Remigration or Reintegration: What Explains the Intentions of Overseas Filipino Workers?

Melissa R. Garabiles,
De La Salle University and Scalabrini Migration Center
Maruja MB Asis,
Scalabrini Migration Center

Remigration or Reintegration: What Explains the Intentions of Overseas Filipino Workers?

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

INTRODUCTION

The return of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to the Philippines during the time of COVID-19 seriously tested the capacity of Philippine institutions to support OFWs. Since the start of government-organized repatriation in February 2020, close to a million OFWs (923,652) had returned to the country by early 2022 (Fernandez, 2022). Amid border closures and the lack of commercial flights in the early period of the pandemic in 2020, the government organized flights to bring home OFWs. In the case of cruise line personnel, the government allowed cruise ships to dock in Manila Bay so that displaced OFWs, who otherwise could not disembark, can make the return journey.[1] The government continues to facilitate the return of OFWs and cover the airfare of OFWs, as needed. In the past, the government also assisted in OFWs' onward transfer to their home communities upon arrival in the Philippines.[2]

Initially, the 2020 repatriation was hampered by the lack of flights, changing regulations concerning quarantine, inadequate testing facilities, and the lack of coordination with local government units (Asis, 2020; Kang and Latoja, 2022), but these difficulties were eventually overcome. After the emergency response to the pandemic was set in place and improved, the government turned to the huge task of supporting the reintegration of OFWs. In previous crises, returned OFWs had the option to consider remigration to less affected countries (Battistella, 1999). The COVID-19 pandemic's impact is global and opportunities in the global labor market are limited to essential workers. Under the circumstances, would OFWs still consider remigration? If remigration is not a feasible option, would OFWs think about returning for good? Findings from the 2020 survey of returned OFWs suggest that 48 per cent had the intention to remigrate overseas, 37 per cent had no overseas remigration intention (which includes the 2 per cent intending to remigrate within the Philippines), and 15 per cent were undecided (IOM, 2021: 35).[3]

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration includes the goal of "safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration" (UN General Assembly, 2019). IOM offers a definition of sustainable reintegration which does not exclude remigration (IOM, 2019):

> **Reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity.**

Although those with intention to remigrate abroad comprise the largest group, the substantial 37 per cent intending not to remigrate abroad is the potential pool of OFWs who may benefit from reintegration support. This policy brief examines two questions: (1) what are the factors associated with the intention to remigrate overseas, and (2) for those who intend not to remigrate overseas, what are the factors that are associated with plans for self-employment? Since these are intentions, these can change. It would be useful to understand the factors that shape these intentions to develop a more proactive approach to sustainable reintegration.

---

[1] Filipino-crewed ships were allowed to dock in Manila while following strict protocols, which includes inspection by the bureaus of quarantine, customs, and immigration, followed by quarantine inside the ships, provision of clearance to embark, then quarantine in isolation facilities (https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/29/Coast-Guard-more-Filipino-crew-cruise-ships-dock-Manila-quarantine.html)

[2] The Repatriation Assistance Program of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration offers programs for the purpose of "[b]ringing back of distressed OFWs and human remains. Emergency repatriation is carried out in the event of any political unrest or natural calamities. Workers are accorded with airport assistance, temporary shelter at the OWWA Halfway Home, psycho-social counseling, stress debriefing, and transport services or fares for their onward travel to their respective provinces" (https://owwa.gov.ph/?page_id=1435).

[3] See also Papers 1 and 2. The per centage distribution of the responses of OFWs varies because of differences in the sample size considered for the analysis. Note that in Papers 1 and 2, those who had intention to migrate internally were included in the group which has no intention to remigrate abroad. The pattern of responses is the same in the IOM report and the two papers.

