

Factors Influencing the Decision to Migrate from Rural to Urban Areas among Vietnamese Youth Labor: The Case of An Giang Province, Vietnam

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Abstract

The study identifies the current state of migration from rural to urban areas among Vietnamese youth laborers, focusing on An Giang province. Additionally, the study estimates the factors influencing the migration decisions of young laborers from rural to urban areas. The research utilizes primary data collected directly through interviews with 498 young laborers in An Giang province who have moved, are moving, or intend to move from rural areas to urban areas using a non-probability sampling method. The collected data is estimated using a Probit model based on Stata 14.0 software. The estimation results show that the model is highly statistically significant. Furthermore, the research results indicate that the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas among An Giang's young laborers is influenced both positively and negatively by several related factors. Consequently, the study proposes effective solutions to help young laborers make informed decisions and create the best economic value for themselves.

Keywords: Migration, Youth Labor, Probit Model

INTRODUCTION

Labor migration is an inevitable activity in the socio-economic development process of any country or territory. Industrialization and urbanization are seen as "magnets" attracting labor to areas with rapid and high industrial development. Additionally, labor migration is considered an important solution for addressing livelihood issues and adapting to environmental and climate changes, as well as redistributing the population.

Lee (1966) argued that the primary reasons driving the internal migration of labor from rural to urban areas are the lack of means of subsistence (such as land, poverty, unemployment, etc.) and the lower quality of life in rural areas compared to urban areas. Harris (1970) also stated that the internal migration of labor from rural to urban areas is an inevitable economic rule for any country undergoing industrialization and urbanization. Moreover, the shift of labor from traditional areas (mainly land-based production) to modern areas (primarily utilizing human resources) represents an endless potential for economic growth (Lucas, 2006). People usually move from regions with low wages, few job opportunities, or high unemployment rates to regions with higher wages and lower unemployment rates. The main reason behind labor migration in many countries stems from economic factors, which are the main drivers of the migration process (Ravenstein, 1885).

Today, with the strong development of science and technology, economics, and the global process occurring worldwide, labor migration in many countries has gradually become more common. The disparity in socio-

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economic conditions between regions has created waves of migration, especially labor migration, to generate benefits for those involved. For developing countries, including Vietnam, labor migration is one of the critical and inevitable issues that most governments must address during economic transition, requiring conditions for breakthroughs in development and economic growth.

Rural reforms and open policies implemented in China in 1979 led to a massive temporary migration of rural laborers to urban areas. As part of extensive market reform policies, the Chinese government somewhat relaxed the household registration system to allow temporary labor migration to urban areas (Wang et al., 2021). With significant income differences between urban and rural areas after the 2000s, rural-to-urban labor migration has increased (Yang et al., 2013). Consequently, the labor supply in rural areas has decreased, affecting domestic agricultural productivity (Zhang et al., 2016).

Amid the national labor migration flow, the Mekong Delta is one of the regions with the highest levels of migration compared to other areas in the country. An Giang province, in particular, is the eighth most populous province in Vietnam but has the highest number of people migrating out for work nationwide (General Statistics Office, 2019). Despite the positive aspects of labor migration, it still brings negative impacts on individuals, families, and society.

Labor migration is not a current or urgent issue since there have been many studies on labor migration across the country. However, these studies mainly describe the situation and causes of migration based on sociological or ethnographic analyses, with a few addressing the impact of demographic factors on migration. Overall, these studies have not deeply analyzed the close relationships and the extent of the influence of factors determining the migration process of labor, particularly young laborers in An Giang province. Therefore, this study aims to identify the current state of labor migration, especially among young laborers, and estimate the extent of influence and relationships between factors on the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas among young laborers in An Giang province. Based on this, the study proposes effective solutions to help young laborers make informed decisions and create the best economic value for themselves.

