











“Youth migration during war: Triggers of positive aspirations and preservation of human resources in Ukraine”

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YOUTH MIGRATION DURING WAR: TRIGGERS OF POSITIVE ASPIRATIONS AND PRESERVATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN UKRAINE

Abstract

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has become an existential challenge and a trigger of the migration crisis. The study aims to identify migration intentions of youth and factors for the preservation of the young population in Ukraine (a case study of university youth). The study conducts a sociological survey using a Google Forms questionnaire. The sample was formed by the method of three-stage selection: (1) quotas for the share of undergraduate and graduate students; (2) the higher education institutions in Ukraine were selected by the criterion of the number of students and specialties; and (3) field of knowledge. The sample size is calculated based on the resampling method and included 2,200 people from all regions in Ukraine (except Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts). The study reveals that 10% of students plan to go abroad in the near future before graduation, 30% plan to stay in Ukraine only if the socio-economic situation improves after the end of the war, and 28.3% plan to migrate after graduation. The reasons for positive migration aspirations among students are socio-economic and security issues (14.9% can find a job abroad in the short term, 11.1% see the lack of further prospects in Ukraine even after the end of the war). Monitoring of youth migration processes across two vectors – current volumes and potential aspirations – can serve as an information and analytical basis for the development of a new vision of the country's migration security strategy to preserve human resources in Ukraine.

Keywords

youth, war, migration, questionnaire, aspirations, challenges, crisis, students

JEL Classification

I31, J21, O15

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of the world economy and the resulting integration processes open the space for new forms of economic interaction between countries. They also expand the prospects for the potential of the economically active population, including young people, and provide opportunities for virtual employment and free choice of employment and education in almost any region or country in the world. In particular, according to the UN estimates, 10% of the population left Ukraine only in the first month after the beginning of the invasion, which has become the fastest migration crisis since the Second World War (PBS, 2022). The total Ukrainian youth losses today are estimated at almost 30% over the last decade, the lion's share of which are losses due to educational and labor migration.

Youth migration led to a regression of the national economy, a decline in the standard and quality of life, increased socio-economic instability, a weakening of security factors, and a significant reduction in economic capacity. Youth migration is the greatest threat to the devel-

opment and resilience of the national economy. It leads to an increase in labor shortages, the emergence of a personnel “vacuum,” a decrease in tax revenues, a decrease in the innovative component of the competitiveness of the national economy, a loss of entrepreneurial capacity, and the spread of non-economic losses (multinational and distant families and deflation of values, customs, and cultural and historical heritage). Therefore, monitoring youth migration aspirations, as well as the determinants and triggers of their intensification, will contribute to the comparative analysis of potential and positive migration aspirations among the youth. It is important to introduce a system of programming and control over migration intentions, improve institutional and organizational relations between the migration regulation entities, intensify activities on preparation and implementation of joint international educational, research, and business projects, and improve incentives for economic activity of young people. These progressive measures will increase the efficiency of the state policy of preserving human resources, especially intellectual ones.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration, its causes, structural and dynamic changes, and consequences for the local economy and the receiving country are the subject of numerous publications and comprehensive research in the scientific discourse. It is particularly relevant when studying new methods of causal relationships and theories and concepts of the regulation of migration flows (human resources, capital, business, intellectual value) (Lupak et al., 2022). The study of youth migration is mostly found in specialized publications as the reaction to the aggravation of certain socio-economic problems up to the level of critical volumes of youth migration. Meanwhile, the problem of youth migration occupies its own prominent place among the threats of depopulation of rural and less economically developed areas, external migration of highly specialized professionals, women, economically active and creative populations, middle-class representatives, etc. For example, Hajro et al. (2021) emphasized the relevance of drawing attention to the outward migration of young people to more “successful” countries due to globalization. Heckert (2015) classifies the models, causes, and consequences of youth migration. Kovacheva and Hristozova (2019) and Mulcka et al. (2022) emphasize the peculiarities and threats of migration of women at a young age. The urgency of internal and later external migration of young people is clearly seen in Ukraine. Even before the full-scale war, the internal migration led to a demographic crisis in rural and remote areas, and the external transformed from positive (at first glance) practices of educational mobility into firm aspirations for stationary labor migration with subsequent change of citizenship.

With the actualization and, accordingly, the growth of research activity on youth migration, the factors of migration aspirations of the young population have increasingly come into the focus of studies. Interestingly, scientific discourses in countries with high standards of living are characterized by the study of those motives that are not relevant to Ukraine, for example, natural and climatic (Baez et al., 2017) and/or so-called “soft” mostly worldview factors. The studies of environments with more existential challenges of socio-economic development address more applied and acute problems ranging from lack of work, employment, income, and opportunities for labor and social self-realization (Fedyuk & Kindler, 2016) to the banal lack of housing and critically complex housing and living conditions (Malamassam, 2016).

Undoubtedly, mass external migration becomes acute during full-scale wars. The significant share of young people became refugees, which is threatening both in terms of critical losses of human resources and knowledge resources, “devaluation” of intellectual and human resources, and the quality of human capacity due to the departure of the most creative stratum of people and potential highly qualified personnel. Countries that are losing population face two sets of equally complex and critical (to solve) problems. On the one hand, they should retain young people and keep them motivated to return home (Dunne & Tian, 2019; Duszczyk & Kaczmarczyk, 2022), and, on the other hand, solve the urgent problems of migrants abroad (Balcells & Steele, 2016; Bastianon, 2018; Djajić, 2014).

