



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

An Empirical Study on the Social Integration of Young Migrant Workers: A Case Study of Nanjing City

Tingting WANG *

College of Economics and Management, Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Nanjing 210016, China

Abstract Based on the empirical survey of 184 young migrant workers in Nanjing City, this paper makes an in-depth analysis of issues concerning the social integration of young migrant workers from economic integration, cultural integration and psychological integration. The survey results show that the overall level of social integration of young migrant workers is low; the dualistic household registration management system of urban and rural areas is the root cause, the lack of human capital, cultural capital and social capital is the underlying causes, and urban residents' discrimination and exclusion is the external cause; to speed up the social integration of young migrant workers, the key is based on the actual needs of youth migrant workers to take practical measures to gradually integrate them into the city.

Key words Young migrant workers, Social integration, Nanjing City

1 Introduction

Issue of migrant workers was the product of economic reform in the 1980s, with the rapid increase in the number of this group, there is certain differentiation in the internal structure of this group. Different from the older generation of migrant workers, young migrant workers appear in the social stage, and become the backbone of migrant workers. Young migrant workers generally refer to the workers in the city, who were born in the late 1980s, and now reach working age^[1]. Compared with the traditional migrant workers, some of them are born and raised in the countryside, and come to work in the city after graduation or dropping out of school; there is also a fraction of children of the job seekers growing up in the city with their parents, and the only difference between them and the urban children lies in they retaining the rural registered permanent residence. Compared with their parents, young migrant workers receive some education, and have some survival skills as well as high expectation and city awareness like their urban counterparts. However, due to existing mechanism and institutional barriers, they do not fully integrate into urban life^[2]. Paying close attention to young migrant workers, and further strengthening the research on urban living conditions and adaptation, can help to better understand the group of young migrant workers, and enhance the comprehensive ability to integrate into the city.

2 Research methods and data

In this paper, we mainly use the social survey method for study, including face-to-face interview, in-depth interview and statistical analysis. In this study, we select Nanjing City as the survey place. From July to August 2014, the research team collected data and conducted a questionnaire survey of young migrant workers in Nanjing City. The objects of study are limited to the special group of young migrant workers in this paper, so the scope of objects of

study is narrowed, and the qualified respondents, aged over 15 years and below 35 years, are the rural workers or businessmen from elsewhere without Nanjing registered permanent residence, namely young migrant workers. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 184 valid questionnaires were returned, with effective recovery rate of 92%. It is learned in the survey that for the young migrant workers from elsewhere in Nanjing City, the proportion of men and women is 59.3% and 40.7%, respectively; the unmarried migrant workers account for 67.4%; the average age is 28.5 years; most of the young migrant workers have been working in the city for 2 to 5 years, accounting for 58.2%; 87.4% of them received junior high school and senior school education, and 59.2% of them only received junior high school education; 64% of workers are from other provinces; in terms of residence, 75.6% of them choose to rent a house or live in dormitory.

3 Current situation of young migrant workers' social integration

3.1 Integration at the economic level This paper compares the young migrant workers' monthly average wage with the minimum wage standard in Nanjing City and the average wage level in Nanjing City, to measure the young migrant workers' social integration at the economic level. As can be seen from the table below, the migrant workers with monthly income of less than 1500 yuan account for 6.5% of the total samples; the migrant workers with monthly income of 1500–2500 yuan account for 20.1% of the total samples; the migrant workers with monthly income of 2500–3500 yuan account for 41.8% of the total samples; the migrant workers with monthly income of 3500–4500 yuan account for 26.1% of the total samples; the migrant workers with monthly income of more than 4500 yuan account for 5.5% of the total samples. In July 2014, the minimum monthly wage was adjusted from 1320 yuan to 1480 yuan in Nanjing's minimum wage standard, an increase of 160 yuan. *Jiangsu Statistical Yearbook* (2014) first disclosed Jiangsu's average wage data in 2013. The average annual wage of employees in urban units was 57177 yuan (about 4764.8

yuan/month), and the average annual wage of the staff and workers at post was 57985 yuan (about 4832.1 yuan/month) in 2013. We can see that most of migrant workers' income can reach 1500 yuan, higher than the minimum monthly wage standard in Nanjing City, and the migrant workers with the monthly income of less than 1500 yuan only account for 6.5% of the total samples, so their

basic needs of life can be met from the point of view of wage level. However, from the average wage level, the average wage level of more than 94.5% of samples is less than the average wage level in Jiangsu Province. Through the above analysis, it can be found that the young migrant workers' integration in the economic dimension needs to be further improved.