Theoretical Basis

Concepts of Labor Migration and Internal Migration

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), labor migration is the movement of populations, including any movement of an individual or a group of people, whether across national borders or within a country. It involves the movement of people, regardless of length, composition, or reason, including migration of refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, and people moving for other purposes.

Lewis (1954), and Fei and Ranis (1961) suggest that internal migration is a desirable process whereby surplus rural labor is withdrawn from traditional agriculture to provide cheap manpower for the developing modern industrial sector. Similarly, Lee (1966) views migration as a permanent or semi-permanent change in residence. There are no limits placed on the distance moved or the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between internal migration (i.e., migration within a country) and external migration (i.e., migration beyond the boundaries of a country or international migration).

Shryock et al. (1980) suggest that labor migration is related to the duration of residence. Therefore, they define labor migration as a form of geographical or spatial movement accompanied by a change of permanent residence between administrative units. According to these authors, temporary and non-permanent residential changes such as visiting, tourism, business travel, including cross-border travel, are not considered migration.

According to Dung (2012), labor migration can profoundly impact the economy and family welfare. The movement of labor from surplus areas to deficit areas will improve resource allocation and promote economic growth. Labor migration not only creates higher incomes but also provides opportunities for migrants to improve their skills and work more efficiently upon return.

On the other hand, Binci and Giannelli (2013) argue that internal migration (domestic migration) and external migration (international migration) result from different decision-making processes and lead to different

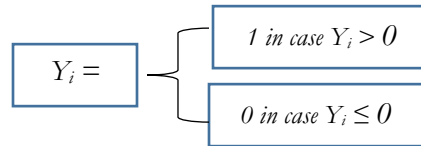
impacts. Internal migration occurs within a country, while external migration involves movement beyond a country's borders.

2.2. Factors Influencing the Decision to Migrate from Rural to Urban Areas of Young Labor in An Giang Province, Vietnam

The article uses a Probit regression model to estimate the factors influencing the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas of young labor in An Giang province, Vietnam, through the model (1) as follows: The Probit model is of the form:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_i X_i + \varepsilon_i(1)$$

The dependent variable Y_i is unknown. It is often referred to as a dummy variable. We consider the dummy variable Y_i defined as follows:



- Y_i is a dummy variable representing the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas by young labor in An Giang province. This variable takes the value of 1 if the laborer decides to migrate from their current residence in An Giang, Vietnam, and 0 otherwise.
- X_i are the variables affecting the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas by young labor in An Giang province, Vietnam.

Based on this, the study proposes an empirical model of the factors influencing the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas (Dicu) by young labor in An Giang province, Vietnam, through the model (2) as follows:

$$DiCu_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Tdhv_i + \beta_2 Tuoi_i + \beta_3 NuLD_i + \beta_4 ThanhvienGD_i + \beta_5 LDGD_i + \beta_6 ThanhvienGDDC_i + \beta_7 LDGDDicu_i + \beta_8 Docthan_i + \beta_9 TNLDTruocDC_i + \beta_{10} TNLDSauDC_i + \beta_{11} Dtkinh_i + \beta_{12} Binhduong_i + \beta_{13} Dongnai_i + \varepsilon_i(2)$$

