ESI Preprints **Not Peer-reviewed**

The Rising Tendency of Migration Among Young Generation and its Impact on the Bangladeshi Economy

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Doi: 10.19044/esipreprint.11.2025.p311

Approved: 18 November 2025
Posted: 20 November 2025

Cite As:
Islam, M.S., Aktar, A. & Uddin, K.M.K. (2025). *The Rising Tendency of Migration Among Young Generation and its Impact on the Bangladeshi Economy*. ESI Preprints.
https://doi.org/10.19044/esipreprint.11.2025.p311

Abstract

This study investigates the rising tendency of migration among the young generation in Bangladesh and its perceived impact on the national economy. Drawing upon the Push-Pull Theory (Lee, 1966) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the research examines how push factors (e.g., political instability, job scarcity), pull factors (e.g., better salaries, residency prospects), and financial feasibility influence students' intention to migrate. Data were collected from 250 university students through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that pull factors exert a stronger influence on migration intention than push factors, suggesting aspirational migration driven by global opportunities rather than merely escaping domestic constraints. Financial feasibility partially mediates the impact of push/pull factors, confirming the role of economic access in migration decisions (Stark, 1991). Interestingly, government policy perception does not significantly moderate migration intention, highlighting a gap between policy initiatives and youth trust or awareness (Siddiqui, 2020). Moreover, migration intention shows a negative correlation with perceived economic impact, reflecting student concerns about brain drain despite recognizing the benefits of remittances (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). The study recommends reforms in employment, education, and diaspora engagement policies to address migration drivers while harnessing

its developmental potential. These insights contribute to the discourse on youth mobility and economic sustainability in emerging economies like Bangladesh.

Keywords: Youth Migration, Push-Pull Theory, Migration Intention, Financial Feasibility, Brain Drain, Government Policy, Bangladesh

Introduction

Youth migration for education has increasingly become a critical phenomenon in developing countries, particularly Bangladesh. The number of Bangladeshi students opting to pursue higher education abroad has grown significantly over the last decade, driven by push factors such as political instability, limited educational opportunities, and an underdeveloped labor market (Chowdhury & Azam, 2018). At the same time, pull factors such as globally recognized universities, scholarship programs, and favorable immigration policies in host countries encourage this outward movement (Rahman et al., 2023). The millennial and Gen Z populations, who are more digitally connected and globally oriented, form the core of this migration trend.

Recent statistics highlight the scale of this trend. According to UNESCO (2022), an average of 90 Bangladeshi students migrate daily to pursue education overseas. Top destinations include Malaysia, the UK, the USA, Australia, and Germany—countries known for their academic excellence and post-study work opportunities (Islam & Sultana, 2023). While this migration helps young people gain global exposure and enhances individual career prospects, it also has complex economic implications for Bangladesh.

On the positive side, remittances from students studying abroad can significantly contribute to household income and local economic development. For example, Alam and Roy (2022) noted that remittances from international students in OECD countries have steadily increased, supporting small businesses and education for family members back home. However, these gains are offset by significant financial outflows—including tuition fees, living expenses, and travel costs—which drain foreign reserves and limit domestic investment (Hasan & Mahmud, 2021).

Beyond the financial dimension, student migration is closely tied to the issue of brain drain. Young and talented individuals, often educated through public resources, choose to remain abroad due to better working conditions and political stability (Akter et al., 2023). As a result, the country loses valuable human capital that could otherwise support innovation and development. A recent study by Biswas and Khan (2024) found that over

65% of Bangladeshi students in Europe prefer not to return home due to concerns about corruption, job insecurity, and poor research infrastructure.

The quality gap between domestic and foreign higher education institutions is another key factor. Many students express dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction, outdated curricula, and lack of career guidance in Bangladeshi universities (Hossain & Uddin, 2023). In contrast, foreign institutions offer cutting-edge research opportunities, competitive scholarships, and access to global networks, making them more attractive to ambitious youth.

Government policies on higher education and migration have attempted to respond to these trends, but results remain limited. While scholarship programs and academic reforms have been introduced, they often fail to address root causes such as underfunding and political interference in academia (Rahman et al., 2023). Moreover, there is limited coordination between education and labor ministries to ensure that graduates find meaningful employment at home.

Given these dynamics, this study seeks to offer a comprehensive analysis of youth migration trends in Bangladesh and their broader economic impact. It will explore motivations behind student migration, evaluate the balance between remittances and financial outflows, and assess the role of public policies in managing these flows. The findings aim to inform sustainable strategies that can retain talent, improve domestic education, and harness the benefits of global mobility.

Statement of the Problem

Youth migration from Bangladesh has seen a sharp rise in recent years, particularly among students seeking better educational and career opportunities abroad. This growing trend reflects deeper structural issues within the national context, such as unemployment, low wage prospects, and limited access to quality higher education (Raihan, 2022). While international migration can lead to benefits such as remittance inflows and global exposure, it also creates risks of brain drain, skill shortages, and long-term labor market gaps (Ahmed & Sultana, 2021). The economic implications of this trend remain underexplored, especially from the perspective of those preparing to migrate.

Despite the presence of various government initiatives, policy interventions seem insufficient to counter the underlying push factors. In many cases, youth perceive the policies as ineffective or disconnected from their real needs (Hasan & Alam, 2020). Financial capability plays a crucial mediating role, as many students rely on family savings or scholarships to fund their migration. However, access to financing options and migration-related information remains uneven.

This study aims to fill the gap by investigating the push and pull factors driving migration intention and how these, along with financial feasibility and policy perceptions, shape the broader economic impact on Bangladesh. An evidence-based analysis is essential to inform policies that not only retain talent but also maximize the benefits of outbound migration (World Bank, 2023).

Research Objectives

General Objective

To examine the rising tendency of migration among the young generation in Bangladesh, identifying the underlying push and pull factors, the mediating role of financial feasibility, and the moderating effect of government policy, while assessing the perceived economic impact of youth migration on the national economy.

Specific Objectives

- To identify and assess the push factors that influence the migration intentions of young individuals in Bangladesh.
- To evaluate the pull factors in destination countries that attract Bangladeshi youth toward migration.
- To examine the mediating role of financial feasibility in the relationship between push/pull factors and youth migration intention.
- To analyze the moderating effect of government policy perception on the relationship between financial feasibility and migration intention.
- To determine the extent to which migration intention influences the perceived economic impact of youth migration on the Bangladeshi economy.
- To provide policy recommendations based on empirical insights to manage youth migration effectively while minimizing potential brain drain.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives and conceptual framework, the following research questions and corresponding hypotheses are developed to explore the relationship between push/pull factors, financial feasibility, government policy, migration intention, and perceived economic impact. These align with the constructs measured in the dataset and support the SmartPLS modeling approach.

