

EDU WORLD 2022**Edu World International Conference Education Facing Contemporary World Issues****THE ISSUE OF IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN ROMANIA**

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Abstract

The era of globalization brings with it many challenges and intensifies the dynamics of some processes and phenomena at the political, demographic, social, psycho-social level. One of these challenges is the immigration of students for studies. In Romania, this phenomenon is a real one, although not very well known. It presents an interesting complexity because, in recent years, Romania attracts an increasing number of young people who choose to study on the territory of our country. Their interest in immigrating to Romania increased with the opening of society to change its character and change its institutional architecture. The purpose of this study is to analyze some aspects specific to students, coming to Romania, related to the countries they come from. The phenomenon of immigration is a formula by which young people can study in any country due to the rights and freedoms of citizens. Predominantly quantitative methods were used, in particular, the secondary analysis of the data. It was found that the phenomenon studied is increasing, despite the decrease in the total number of students.

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1. Introduction

As a European country, Romania has experienced various changes such as democratic consolidation, reindustrialization, and international migration (including its two components: emigration and immigration). The present study focuses on the importance of knowing some aspects specific to young immigrants for higher education in Romania.

At the moment, a factor of major interest is that Romania is no longer seen as a country of emigration, but is able to receive foreign immigrants or citizens. According to the General Inspectorate for Immigration, in 2021, over 148.000 immigrants arrived in Romania, of which over 96,000 are from third countries (Moldova, Turkey, Syria, Nepal) and over 52,000 are citizens of the European Union (most of them from Italy, Germany, France). Three years ago, the number of immigrants from Romania reached the threshold of 2% of the total population. In 2018, in Romania, 19.4% of immigrants came to study (Indexul Integrării Imigranților în România, 2019). In terms of form of training, the majority of immigrants who attend university courses (bachelor, master, and doctorate) amount to a proportion of 43%. Another part of the immigrants are enrolled in preparatory courses of Romanian language before the start of university courses, courses offered by school inspectorates or NGOs. Providing educational support for immigrants decreases the occurrence of disruptive behaviors in schools' settings (Constantinescu et al., 2019; Dumitru, 2022).

A lower percentage follows various forms of specialization such as residency or specialization courses in certain fields, as well as vocational courses offered by NGOs or other competent institutions. Most immigrants who attend university courses have turned to the most important universities in Romania. It is understood that the motivation of young people to emigrate to a country aiming for studies is born for various reasons and taking into account the following fact "the more people have a profession with a higher social prestige, the greater the social trust" (Constantinescu, 2004, p. 246).

The aspect regarding the studies is interesting, because it is the main reason of the foreign immigrants who arrive on the territory of Romania. Traditionally, foreigners come to study medicine in Romania because the diplomas obtained are recognized in their countries, and the tuition costs are lower. In addition, the Romanian state grants foreign students undergraduate or postgraduate scholarships. Not only has the study of medicine attracted foreign immigrants to Romania, but also the technical, maritime, architectural studies.

The superior Romanian education is of high quality, but many Romanians choose to emigrate. At the opposite pole, there are foreign students. This study will follow the evolution of the phenomenon of youth immigration in Romania for higher education. It will be studied the dynamics of the phenomenon of immigration of students in Romania. It is of interest whether their entry is increasing, linear or decreasing. It will also be shown which of the countries from the European Union or abroad send young people for higher education on the territory of Romania. In the context of higher education, it is interesting which universities are considered attractions for foreigners. Additionally, for a better designing of educational programs, it is important to take into consideration students voice (Dumitru Tăbăcaru et al., 2022). Quantitative research will be used, the secondary analysis of data will be used, and "applied directly to quantified data that are already collected" (Constantinescu, 2003a p. 20). About the fact that education is a long-term investment, on which the future of each society depends, the literature

has reached a consensus. However, there is talk of a crisis of the current education, which has affected the state of the learner and which threatens to degrade him even more (Gorun, 2015, p. 5).