> **Finding local employment is not that attractive to returning migrants because of the low pay.**

Since labor migration in Asia is designed to be temporary, especially for migrant workers in less skilled occupations, return migration is embedded in the system. Even as the Philippine government is finding labor markets for Filipinos, policy discussions on return migration have a long history in the Philippines, and various strategies have been attempted over the years to facilitate the reintegration of OFWs in the country. If the desired outcomes are for Filipinos to migrate out of choice and not out of necessity and for effective reintegration of OFWs when they decide to come back to the country, as indicated in the declared policy objectives in Section 2 of the Republic Act No. 11641[4], then these have yet to happen. In fact, re-migration has been the norm, as indicated by the large share of rehires compared to new hires among the OFWs deployed every year (IOM and SMC, 2013; NEDA, n.d.). The aspiration for the country to develop so that labor migration becomes an option and not a necessity is the dream of every administration. Since the beginning of the reintegration program, entrepreneurship and local employment were offered as vehicles for reintegration in the local economy. The idea to start a business also resonates with migrants' vision of their lives upon returning "for good" in the Philippines. Finding local employment is not that attractive to returning migrants because of the low pay. Despite sustained economic growth in the last decade, the number of Filipinos leaving the country to work abroad has been on the rise, until the pandemic happened (IOM and SMC, 2013; NEDA, n.d.; Asis, 2021).

The existing reintegration programs and services of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO) are not designed to respond to the large-scale return of OFWs. Thus, during the pandemic, OWWA and NRCO launched new initiatives specifically geared to pandemic-affected returnees. The Technical Education Skills and Development Authority (TESDA) expanded its training programs, and other departments, notably, the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), offered loan facilities for returned OFWs. Some local governments also provided financial assistance and/or cooperated with national government agencies in rolling out programs in their localities. The various efforts try to address different aspects related to economic reintegration – this includes access to capital, training programs for skills upgrading, mentorship, local employment opportunities, educational support for the children of OFWs. As discussed earlier, sustainable reintegration is multi-dimensional. The policy brief focuses on economic reintegration because it is central to addressing the drivers of (re)migration, and the dataset used for the analysis does not contain variables that would allow exploring other aspects of reintegration.

[4] Section 2 of Republic Act No. 11641 states "The State does not promote overseas employment as a means to economic growth and national development and shall continuously aim to make it a choice and not a necessity. The State shall institute measures that will strengthen the domestic labor market for the effective reintegration of Overseas Filipino Workers."

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data for this paper came from the telephone survey conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in September-December 2020 (hereafter, the 2020 survey), with generous funding from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The original sample included data from 8,332 OFWs who returned to the Philippines after the nationwide quarantine and travel restrictions were enforced on March 16, 2020. The OFW returnees were recruited through the anonymized database of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), IOM's list of beneficiaries in their transportation assistance program, and advertisements in social media, quarantine facilities, and airports. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous (IOM, 2021).

Measures

To know why some returned OFWs intend to remigrate while some intend to stay, or why some OFWs plan to go into self-employment while others would rather enter paid employment, the analysis considered three clusters of explanatory variables that may explain these variations (Table 1). The clusters and their components are as follows:

- Migration variables – This consists of variables related to the OFWs' migration experience which include the sector or type of work overseas (sea-based or land-based) and reason for their return to the Philippines. The former serves as an indicator of the salary level and work conditions,[5] and the latter is an indicator of the level of preparedness of returnees.

- Individual characteristics – This cluster covers socio-demographic characteristics which indicate the resources and social context of returned OFWs.

- Return conditions – The variables indicate the economic status and welfare of returned OFWs which can contribute to their sense of economic prospects overseas vis-à-vis those at home.

Data Analysis

SPSS version 20.0 was used for the data analysis. The first step was conducting bivariate analyses to explore associations between the outcome and explanatory variables; variables that were significant at $p < .10$ were included in further analyses. Hierarchical bivariate logistic regression was then performed to determine the odds or likelihood of intent to remigrate abroad and plan to pursue self-employment. This statistical technique involves starting with a basic model, then adding correlates after controlling for variables to try to improve the model. Each outcome variable was subjected to three models, starting with migration variables (Model 1), followed by considering the migration variables and individual characteristics (Model 2), and finally considering all variables – migration, individual characteristics, and return conditions (Model 3).