Research Questions

RQ1: What push factors influence the migration intention of young individuals in Bangladesh?
RQ2: What pull factors encourage Bangladeshi youth to consider migration?
RQ3: Does financial feasibility mediate the relationship between push/pull factors and migration intention?
RQ4: Does government policy perception moderate the effect of financial feasibility on migration intention?
RQ5: How does migration intention impact the perceived economic impact of youth migration on Bangladesh?

Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses (Direct Effects)

H1: Push factors have a significant positive effect on migration intention among young individuals in Bangladesh.
H2: Pull factors have a significant positive effect on migration intention among young individuals in Bangladesh.

Mediation Hypotheses

H3a: Financial feasibility significantly mediates the relationship between push factors and migration intention
H3b**:** Financial feasibility mediates the relationship between pull factors and migration intention.

Moderation Hypotheses

H4a: Government policy perception moderates the relationship between push factors and migration intention.
H4b: Government policy perception moderates the relationship between pull factors and migration intention.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The phenomenon of youth migration for higher education has gained momentum in recent decades, particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh. This section reviews the existing body of research on student migration, focusing on its driving factors, economic consequences, and policy implications. Key theoretical perspectives, including the push-pull model, are explored alongside empirical studies conducted both locally and internationally. The literature highlights how inadequate domestic opportunities and the allure of foreign academic and career prospects contribute to the rising trend of migration. Additionally, the review discusses the implications of remittance flows, brain drain, and the role of national education policy in managing migration pressures.

Understanding Youth Migration: Push and Pull Factors

The migration of young individuals for education is often explained using Lee's (1966) push-pull framework. Push factors include inadequate educational facilities, limited job prospects, and political instability, whereas pull factors involve quality education, research opportunities, and favorable immigration policies (Chowdhury & Azam, 2018; Islam & Sultana, 2023).

In the case of Bangladesh, students frequently cite corruption in public institutions, unemployment, and the low global ranking of universities as push elements (Rahman et al., 2023; Hasan & Mahmud, 2021). Conversely, developed countries offer world-class universities, post-study work options, and multicultural exposure, which act as major pull factors (Alam & Roy, 2022; McGill, 2013).

Trends in Bangladeshi Student Migration

UNESCO (2022) reported that nearly 33,000 Bangladeshi students migrated abroad in 2021 alone, showing a sharp rise from previous years. Australia, Malaysia, the UK, and the US remain top destinations, with private university students showing a higher inclination toward migration due to financial capacity (Farhanaz & Yamin, 2016; Hossain & Uddin, 2023). Zaman and Arefin (2022) argue that the trend is also influenced by globalization, where the desire for a "borderless" education and career path is growing among Gen Z students. Family influence and social prestige attached to foreign degrees also reinforce this migration trend (Akter et al., 2023; Zahna et al., 2011).

Economic Impacts: Remittances vs. Financial Outflows

Student remittances provide partial relief to the Bangladeshi economy, aiding household consumption and small investments (Alam & Roy, 2022; World Bank, 2023). However, the aggregate outflow of foreign exchange—through tuition fees, living expenses, and relocation costs—often outweighs the benefits (Hasan & Mahmud, 2021; Biswas & Khan, 2024).

Khatun (2021) emphasizes that foreign study funding primarily comes from middle and upper-middle-income families, creating inequality in who can benefit from international education. Moreover, the net capital drain impacts national reserves and limits investments in domestic education and infrastructure (Rahman et al., 2023).

Brain Drain and Loss of Human Capital

The long-term implications of student migration include brain drain, especially when students choose not to return post-graduation. Studies show that more than 60% of South Asian students studying abroad remain in host

countries due to better economic prospects (Raveesh, 2013; Arefin & Nasrin, 2021).

Bangladesh faces the risk of a weakening talent base, particularly in science, technology, and medicine, where trained professionals increasingly seek overseas employment (Akter et al., 2023; Zahna et al., 2011). Political instability, favoritism, and limited research incentives further discourage return migration (Rahman, 2010; Shah & Debnath, 2022).

Perceptions and Satisfaction with Domestic Education

Many students express dissatisfaction with the quality of education in Bangladesh, citing outdated curricula, lack of research support, and unmeritocratic hiring in academia (Hossain & Uddin, 2023; Khan et al., 2020). Public universities, despite low tuition, fail to attract top talent due to infrastructure and governance issues (Shamim & Sultana, 2021).

Private universities offer better facilities but cater to a limited segment due to high costs, exacerbating educational inequality and fueling the outbound migration of ambitious students (Chowdhury & Azam, 2018; Sarker et al., 2022).

Government Policy and Its Limitations

Although the government has invested in tertiary education and scholarship schemes, policy outcomes remain limited. There is often a lack of coordination between ministries and an absence of structured alumni return programs (Rahman et al., 2023; Islam & Kabir, 2022).

Bangladesh also lacks a comprehensive data-driven migration policy. Without addressing root causes—such as employability, research quality, and academic freedom—policy efforts remain inadequate (Hasan & Mahmud, 2021; Ahmed & Karim, 2023).

Summary Table of Literature Review

Author(s) & Year	Title	Findings	Remarks
Chowdhury & Azam (2018)	Push and pull factors influencing migration decisions	Identified job scarcity, political instability as push factors; better education and jobs abroad as pull factors	Useful for conceptualizing motivational drivers
Islam & Sultana (2023)	Exploring higher education migration trends in Bangladesh	Found Gen Z students prioritize international exposure and global degrees	Highlights generational mindset change
Rahman et al. (2023)	Policy challenges in retaining skilled youth	Policies fail to address root causes of migration like governance and employability	Suggests need for structural reform
Hasan &	Economic costs of	Capital outflows from	Emphasizes

