



Determinants of youth migration aspirations decision in Ethiopia

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Citation

Moreda, M. (2023). Determinants of Youth Migration Aspirations Decision in Ethiopia. *EthiInquiry Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 2(2): 19-32.

Article history:

Submitted: Sept 1, 2023
Received in revised version: Sept 5, 2023;
Published online: Sept 21, 2023.
Web link: <https://journals.hu.edu.et/hu-journals/index.php/erjssh/>, ISSN: Print 2790-539X, Online 2790-5403

Full length original article

OPEN ACCESS

Abstract

This study examines the factors influencing the migration aspirations of young people in Ethiopia. Using data from the Migrating Out of Poverty Research program Consortium household survey, the study analyzes a sample of 1938 youth aged 16 to 34 from four regions in Ethiopia. A logit regression model was used to predict youth migration aspirations. The findings indicate that respondents' marital status, education level and school attendance, previous migration experience, network with migrant members and relatives, and employment status significantly shape youth migration aspirations. Moreover, youth living with male and aged household heads, from better-off families are less likely to express aspirations for migration. The results further noted that remittance increases youth's probability of aspiring to migrate. Finally, this study emphasized the stark differences between male and female youth in migration decision-making, showing that females are much more likely to be influenced by household factors than their male counterparts. Based on the present results, the study concludes that youth education, employment status, previous migration experience, household welfare, and poverty conditions are crucial for determining youth migration aspirations in Ethiopia. Therefore, policies and programs that enhance youth access to education and skill development training, thereby increasing their employment opportunities, can significantly impact youth migration aspirations. Moreover, government offices concerned with youth migration should consider integrating youth in policy development.

Keywords: Youth migration aspirations, demographic factors, socioeconomic factors, household characteristics, Ethiopia

1. INTRODUCTION

International migration is a global phenomenon that has significant economic, social, and political implications (Koser, 2007). In 2020, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 281 million, with individuals aged 15–34 accounting for the largest share (42%) (IOM, 2020). Within this context, Ethiopia, as a developing country, has witnessed a steady increase in the number of Ethiopians migrating abroad. In fact, in 2019, Ethiopia ranked third among countries of origin for refugees and asylum-seekers worldwide, and it stood ninth among the top countries of origin for international migrants globally, with a significant proportion being youth (UNHCR, 2021). This growing trend has prompted scholars to investigate the determinants of migration aspirations, particularly among the youth, who form a substantial portion of Ethiopia's population and are among the most vulnerable groups affected by international migration. However, the existing body of research offers a limited understanding of the determinants of international migration in Ethiopia.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) estimates that Ethiopia had a net emigration rate of 6.29 per 1,000 population in 2020, indicating a considerable outflow of individuals seeking opportunities abroad (UN DESA, 2020). This trend raises concerns regarding the potential brain drain, as the departure of highly skilled and educated youth can impede the country's development efforts. Consequently, it is crucial to investigate the factors influencing youth migration aspirations for sustainable economic growth and social stability in Ethiopia.

The phenomenon of youth migration and the factors influencing their aspirations for migration have been the subject of considerable research and scholarly attention. Several studies have explored the motivations and determinants of young people's migration intentions in different regions and contexts. One important aspect that emerges from the literature is the role of economic disparities and opportunities in shaping young people's migration aspirations. Economic factors such as unemployment, lack of job prospects, and low wages have been consistently identified as push factors driving youth migration. Studies in the Arab Mediterranean region (Etling, Backeberg, & Tholen, 2018) and the Middle East and North Africa region (Ramos, 2019) highlight the high unemployment rates and limited opportunities as significant determinants of migration intentions among young people.

However, economic factors alone do not fully explain youth migration aspirations. Social and cultural factors also play a crucial role. For instance, studies in Mexico (Azaola, 2012) and Romania (Roman & Vasilescu, 2016) emphasize the influence of peer groups, social networks, and the desire for financial independence on young people's decision to migrate. These studies demonstrate that migration can be seen as an alternative way of including rural youth or a means to escape limited opportunities in their localities.

Furthermore, the political context and perceptions of governance and democracy are important factors shaping young people's migration intentions. The study by Etling et al. (2018) in the Arab Mediterranean region highlights the significance of political discontent, the perception of democracy, and the ability to shape government policies as determinants of migration intentions. Similarly, the study by Mol (2016) on European youth during the economic crisis reveals the role of individual characteristics, feelings of discontent, and the economic situation in the country of origin and destination.