After data cleaning and applying listwise deletion to manage missing data, the sample size was reduced to 6,553 cases. This was the sample used to determine the characteristics associated with the intent to remigrate. In a similar manner to analyze what influenced OFWs' decisions whether to go into self-employment, a separate data set was used to include only those who did not intend to remigrate abroad. After listwise deletion, the sample size of those who did not intend to remigrate abroad went down to 3,232 cases.

---

[5] The comparison of land- and sea-based OFWs shows that the latter was better off in terms of reason for return (fewer returned because of COVID-19 or problems) and monthly income (see Paper 2).

RESULTS

Who are likely to intend to remigrate abroad?

As shown in Table 2, about half of the respondents expressed the intention to remigrate. Table 2 also shows that participants were mostly male, aged 39 and below, and had college degrees. The majority were married, based in the National Capital Region (NCR)/ Region III/Region IV-A and were employed before migrating abroad. In terms of children and household size, they had a median of 1 child and a household size of 4. Most did not have relatives abroad. Prior to returning to the Philippines during the pandemic, almost 80 per cent were land-based migrants. The majority reported coming home because of a confluence of being scheduled to return and due to COVID-19. A little more than half stated being eligible to receive government assistance. A little more than half also experienced a drop in income by 60 per cent or less.

Results from bivariate analyses show that the intent to remigrate *differed* in terms of type of work prior to their return to the Philippines, reason for return, sex, age, educational attainment, region in the Philippines, household members abroad, eligibility to receive government assistance, and amount of drop in income. On the other hand, intention to remigrate *did not differ* across work status before migration, marital status, number of children, and household size. These variables, therefore, were excluded from further analyses.

Results from hierarchical binary logistic regression analysis (Table 3) show that those with greater likelihood of intending to remigrate abroad were those with the following characteristics:

Males	from Luzon (NCR/Regions III and IV-A)	Have household members abroad
Younger (39 years and below)	Sea-based	Eligible to receive government assistance
College degree holders	Return was unplanned or unintended (push factors, displacement or COVID-19)	Income dropped more than 60%

Thus, the three clusters of explanatory variables contribute to the likelihood of OFWs' intent to remigrate abroad. As Table 3 suggests, the migration variables (Model 1) influence remigration intentions, and as other clusters are added into the analysis (Models 2 and 3), further explanation of OFWs' intent to remigrate abroad is revealed. The significant variables are a combination of push, pull and facilitative factors that drive remigration. Sea-based OFWs (specifically those working on merchant vessels) are more likely to think of remigrating than land-based OFWs because work in global shipping is performed beyond national borders. The pressure to remigrate is suggested by the greater odds of those who returned due to push factors than those who had met their goals. The individual characteristics associated with higher likelihood of remigrating (males, younger, and higher education) are factors associated with migration; residence in the more developed regions in Luzon and having household members abroad are facilitative factors while the return conditions reflect push factors or emigration pressures. Thus, the factors associated with remigration intentions are no different from those shaping first-time migration. Remigration intentions reveal that OFWs have yet to reach a level of economic sufficiency, hence, they continue to rely on overseas employment.

Who are likely to plan for self-employment?

The other half of OFWs reported no intention of remigrating overseas; this was the sample used in comparing the profile of returned OFWs who are likely to take up self-employment and those who are not likely to take up self-employment. The profile of these participants is shown in Table 4. A little over half of participants were male. Most were younger than 40 years old and had no college degrees. The majority were married, came from the National Capital Region (NCR)/Region III/Region IV-A. 51 per cent were employed before migrating abroad. They had a median of 1 child and 4 family members in the household. The majority had no relatives based abroad. Before their return to the country, 85.6 per cent were land-based migrants, and the majority reported going home to the Philippines because they were already scheduled to come back and because of the pandemic. More than half reported not being eligible to receive government assistance and experiencing their incomes drop by 60 per cent or less.

