Independent North-South Child Migration as a Parental Investment in Northern Ghana

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Abstract

North-South independent child migration flows in Ghana have gained increasing political and research interest in Ghana. Parents and adult relations actively participate in the decision of their children to migrate. In view of this, this study uses a 2005 survey of 451 independent child migrants in Accra and Kumasi to assess the extent to which this relatively new wave of migration constitutes some kind of an economic investment by parents against poverty. A major finding of the study is that although parents, through remittances by their children, may meet their objective of sending their children as migrants to southern communities, in the long run, these gains may be eroded due to diverse social, economic and reproductive health risks the children may be exposed to.

Introduction

Children in several countries in Africa are migrating for a wide range of reasons including chronic poverty, resulting from parents' inability to take care of them or for adventure. In Ghana, north-south migration of children is of a relatively new development. Hitherto, the northern regions have constituted a belt of seasonal adult migrant labour for southern forest agricultural and mineral extraction activities. This resulted from the spatial imbalance in development that has long existed between the southern and northern regions of Ghana. As Benneh (1976) explains, uneven spatial development in Ghana has acted as a mjor factor explaining the migration of people from rural to urban areas in the country. For a long time, the northern regions have recorded the highest poverty indicators from all the living standards surveys so far conducted in the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2004a). This high level of poverty in the northern regions has largely explained the inability of many parents to take care of their children's education.

Adepoju (2005) explains that the spatial imbalance in development was a direct response to the policies of the colonial administration at the time. Songsore (1983) described this development as a deliberate design to serve the interest of the metropolis in Europe. He explains further that the spatial development policies of the colonial administration was reinforced through the creation of development nodes that facilitated the production of raw materials such as gold, cocoa, timber, rubber, coffee, etc., that were needed by the industrial sector in Britain. According to Nabila (1985), migration from the north to the middle belt and southern communities, began quite early as the colonial authority was actively involved in attracting labour from the Northern Savannah Agro-Ecological Zone.

One study in Ghana by Hashim (2005) examined the experience of independent child migrants from Bolgatanga in North East Ghana travelling to the Central Region. In this study, Hashim notes that children's migration represents a coping strategy with which to deal with external shocks. Quite clearly, children's migration from the northern regions to southern cities and communities is gradually appearing as a strategic economic investment by many parents against poverty. For

example, in several instances, the decision by children to migrate is influenced by parents, relatives and friends plausibly based on the benefits they (parents) are likely to benefit from the migration of their children.

In 2005, a study among a sample of child migrants from the northern regions surveyed in Accra and Kumasi reported that most of the child migrants migrated out of their desire to earn some incomes in destination areas in order to return home to support their parents and siblings (Anarfi and Kwankye, 2005). This desire is further strengthened by the efforts these child migrants make to regularly send home remittances to their families at home in the north. Unfortunately, it is at these young ages that they are supposed to be in school, a situation that further deepens the high illiteracy rates that currently prevail in the northern regions of the country in comparison with others in the south.

While the remittances the migrants send home may constitute an indication of some positive returns from their migration as some form of investment, the child migrants are exposed to economic, social, sexual and reproductive health risks which may in the long run render the investment agenda largely unproductive. Yet, some of the migration decisions are made without recourse to possible risks they may be exposed to outside their homes.

In the light of the foregoing, the fundamental question is whether migrating as a child is really an investment and hence an answer to the poverty situation that majority of families in northern Ghana regularly face. Besides, what is the assessment of the child migrants regarding the benefits they derive from migrating at these young ages? How are the remittances sent home related to the person taking the decision for the child to migrate? How do the migrants vary in terms of earnings at the destination areas and how is the amount of earning made related to the likelihood of the migrant sending remittances to parents? What conclusions can be drawn regarding migrating as a child constituting an investment for parents? To answer these and other equally important questions, this study uses data collected from a 2005 survey of independent child migrants originating from the three northern regions of Ghana for analysis.

The main objective of the study is to examine a sample of male and female migrants who migrated from any of the three northern regions during their childhood years and were resident in either Accra or Kumasi to assess the extent to which child migration could constitute a means of investment for families. The specific objectives are to describe the migrants based on their socio-economic characteristics, find out the persons that influence their decision to migrate, their own assessment as to whether or not they have regretted after migrating. It also highlights some of the possible areas of contribution the child migrants make to the wellbeing of their family members and siblings back at home.

Data and Methodology

The study uses data collected from a 2005 survey of independent child migrants in Accra and Kumasi. These migrants migrated from the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions of Ghana and were resident in Accra and Kumasi at the time of the survey. The total sample for the study is made up of 451 independent child migrants of age 10-24 years who migrated at ages less than 18 years, mainly selected from the main lorry stations and market places in the two cities for interview. The analysis, thus, excludes persons who migrated at ages older than 17 years. The

respondents in the study consist of 305 (67.6%) from Accra and 146 (32.4%) from Kumasi.

