

# *The Impact of Social Integration Factors on the Residency Intention of Young College Students*

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**Abstract:** This study utilizes data from the 2017 National Dynamic Monitoring Survey of Floating Population to select young college students and establish a binary logistic regression model to explore the impact of social integration factors on the residency intention of young college students. Furthermore, an exploratory analysis is conducted on young college students in the intention stage. The study shows that 58.82% of young college students have a long-term residency intention. The higher the level of economic integration, institutional matching, cultural integration, social participation, and psychological identification, the greater the likelihood of their willingness to reside long-term. The key factor influencing the residency choice of young college students in the intention stage is the family's monthly income. In order to retain young college students with higher human capital and lay the foundation for high-quality and sustainable urban development, relevant policies should be implemented to increase their income, enhance job stability, and provide them with humanistic care and opportunities for social participation.

**Keywords:** Social integration, Young college students, Residency intention, Binary logistic

## **1. Introduction**

According to the report of the 7th National Population Census in 2020, the number of floating population in China has reached 375.8 million, an increase of 69.72% compared to the census data from ten years ago. With the continuous development of social economy and the sustained investment in education by the government, the number of individuals with college education or above has reached 154.6 million, a 73.2% increase compared to the results of the 6th census. The proportion of this population in the total population has increased from 6.66% to 10.72%, and in the floating population, it has reached 41.16%. According to the 2018 Development Report on China's Floating Population [1], the proportion of highly educated floating population in the five major urban clusters is higher than the 12.94% level in 2016, with the Chengdu-Chongqing region and the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region reaching 24.47% and 22.52% respectively. The increase in the total number of floating population and the continuous improvement in education levels have resulted in the expansion of the highly educated floating population. For the floating population, cities can provide better job opportunities, social security, medical services, and education for their children, ultimately leading to improved family economic conditions and quality of life. For cities, the influx of migrant population contributes to the continuous enhancement of the city's population agglomeration capacity.

At the same time, it also affects the labor market and employment structure of the city, ultimately influencing the city's future economic growth, economic and industrial structure, capital accumulation, and fiscal balance. According to Schultz's human capital theory [2], there are many factors that influence urban economic development, among which the most crucial factor is human resources. The development of urban economy mainly depends on the improvement of human quality.

Therefore, in the context of promoting urban economic and social development and the continuous increase in the proportion of highly educated floating population, it is necessary to study the group of highly educated young college students from the perspective of social integration, analyze the factors influencing their choices to stay or leave, and provide suggestions for government departments to formulate relevant policies to retain young college students.

## 2. Theoretical Foundations and Literature Review

From a macro perspective, the most typical study on the residential choices of the floating population is the "push-pull" theory of population migration proposed by Herberle in the 1930s. According to this theory, population mobility is determined by both the pull factors in the destination that can improve family living conditions and the push factors in the origin that hinder the improvement of living standards. The combination of these two factors determines population mobility [3]. A systematic "push-pull" theory was later proposed by D.J. Bogue in the late 1950s, which suggests that the push and pull factors in the origin and destination coexist. For example, the depletion of natural resources in the origin and surplus rural labor force create push factors, while the happiness of family reunions and familiar social networks create pull factors. However, the overall effect of push factors is stronger than that of pull factors, which ultimately promotes population migration [4]. Based on the theories of Herberle and Bogue, Everett Lee, an American scholar, published a paper in 1966 titled "Migration Theory," which points out that both push and pull factors exist in both the destination and origin, and further explains the existence of intermediate barrier factors and individual factors. Intermediate barrier factors mainly include distance, language and culture, and material differences, while individual factors mainly involve the comprehensive judgment of these three factors [5]. In addition, there is the dual economy theory proposed by Lewis in 1954, which states that there is surplus labor with zero marginal productivity in rural areas. As labor shifts to cities, it not only improves agricultural productivity but also promotes urban industrialization. This theory explains from a macro perspective why population flows from rural to urban areas. From a micro perspective, there are mainly cost-benefit theory, new migration economics theory, and prospect theory. The new migration economics theory argues that migration decisions involve maximizing expected income and minimizing risks, and individuals make migration decisions that maximize benefits and minimize risks for themselves and their families [6].

Since the 1990s, scholars have incorporated social integration theory into the analysis of urban adaptation of migrant workers [7]. The definition of social integration has not yet reached a consensus. Ren Yuan [8] believes that social integration is the process of mutual adaptation between different individuals, groups, and even different cultures. Yang Juhua [9] believes that integration is bidirectional, while assimilation is unidirectional. Social integration refers to the dynamic process of continuous approximation of language, culture, customs, and behaviors to the local residents. Zhang Peng [10] and others point out that social integration of the floating population is not only a process of gradual assimilation but also a process of subjective psychological identification. Mu Guangzong [11] and others further summarize that social integration is the result of social inclusion and acceptance. Social inclusion refers to the integration of employment, life, culture, and institutions, while social acceptance refers to the absence of discrimination, lack of public services, and welfare support for the floating population in the destination.

The social distance scale proposed by Bogardus in the 1920s provided the basis for measuring social integration. Thanks to this scale, the degree of interaction between individuals and the distance between individuals and groups could be measured [12]. Regarding the dimensions of measurement, Chinese scholars mostly borrowed from the measurement dimensions and indicators of the Western scholars. Although the research results of foreign scholars are valuable, the actual situation in China is different from that in foreign countries. Based on this, Chinese scholars have conducted a lot of exploration on the localization of the social integration measurement system. Although different scholars have chosen different dimensions, there are some commonalities in their research. Generally, these dimensions include economic integration, institutional matching, cultural integration, social participation, and psychological identification. Through reading relevant literature on social integration of the floating population, the dimensions for measuring social integration of the floating population are summarized in Table 1. As for the measurement indicators under each dimension, there is no unified indicator system in academia. However, Yang Juhua's [13] proposed indicator system for the four dimensions of social integration provides a solid foundation for constructing measurement models of social integration in other fields. Subsequently, Zhou Hao [14] proposed different opinions on Yang Juhua's measurement dimensions and indicator system, suggesting that the measurement dimensions should consider their progressive relationship, and the measurement indicators should measure integration itself rather than its results. Additionally, the measurement indicators should be independent. Based on this, a five-dimensional measurement framework system was reconstructed.

