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## **An Empirical Assessment of Rural Youth Residents' Intention Toward Migration**

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### **Introduction**

Young people migrate from rural areas because they see migration as a way to take advantage of new opportunities, to increase their social status, or sometimes simply as a means of survival (Trell et al., 2012). Migration can be an important part of the transition to adulthood (Billari, 2001). The loss of young people from rural areas and small towns has been referred to as the 'rural youth drain' (Kirstein & Bandranaik, 2004). Although migration is a normal element of population dynamics in most societies, the scale of movement experienced in some developing countries can produce undesirable consequences for whole society. For example, migration of motivated and skilled individuals can reduce the quality of life for those remaining in rural areas (Garasky, 2002). Moreover, migration reduces the amount of labour and human capital available to the agricultural sector and allied rural industries (Karbasi & Fahimi-Fard, 2011; Li & Zahniser, 2002), which

impacts negatively on the sustainability of rural areas and services (Eacott & Sonn, 2006). Migration from rural areas also puts pressure on urban populations which can have undesirable consequences in terms of urban poverty and development, and social costs such as congestion, pollution and crime. The increased demand for housing and overloading of urban facilities means that migrants and other poor people congregate in urban slums, often lacking access to clean water and sewerage systems (Cornwell & Inder, 2004).

Policymakers in Iran are concerned about the outmigration of young people, framing it essentially as a threat to the economic development of the country. A better understand of the motivations behind rural to urban migration decisions in Iran could help both re-frame the policy debate and contribute to the development of better policy instruments with which to respond to this phenomenon and its socioeconomic consequences.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The TPB is an important and widely used social cognitive model that aims to explain variance in volitional behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Liao et al., 2007). TPB focuses on psycho-social factors that influence behavior, such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, intentions and personality traits. The idea is that a person's actual behavior in performing a particular action is directly guided by his or her behavioral intention. Thus, according to the TPB, individuals who have positive attitudes toward migration, believe that there is normative support for migration, and feel that it is easy for them to engage in it, should also have strong intentions to migrate. In line with the theory, Wiborg (2004) and Kirstein & Bandranaike (2004) revealed that attitude toward rural areas is an important factor in migration decisions. De Jong (2000) labeled attitude as valued goal that helps define motivations for migration. This study applied satisfaction as the mediating variable and combined theory of planned behaviour to develop the migration intention behavioural model for Iran.

## **Material and Methods**

The study was designed as a cross-sectional survey. The population of interest consists of two groups of rural young people: (1) randomly selected students studying at Ramin University in Khouzestan province of Iran, and (2) young people, one identified by each of the student respondents, who were from his/her rural area who was not well educated. The study sample thus consisted of 200 young people.

## **Results and Discussion**

Attitude affected satisfaction directly. It can predict 31% of the variance in satisfaction with living at rural area. While subjective norm and perceived behavioural control were not a significant predictor of satisfaction. Furthermore regression revealed that satisfaction can explained 30% of the variance in intention toward living at rural area.

The current study drew on a well-established social–psychological model to examine decisions to engage in migration. The aim of this study was investigate the intentions of rural youth toward migration and the factors that determine this intention. The study leads to three major findings. First, we revealed that attitude toward urban, hasing an impact on satisfaction. Satisfaction also can predicted intention toward migeation.

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