The study uses proportions generated from simple cross-tabulations employing the SPSS as the main analytical tool with tables used to present key findings. Chi square analysis is used to determine the statistical variation among the migrants with respect to their background characteristics. Binary logistic regression analysis is also employed to examine the variation of the migrants in terms of daily earnings, remittances and their assessment regarding the benefits they derive from migration.

The limitations of the study include the fact that the study population was not selected as a representative sample of all child migrants from the northern parts of Ghana who were resident in Accra and Kumasi at the time of the survey. The results of this study, therefore, cannot be generalised for all child migrants in the two cities whose places of origin were in the three northern regions. Secondly, in an assessment of child migration as a parental investment, it would have been more appropriate to trace at least some of the migrants in the two cities to their households of origin to speak to their parents or close relations about how they assess migration of the children. This limitation restricted the discussion of the investment aspect of child migration for parents from deductions without directly assessing the views of the parents. In spite of these limitations, the study presents results that attempt an interrogation of the issue and lays a firm foundation for future research.

Characteristics of the Child Migrants

Analysis of the age-sex composition of the child migrants shows a dominance of females in the north-south migration of children in Ghana: 65% (293) of the respondents were females with males representing 35% (158). In terms of age, more than half of the migrants in the two cities were of age 15-19 years. The breakdown by sex, however, shows a higher proportion of the females to be within age 15-19 years (Table 1). This pattern of age distribution is consistent comparing the migrants by sex and with regard to the two cities of residence. Again, a relatively higher proportion of the females were of younger ages (i.e., less than 15 years) compared to the males in either city. Clearly, therefore, the males were relatively older compared to the females considering the relatively higher proportion of males recorded in ages 20-24 years in comparison with the females.

A chi square analysis that was carried out on the variation of the respondents by age showed that the migrants varied significantly by sex, place of enumeration and ages less than 15 and 15-19 years. The analysis for 20-24 years, however, did not produce statistically significant results. This shows that there was no variation among the migrants aged 20-24 years by sex and place of destination.

****Table 1 about here****

With respect to education, a large proportion of the child migrants had little or no education. As is presented in Table 1, almost two-thirds of the females in both cities had no education compared to a little less than a third of the males. Those who had secondary or Senior Secondary School education represented less than five percent of either the male or female respondents in either Accra or Kumasi. The results of the analysis are consistent with the situation in Ghana where for a long time males tend to have a relatively higher education than females (see Ghana Statistical Service, 2005). The application of chi square analysis also showed a statistically

significant variation among respondents with no education and primary level education only. What this pattern of education suggests is that a majority of the child migrants had little or no employable skills that would guarantee them with jobs in the formal sector which requires a relatively higher level of education and training in specific skills.

In terms of the type of work engaged in by the migrants at the time of the survey, Table 1 further shows that nine out of every 10 female child migrants in both cities were working as head porters (commonly known in Ghana as *Kayayei*) at the main lorry stations and markets. In Ghana, this is a common practice where young ladies from the northern parts of the country do carry load for people for which they are paid a negotiated fee. In contrast, although a considerable percentage of the males were working as technicians or mechanics, a sizeable proportion of them worked as street vendors and traders in various items in shops and along streets. This is especially the case among the males in Kumasi among whom a little more than 40 percent were engaged in the sale of items on the street or in shops. It should be noted, however, that the technicians and mechanics could be those in apprenticeships rather than qualified mechanics or technicians. It could, thus, be a way of upgrading or acquiring new skills to assist them compete for jobs in the urban job market.

It is again observed in Table 1 that a huge proportion of the respondents were never married, the highest proportion married (14 percent) being recorded among the males in Kumasi. This is not very consistent with the situation in Ghana where one expects to find a higher proportion of females rather than males being married at younger ages (see Ghana Statistical Service, 1999 and 2004b).

The study was further interested in the timing of migration and found from the analysis that a relatively higher proportion of the child migrants moved to live in either Accra or Kumasi at ages between 15 and 17 years. It is, however, to be noted that a little more than a third of them migrated when they were 10-14 years (not recorded in Table 1). There were again less than 20% of them who migrated at very young ages of less than 10 years. The contemporary nature of north-south child migration in Ghana is supported by results of further analysis of the data that about 90 percent of the migrants have stayed at their present destination for five years or less. Furthermore, three out of four of them (74.7%) have migrated only once, 15.5% have migrated two times and just about six percent of them have migrated three times. Multiple migration is, therefore, not common among them.

The Decision Making Process and Parental Expectations

An analysis of child migration as a parental investment begins from an assessment of the decision-making process to migrate. Against this background, the study asked questions about who made the decision for the migrant to migrate in the first place. From the results of the analysis presented in Table 2, it is to be noted that overall, there is some variation between the males and females with respect to the decision-making activity. While two-thirds of the females reported to have taken their own decision to migrate, for more than half of the male migrants, the decision to migrate was taken by persons other than themselves. Prominent among these other persons are parents and other relations. This has earlier been noted by Kwankye et al (2009). Comparing the results by sex and place of destination, it is quite clear that with the exception of female migrants in Accra, more than half of their male counterparts in Accra and both sexes in Kumasi had the decision to migrate being

taken by their parents and other relations with friends having some limited influence on them to migrate.

