

# Three Characteristic Features of the East European Educational Services Market

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**Abstract** The purpose of the study was to explore three characteristic features of the East European educational services market. The study was carried out since December 2018 till January 2020. The following research methods were used in the work: empirical methods, methods of theoretical analysis and methods of social statistics. The results have a few significant implications for science and practice. For the first time three characteristic features of the East European educational services market were explored in the study: 1. The first characteristic feature of the East European educational services market is lack of strong research on higher education challenges. 2. The second characteristic feature of the East European educational services market is lack of the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries. 3. The third characteristic feature of the East European educational services market is weakness. The results are highly statistically significant (0.01). In this sense, the decision-making process is with accurate, controlled probability. Hence, some recommendations for the Governments of East European countries were generated: The governments should provide funding for research on the educational services market, and the governments should add the definition "educational services" to the normative legal acts.

**Keywords** Educational Services, Educational Services Market, Characteristic Features, Lack of Strong Research, Lack of the Definition of "Educational Services", Weakness of Market

## 1. Introduction

The study is a part of a common research of educational services market in Eastern Europe. The study was carried out at the East European Scientific Group, the Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University and the Khmelnytskyi Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy since December 2018 till January 2020. The common research was initiated in December 2016 by the East European Scientific Group.

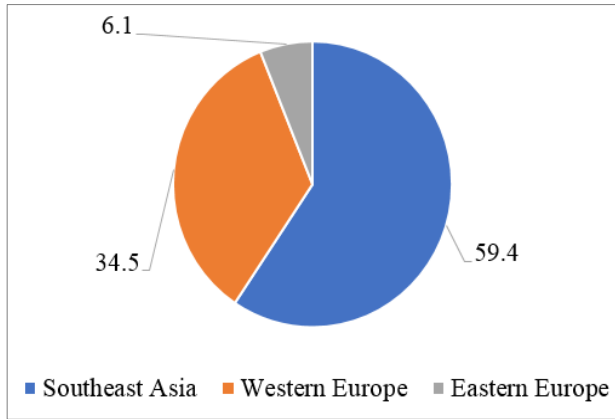
You know the topic of the educational services was in demand about 40-50 years ago. Our results showed that it is a problem for East European Universities from a few points of view. The needs to study educational services are due to a number of factors:

- At the end of the 20th century, humanity was faced with a global problem of shortage of skilled personnel.
- The problem was exacerbated by the transition of the international community to a new qualitative state - the "information" society.
- The professional training received by the specialists was not enough to work with modern information technologies and social networks.

And finally, according to experts [1], the volume of the higher education market in Southeast Asia is 11.7 billion US dollars. The next largest region is Western Europe: \$6.8 billion. The volume of East European market is \$1.2 billion [1]. Fig. 1 shows a diagram that compares the volumes of the educational services market in the three named geographical regions.

Figure 1 shows that the share of the East European educational services market on the Eurasian territory is only 6.10%. This is almost six times less than the educational services market in Western Europe and about

ten times less than the Southeast Asian one. From Figure 1, you can see that the East European educational services market is really weak and undeveloped. So, East European universities have been losing money for this reason, at least, for a few years.



**Figure 1.** The volumes of the educational services market in the Southeast Asia, Western and Eastern Europe, %

In this study, the authors got the overall picture regarding the East European educational services market.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. General Information

The study was carried out at the East European Scientific Group, the Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University and the Khmelnytskyi Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy since December 2018 till January 2020. The practical part of the study was focused on the Eurasian territory. If we are speaking of theoretical part, the authors relied on previous studies published before that.

**The object** of the study is the East European educational services market.

**The subject** of the study is characteristic features of the East European educational services market.

**The purpose** of the study is to explore three characteristic features of the East European educational services market. It is expected that the East European educational services market has more characteristic features than three. However, in our study, we will limit ourselves to only three ones.

The following research methods were used in the study:

- empirical methods (study scientific papers and normative legal acts; content analysis of relevant sources; monitoring of research publications);
- methods of theoretical analysis (induction and deduction; comparative and retrospective analysis; classification; specification and generalization);
- methods of social statistics.

The study was performed in the next stages:

- literature review and grouping of results,

- processing of results and verification of statistical hypotheses for each characteristic features of the East European educational services market.

At the first stage, the description of the state of research in the field of educational services market was made. The purpose of the study was formulated after the literature review was finished.

