

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Flight Intentions among Residents in Crime-ridden Neighborhoods: A PLS-SEM Assessment

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**Abstract:** Building sustainable communities is fast becoming a common principle in urban development, and a sustainable community is one that has a prevailing social order and strong cohesion among its members. Today, rising crime is destabilizing traditional neighborhoods by creating fear, which leads to residential turnover. This study aims to assess whether strengthening social cohesion by communities of practice and knowledge-sharing behavior may prevent residents from harboring intentions to leave. A framework based on environmental psychology principles has been developed; communities of practice and knowledge-sharing behavior are believed to stimulate residential satisfaction, which acts as a counteraction to flight intention. A survey was conducted among residents in crime-ridden neighborhoods in the southern region in Malaysia to assess whether the factors have contributed to their flight intention. Three hundred nine responses were obtained and analyzed using partial least squares structural modeling. Findings revealed that communities of practice reduce flight intention indirectly through the moderation of residential satisfaction, whereas low knowledge-sharing behavior have reduced flight intention. Findings of the former are expected, but the latter is surprising, suggesting residents' resilience and experience in handling crime, hence not requiring any sharing of safety practices. The findings identify suitable methods to improve social interactions to prevent residential turnover and keep the neighborhoods relevant and safe for future inhabitants.

**Keywords:** residential turnover, urban flight, flight intention, communities of practice, knowledge-sharing behavior, residential satisfaction.

Today, crime is one of the fundamental problems that surround urban society (Howe & Park, 2017). Rising fear of crime has led to the gradual destabilization and eventual desertion of traditional urban neighborhoods. "Flight from blight" literatures have suggested that inequality in income, wealth, and social standing are among the causes of criminality in these urban centers. When people are forced into subordinate positions,

they harbor resentment against their better counterparts in society (Mann & Fenton, 2017; Bloeser & Williams, 2020). Eventually, these impulses are expressed through irrational decisions and criminal behavior. In the short term, urban poverty may lead to petty crimes and misdemeanors, but prolonged resentment from joblessness can be associated with more violent crimes (Dollar et al., 2019).

At the individual level, safety and security is a fundamental need that must be fulfilled, else it becomes a stumbling block to a person's comity, confidence, and sense of self (Maslow, 1943, p.22). As a natural instinct, humans are expected to fear situations that are known to be dangerous. Fear is a signal to take precautionary measures in order to stay out of harm's way (Melde et al., 2016; O'Brien et al., 2019) and poverty signals potential troubles in the society and this would incite greater fear of crime among urban residents (Vauclair & Bratanova, 2017).

At the societal level, maintaining safety and security ensures that these neighborhoods will continue to remain relevant to urban society. In recent years, sustainability has become the hype in residential development. Managing crime is among the avenues to achieve the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, specifically goal No. 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities (UN General Assembly, 2015, p.14). However, a community is only as sustainable as its ability to maintain and reproduce itself at a reasonable level of functioning. An enduring community is one that has long-term and stable residents (Bramley & Morgan, 2003; Dempsey et al., 2011).

Past research has demonstrated an association between crime and turnover in the residential community (Cullen & Levitt, 1999; Hipp et al., 2009; Boggess & Hipp, 2010; Xie & McDowall, 2010; Sharp & Warner, 2018). The deconstruction of a traditional neighborhood, which normally takes decades from the process of urban growth-and-sprawl, is accelerated with a crime. As the original inhabitants leave the neighborhood, vacancy rates would rise, and this signals to the residential market that houses in the neighborhood are undesirable. Property prices will fall, and residents will sell their homes and leave. These neighborhoods will eventually be transformed into ghetto neighborhoods or crime hotspots where criminals are able to commit atrocities with impunity (Sampson et al., 1997; Schrag & Scotchmer, 1997). With time, the association of the neighborhood with crime will deepen, and the stigmatization would then complicate any future neighborhood regeneration efforts.

The question boils down to "how do you manage crime sustainably to prevent residential turnover?" Urban planners and residential developers today often focus on physical means to control crime.

