



Research Article

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Afghan Students' Decision-Making about Return to Homeland

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Abstract

Elite migration, in other words brain drain, is one of the most important obstacles to the development of developing countries. The brain movement and inverse immigration depends a lot on policies adopted in the countries of origin. This research was conducted with the aim of investigating the Afghan students' decision-making about return to homeland. The statistical population was the Afghan students in Iran. Cochran's formula was also used to determine the sample size. The main research tool was a questionnaire and 161 Afghan students in Iranian universities answered the research questionnaire. The result of research showed that, the decision to migrate is an issue that has several dimensions. The result of research showed that, Afghan female students have not been able to achieve good cultural homogeneity with the host community. Also, the older students are more inclined to preserve their traditional culture (Afghan culture). In addition, with the age of students, their desire to immigrate to another country (third country) has decreased. Also, graduate students are more interested in preserving their native culture and they are more inclined to return to their country. the results of factor analysis showed that. six factor such as: convergence and cultural integration in the host community, war, insecurity and lack of scientific and financial facilities in Afghanistan, students 'professional status in the Afghanistan, students 'professional status in the host society, freedom index in Afghanistan and students achievement motivation could be predict to 55% of students' decision-making about migration.

Keywords: Brain drain, Elite migration, International students, Diasspora

1. Introduction

People generally migrate with the aim of improving their standard of living, they also tend to provide better opportunities for their children to live, in addition to making full use of their skills and talents, invest to achieve stable future for themselves and their families (Rostovskaya et al., 2020). In the economic calculations of industrialized countries, attracting any educated person with a master's or doctoral degree from a third world country earns them one million dollars. Third world countries, despite having 80% of the world's population, have only 20% of world income and 1% of world scientific production capacity (Askari and Badpa, 2017). Immigration, like other socio-economic phenomena, has various positive and negative effects for the countries of origin. The more immigrants there are in a country, the larger the effects (positive and negative) will be affected on the economic and social structure of the country (Duncan., 2020). Whilst emigration was traditionally seen as a 'loss' for home states (discussed in terms of human capital and 'Although the general view the migration will have more detrimental effects (discussed in terms of human capital and 'brain drain') on countries of origin, but new perspectives have been proposed that try to enumerate the benefits (political, economic and social) of this phenomenon such as changing the attitude of governments and developing the values of traditional societies in the world (Brooks and Waters., 2021., ; Czaika et al., 2021).

The "Brain drain" actually means the international transfer of resources. These resources can be defined in terms of human capital theory, so it generally refers to the migration of specialists and elites from developing countries (origin) to developed countries (hosts) (Ukrayinchuk and Chojnicki., 2020). With this definition of brain drain, developing countries are more likely to donate their elites to the richest countries in the world, so it seems that due to the lack of material and financial capital, these countries pay the cost of elite education for the rich societies of the world. Finally, the elites and the educated will leave their country without being effective in the development and welfare of their societies, and as a result, as a desirable human capital, they will help in the development and prosperity of more rich countries (Rostovskaya et al., 2020). Of course, if the departure of students from countries of origin to developed countries is accompanied by the phenomenon of return to the homeland, then we can expect that skilled and capable human capital will be useful as desirable human capital to create prosperity in developing countries (Lanati and Thiele., 2019). The definition of brain drain is: educated, skilled people leave their home country to immigrate to a more economically developed one (Gesing., 2017). The number of international students pursuing education in countries with advanced economies has been rising rapidly over recent decades (Hou and Lu, 2017). While academic brain drain can additionally endanger the very foundations of a country's higher education and research sector in the era of knowledge-based economy (Khan., 2021). It is a common phenomenon in the global migration of elites that these skilled elites stay and work in the host country for

