

# **Person-Environment Fit and its effect on tendency of emigration amongst post-graduate students of the University of Tehran**

## **Introduction**

During recent years, emigration has turned into a frequent and even obvious behavior from graduate students of universities of Iran and more specifically state universities within the country. Regarding the importance of elite technological and science-oriented workforce in promoting the development of countries, this research chose to focus on the tendency of emigration amongst students of university of Tehran as the symbol of modern educational system in the country.

If we approach the concept in terms of “demographic window” it would be well explicit that the country has entered its golden demographic era since around 2004 which obviously implies on necessity of planning fruitful programs to make use of this fresh workforce across the country to promote more economical and social developments. Nevertheless, the growing emergence of emigration and leaving the country may has brought a feeling of anxiety among researchers of this field and has acted as a stimulus for conducting this research.

This research has been conducted to measure the tendency of migration in a context of “Person-Environment Fit” theory. The aforesaid theory was chosen because we consider this migration tendency as a response to personal STRESS and this should be kept in mind that theories of stress have long recognized the importance of both person and environment in understanding the nature and consequences of stress. The contributions of person and environment to stress have been formalized in the person-environment (P-E) theory of stress. The comprehensive nature of this theory encourages any researcher to take P-E fit as an independent variable in vast group of researches.

Main questions in this research are as follows:

- Is there a relation between migration tendency among post-graduate students of university of Tehran and degree of P-E fit?
- Does P-E fit in its both formal and informal dimension affect migration tendency in the same way?
- Do demographic variables cause significant effect on student’s migration tendency?
- What are the combined effects of P-E fit degree and demographic variables on migration tendency?

## **Methodology**

This study used “survey” as the research method and a modified questionnaire was designed in order to gather needed information. The questionnaire included items measuring level of migration tendency as dependent variable and other items related to measurement of P-E fit as well as demographic and contextual variables as independent variables.

P-E fit concept consists of four dimensions of Needs, Abilities, Supplies and Demands which further forms “Needs-Supplies Fit” and “Abilities-Demands Fit”. As noted before, lack of fit in each of these notions results in emergence of stress in person’s mental status which is assumed to increase the tendency of migration. Thus, a questionnaire which measures needs and abilities of

person beside supplies and demands of the environment (both formal and informal environment – first one implies on college and workplace and society in general while latter one implies on family and friends) and can operationalize these concepts as independent variables, is used to gather the needed data.

Tendency of migration is the mental preparedness of a person to move from one place to other one. In other words, it can also be called probable migration in future. This tendency could be resulted from a series of personal characteristics, social belongings, attraction of destination, etc. Migration intention is possessing a well-designed plan to migrate in near future.

Since it was a case study, the target population for this research included post-graduate students or recently graduated students of the University of Tehran. Regarding Cochran's formula, sample size was 371 and after distributing the questionnaire among a random cluster sample of students, 358 filled questionnaires were obtained which formed the initial step in analyzing the data using SPSS. Chi Square, Spearman, Phi and Cramer correlation and multivariate linear regression as well as logistic regression were some of the tests used to analyze the data in this research.

## **Findings**

Initially it should be noted that about 70% of students of university of Tehran reported high migration tendency regardless of any other research question and only 12.9% of them reported reluctance and rather low tendency of migration to foreign countries.

In terms of descriptive statistics, boys included 56% and girls included 44% of sample size. Mean age of respondents was 27 and more than 83% of them were single and more than half of respondents were living with their families while others lived either at dorms or by themselves.

After bivariate analysis and testing the hypothesis on relation between amount of P-E fit and migration tendency, it was realized that in terms of Need-Supply fit which is about degree of congruence between person's needs and environment's supplies to meet those needs, there exists a significant but reverse relationship between these two concepts. This was observed once again while analyzing the relationship between Ability-Demand fit and migration tendency. It's worth mentioning that this significant reverse relationship was observed in both formal and informal dimensions of Need-Supply fit and Ability-Demand fit which implies the fact that an increment in tendency of migration correlates with a decrement in degree of P-E fit which proves the initial hypothesis of the research.

After checking the role of demographic and contextual variables in variance of migration tendency, it was found that variables such as sex, level of education, field of study, place of residence, religion, ethnicity and level of education of parents do not depict a meaningful and significant correlation with migration tendency. On the other hand, age and educational status were the only contextual variables that showed positive meaningful correlation with migration tendency. This means that the older the students are, the higher they are eager to migrate, plus the fact that graduated students had higher willingness for migration than studying students.

In order to analyze the relation between migration intention and P-E fit, bivariate logistic regression test was performed which yielded in revealing the fact that about 11% of variance in migration intention is explained by changes in P-E fit variables regarding Nyjel-Crack index.

After conducting a multivariate linear regression test, it was shown that when controlling demographic and contextual variables, the complex of variables representing P-E Fit could be

responsible for about 17% of variance of the dependent variable. However this increased to up to 30% after releasing control variables into the final model.

## **Conclusion**

P-E fit theory provides a systematic, general framework for understanding how the person and environment combine to produce stress. This stress stemming from misfit between person's needs and abilities vs. environment's supplies and demands may lead to encouragement to migrate to foreign countries and put the country in a situation of brain-draining. It should be kept in mind that devising any plan in order to reduce P-E misfit and develop the well-being of young generation requires precise planning. Any indigested set of plans to reduce misfit in certain content dimension may result in an increase of stress in other dimensions. Students should also be aware that considering migration as a way of reducing stress and enhance well-being may operate upside down and result in more stressful conditions after migration (For example leading to marginalization in destination country).

Available evidence relevant to P-E fit theory has important flaws and limitations, and much remains to be learned regarding the nature, causes and consequences of P-E fit in demographic context.