This may be illustrated using the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) framework, which was popular with urban planners in the late 20th century. CPTED holds that a built environment that is properly designed will inhibit crime and contribute to better living standards and quality of life (Crowe, 2000, p.46). There are six major blocks of CPTED: (a) defensible space whereby the neighborhood layout is designed in a way so that its inhabitants can easily defend its own premises; (b) target hardening whereby physical security and barriers are employed as a deterrence to criminals; (c) image and maintenance whereby the neighborhood is kept clean, kempt, and unattractive to criminals; (d) access control whereby the layout of the neighborhood is designed in such a way that it restricts entry and exit of unwanted visitors; (e) surveillance which makes public spaces easier to monitor of unwanted activities; and (f) activity support which provides spaces conducive for residential activity, of which the "life" created will act as a natural deterrent to crime.

Although these measures are generally useful in reducing crime and increasing the safety and security of the residential space, we must also ask whether these physical measures are truly effective in preventing residential turnover. Fencing up may be efficient in defending a neighborhood against intruders, but it makes residents more self-centric, inoculates an inwardly-focused culture, and preventing the community from integrating with the society beyond the gated enclave (Lang & Danielsen, 1997; Power & Houghton, 2007). This is because residents in neighborhoods that lack social interaction and community involvement will not stay because they lack a sense of belongingness, interdependence, and could not trust others to guarantee their safety (Bramley & Morgan, 2003; Dempsey et al., 2011; Watson & Kessler, 2013; Melde et al., 2016; O'Brien et al., 2019).

Our deductions suggest that strong crime prevention and control is a function of social interactions, and social interactions are instrumental in preventing residential turnover, especially in crime-ridden neighborhoods. This paper investigates how a favorable social environment in the neighborhood can serve as a function of crime prevention and control to prevent residents from having flight intentions.

## Framework

To date, little attention has been given to the function of social interactions in crime prevention and control as a countermeasure against the effects of residential turnover. The majority of research on the interplay between crime and residential turnover revolves around the roles of changes in the social landscape, which are usually caused by displacement by immigrants and ethnic minorities (e.g., Xie & McDowall, 2010; Livingston et al., 2010). Until now, the study of social interactions and turnover behavior has remained very much in the domain of organizational behavior (e.g., Hemmasi & Csanda, 2009; Fazio et al., 2017; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017; Dutton, 2018; Tews et al., 2020).

There have also been less progress in bringing together the theoretical notions through which social interaction, crime, and the neighborhood might relate. The study of human social behavior is traditionally a domain of social psychology, whereby theories like the theory of planned behavior (TPB) are often applied. However, when these behaviors occur within the constraints of a given environment, the relevance of the TPB is significantly diminished. One of the criticisms of the TPB is for undermining the role of the environment in influencing behavior (Handy, 2004). The TPB is also known for being overly rational and not giving balanced attention to cognitive and affective processes that are known to bias against human judgments (Conner & Armitage, 1998; Geraerts et al., 2008; Wolff et al., 2011). Thus, the TPB may not be robust in conditions whereby the environment is not controlled.

In this study, the environment (neighborhood) is the principal context in which residents' flight intentions are to be studied. Because the behavior cannot be detached from the influences of the environment, this study could not use the TPB. Instead, we use notions from the field of environmental psychology to determine the point of convergence of the studied factors, namely social interaction, crime, and residential turnover. Environmental psychology allows the study of human social behavior and emotions in relation to the environment, as Wood and Giles-Corti (2008) put it, "context in which social capital can be fostered, accessed or destroyed and in which norms and behavioural manifestations of trust, reciprocity, civic engagement and mutual support can reside" (p.156).

From the perspective of environmental psychology, the manner of which humans behave in a given environmental setting is dictated by the *stimulus-organism-response* (SOR) paradigm; the cues from the environment or *stimuli* is theorized to affect a person's behavior or *response*, through the intervention of the subject's internal state or *organism* (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In relation to this study, (a) the *environment* is represented by the neighborhood wherein the adversities of crime occur. It sets the context for which residents' behavior can be assessed and modified; (b) *stimulus* may be understood as the social interactions that arose in response to criminal activity in the neighborhood, characterized by *communities of practice* and *knowledge-sharing behavior* in this paper; (c) *response* may be characterized by *flight intention*, otherwise known as residential turnover or urban flight, and (d) *organism* may be explained through neighborhood satisfaction. Favorable social interactions (strong communities of practice and knowledge-sharing behavior) would reduce residential turnover (flight intention), and this behavioral tendency would be amplified or reduced by their degree of contentment or affect towards the neighborhood (neighborhood satisfaction). The theorized relationships are as illustrated in Figure 1.