various reasons such as the level of prosperity, research facilities, security, secure future, ecosystem stability, hope for the progress of children and etc (Lanati and Thiele., 2019). The research on migration aspirations among professionals suggests that further study is an important factor for highly skilled prospective migrants (Adu, 2019). In some countries of the world (such as Afghanistan) the phenomenon of elite migration or brain drain is much more acute than in other regions. The reasons for the inadequate structure in these countries, have caused them to lose their human capital more and more every year, and as a result, the process of development and prosperity in these countries continues to be slow and backward (Khosravi et al, 2020). The word DIASPORA means a significant Greek population that settled in different countries and parts of the world, especially in the last century. Afghanistan is one of the developing countries that has a large and diverse diaspora community in other countries of the world (Chalari and Koutantou,. 2021). In the population of immigrants, the number of students in developing countries as an elite and seeking knowledge, skills and abilities is very significant. However, deciding to study abroad is one of the most difficult tasks for students in developing countries. But the characteristics of educational institutions in developed countries, including: high quality courses and appropriate laboratory and research facilities can be considered as one of the most important motivating factors for student migration from developing countries (Bahir,. 2021).

Identifying and investigating the causes and factors that make students decide to emigrate, as well as planning to reduce weaknesses and improve the current situation can help developing countries to attract elites and return them home and thus use their capacities to take action in the development process of the country (Hung and Yen., 2020). Afghanistan territory is historically one of the oldest lands in the world (Duanati and Qanti,. 2022). Afghanistan's history is blighted by conflict, a repetitive cycle of externally and internally driven warfare with only brief periods of peace. The decades of conflict decimated much of the social infrastructure country (Frost et al,. 2016). Afghanistan has been a low-income country throughout the past century (IOM., 2019). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Afghanistan was the expect of the top 10 countries of origin migrant country in the world in 2020. The top 10 countries of origin – the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan have the first and second ranks, respectively (IOM, 2020). According to the same report, except for the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic during the past years (2005-2020), Afghanistan has always been the number one origin migrant in the world. Nearly 5 million Afghan currently live abroad, most of them in neighboring Iran and Pakistan (Fig 1). These cases have made the phenomenon of migration, especially elite migration and brain drain, one of the most common social and economic phenomena in Afghanistan in recent years, so that the country has not been able to have appropriate policies for the return of graduates and immigrant elite. According to statistics, a quarter of Afghan migrants will be destined in Iran. This paper examines the factors influencing the desire of Afghan graduates and students studying in Iranian universities to return.

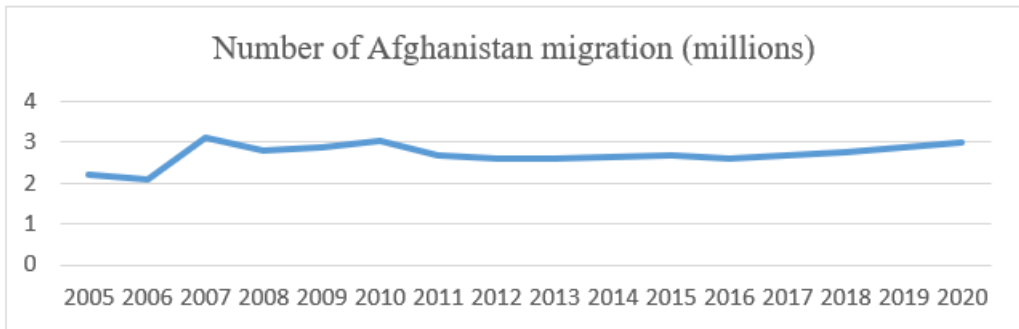


Figure 1: Number of Afghanistan migration 2005- 2020

Source: IOM report 2020, completed by researchers

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Public policy with the aim of appropriate allocation of scarce resources in countries for more efficient development uses the concept of human capital as the driving force for the development of these societies. But it seems that the lack of adequate manpower (based on the emphasis on the unbalanced development model) remains one of the main weaknesses of developing countries. Inadequate infrastructure causes this small number of skilled and elite human resources to choose the inevitable migration decision and go to developed countries (Apostu et al., 2022). Migration can vary greatly depending on how long a person stays away from their homeland, but in general, migration can be defined as the process of moving from one place / region / country of residence to another. This type of relocation can occur within or between countries (Chalari and Koutantou, 2021). To summarise, migration theories can potentially be combined across five analytical dimensions:

1. At different levels of analysis
2. At different points of time.
3. From different thematic or disciplinary perspectives.
4. In different (geographical, regional, national) contexts.