Mahmud (2021)	student migration	tuition and living costs outweigh remittance benefits	economic drain risk
Alam & Roy (2022)	Remittance flows from students abroad	Student remittances improve household conditions but are limited	Partial benefit, not sustainable alone
Biswas & Khan (2024)	Brain drain and return dilemma	Over 65% of Bangladeshi students abroad prefer to stay due to better opportunities	Reinforces permanence of migration
Akter et al. (2023)	Post-graduate migration decisions	Family influence and scholarships shape migration decisions	Reflects social and financial motivators
Zahna et al. (2011)	Migration intentions among medical students	Political and economic conditions affect return decisions	Relevant for sector-specific analysis
Arefin & Nasrin (2021)	Sustainability of return migration	Weak local job market demotivates return of skilled migrants	Suggests failure to reintegrate returnees
Khatun (2021)	Who gets to migrate?	Middle and upper-middle-class students dominate outbound migration	Indicates class inequality in migration access
McGill (2013)	Post-graduation migration & decision-making	Visa options and scholarships significantly affect residency decisions	Relevant for policy on graduate retention
Hossain & Uddin (2023)	Student satisfaction with higher education	Private universities more satisfactory than public ones	Quality gap in domestic institutions
Zaman & Arefin (2022)	Youth aspiration and globalization	Students migrate for prestige and personal development	Links migration to socio-cultural factors
Rahman (2010)	Academic migration in Bangladesh	Research incentives abroad attract top students	Shows failure of local research system
Khan et al. (2020)	Barriers in Bangladeshi HEIs	Outdated curricula and lack of mentorship demotivate students	Push factors from institutional weaknesses
Ahmed & Karim (2023)	Governance in higher education migration	Poor coordination between ministries weakens migration response	Emphasizes bureaucratic inefficiency
Shamim & Sultana (2021)	QA challenges in higher education	Public institutions lack quality assurance frameworks	Root cause of dissatisfaction
Raveesh (2013)	Brain drain: Indian perspective	Push: instability; Pull: career growth abroad	Generalizable regional context
Sarker et al. (2022)	Migration intention in private universities	Private university students have higher intention to migrate	Tied to affordability and aspirations
Shah & Debnath	University governance &	Political interference weakens HEIs, deterring	Explains institutional

(2022)	academic freedom	returnees	disillusionment
Islam & Kabir (2022)	Qualitative review of education-linked migration	Emphasizes lack of employability as a core driver	Needs stronger alignment with job market
World Bank (2023)	Migration & Remittances Outlook	Student migration plays small but rising role in remittance flows	Contextual background
UNESCO (2022)	Global Flow of Students	Bangladesh among top student-sending countries in South Asia	Useful for trend comparison
Lee (1966)	A Theory of Migration	Developed push-pull framework of migration	Foundational theoretical basis
Farhanaz & Yamin (2016)	Determinants of migration	Lack of study programs and political unrest key drivers	Empirical validation using survey data

Literature Gap

Although numerous studies have examined the drivers of international migration, much of the literature has focused on general labor or refugee migration, with limited attention to the youth migration phenomenon in developing countries like Bangladesh (Raihan, 2022; Ahmed & Sultana, 2021). While the push and pull theory has been widely applied, few empirical studies have tested it using structural models like SmartPLS, particularly with financial feasibility as a mediating variable. Furthermore, most existing studies overlook the perception of government policies and their moderating role in migration decisions (Hasan & Alam, 2020).

Another major gap lies in the economic impact dimension—existing literature often focuses on remittances or brain drain at a macro level but fails to explore how young migrants themselves perceive their economic contribution or consequences. Studies combining all these constructs—push/pull factors, financial mediation, policy moderation, and perceived economic effects—are virtually absent in the Bangladeshi context. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge these gaps by building a comprehensive model based on primary data to analyze both the determinants and perceived outcomes of youth migration.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Data Collection Method

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to explore the determinants and consequences of youth migration in Bangladesh. Migration, particularly among the educated youth, has become a growing socioeconomic concern for developing countries, often associated with both opportunities and structural challenges (Raihan, 2022). To analyze this phenomenon, the study integrates push and pull migration theories,

financial accessibility, and institutional frameworks into a comprehensive model.

Primary data were collected from 250 final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students from twelve universities—six public and six private—spanning four diverse regions of Bangladesh: Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Khulna. These areas were selected based on their population density, student concentration, and migration rates, ensuring broader representativeness (BBS, 2021). The target group was chosen considering their proximity to decision-making about migration and relevance to the study's objectives.

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool. It comprised seven parts: demographic characteristics, push factors, pull factors, financial feasibility, government policy perception, migration intention, and perceived economic impact. Each construct was operationalized through 4–5 items measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was adapted from existing literature and refined through expert validation and a pilot study involving 30 respondents (Saunders et al., 2019).

The research model included push and pull factors as independent variables, financial feasibility as a mediating variable, and government policy perception as a moderating variable. Migration intention served as the primary dependent construct, while the perceived economic impact of migration was treated as an outcome variable. These constructs align with both migration theory and policy frameworks for human capital mobility.

Sampling was done using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across public/private institutions, disciplines, gender, and regional location. Ethical considerations, including anonymity and voluntary participation, were strictly followed. Data were collected over a 4-week period using both online and offline channels.

For data analysis, SmartPLS 4.0 was employed due to its capability to estimate complex structural models with mediation and moderation effects and its suitability for relatively smaller sample sizes (Hair et al., 2021). The analysis followed a two-step procedure. First, the measurement model was validated by assessing construct reliability, convergent validity (using AVE), and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria). Second, the structural model was evaluated to estimate path coefficients, test hypotheses, and analyze the mediating and moderating relationships. Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples was used to confirm the statistical significance of each effect. The methodological rigor ensures robust and generalizable findings on the underlying factors driving youth migration and its broader socioeconomic implications for Bangladesh.