****Table 2 about here*****

It is, however, to be noted that statistically, the variation among the migrants with respect to the person taking the decision to migrate showed significance at a level of $p < .001$ only for decisions taken by the migrants themselves. This, notwithstanding, the results of further analysis of the data on the reasons why they migrated provide some suggestions to the effect that there are some expectations from parents when their children migrate whether they directly influenced them to migrate or not. They are, therefore, more likely to support any move by their children who may take the decision to migrate down south. Within this context, it is possible for some parents and other relations to see the migration of children from their households as some kind of investment from which they may derive some benefits in the form of remittances for their upkeep at home.

Again, further analysis of the data indicated the prominence of parents' inability to cater for the needs of the child migrants as a major factor that pushed many of them out of school to consider migration as an option for survival. For these kids (80% of them), their desire was to migrate to find money to support themselves and their families. By implication, this consideration has a built-in element of migration as some kind of investment the benefits of which are not for the migrant child alone but most importantly, parents and siblings left behind. Such an expectation has the tendency to put much responsibility on the children at such early ages of their lives to work to support families at home.

The foregoing is supported by the finding that more than half of the males and two in five of the females reported that they were taking care of other persons apart from themselves (Table 2), an observation that confirms the tacit acceptance that they are an investment for a much larger group apart from themselves. Obviously, taking up this huge responsibility places some economic stress on them since they have to work extra hard to fend for themselves in the cities while at the same time, making savings to be able to send home regular remittances.

Comparing the migrants in the two cities, it is clear from Table 2 that migrants in Kumasi reported a higher proportion of their number that were taking care of other persons than their counterparts in Accra. Again, a higher proportion of the males whether in Accra or in Kumasi indicated to be caring for other persons. This is very much to be expected and is consistent with the cultural norms of many traditional societies in Ghana particularly among the patrilineal socio-cultural environment of the northern sending regions. Within this cultural setting, males are usually the bread winners, heads of household and consequently, much is expected from them in terms of resources for the upkeep of the household or the wider extended family.

Furthermore, Table 2 reinforces the point that parents left behind expect a lot from their children who have migrated in terms of remittances. This reasoning is predicated upon the observation that more than two-thirds of the child migrants said they were taking care of their parents while the rest were spending on siblings and other persons left behind. It is to be noted that while in Accra, a higher proportion of the males reported to be taking care of their parents relative to their female counterparts, the reverse is the case in Kumasi. It is also important to state that the variation among the respondents who responded to spend on other persons at home was statistically significant at $p <.001$ using chi square analysis. On the other hand, a

lower level of statistical significance of p <.05 was achieved with regard to the variation of the respondents who take care of other siblings left behind at home. Yet, the mere presence of one's child in the city in Accra or Kumasi does not necessarily translate into an investment by virtue of the benefits to be derived by the parent or sibling left behind. This will first depend on the type of work the child migrant gets to do at the destination area, the income earned and his/her acceptance of a responsibility to send some remittances home to parents.

Assessing Child Migration as an Investment

The discussion so far appears to point to some kind of benefits parents and other family members derive from the child migrants when they migrate down south. It is, however, difficult to conclude at this stage the extent to which the act of migration by itself constitutes an investment that generates benefits for persons who, in one way or another might have influenced the movement. The study, therefore, turns attention to an assessment of this by examining the average daily earnings and remittances the child migrants reported to be making to their parents and other relations at the place of origin. In addition, an analysis of the migrants' own assessment of the benefits they have derived from having migrated is done to expand the scope of the analysis of whether or not child migration constitutes some kind of investment from the point of view of the migrants themselves.

In the survey, the child migrants were asked about their average daily earning in addition to whether they have been sending home remittances in the form of money or food. The results of the analysis of their responses to these questions are presented in Table 3. The results indicate that the males were on the average earning relatively higher incomes compared to the females. For example, about one in five of the males in both cities earned GH¢5.00 or higher compared to about one in 10 of the females. A similar pattern is shown between the migrants in Accra and Kumasi by sex. The variation between the sexes appears wider in Kumasi compared to Accra. For example, 31 percent of the males in Kumasi reported to be earning an average amount of GH¢5.00 or higher compared to 13 percent of their female counterparts. It was also found that the variation in income earned by sex and place of destination was statistically significant with respect to earnings less than GH¢1.00 and GH¢2.00 or higher at a p <.05. The variation between the sexes may be due to the type of work they were doing. For example, it was earlier observed in Table 1 that more than three-quarters of the females were working as head porters (*kayayei*), an activity that does not attract high wages. In contrast, close to a third of the males worked as mechanics, technicians or street vendors and are, therefore, more likely to earn higher incomes than the females.

