ABSTRACT

Youth disengagement, characterized as not in education, employment, or training (NEET), is a critical development issue for sub-Saharan African countries to harness the demographic dividend. Understanding the role of demographic dynamics, particularly migration, in influencing NEET status is imperative for designing and implementing policies and interventions. This study examines how migration status affect youth NEET in Ghana from a gendered perspective with data from the 2022 Ghana Annual Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Three logistic regression models were run to examine the influence of migration on NEET. Long-term and return-migrants are less likely to be NEET than non-migrants. Among females, long-term migrants exhibit a lower likelihood of NEET status compared to non-migrants but among males, only return migrants have a decreased likelihood of NEET status. These findings emphasize the nuanced gendered relationship between migration and NEET status. Further research should inform evidence-based policy to leverage youth migration to reduce NEET.

Introduction:

Youth empowerment, through employment and skill acquisition, is essential for economic development and their own subjective well-being (Geza et al., 2022). Employment, educational and training opportunities to empower young people are not evenly spatially distributed across countries. Migration is an important sociodemographic process by which people can reach economic and social empowerment opportunities.

NEET refers to a situation where a person is Not in Employment, Education and Training. Being NEET represents a state of youth disengagement which has adverse consequences for their subjective wellbeing as well as national progress. Migration and Youth NEET are topical issues in the sustainable development discourse, as they are both critical for population redistribution and a prerequisite for attaining the demographic dividend in sub-Saharan Africa. That notwithstanding, the relationship between the two is unclear and scholarship on how migration dynamics drive youth development in contemporary dispensations is inconclusive. Migrant youth are generally more likely to be NEET (Caroleo et al., 2020; Zudina, 2022). The credentials of most young migrants are not recognized resulting in unemployment or underemployment (Cortina et al. 2014).

Other factors such as language barrier and social networks make young migrants vulnerable to NEET (Pattinasarany, 2019). On the contrary, migration could be a protective factor against being in NEET (Yang 2020).

This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how the migration status of young persons relates to their NEET status. This is premised on the assumption that young persons are willing to be in employed or engaged in some skill acquisition or enhancement activity.

Data & Methods:

This study uses data from the nationally representative Ghana Annual Household Income and Expenditure Survey (AHIES) collected in three quarters of 2022. The AHIES collects information on household living conditions and general population wellbeing. The survey also collects detailed household and individual-level data pertaining to demographics, migration, education, health and employment among others.

Sample: The survey sampled 10,800 households in 600 enumeration areas. About 54,000 individuals from the 10,800 households sampled were used in this study. The sampling frame for the survey was the 2021 population and housing census listing frame. A random sampling method was used to select eighteen (18) households in selected enumeration areas in all regions to produce a nationally representative sample.

Analysis: The associations between migration status and Youth NEET were examined at the bivariate (not shown) and multivariate levels separately for men, women, and the total population. The outcome variable, Youth NEET, is dichotomous; hence, we employed binary logistic regression models using maximum likelihood estimation techniques (Table 1), adjusting for selected socioeconomic and demographic variables. The separate models for men and women examine the within-group differences.

Results:

In model one, compared to non-migrants, long-term migrants have lower odds of being NEET while recent migrants have higher odds. This reflects the reality of migrants new to their destination who require time to be settled and be integrated into the social and economic activities in the destination areas. Overall, females have significantly higher odds of being NEET compared to males.

Generally, persons between the ages of 20-24 and 25-29 have significantly higher odds of being NEET compared to persons between the ages of 15-19 while those between 30-35 years have a lower odd of being NEET. As the educational attainment of an individual increases, their likelihood of being NEET reduces.

Both married and formerly married individuals have lower odds of being NEET compared to the never married individuals. Individuals living in rural areas have lower odds of being NEET compared to those in urban areas. Living in the Northern Belt is associated with higher odds of being NEET compared to living in the Coastal belt. Compared to Christians, Muslims have higher odds of being NEET while those in other religions have lower odds of being NEET. Individuals belonging to the Mole-Dagbani/Grusi/Gurma ethnic groups have lower odds of being NEET compared to other ethnic groups.