Religion and cultural norms also emerge as influential factors in migration aspirations. Hoffman, Marsiglia, and Ayers (2015) find that internal and external religiosity can influence Mexican youth's desire to work or live in the USA. This suggests that religious and cultural norms can shape young people's aspirations by discouraging or facilitating migration.

A systematic review of determinants of migration aspirations by Aslanyan et al. (2021) found that the factors that stand out as the most certain and steady drivers of migration aspirations are young age and ties with current or former migrants. Other determinants, especially dissatisfaction with public services and exposure to violence and insecurity – appear to raise migration aspirations even more consistently, but they have been studied less frequently.

Overall, the above empirical studies indicate that youth migration aspirations are multifaceted and influenced by economic, social, political, and cultural factors. Economic disparities, lack of opportunities, social networks, political discontent, perceptions of governance, and cultural norms all influence young people's decision to migrate. Understanding these factors is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders to develop effective strategies and interventions that address the needs and aspirations of young people in relation to migration.

Despite the increasing attention given to international migration in Ethiopia, limited research specifically focuses on the determinants of youth international migration aspirations. Existing studies primarily concentrate on general determinants of internal and international migration, patterns, and consequences of migration in different regions of Ethiopia. The determinants of migration vary depending on the type of migration. Wealth and network variables emerge as crucial factors in international migration, where wealthier households with established networks have a higher likelihood of sending members abroad (Beyene, 2011; Tegegne & Penker, 2016). Human capital variables such as age and education play an important role in internal migration, with younger individuals and those with higher education levels being more likely to migrate internally (Beyene, 2011; Tegegne & Penker, 2016). Push factors like environmental degradation, lower agricultural productivity, and inadequate social services drive both internal and international migration, while pull factors such as better employment opportunities and urban amenities attract people from rural areas to urban centers (Kassegn, 2020; Melesse & Nachimuthu, 2017). Moreover, social and human capital theories are emphasized as significant in explaining migration, with social capital, represented by networks and connections, influencing international migration decisions, while human capital, including education and skills, being more relevant for internal migration (Beyene, 2011; Tegegne & Penker, 2016). Additionally, recent trends indicate a shift towards economic motives, with the United States and the Middle East being identified as major destinations for Ethiopian migrants (Ayanie et al., 2020). As such most of the above studies focused on factors of internal and international migration without considering those determinants that influence youth migration aspirations in the country.

In the context of international migration few empirical studies conducted in Ethiopia have shed some light on the determinants of youth international migration aspirations in the country. The studies by Schewel and Fransen (2018) and Schewel and Fransen (2020) explore the relationship between education and migration aspirations in Ethiopia. According to Schewel and Fransen (2018), rising levels of primary and secondary education influence aspirations to migrate. They find that completing primary education increases the aspiration to live elsewhere. In their study on immobility aspirations, Schewel and Fransen (2020) reveal that the desire to stay decreases with higher levels of education. These studies challenge the assumption that migration is solely

driven by poverty and emphasize the role of education in shaping migration patterns. However, the two studies did not give detailed examination of the major non-education factors that shape youth migration aspirations in Ethiopia.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature by building upon these existing studies and further investigating the determinants of youth international migration aspirations in Ethiopia. By considering factors such as education, income, job opportunities, social networks, and the influence of migration experiences, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the unique factors that shape youth migration aspirations in Ethiopia in the context of international migration.

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that influence youth international migration aspirations in Ethiopia. To achieve this aim, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What are the socio-demographic characteristics of youth who aspire to migrate internationally in Ethiopia?
- What are the economic and non-economic factors that influence youth international migration aspirations in Ethiopia?
- How do social networks and family ties affect youth international migration aspirations in Ethiopia?

This study holds significant value as it provides insights into the unique factors that shape youth's international migration aspirations in Ethiopia. The findings from this study can inform policymakers and stakeholders in developing targeted interventions that address the driving factors behind youth migration aspirations. Ultimately, these interventions can help reduce the number of vulnerable youths who undertake dangerous and irregular migration journeys. To achieve these objectives, this study uses data from the 2018 Migrating Out of Poverty (MOOP) Research Program Consortium (RPC), funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) household survey for Ethiopia. The sample consists of 1200 rural households with and without migrants, and the data were collected through face-to-face interviews. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, bivariate analysis, and logistic regression models.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 2 describes the data and methodology used in this study. Section 3 presents the results and discussion of the study. Finally, Section 4 provides the conclusions and policy implications of the study and recommendations for future research.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Data source and methods of data collection

The data for this study was obtained from 2018 migrating out of Poverty (MOOP) Research Program Consortium (RPC), funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) household survey for Ethiopia. The survey covered 1200 rural households with migrants and households without migrants. The survey covers four regions (Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya, and SNNPR), seven woredas, and sixteen kebeles.