When the authors selected countries, they tried to get good diversity. In order to achieve diversity, the authors used the following indications:

1. Economic indicators:
  - countries with a Per capita GDP of less than \$ 10,000,
  - countries with a Per capita GDP of \$ 10.000 to \$ 20.000,
  - countries with a Per capita GDP of more than \$ 20.000.
2. Entry into the European Union:
  - the countries of the European Union,
  - non-European Union countries.
3. Population:
  - large countries (with a population of more than 40 million people),
  - medium-sized countries (with a population of 20–40 million people),
  - small countries (with a population of less than 20 million people).

There were eight countries in the literature review: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine.

### 2.2. Calculation Method

At the second stage, the authors have verified two pairs of statistical hypotheses:

1. The activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is strong.
2. There is the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries.

The method of testing of the hypothesis about the average of General population is to calculate t-statistics [2]:

$$t_{\text{stat}} = (\bar{X} - \mu_0) / \hat{S}_X, \quad (1)$$

$\bar{X}$  - Average of sample,

$\mu_0$  - fixed constant,

$\hat{S}_X$  - Average error.

And, at last, after discussion, the authors made a conclusion.

## 3. Literature Review

In the last years, some papers related to educational services have been published [3-9]. These papers showed

some local problems of East European educational services market.

### 3.1. Assessment of the Activity in Research on Higher Education Challenges in Eastern Europe

In order to determine the activity in research in the field of higher education, a content analysis was performed between 2001 and 2018. The 100 publications, which are most related to the topic of "The Challenges of Higher Education", have been studied [10]. Further monitoring on this topic was carried out in 2019 and 2020. So, the literature review includes above 10 publications in journals indexed in databases WoS and SCOPUS, for example, articles [11 – 22], etc.

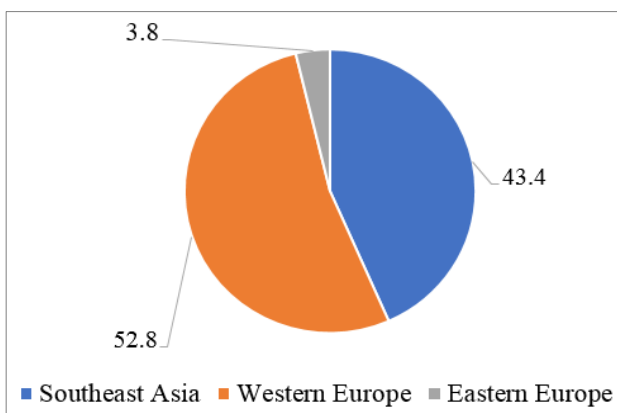
The aim of the content analysis was to identify centers of strong research activity in higher education challenges. The general results of the content analysis were presented in the form of table [10]. In this paper, the authors presented the data from the article [10] into a new table form (Table 1) and a graphical form (Fig. 2).

**Table 1.** Distribution of relevant publications on higher education challenges by three named geographical regions (Southeast Asia, Western and Eastern Europe) in the world's leading scientific journals

No	Geographical region	Number of publications
1	Southeast Asian	11
2	Western Europe	15
3	East Europe	1
	Sum	27

The data in Table 1 shows that the East European region is not in high demand among researchers on this topic. In other words, the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is low.

Fig. 2 shows a circular diagram that contains the distribution of relevant publications by three named geographical regions in the world's leading scientific journals.



**Figure 2.** The distribution of relevant publications on higher education challenges by three named geographical regions in the world's leading scientific journals, %

Data of Fig. 2 confirm that the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is 3.80%. This indicates low activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries. However, our opinion has no scientific basis. Verification of statistical hypotheses can provide a scientifically based answer [2]. The first pair of statistical hypotheses is:

- The Null Hypothesis  $H_0, \mu_0 = 1.0$ . The Null Hypothesis sounds: the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is strong.
- The Alternative Hypothesis:  $H_1 \neq 1.0$ . The Alternative Hypothesis sounds: the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is not strong.

Lack of strong activity in research on higher education challenges may be the first characteristic feature of the East European educational services market.

### 3.2. Study of Educational Services Legislation in East European Countries

The terms for the provision and receipt of higher education educational services in some East European countries will be discussed below. We will focus on the definition "educational services". It is very important to know whether there is a definition of "Educational services" in the legislation of East European countries? This is important because if there is no the definition of "Educational services", then there can't be market of educational services.

Lack of definition of "Educational services" in the legislation of East European countries may be the second characteristic feature of the East European educational services market.