Again, Table 3 shows that 68 percent of the males compared to 57 percent of the females reported to have been sending money home. The differences are, however, wider between the males and females in Kumasi than their counterparts in Accra. Once again, the variation in reported remittances sent home between males and females is a clear indication of the cultural context that is at play where males learn quite early in life about the responsibility they have towards their parents and other family members. In the patrilineal society in the northern part of Ghana, males are considered as permanent members of the household while females upon marriage are more likely to leave to join their spouses outside their parents' compounds. Consequently, the males tend to have a higher social attachment to the parents' home and are required to support the members whether they migrate or not. This socio-

cultural role differentiation could explain the variation between males and females with respect to remittances sent home from the destination areas. Most importantly, the analysis has shown that the males are more likely to earn higher incomes than their female counterparts. It is also important to note that the results are statistically significant, indicating that the tendency for the child migrants to send home remittances in the form of money varies quite significantly by sex and place of destination.

****Table 3 about here****

Analysis of the frequency with which the child migrants send money home also suggests that for more than two-thirds of either males or females, remittances are sent home either on monthly or quarterly basis. It is again to be noted that quite a high proportion of the migrants in Kumasi (23 percent of the males and 20 percent of the females) reported to be sending money home any time they had money. This showed a big difference between them and their counterparts in Accra. Yet, statistically, the chi square analysis showed a significant difference only among those who responded to be sending money home on weekly basis at a $p < .001$, suggesting that overall, not much variation was found among the respondents by sex and place of destination with regard to the frequency of cash remittance.

It was also found that most of the remittances were spent on household consumption. A similar pattern was found between the males and females. This is very much consistent with some of the reasons for which the children migrated. Prominent among them is parents' inability to take care of their children perhaps due to poverty. Consequently, it is to be expected that household consumption especially during the dry season when many households experience famine would be the first consideration with regard to the use of any remittance that may be received from the migrants. This is not surprising since this is quite common. Interestingly, such use of remittances is often considered unproductive although these are likely to have multiplier effects that could be beneficial in the long run (see Russell and Teitelbaum, 1992). For child migrants who earn small incomes in the cities, their remittances could quite understandably end up being spent on household consumption. One major use to which migrant remittances could be put to is in the area of funerals which are inseparable aspects of the social lives of rural communities in Ghana.

Again, regarding the means by which the remittances were sent home, most of the migrants responded to send them by known people who occasionally travel home from the cities to their homes of origin. This system of money transfer is based strictly on trust between the sender and the "courier" and could be subject to abuse by the "courier". However, none of them reported to have lost money sent by a "courier". This suggests that this system has so far worked for them.

The assessment of the migrants themselves regarding the benefits they have derived from having migrated to the south suggested that a higher proportion of either males or females were convinced that they made the right decision. This is informed by the observation in Table 3 that 57 percent of the males and 49 percent of the females said they had not regretted migrating to either Accra or Kumasi compared to 33 percent of males and 41 percent of females who indicated they had regretted ever migrating. Comparing them by the two cities of destination, the results show that a higher proportion of the child migrants in Accra reported to have regretted migrating compared to their counterparts in Kumasi. Again, while a relatively higher proportion of the males than females in Kumasi indicated that they had regretted deciding to

migrate, the reverse is the case in Accra. These responses might have been informed by whether or not their desires had been met or not which in turn would affect the benefits their parents and other relations left behind could ever hope to derive from them as an investment for having migrated down south.

The discussion so far on the decision-making activity, earnings, remittances and the migrants' own assessment of the benefits they have derived from having migrated provides a basis to guide the analysis as to whether the migration of children to Accra and Kumasi is an investment for parents or not. It is, however, important at this stage to attempt some multivariate analysis to see the extent to which this line of reasoning is supported. To undertake this analysis, binary logistic regression is carried out using the quantum of daily earning, whether the migrant sends home remittances, the amount of money sent at a time and migrants' own assessment of migration as four different dependent variables with a combination of background characteristics of migrants including city of destination (i.e., Accra or Kumasi), current age, sex, highest level of education attained, age at migration, duration of stay at destination city and person taking the decision for the child to migrate as the explanatory variables.

For daily earnings, the interest was to find out the determining factors that are likely to affect the earning of incomes GH¢2.00 or higher compared to less than that. In the analysis, therefore, all migrants who reported an average daily earning of less than GH¢2.00 were coded "0" and "1" if the average earning was GH¢2.00 or higher. In addition, migrants who reported to have never sent home remittances were coded "0" and "1" if otherwise. On the other hand, all migrants who reported to send home monetary remittances of less than GH¢12.00 (on average) at a time to support parents and other family members were coded "0" and "1" if the remittances were GH¢12 or more. Finally, in the case of migrants' assessment of their migration, migrants who indicated that they have regretted for migrating were coded "0" and "1" if otherwise in the binary logistic regression analysis.

