

Article

Migration Potential of Students and Development of Human Capital

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Abstract: Studying student migration trends is a significant task in studying human capital development as one of the leading factors in sustainable socio-economic development. The migration potential of students impacts the opportunities and prospects for sustainable development. The study of factors influencing the migration behavior of students acquires special significance in this article. The interpersonal competencies of the population impact its migration potential. Migration processes impact the differentiation of regions in terms of human capital. This article is based on theoretical and practical research on human capital, its formation, development, and migration as a factor in human capital development. The practical part of the study presents an analysis of data obtained from a sociological study of the factors that determine internal and international migration. An anonymous sociological survey of students in Ekaterinburg, Kursk, and Tomsk (Russia) was conducted in several stages. The first stage was implemented in October and December 2020 ($N = 958$). The second stage was implemented in October and November 2021 ($N = 960$). This study allows for tracing how the COVID-19 pandemic affects the migration potential of students and their desire for a satisfactory career path.

Keywords: human capital; well-being; students; migration; employment

1. Introduction

The study of human capital development factors with the trends of migration processes is of high importance today. The concept of "human capital" correlates with the definition of capital in economic theory. Capital is like a stock of goods, which, accumulating, generates income through investment. However, human capital has a distinctive characteristic: human capital is inseparable from the individual and its owner. Human capital refers to the accumulated stock of an individual's professional skills, which, according to the concepts of W. Petty [1], A. Smith [2], and A. Marshall [3], is of great importance for the economy. The formation of the theory of human capital took place only in the middle of the 20th century and is associated with the work of the American economist T. Schultz. T. Schultz proposed a macroeconomic approach to assessing and managing human capital development [4]. It

was T. Schultz who introduced the concept of human capital as a central factor in economic growth. According to T. Schultz, spending on education, advanced training, and health is an investment in a person's future. Investing in themselves enables people to have broader job prospects, higher incomes, and other benefits.

In 1964, G. Becker substantiated the effectiveness of human capital and transferred the concept of human capital as a set of skills, knowledge, and skills of a person [5]. G. Becker concluded that human capital needs constant investment since it can accumulate in the process of investment, but also "wear out" in material and moral aspects.

In the 1990s, an assessment was made of the contribution of education and the duration of labor activity to human capital [6]. In the early 2000s, the concept of intellectual capital as the basis of a company's fundamental value began to develop actively [7]. In the structure of productive relations in the era of scientific, technological, and innovative transformations, human capital is a source and the most valuable resource of competitive advantage for a social entity and the national economy.

Today, national governments face the challenge of maintaining competitiveness in the global knowledge economy. Therefore, increasing the adaptability of labor markets and stimulating the workforce requires the development of reliable comparable data on the core competencies of the population. Adult competencies and how they are assessed are important in the context of international comparisons [8–10].

The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is one of the ways to effectively assess the international competencies of the population [11–13]. PIAAC is an international project. PIAAC data allow us to establish relationships between key cognitive skills, and economic and demographic data. PIAAC is a way to obtain information and analyze human capital in various countries.

The results of the PIAAC project provide a basis for the development and improvement of the educational policy of countries, as it shows the relationship between the key competencies of the population in modern society and the level of the gap between the labor market and education, the level of literacy of the population, socio-demographic indicators, the level of access of different social groups to education, and other factors [12]. Data from the PIAAC project capture the age and conditions of transition from educational institutions to work for young people. This indicator is significant for the investigation of the migration potential of students, which is the subject of this study.

Human capital includes a set of knowledge skills, among which one of the keys is interpersonal communication. The significance of interpersonal competence is revealed in the interaction of participants with cultural differences. Communication between representatives of certain cultures gives rise to many difficulties that are caused by a discrepancy between norms, values, worldview, language, and other problems. Solving the difficulties of communication is impossible without the formation and development of interpersonal competencies of the individual.