Table 1: Expectations about the signs of the β_i coefficients in model (2),

Variable Name,	Explanation and Unit of Measurement	Relevant Research,	Expected Sign of β_i
Tdhv	Education level of workers (school level)	Parrado & Cerrutti (2003), Vo Thanh Dung (2010)	-
Tuoi	Age of worker (years)	Parrado & Cerrutti (2003), Pham Tan Nhat and Huynh Hien Hai (2014)	-/+
NuLD	= 1 if female worker, = 0 otherwise	Grigg (1977), Chattopadhyay (1998), Vo Thanh Dung (2010)	-
ThanhvienGD	Total number of family members (person)	Huy (2009a&b), Pham Tan Nhat and Huynh Hien Hai (2014)	+
LDGD	Number of family workers (person)	Huy (2009a&b), Pham Tan Nhat and Huynh Hien Hai (2014)	+
ThanhvienGDDC	Total number of family members migrating (person)	Huy (2009a&b), Pham Tan Nhat and Huynh Hien Hai (2014)	+
LDGDDicu	Number of migrant family workers (person)	Recommended by the authors	+
Docthan	= 1 if the worker is unmarried and = 0 otherwise	Pham Tan Nhat and Huynh Hien Hai (2014)	+/-
TNTruocDC	Income received by workers before migration (million VND/month)	Recommended by the authors	+
TNSauDC	Labor income received after migration (million VND/month)	Recommended by the authors	+
Dtkinh	=1 if the worker is a Kinh person, =0 otherwise	Recommended by the authors	+
Binhduong	= 1 if workers migrate to Binh Duong to work, = 0 otherwise	Recommended by the authors	+/-
Dongnai	= 1 if workers migrate to Dong Nai to work, = 0 otherwise	Recommended by the authors	+/-

Source: Author compiled from relevant studies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An Giang has a total of 121,724 laborers (An Giang Population Report, 2022). The study will conduct direct interviews with 498 An Giang residents who have migrated, are migrating, or will migrate from rural to urban areas (accounting for 0.33% of the total labor force in An Giang). The survey targets a diverse and hard-to-reach population since they are laborers currently residing in An Giang or those who have migrated to other regions for work. Therefore, the study will employ a non-probability quota sampling method to ensure the expected sample size and high reliability.

The interview results are based on a pre-prepared questionnaire conducted in two steps. First, the study will conduct qualitative interviews with 6-10 young laborers living in rural areas using qualitative questions to determine the extent and ability to provide essential information for the research problem, thereby contributing to the construction of a complete questionnaire. Finally, the study will directly interview 498 young laborers in An Giang province who have migrated, are migrating, or will migrate to other provinces for work.

Regression model (2) is estimated using the Probit regression method to analyze the extent and influence of factors on the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas among young laborers in An Giang province. The study also conducted tests and addressed violations of the Probit regression model assumptions (if any) to ensure the model is free of defects. The analysis is then based on the results of the corrected model. Based on the estimation results, the study proposes several recommendations to help young laborers in An Giang specifically and the Mekong Delta generally make informed decisions and achieve the highest economic welfare value.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Overview of Labor in An Giang Province, Vietnam

The survey directly interviewed 498 young laborers from rural areas in An Giang province, including 226 female laborers (accounting for 45.38% of the sample) and 272 male laborers (54.62% of the sample). Regarding ethnic composition, most respondents were of Kinh ethnicity, accounting for 94.38% of the sample, as most of An Giang's population are Kinh people. The remaining respondents included laborers of Hoa, Khmer, and Cham ethnicities, with a very low proportion of only 5.62%.

Table 2: Basic Indicators of Workers in An Giang

Indicator	Unit	Average	Highest	Lowest	Standard deviation
Income of workers before migration	Million VND /month	2.60	6.00	1.00	1.60
Education level of workers	Level of study - Grade	2.22	6.00	0.00	1.32
Age of workers	Age	30.51	53.00	15.00	7.55
Income of workers after migration	Million VND /month	3.05	9.00	0.61	1.60
Income of workers after migration	Million VND /month	8.20	30.00	1.00	4.20
Number of family members	Person	3.66	13.00	0.00	1.67
Number of family members of working age	Person	2.68	8.00	0.00	1.27
Family members who have migrated	Person	2.64	13.00	0.00	1.72
Family members of working age who have migrated	Person	1.24	7.00	0.00	1.09

Source: Results compiled from self-survey data in 2023.

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the surveyed laborers in An Giang province. The average household size is 4 members, but the average number of working-age members is 3 per household. Similarly, each household has, on average, 1 family member who has migrated. The results show that the surveyed households in An Giang have an abundant labor supply, contributing to increased household income.