Table 1: Measurement Dimensions of Social Integration of the Floating Population by Different Scholars

| Year | Author             | Measurement Dimensions |                           |                           |                           |
|------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1998 | Heckman [12]       | Economic Integration   |                           |                           |                           |
| 2008 | Shuzhuo Li [15]    | Behavioral Fusion      | Emotional Fusion          |                           |                           |
| 2011 | Zhongshan Yue [16] | Cultural Fusion        | Socio-economic Fusion     | Psychological Fusion      |                           |
| 2014 | Juntao Ye [17]     | Survival Integration   | Social Interaction Fusion | Social Interaction Fusion |                           |
| 2018 | Chuande Lian [18]  | Economic Integration   | Social Integration        | Cultural Fusion           |                           |
| 1995 | Kai Tian [7]       | Economic Level         | Social Level              | Cultural Level            | Psychological Level       |
| 2008 | Wenhong Zhang [19] | Psychological Fusion   | Cultural Fusion           | Identity Fusion           | Economic Integration      |
| 2010 | Juhua Yang [13]    | Economic Integration   | Economic Integration      | Cultural Acceptance       | Identity Identification   |
| 2017 | Linwei Yu [20]     | Economic Integration   | Health Integration        | Cultural Fusion           | Psychological Integration |

Table 1: (continued).

|      |                 |                      |                      |                      |                              |                           |
|------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2022 | Fang Xu [21]    | Economic Integration | Social Adaptation    | Cultural Acquisition | Psychological Identification |                           |
| 2012 | Hao Zhou [14]   | Economic Integration | Cultural Adaptation  | Social Adaptation    | Structural Fusion            | Identity Identification   |
| 2014 | Peng Zhang [10] | Economic Conditions  | Social Participation | Social Participation | Attitude towards the City    | Attitude towards the City |

Research on the factors influencing the choice of staying or leaving for migrant populations in cities has been conducted by scholars. Some scholars have studied the impact of rental affordability [22], public services, and urban economic fundamentals from the perspective of cities on the willingness of migrant populations to stay [23]. Others have examined the influence of land ownership, children's education, and parental support from the perspective of families on the willingness of migrant populations to stay [24]. It has also been pointed out that the impact of affordable housing and the level of public services on the willingness of migrant populations to stay is inconsistent across different stages of the family life cycle. Regarding individual research, relevant articles indicate that marital status, gender [25], educational level [26], housing conditions [27], and employment quality [28] all influence whether individuals will stay in a city for the long term.

There is very limited research on the social integration factors affecting the decision of young college students to stay or leave the city. Based on prospect theory, some scholars have studied the influence of housing affordability prospects on the residency intentions of newly employed college students in Shanghai. The results show that the impact of housing affordability prospects varies among young college students with different characteristics, with a more significant effect on non-local registered, married, and only-child students [29]. Through questionnaire surveys conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, some scholars have found that in the context of high housing prices, there are multiple factors influencing the decision of young people to stay, including urban household registration, higher education level, and more stable housing types [30]. A survey of college graduates in Nanjing found that the pressure from parents and peers plays an intermediary role in their residency intentions. In their subjective perception, the difficulty of finding a job does not affect their willingness to stay, but the challenges encountered in finding affordable housing become an obstacle to their willingness to stay [31]. Furthermore, scholars have conducted characteristic analyses of young mobile talents, and the results show that young mobile talents have higher incomes and face difficulties in sending their children to school, resulting in a strong desire to settle down. However, there are differences between cities [32]. The research results of some scholars indicate that when young people choose a city, they are influenced by multiple factors. The number of schools and hospitals has a positive impact, while population concentration and environmental pollution have a negative impact [33]. Additionally, some scholars have focused on analyzing graduates from "top universities," and the results show that the location of the university has a sticky effect, economic factors and urban comfort have an attractive effect, while a higher housing price-to-income ratio has a crowding-out effect [34].

The research findings of the aforementioned scholars provide a direction for investigating the impact of social integration factors on the residency intentions of young college students in this study. They also provide a solid theoretical foundation for constructing a social integration measurement framework in this study. However, the existing research has the following limitations: Firstly, studying all migrant populations as a whole, overlooks the differences among different groups, such

as their life experiences and values. Secondly, when constructing the measurement system, less consideration has been given to the influence of social institutional factors on migrant populations, such as the employment system, education system, pension system, and minimum living guarantee system behind the household registration system. Furthermore, previous studies have mostly measured social integration of migrant populations as an outcome, examining their degree of urban adaptation, while conducting less research on social integration factors as the reasons affecting their residency intentions. Finally, in the study of the choice of staying or leaving for young college students, existing research only selects one or more measurement indicators from the social integration measurement framework as the starting point, and the sample sources are limited to specific cities or regions.

Based on the above analysis, the measurement framework constructed in this study includes five dimensions: economic integration, institutional matching, cultural integration, social participation, and psychological identification. It is hypothesized that social integration factors in these five dimensions will positively and significantly influence the residency intentions of young college students.