Interpersonal communication is diverse since it is realized in communications between representatives of subcultures of different generations, interethnic communications, communications between representatives of different social strata, demographic groups, religious groups, and other types of communication.

Interpersonal communication is a complex and ambiguous phenomenon. The variety of interpersonal communication theories reflects the complexity of the phenomenon of interpersonal communication:

- uncertainty reduction theory [13];
- theory of adaptation [14];
- rhetorical theory [15,16];
- theory of rules [17,18];
- theory of social categories and circumstances [19];
- constructivist theory [20,21]; and
- conflict theory [22].

Interpersonal competence requires that the participants in the interaction can respect another cultural identity. The achievement of these competencies is possible provided that people are open to learning about a foreign culture and the perception of psychological, social, and other intercultural differences; through these, they can overcome social, ethnic, and cultural stereotypes and observe etiquette in the process of communication. This requirement implies both the assimilation by people of the maximum amount of information about a different culture and the ability of people to navigate and communicate with insufficient knowledge of the basic elements of the culture of their partners.

The development of interpersonal competencies impacts the migration potential of the population. The ability to interpret the behavior of representatives of a “different” culture influences perception by the population of incoming migrants or their socio-cultural differences. Additionally of great importance in communication are the strategic skills to smooth out conflicts between “us” and “them.” Thus, people can create an effective model of intercultural interaction. That is, the important educational results are both knowledge competencies and the skills of empathy, tolerance, reflection, and critical thinking.

Migration processes impact the transformation of human capital. That is, migration is becoming one of the leading factors in sustainable socio-economic development. One of the factors influencing the migration behavior of students is the differentiation of regions in terms of stocks of human and intellectual capital. The study of the migration potential of students is necessary to expand the theoretical understanding of this phenomenon and the practice of managing it.

Since the middle of the 20th century, the colossal difference in the economic development of developed and developing countries has actualized the study of the migration of students and the able-bodied educated population.

Some of the significant questions are:

- establishing the reasons why students decide to migrate;
- determining the short-term and long-term consequences of migration; and
- the development and implementation of the internal policy of countries aimed at weakening migration flow outside the population.

The attractiveness of a country for intellectual personnel largely determines its future place in the world economy. A country may lag in socio-economic development if it loses its intellectual potential due to “brain drain” and does not replenish it through “brain drain”. Therefore, qualified and highly educated specialists are a key factor in the competitiveness of countries [23–25]. This circumstance makes the issue of student migration vital for the development of countries. Educational reforms in many countries are aimed at creating favorable institutional conditions that ensure the availability of prestigious educational trajectories and the choice of a job [26]. Despite all the measures taken, different levels of education can be characterized as maintaining inequality [27–29]. Socio-economic factors in this issue, a concept such as inequality is significant since the decision of students to migrate depends on resources, academic performance, motivation, and values formed in the family [23,30,31]. A significant factor is the influence of the social position of parents on the social position of children, and hence on the students’ choice of migration and social reproduction [32].

Historical changes at the global level have given rise to various challenges that the international community and countries face in connection with the phenomenon of migration [33]. Therefore, this article focused on studying the factors that determine internal and external migration and the migration potential of students. The increase in the COVID-19 epidemic created many challenges in the modern global mobility system. The COVID-19 pandemic is a constraint on the movement of citizens [34–36]. Citizens decide to migrate under the influence of various factors. Citizens’ decisions about migration affect the human capital in the regions. Societal efficiency and resilience necessarily include a correlation between public attitudes toward migration and government migration policy [37].

A constructive public position should be aimed at overcoming xenophobia and stigmatization of migrants. The achievement of this target requires a study of public attitudes

toward migration and correlates with target 17 of the Global Strategy, the Treaty on Safe, Orderly, and Irregular Migration [38].