Scientific research highlights the empirical consequences of migration of young people that are ex-

istential for a country or nation. For instance, they include economic crisis, suppression of economic growth (Borjas, 2022), destabilization of innovation and technological progress (Bove & Elia, 2017), humanitarian crisis (Klingenberg et al., 2021), deterioration of human capital (Lulle et al., 2021), and decline in rural areas (Lupak et al., 2022).

Critical youth migration may not be a problem but rather an opportunity for society when young people, having gained knowledge, experience, and competencies, return home and fully realize them in the migration country (Bil et al., 2021; Carling et al., 2021). This refers to the transition from migration to youth mobility, not just spatial but also economic, social, labor, educational, and cultural.

The monitoring of youth migration processes is becoming increasingly important, including the development of tools for effective regulation of youth migration in times of war. Pitiulych et al. (2020), Artuc et al. (2015), Schon (2019), and Van Mol et al. (2018) developed a methodology for analyzing the scale of youth migration. It became an informational and analytical basis for its monitoring (among which sociological tools have a significant place, while migration is based on migration aspirations, which is a phenomenon of a purely qualitative, motivational, and personal nature).

To develop public policy tools for regulating the causes, volumes, dynamics, structural characteristics, and consequences of youth migration, one must rely on research findings that justify such policies from the perspective of effective youth policy and high quality of youth life (Belmonte et al., 2020), stimulating youth re-emigration, and regulating the legal aspects and interests of the country, its citizens, and tangible and intangible assets (Fassi & Lucarelli, 2021). Moreover, smoothing out professional and qualification imbalances (Levytska et al., 2022), solving refugee problems and preventing humanitarian conflicts (Poole, 2022), strengthening the sense of belonging to the native land, fostering the spirit of patriotism (Roth & Hartnett, 2018), and preserving human resources to maintain the proper reproduction of the population and the economy (Vasylytsiv et al., 2020) are equally critical.

It is necessary to study migration aspirations of young people in Ukraine, especially students, and identify

factors for the preservation of the young population. This requires development and implementation of a new model of state migration and youth policy, particularly identifying needs, problems, and opportunities as triggers of outward migration.

This study aims to identify the current and potential migration intentions of youth and factors of the preservation of the young population in Ukraine (a case study of university youth).

2. METHODS

To identify the migration aspirations of youth and the triggers of their deterrence (sampling university youth), a sociological survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire using Google Forms. This form of survey allows for obtaining objective and unbiased answers from respondents, avoiding subjective assessments.

The sociological survey of university youth aims to

- (1) build a social profile of higher education students, including their activities in public and political life and experience in international exchange and employment programs;
- (2) identify migration aspirations and the main triggers for the development of positive potential migration intentions;
- (3) determine the main factors of deterrence and socio-economic determinants of reduction of the country's migration capacity.

The total sample of the university youth target group was 2,200 persons (Table 1 shows the sample structure). Next, 6% of the surveyed students are internally displaced persons. The minimum sample size was calculated based on the resampling method, which is often used in sociological surveys and scientific research. In the first stage of selection, a quota was set for the share of bachelor's and master's students in higher educational institutions in the total number of students. In the second stage, the higher educational institutions in Ukraine with the largest number of higher education students and specialties were selected (e.g., the National Technical University of

Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute” and Lviv Polytechnic National University). In the third stage, the field of knowledge was the main criterion for selection. In particular, the fields with the largest number of students were included in the sample according to the appropriate quota. The number of respondents within each field of study was determined in proportion to the share of students in it. Using probability sampling, only one group of the required field of study was interviewed per higher educational institution.

The survey was conducted in September-October 2023. The coefficient of variation of the relative standard error of the sample, which does not exceed 10% with a probability of guaranteeing the results of 95%, was chosen as the main characteristic of the survey reliability.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

| Feature | Quantitative characteristics, % |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Female | 59.8 |
| Male | 40.2 |
| Age groups | |
| 16-20 years old | 78.7 |
| 21-25 years old | 15.7 |
| 25-30 years old | 1.7 |
| 31-35 years old | 3.9 |
| Education levels | |
| Bachelor | 89.6 |
| Master | 10.4 |
| Field of study | |
| Management and administration | 15.6 |
| Information technology | 10.7 |
| Engineering sciences | 10.3 |
| Education and pedagogy | 8.7 |
| Natural sciences | 6.2 |
| Law | 5.7 |
| Humanitarian | 5.5 |
| International Relations | 5.4 |
| Mathematics and Statistics | 4.4 |
| Social and Behavioral Sciences | 4.0 |
| Transport | 3.5 |
| Service | 3.2 |
| Sector Health | 3.6 |
| Construction and Architecture | 3.5 |
| Culture and Arts | 3.5 |
| Other | 6.2 |

The sociological results are processed based on a harmonic weighted average to transform the initial values of the sociological estimates into empirical estimates.

3. RESULTS

Increased migration activity of the population has always been a controversial feature of Ukraine's development, and in the conditions of war, external migration, especially among young people, has become critical. The lack of security factors and the deterioration of the socio-economic situation have only exacerbated migration challenges in Ukraine, which has become a trigger for the formation of positive migration aspirations among young students. Young people participate in youth movements and volunteer; international exchange programs for students and their employment abroad are tools for creating a “social bridge” for further stay in the destination country; they speak a foreign language at an intermediate level and are active participants in the labor market. There is a widespread belief in society that young people speak mostly Russian, and that their level of Ukrainian is low. However, the survey reveals that 78% of students in Ukraine speak the state language at an advanced and proficient level, and 52% speak English at an intermediate and above-intermediate level. Thus, the average score of Ukrainian language proficiency among students is 5.2 points (out of a maximum of 6). For comparison, English scored 2.9 points, while Polish and German scored 1.7 and 1.5 points, respectively.

