



Specific features of the development of international academic mobility among Ukrainian humanities students in the digital society

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■ **Abstract.** This article aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis and characterisation of the main directions and programmes of academic mobility for Ukrainian students, with particular attention to those specialising in information and library sciences. The methodological framework of the study included such methods as analysis and content analysis of academic sources – primarily online resources – along with critical and comparative analysis, generalisation, hypothesis formulation and forecasting. The article outlined various types of digital education programmes and initiatives available to students of humanities disciplines in Ukraine, taking into account their advantages and limitations, particularly in terms of their potential to enhance academic mobility. Key trends and directions in academic mobility and digital education programmes for humanities students in Ukraine were identified, and their potential to improve academic mobility and enrich the educational experience of students in these fields was discussed. The challenges and obstacles that must be overcome to realise the full potential of digital education programmes for academic mobility were addressed. There is considerable potential for the development of academic mobility within digital education programmes for humanities students in Ukraine; however, achieving this will require national stability, sustained effort and continued support. The prospects for academic mobility among Ukrainian humanities students through such programmes are linked to the ongoing adoption of digital technologies based on the experience of European universities, the exploration of international practices in innovative teaching methods, increased accessibility and flexibility in education, as well as the strengthening of cooperation and exchange within virtual learning environments

■ **Keywords:** student mobility; educational space; international placements; digital education projects; international programmes

■ Introduction

Academic mobility is a vital component of international cooperation in higher education, promoting knowledge exchange, cultural integration and personal development among students. These processes are of particular interest to young people within the context of the

European digital learning space. The digital revolution has brought both new opportunities and challenges for academic mobility, enabling remote learning, online collaboration and the exchange of digital resources. At the same time, it has raised important questions regarding

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the exclusivity, accessibility and inclusivity of distance education, as well as the impact of digitalisation on traditional forms of educational mobility and the active participation of students from various disciplines, including those in the humanities. In Ukraine, where the higher education sector is undergoing comprehensive reform, academic mobility is viewed as a key driver of modernisation and internationalisation. The complex geopolitical situation, particularly the full-scale war, has significantly affected the academic mobility opportunities available to Ukrainian students. Power outages, internet disruptions, and both psychological and logistical difficulties have posed major challenges for those participating in international education programmes. Nevertheless, international digital education projects and platforms have helped to mitigate some of these difficulties by providing flexible learning opportunities and allowing students to complete coursework remotely.

The state of research on academic mobility within the European digital education space has been the subject of numerous studies. According to I. Shemelinets & Y. Nikolayev (2022), new formats of academic mobility have emerged as a result of the digitalisation of the learning process. The concept of digital mobility has also been explored by W. Shen *et al.* (2022), who emphasise the flexibility and accessibility offered by digital platforms. A.M. Samko (2022) has analysed the trends and patterns of academic mobility in Europe, paying particular attention to the role of digital technologies in enabling and shaping these processes. C. López-Duarte *et al.* (2021) highlighted the importance of international exchange for students' professional development, as well as the transformative role of digital technologies in reshaping traditional forms of academic mobility. Online courses, virtual symposia and the integration of electronic educational platforms are expanding access to international education – even for those students who are unable to travel physically.

In Ukraine, research on academic mobility within the European digital education space remains relatively limited. Most existing studies focus on broader issues such as educational reform, digitalisation, and international cooperation. However, there is a growing body of research aimed specifically at exploring the unique characteristics of academic mobility in the Ukrainian context. Academic literature reveals both similarities and differences when comparing the situation in Ukraine with wider European trends. According to O. Kalinichenko (2021), an attempt has been made to analyse changes in the structure of international mobility among higher education students in Ukraine, with particular emphasis on institutional strategies and the influence of digital tools. The study highlighted that digitalisation has become not merely a response to current demands, but a necessary condition for maintaining educational engagement during times of disruption. Researchers A.P. Martyniuk &

A.M. Hubina (2024) have emphasised the importance of strengthening international capacity in areas such as grant and project activities, the preparation and submission of project proposals for competitive funding, and the development of strategic partnerships. According to their view, academic mobility aims to ensure that all teaching staff and university personnel participate in study visits and international placements as part of their professional development. Scholars H. Cherusheva *et al.* (2023) focused on pedagogical innovation in the context of virtual mobility, presenting examples of how digital platforms have been integrated into the teaching process at Ukrainian higher education institutions. The authors examined the relationship between students' digital competencies and their readiness to engage in international educational projects. In the study by R. Karp (2024), attention was drawn to the social aspects of academic mobility, particularly the impact of intercultural adaptation on the academic performance of Ukrainian students in digital formats. The author emphasised the need to develop soft skills within the context of remote collaboration. The article by L. Mykhailova *et al.* (2023) presented an analysis of the transformation of humanities education under the conditions of digital mobility, based on empirical data from student participation in virtual international projects. The researchers concluded that humanities education is not only adapting to new realities but is also opening new interdisciplinary horizons through digital mobility. Authors A.-M. Chubniska & V. Guchko (2023) focused on the experiences of Ukrainian students participating in dual degree programmes, in which digital tools served not only as a platform for learning but also as a means of sociocultural integration. The study by O.V. Zhovnych & A.V. Duchenko (2024) examined the specific nature of academic mobility among students in regions destabilised by armed conflict, with particular emphasis on the importance of maintaining digital infrastructure and ensuring institutional flexibility within universities.