Findings from bivariate tests showed that the plan for self-employment *differed* in terms of type of work (i.e., sea-based or land-based) prior to their return to the Philippines, sex, age, educational attainment, region in the Philippines, marital status, number of children, eligibility to receive government assistance, and drop in income. There were *no differences* in terms of work status before migration, household size, household members abroad and reason for return to the Philippines. Thus, these variables were excluded from further analyses.

Hierarchical binary logistic regression results (Table 5) reveal that there was greater likelihood to plan for self-employment among the following:

🚶	Females	🏖️	Land-based
👪	Married	👨‍👩‍👧	With more children
📖	No college degree	🏛️	Eligible to receive government assistance
📍	from Luzon (NCR/Regions III and IV-A)	💳	Income dropped more than 60%

Similarly, all three clusters have some influence on the self-employment plans of OFWs who intend to remain in the Philippines. It is noteworthy that migration and return conditions (see Models 1 and 3 in Table 5) have a very modest influence on plans for self-employment. The cluster of variables that exert the most association with self-employment are individual characteristics—gender, marital status, educational attainment, number of children, and residence in the more developed regions of Luzon.

CONCLUSION

Insights

The analysis has identified factors that are associated with OFWs' intention for remigration abroad and plan for self-employment. The findings reflect that remigration is part of the options being considered by returned OFWs, particularly among sea-based workers (specifically those working on merchant vessels). Those who are intent on remigrating tend to be those who are unprepared to come back, are still too young to retire, and those who may find it challenging to find work in the Philippines (e.g., seafaring has no local equivalent; unemployment rates in NCR (9.2%) and Region IV-A (10.3%) are higher than the national average (7.4%) and are two of the highest in the country (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021)). The factors associated with remigration intentions are no different from those that influence first migration, notably the lack of viable career prospects in the country (Delerio, Mansal, and Dumalaog, 2021). Thus, for as long as push factors are unaddressed, the return to the Philippines will continue to be temporary, whether in times of crisis or not. Turning to OFWs intending to remain in the Philippines, the plan to go into self-employment is associated with land-based OFWs. Amid the ongoing pandemic, the overseas employment prospects for land-based workers are limited, and this may have influenced the life plans and intentions of returned OFWs.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Acknowledge and support the possible remigration. In terms of intention to remigrate abroad, it is necessary for the Philippine government to acknowledge and support the possible remigration of some of the returned OFWs, particularly the seafarers as suggested by the study's findings. In the context of the continuing pandemic, the government should continue to ensure that OFWs who will remigrate will have access to vaccination and boosters, with the vaccine brand preferred (or in some cases, required/recognized) by receiving countries taken into consideration7. Proper documentation of their vaccination status should meet international standards and should be readily available to them. OFWs would also need to continue to be prioritized in passport and/or visa processing to avoid delays in deployment or cancellation of contracts.8 Many of those who intend to remigrate may have difficulty paying deployment-related

> " Those who are intent on remigrating tend to be those who are unprepared to come back, are still too young to retire, and those who may find it challenging to find work in the Philippines.

expenses (i.e., temporary housing while processing papers) due to a large drop in their income. Mechanisms should be in place to allow them to leave the country while minimizing debts. There are also countries or territories that require quarantine and/or testing upon entry, e.g., 1-day quarantine then testing in Qatar (Ministry of Public Health, 2022); 14-day quarantine in Macao (Government Portal of Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, 2022). The Philippine government should engage with foreign governments to ensure that quarantine- and testing-related expenses will be shouldered by the employers instead of by the OFWs or later deducted from OFWs' salaries. Pre-departure orientation also needs to include building awareness of receiving countries' vaccination requirements, quarantine protocols, and health practices. The availability of online processing of documents and pre-departure orientation is advised as an added protection against COVID-19. Given the fluctuating reopening of countries, provision for temporary accommodations near airports and seaports is recommended to assist remigrating OFWs.