Exchange programs are gaining popularity among students, as they provide an opportunity to improve foreign language skills abroad and gain experience and new knowledge, on the one hand, and form a “social bridge” for further study and residence in the destination country, on the other. Thus, when asked, “Have you participated in international exchange programs for students? (e.g., Chevening, Fulbright, Eiffel Excellence Scholarship, SGES, Erasmus +, etc.)”, 4% of respondents answered in the affirmative, and 19% plan to participate in international exchange or internship programs. Moreover, 51% of respondents have not decided on their potential participation in international programs, while about 5% of respondents have experience of participating in international student employment programs abroad. Interestingly, 36.2% of respondents with experience in international student exchange programs and 26.0% of respondents who have participated in programs offering jobs to students abroad indicate

Table 2. Responses to the question “Where do you see your future?” depending on the experience of participation in the programs of international student exchange and employment abroad, %

| Options | | Have you participated in international exchange programs for students? | | Have you participated in programs that offer work for students abroad? | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|-------|--|-------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Where do you see your future? | Only in Ukraine | 36.17 | 29.33 | 24.04 | 29.90 |
| | If the socio-economic situation improves in Ukraine | 24.47 | 35.26 | 37.50 | 34.66 |
| | Undecided | 12.77 | 23.88 | 19.23 | 23.61 |
| | Rather abroad | 13.83 | 8.37 | 8.65 | 8.61 |
| | Definitely abroad | 12.77 | 3.16 | 10.58 | 3.22 |

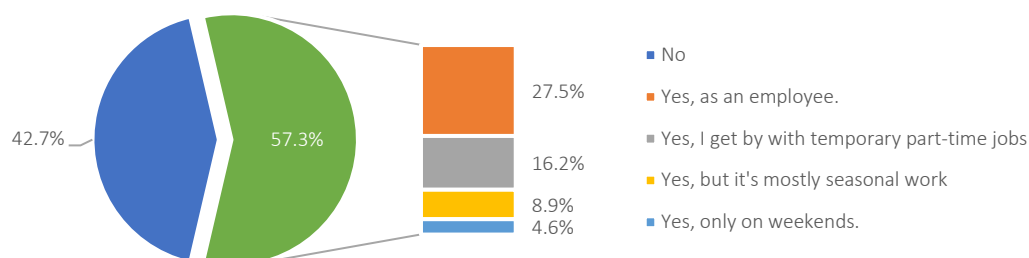
Note: Percentage of respondents to the number of respondents who had experience of participation in international programs.

that they see their future in Ukraine. Meanwhile, 24.5% of the respondents who have participated in international exchange programs and 37.5% of those who have already worked abroad as participants of international programs see their future in Ukraine as subject to improvement of the socio-economic situation (Table 2). Every fourth to fifth respondent who has participated in international programs sees his or her future abroad. This distribution of responses confirms the fact that migration is a catalyst for the capitalization of the human capital of young people, and thus, international support programs not only facilitate the conditions for human development but also serve as a trigger for building the migration capacity of territories.

University youth are active participants in the labor market, have experience in political activity, participate in the youth movement, and are active volunteers and members of civil society. In particular, 57.3% of respondents combined study and work or were employees (27.5%), 16.2% of students had temporary part-time jobs, and 4.6% worked mostly on weekends or were engaged in seasonal work (8.9%) (Figure 1).

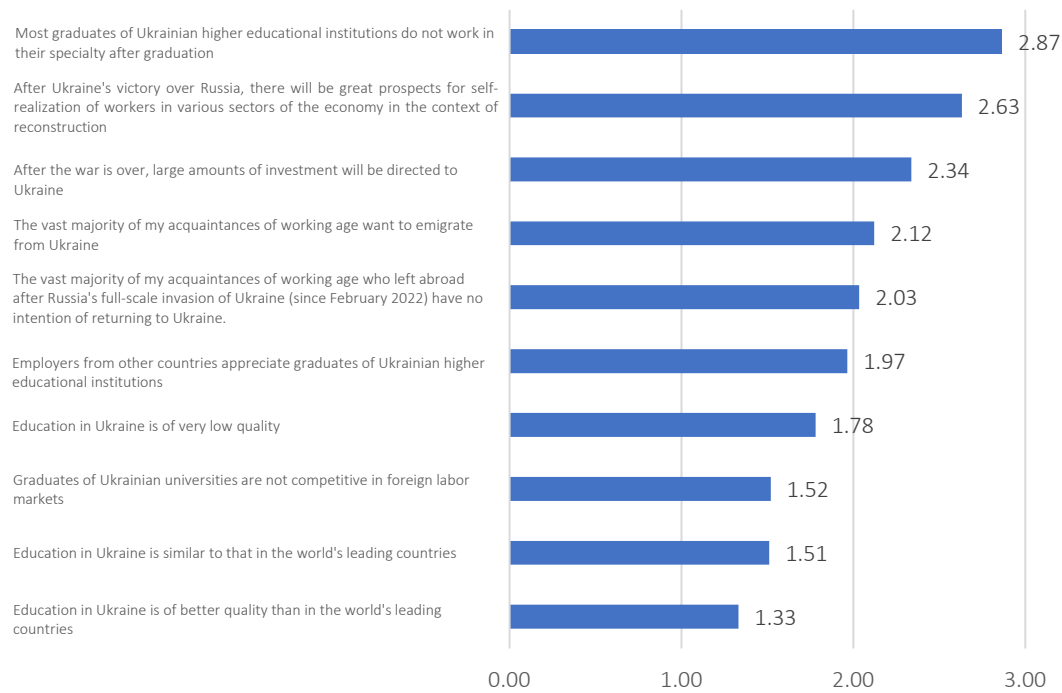
It is worth mentioning that 21.8% of the surveyed students have experience of political activity, of which 14.1% were active participants in youth movements, and 3.5% took an active part in the activities of a political party but were not members of it. Meanwhile, 2.8% were members of a youth branch of a political organization, including 1.4% who are active members of a political organization. At the same time, more than 54% answered yes to the question “Do you have experience in civic engagement/activities?”, 10.5% are actively engaged in volunteering, and 12.7% participate in the activities of NGOs.