Migration is a complex phenomenon, therefore, in the literature, there is no universally accepted definition. The fact is that it must be viewed according to its two components: emigration and immigration.

In a simple sense, the term migration refers to the massive movement of populations from one area to another, influenced by economic, social, political or natural factors (Academia Română Iorgu Iordan, 1998). Viewed from the point of view of its manifestation at the level of society, migration is a social phenomenon known in all epochs of evolution of society and has marked it, in certain historical periods, taking place both nationally and internationally. The movement of people from one territory to another, from one geographical area to another and from one continent to another, has not represented, in the past centuries, an insurmountable impediment, despite the size of the distances and the natural barriers, as long as they could benefit from the means of transport existing in each historical epoch. Also regarded as a phenomenon, we see that "Migration is a phenomenon in the same sense in which the events of death and childbirth, for example, by aggregation define the features of mortality and fertility respectively" (Otovescu, 2016, p. 27; Sandu, 1984, p. 20).

The theoretical approach to international migration, values the existing and relevant scientific aspects from the point of view of academic requirements. Regardless of the perspective from which we look at the phenomenon of migration, the fact is that it involves the disappearance of an individual for a certain period of time. This action generates effects that allow a certain type of approach, "In approaching the effects of international migration, the greatest difficulty starts from the current complexity of the phenomenon, given by the multitude of forms and characteristics that are associated with them and by their accentuated dynamics" (Constantinescu, 2003b, p. 278).

Migration raises complex and emerging issues, with migrants having social, civic, political contributions and being key agents of change (IOM, 2020, p. 5). This bipolar phenomenon involves the movement of people to and from places of origin to other destinations called the host. As far as emigration is concerned, this is a historical phenomenon that has occurred since ancient times and continues today, but with a different dynamic, influenced by the evolution of society in general. An emigrant is a person who leaves his place of origin in order to settle temporarily or definitively in another place. International emigration involves leaving the country of origin and moving to a host country. Immigration, also known since ancient times, involves the entry into the host country of persons originating in other territories in order to remain temporarily or permanently.

One type of mobility, considered interesting by researchers, is contemporary educational mobility, especially since students are involved in both short-distance travel and travel that involves crossing boundaries. The latter are called "international students" (Brooks & Waters, 2021, p. 4).

The immigration of young people to Romania for studies is due, in large part, to the high quality of the Romanian education. Higher education has a number of characteristics that differentiate it from other forms of organization of education. Higher education in Romania is distinguished by the number of prestigious universities, by the quality of professional training, by the specialists who promote it abroad.

One can understand why education is an essential factor of social, human, community development, its absence keeping society in a state of backwardness.

In the organization of the higher education system there are a number of differences, depending on the way of organization of each society. Thus, we learn that "In some countries, all universities and colleges are state institutions and receive funds directly from government sources" (Giddens, 2000, p. 244).

As far as higher education is concerned, Ravenor (2021), brings three basic reasons for it to be considered "a distinct educational dimension that starts from the point where the education ends" (p. 37): higher education takes place in universities, and those who follow a form of higher education are called students; research is almost indispensable in higher education.

Otovescu (2009) defines the university as "a fundamental unit of higher education, an essential component of the educational system and, at the same time, a leading institution, indispensable to any contemporary society" (p. 14).

The university was defined as "a fundamental unit of higher education, an essential component of the educational system and, at the same time, a leading institution, indispensable to any contemporary society" (Otovescu, 2017, p. 14).

2. Problem Statement

The central element of the research is the young man in his capacity as an immigrant, and the associated problem is that of researching the immigration phenomenon by reference to the young people who come to Romania for studies. It aims at the balance between the number of immigrants who are beneficiaries of university education in Romania and the social transformation that the host society is going through, as a result of the orientation of young Romanians to other states. An image is emerging of the young population, which is in the immigration process in Romania (depending on the countries they come from) and of the academic centers that attract them and that facilitate their access to a higher, quality education. In recent years, immigration has generated much debate. In – an increasingly globalised and multiethnic world, institutions need to develop or adapt their policies to meet the demands of immigration issues (Aerschot & Daenzer, 2016, p. 16). Such institutions that have to face these challenges are universities.

