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# DESIGNING THE RETURN MIGRATION OF ROMANIAN STUDENTS

Case  
Study

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## **Keywords**

*International student migration,  
Return migration,  
Brain drain*

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## **JEL Classification**

*F22, I22*

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## **Abstract**

*Romanian youth migration is an increasing phenomenon, due to subjective and objective factors as economical reasons, professional carrer and increasingly more international competition for talent. In these circumstances, the present article aims to evaluate determinant factors that contribute to the decision of Romanian graduates to return national labour market. We sustain that young Romanians consider carefully and hardly decide their professional future. A particular attention is given to their personal reasons and motivations as well as family and friends network. For designing returning factors we present the results of a questionnaire survey, asking young pupils and students about their future educational way and personal reasons underlying the decision to study in a foreign country and taking into consideration the returning decision. As far international student migration is seen as a first step to migration for work, our work desires to fight for returning home of Romanian well-educated graduates.*

## BACKGROUND

With the widening of the workplace and study throughout the European area, new opportunities have emerged for young Romanian students, willing to know the world. In this context, perspectives, motivations and behaviour were quickly adapted to current development trends. Young Romanians, students with a valuable human capital, knowledge, skills, and competencies are appreciated by talent seekers. Subsequently, the acquired knowledge and skills are developed and implemented in accordance with the development needs of companies and become a highly qualified workforce, contributing to high performance of destination countries.

The phenomenon of youth mobility for studies (as potential migration) acquires specific characteristics of migration phenomenon and the determinants fall within the range of factors that lead to permanent migration. Young people are a quality, well-trained workforce that can easily be employed to developed economies. The impact of the phenomenon is felt in all areas such as economic, social, demographic, education, health, security in both destination countries and countries of origin.

### THE DECISION FOR MIGRATION IS COMPLEX AND INCLUDES A VARIETY OF FACTORS

Theoretical researches of the return migration phenomenon combine approaches from economical problems, social integration, decision making process and behavioural science. Educated migrants have complex choices and make various decisions that influence returning to home country, depending on: finding a job and developing a professional career, or continue the education and specialization, or even more a combination between those.

Recent economic research on brain drain, globalization and development (Hampf F. et al, 2017) sustain that there is growing evidence and understanding that migrants in general, and skilled migrants in particular, favour the economic, financial and even political and cultural integration of their home country into the global economy.

Two main results are emphasized: the fact that educational investments are higher when high-skill migration is not constrained, and the role of skilled diasporas in promoting the integration of migrants' home countries into the global economy. Both results strengthen the rationale for letting skilled people go.

Analysing evidence from Romanian migrants (Hinks T. et al, 2017) pays particular attention to differences in expected earnings and skills and

training acquired as a migrant. The study finds that higher expected earnings in Romania and investment in Romanian firms are positively correlated with plans to return migrate.

Romanian researchers (Predoşanu G. et al, 2011) show that the intention of Romanian migrants to return to home country is influenced by several factors such as: socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender), participation to the labour market in the host country, marital status and location of the partner, parental status and location of the children, importance of national identity, work and income satisfaction as well as positive emotions related to national identity.

Social problems are emergent. At European level the ageing population is growing due to increased life expectancy and reduced fertility with changes in traditional family structure. This will generate major changes in the demand for goods and services, the number of potential users of social services has increased (Ghența M., 2014) generating complexity of social services.

## METHODOLOGY

Our research's aim is to analyze evidences about determinants underlying the youth decision to continue education in another country and future perspectives of returning home in terms of intention and making decision. For that, we run a questionnaire-based survey asking Romanian pupils and students about their intentions and motivations to continue their studies in Romania or abroad. In October 2016, we applied a questionnaire to young people and students who participated at an educational fair, namely The Romanian International University Fair (RIUF) placed in three big towns, Bucharest, Iași and Timișoara, representative for historical Romanian regions. For data collection used is semi structured questionnaire applied face to face, done to the exit at the fair. There were investigated a number of 455 respondents (i.e. students) from which 200 students in Bucharest, 125 students in Iași and 130 students in Timișoara. Respondents give answers about determinants for their future educational way and personal motivations that are behind the decision to leave country and choose a foreign university. Many respondents and visitors were high school students willing to search for educational offer.

## DATA AND RESULTS INTERPRETATION

We interpreted data and information focused on decision of Romanian graduates (actual decision) to return home after graduating and enter national labour market. We sustain that young Romanians consider carefully and hardly decide their

professional future, taking into account many possibilities. A particular attention is given to their personal reasons and motivations as family and friends network.

The main results and interpretation will be detailed below. The return behaviour is expressed by the intensity of the decision to return to the country after studies.

Our results show that, if young people were in the situation to complete their studies abroad, a proportion between 40% - 50% would return to the home country. Surpassed that they will continue their studies in a foreign university, the students of Bucharest will return to Romania after graduation in proportion of 46.3%. Less determined would be the young people from Iași, who would like to return to the country in the proportion of 43.9%. By comparison, Timișoaras' citizens are more determined, about 52.7% of them would return to the Romania after completing studies abroad.

### LET'S SEE THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

In **Bucharest**, about 70% of young people say that if they study abroad they would agree to return only to be with their family and friends (Figure 1). About 21.5% of Bucharest people say they are attached to traditional values and Romanian traditions. On the other hand, statistically significant percentages (20.0%) of young people consider the fact that immigrants are not regarded as equal citizens. Also, a significant percentage of 16.5% of young people consider that daily living is more expensive and more difficult abroad. Still, 4.5% of young people think that turning back after completing their studies would make them more eligible to find a job in Romania. There is a significant percentage of young people (13.5%) who clearly state that they do not want to return to Romania after completing their studies.