The results of the analysis using average amount earned daily as the dependent variable are presented in Table 4a. Overall, it shows that the independent variables explain 14.4 percent of the variation in average daily earnings among the migrants. The results, however, produced largely statistically not significant results. The only variables that produced some statistically significant results were the city of destination ($p < .001$), duration of stay (in completed years) at destination area ($p < .05$) and age at migration ($p < .10$). The results show that persons who were living in Kumasi are 1.9 times as likely to earn an average daily income of GH¢2.00 or higher compared to their counterparts in Accra. This suggests that Kumasi offers a better opportunity for the child migrants to earn higher incomes than Accra. There also appears to be some direct relationship between average daily income earned and the duration of stay of the migrants at the destination area. Apart from migrants who have stayed up to five years at the destination area who appear to provide some inconsistency in the results produced, the likelihood of daily earnings increasing with longer stay at the destination area is not in doubt. For example, migrants who have stayed for six years or longer are 3.5 times more likely to earn a daily income of GH¢2.00 or higher compared to their counterparts who have stayed less than a year at the destination area. The plausible reason is that as they stay longer, they are able to understand the urban economic environment better and are able to adopt strategies to do multiple jobs to earn higher incomes. It should be noted that at the time of the survey, the exchange rate was GH¢1.00 to US$0.96.

*******Table 4a about here*********

The study further examined the likelihood of sending money home to parents and other family members using binary logistic analysis. From the results presented in Table 4b, it is seen that the independent variables jointly explain about 20 percent of the variation in the likelihood that the migrant would send money home. The results further show that migrants who were resident in Kumasi at the time of the survey were 1.7 times more likely to send money home to parents than others in Accra at a significance level of $p < .05$. This is consistent with the results in Table 4a which found migrants in Kumasi to earn more than others in Accra. This is because, the more one earns, the more likely he/she is to consider remitting home money for the upkeep of parents and other siblings left behind. Consistent again with this reasoning is the finding in Table 4b that migrants who were earning higher incomes were more likely to send money home than those who were earning less. For example, at a statistically significant level of $p <.001$, migrants who earned a daily income of between GH¢1.00 and GH¢1.80 were about 3.8 times more likely to send home money to parents and other relations than others who were earning less than GH¢1.00 a day. The corresponding odd ratios for migrants who were earning GH¢2.00-GH¢4.99 and GH¢5.00-GH¢30.00 were 4.7 and 3.1, also at a very high level of significance.

The foregoing finding is consistent with the observation that as migrants increase their earnings, they are most likely to increase their remittances (Black, 2003), Yang, 2004). Doubts have, however, been raised about this relationship to indicate that remittances do not increase indefinitely with continuous increase in migrant earnings (Taylor, 1999, de la Gerza and Lowell, 2002).

The analysis does not, however, identify the duration of stay at the destination area as a very significant determinant of the likelihood of monetary remittances being sent to the home place of origin except for migrants who have stayed six years or longer at the destination area who are about 3.6 times more likely to send home monetary remittances (at a $p <.05$).

*****Table 4b about here****

Binary logistic analysis of the amount of money sent at any given time (Table 4c) does not show any much difference compared to the results presented in Table 4b. The results indicate that the independent variables together account for 23.4 percent of the variation in the likelihood of sending home GH¢12.00 or more money home. Consistently, migrants in Kumasi registered a higher likelihood of sending GH¢12.00 or higher sums of money home than their counterparts in Accra at a significance of $p < .001$. It is also to be noted that female migrants were less likely than their male counterparts to send home GH¢12.00 or higher amounts at any point in time. This finding is consistent with the bivariate analysis presented in Table 3 that suggested a higher proportion of the males than females reporting to be sending home money which was attributed to the fact that the males are stronger physically and are, therefore, more able to perform jobs that demand the use of strength compared to the females. Again, it was earlier found that the males do jobs like street vending and mechanical/technical jobs which earn them relatively higher incomes than the males. Furthermore, the males culturally, see themselves as bread winners and, therefore, begin quite early to take up this responsibility in caring for parents and siblings left behind.

****Table 4c about here*****

Finally, Table 4d presents results of binary logistic regression analysis on the migrants' own account as to whether or not they had regretted for ever migrating as children considering their experiences at the destination areas. The information in the table indicates that overall, 17.4 percent of the variation in the dependent variable is accounted for by the independent variables included in the analysis. The results of this analysis are fairly consistent with those of the other analysis. This is because the amount of income a migrant earns in a day appears to relate directly with the likelihood that he/she would not regret for ever migrating. From Table 4d, it is observed that as the amount of income a migrant earns on daily basis increases, the more likely he/she would be glad to have migrated as a child. Migrants who reported to earn on average between GH¢5.00 and GH¢30.00 a day are 3.8 times more likely to report that they have not regretted migrating. Logically, this is to be expected since the primary motive for most of them for migrating is to work to earn money to take care of themselves, their parents and other siblings.