This article aimed to explore the current state of academic mobility programmes for students in Ukraine, including those involving digital education, and to discuss the challenges and opportunities that are unique to students in the humanities. The study assessed international academic mobility trends, analysed the participation of students from Kharkiv State Academy of Culture in relevant programmes, and identified prospects for the development of such initiatives under present-day conditions.

■ Materials and Methods

The theoretical basis of the research was a systems paradigm, which considers academic mobility as a complex phenomenon shaped by the interaction of social, political, institutional and technological factors. This approach made it possible to consider not only the direct experiences of participants but also the broader

context, including the influence of international cooperation, EU digital policies, and regional initiatives aimed at supporting mobility in times of crisis. Increasingly important is the need for students enrolled in humanities programmes to understand the content and requirements of international academic mobility initiatives delivered through digital technologies and distance learning tools. Special attention was therefore given to the integration of digital educational solutions into higher humanities education, particularly in the field of information and library sciences (speciality 029 ILAS). This discipline was selected due to its inherent need for mastering tools such as learning management system (LMS platforms), e.g., Canvas, analytical dashboards for monitoring academic performance, cloudbased services for collaborative work, and digital intercultural communication practices. The theoretical foundation for analysing trends in academic mobility within the European digital education space was also grounded in systems theory, which views academic mobility as a complex system influenced by economic, cultural, and political forces. The systems approach enabled a comprehensive analysis that took into account not only immediate factors but also broader institutional and societal structures.

The study was based on the author's personal experience gained through participation in academic mobility programmes, as well as on the analysis of informal conversations with colleagues who had also taken part in such initiatives. Key aspects of the research focused on academic mobility among Ukrainian higher education students with a view to integration into the European digital education space. A valuable contribution was the experience of participating in the BOBCATSSS (n.d.) 2023 symposium, held at Oslo Metropolitan University (Norway), which was attended by three students from Kharkiv State Academy of Culture (KSAC). During the event, participants engaged in discussions concerning the organisational structure of the programme, its content, the accessibility of digital resources, and the effectiveness of the implemented methods of interaction (American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics, 1997). These informal exchanges helped to better understand the strengths of the initiative and to identify limitations that affected the efficiency of academic engagement. Particular attention was given to digital learning platforms, notably the Canvas LMS, which was used to support remote interaction and provide assistance to symposium participants. Experience gained through the Seeds for the Future 2021 programme, organised by Huawei (Huawei announces a..., 2021), and the Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge (n.d.) project in 2022 (Germany) enabled a qualitative assessment of the structure, objectives, digital support, and impact of these programmes on the development of professional competencies. Within these programmes, issues related to digital academic

mobility among students of information and library sciences were explored, alongside the specific features of their integration into the international education space and the challenges posed by crisis situations.

The methodological framework of the study incorporated a range of methods selected per the specific nature of the subject. Analysis and content analysis were used to examine academic articles, analytical reports, regulatory documents (Law of Ukraine No. 1556-VII, 2014), and official materials from international programmes related to digital education and mobility. The method of critical analysis enabled an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of different formats of academic mobility, particularly through a comparison between in-person and digital modes. Reflection on the experience of participating in the BOBCATSSS 2023 programme proved especially valuable, serving as an example of how international events have been adapted to hybrid and virtual formats. Comparative analysis was applied to evaluate the Seeds for the Future and Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge programmes, highlighting differences in educational formats, approaches to digital mobility depending on the organisers, target audiences, and programme duration. The method of generalisation supported the formulation of conclusions regarding current trends: the flexible use of digital platforms, the growing role of institutional autonomy in decisions about programme participation, and the importance of inclusivity in virtual environments. Using forecasting methods, an attempt was made to anticipate future directions in the development of digital academic mobility under martial law and the context of the post-crisis recovery of the education sector.

■ Results and Discussion

The concept of academic mobility within the European Higher Education Area (n.d.) (EHEA) refers to the movement of students, researchers, and academic staff between institutions across Europe, aimed at enhancing the quality and relevance of higher education, promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience, and strengthening international cooperation and mutual understanding. This process encompasses a range of activities, including study abroad programmes, Erasmus+ exchanges (Erasmus+ is the EU's programme..., n.d.), joint degree programmes, research collaborations, and academic conferences. Academic mobility is regarded as an essential component of the EHEA, which seeks to establish a harmonised and interconnected higher education system across Europe. The EHEA supports academic mobility as a means of fostering a shared European identity, building a knowledge-based society, and addressing the challenges of globalisation and the digitalisation of education.