For the survey, a migrant is defined as a “former member of the household in which the interview is being conducted who is not currently living in the household and who has moved away from their kebele during the past ten years, and has been away for at least three months or is expected to be away for three months or more”.

Survey data collection was undertaken to identify and examine households with and without migrants, including detailed information on all the individuals residing at home and currently away. The data covers current migrants, social relationships and remittances from current migrants, household socioeconomic wellbeing, other sources of household income, and perceptions of quality of life, and household expenditure on food and non-food items, migration experience of returned migrants, asset, and migration aspiration. In this survey, questions related to migration aspiration were collected from household members aged between 16 and 40, and this study considers a sample of youth aged 16 to 34 (N=1938) to study determinants of their migration aspiration.

2.2. Methodology

Binary logistic regression was chosen as the most suitable method for data analysis due to the binary nature of the dependent variable. As a result, a logit model incorporating individual and household characteristics was employed to determine young people’s migration aspirations (Table 2.1). Individual and household characteristics have average marginal impacts on young migration aspiration, as shown in Table 2.2. The coefficients should be regarded as a percentage point shift in the likelihood of aspiring to migrate. Stata 14.2 was the statistical software utilized to analyze the data.

2.3. Variables and operationalization

In sociology, social psychology, and economics, “aspirations express goals or goal orientations (or desired future end states) that are relevant to well being broadly defined” (Bernard et al., 2014). As goals, they “serve to mobilize and direct energy into action with respect to their objects, thus providing motive power for action” (Haller and Miller, 1963, cited in Bernard et al., 2014).

Bernard and Taffesse (2014) characterize aspirations as (1) future-oriented, i.e. goals that could be achieved in the future, (2) motivators, i.e. aspirations are something that people are willing to invest resources to achieve, and (3) specific dimensions of well-being such as wealth and social statuses, but also a combination of two or more of this dimensions to attain general life outcomes. This implies that aspirations are very important psychological factors that could affect future-oriented current decisions and predict economic behaviors (Bernard and Taffesse, 2014). In this study, aspirations are defined as the desire to fulfill or achieve the desired goal.

The dependent variable that specifies migration aspirations variable is derived from a survey question that connects the prospect of future migration to a current or recent cognitive or emotional state. The two parts can be analytically distinguished as the action and the mindset, respectively (Carling, 2019 cited in MOOP 2018) household survey question filter migration aspiration, through a direct question asked only those who are currently living in the household and were aged 16 to 40 whether they were considering migrating in the next 12 months and reasons for considering and not considering migrating, where they are considering migrating, and whether they have any connections at the planned destination. The survey question,

therefore, intended to analyze measures of consideration, intention, duration, or some other form of mindset regarding the prospect of migrating: The nature of the mindset (e.g. consideration, intention) 2. The temporality of the mindset (e.g. during the 12 months the moment of the interview) 3. The nature of the action (e.g. migrate destination, live in another place) 4. The temporality of the action (e.g. likelihood that individual will migrate, probability). Based on the combination of the questions asked above those individuals who considered migrating are coded as 1 that the respondent aspires to migrate, whereas response 0 shows that the respondent does not wish to migrate.

Relevant independent variables that are likely to affect the migration aspirations decision of youth are included from theories, empirical studies, experience, and data availability. These explanatory variables were chosen and categorized into individual and household characteristics. The variables and expected signs are summarized in Appendix Table 1.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive statistics

Tables 2.1 show the characteristics of youth respondents in 2018. The data show that about 27% of the sample youth aspire to migrate in 2018. About 53.7 % were male and had a mean age of 23 years. The data show that around 22% of the youth were married, and about 21% of them have children aged less than 15 years of age. About 10.2% of the youth had previous migration experience, and 7.3 % have maintained networks and attachments with migrant members and relatives. The mean schooling of youth was around seven years, and 36% are currently attending school. About 8.4% of the youth reported that they are not currently employed (including those unemployed looking for work and not looking for work).