Studying student migration lies in the scale of the territorial movements of citizens, and the factors and conditions in which they occur. The motives, scale, directions, and consequences of population migration have become the subject of the applied study of the issue of modern trends in the development of human capital. Since the 19th century, the concept of the economic factor has been decisive in explaining migration flows [39–41]. The economic aspect affects the processes of globalization and the activity of population mobility [42,43]. Theoretical and methodological issues of migration as a global phenomenon are revealed in the works of S. Castles, M. Miller [44], D. Harris, M. Todaro [45], R.D. Wise, and H.M. Covarrubias [46]. The phenomenon of migration in various countries is more often associated with labor migration [47–49] and its impact on the economy of the country [50–52]. Significant to this study are works devoted to the regional models of youth integration in the labor market in Europe [53–55].

Migration contributes to the blurring of cultural and social boundaries and the weakening of the sovereignty of states [45]. R. De Angelis [56] addressed various issues for policies and education systems in EU countries that have arisen in connection with migration flows. R. De Angelis notes that before the beginning of the twentieth century, the general idea was that immigrants should join its “ethos” when moving into the country. However, today the importance of preserving the cultural identity of immigrants is emphasized. Modern, tolerant society recognizes multiculturalism as the coexistence of cultures for enrichment and development. However, R. De Angelis raised a very acute issue for modern society. Namely, R. De Angelis pointed to the growing gap between different social groups and segregation [56]. Therefore, the leading norm of intercultural communication should update its legal, educational, and existential aspects [57–59]. Modern research on migration includes legal issues [60–62], transformation and preservation of linguistic identity [63–66], migration, and sustainable development [67–69]. Current ways of information existing on the Internet influence people’s decision-making and the conditions in which migration takes place [70–72]. Information and communication technologies determine the modern world. This circumstance determines the study of the role of electronic social networks in migration [73–75] and the role of electronic social networks in communication and business [76]. However, the migration policy of states should consider the reasons for the formation of the intentions of citizens when they decide on migration.

For students, one of the significant factors determining their decision to move is education and research [77–79]. A person as a carrier of human capital is also depreciated. However, the uniqueness of human capital is that it tends to accumulate and improve over time. That is, unlike buildings, machines, and machine tools, over time, human capital has become more and more valuable both for the bearer of knowledge and for society as a whole.

Education is a factor, which can be seen as an extension of the general investment theory to human resources. People receiving an education know that their future income depends on education and conscious choice. However, this circumstance does not negate the usefulness of education as a blessing as often people like to study and the student lifestyle.

When deciding to obtain an education, people must consider the circumstances that are important in the development of human capital:

- education takes time;
- education requires moral costs since training programs can include complex disciplines, so students often have to deny themselves leisure;
- education requires monetary investment: direct costs such as tuition fees, books, and opportunity costs, as one does not work or cannot work full time while studying;
- benefits from education are not immediate;
- education in the long-term has financial benefits and non-financial benefits, as a more exciting and prestigious job is of great importance when choosing a profession; and

- acquired skills and knowledge need to be updated over time, so education must be continuous.

In international practice, universities are considered as key sources of the economic development of regions. Universities contribute to the development of human capital, science-intensive industries, and socio-cultural and economic initiatives. In this regard, research in the field of the role of higher education in promoting regional economic development is significant. K. Hermannson, R. Scandurra, and M. Graziano studied the importance of higher education for the development of regions in the example of European countries [80]. The researchers concluded that educational centers contribute to inequality between regions [81].

Migration is a complex phenomenon that intertwines economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental aspects [82]. For the Russian Federation, the issues of regulating external and internal migration of the population are of great importance. The reason is that the Russian Federation is a multinational state for which state regulation of migration processes is a basis for socio-economic and demographic development. The Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 [83] proclaims that internal migration is a full-fledged type of migration and is no less important than international. Internal migration is essential for the entire economic and social development of the Russian Federation.

Migration policy is directly related to ensuring the national security of the country, social rights and freedoms, and their guarantee throughout Russia [84]. In Russian regions, the specificity of internal migration is determined by the relatively large proportion of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus. Internal migration is predominantly labor migration [85,86]. The main areas of employment for migrants are construction and services. However, in recent years, the dynamics and demands of the labor market in the regions have led to an increase in the percentage of highly skilled migrants as highly qualified workers move to large Russian cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Tomsk, and Novorossiysk.