Recommendation 2: Create training programs and access to loans for returned OFWs interested in starting a business. As regards plans for self-employment, the Philippine government should create training programs and access to loans for returned OFWs interested in starting a business, particularly among women returnees as this study suggests. The 2020 survey noted that only about 25 per cent of OFWs have capital (see Paper 2). Thus, information on how to access capital is important to help OFWs realize their self-employment plans. Giving tax incentives and simplifying paperwork for loan

> "
> **The pivots, innovations and changes wrought by COVID-19 suggest that the pandemic presented opportunities to rethink and work towards (re)building a better normal.**
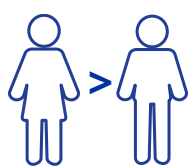
The Philippine government should create training programs and access to loans for returned OFWs interested in starting a business, particularly among women returnees.

applications and business permits could also promote entrepreneurship. Some of the women returnees may have already completed training programs in baking, canning/preserving food, catering, sewing, jewelry-making and the like while they were abroad. Information on operating a business in the Philippines, the use of technology to access information, facilitate bank and financial transactions, and conducting seminars on key aspects of running a business (e.g., marketing, accounting) are recommended9. Training and support to conduct market research and feasibility and sustainability studies could help support businesses for the long-term and at the same time, address communities' needs. Linkages with local government units (such as hiring and training of staff from nearby barangays, provision for cheap or free rent or lease of spaces, etc.) could jumpstart businesses and lessen the work entailed of OFWs, while helping establish community impact

and integration. To enhance awareness about various programs, the government needs to intensify information and education programs through traditional media and social media platforms to reach OFWs and their families. Possibilities to increase direct access to potential suppliers and buyers (e.g., collaborating with malls, markets, or shops and with local government units) are also important supplemental information. All these recommendations are in line with the National Action Plan on Sustainable, Gender-responsive Return and Reintegration10.

Recommendation 3: Remigration and reintegration should not be left only in the ambit of migration policies and migration institutions, but in the broader framework of development policies with a migration lens. The pivots, innovations and changes wrought by COVID-19 suggest that the pandemic presented opportunities to rethink and work towards (re)building a better normal. It compelled the government to face gaps in the social protection of OFWs and to strengthen reintegration programs and services. The unexpected, unprecedented, and large-scale return of OFWs during the pandemic called for emergency measures and policies in response to urgent needs. Past the emergency phase, the pandemic will hopefully be a turning point towards forward-looking, proactive sustainable reintegration policies. It is a task that should not be left only in the ambit of migration policies and migration institutions, but in the broader framework of development policies with a migration lens. **Both remigration and reintegration could contribute to national development**[11]. OFWs' remittances help in their families' daily sustenance and social mobility, and also boost local economies through investments and employment. Further, their wealth of knowledge, skills, and experiences abroad can be shared to different sectors in the country to drive development, innovation, and capacity-building at community and national level (NEDA, nd).

---

[7] OFWs were one of the priority groups in vaccination and had access to vaccines preferred by their destination country, particularly Western brands (https://globalnation.inquirer.net/197103/ofws-to-get-vaccine-preferred-by-destination-country)

[8] OFWs are eligible to avail of the courtesy lanes for walk-in passport applications provided they show proof of their OFW status (https://consular.dfa.gov.ph/courtesy-lane-facility-availment)

[9] A study conducted on repatriates during the pandemic found that some OFWs lack entrepreneurial training and digital literacy (Delerio, Mansal, and Dumalaog, 2021).

[10] This National Action Plan has 7 strategic objectives, namely: safe and dignified return and readmission of migrants and their families; development and maintenance of a database of OFWs; use of digital technology and social and traditional media platforms; use of reintegration framework and case management tools; improve employment, skills, and economic development; greater financial inclusion, and; stronger coordination among stakeholders.

[11] The Updated Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 (Chapter 21) seeks to protect the rights of Overseas Filipinos whether they are in the Philippines or abroad, to promote their welfare including their reintegration back home, and to expand their opportunities such as inclusion in local development planning.