****Table 4d about here******

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has contributed to initiating a debate in Ghana as to what extent independent child migration from the northern savannah ecological regions is an investment for parents. It has further broadened the scope of the debate to examine the nuances of parents' expectations from their migrant children that perhaps motivate them to influence their decision to migrate at young ages especially in situations where they find it difficult to financially take care of their schooling. Quite inconsistently, however, although the analysis presented in this paper clearly demonstrates that the migrants make efforts to send home some remittances as one key desire of theirs to care for the household needs of their parents and other siblings, the analysis revealed no statistically significant differences with regard to whether the decision to migrate was taken by the parents or the prospective migrant. Quite clearly, therefore, it has been found that the probability that a migrant would send home remittances to parents does not relate significantly with the person who took the final decision for the child to migrate.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it cannot be ruled out completely that parents derive some benefits when their children migrate, a situation which could make some of them consider first what they would derive from the children when they migrate in encouraging or deciding that they migrate down south. So far, the most important determining factor that explained the likelihood of a migrant sending home some monetary remittances was the amount of income the migrant earned at the destination area. Quite consistently, therefore, migrants in Kumasi were able to send higher amounts of money home to their parents in the northern sending communities because they had the opportunity to earn higher incomes compared to their counterparts in Accra. The proximity of Kumasi to the north compared to Accra can, however, not be ruled out completely as a factor influencing the regular remittances from migrants in Kumasi compared to others in Accra.

Linked to the ability to earn higher incomes is the capacity of the migrants to possess basic employable skills to be able to compete for jobs that provide

opportunities for earning higher incomes in the city which unfortunately most of the migrant children often do not possess. From the analysis, most of them especially the females possess little or no education and consequently, most of them had no job-possessing skills before they migrated to either Accra or Kumasi. As was found in the analysis, the migrants who were earning higher daily incomes were also the persons who were less likely to report that they had regretted for migrating. In contrast, their counterparts who were not earning adequate incomes were more likely to confirm that they had regretted to have migrated.

It was also noted that the migrants who had stayed longer in the cities were more likely to earn more income on daily basis and, therefore, be in a better position to support their parents back home with some monetary remittances. Yet, as they stay longer in the city to work, the more they sacrifice their young years of schooling for money which may never be adequate to take care of themselves and their other dependents at home. Initially, therefore, their migration could be seen as some investment as the remittances they send tend to cushion their parents in times of need especially in the periods of famine in the dry season.

Although these findings point to some investment returns from the child migrants, it is difficult to conclude that parents in northern sending areas decide to let their children migrate as an investment, most especially when most of the remittances go into household consumption and not into businesses that would yield further returns. While not completely ruling out a possibility of some parents seeing the migration of their child as some kind of investment, the initial gains may be losses in the long term due to the loss they may suffer from having to stop schooling at very early ages. What this paper has brought out is that the benefits parents derive from their migrant children's remittances would suggest that to some extent child migrants constitute a source of investment to their household of origin. This is, however, incomplete until and unless the migrants are able to find good jobs with good incomes in the destination areas before the migration could be considered very beneficial as a means of an investment any parent and the migrants themselves could rely upon.

It is important to also draw attention to the fact that parents and other relations should be sensitised not to rush in influencing their young children and household members to migrate at tender ages since that could amount to forcing them into child labour which in itself carries risks for the child and also is against the law. Already, the 2001 Child Labour Survey has found several children to be involved in economic activities that to a large extent, constituted child labour with a tendency to affect their health and educational development (Ghana Statistical Service, 2003). Parents should rather, take keen interest in investing in the children's education and skill acquisition before they migrate in order to be able to compete for well-paid jobs in the cities. Perhaps, giving birth to fewer numbers of children could be an incentive in ensuring that parents are able to cater for their children's education to at least the senior high secondary school level in order that when they migrate, they may find jobs that could attract relatively higher incomes for some sustainable returns to be derived from their earnings.

Further research should expand the scope of the analysis to include parents' views from sending communities. For example, it should be possible to link some migrants in the destination areas to their households in the sending areas to examine the rationale of parents in sending their child as migrants or agreeing to their children's decision to migrate instead of continuing their education. This would provide all the relevant data to fully examine child migration as an act of parental

investment instead of using proxies based on what responses child migrants provide as has been attempted in this paper.

In sum, although the paper presents relevant insights for further studies, it is quite difficult to conclude without fear of contradiction that independent child migration in Ghana is a sustainable means of parental investment. This is based on a consideration that many of the child migrants in the two cities surveyed earn quite meagre incomes, often less than one US dollar a day. To make savings from such earnings and at the same time send remittances would mean that many of them starve themselves in order to support families left behind. In the process, they put themselves at serious health risks which in the long run may negate any short-term benefits parents may derive from the independent migration of their children as a sustainable investment against widespread poverty in northern Ghana.