### **3. Research Design**

#### **3.1. Data Source**

The data used in this study is sourced from the 2017 National Dynamic Monitoring Survey of Floating Population. The sampling method used in this data collection is scientifically valid and covers a wide range of areas. Compared to existing empirical studies on young college student migrants, this dataset has a larger sample size and is more representative of the entire country. In this study, based on the definition of youth in the “Medium- and Long-Term Youth Development Plan (2016-2025)” [35], the term “young college student migrant group” refers to individuals who have resided in the destination city for more than one month, have a non-local household registration, are between the ages of 20 and 35, and have a degree of associate, bachelor’s, or postgraduate. After screening, deleting missing values and outliers, a total of 18,624 valid samples were obtained, covering 31 provinces (regions, municipalities) and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

#### **3.2. Variable Selection**

##### **3.2.1. Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in this study is whether young college students are willing to reside in the current city for a long term. Following the classification of rural youth residence duration by Dai Hongjuan [36], this study defines a residency duration of 5 years or less as short-term residency, and a residency duration of 6 years or more as long-term residency. Considering that there are only 277 samples that explicitly answered “no” and the group that answered “undecided” did not express a clear intention for long-term residency, responses of “no”, “1-2 years”, “3-5 years”, and “undecided” are considered as not having a long-term residency intention, while responses of “6-10 years”, “10 years or more”, and “settling down” are considered as having a long-term residency intention. Ultimately, the answers are transformed into a binary variable of “yes” and “no”.

##### **3.2.2. Independent Variables**

Referring to Song Quancheng’s [37] approach to handling independent variables, this study selects monthly household income and employment status to measure the degree of economic integration, user domicile level and health and public services to measure the degree of institutional matching,

customs and hygiene habits to measure the degree of cultural integration, participation in activities and organizations to measure the degree of social participation, and identity recognition and integration willingness to measure the degree of psychological identification. In the dimension of economic integration, family monthly income and employment status are commonly used in previous studies. However, descriptive statistics of the variable show that the minimum value of family monthly income is 30 yuan, the maximum value is 200,000 yuan, the mean is 9,387 yuan, and the standard deviation is 7,444.79. The skewness is as high as 34.21. Therefore, logarithmic transformation is applied to the family monthly income variable in the regression model. In the dimension of institutional matching, household registration and health and public services, which are closely related to individuals, are selected for measurement. The sum of whether individuals received related services in health and public services is calculated to generate a continuous variable with values ranging from 0 to 9. In the dimension of cultural integration, the original questionnaire surveyed the identification of customs and the difference in hygiene habits compared to local residents. Therefore, it was not possible to obtain the identification of customs and hygiene habits of young college students. Hence, only reverse analysis can be conducted, meaning that the more young college students identify with their hometown customs and perceive a greater difference in hygiene habits compared to local residents, the lower their identification with the customs and hygiene habits of the destination city. In the dimension of social participation, whether individuals have joined relevant organizations and participated in relevant activities are selected for measurement. The number of organizations joined and the number of activities participated in are summed to generate new continuous variables. In the dimension of psychological identification, subjective identity recognition and subjective willingness are measured, and the four items under integration willingness are summed to generate a new continuous variable with a value range of 4 to 16.

3.2.3. Control Variables

Based on the findings of previous literature, variables such as the number of co-residents in the household, gender, age, education level, marital status, migration status, and housing attributes have been found to influence residency intention. Therefore, these factors are included as control variables. The specific variable names and their assigned values are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Variable Descriptions and Assignments

| Variable Category     |                       | Variable Definition                   |                                                        |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|                       |                       | Measure Question Item                 | Variable Assignment                                    |
| Dependent Variable    |                       |                                       |                                                        |
| Intention to Reside   |                       | Whether intending to reside long-term | Binary variable (No=0, Yes=1)                          |
| Independent Variables |                       |                                       |                                                        |
| Measurement Dimension | Measurement Variable  |                                       |                                                        |
| Economic Integration  | Occupation            | Current employment status             | Binary variable (Employee=0, Employer/Self-employed=1) |
|                       | Family Monthly Income | Family Monthly Income                 | Continuous variable (Log transformed in the model)     |

Table 2: (continued).

|                        | Household Registration     | Location of household registration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Binary variable<br>(County-level and below=0, Prefecture-level and above=1)                                                        |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Institutional Matching | Health and Public Services | <p>Have you received education on occupational disease prevention and control?</p> <p>Have you received education on prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases/AIDS?</p> <p>Have you received education on reproductive health and contraception?</p> <p>Have you received education on tuberculosis prevention and control?</p> <p>Have you received education on smoking control?</p> <p>Have you received education on mental health?</p> <p>Have you received education on chronic disease prevention and control?</p> <p>Have you received education on maternal and child health/family planning?</p> <p>Have you received education on self-rescue during emergencies?</p> | <p>Continuous variable<br/>No=0, Yes=1<br/>Summation<br/>generates value range<br/>Continuous variable<br/>ranging from 0 to 9</p> |
| Cultural Integration   | Customs and Habits         | I consider it important to follow the customs and habits of my hometown.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Continuous variable<br/>Strongly disagree=1<br/>Disagree=2<br/>Somewhat agree=3<br/>Strongly agree=4</p>                        |

Table 2: (continued).

|                      |                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | Hygiene Habits                 | There is a significant difference between my hygiene habits and those of the local residents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                    |
| Social Participation | Participation in activities    | <p>Have you participated in union activities?</p> <p>Have you participated in volunteer association activities?</p> <p>Have you participated in alumni activities?</p> <p>Have you participated in hometown association activities?</p> <p>Have you participated in hometown business association activities?</p> <p>Have you participated in other activities?</p> | <p>Continuous variable<br/>No=0, Yes=1<br/>Summation<br/>generates value range<br/>Continuous variable<br/>ranging from 0 to 6</p> |
|                      | Participation in organizations | <p>Have you engaged in providing suggestions to relevant departments?</p> <p>Have you engaged in supervising village/community management?</p> <p>Have you engaged in online publishing and participating in discussions?</p> <p>Have you engaged in donating and blood donation?</p> <p>Have you engaged in participating in party branch activities?</p>          | <p>Continuous variable<br/>No=0, Yes=1<br/>Summation<br/>generates value range<br/>Continuous variable<br/>ranging from 0 to 5</p> |