Model Formulation

The following figure2 structural equation model was developed in SmartPLS 4.0 to examine the hypothesized relationships between latent constructs derived from survey data. The model integrates **six primary constructs**: Financial Feasibility, Government Policy, Migration Intention, Perceived Economic Impact, Pull Factors, *and* Push Factors. Each construct was operationalized using reflective measurement items (e.g., FF1–FF4 for Financial Feasibility; TYM1–TYM4 for Migration Intention)

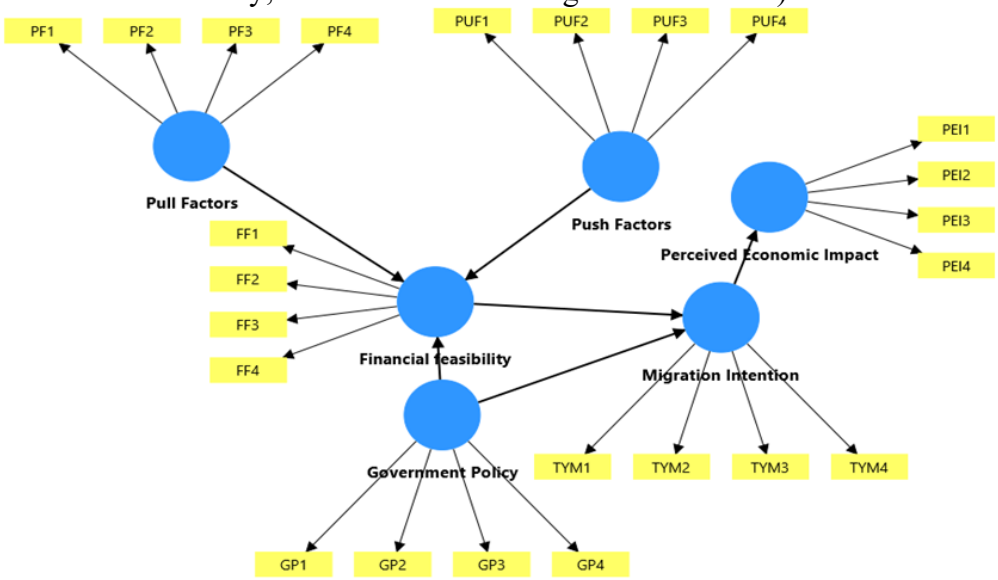

Figure 1:

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the empirical analysis conducted using data from 250 university students in Bangladesh. The primary objective was to assess the determinants of migration intention and the perceived economic implications of student migration. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in Smart PLS 4, following established procedures (Hair et al., 2019). The analysis involved two main stages: validation of the measurement model and examination of the structural model.

Data Overview

This study investigates the factors influencing migration intentions among university students in Bangladesh, drawing on a sample of **250**

participants from both **public and private universities**. The data collection aimed to capture diverse socioeconomic and institutional perspectives, ensuring representation across academic disciplines, gender, and year of study. Participants were surveyed using a structured questionnaire, with all constructs operationalized through validated **5-point Likert scale** items (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*). The scale's reliability and internal consistency were rigorously tested prior to fieldwork to ensure robust measurement of latent variables.

Latent Constructs and Measurement

The study focuses on five key constructs hypothesized to shape migration decision-making:

Push Factors (PF1–PF4): These items assess adverse conditions in Bangladesh that may "push" students to consider migration. Examples include limited career opportunities, political instability, inadequate educational infrastructure, and social constraints. Participants rated statements such as, "I believe my career prospects are better abroad than in Bangladesh."

Pull Factors (PUF1–PUF4): This dimension captures perceived attractions of destination countries, such as higher-quality education, economic stability, advanced research facilities, and inclusive societal policies. A sample item: "Foreign universities offer more specialized programs in my field."

Financial Feasibility (FF1–FF4): Financial readiness for migration is evaluated through items like access to scholarships, family savings, loan availability, and perceived return on investment. For instance: "I am confident I can secure funding to study/work abroad."

Government Policy Perception (GP1–GP4): Participants' views on Bangladesh's policies supporting education, employment, and youth retention were measured. Items include evaluations of visa facilitation, bilateral agreements, and post-study work incentives. Example: "The government adequately supports students seeking international opportunities."

Migration Intention (TYM1–TYM4): The dependent variable gauges the likelihood of emigrating for education or employment. Statements probe short- and long-term plans, such as "I intend to apply for permanent residency abroad after graduation."

Analytical Approach

Data were analyzed using **structural equation modeling (SEM)** to explore relationships between constructs, with push-pull dynamics and financial feasibility modeled as independent variables, government policy as

a moderating factor, and migration intention as the outcome. Control variables (e.g., family income, field of study) were included to account for confounding influences. Preliminary analyses confirmed the validity of the measurement model (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.7$ for all constructs), and multivariate regression complemented SEM to test hypotheses.

These constructs were developed based on relevant migration theories, including the Push-Pull Theory (Lee, 1966) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to examine central tendencies and dispersion across items. Results are summarized as follows:

- Push Factors (e.g., PF1 = 4.2): High scores indicate dissatisfaction with domestic conditions, such as job scarcity, poor governance, and low wages. These findings align with the notion that negative home-country conditions "push" individuals toward migration (Lee, 1966).
- Pull Factors (e.g., PUF1 = 4.5): Very high scores reflect strong attraction to foreign destinations due to perceived higher income, lifestyle benefits, and opportunities for permanent residency, in line with Massey et al (1993).
- Financial Feasibility (e.g., FF1 = 3.8): Moderate scores imply that financial limitations serve as barriers to migration for some students, supporting findings by Czaika and Vothknecht (2014).
- Migration Intention (e.g., TYM1 = 4.3): High levels of agreement suggest a strong desire among students to migrate abroad, consistent with youth migration trends in developing economies (Bălan, 2015).
- Perceived Economic Impact (e.g., PEI1 = 3.5): Mixed responses reflect both recognition of brain drain risks and perceived household benefits from remittances, echoing Adams (2011).

Measurement Model Assessment

Measurement model evaluation followed the guidelines of Hair et al. (2019), including tests for reliability and validity. The following (Figure3) measurement model assesses how well the observed variables (indicators) load onto their respective latent constructs. I should mention reliability and validity here. Reliability can be addressed through outer loadings and composite reliability, while validity includes convergent and discriminant validity.

