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International Educational Migration: Case of Kazakhstan

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the issue of the current state of international educational migration from Kazakhstan. The article discussed the very essence of migration processes, the problems of this issue, identified the reasons for the increase in the number of those wishing to study abroad, considered the positive and negative consequences of the educational migration of Kazakhstanis, and identified recommendations for stabilizing the issue of youth migration. With the development of society, the trend of getting an education in foreign universities among young people is increasing every day. The multiple growths in the pace of development of educational migration around the world bring the formation of a carefully thought-out migration policy of states and the adaptation of foreign students to new living conditions to the very top of international agendas. In modern realities, the issue of regulating educational migration in the Republic of Kazakhstan is becoming the most acute. Every year more and more young people from Kazakhstan prefer to get an education abroad. For students, there are a lot of advantages to getting education abroad. However, educational migration today has an impact on the state in several areas: the economy of states, foreign and social policy. And this influence is not always positive. The trend of educational migration of Kazakhstanis abroad carries the risks of a brain drain since many young people after completing their studies in foreign institutions are in no hurry to return. With

their foreign diploma, they get a prestigious job and leave Kazakhstan forever. Today Kazakhstan needs effective mechanisms to prevent the outflow of students such as improving the quality of domestic education, facilitating the conditions for obtaining education, increasing the prestige of Kazakhstani universities, etc.

Key words: migration, education, international relations, the youth, globalization, brain drain, foreign universities.

Introduction

Currently, one of the most intensively developing areas in terms of scientific study in the framework of migration research is the phenomenon of educational (or studying) migration. In many countries of the world, education has long been a strategic resource that governments and private businesses use and invest in. Migration and education for many young people are decisions that determine their further life trajectory (Zamotin, 2016).

The process of internationalization in education is controversial. It is based on potentially conflicting processes. On the one hand, countries are involved in the global educational process, on the other hand, they are faced with the problem of emigration of young people to obtain a better and more affordable education offered by other states.

International educational migration is the movement of people between countries to receive education at various levels and for different periods. It includes the movement of schoolchildren, students, graduate students, doctoral students, trainees, professionals who improve their skills in various structures, and organizations. Huge part of the educational migration is the flow of educational migrants who are focused on such educational institutions as schools, colleges, and universities (Youth migration to the West: demographic, social and economic aspects. Course work. Sociology., 2011).

Migration processes in the Republic of Kazakhstan are developing under the influence of various factors: socio-economic, political, ethnic, environmental and

others. Since the first years of independence, the regulation of migration processes has been and still belongs to one of the most important directions of state policy. During this time Kazakhstan has become an active participant in world migration processes (Medikhanova, 2010). Even though Kazakhstan is now getting out of the demographic crisis that began in the late 1990s and lasted until 2008, some demographic indicators are changing for the worse. In 2012, a negative migration balance was recorded, which continued to grow in the following years. The overwhelming majority of those leaving are labor migrants, but there are also intellectual emigrants among them.

Thus, it can be assumed that if appropriate measures are not taken in time, then the negative balance will continue to grow in the future (Sadovskaya, 2016).

The purpose of this research is to identify problems in the field of educational migration from Kazakhstan, as well as to develop recommendations for improving and stabilizing the situation associated with migration processes today.

The following objectives were set: to identify the reasons for the growth of youth migration, to determine the main priority areas of young people, to formulate the problems of this issue and to give recommendations on a possible solution to the problem in the field of migration processes of young Kazakhstanis.

Methodology

The methodological basis of this scientific article includes method of studying and analyzing literature, synthesis, and statistical method. These methods were used to study and analyze scientific works, statistical data of international organizations, scientific and news articles based on the results of a survey of applicants and students who study in Kazakhstan, participated in exchange programs, or got an education abroad. A comparative analysis was also used to compare different points of view, the positive and negative aspects of international educational migration in the world and Kazakhstan.

Literature review

Educational migration of young people acts as a separate independent direction of scientific research. This is due to the serious impact of this process on the future fate of young people, the socio-economic situation of the regions and, in general, on the spatial distribution of human capital. There are many works devoted to the study of youth migration, special attention is paid to the question of why young people prefer to receive education abroad, after graduation, whether young specialists return or move abroad.