Regarding household characteristics, 72% were male-headed, and the household head's mean age was 54. Around 75% of the head were married and had a mean household size of six. Most households had land for agriculture (94%) with a mean log of income and wealth index of 0.3 and 0.1, respectively. About 54% of the households perceive that their overall quality of life has improved over the past five years.

Table 2.1: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Youth characteristics					
Aspire to migrate	1992	0.27	.444	0	1
Age	2001	22.522	5.315	16	34
Age (square term)	2001	535.49	258.009	256	1156
Gender(male)	1974	0.537	.499	0	1
Currently in school	1998	0.359	.48	0	1
Highest education level completed(in years)	1998	6.692	3.805	0	25
Marital status	2001	0.221	.415	0	1
Having child aged less than 15	2001	0.208	.406	0	1
Previous migration experience	2001	0.102	.303	0	1
Network with migrant members and relatives	2001	0.073	.26	0	1
Unemployed	1998	0.084	.278	0	1

Household characteristic					
Age of household head	1986	54.816	14.347	17	99
Sex of household head(male)	1969	0.7222	.448	1	2
Household head is Married	1986	0.747	.435	0	1
Education of household head (in years)	1986	2.199	3.292	0	15
Household size	2001	6.025	2.031	1	13
Household has Land for agriculture	2001	0.941	.237	0	1
Log of income Percapita	2001	7.905	2.169	1	11.571
Parent's Wealth index	2001	0.309	.138	.007	.891
Parent's Wealth index Sqare term	2001	0.115	.102	0	.793
Household received remittance in the last 12 months	2001	0.68	0.466531	0	1
Perception of the overall quality of life(subjective wellbeing)	2001	0.59	.492	0	1
Region of residence					
Tigray	2001	0.213	.41	0	1
Amhara	2001	0.227	.419	0	1
Oromiya	2001	0.28	.449	0	1
SNNPR's	2001	0.279	.449	0	1

3.2. Determinants of youth migration aspirations: Regression result

This study aims to identify the main determinants of the migration aspirations decision of youth in Ethiopia through the log it regression model. The log it model was estimated using the maximum likelihood technique and are presented in Table 2.2. Additional insight was also provided by analyzing the marginal effects, calculated as the partial derivatives of the non-linear probability function, evaluated at each variable sample mean. The likelihood estimates of the log it model indicated that the Chi-square statistic of 567.785 was highly significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that the model has strong explanatory power. The pseudo coefficient of multiple determinations (R^2) shows that 25% of the variation in migration aspiration decisions in Ethiopia was collectively explained by the independent variables. Table 2.2 lists the determinants variables that were identified to affect migration aspirations. They are grouped in individual and household characteristics. Some of the variables that were not significant in the model were excluded from the model.

Taking individual characteristics, the result showed that the relationship between marriage and migration aspirations is negative and significant. This result indicates that married individuals are less likely (14%) to aspire to migrate. This might be the fact that individuals that aspire to migrate, such aspirations will certainly affect the considerations of their partner. in addition, family responsibility might influence the decision. The result is in line with ([Etling et al., 2020](#); [Ivlevs and King, 2015](#); [Krieger and Maitre, 2006](#); [Lee and Lee, 2019](#); [Lovo, 2014](#); [Maleszyk and Kdra, 2020](#); [Manchin and Orazbayev, 2018](#); [Marrow and Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020](#); [Migali and Scipioni, 2019](#); [Sadiddin et al., 2019](#); [Smith and Floro, 2020](#)).

The result indicated that educational attainment which is measured by an individual's number of years of education has a positive association with aspirations to migrate. This might be the fact that educated individuals may think that they face lower institutional barriers and they may find it is less difficult for them to learn a new language or thinking that could make them more likely to aspire migration because migration is viewed as more achievable. The other plausible explanation is that individuals may have migration aspirations because they think

that they are educated or skilled and can get a job easily or it might be the fact that they are educated and they seek higher education to fulfill their aspirations to migrate. The finding from this study is consistent with most empirical studies c

In contrast to the above related to educational attainment, current school attendances discourage individuals who wish to migrate. This study showed that school attendance negatively affects migration aspiration decisions. An individual currently in school is less likely (7%) to aspire to migrate than those not attending school. This result might be because individuals may have their dream to fulfill and want them to come true.