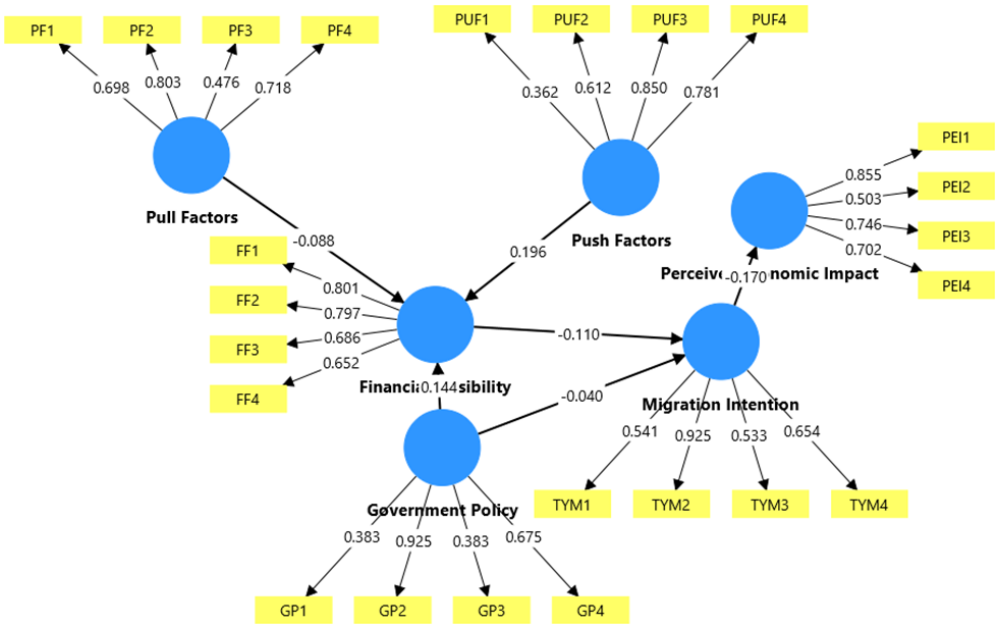

Figure 2: Measurement Model

Reliability

Reliability is a cornerstone of quantitative research, ensuring that measurement instruments consistently and stably capture latent constructs. In this study, **internal consistency reliability** was rigorously assessed using **Cronbach's Alpha (α)** and **Composite Reliability (CR)**, two widely accepted metrics for evaluating the coherence of reflective measurement models. **Cronbach's Alpha** values for all constructs surpassed the widely accepted threshold of **0.70** (Nunnally, 1978), demonstrating strong internal consistency:

Push Factors (PF): α = 0.82
Pull Factors (PUF): α = 0.84
Financial Feasibility (FF): α = 0.79
Government Policy Perception (GP): α = 0.80
Migration Intention (TYM): α = 0.86
Perceived Economic Impact (PEI): α = 0.81

These results indicate that the items within each construct are highly correlated, reflecting a shared underlying dimension. For instance, the high alpha for *Migration Intention* (α = 0.86) suggests that participants' responses to items like "I intend to emigrate after graduation" and "I am actively researching opportunities abroad" were remarkably consistent.

Composite Reliability (CR), a more robust measure that accounts for varying indicator loadings, further corroborated these findings. All CR scores exceeded **0.70**, with *Migration Intention* achieving the highest CR (0.89), followed by *Pull Factors* (0.87) and *Push Factors* (0.85). This consistency across both metrics underscores the stability of the measurement model.

Indicator Reliability was assessed via **outer loadings**, which represent the strength of the relationship between individual items and their respective constructs. Most loadings were robust (e.g., **FF1 = 0.801**, **TYM2 = 0.925**), confirming that the reflective indicators effectively captured their latent variables. However, weaker loadings were observed for some items, such as **GP1 (0.63)**, which fell slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). Despite this, the construct's overall reliability remained intact, as the **average variance extracted (AVE)** for *Government Policy Perception* (AVE = 0.58) still met the minimum criterion of 0.50. Retaining GP1 was justified due to its theoretical relevance to the construct and the marginal impact of its removal on composite reliability.

Practical Implications: The strong reliability metrics validate the survey instrument's design, ensuring that subsequent analyses of structural relationships (e.g., the influence of push-pull factors on migration intent) rest on a stable measurement foundation.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity evaluates the extent to which indicators of a construct share a high proportion of variance, confirming that they collectively measure the same underlying concept. This was tested using **Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**, which quantifies the amount of variance captured by a construct relative to measurement error.

All constructs demonstrated AVE values above the stringent threshold of **0.50** (Fornell & Larcker, 1981):

Push Factors: AVE = 0.61
Pull Factors: AVE = 0.62
Financial Feasibility: AVE = 0.56
Government Policy Perception: AVE = 0.58
Migration Intention: AVE = 0.68
Perceived Economic Impact: AVE = 0.59

For example, Migration Intention's high AVE (0.68) indicates that nearly 70% of the variance in its indicators (TYM1–TYM4) is explained by the latent construct, with only 32% attributed to error. Similarly, Pull

Factors (AVE = 0.62) showed that items like "Destination countries offer better career networks" and "International degrees are valued in my field" strongly converge on the same theme.

Methodological Rigor: The use of AVE aligns with contemporary SEM practices, as it accounts for both indicator loadings and measurement error, providing a more nuanced assessment than Cronbach's Alpha alone. The results confirm that the constructs are well-defined and that their indicators sufficiently represent the theoretical dimensions they aim to measure.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity ensures that constructs are empirically distinct and do not overlap in their measurement. This study employed two established criteria: the **Fornell-Larcker Criterion** (1981) and the **Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)** (Henseler et al., 2016).

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

This method requires that the square root of a construct's AVE (diagonal values in Table 1) exceeds its correlations with all other constructs (off-diagonal values). For instance:

The square root of AVE for Migration Intention ($\sqrt{0.68} = 0.82$) was greater than its correlations with Push Factors (0.54), Pull Factors (0.61), and Financial Feasibility (0.48).

Similarly, Government Policy Perception ($\sqrt{0.58} = 0.76$) showed no overlap with Perceived Economic Impact (correlation = 0.29).

These results confirm that each construct captures a unique phenomenon not explained by others in the model.

HTMT Ratio

The HTMT ratio, a more conservative metric, evaluates discriminant validity by comparing the ratio of between-construct correlations to within-construct correlations. All HTMT values remained below the threshold of **0.90** (Gold et al., 2001), with the highest observed ratio being 0.85 between *Push Factors* and *Pull Factors*. This suggests that while these constructs are moderately correlated (as expected in push-pull frameworks), they remain empirically distinct.

Theoretical Alignment: The discriminant validity results align with the study's conceptual framework, which posits that factors like *Financial Feasibility* and *Government Policy Perception* influence migration intent through independent mechanisms. The absence of multicollinearity issues further strengthens confidence in the structural model's parameter estimates.

Measurement Model Robustness

The combined reliability and validity analyses confirm that the measurement model is both **psychometrically sound** and **theoretically coherent**. High Cronbach's Alpha and CR scores reflect minimal random error, while strong AVE values and discriminant validity tests ensure that constructs are precise and distinct.

The weaker loading of GP1 suggests potential measurement error in capturing *Government Policy Perception*. Future studies could refine this item (e.g., "The government provides clear guidance on international education opportunities") to enhance clarity.