#### Azerbaijan

The main document regulating educational activities is the Law "On Education" [23]. The definition of "educational services" in the named Law is absent. In Art. 1, the definition of "educational product" is shown: innovations in the field of education, original educational and subject programs, systems of teaching methods, educational modules, educational projects [23, Art. 1]. According to this definition, the legislation of Azerbaijan is focused on "educational franchising". It is a system of complex services for the implementation of educational products ... in the domestic or international educational market.

#### Belarus

There is no definition of "educational service" in the Code of the Republic of Belarus "On Education" [24, Art. 1]. In Art. 31 "Fundamental Rights of Students", it is mentioned about the right to "receive paid services in the field of education."

### Croatia

In Croatia, there are several Laws governing educational activities [25, 26]. For example, the Croatian Law on higher education does not have the definition of "educational services".

### Czech Republic

There is no definition of an "educational services" in Czech law [27]. Students are not considered as a subject of educational services.

### Poland

The new Law regulating educational activities in higher education declares that "The University conducts training..." [28, Art.53.1]. The definition of "educational services" is absent.

### Serbia

In the Law on Higher Education, the definition of "educational services" is used in §11, Art. 4 [29]. However, there is no explanation of what this definition means.

### Russia

First of all, we note that neither in the Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" nor in other regulatory legal acts regulating educational activity, there is no official definition of "educational services" [30].

### Ukraine

In Art. 1 "Basic terms and their definitions", the following definition is given: "educational service is a complex of actions of a subject of educational activity determined by the legislation, educational program and/or contract, and aimed at achieving the expected learning outcomes by an applicant" [31]. Here we can see three sources of educational services: the state, the educational program and the agreement.

Table 2 summarizes the results of this part of the literature review. We are focusing on the aspect: is there the definition of "educational services" in the country's Laws?

**Table 2.** Educational services in legislation of East European countries

No	Country	Definition of "educational services" is in Law
1	Azerbaijan	No
2	Belarus	No*
3	Croatia	No
4	Czech Republic	No
5	Poland	No*
6	Serbia	Yes
7	Russia	No*
8	Ukraine	Yes

\* - It says only about "paid educational services."

The data in Table 2 does not provide a clear answer to the question: is there the definition of "educational services" in the country's Laws? Table 2 shows that, in a number of East European countries, there is the definition of "educational services" in the country's Laws. In some of them there is only a definition of "paid educational services". In other East European countries, the definition of "educational services" is absolutely absent. Verification of statistical hypotheses can provide a scientifically based answer [2]. The second pair of statistical hypotheses is:

- The Null Hypothesis  $H_0, \mu_0 = 1.0$ . The Null Hypothesis sounds: there is the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries.
- The Alternative Hypothesis:  $H_1 \neq 1.0$ . The Alternative Hypothesis sounds: there is no the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries.

Lack of definition of "Educational services" in the legislation of East European countries is the second characteristic feature of the East European educational services market. This feature guarantees problems on the East European educational services market.

## 4. Results

What did the literature review show? It showed two scientific facts:

1. The first part of the literature review shows low activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries.
2. According to the national Laws there is the definition of "educational services" in some East European countries. In some of them there is only the definition of "paid educational services". In other East European countries, the definition of "educational services" is absolutely absent.

We have got an overall picture in the literary review. It is not a strong scientific evidence. So, our aim is to explore these characteristic features of the East European educational services market. Therefore, we should to process the data we got in the literature review.

### 4.1. Activity in Research on Higher Education Challenges in Eastern Europe: Verification of Statistical Hypotheses

Let's transform the nonparametric data from the first part of the literature review into a tabular form [2]. Table 3 contains the modified values of column 3 from Table 1. We assume that each paper from Southeast Asian and Western Europe receives the value 0.0 (zero). The case for each paper from East Europe receives the value 1.0 (one). So, we can calculate the average of sample  $\bar{X}_i$  and statistical

deviation  $\delta_i$  for the Eurasian territory.

**Table 3.** Statistical data for verification of statistical hypotheses

No	Geographical region	Number of publications	Indicator for statistics
1	Southeast Asian and Western Europe	26	0.0
2	East Europe	1	1.0
3	Sample size, n	-	27
4	Average of sample $\bar{X}_i$	-	0.04
5	Statistical deviation $\delta_i$	-	0.19

Table 3 allows us to start verification of statistical hypotheses. We repeat Null and Alternative hypotheses:

- The Null Hypothesis  $H_0, \mu_0 = 1.0$ . The Null Hypothesis sounds: the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is strong. It means, the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries equals to 100%, if random deviations will not to take into account.
- The Alternative Hypothesis:  $H_1 \neq 1.0$ . The Alternative Hypothesis sounds: the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is not strong. It means that the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries does not equal to 100%, if random deviations are not taken into account.