A pronounced direction from the periphery characterizes the current internal and external migration state to the center. This trend is manifested in the migration of people from developing countries to developed countries and internal migration to the administrative and industrial centers of the state.

This study aimed to study the migration potential of students in regions with different conditions in the spheres of economy, culture, science, and education. The choice of conducting research in different regions is consistent with the opinion of K. Scandura, K. Cefalo, and N. Kazepov [87] that the territorial differences of regions are associated with their specific interaction with socio-economic trends and institutional features. Therefore, ignoring territorial differences can lead to the aggravation of existing social inequality and the emergence of new negative socio-economic processes [87].

The promising area for the development of internal and external migration is the mobility of scientists since it allows for the communication of highly qualified specialists, which is of great importance for the development of the knowledge society [88,89]. Education is an important factor influencing migration flows [90–92]. The development of online education and online communication of scientists today allows for communication in different countries [93–95]. However, not all students choose online education as the main approach and often students and teachers consider online learning as an additional way to offline communication.

The article presents the study of the conditions for changing human capital on the example of the migration potential of students in the cities of the Russian Federation. Conducting a sociological survey of university students in Ekaterinburg, Kursk, and Tomsk made it possible to reflect on the social well-being of students and formulated a request for an adjustment to the migration policy.

2. Materials and Methods

An anonymous sociological survey of students in Ekaterinburg, Kursk, and Tomsk (Russia) was conducted in several stages. The first stage was implemented in October and December 2020; the total number of respondents was 958. The second stage was implemented in October and November 2021; the total number of respondents was 960. This study allowed us to trace how the COVID-19 pandemic affects the migration potential of students and hence the formation and development of human capital in regional and international terms.

The article's authors explained the questions to the students before starting their survey as the researchers needed to ensure that the respondents understood everything correctly. When answering questions, respondents could ask for questions to be clarified by those accompanying the survey. The survey was realized in an anonymous format, which allowed the respondents to answer the questions as truthfully as possible.

After completing the survey, the Supplementary Questionnaires were checked for accuracy and completeness. At both stages of the survey, some questionnaires were not completed by 30%: at the first stage—three questionnaires; at the second stage—four questionnaires. These questionnaires were not included for further processing.

The completed questionnaires were assigned codes. Each question of the questionnaire was a measuring tool to fix the answer. Statistical processing of the questionnaires was considered using the method of computer data processing in MSEXel. This program automatically calculated the average score and showed the percentage for each of the questions following the questionnaire's scale.

These research procedures were applied to protect the privacy of students.

This information is relevant because this study was conducted in October and December 2020 and October and November 2021.

In Ekaterinburg, sociological research was implemented in October 2020, ($N = 200$ respondents), and in October 2021 ($N = 202$ respondents). The students surveyed studied at the Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia, B.N. Yeltsin, Ural State Mining University, Ural Institute of Management of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation, Ural State University of Economics.

In Tomsk, sociological research was implemented in December 2020 ($N = 400$ respondents), and in November 2021 ($N = 400$ respondents). The survey involved students studying at Tomsk Polytechnic University.

In Kursk, sociological research was implemented in December 2020, ($N = 358$ respondents), and in November 2021, ($N = 358$ respondents). The students took part in the survey study at the Kursk State Medical University.

Limitations

The sociological survey aimed to study the migration potential of students studying at universities in Ekaterinburg, Kursk, and Tomsk (Russia). The choice of these cities was associated with their different levels of development of the economy, culture, science, and education. The common connection is that these cities are the educational centers of the regions. The study's time frame includes two periods, namely, October and December 2020 and October and November 2021. The period between the studies made it possible to trace the dynamics of changes in the students' migration preferences. We cannot deny the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the students' perceptions and attitudes about their future in the near and long-term.

