



New Trends
in Psychology

Migration Intentions, Intercultural Interaction, and Dreams: Psychological Orientations of Student Youth

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Abstract: The article examines migration intentions, intercultural interaction, and the dreams of university students. It analyzes the socio-economic and psychological factors influencing emigration attitudes and their relationship with intercultural interest and personal aspirations. The empirical base includes studies conducted in 2021 and 2024, within a sociocultural approach that considers context, ethnic status, generational belonging, and individual characteristics such as identity and intercultural attitudes. The research involved Moldovan and Gagauz youth, revealing diverse migration motives, including economic difficulties, career goals, and family ties. Both ethnic groups showed a high level of intercultural interest, explained by the region's historical multiculturalism and the influence of labor migration. The analysis of dreams and ambitions indicated students' aspirations for personal happiness, professional self-realization, national well-being, and travel. The analysis of dreams highlighted students' aspirations toward personal happiness, professional self-realization, national prosperity, and opportunities for travel. The findings highlight the importance of integrating socio-economic and psychological perspectives in shaping youth policy.

Keywords: migration intentions; intercultural interest; dreams; student youth; ethnic groups

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1. Introduction

The relevance of the study of migration intentions of young people is due to socio-economic and cultural factors. Youth migration affects the demography, economy and culture of the country, and its analysis allows us to predict the consequences and influence the measures of youth, migration and educational policies. Migration flows are changing under the influence of globalization, changes in the field of education and the economy. The key factors of migration are: the socio-economic situation in the country, the prospects for professional realization abroad, the attitude of young people to emigration processes. Prediction of migration intentions requires complex interaction taking into account economic and socio-cultural aspects (Moşneaga, 2017; Moşneaga & Turcan, 2015; Murashchenkova et al., 2022; Murashchenkova, 2021; Khorozova, 2018; Caunenco & Khorozova, 2023).

Studying intercultural relations among young people of different ethnic groups, we pay attention to the relationship between migration intentions, intercultural interest, and dreams. The article presents an analysis of individual aspects of our empirical studies conducted in different time periods (2021, 2024).

Currently, the study of intercultural relations of student youth continues.

2. An Empirical Investigation of Migration Intentions, Intercultural Interests, and Aspirations among Youth

2.1. Migration Intentions of Young People

The key factors of emigration are: new opportunities (positive attitude towards emigration, dissatisfaction with living conditions, weak regulations towards the country); social support (availability of family support and international contacts); limited resources (career aspirations, achievement motivation, openness to new high experience, trust in cultural differences, self-efficacy, influence of foreign languages) (Kley, 2017; Murashchenkova, 2021). According to the theory of planned behavior of A. Aizen, emigration behavior is predetermined by intentions, formed attitudes, outlier norms and perceived behavioral control. However, a gap remains between intentions and actual behavior, and this requires additional research (Rasskazova et al., 2015). Empirical studies conducted by Murashchenkova et al. revealed the influence of ethnic and global identity on the emigration goals of students from Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. Significant predictors are the

perception of the present and future of the country: dissatisfaction with the present and weak involvement in the future increase emigration intentions (Murashchenkova et al., 2023).

The study of Khorozova revealed that migration at present in the ATU Gagauzia is irreversible and creates a “dispersion” of the ethnic identity of the Gagauz and Bulgarians. Changes in their ethnic identity are manifested through the cognitive and affective components of ethnic stereotypes. Depending on the attitude towards the meeting, student youth show different expressions of ethno-affiliative accents (Khorozova, 2018).

Deterrent factors include the level of education, professional qualifications, experience of international mobility, age and civic identity. High uncertainty in the field of civic identity and compliance with emigration recommendations.

We conducted an empirical study of the migration intentions of young people.

Hypothesis

- It is hypothesized that economic motivations and professional aspirations represent the dominant predictors of migration intentions among students, while strong family ties serve as a major restraining factor.

2.1.1. Research Methodology

The sample of the study group is 80 respondents aged 19-25. The social status of the subjects is students and master's students of the universities of Chisinau and Comrat. Ethnic groups are Moldovans and Gagauz.

