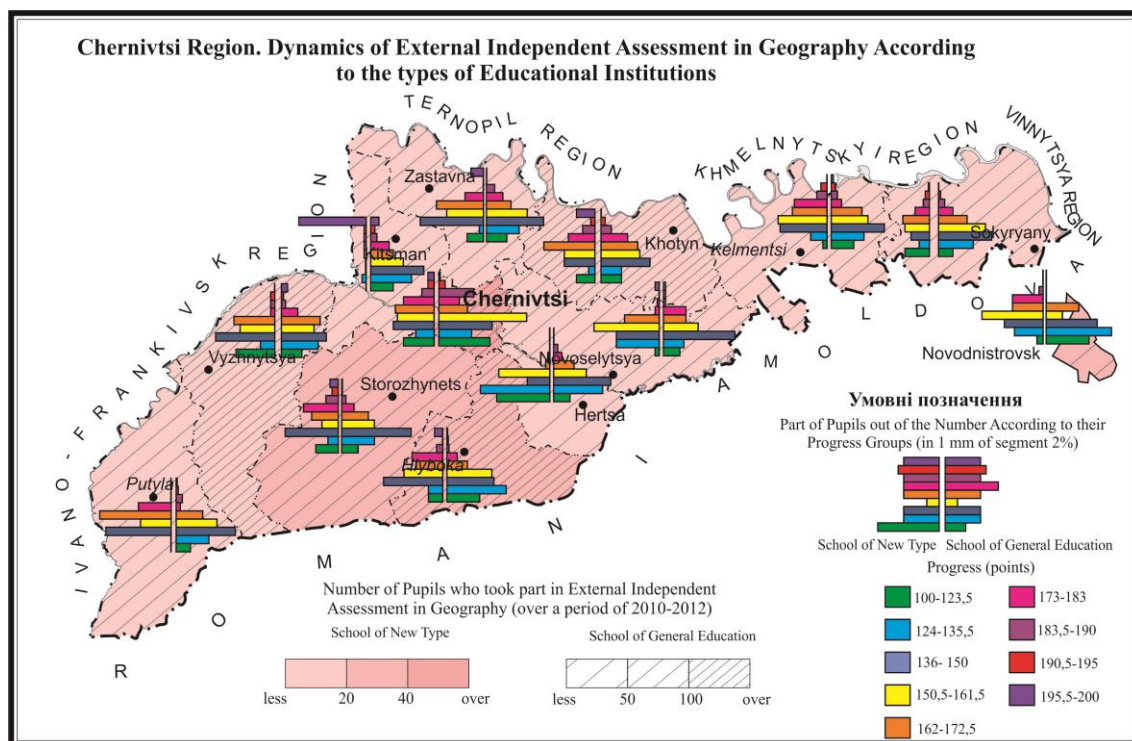


Figure 3: Chernivtsi Region. Dynamics of External Independent Assessment in Geography according to the types of Educational Institutions

In most cases, the percentage of middle schools and high schools in Chernivtsi region who have received at EIT 173 to 200 points, twice higher than average percentage of their peers with normal schools that scored the same number of points. Of course, it should be noted that the results of students of Chernivtsi schools and high schools three times better than the results of similar students in schools of a new type of field.

It is necessary to consider the factors that affect the above mentioned results of external evaluation. First a significant role of the teaching institutions. In schools, a new type of per pupil falls significantly greater number of teachers of higher qualification than usual. This trend affects the results of the EIT. Especially noticeable interdependence in such areas as administrative Glyboksky , Zastavna , Kelmentsi , Sokyryany , Storozhynets , Khotyn and of course Chernivtsi. So in Chernivtsi 39 % of the teaching staff of the highest category in schools is a new type. The largest proportion of students are in these educational establishments - 28% of which are the results of external evaluation received from 173 to 200 points [5,6,7]. These results suggest that a new type of graduate school graduate versus ordinary school are more likely to get higher scores on the external independent testing and, therefore, is more likely to come to school is your choice.

Traced the presence of differentiation results EIT based on factors that are directly or indirectly related to the socio- economic background of the individual. This is one of the indicators of the existence of educational inequality in our country. The introduction of external testing as the tests are designed to provide equal opportunity to all who wish to continue their studies in higher education is unable to reverse the inequality of educational opportunity. Offering equal opportunities in step admissions, independent external evaluation establishes the fact that the starting inequality of opportunities, which is conditioned not only

skills, but also social origin and manifests as unequal access to quality education at the primary and secondary education. [4]

Discussion points. The introduction of external testing institutes should ensure equal opportunities since each graduate school that strives to continue their studies in higher education. However, the presence of a fair selection at the level of the transition to higher education can't be equated with the leveling of educational inequality in society, because high school graduates who make up testing , with different levels of training on the subject , different starting conditions , and thus align likely at this stage can lead to perpetuate existing inequalities.

Conclusions

During the study we conducted differentiated educational opportunities of students depending on the type of school in Chernivtsi region.

External independent evaluation, of course, is an important step in reforming educational system of our country. The results of EIT enabled analysis and comparison of the educational achievements of graduates of schools of different types and different types of settlements. In addition, the introduction of UPE, although it does not resolve equal opportunity of university students of different social backgrounds , but at least emphasizes the importance of creating equal conditions of accession for each applicant. However, despite these positive developments, the reform of entry to higher education with the introduction of reforms at the school level, and maybe even pre-school education does not provide equal opportunities to quality education for all capable and motivated individuals.