3. Results

The first question of the questionnaire was the question of the significance of migration for students. As a result, most students expressed that the issue of migration was significant for the population (Table 1).

Table 1. The significance of migration for students.

Answers/Years	Students of Ekaterinburg, %		Students of Tomsk, %		Students of Kursk, %	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
The issue is extremely important	57	63	70	68	25	24
The issue is important	34	32	25	26	40	43
This issue is not relevant for the region	9	5	5	6	35	33

This question allowed students to choose from multiple choice answers. On average, respondents selected 1.8 answer choices in 2020 and two answer choices in 2021. Table 2 shows the issues that students considered the most significant in connection with migration.

Table 2. Topical issues of migration for students.

No.	Topical Issues	Students of Ekaterinburg, %		Students of Tomsk, %		Students of Kursk, %	
		2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
1	Arrival of foreign labor	87	90	60	56	55	50.5
2	“Brain drain”, i.e., departure of highly qualified specialists and university graduates	78	77	85	88	78	81
3	Influx of unskilled labor	72	75	65	64	70.5	66.5
4	Illegal migration	61	50	65	64	68	64
5	The spread of the shift due to the impossibility of finding a job on the spot	56	57	70.5	73	50	56
6	An increase in crime and criminal groups associated with the presence of migrants	42.5	41	32	40	45	50
7	Corruption in the migration sphere	47.5	50	40	43	37.5	40

The question of the need to change the migration policy concerning arriving citizens led to the following results (Table 3).

Table 3. The need to change the migration policy concerning arriving citizens.

Answers	Students of Ekaterinburg, %		Students of Tomsk, %		Students of Kursk, %	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
It is not worth limiting the arrival of foreign citizens in Russia	41	52	80	73	55	53
It is necessary	27.5	35	5	15	40	46
Difficult to answer	31.5	18	15	12	5	1

One of the most significant issues was the question of changes in the students' attitudes toward migrants over the past few years (Table 4).

Table 4. The students' attitudes toward migrants over the past few years.

Answers	Students of Ekaterinburg, %		Students of Tomsk, %		Students of Kursk, %	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
The relationship remained the same	81.5	80	90	87	70	69
The relationships became better than previous	15	13	5	14	5	7
These relations worsened	3.5	5	5	9	25	24

The sympathies of students from Ekaterinburg, Tomsk, and Kursk toward migrants from other countries were the same in 2020 and 2021.

Students in Ekaterinburg were more sympathetic toward visitors from Germany (51%) and Belarus (38.5%).

Tomsk students were more sympathetic toward visitors from Germany (40%), Belarus (25%), the Czech Republic (10%), and Slovenia (25%).

Kursk students were more sympathetic toward visitors from Germany (20%) and Belarus (80%).

The main migration flows to Russian cities were citizens of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Ekaterinburg is the next priority after Moscow and the Moscow region for citizens from Tajikistan. This trend was explained by the geographical location of Tajikistan and the presence of the Tajik diaspora in Ekaterinburg.

In general, most respondents had a neutral attitude toward migrants from different countries (more than 70%).

The students noted that in connection with the arrival of migrants, there were positive trends in the following areas (data for 2020 and 2021 were identical):

- demographics (students of Ekaterinburg—44%, students of Tomsk—50%, students of Kursk—35%).
- economics (students of Ekaterinburg—6%, students of Tomsk—45%, students of Kursk—30%).

The students noted that in connection with the arrival of migrants, there were negative trends in the following areas (data for 2020, and 2021 were identical):

- crime (students of Ekaterinburg—60.5%, students of Tomsk—55%, students of Kursk—75%).
- unemployment (students of Ekaterinburg—55.5%, students of Tomsk—60%, students of Kursk—63%); and
- environment (students of Ekaterinburg—47%, students of Tomsk—40%, students of Kursk—35%).

The sociological survey aimed to identify the migration intentions of the respondents themselves.