To make it easier for students to access their studies through the Romanian language courses, which they benefit from in the preparatory year they spend in Romania. There is an obligation to attend these courses in order to provide the foreign student with the basic elements he needs in communication. To study is to do a constant, systematic intellectual work, in order to acquire deep knowledge in a certain sphere of activity. In this context of education, a particularly important factor is communication (Constantinescu, 2004, p. 79); defined in the simplest way, communication consists of a process of transmitting information, ideas and opinions from one individual to another and from one social group to another. Approached sociologically, communication involves psychosocial interaction in order to transmit information and cohesion the beneficiary group.

3. Research Questions

A first question to be answered is the one regarding the dynamics of the immigration phenomenon of young people who come to study in Romania. It is interesting if their number is increasing, remains constant or is decreasing. Another problem is the knowledge of the countries in the European Union or abroad that send students to Romania. It is also desired to know the universities considered attractions for foreigners. In contemporary times there is more and more talk about the rapid and profound changes of societies that face a series of challenges: environmental, economic, but especially social challenges. Amid these changes, global migration continues to grow. In this respect, a problem worthy of consideration is the one related to the evolution of the total number of students, given the choice by some young Romanians of universities abroad.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyse several aspects specific to young immigrants who came to Romania for studies. Issues related to the countries they come from, the universities they opt for, will be analysed. Also, the dynamics of these immigrant students will be analysed, it will be determined whether their number is increasing, decreasing or remains constant and it will be monitored how they influence their percentage, the total number of students in our country

5. Research Methods

The research conducted in this study is predominantly quantitative (explanation by the causal relationship between the total number of immigrants in Romania, immigrants for studies, the total number of students, the study of the general trend of evolution of the population in university environments by reference to statistical data on indicators such as the total number of immigrants, the number of immigrants for studies, the number of young students in Romania) and secondary analysis of the data applied directly to the quantified data that are already collected.

In analysing the secondary data, we used indicators provided by the Ministry of National Education, the Index of Immigrant Integration in Romania, the National Institute of Statistics, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, newspapers and specialized magazines.

The relationship between man and society in the modern era has a complex structure due to evolution. In the last two centuries, theories that try to explain the relationships between individuals and the collectivity have emerged as an avalanche, each of them trying to explain this complex interaction.

The growth of the population of the European continent, due to economic and industrial development, has changed the perspective of individuals on the way of life. The high standard of living has become a major wish for the citizens of the least developed countries, which has led to international migration.

Being aware of the importance of the economic impact, we can understand the challenge that migration of people is launching, but it cannot be reduced to this aspect. The most important theoretical approaches to migration will therefore be further presented.

The need for synthetic interpretations, generalizations of numerous data and information of an applicative nature led to the publication of two reference works in the field of migration: *Worlds in motion. Understanding international migration at the end of the millennium*, Massey et al. (1998) and *Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*, written by Douglas S. Massey and Kristin Espinoza.

In the first mentioned paper, the following theoretical perspectives or approaches are examined: neoclassical economy; the new migration economy; the segmented labour market; structuralist conception or theory of addiction; approach from the perspective of migrant networks; institutional approach; the share capital approach; the cumulative causal approach. (Otovescu, 2016, p. 92)

These theories can be grouped into: sociological theories (transnational theory, cumulative causality, migration network theory), economic theories (the age of the dual market or of labor and social hierarchy segmentation, the history of neoclassical economy, the history of the World system, the new economy of migration), theories concerning social protection (institutional theory). Theories have an essential role in scientific research because “they provide explanations rather than descriptions that simply list relevant facts” (Giddens & Sutton, 2021, p. 4).