After that, verification of statistical hypotheses will be performed. Table 4 shows the results of verification of statistical hypotheses.

**Table 4.** Verification of statistical hypotheses: the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is strong, the checking level is 1.0 %

No	Initial data	Result
1	Sample size, n	27
2	Average of sample, $\bar{X}$	0.04
3	Standard deviation for sample, $\delta_x$	0.19
4	Average error, $\hat{S}_X = \delta_x / \sqrt{n}$	0.037
5	Value $ t_{stat} $ for $\mu_0 = 1.0, (\bar{X} - \mu_0) / \hat{S}_X$	25.95
6	Value $t_{tab1}$ for significance level 99.0, %, [32, p. 42]	2.779
7	Result, $ t_{stat}  > t_{tab1}$	Yes
8	The accepted hypothesis	Alternative

If t-statistics in absolute  $|t_{stat}|$  is larger the t-value from the t-table  $t_{tab1}$ , we reject the Null Hypothesis and accept the Alternative Hypothesis: the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is not strong.

The observed difference between the statistical average  $\bar{X}$  and a specified value of  $\mu_0=1.0$  can not be explain by

coincidence only. Since the difference exceeds a simple coincidence, the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is not strong, if random deviations will not to take into account.

It was statistically proved that the activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries is not strong. The result is highly statistically significant (0.01). The Alternative hypothesis was accepted. This result is stronger compared to the case when the Null hypothesis is accepted [2, 32].

So, lack of strong research on higher education challenges is the first characteristic feature of the East European educational services market. Low activity in research on higher education challenges contributes to the weakness of the East European market for educational services. A strong activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries could show the ways for educational services market growth.

#### 4.2. Presence of the Definition "Educational Services" in the Legislation of East European Countries: Verification of Statistical Hypotheses

Table 5 contains the modified values of column 3 from Table 2. We assume, if there is the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of an East European country, it gets the value '1.0' (one). If there is the definition of "paid educational services" in the legislation of an East European country, it gets the value '0.5'. If there is no the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of an East European country, it gets the value '0.0' (zero). On this basis, we can calculate the average of sample  $\bar{X}_i$  and statistical deviation  $\delta_i$  for East European countries [2].

**Table 5.** Statistical data for verification of statistical hypotheses

No	Country	Indicator for statistics
1	Azerbaijan	0.0
2	Belarus	0.5
3	Croatia	0.0
4	Czech Republic	0.0
5	Poland	0.5
6	Serbia	1.0
7	Russia	0.5
8	Ukraine	1.0
	Sample size, n	8
	Average of sample $\bar{X}_i$	0.44
	Statistical deviation $\delta_i$	0.39

Table 5 allows us to start verification of statistical hypotheses. We repeat Null and Alternative hypotheses:

- The Null Hypothesis  $H_0, \mu_0 = 1.0$ . The Null Hypothesis sounds: there is the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries. It means, that the number of East European countries with the definition of "educational services" equals to 100%.
- The Alternative Hypothesis:  $H_1 \neq 1.0$ . The Alternative Hypothesis sounds: there is no the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries. It means, that the number of East European countries with the definition of "educational services" does not equal to 100%.

Now, verification of statistical hypotheses will be performed. Table 6 shows the results of verification of statistical hypotheses.

**Table 6.** Verification of statistical hypotheses: there is the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries, the checking level is 1.0 %

No	Initial data	Result
1	Sample size, n	8
2	Average of sample, $\bar{X}$	0.44
3	Standard deviation for sample, $\delta_x$	0.39
4	Average error, $\hat{S}_x = \delta_x / \sqrt{n}$	0.152
5	Value $ t_{stat} $ for $\mu_0 = 1.0, (\bar{X} - \mu_0) / \hat{S}_x$	3.684
6	Value $t_{tabl}$ for significance level 99.0, %, [32, p. 42]	3.499
7	Result, $ t_{stat}  > t_{tabl}$	Yes
8	The accepted hypothesis	Alternative

If t-statistics in absolute  $|t_{stat}|$  is larger the t-value from the t-table  $t_{tabl}$ , we reject the Null Hypothesis and accept the Alternative Hypothesis: there is no the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries.