In 2020, students in Ekaterinburg mostly considered moving to another region of Russia, or another country (81%). Only 19% of students did not consider this possibility. In 2021, the situation changed, where 60% of students considered the possibility of moving to another region of Russia or another country and 40% of students did not consider the possibility of moving to another region of Russia or another country.

In 2020, students in Tomsk believed that they considered moving to another region of Russia or another country (75%); 25% of students did not consider the possibility of moving to another region of Russia or another country. In 2021, the situation did not change much—56% of students considered the possibility of moving to another region of Russia or another country while 44% of students did not consider the possibility of moving to another region of Russia or another country.

In 2020, most Kursk students considered moving to another region of Russia or another country (80%); 20% of students did not consider the possibility of moving to another region of Russia or another country. In 2021, the situation changed dramatically—40% of students considered the possibility of moving to another region of Russia or another country while 60% of students did not consider the possibility of moving to another region of Russia or another country.

One of the main trends in the migration situation within the country was stable population growth in Moscow, the Krasnodar Territory, and the Belgorod Region. The desire of students to move to other areas was associated with the following reasons (Table 5).

Table 5. Reasons why students wanted to move out of the city.

Answers	Students of Ekaterinburg, %		Students of Tomsk, %		Students of Kursk, %	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Low wages	26	30	32	30	50	50
A low standard of living in general	30	35	25	30	30	33
Poor ecology	20	20	20	15	13	10
An unfavorable climate	10	5	7	5	3	1
Lack of affordable housing	24	20	16	20	13	6

Reasons for moving such as poor ecologically and uncomfortable climate were not predominant. However, they did take place in the students' ideas about a comfortable and environmentally-friendly place of life. This factor determines the need to address the topic of the ecological state and environmental education in the regions [96,97]. In September–October 2020, the Internet recruiting company HeadHunter conducted a study that correlates with our received data [98].

The students identified the following goals that led them to the decision to migrate (Table 6). The students' goals were both tangible and intangible.

Table 6. Goals of students when making a decision to migrate.

Answers	Students of Ekaterinburg, %		Students of Tomsk, %		Students of Kursk, %	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
To find a permanent place of residence	16	15	28	25	20	20
Students want to find a more attractive place to work	14	20	26	25	30	33
Students think about career prospects	13	25	16	16	25	20
The rest are attracted by recreation and travel	11	10	10	6	12	7
To see the world	14	8	17	6	13	5
Education	15	10	3	14	0	10
Business development	10	7	0	5	0	4
Marriage	7	5	0	3	0	1

Students noted the following sources of information regarding the living conditions of the region where they wanted to move (the data for 2020 and the data for 2021 did not differ):

- Internet and social networks (students of Ekaterinburg—37%, students of Tomsk—45%, students of Kursk—60%).
- personal experience (students of Ekaterinburg—25%, students of Tomsk—60%, students of Kursk—13%).
- friends or acquaintances (students of Ekaterinburg—22%, students of Tomsk—45%, students of Kursk—20%).
- relatives (students of Ekaterinburg—6%, students of Tomsk—7%, students of Kursk—5%).

One of the important questions was the following: “Under what conditions would the respondents remain to live and work in their area of residence?” Table 7 shows the students' opinions about the reasons why they would choose to stay in their home region. Students could select multiple answers or not answer this question.

Table 7. Conditions under which the respondents would remain to live and work in their area of residence.

Answers	Students of Ekaterinburg, %		Students of Tomsk, %		Students of Kursk, %	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
While ensuring decent wages, an increase in income	29	30	50	53	60	63
When solving the issue of employment, ensuring career growth	16	20	20	45	55	54
Solving the housing problem	12	20	17	30	70	71
Social and financial support from the authorities	10	10	7	10	8	9
Development of social infrastructure	14	15	10	9	13	15

In 2020, most students who wanted to move had not yet decided on the timing of the move (45%). Some students had plans to move in 3–5 years (students of Ekaterinburg—29%, Tomsk—30%, and Kursk—35%). Students planned to move in the next few years (students of Ekaterinburg—14%, Tomsk—32%, and Kursk—5%). In 2020, a significant portion of the students had not yet done anything to move (students of Ekaterinburg—37%, students of Tomsk—25%, students of Kursk—60%). Most students were planning to move to another region of Russia (42% of all students); about a third of students planned to move to another country; and 20% of students found it challenging to answer.