Migration can be considered a special socio-economic phenomenon because it may occur at specific times and even geographically. For this reason, in different theories, the phenomenon of migration has been presented for different groups, including: occupational groups, skills, income, different classes or ethnicities (De-Haas., 2021). One of the important factors influencing the behavior of immigrants is the economic situation, especially the labor market conditions in the host and origin society, because the decision to return home is exactly influenced by the labor market conditions in these two societies. These conditions have been general and permanent, in favor of the host community and to the detriment of the community of origin (Bijwaard and Wang.,

2016). The decision to immigrate by a student is usually a multi-step process. This decision is influenced by various micro and macro factors in the host and guest community. Students must take risks and decide to immigrate based on the inadequate information and uncertainty (Kyei, 2021). Many students tend to stay in the host country for short-term work experience as a pursuit of postgraduate professional development. Students' decision to stay in the host community after graduation or to leave for repatriation involves a wide range of immigration programs. This decision is influenced by factors such as: their relationships with important people in the host countries to their place of residence and even their personal circumstances. Is included. In order to better explain the process of students' decision to stay in the host community after graduation or to leave for repatriation, some researchers use the stress-strain factor model, which considers immigration decisions as an interaction of factors that individuals Prevents them from their countries (push factors) and paves the way for their attraction to the host countries (pull factors) (Netierman et al., 2021., ; Geddie, 2013). Although social scientists believe that due to the widespread consequences of migration for the immigrant, the decision to emigrate should be very reasonable and the person should migrate with a full assessment of its costs and benefits, but the current reality shows that the decision to emigrate is influenced by Factors such as: specific personal needs, psychological and most importantly, uncertainty and limited information about living and welfare opportunities are taken (Czaika et al., 2021). According to the study, it can be said that the push-pull model has provided useful insights into the psychological, social, political and economic factors that determine the decision to migrate in students (Lee, 2017). In answer to the question that, What Propels Immigration?, It can be stated that:

1. Search for work
2. Humanitarian refuge (war and violence, environmental catastrophes)
3. Family motivations

The theory of Push and pull factors of migration emphasizes that, the planning or decision to migrate depends on economic conditions and even non-economic variables in the two countries of origin and extent (Simpson, 2017). According to the push and pull model, any of the factors, including the political or environmental factor, can be both a barrier to migration and can be an effective factor in encouraging migration. In other words, the extent and intensity of its presence in society student migration is influential. In this model, push factors related to the political situation of a country can include such things as: war, oppression, corruption, crime or discrimination. Also, pull factors include: the existence of property rights, proper law, law enforcement and the expansion of freedom (Fig 1). Also it has been found that the main factors that lead to migration are (economic, political, social, and cultural factors) respectively (Abou-AL-Ross and AlWaheidi, 2021).

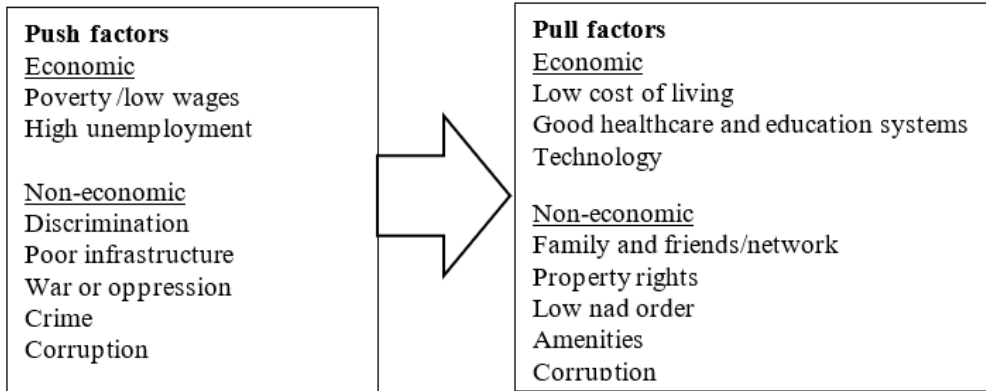


Figure 2: Push and pull factors of migration

Source: Simpson, 2017 and modified by researchers

Chalari and Koutantou (2021) research result showed that, factors leading to the decision to return home are associated with included: (a) macro-factors relating to the socio-economic and environmental situation of the origin country, as well as (b) powerful drivers of enduring the psychological, social, cultural and mentalities (Chalari and Koutantou,. 2021).