In Ukraine, a regulatory and legal framework has been developed to govern student academic mobility programmes. This framework comprises a complex

system of laws, regulations, and policies operating at both national and institutional levels. The primary legal document regulating academic mobility in Ukraine is the Law of Ukraine No. 1556-VII (2014), which sets out the principles and general provisions concerning the organisation and functioning of higher education institutions, as well as their relationships with other participants in the educational process. Ukrainian universities and other higher education institutions also have their own internal policies and regulations governing academic mobility programmes, which must comply with national legislation. These institutional policies often provide additional guidance on the requirements and procedures for participation in mobility programmes, including eligibility criteria, application procedures, and rules for credit transfer and recognition.

For Ukrainian university students, such programmes offer a unique opportunity to broaden their cultural horizons, gain international experience, and improve their foreign language proficiency. Similarly, participation in academic mobility programmes can enhance students' career prospects by providing them with a competitive advantage in the labour market and helping them to develop key social skills, including adaptability, communication, and intercultural competence. Academic mobility programmes also contribute to the internationalisation of Ukrainian higher education institutions by promoting academic excellence and facilitating the exchange of best practices. Therefore, evaluating academic mobility programmes for Ukrainian university students is of particular importance, as it offers insights into current developments and the potential of the digital society, as well as the challenges facing the national higher education system.

This study examined and analysed international academic mobility programmes available to Ukrainian higher education institutions, specifically involving undergraduate and postgraduate students in information and library sciences (speciality 029 ILAS) at KSAC between 2014 and 2024. Among the programmes identified were Seeds for the Future (Cultivating digital talents..., n.d.), Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge (n.d.), and other short-term mobility initiatives, providing an overview of the opportunities available to Ukrainian students in this field. The Seeds for the Future 2021 (Huawei announces a..., 2021) international programme, organised by Huawei (China), invited the top students and graduates from Ukrainian higher education institutions who had successfully passed a competitive selection process. This important educational initiative, now in its seventh consecutive year since its launch in 2018, has been supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. It continues to promote the development of high-quality education and supports the future employment of talented Ukrainians in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Seeds for the Future: The new..., 2023).

Seeds for the Future may be described as a unique international academic mobility programme aimed at enhancing knowledge exchange, deepening understanding of China and its culture, and fostering communication and cooperation in the ICT sector. The programme is funded by Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd., a global leader in ICT infrastructure and smart devices, and offers Ukrainian university students the opportunity to participate in remote learning, followed by a two-week study visit to China. Participants attend lectures and seminars on ICT developments and trends, visit Huawei's headquarters and research centres, learn about Chinese culture and way of life, and engage with professionals in the field as well as with fellow students from around the world. The programme is highly competitive and involves a rigorous selection process based on academic achievement, English language proficiency, and other criteria set by the sponsor. Successful participants receive certificates of completion and become part of a global alumni network (Huawei announces a..., 2021). Seeds for the Future supports various forms of academic mobility for Ukrainian students, combining both online and offline components. The online stage includes virtual courses and lectures on advanced ICT topics such as 5G, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence, aimed at providing students with solid theoretical knowledge in the field. The offline stage offers students the opportunity to travel to China, particularly to Huawei's headquarters in Shenzhen, where they participate in hands-on workshops and collaborate with industry professionals on real-world projects. The Seeds for the Future 2021 programme provided a blended model of academic mobility for Ukrainian students interested in ICT, aiming to equip them with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in the sector.

The Seeds for the Future 2021 programme provided a blended model of academic mobility for Ukrainian students interested in ICT, aiming to equip them with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in the sector. The programme offered Ukrainian students the opportunity to gain valuable experience and enhance their qualifications in the field of ICT, cutting-edge research and development, as well as the innovative application of ICT. It also enabled participants to interact and build professional connections with experts in the field. By taking part in Seeds for the Future 2021, students gained insight into the latest trends and innovations in ICT and broadened their cultural perspectives. However, certain drawbacks of the programme were noted. Participants were required to demonstrate a sufficient level of English proficiency, as the programme was conducted entirely in English. Additionally, Seeds for the Future is highly selective, accepting only a limited number of students each year. Although the programme covered travel and accommodation costs, daily expenses such as food and personal spending were not included. Despite these limitations, Seeds for the

Future 2021 provided Ukrainian students with a valuable opportunity to deepen their ICT knowledge and skills, gain practical experience, and establish connections with professionals in the field. Overall, participants evaluated the programme positively, expressing satisfaction with the learning outcomes – particularly the improvement of their English proficiency and applied ICT skills in academic contexts.

The Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge programme may be described as a cross-border academic mobility initiative aimed at fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among students, researchers, and industry experts from Ukraine and Germany. The programme was designed to provide Ukrainian students with practical experience in the field of information technology (IT) through participation in various IT projects and workshops, organised with the support of the host institution, the Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau. The Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge 2022 programme was expected to contribute to the development of the IT industry in both countries and to strengthen cultural and academic ties between Ukraine and Germany. It was intended to run for one academic year, during which students would participate in a range of activities aimed at expanding their knowledge and skills in IT (Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge, n.d.).

The Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge programme supports various forms of academic mobility aimed at promoting international exchange and collaboration among Ukrainian students. These types of mobility include a range of opportunities, such as short-term study visits, which enable participation in intensive courses organised by the host university, offering students the chance to gain specialised knowledge and skills in a chosen field. The programme also includes internships with host organisations, allowing students to apply their academic knowledge in professional settings while gaining valuable practical experience. Joint research projects offer opportunities for students to collaborate with individuals or teams from the host university, institutions, or industry partners, encouraging knowledge transfer, intercultural understanding, and innovation. In addition, language courses are available to help students develop or improve their language skills, facilitating communication and interaction with people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. All these forms of mobility are designed to support students' academic and professional development, helping them strengthen the key competencies needed to contribute to Ukraine's digital society and succeed in the global labour market.

Participation in the Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge 2022 programme had both advantages and certain drawbacks that should be considered in its evaluation. Among the positive aspects were the enhancement of academic and professional skills in the field of IT, made possible through participation in lectures, seminars, and practical training sessions. Exposure to a different

academic environment and teaching approaches also played a significant role in broadening participants' perspectives. Students had the opportunity to develop cross-cultural competencies and global awareness, establish international contacts, and build collaborative relationships with students and lecturers from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau. An important outcome of the programme was the improvement of future employment prospects through the acquisition of new knowledge and hands-on experience. However, participation in the programme was not without challenges. One of the main limitations was the strict selection criteria, which narrowed the pool of potential candidates. Additionally, the short duration of the programme sometimes made it difficult to fully benefit from all the available opportunities. A limited number of places created competition among applicants, even those who met the formal requirements. Further difficulties arose from academic and logistical issues, such as missing classes or exams at the home university and the need to ensure the transfer of academic credits. After completing the programme, some participants encountered limited employment opportunities, which also affected the overall assessment of the programme's effectiveness.

It is important to note that the advantages and disadvantages of participating in the Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge 2022 programme may vary depending on individual circumstances and expectations. Students are advised to carefully consider their educational, personal, and professional goals before applying. The comparison of international academic mobility programmes for Ukrainian students was based on several criteria. These included the types of mobility supported by each programme, student eligibility requirements, the benefits and drawbacks of participation, and the challenges faced by students involved in such programmes. A detailed assessment of each programme was carried out using these criteria. The analysis revealed that the Seeds for the Future 2021 programme offered long-term mobility opportunities for Ukrainian students in the field of ICT. It allowed students to gain deeper insight into the latest technological developments in ICT and take part in cultural exchange. However, the programme was limited to ICT students, and the highly competitive selection process made it difficult for many applicants to gain admission. The Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge 2022 programme provided short-term mobility opportunities for Ukrainian students. It was focused on strengthening students' skills in software development and IT project management. The programme also offered opportunities for interaction with lecturers and students from various higher education institutions and a closer look at their teaching methods and research practices. Nonetheless, the programme was open to only a limited number of participants, and its short duration restricted the depth of learning.

It can be concluded that both the Seeds for the Future 2021 and Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge 2022 programmes had their respective strengths and weaknesses. The Seeds for the Future 2021 programme offered a relatively modest opportunity for long-term learning, whereas the Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge 2022 provided a short-term yet intensive educational experience. The participant requirements for both programmes aligned with the intended learning outcomes, although the selection process for Seeds for the Future was exceptionally competitive. It is therefore recommended that the selection procedures for international academic mobility programmes be made more transparent and accessible to a broader range of students. The challenges faced by students participating in international academic mobility programmes in Ukraine are varied and complex, and can be analysed from multiple perspectives (López-Duarte *et al.*, 2021). One of the key challenges involves adapting to an entirely new academic and cultural environment, which can be a difficult and demanding experience for many students. Unfamiliar teaching methods, differing academic norms and expectations, and overcoming language barriers can also present significant challenges for students. Another issue relates to the social and emotional impact of international mobility, which can be both positive and negative. On the one hand, students may form new friendships, engage with different cultures, and acquire valuable skills and knowledge that can benefit their future careers. On the other hand, they may experience feelings of isolation, homesickness, and cultural disorientation, all of which can affect their academic performance and overall well-being. Financial constraints can also pose a major obstacle, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds or those with limited access to scholarships and financial support. Universities and policy-makers need to recognise and address these challenges in order to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of international academic mobility programmes in Ukraine. Doing so will contribute to greater educational cooperation and exchange on the global stage.