Table 1 The basic situation of the survey samples

Basic content		Frequency	Percentage//%	Basic content		Frequency	Percentage//%
Gender	Male	109	59.3	Education level	Primary school and below	23	12.60
	Female	75	40.7		Junior high school	109	59.20
Nationality	Han	159	86.4		Senior high school and above	52	28.20
	Minority	25	13.6	Marital status	Married	60	32.60
Residence	Buying house by oneself	11	6.0		Unmarried	124	67.40
	Renting house	73	39.7	Census register	Jiangsu Province	66	0.36
	Lodging at friends and relatives' house	19	10.3		Outside Jiangsu Province	118	0.64
	Dormitory	66	35.9	Monthly income	Less than 1500 yuan	12	6.50
	Others	15	8.1		1500 – 2500 yuan	37	20.10
Purpose	Making money	142	77.2		2500 – 3500 yuan	77	41.80
	Staying with family	21	11.4		3500 – 4500 yuan	48	26.10
	Loving Nanjing	11	6.0		More than 4500 yuan	10	5.50
	Seeking refuge with relatives	8	4.3	Changing jobs	Yes	148	80.40
	Making friends	2	1.1		No	36	19.60

Table 2 Integration at the economic level

Monthly income	Frequency	Percentage//%
Less than 1500 yuan	12	6.5
1500 – 2500 yuan	37	20.1
2500 – 3500 yuan	77	41.8
3500 – 4500 yuan	48	26.1
More than 4500 yuan	10	5.5

3.2 Integration at the cultural level Integration at the cultural level refers to the actors' integration of at the level of values. In *Communication, Adaptation and Integration-A Comparative Study on Migrant Farmers and Landless Farmers*, Tongxing divides the adaptation of a person or a group of people to a new social environment into four levels: integration, assimilation, isolation and marginalization. In this study, we divide it into migrant workers' original cultural identity reservation and new social and cultural identity. "Whether to comply with one's hometown custom" is used to measure the farmers' the original cultural identity, and "whether to agree that the boys should read more books than girls" is used to measure the new social and cultural identity. In setting of variables, "it is important to comply with one's hometown custom" is divided into five cases: "strongly agree"; "agree"; "do not know"; "disagree"; "strongly disagree". "It is necessary to make boys read more books than girls" is divided into "strongly agree"; "agree"; "do not know"; "disagree"; "strongly disagree". In order to better understand the integration, the categories of the two variables are set as "agree"; "do not know"; "disagree". From the data in the following table, 75% of migrant workers agree with the new culture as well as the culture in the

original social environment; 6.5% of migrant workers disagree with the new culture but agree with the culture in the original social environment; 3.3% of migrant workers do not know about the cultural identity in the new social environment, but agree with the culture in the original social environment; 2.7% of migrant workers agree with the culture in the original social environment, but disagree with the culture in the original social environment; 3.3% of migrant workers disagree with the culture in the new social environment as well as the culture in the original social environment; 1.6% of migrant workers do not know about the culture in the new social environment, and disagree with the original culture; 4.9% of migrant workers agree with the new culture, but do not know about the original culture; 2.2% of migrant workers disagree with the new culture and do not know about the original culture; 0.5% of migrant workers do not know about the new culture and original culture. It can be seen that 75% of young migrant workers' integration at the cultural level is good after entering into Nanjing City, and they can not only well accept new cultural values, but also retain the cultural identity in the original social life environment; 6.5% of migrant workers are in the isolated state, and they retain the cultural identity in the original social life environment, but can not accept the cultural values in the new social environment; 2.7% of migrant workers are in the state of assimilation, and they agree with the cultural values in the new social environment, but disagree with the cultural values in the original social environment; 3.3% of migrant workers are in the state of marginalization, and they disagree with the culture in the new social environment and original social environment. On the whole, the migrant workers' integration at the cultural level is good, and few of mi-

grant workers are in the state of isolation and marginalization.

Table 3 Integration at the cultural level

		New cultural identity frequency//%			Total
		Agree	Disagree	Do not know	
Original cultural identity frequency//%	Agree	138(75.0)	12(6.5)	6(3.3)	
	Disagree	5(2.7)	6(3.3)	3(1.6)	
	Do not know	9(4.9)	4(2.2)	1(0.5)	
Total		152(82.6)	22(12.0)	10(5.4)	184(100.0)