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Tables

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Child Migrants by Sex and Background Characteristics, Accra and Kumasi

	Accra		Kumasi		Both Cities	
Characteristics	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Age						
< 15**	9.2	33.6	21.1	33.3	14.6	33.6
15-19*	56.3	59.0	39.4	53.3	48.7	57.5
20-24	34.5	7.4	39.4	13.3	36.7	8.8
Level of education						
No education**	23.0	63.1	39.4	68.0	30.4	64.4
Primary**	43.7	32.7	43.7	22.7	43.7	30.1
Midd/JSS	29.9	4.1	12.7	5.3	22.2	4.5
Sec/SSS	3.4	0.0	4.2	4.0	3.8	1.0
Type of work						
No work	2.3	0.5	2.8	4.0	2.5	1.4
Head Porter	26.4	94.9	43.7	76.0	34.2	90.1
Tech./mechanic	42.5	1.4	11.3	10.7	28.5	3.9
Selling	23.0	1.3	42.2	8.0	31.7	3.2
Other	5.8	1.9	0.0	1.3	3.1	1.4
Marital status						
Never married**	97.7	90.8	81.7	86.7	90.5	89.8
Married**	2.3	9.2	14.1	9.3	7.6	9.2
Formerly married	0.0	0.0	1.4	2.7	0.6	0.7
Consensual Union	0.0	0.0	2.8	1.3	1.3	0.3
Duration of stay (yrs)						
< 1**	12.6	54.1	18.3	40.5	15.2	50.7
1*	16.1	17.4	18.3	14.9	17.1	16.8
2	21.8	16.5	18.3	14.9	20.3	16.1
3	10.3	6.0	8.5	10.8	9.5	7.2
4	6.9	3.2	5.6	8.1	6.3	4.5
5	10.3	1.4	7.0	0.0	8.9	1.0
> 5	21.8	1.4	23.9	10.8	22.8	3.8
Total number	87	218	71	75	158	293

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

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Child Migrants by Person Taking Decision to Migrate and Person Child Migrant Takes Care of

Background	Accra		Kumasi		Both Cities	
Variable	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Decision maker						
Migrant**	47.1	74.2	47.9	44.0	47.5	66.4
Both parents	10.3	6.0	14.1	22.7	12.0	10.3
Mother	10.3	9.7	7.0	13.3	8.9	10.6
Father	10.3	3.7	7.0	2.7	8.9	3.4
Surogate parents	3.4	1.8	1.4	0.0	2.5	1.4
Friends	2.3	1.4	12.7	9.3	7.0	3.4
Other relations	16.1	3.2	9.9	8.0	13.3	4.5
Person taken care of						
Parents at home *	73.5	57.9	63.0	73.2	67.0	67.9
Siblings at home*	26.5	23.7	37.0	26.8	33.0	26.6
Other	0.0	18.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5
Total number	87	218	71	75	158	293

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

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Child Migrants by Sex and Remittance Sent Home, Accra and Kumasi

Background	Accra		Kumasi		Both Cities	
Variable	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Remittance home						
Yes	58.1	55.4	80.3	63.0	68.2	57.3
No	41.9	44.6	19.7	37.0	31.8	42.7
Frequency of remittance						
Weekly**	4.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.6
Monthly	38.0	42.4	35.7	28.3	36.8	38.4
Quarterly	32.0	33.1	26.8	34.8	29.2	33.5
Yearly	24.0	14.4	5.4	13.0	14.2	14.0
Once	0.0	1.7	5.4	4.3	2.8	2.4
Every 2-6 months	2.0	5.9	3.6	0.0	2.8	4.3
Any time money	0.0	1.7	23.2	19.6	12.3	6.7
Use of remittances						
Household use	56.0	51.7	52.6	60.9	54.2	54.3
Building materials	0.0	0.8	12.3	4.3	6.5	1.8
Helping siblings	8.0	0.8	5.3	2.2	6.5	1.2
Other	36.0	46.6	29.8	32.6	32.7	42.7
Total number	87	218	71	75	158	293

**p <.001.

Table 4a: Results of logistic regression analysis of average daily earning among the child migrants

Independent Variable	B	S.E.	Odds ratio
Destination			
Accra (RC)			
Kumasi	.630	.231	1.877***
Sex			
Female (RC)			
Male	-.116	.263	.891
Current Age (years)			
< 15 (RC)			
15-19	.300	.319	1.350
20-24	.481	.436	1.617
Education			
No education (RC)			
Primary	.121	.236	1.128
Middle/JSS	-.424	.373	.654
Sec/SSS	.185	.799	1.203
Age at migration			
< 10 (RC)			
10-14	1.155	.510	.315**
15-17	-.136	.269	.873
Duration of stay (years)			
< 1 (RC)			
1	-.095	.320	.909
2	.761	.308	2.140***
3	.995	.430	2.704**
4	1.295	.510	3.651***
5	.468	.581	1.597
6+	1.264	.482	3.538***
Constant	-.976	.351	.377***