### ***Social Interactions and Residents' Flight Intention***

There are two major theoretical perspectives on the fear of crime on social interactions: (a) the *fear-decline model* suggests that the fear of crime weakens social interaction by creating distrust among community members, leading to lower collective efficacy and community decline, and (b) the *fear-solidarity model* suggests that the fear of crime can be manipulated to increase solidarity, whereby residents can be encouraged to set differences aside and cooperate towards a common goal (Liska & Warner, 1991; Hawdon et al., 2014). This meant that all residents share a sense of mutuality and can unite to a certain extent (Phillips et al., 2014). Residents who have been previously victimized were found to be exceptionally willing to engage in crime-prevention programs (Block, 1988). Thus, certain efforts that strengthen community interactions, such as creating communities of practice and inoculating knowledge-sharing behavior, may be employed.

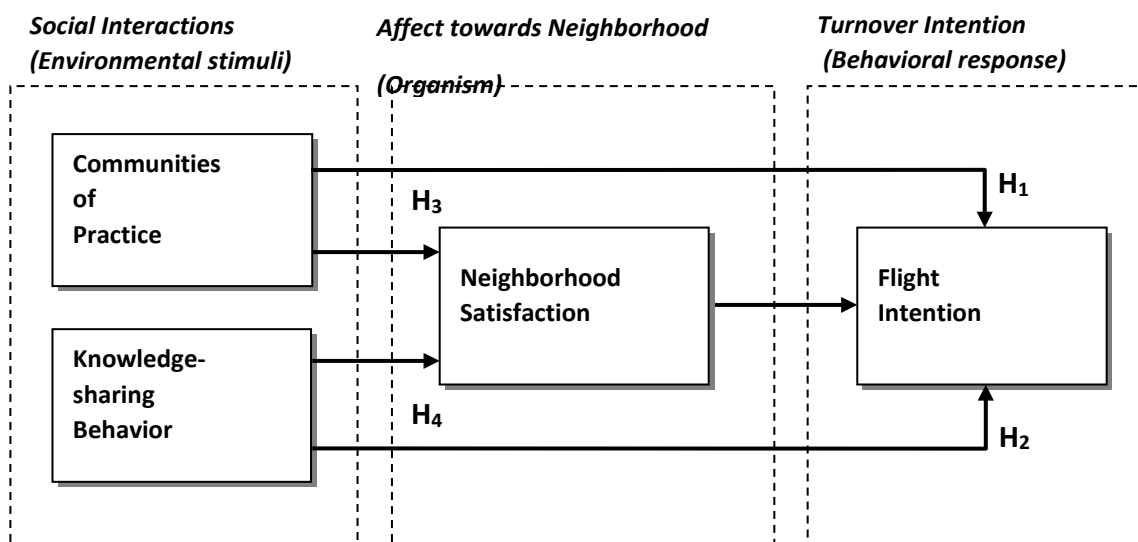


Figure 1. Framework of Residential Flight Intention

Communities of practice are the formation of groups of like-minded people «who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and to deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.” Fostering a community of practice bridges differences in a community, encourages the exchange of resources, discusses each other’s needs and aspirations, and solves collective problems (Wenger et al., 2002, pp.4–5). However, until now, the majority of research on communities of practice occurs in a workplace setting. Communities of practice have been found to improve connectedness, loyalty, and reduce turnover in an organization (Hemmasi & Csanda, 2009; Dutton, 2018).

There is surprisingly little research directed towards improving the understanding of how communities of practice can prevent neighborhood degeneration. Nonetheless, literature notes that residential flight is unlikely in communities that value societal bonds, inter-dependence, and reciprocity (Bramley & Morgan, 2003; Dempsey et al., 2011; Watson, & Kessler, 2013). Some residents, particularly the elderly, tend to move regardless of the societal bonds formed; however, it may be attributed primarily to their need for health services owing to their declining health (Oh, 2003). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H<sub>1</sub>: Communities of practice have an impact on flight intention of residents in crime-ridden neighborhoods.

Knowledge-sharing behavior is generally understood as the exchange of knowledge between a contributor and a seeker (Kimmerle et al., 2007). Inoculation of knowledge-sharing behavior among community members educates one another with information that is of interest to the safety of the community, such as knowledge about crime problems and patterns, what works and what does not, how to put knowledge into practice, and whom to involve in conditions of adversity (Ekblom, 2005, p. 58).