3.3 Integration at the psychological level In the present study, according to the characteristics of migrant workers, their psychological identity is divided into the identity about whether they are rural migrant workers and the identity about whether they become the members of the city. The percentage of the two identities is used to measure the migrant workers' psychological integration. This paper divides the identity of migrant workers into three levels (agree; disagree; do not know), and divides "whether they are members of the city" into five three (strongly agree; agree; do not know; disagree; strongly disagree). In order to well see the integration, it is divided into three categories (agree; do not know; disagree). From the data in the following table, it can be found that the migrant workers who think they are members of the city and also the migrant workers account for 31% of the survey samples; the migrant workers who think they are not members of the city but just the migrant workers account for 54.9% of the survey samples; the migrant workers who are unclear about whether they are members of the city and think they are the migrant workers account for 6.5% of the survey samples; the migrant workers who think they are members of the city but do not think they are

migrant workers account for 2.2% of the survey samples; the migrant workers who do not think they are members of the city and migrant workers account for 1.6%; there are no migrant workers who are unclear about whether they are members of the city and do not think they are migrant workers; the migrant workers who think they are not members of the city but are unclear about whether they are the migrant workers account for 1.1%; the migrant workers who do not think they are members of the city and are unclear about whether they are the migrant workers account for 2.7%; there are no migrant workers who are unclear about the two identities. It can be seen that 31% of migrant workers' social integration is good, that is, they not only accept the new identity in the city, but also retain the original identity; 1.6% of migrant workers are in the marginalized state in the city, that is, they neither accept the new identity, nor retain the original identity; 54.9% of migrant workers are in the isolated state, that is, they do not accept the new identity, but retain the original identity; 2.2% of migrant workers are in assimilation state, that is, they accept the new identity, but do not retain the original identity.

Table 4 Integration at the psychological level

		Whether they are members of the city//%			Total
		Yes	No	Unclear	
Whether they are migrant workers//%	Yes	57(31.0)	101(54.9)	12(6.5)	
	No	4(2.2)	3(1.6)	0	
	Unclear	2(1.1)	5(2.7)	0	
Total		63(34.2)	109(59.2)	12(6.5)	184(99.9)

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions Based on the empirical survey of 184 young migrant workers in Nanjing City, this paper makes an in-depth analysis of issues concerning the social integration of young migrant workers from economic integration, cultural integration and psychological integration. The survey results show that the overall level of social integration of young migrant workers is low; the dualistic household registration management system of urban and rural areas is the root cause, the lack of human capital, cultural capital and social capital is the underlying causes, and urban residents' discrimination and exclusion is the external cause; to speed up the social integration of young migrant workers, the key is based on the actual needs of youth migrant workers to take practical measures to gradually integrate them into the city.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Reforming the household registration system. The reform

should continue to seek a balance between justice concept and reality choices. Urban residents and migrant workers live in the same space, and they seem to have contact, but at the social and psychological level, the migrant workers have a sense of alienation, and become the social groups lacking both protection and restraint in the city. Dual social structure arises from different opportunities, having nothing to do with the migrant workers' quality, so there is a need to gradually advance the reform of the household registration system, explore the institutional design idea of transforming some migrant workers into urban residents and make it feasible in operation^[5].

4.2.2 Improving the living conditions of migrant workers. The living conditions of young migrant workers are not good, there is an urgent need to improve the living conditions of migrant workers, and resolve the accommodation problem. In this regard, we

References

- [1] CONG RH, WANG XJ, XU MG, *et al.* Dynamics of soil carbon to nitrogen ratio changes under long-term fertilizer addition in wheat-corn double cropping systems of China[J]. *European Journal of Soil Science*, 2012, 63(3): 341–350.
- [2] CAO ZH, ZHOU JM. Soil quality of China[M]. Beijing: Science Press, 2008. (in Chinese).
- [3] XU MG, LIANG GQ, ZHANG FD. China's evolution of soil fertility[M]. Beijing: China Agricultural Science and Technology Press, 2006. (in Chinese).
- [4] ZHANG XB, XU MG, SUN N, *et al.* How do environmental factors and different fertilizer strategies affect soil CO₂ emission and carbon sequestration in the upland soils of southern China? [J]. *Applied Soil Ecology*, 2013, 72:109–118.
- [5] XU M, LI D, LI J, *et al.* Polyolefin-coated urea decreases ammonia volatilization in a double rice system of Southern China[J]. *Agronomy Journal*, 2013, 105(1):277–284.
- [6] LI ZF, XU MG, ZHANG HM, *et al.* Yield trends of double-cropping rice under long-term fertilizations in southern China[J]. *Acta Agronomica Sinica*, 2013,39(5):943–949. (in Chinese).
- [7] CAI Z, SUN N, WANG B, *et al.* Experimental research on effects of different fertilization on nitrogen transformation and pH of red soil[J]. *Scientia Agricultura Sinica*, 2012, 45(14):2877–2885.
- [8] MOHANTY S, NAYAK AK, KUMAR R, *et al.* Carbon and nitrogen mineralization kinetics in soil of rice – rice system under long term application of chemical fertilizers and farmyard manure[J]. *European Journal of Soil Biology*, 2013, 58(0):113–121.
- [9] ZANG Y, LIU Q, RONG X, *et al.* Effects of combined application of organic fertilizer and chemical fertilizer on double cropping rice nutrient utilization and leaching loss from paddy soil[J]. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, 2012, 26(1):22.