It is worth highlighting the projects organised by the renowned international association BOBCATSSS, affiliated with the European Association for Library and Information Education and Research (EUCLID), which annually hosts symposia and forums for both professionals and students (presided over by Tania Todorova, University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Bulgaria). The name BOBCATSSS itself is an acronym derived from the cities originally involved in the collaboration: Budapest, Oslo, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Tampere, Stuttgart, Sheffield, and Szombathely. The annual symposia aim to promote academic mobility among students of higher education institutions. Held every year since 1993, the symposia seek to create a platform for students and professionals to exchange knowledge and experience, support educational

and professional development, and foster interdisciplinary collaboration. The BOBCATSSS International Symposium (BOBCATSSS, n.d.) is widely recognised as a prominent academic forum, offering professionals, students, and researchers in the field of library and information science an opportunity to share ideas, exchange expertise, and contribute to the advancement of the discipline. It serves as a platform for discussing current trends and challenges in the field, while also exploring the potential of emerging technologies and innovations.

BOBCATSSS 2023 was expected to attract a diverse international audience, including students, academics, and researchers from around the world (Terra, 2023). This symposium represents a significant event, generating interest in the academic mobility of students from Ukrainian higher education institutions. Its importance and relevance to academic mobility in Ukraine are evident in its strong focus on promoting international collaboration and the exchange of ideas between students and professionals. The symposium offers students a valuable platform to engage with peers and experts from various countries, allowing them to explore diverse perspectives and approaches to academic and professional development. Participation in BOBCATSSS also contributes to the enhancement of intercultural communication skills and the cultivation of global thinking – both of which are essential competencies in today's digital society. The theme of BOBCATSSS 2023 centred on contemporary trends and future prospects related to academic mobility in the digital age. Topics covered a wide range of issues, including – but not limited to – digital literacy, innovation, big data and analytics, information management, and emerging technologies. Overall, the target audience of BOBCATSSS is not limited to any single group or profession; rather, it includes a broad and diverse community of individuals with a shared passion for library and information science. The venue and date of the BOBCATSSS 2023 symposium were determined well in advance and widely promoted through various media channels. The symposium was scheduled to take place in Oslo, Norway, from 25 to 27 January 2023, with Oslo Metropolitan University selected as the host institution. This choice was based on several factors, including the university's excellent facilities, its central location within the city, and its reputation as a hub for academic research and innovation. The time and place of the symposium were carefully selected to maximise participation and engagement from both academic professionals and students.

The BOBCATSSS programme is organised by students and lecturers from various European universities, providing a unique platform for the exchange of ideas and best practices. It may be considered an example of hybrid academic mobility, as participants can engage both in person and remotely. The main tool for communication and educational management during the event was the Canvas LMS – a learning platform

that provided access to educational materials, assignments, and communication channels between students and lecturers. This platform played a crucial role for Ukrainian students, who faced barriers to accessing educational content due to the ongoing war. In particular, during periods of frequent power outages in Ukraine, the ability to download materials for offline use significantly improved the effectiveness of the learning process in conditions of an unstable internet connection.

Participation in the BOBCATSSS symposium offers several benefits for students of higher education institutions in Ukraine. Firstly, the symposium provides a platform for engaging in academic discussions and exchanging ideas with professionals in their field. It gives students the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and gain valuable insights into current trends and practices within their areas of study. Secondly, the symposium enables students to network with a range of experts and potential employers. This can lead to career opportunities, collaborative projects, and mentoring relationships that significantly contribute to students' academic and professional development. Finally, the symposium allows students to explore different cultures and international perspectives, helping to enhance their social and communication skills, as well as their ability to adapt to diverse environments.

The activities available to BOBCATSSS participants include: various academic and professional panels on library and information science, as well as information management more broadly; interactive sessions and round tables dedicated to current issues in the field; and pre-conference workshops offering hands-on experience and training in relevant software and hardware. These workshops are designed to strengthen the skills and competencies of professionals working in the field of librarianship and information science. In addition, participants have the opportunity to engage with like-minded scholars and practitioners, gaining fresh perspectives on some of the most pressing challenges facing the rapidly evolving information landscape in the digital age. Participation in the BOBCATSSS symposium offers Ukrainian students in higher education a valuable opportunity for academic and professional development. By taking part in various workshops, lectures, and events presented at the symposium, students can acquire relevant knowledge and skills applicable to their field of study. The symposium also enables students to network with professionals and peers from their disciplines, potentially opening pathways for collaboration, mentorship, and future career advancement. For Ukrainian university students seeking to strengthen their academic and professional prospects, participation in the symposium represents a meaningful investment.