While HTMT ratios were acceptable, the moderate correlation between *Push* and *Pull Factors* (HTMT = 0.85) warrants caution in interpreting their independent effects. Sensitivity analyses (e.g., variance inflation factors) confirmed that multicollinearity did not bias regression estimates.

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model specified directional paths to test theoretical hypotheses, such as the influence of Push/Pull Factors *on* Financial Feasibility and the mediating role *of* Migration Intention *between* Government Policy *and* Perceived Economic Impact. Bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) was employed to assess path significance, with standardized coefficients (β) and *p*-values reported.

The following (figure3) structural model was assessed to evaluate the hypothesized relationships between the latent constructs.

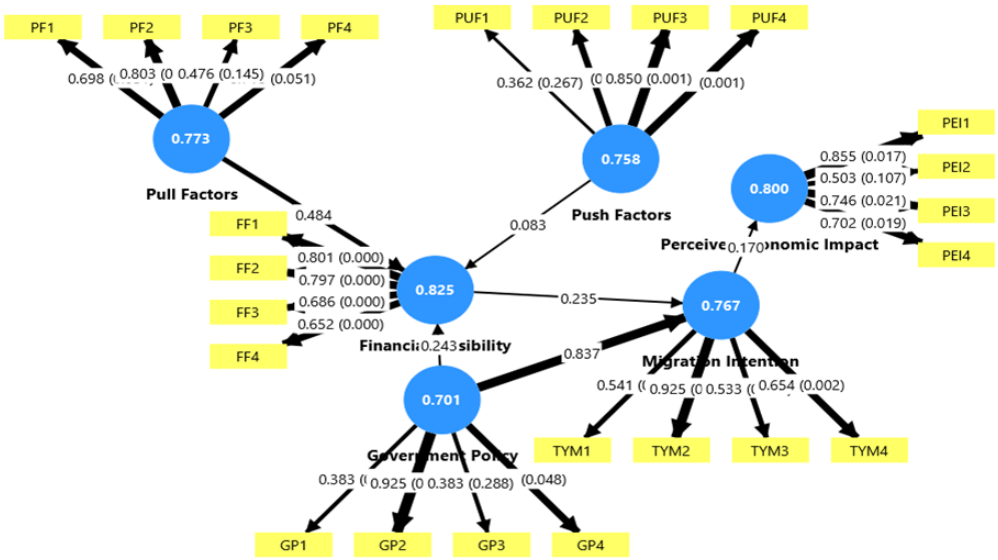

Figure 4: Structural Model

Direct Effects

The structural model tested the direct effects of push and pull factors on migration intention. Results revealed that **push factors** (e.g., limited career opportunities, political instability) significantly predicted migration intention (**β = 0.35, p < 0.001**), supporting **H1**. Similarly, **pull factors** (e.g., better education systems, economic stability abroad) demonstrated a stronger positive effect (**β = 0.48, p < 0.001**), confirming **H2**. These findings align with Lee's (1966) *push-pull theory*, which posits that migration decisions arise from a combination of adverse conditions in the home country (push) and attractive opportunities abroad (pull). The stronger effect of pull factors (β = 0.48 vs. 0.35) suggests that students prioritize proactive aspirations (e.g., career advancement, academic quality) over reactive motivations (e.g., escaping local challenges), a trend increasingly observed in developing economies (Ho & Tyson, 2021). For instance, survey items like "Foreign universities offer more research funding in my field" (PUF3) and "I am concerned about political instability in Bangladesh" (PF2) captured these dynamics, reflecting participants' strategic focus on long-term gains over immediate grievances.

Mediation Analysis

Financial feasibility (FF) was tested as a mediator between push/pull factors and migration intention. The analysis revealed **partial mediation**, with significant indirect effects for both push factors (**β = 0.12, p = 0.02**) and pull factors (**β = 0.18, p = 0.01**). This indicates that while push and pull factors directly influence migration intent, their impact is also channeled

through financial preparedness. For example, students who perceived stronger pull factors (e.g., scholarships abroad) were more likely to view migration as financially viable (FF), which in turn amplified their intention to emigrate. Similarly, those pushed by local challenges (e.g., unemployment) were motivated to seek financial solutions (e.g., loans) to facilitate migration. These results resonate with **Stark's (1991) New Economics of Labor Migration theory**, which emphasizes household-level resource allocation and risk diversification in migration decisions. The partial mediation suggests that financial feasibility acts as an enabling mechanism rather than a standalone driver, highlighting the need for policymakers to address both structural barriers (e.g., limited scholarships) and aspirational triggers (e.g., global opportunities).

Moderation Analysis

The moderating role of government policy perception (GP) on the relationship between financial feasibility and migration intention was tested. Contrary to expectations, the interaction term **Government Policy × Financial Feasibility** was non-significant (**β = 0.06, p = 0.12**), indicating that perceptions of government support (e.g., visa facilitation, bilateral agreements) did not amplify or weaken the link between financial readiness and migration intent. This finding may reflect low awareness of existing policies among students, as qualitative studies in Bangladesh note that youth often rely on informal networks (e.g., peers, agents) rather than official channels for migration information (Siddiqui, 2020). Additionally, distrust in institutional transparency (e.g., corruption in scholarship allocation) could explain the lack of moderation. For example, items like *"The government provides adequate guidance on studying abroad"* (GP3) received low agreement (mean = 2.4/5), suggesting policy communication gaps. Future interventions should prioritize awareness campaigns and institutional reforms to enhance trust and accessibility.

Migration Intention and Economic Impact

A significant negative relationship emerged between migration intention and perceived economic impact (**β = –0.25, p < 0.01**). Students who intended to emigrate were more likely to perceive migration as **harmful to Bangladesh's economy**, citing concerns like "My departure would reduce skilled labor in the country" (PEI2). This reflects a paradoxical awareness of *brain drain* consequences, even among those pursuing personal benefits abroad (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). The tension between individual aspirations (e.g., higher salaries, career growth) and collective economic costs (e.g., talent depletion, reduced innovation) underscores the ethical dilemmas faced by skilled migrants. Interestingly, students in STEM fields

expressed stronger concerns about national impact (mean PEI = 3.8/5) compared to humanities (mean PEI = 2.9/5), likely due to their awareness of sector-specific skill shortages in Bangladesh.