Educational migration is a multifaceted phenomenon, therefore, the approaches to the study of this type of migration are multifaceted. For example, (Demina, 2018) notes that in the works of Asmolov A.G., Bayram M., Banks J., Bennett M., Soldatova G.U., educational migration is considered through the problems of interethnic interaction and adaptation in a multicultural environment. Ledeneva L. I., Tyuryukanova E. V. and Petrov V. N. mainly analyze the professional migration intentions of students. Most Russian researchers consider two forms of manifestation of educational migrations: "brain drain" from the country and the problems of adaptation of foreign students, the most significant works on this issue are the works of Doctor of Sociological Sciences E.E. Pismennaya (Pismennaya, 2018) and Doctor of Economics S.V. Ryazantsev (Edited by Ryazantsev, 2019).

It is difficult to name outstanding scientists among Kazakhstani authors who study international educational migration and its impact on Kazakhstan. Today there are works of such specialists as: Serikkalieva A. E., Zhumashev D., Sadovskaya E. Yu. and others. The works of the previously listed authors were used in this study. We have works aimed at studying educational migration from Kazakhstan to certain countries that are preferable for Kazakhstani youth, such as Russia, China, and the United States.

In this article the primary sources were analyzed, that is, statistical data on international educational migration from Kazakhstan for the entire period of independence in general terms and for the last 2 years in more detail.

We can see that there are no large-scale works on this topic, they are all fragmentary. Analysis of the current situation and forecasting trends in the field of educational migration is hampered by the insufficient efficiency of modern methods of statistical assessment of migration flows. The problem of lack of reliable information about various categories of the population, caused by the fact that students often do not study for a full academic year, participate in exchange programs, and therefore their number may not be reflected in the statistics of students based on the rules of a particular university of the recipient country.

Findings and discussion

For 30 years of sovereignty, international migration in the Republic of Kazakhstan has gone through a stage of rapid and spontaneous development and in recent years has entered a period of relatively regulated movements. During this period, the directions of migration changed significantly: new types were formed, migration policy, legislation, and management institutions were developed and reformed. Causal relationships in migration are complex and correlate with market and political transformations within the country and inclusion in the regional and global economic systems (Toleuov, 2020).

The largest group leaving Kazakhstan is the youth. In the Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the term migration is used once in connection with the indication of the values on which it is planned to base the socialization of young people and their involvement in social and political life. At the same time, several areas are indicated that can have a direct impact on the migration potential of youth: provision of affordable and high-quality education; creating conditions for youth employment; development of a system of affordable housing for young people (About education. Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 27, 2007 No. 319-III.).

The problem of educational migration, namely the annual growth in the number of Kazakhstani applicants and students who go abroad to get an education, is discussed at a high level. The Government of Kazakhstan is seriously concerned

that the outflow of applicants increases every year. So, Government is developing ways to solve this problem, such as improving the quality of education in Kazakh universities, allocating many grants for education, simplifying the procedure for admission to higher education institutions, etc. (Mussina, 2020).

In March 2010, Kazakhstan officially joined the Bologna Declaration and in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna process moved to the three-level model of training: Bachelor - Master - Doctorate (Ph.D.). Kazakhstan as a full member of the European Higher Education Area has begun to actively use the relevant standards and introduce them into the higher education system. Today, Kazakh universities are slowly moving forward in the world rankings of QS World University Rankings, Webometrics, QS University Rankings: EECA. In Kazakhstan, there is free higher education, funded by the republican budget, and paid higher education.

Almost 30% of all students at universities receive education at the expense of a state educational grant. Grants in Kazakhstan are the main part of the financing of universities, thanks to which the state attracts interested students to national universities, controls and regulates the training of specialists. Kazakh universities actively participate in the implementation of joint projects of international organizations UNESCO, UNICEF, DAAD, ERASMUS +, Mevlana, etc., cooperate with foreign universities within the framework of 7743 international agreements with more than 55 countries of the world, implement joint programs for obtaining two diplomas (Ledeneva, 2021).

Despite the efforts of the Government of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Education and Science to introduce new educational mechanisms and include higher education institutions in the international educational system, the outflow of young people for the purpose of obtaining foreign education not only does not stop - but its intensity increases every year. There are no precise, systematic data on educational migration from Kazakhstan: as a rule, the volume of migration is recorded only for those who study abroad at the expense of the national budget. At the same time, the statistics do not consider those who study abroad at their own

expense or international scholarships (Shchekunskikh, 2021). Statistics on Kazakhstani students studying abroad are presented on the official statistical websites of host countries, such as Russia and China. Also, information regarding the number of students from Kazakhstan is presented on the websites of international organizations.