However, attending BOBCATSSS may involve certain potential drawbacks that could deter Ukrainian students. One such challenge is the potential language barrier, as presentations and discussions at the

symposium are held in English and other languages. This could pose difficulties for individuals who are not proficient in the languages used during the event and may limit their ability to fully engage with the seminars, lectures, and discussions on offer. In such cases, participants may struggle to fully grasp the content of the conference, which could negatively affect their overall experience. However, it should be noted that these challenges can be mitigated through the provision of translation services and language support for those who require them. Ultimately, the time commitment needed to participate in the symposium may be a drawback for some students, as they might miss classes or other academic obligations. Nevertheless, with careful planning and communication with their lecturers, students can minimise the impact of their absence and catch up on coursework upon their return. It is important to acknowledge the potential barriers to attending conferences such as BOBCATSSS 2023, so that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure an inclusive and positive experience for all participants. While BOBCATSSS may present certain difficulties for Ukrainian students, these can be overcome through proactive strategies and planning. The benefits of participating in the symposium – including enhanced academic and professional development – make it a valuable opportunity that should not be overlooked. An analysis of the international annual BOBCATSSS symposium provides useful insights into the advantages and potential limitations of participating in academic mobility programmes for students at Ukrainian higher education institutions. The symposium offers a series of workshops, lectures and other activities that contribute to students' learning and skills enhancement. Overall, participation in programmes such as BOBCATSSS is of significant importance for Ukrainian students, as it allows them to engage with diverse perspectives and strengthen the competencies and knowledge needed to thrive in Ukraine's digital society.

The integration of digital education programmes into academic mobility initiatives remains a relatively recent development, and empirical research into their effectiveness is still limited. However, numerous successful examples demonstrate the potential of this approach. For instance, several universities in Ukraine have begun implementing online courses as part of their academic mobility programmes, enabling students to study abroad while remaining connected to their home institutions. Despite these positive developments, the current state of academic mobility programmes for students in the humanities in Ukraine – particularly those involving digital education – faces several challenges and limitations. One of the key issues is the lack of infrastructure and resources required to support such initiatives, particularly in the areas of technology and communication. Similarly, there is often a need for additional training and support for academic staff and

administrators involved in these programmes, as well as a need to develop more precise methods for evaluating and analysing their effectiveness.

The participation of students from Kharkiv State Academy of Culture in international academic mobility programmes has proved to be a key factor in the development of their professional competencies. The most notable impact was observed in the areas of digital literacy, intercultural communication, and adaptive skills – all of which directly influence future professional activities in the field of library and information science. The Seeds for the Future 2021 programme, organised by Huawei, provided students with practical knowledge in the field of information and communication technologies. The educational content, which covered topics such as 5G, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity, aligned with current demands for digital competence among specialists in the humanities. Participation in virtual training sessions, team projects, and English lectures contributed not only to professional development but also to the students' linguistic proficiency, significantly broadening their future opportunities for international collaboration.

The Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge project also had a positive impact on the development of students' professional skills. As part of this cross-border partnership, students participated in real-life IT projects, seminars, and workshops delivered by lecturers from the Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau (Germany). Engagement with representatives of the German academic community enabled participants to explore practical aspects of managing educational platforms, digital document workflows, and innovative methods of information processing. The experience gained served as a foundation for further professional specialisation in areas such as digital libraries, electronic archives, and information management. The BOBCATSSS 2023 programme exemplified a hybrid form of academic mobility. The use of the Canvas LMS platform as the primary tool for remote interaction during the symposium provided students with hands-on experience in working with modern digital services. This contributed to the development of both asynchronous and synchronous communication skills – an essential component of professional practice in the library and information sector. Such skills have become particularly relevant during the transition to remote and blended service formats in libraries, archives, and information centres.

In addition to professional development, mobility programmes also contributed to the enhancement of soft skills, including intercultural communication, teamwork, time management, and digital ethics. Participation in international projects improved students' ability to adapt to new environments, respond swiftly to changes, and think critically when analysing information. These skills form a foundation for future career progression, particularly within international projects,

educational platforms, digital libraries, and the field of scientific and information support. The findings indicate that participation in international academic mobility programmes opens up a range of opportunities for students. Graduates are more likely to be competitive in the international job market, engage in joint research initiatives, work in digital communications, and take on roles as coordinators of international educational projects. The development of such initiatives is fostering a new generation of humanities professionals who not only possess subject-specific expertise but are also equipped to operate effectively in the context of digital transformation.