- [10] XIN JS, XU MG, TIAN YG, *et al.* Study on the evolution trend of the quality of cultivated land[M]. Beijing: China Agricultural Science and Technology Press, 2008. (in Chinese).
- [11] LI ZF, XU MG, PANG HC, *et al.* The rice yield trends in three hydric paddy soils in south China and its fertility factors[J]. *Acta Pedologica Sinica*, 2014,51(5):953–962.
- [12] YANG LZ, SUN B. Nutrient cycling and balance of Chinese agro-ecosystem and its management[M]. Beijing: Science Press, 2008. (in Chinese).
- [13] JIANG C, HUANG JH, LI XQ, *et al.* Responses of soil nematode community to long-term application of organic manure in upland red soil[J]. *Acta Pedologica Sinica*, 2011, 48(6): 1235–1241. (in Chinese).
- [14] LIU YR, LI X, YU J, *et al.* Mechanisms for the increased fertilizer nitrogen use efficiency of rice in wheat-rice rotation system under combined application of inorganic and organic fertilizers[J]. *Chinese Journal of Applied Ecology*, 2012, 23(1):81–86. (in Chinese).
- [15] SUNY, LIAO Y, ZHENG S, *et al.* Effects of long-term fertilization on soil organic carbon pool and carbon sequestration under double rice cropping [J]. *The Journal of Applied Ecology*, 2013. 24(3):732–740.
- [16] YUAN HC, QIN HL, LIU SL, *et al.* Response of abundance and composition of the bacterial community to long-term fertilization in paddy soils[J]. *Scientia Agricultura Sinica*, 2011, 44(22):4610–4617. (in Chinese).
- [17] HOU HQ, LIU XM, LIU GR, *et al.* Effect of long-term located organic-inorganic fertilizer application on rice yield and soil fertility in red soil area of China[J]. *Scientia Agricultura Sinica*, 2011, 44(3): 516–523. (in Chinese).

(From page 46)

can learn from Shanghai's experience to actively establish "concentrated residential area for the workers in Shanghai" which has achieved good economic and social benefits.

4.2.3 Increasing the wages of migrant workers to improve the stability of their work. Young migrant workers have high expectation of their income, which reflects that it is necessary to increase the wages of migrant workers, and appropriately improve the wage standards. The specific wage increase process can be carried out in accordance with two indicators: one is the growth rate of living standards in rural areas and small towns, and the other is the growth rate of national economy, which objectively requires an increase in wages of workers.

4.2.4 Developing the formal employment channels and regulating the informal employment channels for migrant workers. The survey shows that 52.9% of migrant workers find a job in the city through the introduction of close friends and relatives; 14.6% of migrant workers accidentally find a job; only 8.2% of migrant workers find a job through employment agency. The informal employment channels are instable, so it is necessary to rely on laws to regulate the informal employment channels and develop formal employment channels for the migrant workers.

4.2.5 Creating a positive cultural atmosphere for young migrant workers. Working life is monotonous, for want of entertainment. Surfing the Internet, chatting, listening to music and other lifestyles prevalent in the city, are also favored by the young migrant workers, but it is only survival adaptation in general, far from the city assimilation. Therefore, it is necessary to actively create a positive cultural atmosphere to make migrant workers truly integrate into city.

References

- [1] YE PF. The way of the migrant workers' social inclusion: Based on the evolution feature of social interaction[J]. *Urban Studies*,2012(1): 81–85, 109. (in Chinese).
- [2] ZENG WM. Problems & causes in local government's social administration [J]. *Exploration and Free Views*,2014(2):21–24. (in Chinese).
- [3] YANG YS, SHI MD. Analysis on the problems of migrant workers in China [J]. *Truth Seeking*, 2011,39(2):43–45. (in Chinese).
- [4] CAI F. Chinese migrant workers given attention by the whole world——Discussion on the deep urbanization with Chinese characteristics[J]. *International Economic Review*, 2010(2): 18–21. (in Chinese).
- [5] LI SZ, REN YK, JIN XY, *et al.* A research on the social integration of Chinese migrant rural workers and its influencing factors; an analysis based on the social support network[J]. *Population & Economics*, 2008(2):1–8,70. (in Chinese).