

ROMANIAN YOUTH INTENTION FOR STUDYING ABROAD AND RETURNING DILEMMA IN ACTUAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT

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Abstract

The economic development of Romania less than other European country and the difficulties to access a job after the graduation or at least a well paid one, and the appreciation shown for a graduate from abroad greater than from a local one are main factors than determines in the last years an exodus of the young generation.

A secondary effect of this phenomena is the aging of the labor force and side effects as low revenues for state, health and social budgets.

In this paper, we propose to argue the importance of monitoring the phenomenon of migration and specifically youth mobility for studies which increasingly get more classical features of labor migration.

The main objective of the study is to analyses information on individual factors underlying the youth decision to study in another country in terms of concerning, intention and making decision. More, there are personal determinants, in terms of youth perceptions, expectations and needs, that basic underlying the decision of young Romanians to study abroad. Also the subjective determinants are the first ones that advocate the dilemma of returning home after graduating. Presented results are based on the research conducted on a sample of about 500 students from three academic centers Bucharest, Iasi and Timisoara, placed on South, East and West of Romania, so we can consider as a national representation.

Anchoring this finding in actual economic context is mandatory, public decisions makers will better know how to design public policies for undergraduate studies to be linked with the economic environment and for the youth unemployment.

Keywords: education, human development, labor mobility, migration, economic development

JEL Classification: I30, J61, J68, O34

Introduction

Youth migration in a globalized world

Migration is known from ancient times, but nowadays, the phenomenon is actual and complex, due to the global national, regional or global effects that are difficult to estimate at controlled. Current debates on migration aimed to understand the multitude of determinants factors for migratory decision making (Czarnowski, 2013) and the multiple effects of population movements on the involved economies (OECD, 2012). Facilitating the mobility of individuals for studying is one of the main objectives of the Bologna Process. European Union ministers agreed on the objective „20% by 2020 the proportion of students in higher education who completes a training period or training abroad“. Thus, mobility is an integral part of the EU program for education and training (European Union, 2013).

Youth migration for studying abroad is defined by moving young people or students for studying outside their country of birth or citizenship, for a period of 12 months or more. Learning mobility in order to acquire new knowledge, skills and competences, is one of the fundamental ways in which young people strengthens their employability, building a career and foster their personal development, creativity and active citizenship respecting intercultural dimension.

In actual literature there are many theories to describe the complex phenomenon of migration. More, we notice a recently growing effort to explain and understand the phenomenon of expansion of international migration of young people, even if, initially, it was mobility or student migration. For example, Findlay (2010) sees migration as mobility of students' knowledge and the theory of supply and demand explains student mobility as a complex interaction between the financial interests of higher education institutions and personal motivations and economic needs of students and their families. Raghuram (2013) redefines theory and suggests expanding student mobility approaches to analysis spatiality migration and examine how young people become agents of knowledge in configuring poles of academic knowledge, technical, informational. King and Raghuram (2013) and Madge et al. (2014) suggest that the theory of global knowledge allows understanding international students as active actors in establishing new knowledge space.

One of the motive of the youth migration, but not only, to high developed countries is the fact that they achieved a better management of intellectual capital (Lopez-Ruiz & all, 2011). The same study confirms, what we have considered as base idea of our analysis that is a strong link between the education and economic environment as source of economic growth.

Romanian youth migration

After European integration there were opened new opportunities for young Romanians and their opportunities have changed significantly. At European level, the right to live, work, travel and study in another country is secured and young people are free to choose their educational route. Romanian youth and students are welcome in host countries because they represent a gained human capital because of knowledge, skills, competences that it brings. Thereafter, this capital shall be for the host economy as a highly skilled workforce.

Unfortunately, migration led to labor market imbalance and population mobility. The loss of population due to emigration reaches a very dramatic trend, and worst the migration of young people affect more demographic balance.

Romanian researchers (Zamfir A.M. et col., 2016) studied the aspects of youth mobility for study as first step towards migration for work, showing that the volume of Romanian

students studying abroad is on the rise. Analyzing data for Romanian youth mobility in European context, it was shown that there are several opposite effects of phenomenon of student mobility turning into (permanent) migration. There is a weak boundary between student migration and migration to work. For many young people, the perspective of studying abroad is the first step in their decision toward working and establishing permanent residence in the host country.

The youth migration starts from the determination to study abroad from the beginning considering that the higher education abroad is more appreciated and gives them better skills that will highly be appreciated on the labor market. A second stream of studying abroad comes from students' mobility, which are extended after the first 3 or 6 months and in a substantial degree ends up with a working migration.

The meaning of intellectual capital has different content from the point of different perspectives of employee, employers and society (Grigorescu & Chiper, 2016). Romania is known as a country with "minded and educated" capital so all the time the youth were targeted by "head hunting" and "brain drain" phenomena.

