

СЕКЦІЯ 1

СУЧАСНІ СУСПІЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ: СОЦІОЛОГІЧНИЙ ВИМІР

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CHALLENGES TO QUALITY OF SCHOOL EDUCATION IN UKRAINE DURING WAR: CURRENT ASSESSMENT AND PATHWAYS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Introduction. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has profoundly impacted its educational infrastructure, as schools and students face unprecedented challenges. With many schools damaged or repurposed for humanitarian needs, maintaining a stable and accessible education system has become difficult. Pre-war, the External Independent Testing (EIT) played a crucial role in assessing students' academic readiness for university. However, due to the war, the EIT has been temporarily replaced by the National Multidisciplinary Test (NMT), which has streamlined the evaluation process to accommodate the crisis situation. This shift has raised questions about impact of such a change on educational standards. As education is integral to socio-economic stability, Ukraine must find ways to support the quality of learning under wartime constraints while planning for a post-war system that meets pre-conflict standards.

Discussion. The war has created significant barriers to educational access and quality, profoundly influence students learning. According to a recent report by the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, since February 24, 2024, 318 education facilities have been destroyed, and another 1112 have been severely damaged [1]. As a result, many schools, particularly in conflict-affected areas, have shifted from regular, in-person instruction to either online or highly

irregular learning schedules. This transition has exacerbated challenges already present during the COVID-19 pandemic, where extended periods of online learning led to a decline in students' academic performance. According to the 2022 PISA [2] results, Ukrainian students scored below the average of OECD countries in reading, mathematics, and science, with significant deterioration compared to the 2018 assessments (table 1). These findings highlight the compounded impact of disruptions to traditional learning environments on students' knowledge and skills.

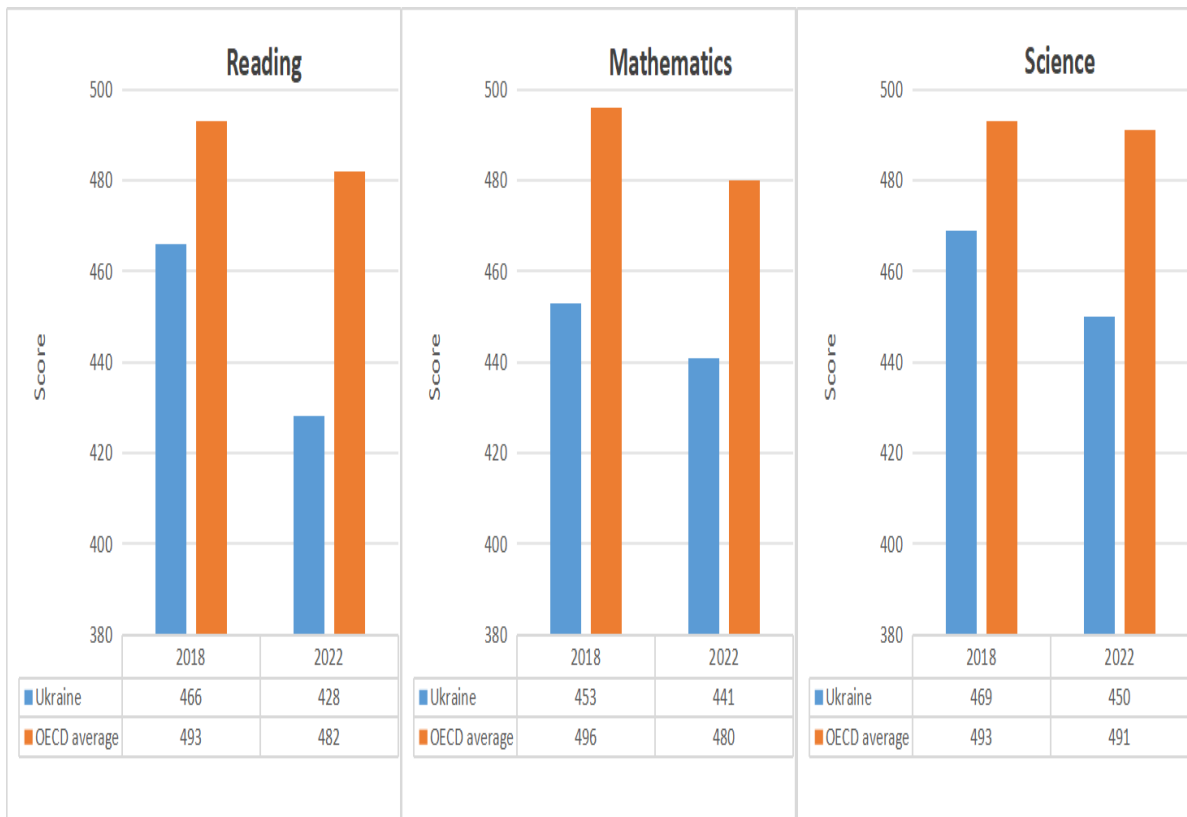


Table 1 – Comparison of Ukraine and OECD Average PISA scores by subject (2018 and 2022)

The EIT, used pre-war, provided a comprehensive, multi-subject evaluation that challenged students' knowledge across a range of subjects, ensuring preparedness for higher education. In contrast, the NMT has reduced testing requirements and subject coverage to adapt to wartime conditions. This shift is designed to ease the academic burden on students while maintaining a path to university entry, however, it

has led to noticeable trends. The change of the testing way led to higher pass rates [3] (table 2) and anecdotal reports from students and alumni suggesting that the NMT is easier than EIT. The format initially offered online access for safety reasons, but has since shifted to offline in secure locations, including centers abroad for displaced students. While these adjustments have kept the system functional, they raise questions about the long-term impact on educational standards and students' academic preparation.

