

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AS AN ADAPTATION FACTOR FOR LABOR MIGRANTS

Elena Shuklina

Abstract

The article reveals the role of the professional education in labour migrants' adaptation process, that takes part in Yugra – one of the most immigration-oriented Russian regions. This paper outlines specific features of the Yugra labour market, regional variety of educational services for adults, analysis of labour migrants' needs for professional education and how these needs are met by the local education market. The outcome of several sociological research projects (arranged in 2012-2015 in Yugra) is the controversy between the numerous amount of educational services for adults, and their ignorance towards the demands of the specific segment of labour migrants. The existing fairly large market of educational services is not oriented towards the specifics of education for migrants as a particular target segment. The need for complex educational strategy for labour migrants based on the continuous learning process principle is discussed. The desired outcome of this process is the successful development of the Yugra region.

Key words: labour migrants' education, adaptation of migrants, teaching and learning Russian

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Introduction

The global trend towards an increase in migrant flows is characteristic of our time. Bringing about a whole range of changes, not only economic, but also social, it is fraught with social risks associated primarily with labour migrants' adaptation and integration in the receiving country. The factors contributory to reducing these risks are multifarious, and professional education is one of them.

The Russian Federation has not established a system of professional education and retraining for labour migrants, therefore, it is a burning issue, especially for regions with high migrant capacity, one of which (KhMAO-Yugra – Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Region) is the object of our research.

The urgency of labour migrants' education, training and retraining problems is due to the fact that, on the one hand, enterprises applying for professional staff do not receive sufficiently qualified employees. On the other hand, labour migrants themselves are often not oriented towards receiving professional education. Moreover, they are faced with various forms of corruption, problems of psychological pressure, fraud and so on.

In major international human rights regulations, such as the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (Strasbourg, November 24, 1977 - not signed by Russia) (European Convention, 1977) and International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 45/158 of December 18, 1990 - not signed by Russia) (International Convention, 1990), it is stated that „migrant workers shall enjoy equality of treatment with nationals of the State of employment in relation to:

- a) Access to educational institutions and services subject to the admission requirements and other regulations of the institutions and services concerned;
- b) Access to vocational guidance and placement services;
- c) Access to vocational training and retraining facilities and institutions”, etc. (International Convention, 1990).

Yet, since Russia has not signed these international regulations, the problems of education for migrant workers are, as a rule, solved either by migrants themselves, or by the inviting party (enterprises, institutions) interested in using migrant labour, or otherwise ignored.

The purpose of the article is to present the main findings of an empirical study of the migrant workers' educational needs, their compliance with the regional labour market needs, and opportunities offered by the professional education system. Achieving this aim allows for making a conclusion on the need to develop the system of professional training for migrants in the region as a necessary condition for their socio-economic adaptation and for regulating supply and demand in the regional labour market.

Similar problems are being actively discussed by the international community. Researchers focus on studying changes in migration policy taking into account the migrants' educational and qualification characteristics (Boyd, 2014; Devitt, 2010), the regulation of highly qualified workers migration (Neubecker, 2014), labour migrants' education (Diehl et al., 2009; Li, 2011).

Methods

The features of labour migrants' education and adaptation practices will be examined on the basis of empirical sociological studies analyzing migrant education issues, conducted in 2012-2015 in the KhMAO-Yugra Laboratory of Regional Studies of the Surgut State Pedagogical University and the Department of Sociology and Technologies for State and Municipal Management of Ural Federal University.

The researchers applied case-study methodology involving the use of a complex of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Several educational institutions engaged in migrants' language testing participated in the study. The objects of the study were migrants taking tests in the Russian language in order to obtain Russian citizenship and employment in the Russian Federation. Informal interviews with migrants (84 interviews) and a large-scale survey using questionnaires were used in the study. Sample size for the migrants' survey - 333 people. The surveys lasted for a month, with the general study population amounting to 2000 people, and the sampling error of 0.05 with 0.95 probability.

The methodology involved comparing the objective characteristics of the regional labour market with the data of the research into the migrants' educational needs and professional orientations.