The last years, starting with 2007, the Romania integration in European Union, the migration were significant increase due to the free education and labor force mobility.

Young people would like to study in another country

Making the decision to migrate involves several steps such as: information, analysis of opportunities, alternatives and consequences, action) on the basis of personal motivations, objectives and priorities. These can be influenced by individual experiences and context - environment and information, and by subjective elements like perceptions, attitudes, motives etc. Just understanding decision-making model and its determinants, we can create a coherent system of intervention to influence or orientation of youth educational route. Anchoring these theoretical preconditions in actual economic context is mandatory. The general objective of our work is to deepen the research of migratory behavioral as result of interaction between cognitive components (i.e. concerning, information), behavioral component (measured by intention to migrate), motivation and decision-making.

Methodology

The main objective of the analysis is to analyze information on individual factors underlying the youth decision to study in another country in terms of concerning, intention and making decision.

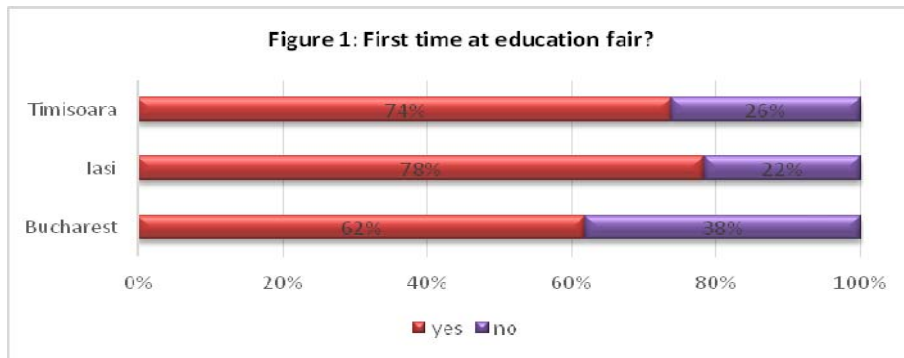
In October 2016, we conducted a questionnaire survey asking young people about their future plans to continue their education in Romania or abroad. The investigation was applied to young people and students who was took part at the Romanian International University Fair (RIUF) which is considered the largest educational event in Romania. Sampling design allowed the investigation in three regions of the country, namely South (Bucharest), the West (Timisoara) and East (Iasi). The instrument to collect data is semi structured questionnaire applied face to face, applied to the exit at the fair. This sample was composed of 455 respondents (named students) including 200 students in Bucharest, 125 students in Iasi and 130 students in Timisoara. Respondents provided information about interest for their future educational way and personal reasons underlying the decision to study in a foreign country. However, that most visitors were high school students.

Data and results interpretation

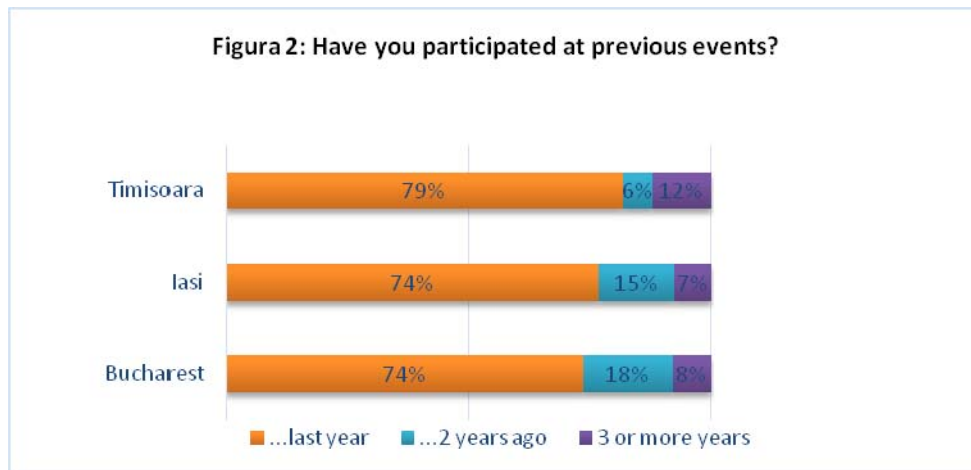
Collected data and information focused on investigating the young people concern of considering studying abroad, intention to leave to study abroad, decision to leave to study abroad and probability to return home after finishing studies. The main results and interpretation will be detailed below.

a) considering studying abroad as the presence in fairs for educational offers

Three quarters of respondents have participated in past fairs for educational offers (Figure 1). Most of those who have previously participated in such an event, they did it last year (Figure 2) so recently. The situation is slightly different in the three cities. At RIUF Bucharest, 62% of young people said they have participated in fairs for educational offers. Of those who participated in other events of this kind (38%) most of them (74%) also came last year and only 18% have participated two- three years ago or more.