The study was conducted in 2021. The main method was the questionnaire by L. B. Schneider “LOR: leaving as an opportunity and reality” (Shneyder, 2018).

2.1.2. Results of the Empirical Study

They can leave and want to: 32.5% of Moldovans and 25% of Gagauz. The main reasons for migration intentions are difficulties, the desire for career growth, the search for the best life prospects. They can, but do not want to leave: 50% of Moldovans and 37.5% of Gagauz. The main factors are strong family ties, patriotic sentiments, and satisfaction with life in their home country. They cannot but want to leave: 12.5% of Moldovans and 17.5% of Gagauz. The main obstacles are lack of financial opportunities and the need for education. *They cannot and do not want to*

leave: drip factors - family ties, stability of the social environment, comfort (Caunenco, 2023).

As can be seen, despite the prevalence of orientation towards self-realization within the country, the share of those considering the possibility of emigration is significant among Moldovan and Gagauz youth (“I can leave”, “I want to, but I can’t”). Migration goals are largely related to the progressive *availability of social elevators and socio-economic reform in the country. For effective prediction of youth policy, it is important to take into account the intercultural experience and intercultural interest of Moldovan youth.*

2.2. Intercultural Interest among Youth

2.2.1. Study Methodology

While studying intercultural relations between ethnic groups, we also studied intercultural interest. Intercultural interest includes a positive attitude towards intercultural communication, a desire for interaction, a desire to communicate with representatives of other cultures, as well as an interest in cultural differences (Khukhlaev et al., 2021). The study was carried out in line with the sociocultural approach, which takes into account such factors as the sociocultural context, ethnic status, generational affiliation and individual characteristics of interacting groups and individuals, including identity and individuals (identity, intercultural attitudes). Human behavior and culture are largely determined by environmental conditions, biological and cultural transmission of values, identities, attitudes and behavior patterns of interacting individuals and groups (Lebedeva et al., 2023).

Hypothesis

- It is hypothesized that student youth will demonstrate a high level of intercultural interest, explained by their residence in a historically multicultural region (the Republic of Moldova) and by cross-cultural experience acquired through stays abroad.

Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of 80 respondents. Age composition – 19-25 years. Social status: students, master’s students of the universities of Comrat (ATO Gagauzia), Taraclia; research period – 2024. Ethnic groups – Gagauz, Bulgarians.

Research Instruments

To study the intercultural interest of young people, we used the scale “Intercultural Interest” from the methodology “Integrative Questionnaire”. The research protocol included the following questions:

- How many countries have you visited? Which ones? The purpose of these questions was to identify practical intercultural experience of interaction and communication with other cultural and ethnic groups.

To compare the intercultural interest of Gagauz and Bulgarian youth, we used the Student's t-test. The statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics was used to process the data.

2.2.2. Empirical Results

The study revealed high values for intercultural interest among Gagauz ($M=4.55$) and Bulgarian ($M=4.26$) youth. According to the scale “Intercultural Interest” there were no statistically significant differences between Gagauz and Bulgarian youth ($t(78) = 1.93, p > 0.05$).

The Gagauz and Bulgarian youth have a wide geography of visiting countries and the formation and development of intercultural practical experience on this basis. The most frequently visited countries for young people are: Romania (Gagauz - 10%; Bulgarians - 11%), Ukraine (Gagauz - 23%; Bulgarians - 22%), Turkey (Gagauz 16%; Bulgarians - 17%), Bulgaria (Gagauz - 14%; Bulgarians 20%), Russia (Gagauz - 8%; Bulgarians - 16%), Germany (Gagauz - 8%, Bulgarians - 4%). Of interest is the list of countries that are currently also “attractive” for further emigration or labor migration - Canada, England, France, the Czech Republic, Italy. Never been abroad: Gagauz - 10%; Bulgarians - 7%.