Personal previous migration experience (both internal and international migration) and having a network of ties with migrant members and relatives positively affect migration aspiration. Individuals with previous migration experience (return migrants) are more likely (15%) to aspire to migrate than their counterparts. Similarly, those with ties or networks with current or former migrant family members and relatives are more likely to aspire to migration by 76 percentage points. Previous migration experience may have a positive and higher likelihood impact on individuals' migration aspirations since return migrants may know how to transform aspirations into a real movement, which they can employ to make migration possible a second time around. Furthermore, if the community from which they migrated has a high share of out-migration, in that case, return migrants are more likely to have networks at their prior residence or in other regions. These factors suggest that those who have previously migrated would have stronger migration desires than those who never did so. This finding is in line with the works of (Efendic 2016; [Etling et al., 2020](#); [Hoffman et al., 2015](#); [Nieri et al., 2012](#); Nowotny 2014; [Tabor et al., 2015](#)). There is a larger propensity to aspire to migration with ties to former or current migrant members and relatives. This can affect individuals' migration aspirations for instance, individuals with close family members who live elsewhere in the country or abroad may wish to move to be reunited with those family members. Furthermore, current migrants' ties might influence opinions of migration and the destination location, for example, through return visits, social media posts, or direct conversation. This finding is consistent with the results of ([Carling 2002](#); [Etling et al., 2020](#); [Marrow and Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020](#); [Tabor et al., 2015](#); [Sadiddin et al., 2019](#); [Smith and Floro 2020](#); [van Dalen et al., 2005](#)).

When it comes to the impact of household characteristics like age, sex, and marital status appears to affect individual migration aspiration decisions negatively. Specifically, the result showed that with the increase in age of the household head, youth members of the family are less likely to aspire for migration at a 10% significant level. Similarly, aspiration for migration reduced with the head being male and married. The plausible reason for the reduction of aspiration with age might be related to support and care given by individual's family members for parents at old age discourage them from migrating out. Concerning sex of the household head it is common in the Ethiopian tradition that the male is the breadwinner of the family the household headed by male is expected to fulfill need of the family members. Because migration in Ethiopia is mostly used to support one's livelihood, a young person living in a household that meets their needs is less likely to aspire for migration. Similarly, if the household head is married, marriage instills responsibility to take care and support partner and young members and may motivate young children and family members to prioritize education than migration. Being male headed and married household head reduce the probability of youth aspiration for migration 9 % and 10 % respectively.

Household income that is measured by per capita household income appears to have positive impact on migration aspiration of youth in Ethiopia. The coefficient is positive and significant at 5 % level though weak, that likely affect aspiration by 1.4 percentage points. This positive relationship of income with aspiration to migration could be that individuals that live in household that earn well parents can afford to cover migration costs including travel expenses expecting that they will gain additional income gains from migration. Such considerations make individual youth in the household to have aspiration for migration to seek for better opportunities in destination areas. This result is consistent with (Ivlevs 2013; Manchin and Orazbayev, 2018; Marrow and Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020; Sadiddin et al., 2019).

Remittances can play a variety of roles when it comes to migration aspiration. The result evidenced that individual that is living in household that receive remittance more likely to aspire for migration (5 %) than others. This might be due to strong family attachment and network with current and former migrant members might have migration encouraging effect – either in order to be together with the remittance sender or because obtaining assistance in settling in a foreign country appears to be more likely to encourage migration aspiration. Furthermore, remittances might be viewed as physical proof that migration pays off, which can encourage people to migrate. The positive effect remittance on migration aspirations is in line with studies by (Carling 2002; Hiskey et al., 2014; Groenewold et al., 2012; Ivlevs and King, 2015; Kandel and Massey, 2002; Ivlevs and King, 2015).

In a country like Ethiopia where migration is commonly considered as a livelihood strategy and as a gateway to a better life wellbeing condition of household is presumed to determine aspiration for migration of household members. Hence, current perception of the overall quality of life of household is expected to influence migration aspirations. Overall, the result from this study indicates that individuals that are living in a household who perceive their current overall quality of life better compared to five years before are less likely (4%) to have migration aspirations. Similar result is obtained from the works of (Cai et al., 2014; Chindarkar ,2014; Graham and Markowitz, 2011, 2013; Ivlevs, 2015; Lovo 2014g; Migali and Scipioni 2019g; Smith and Floro 2020b).

Spatial factors also influence youth aspiration for migration. Accordingly, the result of the study showed that considering Tigray region as a reference the probability to aspire for migration is more likely (7.3%) for those youth living in SNNPR's region while the propensity to aspire for migration is less for those youth living in Amhara and Oromiya region compared to youth residing in Tigray.