Table 2: (continued).

|                                          |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Psychological Identification             | Identity Identification | I feel like I am already a local.                                                                                                                                              | Continuous variable<br>Strongly disagree=1<br>Disagree=2<br>Somewhat agree=3<br>Strongly agree=4                                                                                |
|                                          | Integration Intention   | I enjoy my current city. I pay attention to the current city and its changes. I am very willing to integrate with the locals. I feel that the locals are willing to accept me. | Continuous variable<br>Strongly disagree=1<br>Disagree=2<br>Somewhat agree=3<br>Strongly agree=4<br>Summation generates value range<br>Continuous variable ranging from 4 to 16 |
| Controlled Variables                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Number of family members living together |                         | Number of family members living together                                                                                                                                       | Continuous variable, Range 1-6.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Gender                                   |                         | Your gender                                                                                                                                                                    | Binary variable (Male=0, Female=1)                                                                                                                                              |
| Age                                      |                         | Your age                                                                                                                                                                       | Categorical variable. 20-25 years old=0, 26-30 years old=1, 31-35 years old=2.                                                                                                  |
| Educational Attainment                   |                         | Your level of education                                                                                                                                                        | Categorical variable. Associate degree=0, Bachelor's degree=1, Master's degree=2.                                                                                               |
| Marital Status                           |                         | Whether you are currently in a marriage                                                                                                                                        | Binary variable (No=0, Yes=1).                                                                                                                                                  |
| Mobility Range                           |                         | The range of your current mobility                                                                                                                                             | Binary variable (Within the province=0, Across provinces=1).                                                                                                                    |
| Housing Attribute                        |                         | The nature of your current housing                                                                                                                                             | Categorical variable. Renting=0, Company-provided or government-provided housing=1. Self-owned=2, Other=3.                                                                      |

### 3.3. Sample Characteristics

Among the 18,624 valid samples, males accounted for 49.72% and females accounted for 50.28%, roughly equal proportions that align with the actual situation. The age of respondents was mainly concentrated in the range of 26 to 30 years, accounting for 46.79%, which corresponds to the age characteristics of young college students. The majority of respondents had a college degree, accounting for 57.68% of the sample, while the proportion of respondents with graduate education was the lowest at only 3.06%. Young college students with undergraduate degrees accounted for 39.26%. The majority of respondents were married, accounting for 67.31% of the total sample, while unmarried individuals accounted for 32.69%. Young college students were mainly engaged in inter-provincial migration, accounting for 56.63%, while 43.37% chose to move within the same province. 45.07% of respondents solved their housing problems through renting, while 38.38% purchased their own homes, and only 13.29% were provided housing by their employers or the government. In terms of residency intention, 58.82% of individuals would choose to stay in their current city in the long term, indicating that young college students are more inclined to stay in their current city. The average number of family members living together was 2.63 (ranging from 1 to 6), showing a trend towards family-oriented mobility.

In terms of economic integration, the average monthly household income of young college students was 9387.89 yuan, and the majority of them were employed as employees, accounting for 83.70%. In terms of institutional match, the degree of access to health and public services was 4.12 (ranging from 0 to 9), with 87.74% of individuals having a household registration at the county level or below, and only 12.26% having a household registration at the prefecture-level city or above. In terms of cultural integration, the value range for customs and habits is 1 to 4, with results of 2.35 and 1.80, respectively, indicating a high level of identification with local customs and habits, with no significant differences from the local population in terms of hygiene habits. In terms of social participation, the mean value of activity participation was 1.20 (ranging from 0 to 6), and the mean value of organizational participation was 1.08 (ranging from 0 to 5), indicating a relatively low level of social participation among young college students. In terms of psychological identity, young college students showed a strong willingness to integrate, with a mean value of 13.70 (ranging from 4 to 16), and a relatively high level of subjective identity, with a mean value of 3.00 (ranging from 1 to 4).

Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the proportion of the selected sample is reasonable and the characteristics align well with the young college student population, showing a relatively young age and higher income. County-level and below registered young college students constitute the majority, and rural-to-urban migration is the main flow direction for young college students. Descriptive statistical results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistical Results of Variables

| Variable                                 | Range                | Mean | Standard Deviation | Variable                        | Range                   | Mean    | Standard Deviation |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------|------|--------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Residency Intent                         | Categorical<br>1 0-1 | 0.59 | 0.49               | Monthly Income                  | Continuous<br>30-200000 | 9387.89 | 7444.79            |
| Number of Family Members Living Together | Continuous<br>1-6    | 2.64 | 1.16               | Household Registration Location | Categorical<br>0-1      | 0.12    | 0.33               |
| Gender                                   | Categorical<br>1 0-1 | 0.50 | 0.50               | Health and Public Services      | Continuous<br>0-9       | 4.12    | 3.48               |

Table 3: (continued).