There is a significant difference in the average income of laborers before and after migration. Specifically, the income before migration was about 3 million VND per month, but after migration, it increased to 8.2 million VND per month. This result provides substantial motivation for young laborers to migrate from rural areas to cities or industrial centers to earn higher incomes and improve their living standards.

Additionally, the average education level of the laborers is around grade 2, with the highest education level being grade 6. This result indicates that young laborers in rural areas have quite limited education. Although their income is much higher than before migration, their low education level requires them to have good health to undertake physically demanding and labor-intensive jobs.

The Situation of Rural-to-Urban Migration of Young Laborers in An Giang Province, Vietnam

The number of migrating laborers per household: each household has different internal factors that drive the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas, depending on the working age of its members, the number of members attending school, the assets the family possesses, etc. According to the research results, households with 1 laborer migrating out of An Giang account for 27.11%, households with 2 laborers migrating out account for 35.34%, households with 3 laborers migrating out account for 4.62%, households with 4 laborers migrating out account for 2.21%, households with 5 laborers migrating out account for 0.2%, households with 6 laborers migrating out account for 0.2%, and households with no laborers migrating account for 30.32%.

Table 3: Migrant Workers from Rural to Urban Areas by Gender

Age	Number of Worker (person)	Percent (%)
Worker from 15 – less than 30 years old	250	50.20
- Female worker	111	44.40
- Male worker	139	55.60
Worker from 30 – less than 50 years old	243	48.80
- Female worker	113	46.50
- Male worker	130	53.50
Worker higher than 50 years old	5	1.00
- Female worker	2	0.40
- Male worker	3	0.60
Total	498	100.00

Source: Results compiled from self-survey data in 2023.

Age of household laborers: Most households have a distribution that decreases from low to high with increasing age. The age group with the most family laborers is from 15 to 30 years old, including both males and females. Specifically, members aged 15 to under 30 years account for 55.60% of males and 44.40% of females of the total survey. The age group over 50 years has the lowest proportion, with only 0.4% for males and 0.6% for females. Young laborers in families tend to play the role of the main income earners more than middle-aged and older individuals. Young people are influenced by society and family, leading them to seek stable employment. Middle-aged and older individuals primarily work locally and are less likely to migrate due to the tradition of "living close to the fields and ponds."

Labor migration to improve living standards and economic conditions is increasingly common in An Giang, especially among rural youth. Although spontaneous migration faces many difficulties, they earn higher and more stable incomes compared to their earnings in rural areas where they were born and raised. With their considerably higher incomes post-migration (detailed in Table 2), they spend on the following items (Table 4):

Table 4: Expenditures Made by Young Workers Migrating from Rural to Urban Areas Using Income Earned at the Destination

Expenditures	Quantity	Percent (%)
Living expenses for individual employees	458	41.98
Debt repayment	62	5.68
Help your family in the countryside	171	15.67
Healthcare	38	3.48

Children education	183	16.77
Shopping	45	4.12
Job search	15	1.37
Saving	119	10.91
Total	1091	100,00

Source: Results compiled from self-survey data in 2023.

Table 4 shows that most of the income they receive is used for personal living expenses (41.98%), future investments for their children (16.77%), supporting family living expenses in their hometown (15.67%), and savings (10.91%). A very small portion of their income is used for debt repayment, purchasing goods, medical expenses, and job hunting.

Table 5: Advantages Young Workers Receive After Migrating to Urban Areas

Advantages	Quantity	Percent (%)
Easy to find job	376	38.33
Higher and steady income	329	33.54
Traffic convenience	56	5.71
Good working environment	65	6.63
Many acquaintances	155	15.80
Total	981	100.00

Source: Results compiled from self-survey data in 2023.