Similar to communities of practice, there has been little interest in the impacts of knowledge-sharing behavior on residential turnover but exists in the context of organizations, where knowledge-sharing has been found to prevent turnover intentions (Droege & Hoobler, 2003; Reychar & Weisberg, 2009). In healthcare, social interactions were also found to stimulate cognitive functions (Bernardo & Tolentino, 2019).

In crime-ridden neighborhoods, greater sharing of knowledge gives people a sense of empowerment in using both “practical and theoretical knowledge that effective crime prevention requires” (Ekblom, 2005, p.100). The knowledge of how crime is handled (Breetzke & Pearson, 2015) and the experience of having prevailed (Luthar et al., 2000) have also been found to build resilience in residents. Therefore it is hypothesized that:

H<sub>2</sub>: Knowledge-sharing behavior has an impact on flight intention of residents in crime-ridden neighborhoods.

Neighborhood satisfaction is a concept that loosely translates to the degree of happiness and contentment with the environment in which one resides (Dyck et al., 2011). Satisfaction with the neighborhood, when interpreted through the lens of the SOR paradigm, is a form of emotional mediator between environment and behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this study, neighborhood satisfaction may be understood as the degree of contentment residents have towards crime prevention and control initiatives, which are communities of practice and knowledge-sharing behavior.

Although there is little empirical research that assesses the role of neighborhood satisfaction in mediating the relationships between communities of practice, knowledge-sharing behavior, and flight intention, the general role of neighborhood satisfaction as a mediator has been proven in several studies (Oh, 2003; Van Herzele & de Vries, 2011; Roslan et al., 2019). Participation in the local community has been found to foster neighborhood satisfaction, and greater satisfaction was noted in individuals who perceived a stronger sense of social cohesion than individuals who did not (Hur & Morrow-Jones, 2008; Dassopoulos & Monnat, 2011). Normally, the more satisfied residents are with their neighborhood, the less likely they are to leave (South & Deane, 1993; Jones & Dantzler, 2020). Therefore it is hypothesized that:

H<sub>3</sub>: Neighborhood satisfaction mediates communities of practice and flight intention.

H<sub>4</sub>: Neighborhood satisfaction mediates knowledge-sharing behavior and flight intention.

## Methods

This paper employs a quantitative approach using self-administered questionnaires to gauge the level of social interactions, neighborhood satisfaction, and flight intentions of residents living in crime-prone neighborhoods. Through the results, we determine whether their current level of social interactions (community of practice and knowledge-sharing

behavior) and satisfaction with the neighborhood may have made them resilient to the crime conditions in their community, hence encouraging them to remain in the neighborhoods until the present despite the high criminal activities there.

The data used in this paper are collected from 10 randomly selected neighborhoods in the southern region of peninsular Malaysia. The neighborhoods chosen for sampling were those that recorded the highest crime rates in the region, based on data provided by the local police headquarters. As a condition for using the information, we could not reveal the names of the neighborhoods in this paper to maintain residents' anonymity and to prevent provocation and subsequent reprisal from criminals operating in these areas.

Data collection was done from November 2018 to January 2019, and residents were sampled using snowballing to identify participants with prior victimization experience. In total, 309 valid samples were obtained and analyzed using partial least squares structural modeling (PLS-SEM). Among the two approaches to structural modeling, that is, covariance-based and partial-least-squares, PLS-SEM is used in this paper because the aim of the study is to identify the predictor of predictors of flight intention rather than to confirm the theory (Hair et al., 2017). In this instance, PLS-SEM will be more robust in explaining the causal relationships in our hypotheses.

Despite PLS-SEM's robustness in small sample conditions, we used a sample of 309 because structural modeling by convention requires a generally larger sample size (Barrett, 2007) and Barclay et al.'s (1995) suggestion for "a multiplier of ten cases for each indicator for the indicators of the most complex formative construct or for the largest antecedent constructs leading to an endogenous construct" (p.292) are often misused by researchers to justify poor samples (Hair et al., 2017).