Table 1. Outcome and Explanatory Variables[6]

Variables	Values
Outcome variables	
Intention to remigrate abroad?	0=No; 1=Yes
Plan to be self-employed?	0=No; 1=Yes
Explanatory variables	
Migration	
Type of work abroad	0=Sea-based; 1=Land-based
Reason for return to the Philippines	0=Met goals/end of contract or visa, not COVID-related; 1=Scheduled to return and COVID-related; 2=Displaced/personal or family decision, COVID-related; 3=Problems, not COVID-related
Individual characteristics	
Sex	0=Male; 1=Female
Age	0= 39 years and below, 1 = 40 years and above
Highest education completed	0 = Below college, 1 = With college degree
Marital status	0 = Single, 1 = Married
Home region in the Philippines	0 = Luzon (NCR/Region III, and Region IV-A), 1 = Rest of Luzon, 2 = Visayas, 3 = Mindanao
Has household members abroad?	0=No, 1=Yes
Number of children	Actual values
Household size	Actual values
Worked before migration?	0=No, 1=Yes
Return conditions	
Eligible for government assistance?	0=No, 1=Yes
Expected % drop in income	0 = ≤60% drop in income, 1 = >60% drop in income

[6] The outcome and explanatory variables are based on questions asked in the survey. Data transformations were carried out for the secondary analysis. For details on the recoding of variables as well as the results of preliminary analysis to determine the list of variables for the hierarchical regression are not reported in this policy brief. The technical notes may be requested from the authors.

Table 2. Bivariate Analysis: Intention To Remigrate Abroad by Explanatory Variables

Variable	Total	Intend to remigrate	Does not intend to remigrate
Migration variables	20.7%	27.0%	14.6%
Type of work abroad	79.3%	73.0%	85.4%
Sea-based			
Land-based			
Reason for returning to the Philippines	24.0%	23.6%	24.4%
Met goals/end of contract or visa/Not COVID-related	31.9%	30.5%	33.2%
Scheduled to return and COVID-related			
Displaced/personal or family decision and COVID-related	22.2%	22.8%	21.6%
Push factors and not COVID-related	21.9%	23.1%	20.8%
Individual characteristics	56.5%	61.7%	51.4%
Sex	43.5%	38.3%	48.6%
Male			
Female			
Age	69.7%	71.3%	68.2%
39 years old and below	30.3%	28.7%	31.8%
40 years old and up			
Educational attainment	49.2%	46.0%	52.3%
Below college	50.8%	54.0%	47.7%
With college degree			
Marital status	44.0%	43.5%	44.4%
Single	56.0%	56.5%	55.6%
Married			
Home region	38.8%	40.6%	37.0%
Luzon (NCR/Region III, and Region IV-A)	23.5%	24.2%	22.8%
Rest of Luzon	11.7%	10.5%	12.9%
Visayas	26.0%	24.7%	27.3%
Mindanao			
Has household members overseas?	64.4%	61.3%	67.5%
Yes	35.6%	38.7%	32.5%
No			
Number of children, median (IQR)	1.00 (.00, 2.00)	1.00 (.00, 2.00)	1.00 (.00, 2.00)
Household size, median (IQR)	4.00 (5.00, 6.00)	4.00 (5.00, 6.00)	4.00 (5.00, 6.00)
Work status before migration	48.2%	47.5%	48.9%
Not employed/precarious work/not in labor force			
Employed	51.8%	52.5%	51.1%
Return variables	48.8%	44.6%	52.9%
Eligible for government assistance?	51.2%	55.4%	47.1%
No			
Yes			
Expected % drop in income	51.5%	45.1%	57.7%
≤60% drop	48.5%	54.9%	42.3%
>60% drop			