The whole world is at a historic moment in terms of migration. While transnational migration is no longer a new phenomenon, people from different parts of the world are moving to other regions or countries in much greater numbers than before 2017 (Crawford & Dorner, 2020). Their reasons are diverse, a particularly interesting one being education. In countries with a relatively low standard of education, unlike those whose educational standard is generally high, young people believe that having a better education than others ensure a different, better positioning in society (Nieswand, 2011).

Until 1990, Romania was recognized for the large number of foreign students who came to study Architecture, Construction, the Academy of Economic Sciences, but especially Medicine (especially Arabs). After 1990, the trend continues, with students from other countries continuing to immigrate to Romania for studies. The universities of Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Timisoara, Targu Mures, preferred by the students of the 90's, have been added in recent years those of Constanta, Brasov, Sibiu, Arad. Starting with the academic year 2004/2005, the number of immigrant students in Romania has increased annually from a percentage of 1.37 to 1.78 in the academic year 2009/2010 (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of foreign students enrolled in Romanian universities

Year	Total students	Out of the total number of students: foreign students	Percent
2004/2005	650335	8935	1,37%
2005/2006	716464	9944	1,39%
2006/2007	785506	10396	1,32%
2007/2008	907353	11095	1,22%
2008/2009	891098	11887	1,33%
2009/2010	775319	13778	1,78

It is noted that although the number of immigrant students is increasing, the total number of students varies, which may be a consequence of the decrease in the number of higher education institutions from 117 in 2004/2005 to 108 in 2009/2010. On the other hand, we can attribute the

fluctuation of the total number of students to the phenomenon of emigration of young Romanians to other European states or not.

According to The Index of Immigrant Integration in Romania (IIIR), in 2017, 2018, 2019, the total number of immigrants in Romania continued to increase with the number of immigrant students. The countries that send young people to study in Romania are: Tunisia, Greece, Israel, Moldova, Algeria, but also countries of the European Union such as France, Germany, Italy. This fact is due, on the one hand, to the departure of specialists in third countries, who made it possible to promote quality Romanian education, and on the other hand, to the establishment of faculties in which they are studied in French, English.

Table 2. Comparative evolution of the number of immigrants for studies and the total number of immigrants in Romania

Year	Immigrant students in Romania	Total number of immigrants to Romania	Total number of students
2017	22866	116832	531586
2018	24815	120399	538871
2019	25326	137619	402696

In order to illustrate the data presented in the table 2, we chose the graph below that presents comparatively the evolution of the total number of immigrants in Romania and the number of immigrants for studies in our country (Figure 1).

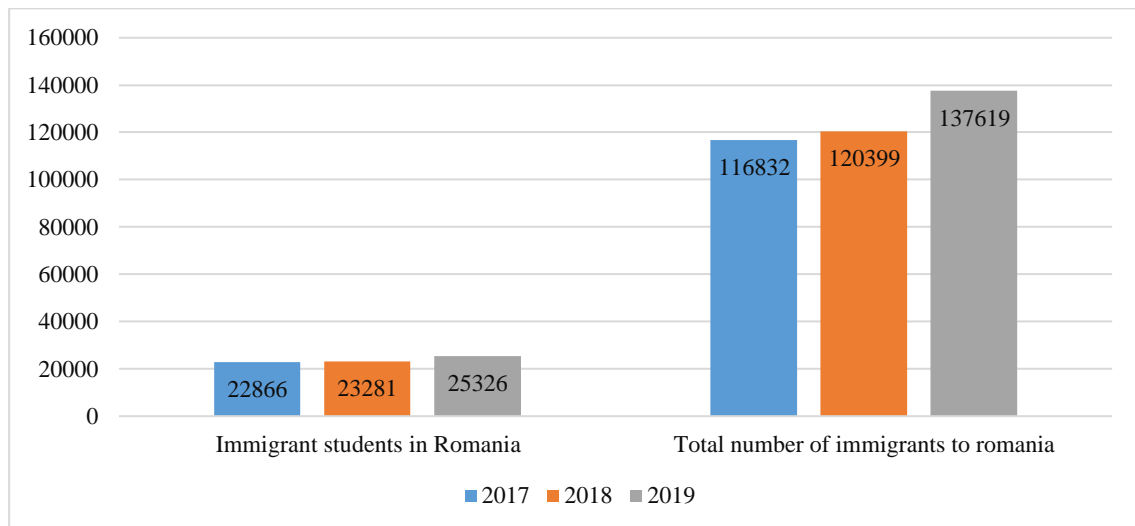


Figure 1. The comparative evolution of the number of immigrants for studies and the total number of immigrants in Romania