|                           |                      |      |      |                                      |                    |       |      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------|------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|------|
| Age                       | Categorical<br>1 0-2 | 1.14 | 0.72 | Customs<br>and Habits                | Continuous<br>1-4  | 2.35  | 0.79 |
| Educational<br>Attainment | Categorical<br>1 0-2 | 0.45 | 0.56 | Hygiene<br>Habits                    | Continuous<br>1-4  | 1.80  | 0.67 |
| Marital<br>Status         | Categorical<br>1 0-1 | 0.67 | 0.47 | Activity<br>Participation            | Continuous<br>0-6  | 1.20  | 1.22 |
| Mobility<br>Range         | Categorical<br>1 0-1 | 0.43 | 0.50 | Organization-<br>al<br>Participation | Continuous<br>0-5  | 1.08  | 1.14 |
| Housing<br>Attribute      | Categorical<br>1 0-3 | 1.00 | 0.98 | Identity<br>Identification           | Continuous<br>1-4  | 3.00  | 0.74 |
| Occupation                | Categorical<br>1 0-1 | 0.16 | 0.37 | Integration<br>Intention             | Continuous<br>4-16 | 13.70 | 1.93 |

### 3.4. Cross-analysis

To further explore the social integration characteristics of young college students, this study conducted a cross-analysis between two groups: those with long-term residency intention and those without. The results indicate that young college students with long-term residency intention have higher levels of integration in terms of economy, institution, culture, social participation, and psychological identity compared to those without long-term residency intention. The detailed analysis results are as follows:

In terms of economic integration, the group with long-term residency intention has a monthly household income that is 3000 yuan higher than the group without long-term residency intention, with no significant difference in employment status. Overall, young college students with long-term residency intention have better economic integration. See Table 4 for detailed results.

Table 4: Cross-analysis Results of Economic Integration Dimension

| Economic Integration         |                          |                   |                |               |                |           |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|
| Decision to Stay<br>or Leave | Monthly<br>Family Income | Employment Status |                |               |                | To<br>tal |
|                              | RMB                      | Empl<br>oyees     | Perce<br>ntage | Empl<br>oyers | Perce<br>ntage |           |
| No                           | 7556.95                  | 6391              | 83.34<br>%     | 1278          | 16.66<br>%     | 76<br>69  |
| Long-term<br>Residency       | 10669.63                 | 9197              | 83.95<br>%     | 1758          | 16.05<br>%     | 10<br>955 |
| Overall                      | 9387.89                  | 15588             | 83.70<br>%     | 3036          | 16.30<br>%     | 18<br>624 |

In terms of institutional match dimension, young college students with long-term residency intention have a higher degree of access to health and public services compared to those without long-term residency intention. Additionally, a higher proportion of the former group has a household registration in prefecture-level cities or above, indicating their stronger institutional advantages. However, both groups have relatively low levels of integration in terms of health and public services (ranging from 0 to 9). See Table 5 for detailed results.

Table 5: Cross-analysis Results of Institutional Match Dimension

| Institutional Matching |                        |                                 |            |                            |            |       |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|-------|
| Institutional Matching | Institutional Matching | Household Registration Location |            |                            |            | Total |
|                        | Range: 0—9             | County-level and below          | Percentage | Prefecture-level and above | Percentage |       |
| No                     | 4.03                   | 6830                            | 89.06%     | 839                        | 10.94%     | 7669  |
| Long-term Residency    | 4.17                   | 9510                            | 86.81%     | 1445                       | 13.19%     | 10955 |
| Overall                | 4.12                   | 16340                           | 87.74%     | 2284                       | 12.26%     | 18624 |

Young college students with long-term residency intention have a lower degree of identification with local customs and hygiene habits, indicating their better integration in terms of customs and hygiene. In terms of cultural integration, they have a higher level of acceptance. The group with long-term residency intention shows a stronger willingness to participate in social activities, but the level of participation is low for both groups. Both groups exhibit a strong sense of identity and integration with the city, approaching the upper limit of the value range. However, young college students without long-term residency intention have a significantly lower level of identity and integration compared to those with long-term residency intention. See Table 6 for detailed results.

Table 6: Cross-analysis Results of Cultural Integration, Social Participation, and Psychological Identity Dimensions

| Decision to Stay or Leave | Cultural Integration |                | Social Participation   |                            | Psychological Identification |                       |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                           | Customs and Habits   | Hygiene Habits | Activity Participation | Organization Participation | Identity Identification      | Integration Intention |
|                           | Range: 1—4           | Range: 1—4     | Range: 0—6             | Range: 0—5                 | Range: 1—4                   | Range: 4—16           |
| No                        | 2.40                 | 1.87           | 1.12                   | 0.99                       | 2.78                         | 13.06                 |
| Long-term Residency       | 2.32                 | 1.74           | 1.27                   | 1.14                       | 3.16                         | 14.14                 |
| Overall                   | 2.35                 | 1.80           | 1.20                   | 1.08                       | 3.00                         | 13.70                 |

#### 4. Analysis of Binary Logistic Regression Results

The dependent variable “Intention for Long-term Residence” is a binary variable. The independent variables consist of both continuous and categorical variables. In order to explore the relationship between social integration factors and the willingness of young college students to reside long-term, this study chooses to analyze the data using a binary logistic regression model. To better explain the relationship between categorical variables and the dependent variable, dummy variables are created for each categorical variable to form a comparison. In this study, Model 1 regresses individual factors of young college students as control variables separately. Then, in Models 2-6, various dimensions of economic integration, institutional matching, cultural integration, social participation, and

psychological identity are included separately. Finally, the control variables and various dimension variables are combined and included in the regression analysis. Detailed regression results can be found in Table 7.

Model 1 is the control variable model. The regression results show that individual factors significantly influence the intention of young college students to reside long-term. With each increase in the number of people living in the same household, the probability of willingness to reside long-term increases by 9.8%. Compared to males, females have a 21.3% higher probability of willingness to reside long-term. Compared to college students with associate degrees, young college students with undergraduate and graduate degrees have a 28.3% and 30.3% higher probability of willingness to reside long-term, respectively. Compared to younger college students, the probability of future willingness to reside long-term for young college students aged 26-30 and 31-35 is 1.436 times and 1.788 times that of the under 25 age group, respectively. The probability of willingness to reside long-term for married young college students increases significantly, 63.4% higher than unmarried individuals. However, inter-provincial mobility reduces their willingness to reside, with a decrease of 8.4% compared to young college students who move within the same province. The group provided with housing by their employer or the government significantly decreases their willingness to reside, at 0.597 times that of the group renting housing. On the other hand, young college students who solve their housing problems through home ownership significantly increase their willingness to reside, with a probability 4.03 times that of the rental group.