RC: Reference Category

-2 log likelihood: 541.917; Nagelkerke R Square: .144

Chi-square: 49.151; df: 15; Sig: .000

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

Table 4b: Results of logistic regression analysis of monetary remittances sent home among the child migrants

Independent Variable	B	S.E.	Odds ratio
Destination			
Accra (RC)	.535	.265	1.707**
Kumasi			
Sex			
Female (RC)			
Male	-.084	.293	.920
Current Age (years)			
< 15 (RC)			
15-19	.299	.341	1.349
20-24	.173	.478	1.189
Education			
No education (RC)			
Primary	.195	.248	1.215
Middle/JSS	.428	.417	1.534
Sec/SSS	.157	.881	1.170
Age at migration			
< 10 (RC)			
10-14	-.231	.525	.794
15-17	-.332	.294	1.393
Duration of stay (years)			
< 1 (RC)			
1	.408	.325	1.504
2	.136	.324	1.146
3	.644	.479	1.905
4	1.115	.624	3.050*
5	.737	.640	2.090
6+	1.274	.584	3.574**
Person taking migration decision			
Migrant (RC)			
Parents	.498	.273	1.645*
Friends	.188	.550	1.207
Other relations	.429	.463	1.536
Daily earnings (GH¢)			
<1.00 (RC)			
1.00-1.80	1.323	.321	3.756***
2.00-4.99	1.543	.346	4.678***
5.00-30.00	1.145	.461	3.141***
Constant	-1.717	.476	.180***

-2 log likelihood: 497.876; Nagelkerke R Square: .193

Chi-square: 65.087; df: 21; Sig: .000

***p < .001; ** p < .05; * p < .10;

Table 4c: Results of logistic regression analysis of the amount of money sent home at any given time among the child migrants

Independent Variable	B	S.E.	Odds ratio
Destination			
Accra (RC)			
Kumasi	-.795	.332	.452***
Sex			
Female (RC)			
Male	-.907	.376	.404***
Current Age (years)			
< 15 (RC)			
15-19	.597	.341	1.816
20-24	-.229	.605	.795
Education			
No education (RC)			
Primary	-.211	.329	.810
Middle/JSS	-.208	.477	.812
Sec/SSS	-.231	.924	.794
Age at migration			
< 10 (RC)			
10-14	-.358	.663	.699
15-17	.209	.355	1.232
Duration of stay (years)			
< 1 (RC)			
1	.397	.409	1.488
2	.314	.453	1.369
3	1.392	.600	4.023**
4	1.988	.771	7.303***
5	.875	.783	2.399
6+	1.336	.632	3.802**
Person taking migration decision			
Migrant (RC)			
Parents	-.116	.327	.890
Friends	.283	.650	1.327
Other relations	-.132	.546	.876
Daily earnings (GH¢)			
<1.00 (RC)			
1.00-1.80	.776	.530	2.173
2.00-4.99	1.555	.550	4.735***
5.00-30.00	2.442	.711	11.497***
Constant	-1.098	.687	.333

-2 log likelihood: 310.326; Nagelkerke R Square: .234

Chi-square: 50.607; df: 21; Sig: .000

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

Table 4d: Results of logistic regression analysis of the Migrants' Assessment as to whether or not they have regretted for having migrated

Independent Variable	B	S.E.	Odds ratio
Destination			
Accra (RC)			
Kumasi	1.124	.274	3.078***
Sex			
Female (RC)			
Male	.103	.300	1.108
Current Age (years)			
< 15 (RC)			
15-19	.483	.346	1.621
20-24	.177	.489	1.193
Education			
No education (RC)			
Primary	.546	.256	1.726**
Middle/JSS	.131	.399	1.140
Sec/SSS	1.109	1.155	3.030
Age at migration			
< 10 (RC)			
10-14	1.407	.564	4.083***
15-17	.286	.298	1.331
Duration of stay (years)			
< 1 (RC)			
1	-.216	.336	.806
2	.085	.342	1.089
3	.128	.492	1.136
4	-.081	.574	.922
5	-.691	.652	.501
6+	-.118	.538	.889
Person taking migration decision			
Migrant (RC)			
Parents	.010	.270	1.010
Friends	.011	.579	1.011
Other relations	-.667	.477	.513
Daily earnings (GH¢)			
<1.00 (RC)			
1.00-1.80	.542	.330	1.719
2.00-4.99	.752	.354	2.121**
5.00-30.00	1.348	.490	3.848***
Constant	-1.308	.480	.270***

-2 log likelihood: 473.658; Nagelkerke R Square: .174

Chi-square: 53.607; df: 21; Sig: .000

***p < .001; ** 807; < .05