It can be seen that the number of immigrants is increasing, and that of immigrants for studies represents a significant percentage of the total number. On the other hand, there is also an increase in the total number of students in 2017, 2018, but a decrease in the total number of students, due to the decrease in demographics and migration of young people (Figure 2).

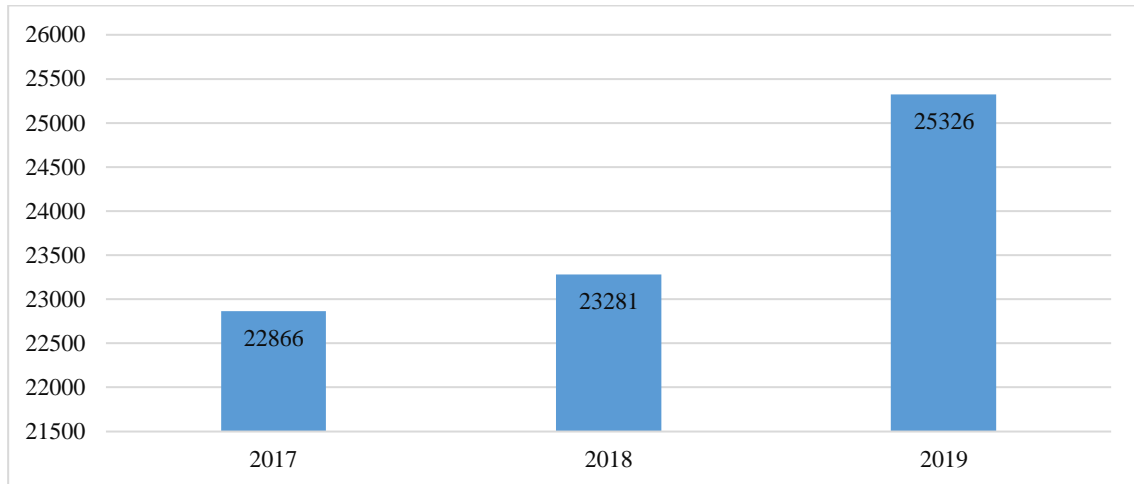


Figure 2. Immigrant students in Romania

The graph shows that the number of young immigrants in Romania for studies increased slightly between 2017 and 2018, and in 2019 the growth was considerably higher (Figure 3).