Model 2 is the economic integration model. The results show that the higher the level of economic integration of young college students, the more willing they are to reside long-term. Compared to employees, young college students with self-employed/employer status have a 0.732 times lower probability of willingness to reside long-term, which contradicts the existing research that “entrepreneurial individuals are more inclined to long-term residence.” This situation may be due to the fact that young college students who are in the process of starting their own businesses have higher mobility and less stability compared to those with employee status, thus affecting their willingness to reside. For each unit increase in logarithm-transformed monthly household income, the probability of young college students willing to reside long-term increases significantly by 57.3%.

Model 3 is the institutional matching model. The results show that the level of household registration does not significantly affect the willingness of young college students to reside long-term. However, for each unit increase in the level of health and public services received, their intention to reside long-term increases by 1.2%, although the effect is not pronounced.

Model 4 is the cultural integration model. The results show that the higher the level of cultural integration, the greater the likelihood of young college students wanting to reside long-term. Since it is difficult to obtain the degree of identification with local customs and hygiene habits from the original questionnaire, this study can only analyze the level of identification of young college students with local customs and the differences in hygiene habits compared to local residents to indirectly assess their level of cultural integration. Both customs and hygiene habits significantly influence their intention to reside long-term. For each unit increase in the lack of identification with local customs, the likelihood of willingness to reside long-term increases by 8.4%. The effect is more pronounced in terms of hygiene habits, with an increase in likelihood of 21.7%.

Model 5 is the social participation model. The results show that the higher the level of social participation, the more willing young college students are to reside long-term. Both activity participation and organizational participation significantly influence their intention to reside long-term. For each unit increase in participation in activities and organizations, the likelihood of willingness to reside long-term increases by 11% and 8.5%, respectively.

Model 6 is the psychological identity model. Identity and integration willingness significantly influence the intention of young college students to reside long-term, indicating that the higher the

level of psychological identity, the stronger their willingness to reside long-term. For each unit increase in the degree of self-identification as a local resident, the probability of willingness to reside long-term increases significantly by 36.8%. Similarly, for each unit increase in integration willingness, the probability of long-term residence increases by 26.5%.

Model 7 incorporates the impact factors of the five dimensions of social integration from Models 2-6 into the analysis, building on Model 1 as the base. The results show that, except for hygiene habits, all other factors significantly influence the intention to reside long-term. The direction of the impact of health and public services changes from positive to negative, indicating that young college students who receive relevant health and public services have corresponding health issues, which to some extent affect their willingness to reside long-term. The impact of household registration changes from negative and insignificant to negative and significant. The degrees of influence of integration willingness, activity participation, and organizational participation slightly decrease but not significantly. The degree of influence of logarithm-transformed monthly household income, customs, and identity significantly increase.

Table 7: Analysis of Binary Logistic Regression Results

| Variable                   |                                                                    | Model 1 | Model 2                | Model 3               | Model 4                | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------|---------|------------------------|
| Independent Variable       |                                                                    |         |                        |                       |                        |         |         |                        |
| Economic Integration       | Employer/self-employed (Baseline: Employee)                        |         | -<br>0.732*<br>(0.046) |                       |                        |         |         | -<br>0.731*<br>(0.048) |
|                            | Logarithm of Monthly Family Income                                 |         | 1.573*<br>(0.032)      |                       |                        |         |         | 1.598*<br>(0.034)      |
| Institutional Matching     | Household Registration Location (Baseline: County-level and below) |         |                        | -<br>0.993<br>(0.053) |                        |         |         | -<br>0.868*<br>(0.056) |
|                            | Health and Public Services                                         |         |                        | 1.012*<br>(0.005)     |                        |         |         | -<br>0.978*<br>(0.005) |
| Health and Public Services | Customs and Habits                                                 |         |                        |                       | -<br>0.916*<br>(0.022) |         |         | -<br>0.951*<br>(0.023) |
|                            | Hygiene Habits                                                     |         |                        |                       | -<br>0.783*<br>(0.026) |         |         | -<br>0.967<br>(0.028)  |

Table 7: (continued).

|                                          |                            |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Social Participation                     | Activity Participation     |                   |                   |                   |                   | 1.11*<br>(0.015)  |                   | 1.07*<br>(0.016)  |
|                                          | Organization Participation |                   |                   |                   |                   | 1.085*<br>(0.016) |                   | 1.06*<br>(0.017)  |
| Psychological Identification             | Identity Identification    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | 1.368*<br>(0.026) | 1.425*<br>(0.027) |
|                                          | Integration Intention      |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | 1.265*<br>(0.010) | 1.248*<br>(0.010) |
| Control Variables                        |                            |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Number of Household Members              |                            | 1.098*<br>(0.018) | 1.053<br>(0.018)  | 1.097*<br>(0.018) | 1.1*<br>(0.018)   | 1.097*<br>(0.018) | 1.092*<br>(0.018) | 1.046*<br>(0.019) |
| Control Variables                        |                            |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Female                                   |                            | 1.213*<br>(0.034) | 1.199*<br>(0.034) | 1.212*<br>(0.034) | 1.195*<br>(0.034) | 1.244*<br>(0.034) | 1.21*<br>(0.035)  | 1.216*<br>(0.036) |
| Age (Control group: 20-25)               |                            |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Age (Control group: 20-25)               |                            | 1.436*<br>(0.049) | 1.407*<br>(0.049) | 1.435*<br>(0.049) | 1.438*<br>(0.049) | 1.433*<br>(0.049) | 1.451*<br>(0.051) | 1.421*<br>(0.051) |
| Age (Control group: 20-25)               |                            | 1.788*<br>(0.056) | 1.744*<br>(0.056) | 1.785*<br>(0.056) | 1.782*<br>(0.056) | 1.78*<br>(0.056)  | 1.774*<br>(0.058) | 1.741*<br>(0.059) |
| Education level (Control group: College) |                            |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Bachelor's Degree                        |                            | 1.283*<br>(0.035) | 1.167*<br>(0.036) | 1.284*<br>(0.035) | 1.263*<br>(0.035) | 1.227*<br>(0.035) | 1.276*<br>(0.036) | 1.132*<br>(0.037) |