As per SEM conventions, the data was tested by first analyzing the measurement model, followed by the structural model. In the measurement model analysis, the convergent and discriminant validity was first established, owing to the recursive nature of SEM analyses, whereby the estimates of the structural model almost never improves from the measurement model. Convergent validity measures whether the items that are theorized to come together did actually converge as a construct, whereas discriminant validity proves whether the theorized constructs are truly distinct

from one another. The variance-inflated factor (VIF) was also assessed to ensure that no multicollinearity problems exist, an important assumption for structural modeling. The model was specified and estimated using SmartPLS version 3.2.8.

### **Measures**

Communities of practice and knowledge-sharing behavior are among the tenets of knowledge management. To date, research in knowledge management has remained centered on organizational learning. Despite the versatility of its notions to be adapted in various environments, its application beyond the organizational setting is limited. Given the inadequacy of relevant literature and empirical support on its application in neighborhood settings, the measurements of this study are adapted from organizational behavior studies.

The adapted variables in this study are communities of practice (Cadiz et al., 2009, pp.1055–1056), knowledge-sharing behavior (Jeon et al., 2011, p.269); flight intention (Rosin & Korabik, 1991, p.330), and neighborhood satisfaction (Konrad et al., 1999, p.1198). The measurements from these constructs were adapted by changing the contexts from organization setting into the neighborhood setting. Participants were then required to rate their agreement or disagreement with the statements on a five-point Likert scale. At the lowest extreme, 1 is identified as “strongly disagree,” and 5 is identified as “strongly agree.”

### **Results**

The study obtained between 28 to 33 responses from each of the 10 neighborhoods (9.1% to 10.7%). There is also a fair distribution in terms of gender (51.1% male and 48.9% female). The majority of the participants are from the 31–50 age range (51.4%); with the highest education being *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* or Malaysian Certificate of Education, which is equivalent to GCE-O level (46.9%); under full-time employment (72.2%) with salaries ranging between 2,500 to 4,999 MYR  $\approx$  approximately 500 to 1,000 GBP (27.8%); and have resided at their respective locations for more than 10 years (61.5%). Many also had their closest neighbors being victimized as well (72.5%).

### **Measurement Model Results**

Results from the measurement model are presented in Table 1. In brief, all the reliability indices are generally favorable as they have met the minimum threshold of 0.7 for internal consistency; values for Cronbach’s alpha (CA) are between 0.924 and 0.956; Spearman’s rho (Rho-A) values are between 0.925 and 0.970; and composite reliability (CR) values are between 0.946 and 0.957. All the measurement items also exhibit item reliability by exhibiting factor above 0.708. Average variance extracted (AVEs) also range from 0.675 to 0.882; AVE values above 0.5 indicate that more than half of the variances are explained by the constructs rather than error; hence the constructs can be regarded to have satisfied the conditions of convergent validity.

Although the reliability indices are favorable, there are two issues worth highlighting. First, knowledge-sharing behavior and flight intention recorded high CR values, which are above 0.95. This indicates a possibility that the measurements are too similar to one another and “measuring the same phenomenon” (Hair et al., 2017, p.112). Nonetheless, when the questions were adapted, care was taken to ensure that these items were not semantically similar, which may cause redundancy. Given this reason and based on the general rule of internal consistency that prefers high internal consistency, we consider the values acceptable.

Second, both KSB2 and KSB3 produced VIF values above 5 (6.762 and 5.937, respectively), raising concerns of multicollinearity. Thus, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017), the offending items were removed one-by-one, starting with the item with the highest VIF until all VIFs are normalized below 5. Henceforth KSB2 was deleted, and as a consequence, all VIF values have dropped below the limit of 5.

Besides revealing internal consistencies and convergent validity, the measurement model results also suggest the presence of discriminant validity. In Table 2, the HTMT values reported are all below 0.85, suggesting that the constructs are significantly different from one another and that the responses obtained are coherent with the theoretical specifications. With that, the study proceeded with the structural model analysis.