The observed difference between the statistical average  $\bar{X}$  and a specified value of  $\mu_0=1.0$  can not be explain by coincidence only. Since the difference exceeds a simple coincidence, there is no the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries, if random deviations will not to take into account.

It was statistically proved that there is no the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries. The result is highly statistically significant (0.01). The Alternative hypothesis was accepted. This result is stronger compared to the case when the Null hypothesis is accepted [2, 32].

So, lack of the definition of "educational services" in the legislation is the second characteristic feature of the East European educational services market.

### 4.3. The Share of the East European Educational Services Market on the Eurasian Territory

Let's go back to the figure 1. It showed that the share the share of the East European educational services market on the Eurasian territory is only 6.10%. This is many times less than the educational services market in Western Europe or in Southeast Asia. The Figure 1 gives us new knowledge that the share of East European educational services market on the Eurasian territory is really weak and undeveloped.

According to Figure 1, we conditionally assume that weakness is the third characteristic feature of the East European educational services market. The available nonparametric data do not allow to verify of statistical hypotheses. Therefore, we accept new knowledge based on Figure 1. We accept this knowledge without strong statistical evidence.

## 5. Discussion

The study showed three characteristic features of the East European educational services market:

1. Lack of strong research on higher education challenges is the first characteristic feature of the East European educational services market.
2. Lack of the definition of "educational services" in the legislation is the second characteristic feature of the East European educational services market.
3. Weakness of the East European educational services market.

Analyzing these three features, we think that the market can't start growing on its own, can it?

On the one hand, low activity in research on higher education challenges contributes to the weakness of the East European market for educational services. A strong activity in research on higher education challenges in East European countries could show the ways for educational services market growth.

On the other hand, the presence of the definition "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries does not guarantee the growth of the educational services market automatically. However, this definition provides a legal basis for the development of commodity-money relations in higher education. It is very important, this allows you to start selling educational services where they could not be theoretically.

We are sure that the Eastern European educational services market has additional characteristic features. However, we will focus on these. And we will allow ourselves to offer a couple of recommendations for the Governments of East European countries based on the results obtained.

The governments of Eastern European countries should provide generous funding for research on the educational services market.

The governments of East European countries should be aimed at correcting national Legislation. The normative legal acts of Eastern European countries should have the definition "educational services". This very important recommendation allows to start selling educational services. Because, otherwise, universities could not theoretically be able to sell them.

These recommendations meet three characteristic features of the East European educational services market.

Can we trust the results of our research?

The results are highly statistically significant (0.01). That is why our results suggest that, the decision will be correct in approximately 99.0% of the cases and incorrect in 1.0% of cases only. In this sense, we have the decision-making process with accurate, controlled probability. We proved the results statistically by accepting Alternative hypotheses. This is a very strong basis for proof.

## 6. Conclusions

A few significant implications of the study are helpful for science and practice.

- For the first time three characteristic features of the East European educational services market were explored in the study:
  - The first characteristic feature of the East European educational services market is lack of strong research on higher education challenges. Scientific research on East European higher education challenges reflected in the world's leading scientific journals is only 3.80% on the Eurasian territory.
  - The second characteristic feature of the East European educational services market is lack of the definition of "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries. The definition of "educational services" is applied only in parts of East European countries. Consequently, in another part of the countries of Eastern Europe, the "educational services" can neither be provided nor received. Since it does not exist in the legal field.
  - The third characteristic feature of the East European educational services market is weakness. It was shown that the East European market of educational services is only 6.10% on the Eurasian territory.
- It is very important to increase the share of the East European service market on the Eurasian territory. A growing activity in research on higher education

challenges in East European countries could show the ways for educational services market growth. The presence of the definition "educational services" in the legislation of East European countries provides a legal basis for the development of commodity-money relations in higher education.

- The recommendations for the Governments of East European countries were generated:
  - The governments should provide funding for research on the educational services market.
  - The governments should add the definition "educational services" to the normative legal acts. This recommendation is very important for selling educational services. Because, otherwise, universities are not able to sell them.
- The results are highly statistically significant (0.01). In this sense, we have the decision-making process with accurate, controlled probability. We proved the results statistically by accepting Alternative hypotheses. This is a very strong basis for proof.
- It was explored three characteristic features of the East European educational services market. So, the aim of the study is achieved.

The aim of the next study is to explore other characteristic features of the East European educational services market.

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