The following quantitative parameters of the regional labour market were taken into account:

1. The number of migrants
2. Country of origin
3. Motives of relocation
4. The list of professions the region expects to engage foreign workers in
5. Requirements to their qualification level

The large-scale survey of the migrants was aimed at identifying:

1. The educational status
2. The migrants' educational needs
3. Their professional sphere before relocation
4. Orientation towards professional sphere after relocation
5. Orientation to the type of educational institution for receiving professional training

The main method used in quantitative research is the multivariate correlation analysis.

Results and discussion

Quantitative characteristics of the regional labour market

Let us consider the features of migration processes in KhMAO-Yugra and practices of attracting foreign workers to the regional labour market.

At the beginning of 2015 204,525 foreign nationals were registered in the KhMAO-Yugra autonomous district as their residence place. The predominant number of immigrants arrived in the region with the following purposes: employment (77% of the total number); personal/private purposes (18.4%); business and work (1% and 0.15%, respectively); education (0.78%); tourism (0.38%); humanitarian/social purposes (0.24%); other purposes (1.14%) (FMS KMAD - Yugra, 2015).

Over 96,5 % of the total number of those who entered the territory of the autonomous region are citizens who are not required to obtain a visa to arrive in the Russian Federation. The most numerous are the citizens of the following countries: Tajikistan - 32.3%, Uzbekistan - 21.4%, Ukraine - 16%, Kyrgyzstan - 11.5%, Azerbaijan - 8%, Kazakhstan - 3.4%, Moldova - 3.4% Armenia - 2.1%, Belarus - 2% (On measures for law enforcement, 2014).

In 2014 the Khanty-Yugra State Employment Service of the Department of Labour and Employment recorded the total of 50 786 job vacancies in the region that were expected to be filled with foreign workers (State Employment Agency, 2015). Foreign nationals mainly arrive in the KhMAO-Yugra largest cities with a stable economic situation and high standard of living which provide diverse employment opportunities: Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk, Khanty-Mansiysk.

Let us examine the "State of employment" (the term from the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families) inventory of offered professions, which are typical for the region. The analysis of the approved list of professions (occupations and positions) which were supposed to attract foreign workers in 2014 in KhMAO-Yugra (Department of Labour, 2015) showed that the proposed list of job vacancies for 16,925 labour migrants includes mostly workers in the areas of electrical power engineering, oil and gas industry, construction, and transport.

Employers primarily announced job vacancies for workers with special skills and professional training. About 10% of the total number of jobs are for highly-skilled professionals, mainly engineering personnel. Employees for high-status positions, such as chief engineer, senior manufacturing technology manager, senior geologist, manager, consultant, team leader, chief project engineer, and others are also in demand. Some of the

vacancies are filled with employees from foreign companies and joint ventures whose branches are located in KhMAO-Yugra residential settlements.

The majority of the recruited workers are from the neighboring countries. In general, the geography of labour migration covers countries such as Australia, Azerbaijan, Venezuela, Ireland, Canada, Kyrgyzstan, China, Korea, Cuba, Lithuania, Moldova, the Netherlands, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, the USA, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Croatia, Czech Republic, Japan and others.

The analysis carried out suggests that with the large flow of labour migration and the wide range of the job vacancies offered, the problem of migrants' professional education, training and retraining remains extremely relevant in the region.

Educational needs and professional orientations of migrants

A large-scale survey was conducted to collect subjective information about the educational needs and professional orientations of migrants aiming to obtain Russian citizenship, permanent residence permit, a temporary residence permit, or a work permit. The surveyed migrants all came from the neighboring countries.

The majority (65.1%) were men, and 34.9% - women. The main reasons for their relocation were primarily economic (the need to get a job and a decent wage - 64.2%), with every fourth respondent migrating for family reasons (reuniting with relatives, marriage - 24.7%); other reasons include: unfavorable situation in the country of origin (6.3%), obtaining Russian citizenship (3.9%), education (0.9%). Moreover, the majority of migrants intend to stay in Russia for permanent residence (76.2%), the rest are going to leave (13.9%) or have not yet made their final decision (9.9%).