The assessment of opinions on the problems of educational development in Ukraine confirm the thesis that young people lack timely and up-to-date professional knowledge, and there is a significant structural and qualitative imbalance in the labor market. According to more than a third of students (37.7%), the main problem in the labor market is the imbalance of supply and demand, as most graduates of Ukrainian higher educational institutions do not work in their field of study after graduation (Figure 2). Thus, young people choose



Note: Percentage of all respondents.

Figure 1. Employment status of young people in Ukraine while studying



Note: Average score of the statement, where 0 means strongly disagree and 4 means strongly agree.

Figure 2. Problems of development of the educational sphere and labor market in Ukraine: A scoring assessment of university youth

socio-humanitarian fields of study (linguistics, economics, and law are the most popular among young people), while the labor market is experiencing a significant shortage of IT specialists, doctors, teachers, technical specialists, and workers.

It should be emphasized that 20% of the surveyed students believe that education in Ukraine is of low quality, and only 13.8% and 11.7%, respectively, agree with the statements that education in Ukraine is of similar or better quality than in the leading countries of the world. It is alarming that 23.4% of respondents agree that the vast majority of their acquaintances of working age who went abroad after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine (since February 2022) do not intend to return to Ukraine. This is despite the fact that one-third of respondents (31.6%) are convinced that after the Victory, Ukraine will have great prospects for self-realization of workers in various sectors of the economy during reconstruction and will receive investments (27.2%).

The potential intentions of students after graduation are a kind of bifurcation point both in local labor markets and in the socio-economic resilience of the country. In particular, the posi-

tive migration intentions of young people to go abroad for further education or employment indicate an intensification of the migration crisis and, consequently, a weakening of demographic and economic security. Intentions to find a job in Ukraine, but not in the field of study, are a trigger for growing employment imbalances. The ratio of respondents who intend to find a job in their specialty in Ukraine (28.2%) to those who intend to leave and find a job abroad is actually twice as high. Meanwhile, 4.0% of respondents are willing to move after graduation to live and work in another region of Ukraine that is safer for life during the war (Figure 3); 28.3% of students intend to go abroad after graduation, including 6.5% for permanent residence, 10.7% for employment in their specialty, and 6.5% for any job abroad.

The clarifying question "Do you intend to go abroad?" reveals that 51.6% of the surveyed young people among students have positive migration intentions, mostly due to socio-economic and security reasons. Thus, 14.9% answered in an affirmative regarding their intention to find a job abroad, 11.1% indicated the lack of further prospects in Ukraine even after the end of the war, and 9.1% did not feel safe in Ukraine. It is worth

mentioning that the United States (12.5%), Poland (8.7%), Canada (8.1%), Germany (7.8%), the Czech Republic (6.6%), the United Kingdom (5.4%), Switzerland (4.5%), and France (1.6%) are the countries of choice for migration.

The results of the sociological survey prove that youth migration abroad has socio-economic reasons, as well as the desire for professional self-realization. The main reasons for choosing a country of migration include a high standard of living and decent working conditions (26.9%), knowledge of the local language (15.2%), and having relatives/friends in that country (13.2%). It is interesting that 6.3% of the surveyed students have experience staying in the country of their choice for further migration, and 4.6% consider these countries as countries for further study (the reason given is the affordable conditions for entering higher educational institutions). It is worth emphasizing that 26% of the surveyed youth have already made some preparations (they have learned about the opportunities and conditions for studying or working in a particular country and obtaining a permanent residence permit, tried to find intermediaries, establish contacts, etc.). Moreover, 35% only declared their intention to go abroad, but their positive migration intentions do not show any signs of realization in the future.

In recent years, the intensity of educational and academic migration from Ukraine, especially from the border areas, has increased significantly, and young people see it as a special “social elevator.” Studies, internships, or other forms of academic mobility are bridging factors for prolonging educational migration into labor emigration. For Ukrainian students, educational migration to Poland and the Czech Republic is most often a transit route for permanent migration to other EU countries. Indeed, when asked, “Would you like to continue your studies or obtain a second higher education abroad?” about 15% of respondents indicated that they plan to do so. The same share has the opportunity to study abroad, and 48.9% have not decided yet.