Table 3. Odds Ratios or Likelihood of OFWs' Intention To Remigrate Abroad

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Odds Ratios	Confidence Intervals		Odds Ratios	Confidence Intervals		Odds Ratios	Confidence Intervals	
Migration variables									
Type of work abroad									
Sea-based (reference)									
Land-based	.435***	0.383	0.493	.463***	0.402	0.534	.461***	0.400	0.532
Reason for returning to the Philippines									
Met goals/end of contract or visa/not COVID-related (reference)									
Scheduled to return and COVID-related	.984	.861	1.125	.950	.830	1.087	.894	.779	1.025
Displaced/personal or family decision and COVID-related	1.243**	1.074	1.438	1.322***	1.139	1.535	1.309**	1.124	1.524
Push factors and not COVID-related	1.343***	1.159	1.556	1.305***	1.124	1.515	1.149	.987	1.338
Individual characteristics									
Sex									
Male (reference)									
Female				.791***	.709	.881	.789***	.707	.880
Age									
39 years old and below (reference)									
40 years old and up				.819***	.734	.913	.798***	.714	.891
Educational attainment									
Below college (reference)									
With college degree				1.112*	1.003	1.234	1.132*	1.019	1.258
Home region									
Luzon (NCR/Region III, and Region IV-A) (reference)									
Rest of Luzon				1.042	.914	1.187	1.148*	1.004	1.312
Visayas				.631***	.532	.748	.615***	.518	.732
Mindanao				.808**	.710	.920	.715***	.626	.817
Has household member/s overseas?									
Yes (reference)									
No				1.366***	1.230	1.517	1.414***	1.271	1.572
Return Variables									
Eligible for government assistance?									
No (reference)									
Yes							1.266***	1.142	1.404
Expected drop in income									
≤60% drop (reference)									
>60% drop							1.880***	1.693	2.089
Pseudo R	3.7%			5.7%			9.0%		

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

Table 4. Bivariate Analysis: Plan for Self-Employment by Explanatory Variables

Variable	Total	Plan to take up self-employment	No plan to take up self-employment
Migration variables	14.4%	11.1%	18.5%
Type of work abroad	85.6%	88.9%	81.5%
Sea-based			
Land-based			
Reason for returning to the Philippines	24.2%	23.2%	25.4%
Met goals/end of contract or visa/Not COVID-related	33.3%	32.8%	34.0%
Scheduled to return and COVID-related	21.3%	22.7%	19.6%
Displaced/personal or family decision and COVID-related	21.2%	21.3%	21.1%
Push factors and not COVID-Related			
Individual characteristics	51.1%	45.8%	57.8%
Sex	48.9%	54.2%	42.2%
Male			
Female			
Age	68.4%	66.1%	71.3%
39 years old and below	31.6%	33.9%	28.7%
40 years old and up			
Educational attainment	52.7%	57.3%	46.9%
Below college	47.3%	42.7%	53.1%
With college degree			
Marital status	44.4%	40.3%	49.7%
Single	55.6%	59.7%	50.3%
Married			
Region in PH	36.6%	39.5%	33.0%
Luzon (NCR/Region III, and Region IV-A)	22.8%	21.8%	24.1%
Rest of Luzon	12.8%	8.8%	17.9%
Visayas	27.8%	29.9%	25.0%
Mindanao			
Has household members overseas?	67.1%	66.4%	68.0%
Yes	32.9%	33.6%	32.0%
No			
Number of children, median (IQR)	1.00 (.00, 2.00)	1.00 (.00, 2.00)	1.00 (.00, 2.00)
Household size, median (IQR)	5.00 (4.00, 6.00)	5.00 (4.00, 6.00)	5.00 (4.00, 6.00)
Work status before migration	49.0%	50.1%	47.5%
Not employed/precarious work/not in labor force	51.0%	49.9%	52.5%
Employed			
Model 3: Return variables	52.3%	47.5%	58.3%
Eligibility for government assistance	47.7%	52.5%	41.7%
Not eligible/not sure if eligible			
Eligible			
Drop in income	57.9%	60.3%	54.8%
≤60% drop	42.1%	39.7%	45.2%
>60% drop			