**Table 1***Measurement Model Results*

<b>Abbr.</b>	<b>Construct and Measurements</b>	<b>Loading</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>Rho-A</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>COP</b>	<b><i>Communities of practice</i></b>		<b>0.940</b>	<b>0.943</b>	<b>0.949</b>	<b>0.675</b>
COP1	I feel comfortable communicating with others about safety and our well-being.	0.841				
COP2	There is an open environment for free communication about safety and our well-being.	0.765				
COP3	It is easy to communicate with others about safety and our well-being.	0.816				
COP4	Collaborating with residents helps me remember things that we have learned.	0.857				
COP5	Participating in meetings helps me to remember things that we have learned.	0.833				
COP6	Lessons learned from past experiences shared are easily remembered.	0.795				
COP7	I interact with others with the intention of learning from them.	0.823				
COP8	I learn new skills and knowledge from collaborating with the residents.	0.823				
COP9	Learning is shared among the residents.	0.841				
<b>KSB</b>	<b><i>Knowledge-sharing behavior</i></b>		<b>0.956</b>	<b>0.970</b>	<b>0.957</b>	<b>0.836</b>
KSB1	I frequently share the knowledge about safety I obtained inside my neighborhood with other residents.	0.940				
KSB2	Overall, I am satisfied in my current neighborhood.	Removed				
KSB3	I frequently share my experience about safety or know-how with other residents.	0.939				
KSB4	I frequently share my expertise from my education or training with residents in my neighborhood.	0.939				
<b>FI</b>	<b><i>Flight intention</i></b>		<b>0.935</b>	<b>0.953</b>	<b>0.953</b>	<b>0.882</b>
FI1	I would want to move out of my current neighborhood.	0.911				
FI2	I am actually planning to leave my neighborhood within the next six months.	0.930				
FI3	I am actively searching for a house in other safer neighborhood right now.	0.895				
FI4	I frequently have thoughts of leaving for another safer neighborhood.	0.920				
<b>NS</b>	<b><i>Neighborhood satisfaction</i></b>		<b>0.924</b>	<b>0.925</b>	<b>0.946</b>	<b>0.815</b>
NS1	Overall, I am pleased with my neighborhood.	0.905				
NS2	Overall, I am satisfied with my current neighborhood.	0.929				
NS3	My neighborhood has met my expectations.	0.907				
NS4	My current neighborhood situation is not a major source of frustration in my life.	0.869				

**Structural Model Results**

For the structural model analysis, the bootstrapping procedure was applied using 500 re-samples. Table 3 shows the results of the model estimations, and Figure 2 shows the model estimation in the structural analysis. The results show that two paths were significant at 99% confidence level, achieving t-values above the 2.33 critical value, that is, knowledge-sharing behavior–flight intention (direct-only relationship) in support of H<sub>2</sub>, and communities of practice–flight intention (fully mediated by neighborhood satisfaction) in support of H<sub>3</sub>.

Moreover, the endogenous construct, flight intention, has an R<sup>2</sup> of 22.2%, which indicates that

this model has a moderate predictive accuracy (Cohen, 2013). The moderate predictive ability is acceptable, given that this study only focuses on social interactions, which is only one of the many aspects that may explain flight intention. Other aspects of the environment, like physical and economic characteristics, were not included in the framework. Naturally, as more exogenous are present, the R<sup>2</sup> will improve. Next, looking at effect sizes, the strength of each individual construct in predicting that flight intention could also be determined. Notably, the strongest predictor of flight tendencies is neighborhood satisfaction (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.216) rather than knowledge-sharing behavior (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.016) or communities of practice (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.002).

**Table 2**  
*Discriminant Validity Assessment*

Abbr.	Construct	HTMT			
		COP	KSB	FI	NS
COP	Communities of practice				
KSB	Knowledge-sharing behavior	0.637			
FI	Flight intention	0.214	0.057		
NS	Neighborhood satisfaction	0.542	0.366	0.484	

**Table 3**  
*Structural Model Results*

Path	Effect	Std. β	Std. error	t-value	p-value	Decision
Communities of practice → Flight intention	Direct (without mediator)	-0.054	0.070	0.774	0.220	Not supported (No impact)
Knowledge-sharing behavior → Flight intention	Direct (without mediator)	0.138	0.063	2.191*	0.014	Supported (Significant impact)
Communities of practice → Neighborhood satisfaction → Flight intention	Indirect (with mediator)	-0.224	0.041	5.400*	0.000	Supported (Full mediation)
Knowledge-sharing behavior → Neighborhood satisfaction → Flight intention	Indirect (with mediator)	-0.034	0.033	1.028	0.152	Not supported (No mediation)

Note: \*Significance at 0.99 confidence level (t=2.33)