The upward trend in the development of positive educational migration aspirations among young people leads to an increase in human resource losses, increased demographic, intellectual, and

social risks, and a weakening of demographic security in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the growing attractiveness of the educational environment of the EU countries, which are actively competing for foreign students, only exacerbates the problem of the “outflow” of talented young people from Ukraine.

A significant proportion of students in Ukraine believe that education abroad is of better quality and provides opportunities for further professional growth and self-realization. Therefore, students’ desire to obtain a European education is understandable, particularly a diploma from a foreign university in Ukraine. This is confirmed by the fact that 62.5% of students answered in the affirmative to the question, “If there was an opportunity to obtain a diploma from one of the leading foreign higher educational institutions in Ukraine, would you be interested in it?”. Only 10% of the respondents said they were not interested in such a prospect.

High unemployment, low living standards, lack of well-paid jobs with decent working conditions, and the war in Ukraine are triggers for the spread of positive migration intentions for employment of young people abroad, especially the transformation of seasonal labor migration among students into long-term (more than one year). Thus, when asked, “Do you plan to be employed abroad after graduation?” 31.5% of the surveyed students said they intended to find a job abroad, and only 15.5% decided to become active participants in the labor market in Ukraine after graduation (Figure 3). At the same time, more than 57% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to work outside their field of study abroad after graduation. A quarter of respondents still has no final decision. In particular, students believe that working outside their field of study creates prerequisites for gaining experience and applied knowledge in the host country and can be temporary, especially while looking for a job in their field of study.

Ukraine’s demographic, socio-economic, and socio-political development depends on the preservation, reproduction, and effective use of human capacity. Instead, the extremely high level and rapid spread of positive migration aspirations, especially among young people, are taking on new threatening forms and leading to a further in-

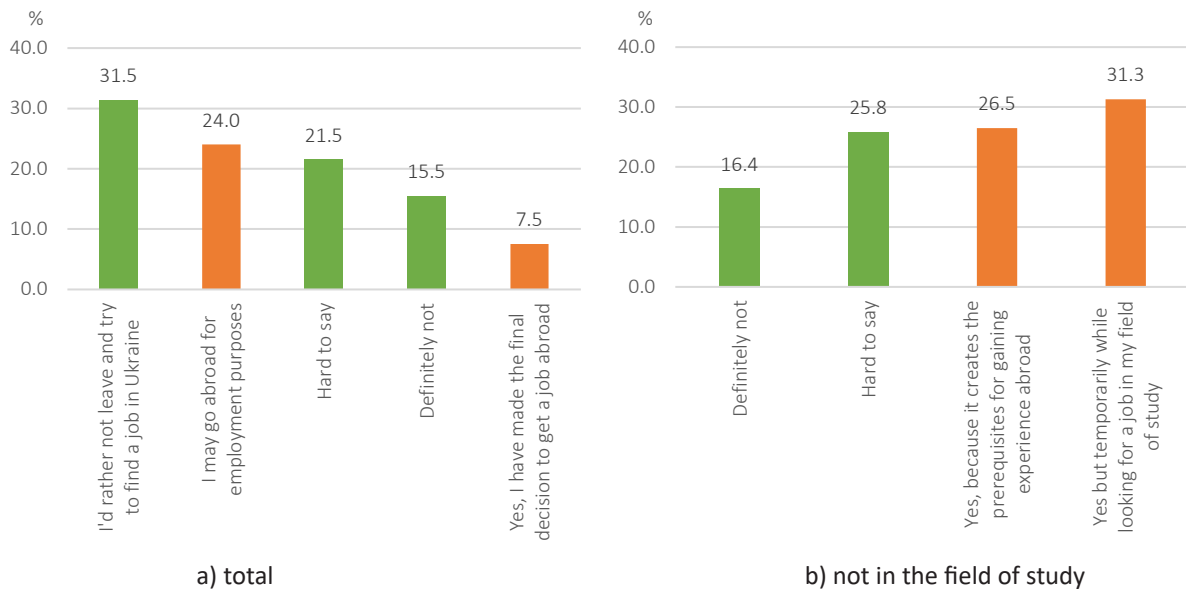


Figure 3. Students' intentions regarding employment abroad after graduation from a higher educational institution in Ukraine

crease in the country's migration losses, especially if the migration reflections of students are about permanent residence abroad. Thus, more than 10% gave an unequivocal affirmative answer to the question "Would you like to migrate permanently?" and about 40% thought about it but have not yet formed any positive migration aspirations.

The results of the survey confirm the thesis that intentions to migrate are more likely to be formed by those young people who do not have an active life position or experience of civic engagement. For example, only 13.9% of students who are actively involved in volunteering and less than 9% of those who are actively involved in the activities of public organizations indicated that they would like to move abroad for permanent residence (Table 3).

The high level of positive migration aspirations in the country is caused by unfavorable socio-economic factors and instability of the socio-political situation, which is confirmed by the results of the study. Thus, unemployment and low wages (17.6%), a long-lasting war and the uncertain geopolitical situation in the country (12.6%), the impossibility of professional realization in Ukraine (11.4%), low social protection (8.2%), and the lack of safe and decent working conditions in Ukraine (10.8%) are among the main reasons for students to leave for permanent residence abroad. At the same time, high levels of corruption and distrust of the authorities (11.5%), lack of socio-economic stability and confidence in the future (11.1%), parents and friends living abroad (5.1%) are the main triggers for the development of positive migration aspirations for further residence abroad.