The dynamics of the migration movement of young people have changed in different directions since 2010. At first, the volume of youth immigration exceeded the volume of emigration, and the migration balance had a positive value. However, since 2014, migration flows began to change direction, and the volume of emigration has already exceeded the volume of immigration of young people, which led to a negative balance. It was first recorded in 2014 and continues to increase nowadays. Young people, as the most mobile group, react to the economic state of the country, and as soon as the economic crisis begins to manifest itself, the intensity of youth emigration immediately increases (Foreign youth migration in Central Asian countries: analysis of risks and minimization of negative effects., 2019).

Schoolchildren, applicants, and students from Kazakhstan are focused on obtaining higher education in Russia, China, USA, European countries and aim to stay there to work after graduation. Young Kazakhstanis leave Kazakhstan because they believe that domestic education is inferior in quality and may also be less accessible. For example, in neighboring Russia, the number of budget-funded places is increasing for foreign students, housing and scholarships are provided. In addition, the admission rules have been simplified. Those who leave Kazakhstan are often the most capable and talented, which diminishes the country's potential for long-term economic growth as well as the country's development (Kasumova, 2019).

UNESCO (Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students, 2021) collects statistics on the volume of international educational migration. If we rely on the latest data from an international organization, almost 84.000 Kazakhstani students are studying abroad. According to UNESCO Institute of Statistics, first 5 destination countries of

Kazakh youth are: Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, United States, Czech Republic, and United Kingdom. This information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. UIS data on the mobility of students. Kazakhstan

Country of origin (number of students)		Destination country (number of students)		Key Indicators	
Uzbekistan	26,130	Kyrgyzstan	2,479	Students abroad:	
				Total number of mobile students abroad	83,503
India	4,453	Turkey	2,065	(% of total mobile students)	1.5
Turkmenistan	3,294	United States	1,764	Outbound mobility ratio	13.2
Russian Federation	1,487	Czechia	1,677	Gross outbound enrolment ratio	-
Kyrgyzstan	1,161	United Kingdom	1,321	Students hosted:	
China	989	Germany	956	Total number of mobile students hosted	40,742
				(% of total mobile students)	0.7

Mongolia	973	Rep. Korea	681	Inbound mobility rate	3.3
Tajikistan	613	Poland	650		
Afghanistan	415	Malaysia	572		
Turkey	316	Canada	506		

Based on many articles on educational migration from Kazakhstan in the top of the countries most popular among Kazakhstanis are Russia and China. So, according to the statistical collection «Export of Russian educational services», in 2018, 59.3 thousand Kazakhstanis arrived in Russia to study at universities (Export of Russian educational services: Statistical Collection. Issue 9, 2019). According to the General Consulate of the People's Republic of China, 15 thousand students from the Republic of Kazakhstan studied in China in the same period (Koshanova, 2016).

The total number of Kazakhstanis studying outside the country is not recorded. The most popular areas of educational migration are: Russian Federation - 39.6 thousand people; People's Republic of China- 17.6 thousand people; Republic of Korea- 1.6 thousand people; United Kingdom- about 1 thousand people (Foreign youth migration in Central Asian countries: analysis of risks and minimization of negative effects., 2019).

According to the statistical compendium of the Eurasian Economic Commission «Education in Figures» (Eurasian Economic Union statistics. Education in Figures., 2020), in 2019-2020, 69.035 Kazakhstanis studied at universities in Russia. Since there are only 605.000 students in domestic universities, it turns out that every 10th

Kazakhstani student study abroad. Within the framework of the EAEU, Kazakhstan occupies a 67% share in the total volume of «exports» of students.

According to the statistical information of the EAEU, we can see the dynamics of the number of students in educational institutions of secondary professional education and higher professional education in Russia who arrived from Kazakhstan in the 2015/16 - 2019/20 academic years. According to the results of the research presented in Table 2, we see that a fairly large number of Kazakhstani students studied in Russia. Even though in the 2019-2020 academic year in Russia there were 3 thousand less students from Kazakhstan than in the 2015-2016 Russia also remains a priority for Kazakhstani youth for getting an education.