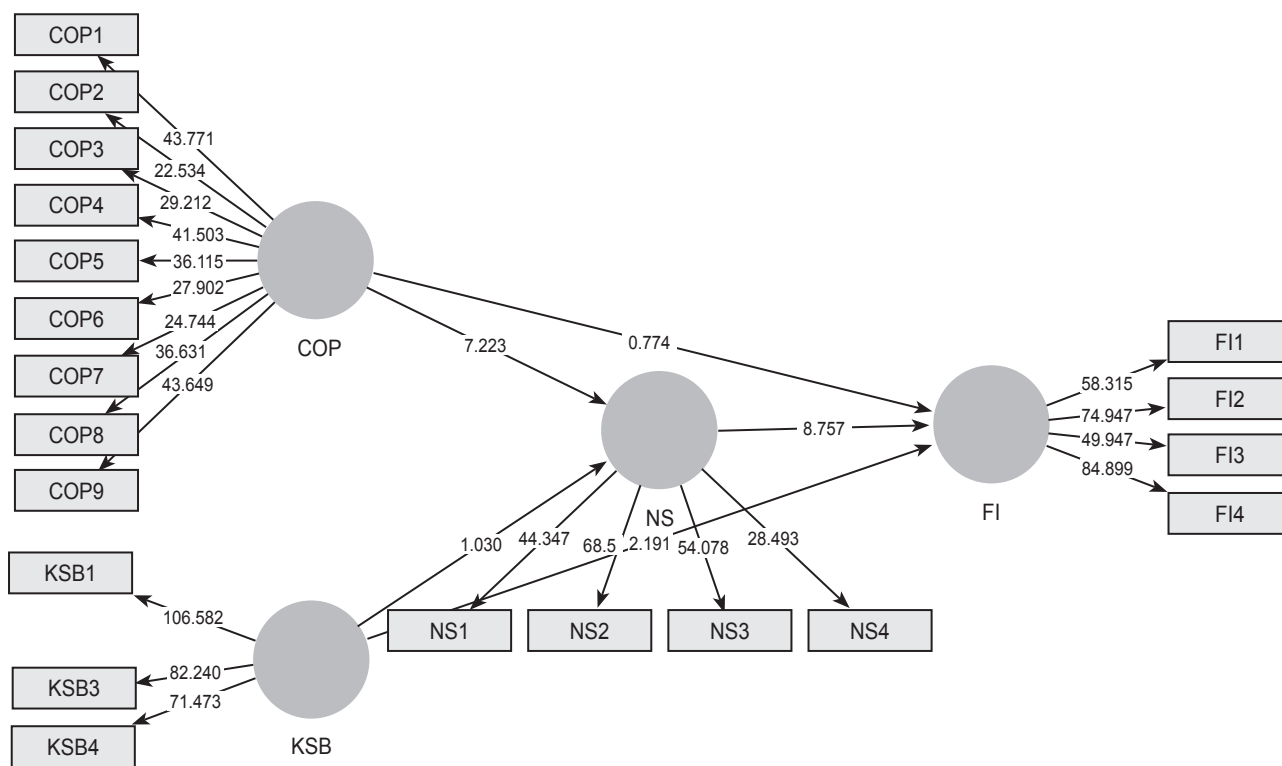


Figure 2. Structural Model Estimations

**Discussion**

The study has proposed a framework to assess the impacts of social interactions, represented by communities of practice and knowledge-sharing behavior, on residents’ flight intentions through the mediation of residential satisfaction. In general, the findings reflect the suppositions of the SOR paradigm that is identified with environmental psychology (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), but there are several oddities with both communities of practice and knowledge-sharing behavior exhibiting different behaviors towards flight intention.

The findings for communities of practice are expected and reflect the notions of the SOR paradigm. The negative relationship between communities of practice and flight intention and mediation by neighborhood satisfaction indicate that although residents are resilient, their reluctance to leave is not directly influenced by relationships and participation in community life but the ability of these relationships in giving them a sense of place,

which in turn discouraged them from leaving. There are suggestions (Hur & Morrow-Jones, 2008) that longer tenures foster greater satisfaction because of increased chances of social interactions; this may have been reflected in 61.5% of our participants having a tenure exceeding 10 years.