Table 3. Results of responses to the question "Would you like to migrate for permanent residence?" depending on the experience of youth civic engagement, %

| Options | | Do you have experience in civic engagement? | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| | | Yes, I was actively involved in volunteering | Yes, I took an active part in the activities of NGOs | Yes, I sometimes participate in social movements | No, I have no such experience |
| Would you like to migrate permanently? | Definitely yes | 13.91 | 8.70 | 9.14 | 12.30 |
| | I have thought about it but have not made a decision yet | 17.83 | 14.86 | 18.88 | 18.50 |
| | Hard to say | 20.00 | 22.10 | 22.12 | 21.80 |
| | Rather not | 27.39 | 30.43 | 28.02 | 27.70 |
| | Definitely not | 20.87 | 23.91 | 21.83 | 19.70 |

While the unstable socio-economic situation in the country and the desire to improve their financial and material situation are the main factors of positive migration aspirations among university youth, the triggers of deterring external migration among students include family relations, friends (22.0%), studying (18.2%) and patriotism (16.4%). About 4% of respondents believe that their satisfactory financial and material situation contributes to the development of negative migration aspirations among university youth. It is also worth emphasizing that language barriers abroad, unwillingness to be a stranger in another country, and the availability of a job are the factors that motivate students to stay in Ukraine. Interestingly, 12.2% of students see their future abroad, and 23.4% of respondents are undecided. Next, 34.8% of respondents plan to stay in Ukraine but are subject to the improvement of the socio-economic situation, and 29.6% of the students see their future only in Ukraine.

The intensity of outward migration from the Western region of Ukraine (especially from Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia, and Ternopil oblasts) is the highest in Ukraine. However, the study shows that the willingness to go abroad in times of war is higher among students in the Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine (Table 4), which is mainly caused by security factors and a significant weakening of the economic resilience of the frontline territories.

The uncertainty of socio-political life and the instability of the socio-economic situation encourage young people to go abroad to study and to find financial resources to pay for expensive education as a social bridge to further employment. In particular, responding to the question, “How

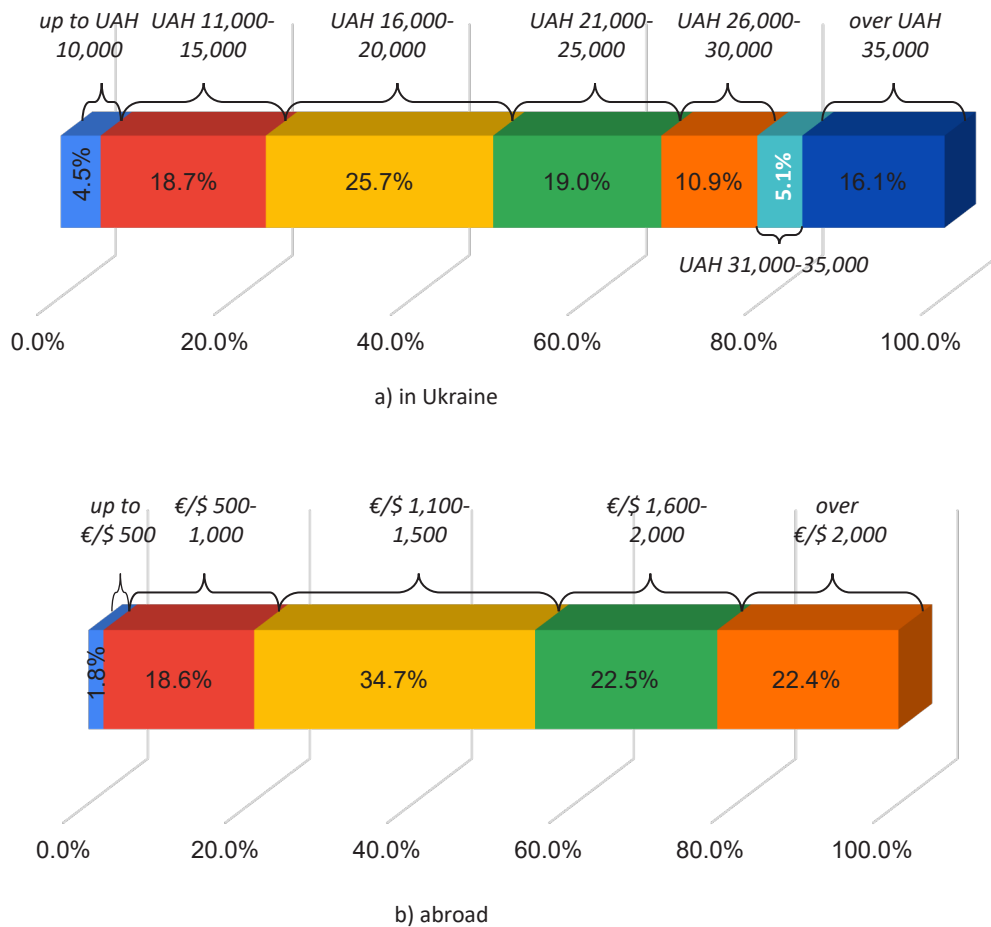
much are you willing to pay for study abroad per year?” 15.5% of the surveyed students indicated that \$1,000 to \$3,000 is an acceptable amount for them, and about 10% can afford to pay less than \$1,000 annually. Interestingly, 36.6% do not want to study abroad, and 32.4% cannot afford to pay to study abroad, so they would consider only government or scholarship funding.