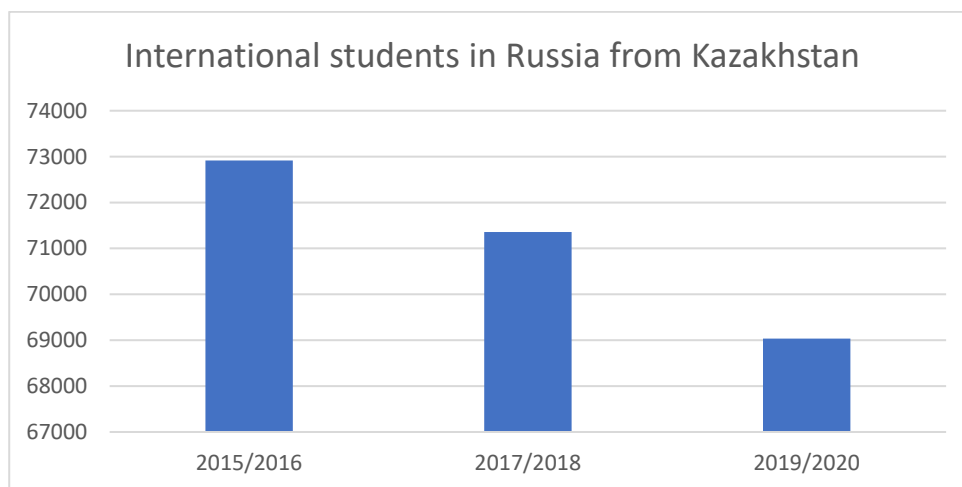


Figure 1. Students from Kazakhstan in Russia in the 2015/16 - 2019/20 academic years

Analysts of the regional office of the International Organization for Migration in Kazakhstan and Central Asia made a calculation. Based on these calculations, analysts made a prediction that the potential of non-return migration of young people who left the countries of the region for work or study can be estimated at

30-35% with a tendency to grow. It means that about 20.000 students from Kazakhstan studying abroad may in the future renounce their citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Foreign youth migration in Central Asian countries: analysis of risks and minimization of negative effects., 2019).

The youth of Kazakhstan is considering the possibility of obtaining a foreign education to leave the country and not return. Having received education and experience of living in another country, young specialists are again guided by migration for another purpose, for example, with the aim of working or staying permanently (Serikkaliyeva, 2019). Therefore, the issue of Kazakhstani students studying abroad affects the future of the country.

The fundamental factor of the state policy of Kazakhstan in the field of education is determined not so much by the implementation of programs to minimize the departure of young people, but by a well-thought-out migration policy to attract foreign students from Central and Southeast Asia to Kazakhstan. But as we can see, the outflow of students is 2 times higher than the number of students coming to us. The measures taken to date are not enough to stabilize the situation.

Simultaneously with the process of the outflow of Kazakhstanis to obtain education outside Kazakhstan, it may happen that the number of people entering Kazakhstani universities will be reduced to 50 thousand people and the republic will have to raise the issue of cardinal reforms in the field of education and employment. Even worse, many Kazakh employers are already refusing to accept employees with higher education who graduated from universities in the republic. And this is a signal about the enormous problems in Kazakhstani higher education (Mamyshev, 2019).

In Kazakhstan, due to the poor-quality material and technical base of Kazakhstani universities, underdeveloped service and infrastructure, gaps in the system of teaching in English, as well as visa restrictions, a situation has developed when outgoing educational mobility exceeds the incoming one. The state policy of Kazakhstan in the field of education is aimed at minimizing risks and threats in the development of social capital. However, the measures by which the Government of Kazakhstan regulates educational migration lose competition to other countries.

These measures are clearly insufficient given the fact that countries aimed at attracting foreign students offer their various educational initiatives and create conditions for retaining foreign graduates in their country.

It is necessary to urgently take measures to stabilize the situation to prevent huge problems due to youth migration. To solve the problem of the outflow of young, talented people from Kazakhstan, it is possible to develop ways of solving the problem based on recommendations. To make education in Kazakhstan attractive for both Kazakhstanis and foreign applicants, it is necessary to increase the prestige of domestic universities; improve the content of educational programs in English (EP), they must meet modern needs; exclude cases of corruption in higher education institutions; to direct the acquisition of education for the further use of the acquired knowledge; to draw up special educational programs to attract foreign applicants (Koloskov, 2021), etc.