Table 5 shows that during the migration from rural to urban areas, these young workers encounter various difficulties. However, they also experience several advantages. First, 38.33% of the total surveyed believe it is very easy to find work, as most apply for manual labor jobs in industrial zones. The second advantage is that after a period of working, they receive higher and more stable incomes compared to working in rural areas, accounting for 33.54%. The next advantage is that many have acquaintances in the company or dormitories because they are all from the same hometown migrating to the city for work (15.80%), along with other benefits such as a better environment and convenient transportation.

Factors Influencing the Decision to Migrate from Rural to Urban Areas Among Young Workers in An Giang Province

Table 6 indicates that 62.45% of young workers decided to migrate from rural areas to urban areas, with the highest number migrating to Ho Chi Minh City at 39.57%, followed by Binh Duong Province at 24.26%, Can Tho at 14.47%, and Dong Nai at 6.38%. The number of workers moving to other provinces such as Long An, Vung Tau, and Tay Ninh is very low. This result shows a trend of workers migrating to major cities or areas with a high concentration of industrial clusters in the country."

Table 6: Decision to Migrate from Rural to Urban Areas by Workers in An Giang

Decision	Number of household	Percent (%)
Migrate	311	62.45
Non Migrate	187	37.55
Total	498	100,00

Source: Results compiled from self-survey data in 2023.

The descriptive statistics of the variables defined in model (2) are detailed in Table 2. Additionally, the statistical results of the categorical variables in model (2) are shown in Table 7. The results indicate that the majority of workers have a demand for employment, accounting for 78.75% of the total survey sample. The proportion of female workers participating in the interview accounts for more than 50% of the total sample, and most of these workers are unmarried, comprising 76% of the total sample.

Table 7: Categorical Variables in Model (2)"

Category	Kinh ethnic group		NuLD		Docthan	
	Number of household	Percent (%)	Number of household	Percent (%)	Number of household	Percent (%)
Yes	470	94.38	226	45.38	190	38.15
No	28	5.62	272	54.62	308	61.85
Total	498	100,00	498	100,00	498	100,00

Source: Results compiled from self-survey data in 2023.

The results of estimating the factors influencing the internal migration decisions of the people in An Giang using the Probit regression method with Stata 14.0 are presented in Table 8 as follows:

The estimation results, after conducting various tests, indicate that the regression model yields a Log likelihood value of -234.1388 with a Prob value of 0.000. This result shows that the regression model is statistically significant at the 1% level and demonstrates the model's suitability for the research. Additionally, most of the explanatory variables included in the model are statistically significant at the 1% level (Age, Unmarried, MigrantFamilyMembers, PreviousIncome, Binh Duong) and at the 5% level (Female, FamilyMembers, Dong Nai). This indicates that the explanatory variables included in the regression model significantly affect the dependent variable.

Table 8. Factors Influencing the Decision to Migrate from Rural Areas to Urban Areas Among Young Workers in An Giang

Variable	Estimated coefficient	P> z
Tuoi	0.0329***	0.002
NuLD	0.2873**	0.027
DTKinh	-0.5224 ^{ns}	0.115
Docthan	0.6712***	0.000
Tdhv	-0.0725 ^{ns}	0.153
ThanhvienGD	-0.1426**	0.019
LDGD	0.0479 ^{ns}	0.511
ThanhvienGDDC	-0.1695***	0.001
LDGDDicu	-0.0052 ^{ns}	0.948
TNLDTruocDC	-0.2253***	0.000
TNLDsauDC	-0.0036 ^{ns}	0.816
Binhduong	-0.8532***	0.009
Dongnai	-0.8041**	0.014
Constant	2.0045***	0.003
Number of observations	498	
Log Likelihood	-265,6994	
LR Chi ² (8)	127,77	
Prob > Chi ²	0,0000	
Pseudo R ²	0,1938	

Source: Results compiled from self-survey data in 2023.