In **Iași**, about 71.2% of young people consider that they would agree to return home to be with their family and friends. In addition, 14.4% of young say they value the Romanian traditions. On the other hand, percentages (6.4%) of young people have restrictions regarding immigrant status and the fact that immigrants are not regarded as equal citizens. Also, 4.8% of young people consider that standard living is more expensive. Only 3.2% of young people think that returning home after graduating would raise chances to find a good job in Romania. Also to this question there is a significant percentage of young people (12.8%) who clearly state that they do not want to return to the country after completing their studies (see Figure 1).

In **Timișoara**, about 83.1% of young people state that they would agree to return only to be with their family and friends. Similarly, 20% of the people

say they want to be attached to Romanian traditions and values. On the other hand, 10.0% of young people have doubts regarding immigrant status and think that immigrants are not regarded as citizens with equal rights. Also, 10.8% of young people consider that cost living is more expensive and harder abroad. However, 13.1% of young people think that turning back after completing their studies would find a better job in Romania. Only 3.8% of young people state that they do not want to return to the country after graduation (see Figure 1).

### CONCLUSIONS

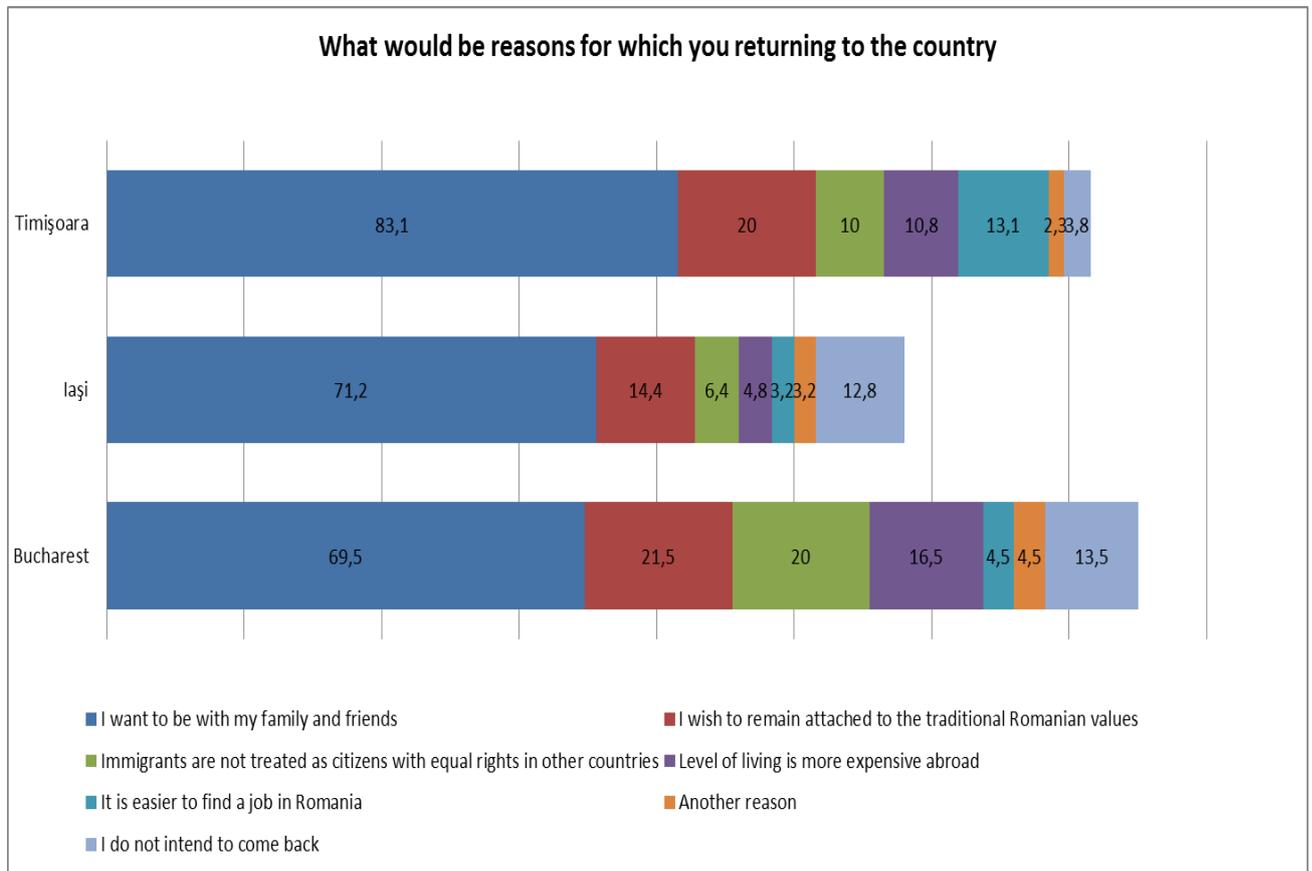
This scientific approach shows a picture of the phenomenon of migration for studies from the perspective of the reasons behind the migration behaviour, respectively the young people intention to continue studying abroad and expressing the intention to return to the country after graduating.

Young Romanians are willing to study abroad, but only half of them would return home after graduating. Generally, for the majority of respondents, the main reason for returning Romania would be the family and friends or traditional value. Only a small number of young people consider the difficulties associated to the immigrant status or the expensive level of living.

These are important aspects of the migration phenomenon for studies that could have negative effects on the valorisation of the Romanians' knowledge, skills, creative and innovative abilities for the benefit of national economic development. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the complex implications generated by the movement of young people, from long-term demographic effects to the destruction of the labour market, skills shortage, inadequate employment, etc.

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**Figure 1:** The reasons for return migration, Bucharest, Iași, Timișoara; multiple choices (%)