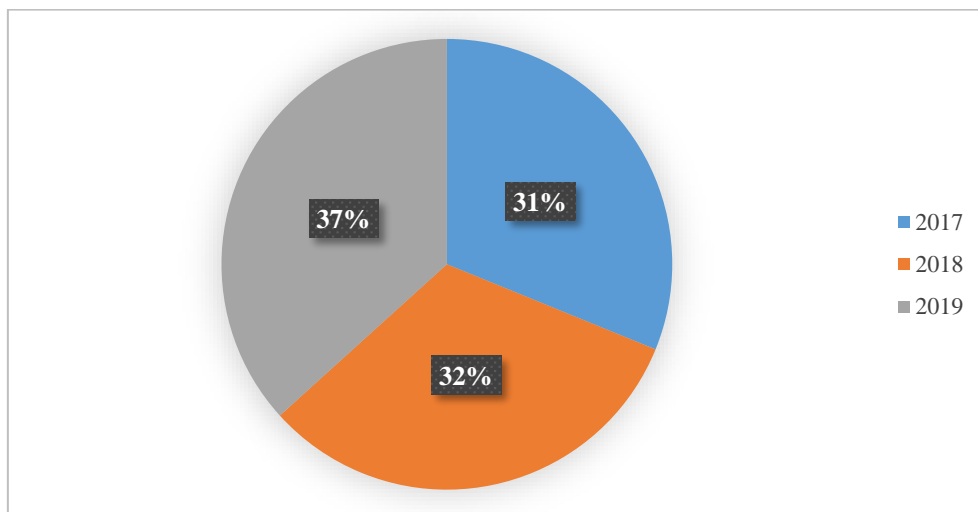


Figure 3. Total number of immigrants to Romania

The total number of immigrants from Romania in the three reference years is increasing. This is not a constant one, as it manifested itself easily between 2017 and 2018 and visible in 2019. However, in the 2018/2019 academic year, the total number of students is decreasing.

In 2019/2020, registering 407 373 students at the bachelor's degree cycle, 540 000 at all cycles of university education, according to MEN, the general trend is of slight increase, the generation 2020 being the largest generation of high school graduates in the last five years.

The academic year 2020/2021, registered 401,902 students in the bachelor's degree cycle (this being the most numerous of the university education cycles), 6% being foreign students.

The current academic year, 2021/2022, started with around 400,000 students. This fact was predictable due to the low promotion from the Bacalaureate Exam, the INS estimates regarding the 18-year-old population that could go to college.

6. Findings

The problem of the research is significant, its relevance coming from the major interest of the society on educational issues, the tendency to decrease the number of beneficiaries, being a cause of concern for the general good.

Romania, a country with the potential to attract foreign immigrants, continues to prove its power to attract young people from other countries, especially for university studies. It has been shown that the tradition of welcoming young people for studies from the period before the 90s, from Arab countries, continued to them, adding young people from Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Moldova, Israel and young people from EU countries. Thus, Romania has remained an educational destination for the university education, so that more and more students will be trained in Romanian universities, contributing to the popularization of the image of the country that hosted them in the countries of origin.

The number of immigrant students in Romania is constantly increasing, even if the total number of students in Romania tends to decrease in recent years. The most attractive universities for immigrant students are those from Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi, Constanta, Craiova, Targu Mureş, Oradea.

7. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to present aspects related to the number of immigrant students in Romania. Thus, after several elements of theory regarding the concept of migration were presented, the quantitative manner of data collection was presented, in particular, using the secondary analysis of the data. The research highlighted the fact that the phenomenon of immigration for studies in Romania is increasing, which proves that the academic environment in Romania is a desired one. This increase is also highlighted by the structure of permanent immigrants, according to the countries of origin, which have been added in recent years. In this context, the universes must maintain their high-quality standards, but also be able to -adapt their policies according to the characteristics of the immigrant students.

It was further pointed out that the countries from which the emigrant students come are countries from outside the European Union, in the majority, but there are also a number of students from EU Member States. These students are especially attracted to university centers with tradition, but in recent years students have also chosen faculties from newly established university centers. Thus, the newly established university centers are attractive through the modern educational design, through the educational offers and last but not least through the new and lively campuses.

Most of the immigrant students who have chosen Romania for their studies appreciate the quality of university education and value the interaction with teachers at the academic level, but also at the interhuman level. Moreover, Romania offers the possibility for young immigrant students from outside the EU to obtain a residence permit for themselves, but also for the family members for which they apply, in order to complete the family.

Young immigrant students, beneficiaries of academic education in our country, represent the main factor that empowers university professors to maintain high performance standards, being aware that they represent ambassadors of academic training in Romania worldwide.

At the moment the number of immigrants for studies is not large enough to provide an upward dimension of the total number of students in our country. The satisfaction related to the educational success, to the support of the authorities, to the attractive tuition fees, but generates more and more interest in carrying out university studies in Romania.

The academic learning, a social phenomenon, which directly influences the quality of society, tends to register a decrease in the total number of students, a fact found through the quantitative research carried out. This current fact has a complex structure, the causes that generate it are identifiable, with valences open to research.

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