Contribution of research results

This scientific study analyzes and summarizes the available statistical data on the international educational migration of Kazakhstani youth, scientific articles by various authors studying the issues of educational migration in Kazakhstan and the world. The article contains data on the main characteristics of educational migration: what is meant by this name, what is the situation in Kazakhstan regarding student migration, why Kazakhstanis prefer to study at foreign universities and stay abroad, where mainly young people of Kazakhstan study, how to reduce the outflow of young future specialists etc. It was revealed that the Government of Kazakhstan is taking decisive steps to improve the quality of education, looking for new opportunities to attract both Kazakhstani and foreign students to Kazakhstani universities. However, this is still not enough to compete with other countries. It was found that educational migration is increasing and can lead to irreversible negative consequences. Therefore, the article proposes to pay more attention to solving problems specifically in the field of educational

migration, since it is the youth that is the future of the country, and if this future migrates, then there will be no one to develop our state.

Conclusion

Today, the world space is being transformed into a single zone where information, goods and services move freely, where ideas spread freely, and their carriers move freely. Therefore, students, undergraduates, PhD students, and university professors use this opportunity. Education abroad is a global trend. Young people want to study abroad, and for this they have many reasons: to receive a high-quality education; great value of European and American diplomas; the presence of additional career prospects; the ability to study one or more foreign languages; the possibility of intercultural communication; the opportunity to travel and explore the world. This is a great opportunity for young people and one of the main indicators of the level of integration of a country into the global community (Khudaverdyan, 2012). However, there is also a negative side to this trend. Many young professionals stay where they received their education and have no desire to return.

The outflow of young people from the country for education abroad is one of the most acute social problems of Kazakhstan. The question of whether the government of Kazakhstan will be able to stop the emigration of young people is extremely important. The outflow of population from Kazakhstan, which began after 1991, continues to exceed immigration. The issues of the outflow of youth from the republic have already been repeatedly brought up for discussion in parliament, however, now the situation continues to remain uncontrolled. Given the international competition in education and the imperfection of the labor market in the country, it is unlikely that it will be possible to stop the emigration of young people in the near future. Most likely, Kazakhstan, as a developing country, will remain a donor of educational and labor resources in favor of more developed countries.

Graduates of schools and colleges prefer to study abroad, since the instrument for determining the level of a teacher's knowledge there is more loyal and attractive for graduates, the quality of education is better, and there are more advantages. Other

countries offer more attractive ways to get education and further work (Chernikova, 2020).

In the very near future, the issue of the outflow of young people from the Republic of Kazakhstan should be taken very seriously. The results of the study conducted by the author showed that despite the ongoing educational policy and the inclusion of Kazakhstan in international educational systems, the attractiveness of Kazakhstan as a country for study, life and work is ambiguous, especially among youth groups. Objectively, Kazakhstan is currently losing the fight for student resources, while the outflow of human capital from Kazakhstan increases the risks for the Kazakh labor market both in the long and medium term. If we do not take appropriate measures, all this can lead to a sharp deterioration in the demographic situation, economic problems, a shortage of students in Kazakh universities, the complexity of international relations, instability in the country and even problems in the field of national security of the republic. However, the expert community remains confident that with an adequate educational policy in the country, emigration risks can be minimized.

The recommendations for changing the situation are that the regulation of educational migration should be of a systematic nature. First, it is necessary to create a positive image of the country and consolidate this image among young people at the level of socio-psychological attitudes. The state should not regulate the migration of all age groups but concentrate its efforts on the youth segment. To reduce the intensity of youth emigration, the most significant solution to the problem is to increase the competitiveness and quality of Kazakhstan's higher education, which is possible, including through the exchange of theory and practice with competitors. To achieve a high level of internationalization in higher education, it is recommended to expand the range of educational programs in English. It is also advisable to develop the practice of implementing programs for issuing two diplomas, to develop a strategy for the internationalization of higher education in the Republic of Kazakhstan. This strategy will include such key issues as attracting foreign students, ensuring the international reputation of universities,

improving the quality of research and scientific developments, cooperation with foreign scientists, etc.

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