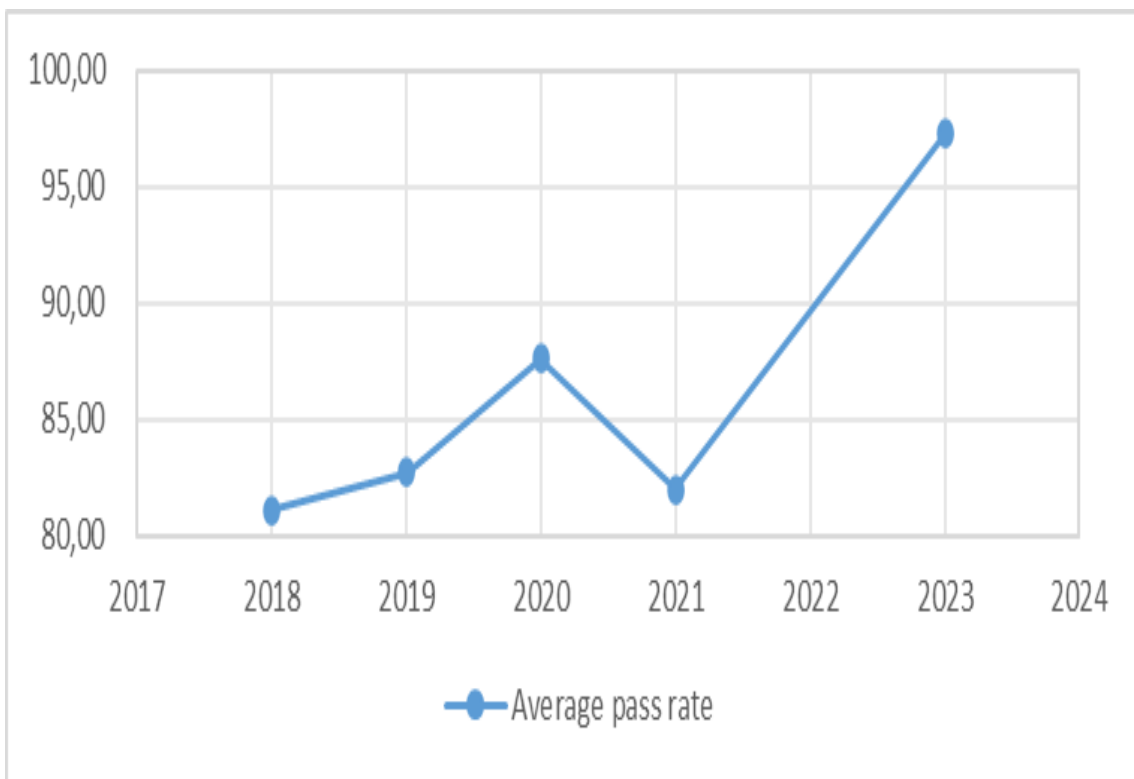


Table 2 – Average passing rate of EIT (NMT) among Ukrainian students over years.

The potential impacts of lowering educational standards are profound. With students encountering reduced academic challenges, the gap in knowledge and readiness for higher education is widening. This has implications not only for students' personal success but also for Ukraine's economic and social stability. A less-prepared workforce could hinder post-war economic recovery, as critical skills and competencies may be lacking among future employees [4]. Additionally, lowering

standards now may create a cycle of lowered expectations, reducing motivation among students and educators alike. Thus, addressing these issues proactively is essential to prevent long-term setbacks for Ukraine's human capital development.

One potential solution to these challenges is the establishment of secure, offline community learning centers. The creation of secure offline learning spaces, such as underground schools in Kharkiv (Ukraine), could address these concerns by offering structured, supervised environments where students can receive face-to-face instruction [5]. These centers would not only enhance academic outcomes but also provide opportunities for social interaction and psychological support, which are vital for student well-being during crises.

Another possible solution is implementing of community-based learning programs that could also significantly enhance student engagement. Community-based programs could bridge this gap by offering supervised learning environments facilitated by trained educators. Such programs would provide structure, accountability, and opportunities for personalized instruction, helping students regain lost knowledge and fostering motivation to excel academically. In addition to academic interventions, providing psychological and social support is essential. Community centers could integrate counseling services and social activities, helping students cope with trauma [6] and social isolation. This support would promote resilience, aiding students' mental health and fostering social skills that are particularly vital during times of crisis [7]. By addressing students' psychological well-being, Ukraine can help students stay focused on their studies and improve their overall engagement in learning.

Conclusion. The educational challenges that Ukraine faces during the war are complex and multifaceted. However, by proactively addressing these issues with a focus on quality and resilience, Ukraine can work toward an education system that maintains rigorous standards even amid conflict. While the NMT serves as an adaptable temporary solution, the goal should be to transition back to a more comprehensive assessment system, ideally by reintroducing EIT or a rigorous hybrid

model that combines the strengths of both. In the meantime, creating secure offline learning environments, fostering motivation through community-based programs, and offering psychological support are essential measures. These changes would support not only the students' personal growth but also the nation's long-term socio-economic stability, ultimately preparing Ukraine's next generation for the challenges of the future.

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FEATURES OF THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict and stress management in an organization is a technology that assumes the presence of principles, methods, programs and socio-economic mechanisms that allow diagnosing the causes of conflicts and minimizing their destructive consequences. The indicated essential features of conflict allow us to determine the main directions of application of social technologies of conflict management:

- 1) identification of the subject and object of the conflict, i.e. the goals of the opposing parties and the values they seek to possess;
- 2) change in the perceptual attitude, including negative emotions, of the participants in the conflict in relation to each other;
- 3) regulation of their mental state;
- 4) the search for optimal ways to resolve the conflict, for which it is necessary to find common ground for the incompatible goals of the opponents [1].