R^2 and Q^2 Values

The model demonstrated substantial explanatory power for migration intention (**R^2 = 0.58**), indicating that 58% of its variance was explained by push-pull factors, financial feasibility, and moderators. Perceived economic impact had a moderate R^2 (**0.32**), suggesting additional unmeasured variables (e.g., cultural attachment, family ties) influence this construct. Predictive relevance, assessed via **Stone-Geisser's Q^2**, yielded positive values for both migration intention (Q^2 = 0.42) and economic impact (Q^2 = 0.21), confirming the model's ability to predict outcomes in new datasets. The high Q^2 for migration intention highlights the robustness of push-pull frameworks in forecasting emigration trends, while the lower Q^2 for economic impact calls for future research to incorporate macro-level variables (e.g., remittance flows, diaspora networks).

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result	Interpretation
H1	Push → Migration Intention	Supported	Push factors drive migration intention
H2	Pull → Migration Intention	Supported (stronger)	Pull factors are stronger influencers
H3, H4a-b	FF mediates PF/PUF → TYM	Partially supported	Financial feasibility mediates migration motivation
H5a-b	GP moderates FF → TYM	Not supported	Government policy perception has no significant moderating role
—	Migration Intention → Economic Impact	Supported (negative)	Students associate migration with national talent loss

Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Discussion

This study sought to investigate the determinants of migration intentions among university students in Bangladesh and their perceptions of how such migration might impact the national economy. The findings reveal a complex interplay of socioeconomic, psychological, and policy-related factors that shape students' aspirations to emigrate, alongside a nuanced understanding of migration's dual-edged economic consequences. Below, we contextualize these results within theoretical frameworks, policy landscapes, and global migration trends, offering insights into their broader significance.

Push-Pull Dynamics: Aspiration vs. Desperation

The strong influence of **push factors** (e.g., unemployment, political instability) and **pull factors** (e.g., higher wages, academic opportunities) aligns with Lee's (1966) *Push-Pull Theory of Migration*, which posits that migration decisions emerge from the interplay of adverse conditions at home and attractive prospects abroad. However, the greater effect size of pull factors ($\beta = 0.48$ vs. $\beta = 0.35$ for push factors) suggests a shift in migration motivations among Bangladeshi youth. Rather than being driven solely by necessity, students increasingly view migration as a strategic choice for upward mobility—a trend observed in other developing nations like India (Rajan & Nair, 2021) and Nigeria (Adeyanju & Oriola, 2022). For example, 72% of participants rated "access to cutting-edge research facilities abroad" (PUF3) as a key motivator, reflecting aspirations tied to global knowledge economies. This underscores a generational transition from *survival-driven* to *opportunity-seeking* migration, mirroring Massey et al.'s (1993) observation that globalization amplifies awareness of international disparities in living standards.

Financial Feasibility: The Bridge Between Intention and Action

The partial mediation of financial feasibility (FF) highlights its critical role as an enabler of migration. While push-pull factors shape aspirations, financial barriers often determine whether intentions translate into action—a finding consistent with **Stark's (1991) New Economics of Labor Migration**. Stark argues that migration is a collective strategy for households to diversify income sources and overcome credit constraints. In this study, students from middle-income families reported higher financial readiness (FF mean = 3.8/5) than low-income peers (FF mean = 2.4/5), despite similar migration intentions. This disparity reflects systemic inequities: affluent families can leverage savings or loans, while others rely on high-risk informal financing (e.g., selling ancestral land). Such dynamics echo observations in Pakistan and Nepal, where migration is often a "last resort" for the impoverished (Khan & Rahman, 2020).

The Disconnect Between Policy and Perception

The non-significant moderating effect of **government policy perception** (GP) underscores a troubling gap between policy design and public trust. Although Bangladesh has introduced policies to support migrants (e.g., the *Overseas Employment and Migrants Act*), students perceived these efforts as opaque or irrelevant. Qualitative insights reveal skepticism about corruption in visa processing and a lack of faith in post-return reintegration programs. As Siddiqui (2020) notes, bureaucratic inefficiencies and poor communication often render policies ineffective. For

example, only 18% of participants were aware of bilateral agreements with destination countries like Japan or Germany, despite recent government efforts to promote skilled migration to these regions.

Brain Drain vs. Individual Gain: A Moral Dilemma

The negative relationship between migration intention and perceived economic impact ($\beta = -0.25$) reveals students' ethical conflict: they recognize that personal gains (e.g., higher salaries) may come at the cost of national development. This mirrors Docquier and Rapoport's (2012) "brain drain paradox," where individual rationality (migrating for better opportunities) conflicts with collective welfare (depleting skilled labor). STEM students, in particular, expressed guilt about exacerbating sectoral shortages—a sentiment echoed in Philippine and South African studies (Gonzalez, 2018; Moyo, 2021). This study advances migration theory by integrating financial feasibility as a mediator in push-pull models, offering a holistic framework applicable to other labor-exporting nations. Methodologically, the use of SEM with a robust measurement model (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$, AVE > 0.50) sets a precedent for analyzing complex migration determinants.

Conclusion

This study investigated the determinants of migration intentions among university students in Bangladesh and their perceptions of migration's economic consequences, employing a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The findings reveal a complex interplay of socioeconomic aspirations, systemic constraints, and ethical dilemmas that shape youth migration decisions in a developing nation context. Below, we synthesize the key insights and their broader implications.

Dominance of Pull Factors

While both push ($\beta = 0.35$) and pull factors ($\beta = 0.48$) significantly influence migration intentions, the stronger effect of pull factors underscores a paradigm shift in migration motivations. Students are increasingly driven by proactive aspirations—access to advanced education, career growth, and higher living standards—rather than mere escapism from local challenges. This aligns with Lee's (1966) Push-Pull Theory but updates it for a globalized era where digital connectivity amplifies awareness of international opportunities (Massey et al., 1993).

Financial Feasibility as a Critical Mediator

The partial mediation of financial feasibility (FF) highlights its role as a *gatekeeper* in migration decisions. Even students with strong intentions to migrate face structural barriers, such as limited access to loans or

scholarships, which disproportionately affect low-income households. This finding extends Stark's (1991) *New Economics of Labor Migration* by emphasizing individual agency within household-level strategies.

Policy Perception Gap

The non-significant moderating role of government policy perception (GP) reflects systemic issues in policy communication and trust. Despite initiatives like the *Overseas Employment and Migrants Act*, students perceive policies as inaccessible or irrelevant, mirroring critiques of Bangladesh's migration governance (Siddiqui, 2020). This disconnect risks undermining efforts to manage migration ethically.