Table 7: (continued).

|                                            |                     |                     |                     |                    |                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Master's Degree                            | 1.303<br>(0.101)    | 1.083<br>(0.103)    | 1.315<br>(0.102)    | 1.272*<br>(0.102)  | 1.199<br>(0.102)   | 1.305*<br>(0.105)  | 1.029<br>(0.108)   |
| Marital Status (Control group: Unmarried)  |                     |                     |                     |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Married                                    | 1.634*<br>(0.047)   | 1.452*<br>(0.048)   | 1.628*<br>(0.047)   | 1.653*<br>(0.047)  | 1.66*<br>(0.047)   | 1.671*<br>(0.049)  | 1.506*<br>(0.051)  |
| Marital Status (Control group: Unmarried)  |                     |                     |                     |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Inter-provincial                           | -0.916<br>(0.034)   | -0.791*<br>(0.036)  | -0.926*<br>(0.034)  | -0.92*<br>(0.034)  | -0.943<br>(0.034)  | 1.001<br>(0.036)   | -0.878*<br>(0.038) |
| Housing Attribute (Control group: Renting) |                     |                     |                     |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Provided by Employer or Government         | -0.597*<br>(-0.050) | -0.617*<br>(0.051)  | -0.591*<br>(0.050)  | -0.6*<br>(0.050)   | -0.564*<br>(0.050) | -0.613*<br>(0.052) | -0.621*<br>(0.053) |
| Self-owned                                 | 4.033*<br>(0.040)   | 3.839*<br>(0.040)   | 4.039*<br>(0.040)   | 3.996*<br>(0.040)  | 3.993*<br>(0.040)  | 3.547*<br>(0.041)  | 3.331*<br>(0.042)  |
| Other                                      | 2.44*<br>(0.093)    | 2.589*<br>(0.094)   | 2.446*<br>(0.093)   | 2.425*<br>(0.093)  | 2.434*<br>(0.093)  | 2.117*<br>(0.097)  | 2.219*<br>(0.098)  |
| Intercept                                  | -0.315*<br>(-0.058) | -0.008*<br>(-0.270) | -0.301*<br>(-0.061) | -0.604*<br>(0.084) | -0.255*<br>(0.062) | -0.005*<br>(0.145) | -0.000*<br>(0.337) |
| N                                          | 18624               | 18624               | 18624               | 18624              | 18624              | 18624              | 18624              |
| McFadden R <sup>2</sup>                    | 0.150               | 0.160               | 0.150               | 0.155              | 0.155              | 0.195              | 0.208              |

Note: 1. The parentheses indicate standard errors; 2. "\*\*", ":", "\*" respectively represent  $P < 0.05$ ,  $P < 0.01$ , and  $P < 0.001$ .

## 5. Exploratory Analysis

Considering that some scholars have expressed skepticism about considering “undecided” as indicating no intention for long-term residence [38], and that some scholars treat the samples with “undecided” responses as missing values when processing variables<sup>[37]</sup>, this study conducted regression analysis again after removing the group that answered “undecided”. The results showed



that the regression results of the main influencing factors remained consistent with those before the removal.

According to the behavior change model proposed by Prochaska and DiClemente in the 1980s [39], human behavior change can be divided into four stages: intention, preparation, action, and maintenance. For the young college students in this study, the group that answered “undecided” is in the intention stage of long-term residence. So, what reasons lead to their lack of confidence in answering whether they will reside long-term? In order to clarify the reasons, it is necessary to use the group that answered “no” as the reference group, and compare the group that answered “undecided” with the group that has the intention for long-term residence, in order to further explore the characteristics of the two groups in the five dimensions of social integration. The results are as follows:

In the dimension of economic integration, there are significant differences between the group of young college students who answered “undecided” and the group with the intention for long-term residence, as shown in Table 8. Their monthly family income is only 7317.18 yuan, with a difference of more than 3000 yuan compared to the group with the intention for long-term residence. There is no significant difference in employment status.

Table 8: Comparative Analysis Results in the Dimension of Economic Integration

| Economic Integration      |                           |                   |            |           |            |       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Decision to Stay or Leave | Decision to Stay or Leave | Employment Status |            |           |            | Total |
|                           | RMB                       | Employees         | Percentage | Employers | Percentage |       |
| No                        | 8067.70                   | 239               | 86.28%     | 38        | 13.72%     | 277   |
| Undecided                 | 7317.18                   | 3775              | 81.98%     | 830       | 18.02%     | 4605  |
| Long-term Residency       | 10669.63                  | 9197              | 83.95%     | 1758      | 16.05%     | 10955 |
| Overall                   | 9649.31                   | 13211             | 83.42%     | 2626      | 16.58%     | 15837 |