At the same time, it is interesting to compare the answers of respondents to the question, “What amount of tuition fees for a year at a Ukrainian higher educational institution is acceptable to you?”. About half of the surveyed students want to study exclusively on a state-funded basis, and 18.6% consider the cost of education less than UAH 20,000 to be acceptable. It is worth mentioning that every third surveyed student is ready to pay for education in the range of UAH 21,000-30,000. While more than 15% of respondents consider the cost of education in the amount of \$1,000-3,000 to be acceptable for them (UAH 38,000-114,000 at the NBU exchange rate), only 3.1% of respondents consider tuition fees in Ukraine over UAH 40,000 as acceptable.

The level of wages is the main determinant of both keeping young people in the country and pushing them abroad. Thus, the largest share of surveyed students (25.7%) plan to work in Ukraine for UAH 16,000-20,000 after graduation, and 19% of respondents plan to work for UAH 21,000-20,000. A small share (about 5% of respondents) would like to receive a salary of UAH 31,000 to 35,000, and 16.1% of students want more than UAH 35,000 (Figure 4a). Meanwhile, students' expectations of opportunities to earn much higher salaries are high. More than a third of respondents would agree to work abroad with a minimum wage of

Table 4. Results of responses to the question “Where do you see your future?” depending on the oblast of residence of students before entering the higher educational institution, %

| Options | | Indicate the oblast of your residence before entering the higher educational institution | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---------------|----------|---------|
| | | Western | North-Central | Southern | Eastern |
| Where do you see your future? | Only in Ukraine | 31.4 | 29.8 | 20.8 | 27.6 |
| | In Ukraine but subject to the improvement of the socio-economic situation | 33.7 | 34.5 | 40.3 | 37.9 |
| | Undecided | 25.4 | 22.6 | 20.8 | 20.0 |
| | Rather abroad | 8.0 | 8.3 | 12.6 | 9.7 |
| | Definitely abroad | 1.6 | 4.7 | 5.7 | 4.8 |



Note: Percentage of all responses.

Figure 4. Answers to the questions “For what minimum wage would you agree to work after graduation in Ukraine and abroad?”

at least €/\$ 1,500, and 22.5% of respondents said that the minimum wage should be about €/\$ 2,000 (Figure 4b). At the same time, the same proportion of students (22.4%) would agree to work abroad with a salary of more than €/\$ 2,000.

Interestingly, the answers to the question “In your opinion, what level of family income could prevent you from working abroad?” were obvious. The largest share of respondents (41.8%) indicated that the amount of income should be more than UAH 45,000; an income of UAH 26,000 to 35,000 would keep every fifth surveyed student from going abroad. Less than 10% of young people said that the family income should be up to UAH 25,000.

To the question, “What is the main factor that could keep you from going abroad after graduation?” 17.8% and 17.5% of the respondents in-

dicated decent working conditions, quality of life in Ukraine, and high salaries, respectively. A significant shortage of jobs with decent wages, the divergence of wages in Ukraine from the income of migrants abroad, and a sharp rise in prices for products and services will generate a further “outflow” of young people from Ukraine, as well as qualified personnel after graduation. Among other factors, young people mentioned professional growth opportunities, career development, self-realization (15.7%), socio-economic stability in Ukraine (13.5%), and favorable conditions for starting and running a business (11.7%).

It is worth emphasizing that social and economic stability in Ukraine is a significant factor for 11.6% of respondents who plan to emigrate for study purposes, while favorable business conditions – for 11.4%. Next, 21.2% said that nothing

Table 5. The main factors that could keep young people from going abroad in terms of their intentions after graduation from a higher educational institution in Ukraine, %

| Options | | Indicate the main factor that could keep you from going abroad after graduation | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|-----------------|--|--------------------------|---|--|
| | | High labor remuneration | Decent working conditions, quality of life in Ukraine | Favorable conditions for starting and running a business | Family, friends | Social and economic stability in Ukraine | High level of patriotism | Professional growth opportunities, career development, self-realization | Nothing can stop you from going abroad |
| What do you plan to do after graduation? | Get a second higher education in Ukraine | 23.48 | 24.65 | 26.28 | 24.75 | 23.66 | 29.93 | 26.39 | 18.82 |
| | Obtain the third educational and scientific level of higher education (postgraduate studies) | 7.24 | 7.52 | 8.37 | 7.48 | 9.06 | 10.22 | 8.41 | 5.88 |
| | Continue studying abroad | 10.35 | 9.99 | 11.36 | 7.55 | 11.58 | 8.35 | 10.88 | 21.18 |
| | Find a job in your field of study abroad | 25.42 | 24.40 | 25.79 | 20.36 | 25.92 | 17.70 | 25.69 | 27.06 |
| | Get any job abroad | 15.20 | 13.97 | 15.88 | 12.16 | 15.77 | 8.92 | 14.74 | 28.24 |
| | Find a job in your field of study in Ukraine | 62.61 | 63.97 | 61.41 | 66.47 | 61.91 | 71.51 | 66.36 | 36.47 |
| | Find any job in Ukraine | 29.50 | 29.46 | 30.22 | 31.01 | 30.37 | 32.09 | 30.40 | 23.53 |
| | Move to live and work in another region of Ukraine that is safer for living during the war | 9.44 | 9.73 | 10.97 | 9.14 | 10.23 | 9.06 | 10.19 | 8.24 |
| | Travel to other regions of Ukraine for temporary work without changing your place of residence | 6.08 | 5.69 | 6.64 | 6.19 | 5.79 | 6.47 | 6.02 | 7.06 |
| | Go abroad for permanent residence | 14.75 | 13.27 | 14.92 | 9.42 | 16.02 | 5.76 | 13.97 | 38.82 |
| | Do nothing | 1.88 | 1.77 | 2.12 | 2.16 | 2.01 | 2.01 | 1.85 | 7.06 |
| | Hard to say | 19.47 | 19.79 | 20.21 | 19.64 | 19.80 | 16.55 | 18.36 | 17.65 |