Among males only, long-term migrants have lower odds of being NEET while all other migration category did not have a significantly different likelihood of being NEET compared to non-migrants. In model three, comprising females only, compared to non-migrants, long-term migrants have lower odds of being NEET while recent migrants have higher odds.

While recent male migrants' likelihood of being NEET does not statistically differ from that of male non-migrants, recent female migrants are more likely to be NEET compared to female non-migrants. Both models show that long-term migrants are less likely to be NEET. This could indicate that when migrants are settled for a longer period, they are better integrated into the labor market and educational systems.

References

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Table 2 Binary logistic regression estimates of the relationship between migration status and youth NEET in Ghana

	Women *Pseudo R^2=0.0354* *Prob>χ^2=0.000*		**Men** *Pseudo R^2=0.0449* *Prob>χ^2=0.000*		**Total (n=54,063)** *Pseudo R^2=0.0408* *Prob>χ^2=0.000*	
	Odds Ratio	**CI (95%)**	**OR**	**CI (95%)**	**OR**	**CI (95%)**
Intercept					0.580	
Gender						
Men (r)						
Women					1.538	1.479, 1.599
Migrant status						
Non-migrant (r)						
Recent migrant	1.145	1.068, 1.229	0.940	0.855, 1.034	1.095	1.035, 1.158
Long-term migrant	0.811	0.757, 0.868	0.816	0.749, 0.888	0.821	0.778, 0.866
Return migrant	0.992	0.859, 1.147	0.795	0.661, 0.956	0.899	0.803, 1.007
Age						
15-20 (r)						
20-24	2.161	2.016, 2.316	1.698	1.581, 1.823	1.967	1.872, 2.067
25-29	1.531	1.409, 1.663	1.527	1.394, 1.672	1.514	1.424, 1.609
30-35	0.886	0.809, 0.971	0.996	0.891, 1.113	0.885	0.826, 0.949
Educational Status						

No education (r)						
Primary	0.902	0.831, 0.979	0.743	0.669, 0.824	0.825	0. 775, 0.879
Secondary	0.632	0.576, 0.695	0.647	0.578, 0.723	0.627	0.584, 0.673
Tertiary	0.392	0.346, 0.444	0.414	0.359, 0.477	0.396	0.361, 0.434
Type of place of residence						
Urban (r)						
Rural	0.877	0.832, 0.923	0.774	0.729, 0.822	0.829	0.798, 0.862
Development zone						
Coastal (r)						
Middle Belt	0.998	0.934, 1.065	0.952	0.882, 1.027	0.974	0.927, 1.024
Northern	1.194	1.088, 1.310	1.392	1.251, 1.549	1.278	1.192, 1.370
Marital status						
Never married (r)						
Currently married	0.699	0.652, 0.748	0.374	0.340, 0.410	0.586	0.555, 0.619
Formerly married	0.585	0.480, 0.713	0.889	0.630, 1.254	0.629	0.529, 0.746
Religion						
Christian (r)						
Muslim	1.179	1.099, 1.267	1.095	1.011, 1.186	1.139	1.081, 1.202
Other	0.765	0.669, 0.876	0.886	0.794, 0.988	0.827	0.760, 0.899
Ethnicity						
Akan (r)						
Ewe/Ga-Dangme	0.952	0.882, 1.027	0.945	0.866, 1.032	0.944	0.892, 1.000

Mole-Dagbani/ Gursi/Gurma/Mande	0.788	0.728, 0.852	0.725	0.663, 0.792	0.757	0.714, 0.803
Other	0.962	0.869, 1.066	0.727	0.646, 0.818	0.843	0.780, 0.909

Source: Ghana Annual Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2022)

**** p<0.001 **p< 0.01 *p< 0.05*