At the level of institutional matching, the majority of the group in the intention stage have household registration in county towns or below. The level of access to health and public services is higher than the group with no intention for long-term residence, but lower than the group with the intention for long-term residence. However, overall, it is not high, with a score of only 3.98 (range: 0-9), as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Comparative Analysis Results in the Dimension of Institutional Matching

| Institutional Matching    |                            |                                 |            |                                 |            |       |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|-------|
| Decision to Stay or Leave | Health and Public Services | Household Registration Location |            |                                 |            | Total |
|                           | Range: 0—9                 | County and below                | Percentage | Prefecture-level city and above | Percentage |       |
| No                        | 3.51                       | 251                             | 90.61%     | 26                              | 9.39%      | 277   |
| Undecided                 | 3.98                       | 4101                            | 89.06%     | 504                             | 10.94%     | 4605  |

Table 9: (continued).

|                     |      |       |        |      |        |       |
|---------------------|------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| Long-term Residency | 4.17 | 9510  | 86.81% | 1445 | 13.19% | 10955 |
| Overall             | 4.11 | 13862 | 87.53% | 1975 | 12.47% | 15837 |

From the results in Table 10, the group of young college students in the intention stage falls between the group with no intention for long-term residence and the group with the intention for long-term residence in terms of cultural integration level and psychological identification level. However, their level of organizational participation in the dimension of social engagement is significantly lower than the other two groups, with a value of 0.94 (compared to 1.01 and 1.08 for the other two groups). From the results, it can be observed that the social engagement level of all three groups is relatively low (activity participation ranges from 0 to 6, organizational participation ranges from 0 to 5). Except for the lower organizational participation level in the group in the intention stage, the rest of the results are slightly above 1. The three groups of young college students exhibit high levels of identity identification and strong integration intentions, with values close to the maximum range.

Table 10: Comparative Analysis Results in the Dimensions of Cultural Integration, Social Engagement, and Psychological Identification

| Decision to Stay or Leave | Cultural Integration |                | Social Participation   |                            | Psychological Identification |                       |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                           | Customs and Habits   | Hygiene Habits | Activity Participation | Organization Participation | Identity Identification      | Integration Intention |
|                           | Range: 1—4           | Range: 1—4     | Range: 0—6             | Range: 0—5                 | Range: 1—4                   | Range: 4—16           |
| No                        | 2.44                 | 1.96           | 1.01                   | 1.01                       | 2.64                         | 12.41                 |
| Undecided                 | 2.41                 | 1.88           | 1.09                   | 0.94                       | 2.81                         | 13.02                 |
| Long-term Residency       | 2.32                 | 1.74           | 1.27                   | 1.14                       | 3.16                         | 14.14                 |
| Overall                   | 2.35                 | 1.79           | 1.21                   | 1.08                       | 3.05                         | 13.78                 |

In general, the part of young college students who answered “undecided” tend to identify more with their hometown customs and habits. Most of them are registered in county towns or below, with insufficient participation in activities and organizations. They have a strong sense of identity and willingness to integrate, but their level of economic integration is insufficient. Their monthly income is significantly lower compared to other groups, which ultimately leads to their indecisiveness in choosing whether to stay long-term.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on a sample data of 18,624 respondents, this study systematically analyzed the influence of social integration factors on the intention of young college students to stay, using a logistic regression model. The exploratory analysis on young college students in the intention stage yielded the following main conclusions and recommendations:

Firstly, young college students have the following characteristics: 58.82% of young college students have the intention to stay long-term, and the number of married individuals is twice that of unmarried individuals. Most of them come from county towns or below, with relatively high monthly

family income. They mainly solve their housing problems through renting. The majority of young college students have an employee status, with only 3.06% having a postgraduate degree. Their level of participation in social activities and organizations is low. They tend to identify with their hometown customs and habits and have a strong sense of identity and willingness to integrate. Compared to young college students without the intention to stay long-term, those with the intention to stay long-term have significantly higher levels of social integration.

Secondly, after controlling for individual characteristics, social integration factors have a significant impact on the intention of young college students to stay. In terms of economic integration, monthly family income and employment status have a significant promoting effect on the choice of young college students to stay long-term. This indicates that better economic conditions serve as the material basis for their willingness to stay long-term, and stable employment ensures higher income. This fully demonstrates that improving the income level and job stability of young college students are key measures to encourage them to stay. At the same time, it is necessary to create good job opportunities and provide high-paying and promising jobs, which are attractive to young people. The government can promote urban economic development to create more employment opportunities. In terms of institutional matching, rural-to-urban migration is the main direction of young college students' mobility. It is necessary to further break down the urban-rural dual structure and minimize the gap between young college students and local residents in terms of living standards, property rights, and access to public services. In terms of cultural integration, customs and habits have a significant impact. In terms of social participation, social participation factors have a significant impact on the intention of young college students to stay, but the level of social participation is relatively low. In terms of psychological identification, their sense of identity and willingness to integrate are relatively strong. When making the decision to stay, young college students are not only influenced by their own material basis but also consider the city's development and changes. Government departments should provide young college students with more human care and social participation opportunities tailored to their cultural integration, psychological integration, and social participation, so as to give them a sense of belonging, identity, and life satisfaction. It is necessary to eliminate cultural barriers, create opportunities for young college students, and make it easier for them to integrate into urban life. Establishing cultural exchange platforms and cultural festival activities can enhance mutual understanding and respect between different cultures. In conclusion, to retain young talent, big cities need to provide high-quality education and job opportunities, improve infrastructure, support innovation and entrepreneurship, and eliminate cultural barriers. Ultimately, they should fully integrate with local residents.

Lastly, through exploratory analysis, it was found that the key factor influencing the decision of young college students in the intention stage to stay is monthly family income. Although this group has a strong sense of identity and willingness to integrate, their income significantly limits their development in the city. To achieve high-quality development in cities, attracting and retaining young college students is crucial. The government should broaden employment channels and introduce corresponding guarantee measures to encourage them to stay and live for a long time.

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