Table 5. Odds Ratios or Probability of OFWs' Plan for Self-Employment

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Odds Ratios	Confidence Intervals		Odds Ratios	Confidence Intervals		Odds Ratios	Confidence Intervals	
Migration variable	1.827***	1.498	2.229	1.276*	1.023	1.593	1.319*	1.055	1.649
Type of work abroad									
Sea-based (reference)									
Land-based									
Individual characteristics									
Sex									
Male (reference)									
Female				1.587***	1.357	1.857	1.607***	1.372	1.882
Age									
39 years old and below (reference)									
40 years old and up				1.003	.839	1.199	1.029	.860	1.232
Educational attainment									
Below college (reference)									
With college degree				.811**	.699	.941	.764***	.657	.889
Home region									
Luzon (NCR/Region III, and Region IV-A) (reference)				1.355**	1.136	1.616	1.370**	1.148	1.637
Rest of Luzon				.746**	.617	.903	.731**	.603	.887
Visayas				.450***	.355	.571	.538***	.421	.687
Mindanao				.958	.799	1.150	1.090	.902	1.317
Number of children				1.120**	1.047	1.198	1.101**	1.029	1.178
Return Variables									
Eligible for government assistance?									
No (reference)									
Yes							1.542***	1.331	1.786
Drop in income									
≤60% drop (reference)									
>60% drop							.743***	.637	.867
Pseudo R	1.5%			7.5%			9.2%		

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

REFERENCES

Asis, Maruja MB

2021   Overseas Employment Prospects and Trends in the Short Term: What Lies Ahead? Migration and COVID-19 Watch No. 3. International Organization for Migration.

2020   Repatriating Filipino migrant workers in the time of the pandemic. Migration Research Series N° 63. International Organization for Migration (IOM). Geneva. Available from https://publications.iom.int/books/mrs-no-63-repatriating-filipino-migrant-workers-time-pandemic

Battistella, Graziano

1999   Philippine Migration Policy: Dilemmas of a Crisis. Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia, 14(1), 229-248.

Delerio, Ronell J., Mansal, Cesar A., and Dumalaog, Frances Camille G.

2021   An Analysis of OFW Return Experiences and Program Challenges amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Advancing an Alternative Reintegration Governance Framework. Institute for Labor Studies Working Papers 2021. Available from https://ils.dole.gov.ph/downloads/category/242-2021-migration

Government Portal of Macao Special Administrative Region of People's Republic of China

2022   [infographic] 24 April 2022 Epidemic-prevention Measures for Inbound Travellers of Different Identities. Available from https://www.gov.mo/en/news/266951/#&gid=1&pid=2

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

2021   COVID-19 Impact Assessment of Returned Overseas Filipino Workers. Makati City: International Organization for Migration. Available from https://philippines.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl326/files/documents/COVID-19%20Impact%20Assessment%20on%20Returned%20Overseas%20Filipino%20Workers_1.pdf

2019   Handbook on Reintegration: Practical Guidance on the Design, Implementation and Monitoring of Reintegration Assistance. Geneva: IOM. Available from https://publications.iom.int/books/reintegration-handbook-practical-guidance-design-implementation-and-monitoring-reintegration

International Organization for Migration and Scalabrini Migration Center (IOM and SMC)

2013   Country Migration Report: The Philippines 2013. Makati City: IOM.

Kang, Jong Woo, and Latoja, Ma. Concepcion G.

2022   COVID-19 and Overseas Filipino Workers: Return Migration and Reintegration into the Home Country – The Philippine Case. ADB Southeast Asia Working Paper Series. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/WPS220002-2

Ministry of Public Health, State of Qatar

2022   Qatar Travel and Return Policy. Available from https://covid19.moph.gov.qa/EN/travel-and-return-policy/Pages/default.aspx#gcc-citizens

National Economic Development Authority (NEDA)

n.d.   Updated Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022. Available from https://pdp.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/122421_Updated-PDP.pdf

Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines

2022   Republic Act No. 11641: An Act Creating the Department of Migrant Workers, Defining Its Powers and Functions, Rationalizing the Organization and Functions of Government Agencies Related to Overseas Employment and Labor Migration, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes. Available from https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2021/12dec/20211230-RA-11641-RRD.pdf

Philippine Statistics Authority

2021   Unemployment rate in October 2021 is Estimated at 7.4 per cent. Available from https://psa.gov.ph/content/unemployment-rate-october-2021-estimated-74-per_cent

UN General Assembly

2019   Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Available from https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl416/files/docs/gcm-n1845199.pdf