The results of the study indicate a high level of intercultural interest among the youth of the Gagauz and Bulgarian ethnic groups. This phenomenon is manifested in a pronounced orientation towards intercultural interaction, motivation to establish interethnic contacts, as well as in the desire to communicate with representatives of cultures that differ significantly from one's own. The identified trends may be due to the historically established multiculturalism of our region, as well as the influence of labor migration processes, within which parents and relatives working abroad act as mediators of other ethnocultural regions, contributing to the expansion of the intercultural competence of young people.

2.3. The Study of Young People's Dreams

2.3.1. Study Methodology

In our research, we proceeded from the fact that a dream has a projection into the future, both on a personal and social perspective, it reflects not only what is important for a person situationally or in a more or less short term, but also social values (justice, equality, peace, beauty and harmony, etc.) (Egorova, 2022). A dream also reflects expectations for the future.

The image of a dream integrates the most important values, goals and motives of a person's life path and becomes a special psychological guideline in the structure of mental activity. Being an ideal project and guideline, a dream has an independent value and does not require immediate and complete implementation, it is associated with deep value experiences and expresses the integrity of the personality. A dream motivates, directs activity and gives meaning and value to a person's actions, emotionally coloring the choice he makes (Egorova et al., 2018).

Hypothesis

- It is hypothesized that the dreams of student youth include both individual and socio-cultural future-oriented perspectives, reflecting a balance between personal aspirations (happiness, health, professional development) and collective expectations (family well-being, national prosperity, and a harmonious society).

Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of 80 respondents. Age composition – 19-25 years. Social status: students, master's students of the universities of Chisinau, Comrat (ATO Gagauzia); research period – 2021. Ethnic group – Moldovans, Gagauz. Research methodology – projective sentence “I dream...” (Egorova, 2022). Objective – study of dreams among Moldovan and Gagauz student youth.

2.3.2. Empirical Results

Based on the content analysis, we identified the following categories: “I”, “career”, “family”, “travel”, “society”, “material well-being”, “other”. One answer could also relate to several categories at once. The dreams of young people were more often associated with the category “I”: Moldovans - (42%) (“To be a kind person”, “To be healthy”, “To be happy”); Gagauz – 34% (“To be happy and not deny yourself anything”, “To be healthy and purposeful”). This category received the first rank. The second rank among Moldovan youth was taken by the category “Society” - 25%

(“About the prosperous future of my country”, “About the best future of Moldova, protected from danger and excessive control”; “About a world where everyone has equal opportunities”). The third rank among Moldovan youth is associated with the category “Family” - 17% (“Family, career, freedom, success”, “...so that my family is always healthy”). The fourth rank is “Career” - 11% (About a successful career...”, “...achieving my professional goals”) and the category “Other” (“At the moment, I have no dreams, the most important things have been achieved”). The fifth rank is “Travel” - 6% (“To visit as many countries and special places as possible...”).

The second rank among the Gagauz youth was taken by the category “material well-being” - 29% (“I dream of being rich and traveling a lot”, “About a good salary”, “To be rich”). The third rank is the category “Career” 18% (“To get a higher education and get a good job”; “To become more successful in my business”; “To open my own business”); the fourth is “Travel” 13% (“To travel the world, to study the mentality and culture of other countries”); the fifth rank is associated with the categories “Family” and “Society” - 11% (“About a happy family”; “About a happy and healthy family that does not need anything”), (“About stability in the country, about a promising future”; “About a friendly society built on mutual respect”); “other” - 3% (Caunenco & Khorozova, 2023).

Our study revealed that young Moldovans and Gagauz dream of personal happiness, career, well-being of the country, travel, family. Based on this empirical material on the dream, a research question arises: to what extent is the implementation of professional, career aspirations of young people feasible in our region? The answer to this research question requires a separate empirical study.

3. Conclusion

An empirical study of migration intentions of student youth revealed that these intentions are a consequence of not only objectively difficult economic conditions, but also subjective ones - personal dreams, readiness for intercultural interaction, social attachments. Migration intentions are a complex multi-component phenomenon, a comprehensive study of which can contribute to the development of effective youth programs aimed at professional and personal self-realization within the country.

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