The significant mediation by neighborhood satisfaction also meant that residents are prevented from leaving so long as their perceptions towards these community networks remain satisfactory. This insinuates the danger of governments self-defeating their intentions of reducing turnover through communities of practice because residents are often dissatisfied with formally-endorsed programs; they usually seek informal channels and go through existing social networks to deal with crime (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Foster, 1995; Bolton, 2006). Communities of practice should, therefore, be allowed to arise naturally because they often do in times of adversity, and what will be learned during this interstitial period will then evolve to become the socio-cultural practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.64).

The findings for knowledge-sharing behavior are interesting because (a) its relationship with flight intention does not appear to be mediated by neighborhood satisfaction, and (b) the polarity of the relationship in its significant direct relationship with flight intention is positive rather than negative. As Hur and Morrow-Jones (2008) suggested, satisfaction is derived from longer social interactions, and knowledge-sharing behavior does not necessitate as much mingling and interaction with other residents. Another reason is knowledge-sharing behavior being a faculty of the mind; hence arguments may arise on its placement in the organism rather than a stimulus dimension, which will result in a direct relationship with flight intention.

The positive path coefficient between knowledge-sharing behavior and flight intention may be surprising, but not improbable. It simply connotes that knowledge-sharing behavior among residents is low, yet they do not intend to leave the neighborhood. It is noteworthy that the 10 neighborhoods from which our data were obtained are among those with the highest crime rates; all our participants also have victimization experiences, and the majority had observed their closest neighbors being victimized as well (72.5%). Therefore, residents would have acquired the knowledge and developed a common sense of safety without the reliance on information from others. This knowledge gives residents a sense of control of the adverse situation, negates their fear of crime, and builds resilience (Ekblom, 2005; Breetzke & Pearson, 2015); hence reduces their tendencies of leaving.

The finding that residential satisfaction is the highest predictor of flight intention also highlights the importance of the mediator in the framework. Studies within the domain of environmental psychology have attempted various forms of emotion and affect as the mediator, for example, the three-factor emotions (i.e., pleasure, arousal, and dominance; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974); bipolar, positive, and negative emotions (Lee et al., 2008); and place attachment, which has been increasingly popular in the recent decade (see Scannell & Gifford, 2010), all which is similar to the supposition in this research. It proves the importance of affect as a mediator. Future research may explore the use of these mediators.

## Conclusion

The research was undertaken to assess whether strong social interactions may have prevented residents from leaving the crime-ridden neighborhood. The framework, constructed based on the SOR paradigm, posits that favorable social interactions (stimuli) may be fostered through a strong community of practices and knowledge-sharing behavior, and elicit residential satisfaction (organism), which will, in turn, serve as a counteraction against flight intention (response). The findings indicate that (a) communities of practice foster satisfaction, which is instrumental in preventing them from leaving the neighborhood, and (b) residents do not practice knowledge-sharing, yet they have no intention of leaving, which suggests that years of victimization experiences have removed the need for being taught on how to stay safe.

Several theoretical and policy implications have been derived. Theoretically, this paper focuses on the role of social interactions; hence various other environmental domains, that is, physical and economic factors, were not researched. The research also implies the applicability of environmental psychology in crime-oriented studies. Many studies linking crime and turnover are neoclassical in nature and uses hard data (e.g., Cullen & Levitt, 1999). Although they may be suitable for generalizing economic impacts, it did not permit an objective assessment of residents' behavior. For that, explanations from a psychological account are needed.

Regarding policy and practice, our findings imply that the residents need facilitation, not enforcement, to have an organic and effective crime control, which satisfies residents and prevent their turnover. Based on the findings and discussions, we recommend that (a) governments use subtler approaches for crime control such as fostering community relationships through education, rather than law enforcement; and (ii) developers and local planning authorities incorporate spaces conducive for social activities in residential design.

Much of the limitations in this research pertain to the little body of empirical research that assesses the role of communities of practice and knowledge-sharing behavior in preventing turnover of residents. Researchers may increase the generalizability of the framework by applying it in other neighborhood

contexts. There are also potentials for other environmental predictors, that is, economic factors and physical factors to be assessed. There can also be an exploration of other forms of emotion or affect that may mediate the predictors and flight/remain intentions. Our study has advanced the understanding and established a groundwork for future research into counteracting the negative effects of neighborhood crime.

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### Declaration of ownership:

This report is our original work.

### Conflict of interest:

None.

### Ethical clearance:

This study was approved by the institution.

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