In 2021, most students who wanted to move had not yet decided on the timing of the move (60%). Some students had plans to move in 3–5 years (students of Ekaterinburg—45%, Tomsk—40%, and Kursk—40%). Students planned to move in the next few years (students of Ekaterinburg—%, Tomsk—20%, and Kursk—5%). In 2020, a significant portion of the students had not yet done anything to move (students of Ekaterinburg—40%, students of Tomsk—27%, students of Kursk—64%). Most students planned to move to another region of Russia (50% of all students); about 15% of students planned to move to another country; and 35% of students found it challenging to answer.

According to students, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and the Krasnodar Territory were the most popular regions for migration. In the Krasnodar Territory, Sochi, Novorossiysk, Krasnodar, and Armavir were attractive to students. Among the countries attractive for migration, students noted the Czech Republic, Germany, Canada, Spain, France, Finland, Israel, and the USA.

Important for this study was the question of whether the students were in the cities and countries to which they planned to leave. Slightly less than half of the students (44%) answered that they had been one or more times. This indicator is significant because it demonstrates that students had a sufficient level of interpersonal competencies to create successful communication in an unfamiliar place for them.

4. Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely restricted international migration due to border closures and forced millions of people to return to their home country or cancel their plans to move to another country. In Russia, the state migration policy was formed in the pre-1crisis period, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic is creating problematic external and internal migration situations.

This study aimed at studying the migration potential of students in the regions of Russia. In connection with this goal, the following factors determining the migration potential of young people became the subject of the study: (1) reasons that encourage young people to migrate; (2) opinions about living and working conditions in a place preferred for migration; and (3) features of migration of migrants from one region to another region or country.

The predominant reasons for moving were low wages and a low standard of living in general. Reasons such as poor ecology and an uncomfortable climate were not predominant. However, they had a place in the students' ideas about a convenient and environmentally-friendly place to live. Mainly, students chose their preferred place for migration in connection with the search for a more attractive place of work and permanent residence.

In Russia, migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus predominate. Despite a generally neutral attitude toward migrants, students generally indicated that many negative factors affected their attitude toward migrants. These factors included the creation of ethnic enclaves, the growth of crime, and the employment of the local population by migrants. These opinions are subjective and may not fully correspond to the statistics for the country. However, slightly more than 24% of respondents in 2020 and 32% in 2021 asked for stricter changes to the migration legislation of the Russian Federation.

The pandemic has reduced the number of Russian students considering moving to another country or city soon. At the same time, students remain focused on the choice of region of their residence and work in terms of a higher standard of living and the possibility of obtaining higher earnings. The data in the presented study correlated with the study by A. Cerqua, G. Pellegrini, and O. Tarola [54], which showed that the motivations for directing the migration flow were not limited to earnings issues. A significant factor in attracting immigrants was the level of public goods and services in the region.

The population outflow is an urgent problem for the cities in which the study was carried out. This fact was confirmed by survey data from 2020 and 2021 and by the official statistics.

A total of 80% of students in 2020 considered moving to another region and country. In 2021, this figure decreased to 60%. Perhaps these indicators are related to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictive measures in various countries.

Current socio-economic conditions make it necessary to develop a model for managing migration processes that consider the migration potential of the population and its needs. According to students, the main factors in choosing a place to live and work are tangible and intangible. Therefore, the state should ensure that students can continue their education and realize themselves in professional activities by considering the population's standard of living, which combines socio-cultural, natural, environmental, and economic conditions.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/educsci12050324/s1>, Questionnaire.

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