The variable **Tuoi** has a positive coefficient at a significance level of 1%, implying that when a laborer's income increases by 1 year, the probability of their decision to migrate for work increases by 3.29% in search of a job that better fits their preferences and expertise. This result aligns with the initial expectations of the authors, as it is seen as a factor influencing the decision to migrate from rural areas to urban areas among individual workers. This finding contrasts with studies conducted in Paraguay and Argentina (Parrado & Cerrutti, 2003)

and in Vietnam (Pham Tan Nhat and Huynh Hien Hai, 2014), which demonstrate that older workers, especially those over 30, tend to migrate less. However, this study's results differ from these two typical studies but remain significant, as most interviewed young workers are under 30 years old. Therefore, the findings maintain reliability and academic significance.

The variable **Docthan** has a positive relationship with the migration decision at a significance level of 1%, suggesting that when young workers are unmarried, their probability of migrating is very high, exceeding 67.12% compared to those who are married. This indicates that single workers are more likely to migrate for new job opportunities as they do not have family or young children to consider.

Additionally, the variable **NuLD** also has a positive relationship with the migration decision at a 5% statistical significance, indicating that female workers in An Giang have a 28.73% higher probability of migrating compared to male workers. This result aligns with local realities, as they often bear family responsibilities and need to generate income to support their parents and siblings.

Conversely, the variables **ThanhvienGD** and **ThanhvienGDDC** have a negative relationship with the migration decision of An Giang province workers at statistical significance levels of 5% and 1%, respectively. This suggests that the larger the number of family members or migrant family members, the lower the likelihood of migration, accounting for about 14.26% and 16.95%, respectively. This can be understood as more difficulties arising when the family has more members.

Similarly, the variable **TNLDTruocDC** also negatively affects the migration decision, with high significance at 1%. This finding is entirely consistent with the reality of workers' lives, as lower income motivates them to migrate more, with a migration probability of 22.53% to increase income and ensure livelihood for themselves and their families.

Additionally, the two variables indicating different migration destinations, **BinhDuong** and **DongNai**, both have a negative impact on the migration decision at significance levels of 5% and 1%, respectively. This implies that if the surveyed young workers plan to choose Binh Duong or Dong Nai as their migration destinations, their likelihood of making the migration decision will be lower (85.32% and 80.41%, respectively) compared to other locations such as Ho Chi Minh City, the center of An Giang province, etc."

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of estimating the influence of various factors on the decision to migrate from rural to urban areas among young laborers in An Giang province were obtained through primary data collected from direct interviews with rural laborers in An Giang. The estimation results show that most variables are statistically significant and align with the initial expectations regarding the signs of the estimated coefficients. Additionally, the results indicate that three variables have a positive relationship, while five variables have a negative relationship with the migration decision at 1% and 5% significance levels. Based on the research findings and the reality of migration from rural to urban areas among young laborers in An Giang, the study offers several recommendations to help laborers make informed decisions and achieve the best economic and social welfare outcomes through two main targets: the government and the laborers themselves:

Government Support: The government should assist local laborers according to their decisions. For those who have not migrated, local authorities need to provide support and job opportunities within the area. For laborers preparing to migrate, whether within or outside An Giang, there should be a focus on education, vocational training, and job placement services to help them choose suitable career paths. For those who decide to migrate, the government should implement policies related to employment, recruitment needs, job sectors, and policies concerning living conditions (such as housing, food, etc.).

For Migrating Laborers: They need to carefully consider their migration decisions, thoroughly research job information, and understand the support policies available at their destination. They should choose industrial zones that ensure social security for their work and stay updated on

information regarding their new location to avoid mistakes during the transition, which could become a burden on their families. They should contact local authorities for support and advice when making migration decisions, to limit spontaneous migration that can lead to issues in local management. Additionally, laborers should strive to improve their skills and expertise to secure jobs that match their abilities, thereby benefiting both their families and their communities.

Acknowledgments

This research is funded by Vietnam National University HoChiMinh City (VNUHCM) under grant number B2023-16-03.

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