The current state of academic mobility programmes for students in the humanities in Ukraine, particularly those involving digital education, is both complex and evolving. While this approach offers numerous opportunities and potential benefits, it also presents widespread challenges that must be addressed to realise its full potential. Despite the clear advantages of digital academic mobility, researchers have highlighted several issues associated with its implementation. As noted by R.M. Ryan *et al.* (2021), limited social interaction due to the absence of direct communication with lecturers and peers may reduce the effectiveness of learning and negatively affect student motivation. Furthermore, not all students possess sufficient skills to use online tools effectively, underscoring the issue of low digital literacy. According to A. Bozkurt & R.C. Sharma (2020), distance learning also requires a high level of self-discipline and organisation, which can be particularly demanding for some students – especially in times of crisis.

Despite considerable academic interest and publication activity in this area, certain aspects of academic mobility in the European digital education space remain under-researched. In particular, there is a need for greater insight into how digital technologies are shaping mobility models and the lived experiences of mobile students in the humanities, many of whom have limited proficiency in information and communication technologies. In the context of growing interest in academic mobility in Ukraine, it is worth highlighting the study by A.M. Samko (2022), who analysed the impact of martial law on the educational process and emphasised the need to adapt academic mobility programmes to new realities, particularly through the use of digital technologies to ensure continuity of learning. On the other hand, in their article, T.A. Vasileva & Yu.M. Petrushenko (2022) explored the integration of Ukrainian students into the European educational space via academic mobility programmes. The researchers stressed the importance of intercultural competence and foreign language proficiency as key factors for the successful integration of students into the international academic environment. S. Amelina & I. Kononchuk (2023) argued that effective practical training for future translators in Germany includes

internships, the completion of profession-oriented tasks, and participation in a semester abroad, all of which contribute to the development of strong translation competence. The study also placed significant emphasis on the independent search for internship placements by students, which fosters their sense of responsibility and adaptability to professional environments.

Several key areas have been identified where further research is required. These include: the impact of digitalisation on academic mobility; the role of intercultural competence within mobility programmes; and the effects of academic mobility on host institutions. Investigating these issues is essential for the sustainable development of academic mobility within the European digital education space and for shaping strategies to enhance the quality and inclusiveness of the mobility experience for all students. While academic mobility is becoming increasingly accessible in the digital age, it also demands the adaptation of curricula and the provision of appropriate student support within new educational formats (Shkarlet, 2022).

The findings of this study suggest that digital academic mobility programmes have considerable potential to influence the professional training of students in the humanities. A comparison with existing scholarly research confirmed the relevance of such initiatives, while also indicating some shifting areas of focus. In the research of W. Shen *et al.* (2022), emphasis was placed on the importance of technical support and a stable digital environment for the effective delivery of virtual mobility. The experience of students from KSAC supports these observations: unstable internet access in Ukraine under martial law significantly complicated the learning process. However, the functionality of the Canvas LMS platform enabled participants to download materials for offline use, which helped to mitigate some of the digital barriers. C. López-Duarte *et al.* (2021) argued that the main challenge of digital academic mobility remains the limited level of social interaction, which negatively affects the development of intercultural competence. However, the present study revealed a contrasting perspective: programmes such as Seeds for the Future and Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge enabled students to develop social skills through teamwork on projects, participation in debates, and engagement in online seminars. This suggests that different programme models foster varying mechanisms of socialisation.

Y. Chen *et al.* (2021) focused on the emotional challenges associated with digital learning, including decreased motivation, feelings of isolation, and screen fatigue. Similar difficulties were observed in the present study; however, the presence of mentors, support from programme coordinators, and regular feedback helped to alleviate these issues to some extent. The insights of A. Bozkurt & R.C. Sharma (2020) are particularly valuable, as they argued that digital mobility requires a rethinking of pedagogical approaches, including

adaptation to cultural differences and the introduction of new forms of assessment. The experience of BOBCATSSS 2023 and Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge demonstrated that the most successful elements of these programmes involved the use of interactive teaching methods – such as peer review, digital portfolios, and virtual presentations. This highlights the essential role of innovative pedagogy in delivering effective digital mobility.

It has been found that humanities disciplines remain underrepresented in current research on digital mobility. For example, the publications of W. Shen *et al.* (2022) focused primarily on technical and management-related fields, while the impact of digital mobility on the formation of professional identity among library and archival science specialists has received little scholarly attention. The experience of students from KSAC highlights the considerable potential of such programmes for integrating digital technologies into the humanities and for fostering flexible, interdisciplinary competences. It is important to note that international academic mobility in digital format holds significant social value for humanities students in Ukraine. It contributes to reducing educational inequality – particularly in times of war, when physical travel abroad is either restricted or impossible. Virtual participation in mobility programmes such as BOBCATSSS serves as a tool for social integration, enabling Ukrainian students to remain part of the global academic community.