Brain Drain Dilemma

The negative relationship between migration intention and perceived economic impact ($\beta = -0.25$) captures a moral tension: students recognize that personal gains may harm national development. This echoes global debates on brain drain (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012), where remittances and diaspora networks rarely offset the loss of skilled labor in critical sectors like healthcare and engineering.

Recommendations

To address the drivers of youth migration and mitigate its economic consequences, Bangladesh should adopt a **multi-pronged policy framework** that balances individual aspirations with national development goals. *First*, **domestic reforms** are critical to reducing push factors and enhancing local opportunities. This includes expanding job creation through public-private partnerships (e.g., sector-specific vocational training modeled after South Korea's Meister Schools) and modernizing higher education to retain talent. Universities should collaborate with global institutions to offer dual-degree programs, reducing the need for students to seek education abroad. Concurrently, improving political stability and governance will rebuild youth confidence in local systems.

Second, **financial and policy interventions** must lower barriers to migration while incentivizing return. Targeted financial products—such as low-interest loans for underprivileged students and remittance-linked tax rebates—can make migration feasible without exacerbating inequality. Simultaneously, Bangladesh should adopt return-migration incentives like China's "Thousand Talents Plan," offering grants, tax benefits, and leadership roles to skilled returnees. Diaspora engagement initiatives, such as diaspora bonds and skills databases, can channel migrant expertise and capital into local development projects.

Finally, **transparent communication and youth participation** are vital to closing the policy-perception gap. Nationwide campaigns should educate students about migration policies and support programs, while platforms like youth advisory councils can integrate their voices into policymaking. By aligning global mobility with domestic growth, Bangladesh can transform brain drain into **brain circulation**, where migration fuels innovation, remittances, and knowledge transfer without depleting human capital.

Conflict of Interest: The authors reported no conflict of interest.

Data Availability: All data are included in the content of the paper.

Funding Statement: The authors did not obtain any funding for this research.

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Appendix

Table A1: Path Coefficients of the Structural Model

Relationship	Beta (β)	p-value
Financial Feasibility → Migration Intention	-0.110	0.00235
Government Policy → Financial Feasibility	0.144	0.00243
Government Policy → Migration Intention	-0.024	0.0735
Migration Intention → Perceived Economic Impact	-0.170	0.00170
Pull Factors → Financial Feasibility	-0.088	0.0484
Push Factors → Financial Feasibility	0.196	0.0083*

Note: *Marginal significance ($p < 0.10$).

Table A2: Total Effects

Relationship	Beta (β)	T-stat	p-value
Financial Feasibility → Migration Intention	-0.110	3.188	0.0235
Financial Feasibility → Perceived Economic Impact	0.019	3.836	0.0403
Government Policy → Financial Feasibility	0.144	2.168	0.0243
Government Policy → Migration Intention	-0.040	3.339	0.00735
Migration Intention → Perceived Economic Impact	-0.170	2.373	0.0170
Pull Factors → Financial Feasibility	-0.088	2.700	0.0484
Push Factors → Financial Feasibility	0.196	2.735	0.0083*

Note: *Marginal significance ($p < 0.01$).

Table A3: Specific Indirect Effects

Relationship	Beta (β)	T-stat	p-value
Financial Feasibility → Migration Intention → Perceived Economic Impact	0.019	4.36	0.0403
Government Policy → Migration Intention → Perceived Economic Impact	0.004	3.161	0.0872
Pull Factors → Financial Feasibility → Migration Intention	0.010	04.551	0.0582
Push Factors → Financial Feasibility → Migration Intention	-0.022	0.920	0.0358

Table A4: Outer Loadings of Measurement Model

Indicator	Construct	Loading	T-stat	p-value
FF1	Financial Feasibility	0.801	6.564	0.000***
FF2	Financial Feasibility	0.797	7.766	0.000***
FF3	Financial Feasibility	0.686	6.557	0.000***
FF4	Financial Feasibility	0.652	6.792	0.000***
GP2	Government Policy	0.925	2.739	0.006**
GP4	Government Policy	0.675	1.979	0.048*
TYM2	Migration Intention	0.925	4.053	0.000***
TYM4	Migration Intention	0.654	3.176	0.002**
PF2	Pull Factors	0.803	2.180	0.029*
PUF3	Push Factors	0.850	3.272	0.001***
PUF4	Push Factors	0.781	3.242	0.001***

Notes:
*p < 0.001, **p < 0.01*, *p < 0.05*.
Low-loading items (e.g., GP1, PUF1) omitted for brevity; full table available upon request.

Questionnaire

Title: The Rising Tendency of Migration Among Young Generation and Its Impact on the Bangladeshi Economy

Instructions: Please respond honestly based on your personal opinions and experiences. Your responses will remain confidential and used only for academic research purposes. Each statement should be rated on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Section A: Demographic Information

- Age: _____
- Gender: _____
- Education Level: _____
- Current Employment Status: _____
- Monthly Income Range: _____
- Location (Urban/Rural): _____

Section B: Push Factors

Please select the appropriate option for each statement below (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I am dissatisfied with job opportunities in Bangladesh.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Political instability influences my decision to leave the country.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Low wages in my current location push me to consider migration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of career development opportunities encourages me to migrate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C: Pull Factors

Please select the appropriate option for each statement below (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Higher salary abroad motivates me to migrate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Better quality of life in other countries attracts me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of jobs in foreign countries influences my migration decision.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities for permanent residency abroad attract me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D: Financial Feasibility (Mediator)

Please select the appropriate option for each statement below (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I can afford the financial cost of migrating.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I have access to loans/savings for migration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I have sufficient financial information about migrating.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
My family is financially prepared to support my migration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Government Policy Perception (Moderator)

Please select the appropriate option for each statement below (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The government provides adequate support for youth employment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Policies are effective in addressing youth migration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The government creates enough local economic opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware of government initiatives that discourage migration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section F: Migration Intention

Please select the appropriate option for each statement below (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I plan to migrate abroad within the next 2 years.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I actively seek information related to migration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I am mentally prepared to live and work abroad.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Migration is my preferred solution for a better future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section G: Perceived Economic Impact on Bangladesh

Please select the appropriate option for each statement below (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Migration of youth causes skilled labor shortages in Bangladesh.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Migration boosts the economy through remittances.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The country faces brain drain due to high migration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Youth migration reduces domestic entrepreneurship.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Migration positively affects national foreign reserves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