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LIFE SATISFACTION AND (NON-) MIGRATION ASPIRATION

The case of Southwest Bangladesh

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Introduction

Life satisfaction (LS) indicates how much an individual is satisfied or dissatisfied with different aspects of his/her life (Costanza et al, 2007; Rogge and Van Nijverseel, 2019). LS depends on income but is also associated with other aspects of life such as social networks and length of stay in a place. In addition, environmental stressors affect satisfaction in life (von Möllendorff and Hirschfeld, 2016).

People are more likely to migrate when they are dissatisfied with life (Cai et al, 2014). However, whether the different determinants of LS independently and/or in combination affect LS and hence migration aspiration remains an empirical question. Besides, there is scant literature that links determinants of LS to migration aspiration in areas that are exposed to persistent environmental hazards. This paper intends to fill this gap.

Data and Method

The study makes use of household data from 190 respondents and econometric analysis, as well as other parametric and non-parametric tests are employed. The basic regression equation takes the following form;

LS = α0 + β1 income + β2 educational level + β3 gender + β4 age + β5 social networks + ε

LS is measured in a 5 Likert scale; 1 indicating total dissatisfaction and 5 representing the optimal satisfaction.

Objective of the study and results

The research has four objectives.

i. it investigates the determinants of LS.
ii. it examines the relationship between LS and migration aspiration. Specifically, whether average LS differs between those who prefer to stay and those who choose to migrate.
iii. it assesses the intersectionality between social network, length of stay and household income in relation to LS.
iv. finally, the differential impact of social network and duration of stay on LS among those who intend to migrate and those who prefer to stay is explored.

The result shows;

- ❑ income as the main determinant of LS.
- ❑ only up to 12 years of schooling affects LS.
- ❑ a higher LS among respondents who prefer to stay compared to those who aspire to migrate.
- ❑ an income mediated effect of social network and duration of stay on LS in the stayer's sample.

Conclusion

- ➢ Despite environmental risks, income remains an important determinant of LS in Southwest Bangladesh.
- ➢ Only some years of schooling affects LS, which can be attributed to the rurality of the study area and lack of employment opportunities for highly educated pupils.
- ➢ The higher LS among stayers conform with the premise that people migrate when they are dissatisfied in life.
- ➢ The finding of the study also indicates that an increase in income can motivate people with a long settlement history with more relatives to prefer to remain in a place.

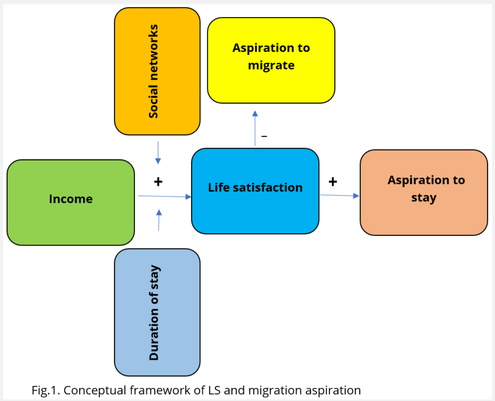

Fig.1. Conceptual framework of LS and migration aspiration

Table 1. Determinants of life satisfaction

Variables		Models	
		OLS	Ordered probit
Income	in thousand BDT	0.01*	0.01*
Income square		0.00	0.00
Education level	Less than 12 years of schooling	0.64*	0.82*
	More than 12 years of schooling	0.45	0.54
Gender	Female	0.70	0.12
Age		0.04	0.05
Age square		0.00	0.00
Social networks	Number of relatives	0.00	0.00
Constant		1,522*	-

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Note: illiterate education level and male gender are reference categories

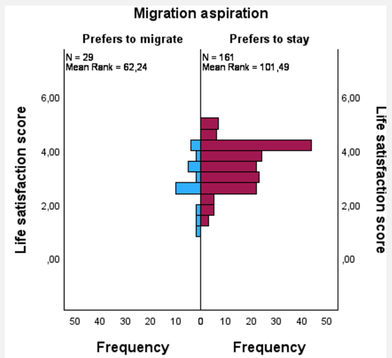

Fig. 2. LS score ranks of Mann-Whitney U test output

Table 2. Overall and stayers models of LS

Variables	Models	
	Overall model	Stayer's model
Income, education level, age, gender, social network, **duration of stay**	1a(income*,<12 years of schooling*)	2a(income**,<12 years of schooling*, -2nd duration category*)
Income, education level, age, gender, income x relatives	1b(income**, -income^2*,< 12 years of schooling*)	2b(income*)
Income, education level, age, gender, **income x duration**	1c*(- income^2*,2nd duration category*)	2c*(2nd duration category)
Income, education level, age, gender, **income x relatives x duration**	1d(income*,<12 years of schooling*)	2d*(income*, 3rd duration category)

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Note: Illiterate education level, male gender and we moved our household here duration of stay are reference categories

References

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