The migrants' educational status is not very high. Just over a half (56.7%) have a professional education background, and only a quarter of them have a university degree. This may lead to possible future difficulties with employment and professional adaptation. The need for professional education for them is a basic condition for solving these problems.

The migrants' status parameters also predetermine potential social risks. The respondents' professional status before relocation is low: more than half of the migrants are manual workers (46.3%) and clerical office workers (14.2%). Only one in seven is a professional with a university degree. It is important to note that one in five is unemployed or a housewife. This is another threat to professional self-identification and adaptation.

The migrants' professional spheres before relocation, and, most importantly, their orientation towards employment after relocation (see Table 1) do not entirely meet the specific demands of the labour market in the region.

Tab. 1: Migrants' professional spheres before relocation and spheres they plan to work in after relocation (% of the respondents)

Professional sphere	Before relocation	After relocation
Sales, service industry	31,5	45,5
Construction industry	18,5	17,2
Manufacturing industry	11,2	10,0
Transport	6,4	0,2
Education	5,5	1,8
Medical industry	5,2	4,5
Defense and law enforcement	1,5	-
Finance (banking, insurance, accounting)	1,5	-
Other	0,6	0,3
Housewife	3,6	0,3
Unemployed	14,5	-
Have not decided (searching for)	-	14,2
Do not plan to work	14,5	6,0
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: data of the survey

Excessive orientation towards sales and service industry (45.5%) and a large percentage of those who have not decided on the sphere of their future professional self-realization are indicators of the lack of clear understanding of the situation on the regional labour market, of the spontaneity in implementing life and, above all, professional plans.

Nevertheless, the majority of migrants (56.4%) are aware of the need for additional education in the chosen professional area. Most of the respondents who considered professional education, further training and retraining to be important are oriented towards professions that are specific to the region and are in demand on the regional labour market – jobs in oil and gas industry (23.5%), construction (16.6%), and transport (11.2%).

The migrants associate obtaining a professional qualification with formal education. Despite the limited access to state-financed education, the majority of the respondents are going to study in a vocational training school and university (67.2%). A third of the migrants are oriented towards obtaining additional professional education through completing training, retraining and professional development courses.

Multivariate correlation analysis confirms one of the main hypothesis that the country of migrants' origin has a reasonable influence at their educational needs. Labor migrants from Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are highly interested in Russian language courses, and in general they are not oriented towards future state professional education. So, educational

model, provided by the state, is more or less sufficient to them. Otherwise, labor migrants from Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine are mostly oriented towards university professional education, and they encounter with limits of opportunities in their educational goals.

Conclusion

The analysis shows the discrepancy between the labour market demand for foreign labour, on the one hand, and the migrants' professional education, training, and qualification status, on the other hand. These trends strongly suggest that educating migrants is one of the most promising directions in the development of education for adults.

No comprehensive systematic work on developing a strategy for this kind of education is currently under way, neither at the national, nor at the regional level. The reasons for this are varied. Notwithstanding the full awareness of the importance of developing human potential in the regions, the funding of these educational programmes is piecemeal. Education is implemented by entities of different levels: federal, regional, municipal, company or organization level. The educational organizations - public and private - belong to different governmental departments. The existing fairly large market of educational services is not oriented towards the specifics of education for migrants as a particular target segment. The issue of promoting educational services to a potential customer leaves much to be desired; special research in this field - marketing, sociological, educational - is not usually carried out.

It is obvious that the need has emerged to develop an overall integrated strategy (concept) for the development of this sector of adult education. Such a strategy would imply consolidating a wide range of entities involved in the management and implementation of educational activities (public, commercial and private, as well as government representatives), integrating education, business, government authorities, and public national associations. It would also involve a combination of different types of formal and informal education. The strategic goal of this concept should be the successful development of a region, a specific territory, and the implementation mechanism should apply the principles of continuing education for migrants as a particular consumer type. In other words, a system of professional education, training and retraining for migrants is essential.

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Contact

Elena Shuklina

Ural Federal University

19, Mira str., Ekaterinburg, 620002, Russia.

shuklina_elena@mail.ru