In Iasi, a comparatively higher number of young people (78%) said they come for the first time at the fair, and from those who already participated, a percentage of 74% did it last year. In Timisoara, 74% of respondents came to this fair for the first time, and a percentage of 79% did it last year.

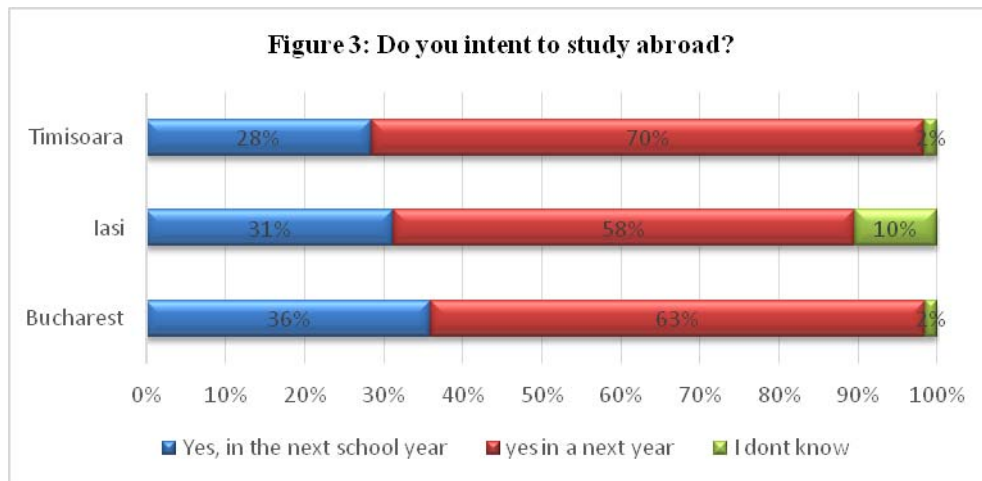


So, during the time the concern of young people for foreign educational offer was not diminishing, as they participated in several fairs. Young people are willing to inform them and gather information before completing the educational guidance.

b) Intention to study abroad

One third of young respondents planning to go to study abroad during next school year 2017-2018; rest of them intend to leave in the next. Among the young people who came to RIUF Bucharest, a percent of 36% said they intend to study abroad to next school year. The rest (63%) said they intend to go abroad in a following year (Figure 3). A percent of 31% of people who came to the RIUF Iasi, affirmed want them to go to study abroad next school year. The rest (58%) said they intend to go abroad in the next school year and 10% said they do not know yet. At RIUF Timisoara, a smaller number of people (28%) said they plan to study abroad next school year and compared more persons (70%) said they are considering to go abroad in a next year.

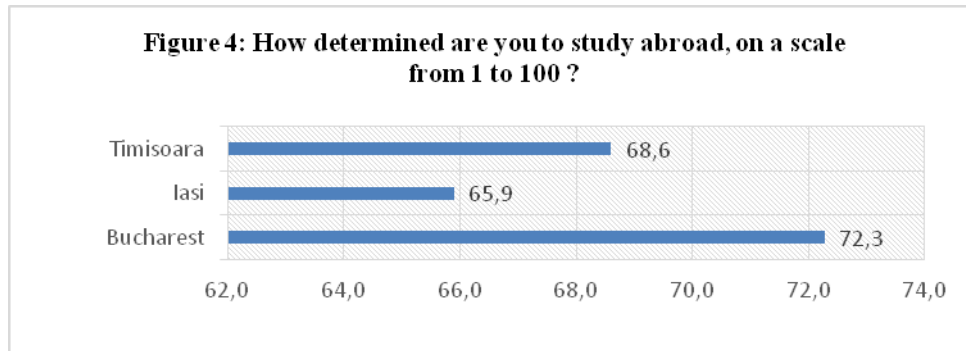
Most often, young people search themselves and inform about the opportunities to study abroad and even if some of them will change their option over time, their concern is remarkable for shaping the intention to study abroad.



c) The decision to study abroad

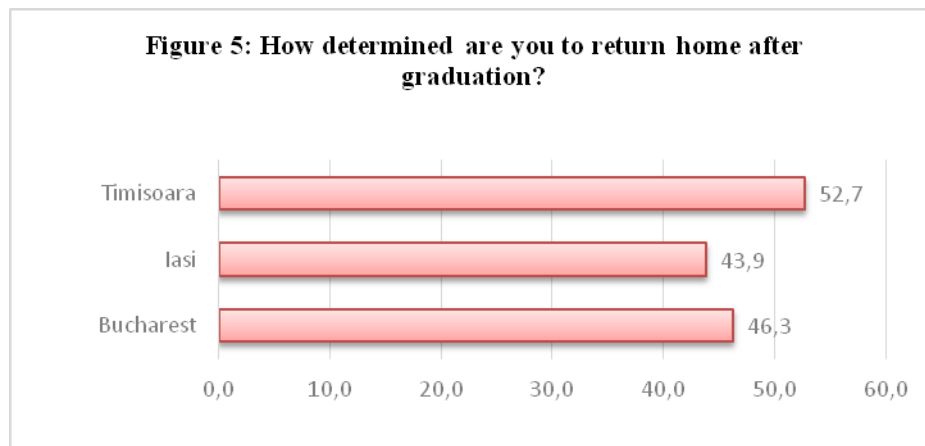
The young people’s decision to study abroad is quite strong and well defined. In Bucharest, young people are significantly committed against people of Timisoara and people from Iasi, because they said that they are determined to go with a proportion of 72.3% compared to 65.9% in Iasi or 68.9% that is the determination of young people in Timisoara (Figure 4).