It must also be acknowledged that scholarly literature still lacks an in-depth analysis of the emotional dimension of digital mobility, particularly concerning the impact of stress, cognitive overload, and fluctuations in motivation. These issues were mentioned only briefly in the articles of Y. Chen *et al.* (2021) and R.M. Ryan *et al.* (2021). This study partially reflects these aspects through students' reflections on the challenges of adapting to the intensive format of virtual interaction. This opens up new avenues for further psychological research in the field. Accordingly, the findings of the analysis support the conclusion that digital academic mobility, despite its limitations, has a tangible impact on the professional training of Ukrainian students. It contributes to the development of flexible competences, lifelong learning skills, self-management, intercultural communication, and digital literacy. These attributes align with the demands of the 21st-century labour market and help prepare future professionals to navigate the realities of a global digital society. Comparing the results of this study with the conclusions of other researchers not only confirms key trends but also highlights underexplored areas – particularly within the sphere of digital mobility in the humanities, institutional autonomy in the context of non-formal educational initiatives, and the effects of crisis conditions (such as war and the pandemic) on emerging forms of mobility. These aspects may serve as a foundation for further interdisciplinary research at the intersection of

education studies, cultural studies, information technology, and pedagogy.

■ Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was established that academic mobility in digital format offers new opportunities for humanities students, particularly in the context of social and political instability. Participation in international programmes such as Seeds for the Future 2021, Wildau-Kharkiv IT Bridge 2022, and BOBCATSSS 2023 demonstrated significant potential for the development of students' professional and intercultural competences. These initiatives contributed not only to the enhancement of digital skills but also to the advancement of interdisciplinary collaboration, critical thinking, self-organisation, and communication in multilingual environments.

The experience of engaging in digital forms of academic mobility showed that humanities students are capable of effectively adapting to new models of learning and professional development. Digital mobility programmes facilitated a deeper understanding of current technological trends, which is essential for future careers in information, library and archival sciences. However, several limitations were also identified, including technical difficulties, insufficient levels of digital literacy, and unequal access to quality internet infrastructure. The analysis of mobility programmes made it possible to identify the components that most strongly influence the success of student participation: the availability of digital learning platforms, active engagement with mentors, support

from coordinators, and flexibility in organisational arrangements. These factors proved crucial for the successful integration of KSAC students into international academic environments.

Digital academic mobility is an effective tool for the professional training of students in the humanities. It helps to compensate for the limitations of physical mobility, particularly under wartime conditions, and lays the groundwork for the future integration of the Ukrainian education system into the European and global academic space. The prospects for developing academic mobility for humanities students through digital education programmes in Ukraine are clearly promising and merit further enhancement. Digital technologies create new opportunities for innovative teaching and learning practices, increased accessibility and flexibility in education, and stronger collaboration and exchange in virtual environments. The development of digital education programmes will help to overcome some of the barriers to academic mobility, such as geographical constraints and financial limitations, by enabling students to take part in remote exchange programmes, online courses, and joint research projects.

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Особливості розвитку міжнародної академічної мобільності українських студентів гуманітарного профілю в цифровому суспільстві

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■ **Анотація.** Мета цієї статті – всебічний аналіз та характеристика основних напрямів і програм академічної мобільності для українських студентів, з акцентом на здобувачах інформаційно-бібліотечного профілю. Методологічний апарат дослідження включав такі методи, як: аналіз та контент-аналіз наукових джерел, переважно – інтернет-ресурсів, метод критичного та порівняльного аналізу, метод узагальнення, метод гіпотези та прогнозування. У статті описано різні типи цифрових освітніх програм та ініціатив, доступних для студентів гуманітарних спеціальностей в Україні, а також враховано їхні переваги та недоліки, зокрема з погляду їхнього потенціалу для посилення академічної мобільності. Визначено ключові тенденції та напрями академічної мобільності та програм цифрової освіти для студентів гуманітаріїв в Україні, а також обговорено їхній потенціал для підвищення академічної мобільності та покращення освітнього досвіду студентів гуманітарних спеціальностей. Висвітлено виклики та перешкоди, які доведеться подолати, щоб реалізувати весь потенціал цифрових освітніх програм для академічної мобільності. Існує великий потенціал для розвитку академічної мобільності в рамках цифрових освітніх програм для студентів гуманітарних спеціальностей в Україні, хоча для подолання викликів і повної реалізації цього потенціалу знадобляться: стабільність в країні, постійні зусилля та підтримка. Перспективи розвитку академічної мобільності серед українських студентів гуманітарних спеціальностей за такими програмами спрямовані на подальше опанування цифрових технологій із досвіду європейських університетів; ознайомлення з міжнародним досвідом використання інноваційних практик навчання, підвищення доступності та гнучкості освіти, посилення співпраці та обміну у віртуальному середовищі

■ **Ключові слова:** студентська мобільність; освітній простір; зарубіжне стажування; цифрові освітні проекти; міжнародні програми