Note: Respondents could have chosen several options.

could stop them (Table 5). High salaries, socio-economic stability, professional growth opportunities, career development, and self-realization are the dominant factors for more than 25% of respondents planning to work abroad in their field of study. One in three respondents who intend to find a job abroad said that nothing would keep them in Ukraine. Socio-economic factors and financial sustainability, on the one hand, and favorable conditions for starting and running a business and professional development opportunities, on the other hand, are determinants of negative migration aspirations for a significant proportion of students (over 60%) who said they intend to find employment in Ukraine after graduation.

4. DISCUSSION

To ensure the re-emigration of young people, prevent them from migrating abroad, and preserve their human capacity, Ukraine should promote the policy of a country with a high quality of life determined by security, social equality, justice, a quality judicial system, and high economic standards of living with decent wages. A competitive labor market and the abandonment of cheap labor policies are the main factors keeping young people from going abroad. According to the results of a sociological survey, labor remuneration in Ukraine is no less than 70% compared to other recipient countries, which can keep young people from migrating.

The thesis that the standard of living and social security are the main factors encouraging and discouraging young people from migrating abroad is confirmed by the distribution of respondents' answers to the question, "If Ukraine introduced a state program of motivation and guaranteed employment for the best graduates of higher educational institutions with higher than average wages in the relevant field (rating system), and/or free provision of a permanent housing, and/or an attractive social package, etc., would this be an additional motivation for you to obtain a quality education and permanent residence and employment in Ukraine?" 54.5% gave an affirmative answer, 11.3% indicated that they do not trust government programs in Ukraine, and only 3.2% of respondents consider their future exclusively outside of Ukraine.

Since 2015, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine has been conducting an annual survey of young people, including their socio-economic status, values, and preferences. As part of its continuation, but with a shift in focus toward the impact of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, an additional study was conducted at the end of 2022 to build a social profile of young people in Ukraine. It reveals that the share of young people engaged in volunteering increased from 20% to 42%. In contrast to the 6% who joined volunteering for the first time in 2021, in 2022, the number was 30%. The proportion of young people who say that their life goals include being useful to their country has increased from 6% in the previous survey to 37% in 2022. On the other hand, the share of those who do not want to leave Ukraine increased from 49% in 2021 to 66% in 2022. This can be explained both by the increase in patriotic sentiment and social cohesion and by the fact that some

young people went abroad (while those who did not want to leave more often stayed in Ukraine or returned from abroad). Moreover, 76% of young people who went abroad because of the war want to return to Ukraine. In particular, 64% plan to return to their previous place of residence, and only 2% – to another (the rest are undecided); 57% of young people abroad mentioned being useful to Ukraine as one of their most important goals in life (Vološevych et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, the results of a survey of Ukrainian youth conducted in June-July 2023 by the Center for Independent Social Research (CISR) of the International Republican Institute (IRI) under the USAID Dream and Act program confirmed that re-emigration intentions depend on the duration of the war and the socio-economic consequences that Ukraine will experience during the period of revival. In particular, 59% of respondents indicated that security was the main factor for returning, 34% – employment prospects and economic stability, and 12% – availability of housing. Next, 65% of young people living in Ukraine would not like to move to another place. The main reasons why young people do not want to change their place of residence include satisfaction with their current place of residence (44%), family and friends (40%), sufficient financial security for life (20%), and patriotism (15%) (USAID, 2023).

Promising areas for further research include building a social profile of young people abroad in the largest recipient countries of human resources (Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, the USA, and Canada) and studying migration issues, conditions, and opportunities for young people to return to Ukraine.

CONCLUSION

The migration aspirations of young people in Ukraine during the war are not permanent; they correlate with the socio-economic situation in the country and affect the capacity for economic recovery in the post-war period. The study aims to identify the current and potential migration aspirations of young people and the factors keeping them in Ukraine (targeting university youth).

The survey provides a social profile of university youth in Ukraine: young people have experience in political activity, participate in youth movements, volunteer, and are active participants in international exchange programs for study and work. The study shows that students' migration aspirations are related to permanent residence abroad and official employment after graduation, and some of them have already

made some preparations (learned about the opportunities and conditions of employment and obtaining a permanent residence permit, tried to find intermediaries, establish contacts, etc.). The main triggers for the development of positive migration aspirations include socio-economic ones, namely high unemployment, low living standards, and lack of well-paid jobs. The study revealed that the factors that prevent young people from migration include a high quality of life and wages in Ukraine, opportunities for professional growth and self-realization, and favorable conditions for starting and running a business. Security, social equality, justice, a high-quality judicial system, and high economic standards of living with decent wages are the main determinants of the re-emigration of university youth to Ukraine.

The survey proved that the intensification of migration of young people, especially students, is determined by the openness of the national economy and gradual liberalization of foreign migration policy, on the one hand. On the other hand, there are challenges arising because of the full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and socio-economic and socio-political upheavals.

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