d) *The decision to return home after graduation*



The decision to return home after graduation is significantly stronger among persons from Timisoara. According to this study, the information is in relation with their family support or influence for remaining home.

Young people from Bucharest would return to the home country after graduation with a rate of 46.3%. Their determination is stronger than people from Iasi who would like to return home in a proportion of 43.9%. Thus people from Timisoara are more determined (about 52.7%) to return home after their studies abroad (Figure 5).



As it could be seen from Figure 4 and 5 the highest rate of the study abroad desire is registered in Bucharest, since the highest rate of return home is highest in Timisoara. More interesting is that the gap between the two studied desires (study abroad and return home to work) shows that it is highest in Bucharest, while in Timisoara is the lowest. At first we can appreciate that this result comes from the geographical position of Timisoara on the west side of the country closer to the other European countries and the economic development of the area higher than the eastern region. But this contrary with the results in Bucharest known as the centrum of the economic development of the country.

The study shows that the desire to study abroad is a first step for youth to decide later that finding jobs in the country they have studied is a confirmation of their skills. But, we have to consider that, part of them are willing to migrate and they are using the study abroad

opportunities, also the students' mobility programs, as first motivation for their families, to start a way to long or permanent migration.

Knowing better the motivation of the youth to study and to work abroad, as the main pillars of the migration phenomena, give us the possibility to design the education program, the employment programs, entrepreneurial facilities etc. an entire system to motivate the youth to consider the return home after finish the study or after a short period of experience.

Conclusion

The decision to migrate is made in successive stages such as: initiation, information, analysis of the alternatives and consequences and the action or implementation.

In general, that young person, who oscillates on the idea of continuing their studies at home or abroad, are willing to inform using several channels for information (media, friends, educational offers etc.). Over time, the youth interest for information and educational events is not diminishing. Young Romanians want to know foreign educational offer and gather information before completing the educational guidance.

The interest in mobility is a precursor for the migration behavior and is measured by intention to go to study abroad. Among the young respondents, almost one third of them plan to study abroad in next school year 2017-2018 and the rest of them intend to leave to study in a school year later. Generally, "If they have a lot of information about the educational offers of different universities they can take a more conscious, aware choice. Broadly Young Romanians decided in a few months (about one third of them) in a year or 2-3 years. Few decide in a long time, more than three years. The decision to go to study abroad is quite strong and well defined and young are willing to take this step.

Behavior about returning after graduation, expressed by the intensity of the declared decision is highly unlikely. In our case, if young people would be in a position to complete their studies abroad, just 40% - 50% would return home after graduating. Young people appreciate the high quality of education abroad and the existence of better job opportunities on foreign labor market. We note that Romanian young people are willing to find a job in foreign country after graduation, considering this a real reason to migrate.

It is obviously that we have to pay attention on several key aspects that should be considered by the public decision makers as national priorities:

- the economic growth is depending by the educated human resources;
- the youth are looking for better socio-economic environment that easily and strongly manage their intellectual capital;
- the education should be positioned in the right place among the European and international education and training suppliers;
- the employers culture and general perception about the abroad education and domestic one has to be changed;
- building mechanisms to better valuation of the youth in terms of employment opportunities, wages, other facilities;
- identifying the main reasons of the mobility transformation in migration and design countermeasures.

If we carefully analyze the decision framework according which young people organize their decisions about their educational and professional, we can anticipate the options and alternatives for achieving the desired results. Future developments of the study will deeper search on the motivation, influence factors and links that are contributing to the youth

decision. A second perspective of the further developments is to find out how it can be weakened the link and change the behavior of the young generation.

At first site it can be considered a normal phenomenon in a global world, but looking into details we have to be honest and to accept that this is a brain drain from our country to more developed one. More than this, the head hunting, the migration after they finish the studies in the origin country, drain not only the youth, the intellectual potential but also the education financial resources.

It could be seen that are multiple reasons for us to study this phenomenon in his depth and to build a strong and wise system with integrated public policies to maintain our human and intellectual capital and to support a robust socio-economic development.

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