Table 2.2: Logit Regression result on the determinants of youth aspiration decisions

Variables	Coefficient	Marginal effect
DV: Aspire to migrate		
Youth characteristics		
Age	0.209 (0.125)	0.0294 (0.0176)
Age (square term)	-0.00409 (0.00259)	-0.000575 (0.000364)
Gender of aspiring (1=male)	-0.0073 (0.127)	-0.00103 (0.0179)
Marital status (=Married)	-0.990***	-0.139***

		(0.261)	(0.0363)
Currently in school(=yes)		-0.484**	-0.0681**
		(0.16)	(0.0223)
Highest education level completed (in years)		0.0859***	0.0121***
		(0.0186)	(0.00257)
Having a child aged less than 15		-0.0126	-0.00177
		(0.254)	(0.0357)
Previous migration experience(=yes)		1.071***	0.151***
		(0.198)	(0.0272)
Network with migrant members and relatives(=yes)		5.368***	0.755***
		(0.535)	(0.0703)
Currently Unemployed(=yes)		-0.334	-0.047
		(0.237)	(0.0333)
Household characteristics			
Age of household head		-0.0128*	-0.00180*
		(0.00541)	(0.000757)
Sex of household head(male)		-0.621**	-0.0874**
		(0.231)	(0.0323)
The household head is Married		-0.690**	-0.0970**
		(0.232)	(0.0323)
Education of household head (in years)		0.00417	0.000587
		(0.023)	(0.00323)
Household size		0.0189	0.00265
		(0.0326)	(0.00458)
The household has land for agriculture		0.373	0.0524
		(0.293)	(0.0412)
Log of income Percapita		0.0994*	0.0140*
		(0.0393)	(0.0055)
Parent's wealth index		(-0.902)	-0.127
		(1.728)	(0.243)
Parent's Wealth index Square term		0.838	0.118
		(2.337)	(0.329)
Household received remittance in the last 12 months		0.325*	0.0457*
		(0.163)	(0.0229)
Perception of the overall quality of life(subjective wellbeing)		-0.265*	-0.0373*
		(0.134)	(0.0188)
Region of residence			
Tigray(reference)		0	0
		(.)	(.)
Amhara		-1.384***	-0.157***
		(0.239)	(0.0253)
Oromiya		-0.455*	-0.0653*
		(0.196)	(0.0283)
SNNPR's		0.422*	0.0727*
		(0.179)	(0.0302)
Mean dependent var	0.271	SD dependent var	0.445
Pseudo r-squared	0.2504	Number of obs	1938

Chi-square	567.485	Prob > chi2	0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)	1748.657	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	1887.892
Log likelihood =	-849.32856		

Note: Marginal effects; (d) for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1;

Standard errors in parentheses * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

4. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to identify the impact of individual demographic and socioeconomic characteristics as well as household characteristics on the migration aspirations of young people in Ethiopia. The study is based on data from Migrating out of Poverty (MOOP) Research Programme Consortium (RPC), funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) household survey for Ethiopia. a survey of 1207 rural households conducted in 2018, and considers a sample of individual youth aged 16 to 34(N=1938). The survey covers four regions in Ethiopia.

The results from the logit model show that both individual and household factors significantly shape the probability of youth migration aspiration. Probability to aspire to migrate increases with higher years of education level, previous migration experience, and frequent contact with migrant members and relatives. At the same time, it decreases with individual youth currently married and attending school. Household factors such as aged, male, and married household heads, from better-off families, make youth less likely to express migration aspirations. The results further show the importance of remittance on youth migration aspirations that living in a remittance-receiving household encourages youth to aspire to migrate out. Finally, this study further emphasized the stark differences between youth and male migration decision-making, showing that females are much more likely to be influenced by household factors than their male counterparts. Overall, these results suggest that youth education, employment, return migrants, household welfare, and poverty conditions are crucial for determining youth migration aspirations decision in Ethiopia.

Therefore, policies and programs that enhance youth access to education and skill development training, thereby increasing their employment opportunities, can significantly impact youth migration aspirations. Moreover, government offices concerned with youth migration should consider integrating youth in policy development. Finally, poverty reduction policies and strategies should work on poor households are recommended.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the Migrating-Out of Poverty (MOOP) Research Program Consortium (RPC) for giving me access to their valuable household survey data for Ethiopia. The availability of this data has been crucial in conducting this research and obtaining meaningful insights.

6. FUNDING

No fund was received.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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