Dago and Barussaud (2021) research result showed that, the impact of the quality of training on Ivorian students' migration can be seen at two levels: the attractiveness of the French higher education system and other OECD countries, and the poor quality of training in Côte d'Ivoire. Numerous and diverse masses are influencing the decision to migrate students in a network. These network factors provide both resources and motivation for students to make the decision to immigrate (Dago and Barussaud,. 2021).

Cejas et al (2021) research result showed that the highest percentage of students abroad belongs to the female gender. The main reason for studying abroad is the search for a better academic training (Cejust et al,. 2021).

Brooks and Waters (2021) research result showed that, governments generally adopt three policies or strategies to prevent elite migration (brain drain):

1. Strengthening "national identity" in students
2. Creating political incentives to ensure the return of graduates to economic incentives in host countries
3. Using short-term and long-term strategies at the same time to achieve the goal of returning home graduates (balance short-term and long-term goals) (Brooks and Waters,. 2021).

Netierman et al (2021) research result showed that for most students, the students' decision to stay in the host country is a gradual process that is influenced by family commitments and especially the cultural environment of the host country. Generally, the possibility of having jobs and job opportunities available to students after their

graduation will pave the way for the possibility of obtaining residency and as a result the decision to reside permanently in the host country. (Netierman et al., 2021).

Keyi (2021) research result empahsis that, the decision to migrate to students is rooted in childhood socialization. Students who are more interested in networking in social relationships and also interested in experiencing new cultures and environments will be more likely to migrate. (Keyi., 2021).

The result of Rostovskaya et al (2020) research showed that, the majority of students migrating to developed countries for undergraduate and graduate program, due to the many attractions in the host country, tend to obtain permanent residence in that country, so that more than half of them were willing to are ready to renounce national citizenship, if it is necessary to obtain a GREEN CARD (residence permit) (Rostovskaya et al., 2020).

khosravi et al (2020) research result showed that, educated elites and immigrants can play an important role in the economic, social and political development of their countries if they return home. They are familiar with new ideas and innovations. They have acquired extensive knowledge and skills. They are valuable human resources that can be effective in strengthening the social capital of society through networking and development of connections between the elites in their country. (Khosravi et al, 2020).

Anetoh and Onwudinjo (2020) research result showed that, Nigeria does not properly utilize the natural and human resources at her disposal. This has forced people to migrate to other countries where they can make meaningful impact and serve in a society that appreciates their services and contributions (Anetoh and Onwudinjo., 2020).

Ukrayinchuk and Chojnicki (2020) emphasis in the the level of education of the developed (host) countries for immigrant students is higher than their level of education in the country of origin, so they have difficulty using some of their skills. They will usually be engaged in a job below their level of education. (Ukrayinchuk and Chojnicki., 2020).

Otomo (2020) research result showed that, on-the-job training has differentially impacted employment trajectories of the migrant workers (Otomo, 2020).

Yazdani et al (2019) research result emphasis that the brain drain has three effects (direct effect, induced effect, and feedback effect) on skilled human resources immigration can be useful if it focuses on gaining experience, training and upgrading skills, but if immigration is permanent, it leads to an additional cost for alternative employment (Yazdani et al., 2019).

Kiani et al (2019) research result showed that, according to research findings, the phenomenon of immigration of elite students was not based on a single variable, rather various variables such as social, political, cultural, economic, organizational, psychological and scientific-academic factors should be simultaneously considered in connection with each other (Kiani et al., 2019).

Hass et al (2019) research results emphasis the importance of understanding the economic, social, and political trends that shape migration in sometimes

counterintuitive, but powerful, ways that largely lie beyond the reach of migration policies (Hass et al., 2019).

According to Castelli (2018), factors that influence the person's decision to migrate can be divided into micro and macro levels. At the micro level, factors such as: education, religion, personal attitudes and personal circumstances will influence the decision to migrate, and at the macro level, factors such as: demographic, economic, social and political conditions in the host and origin countries will influence the person's decision to migrate. (Castelli, 2018).

Ai and Wang (2017) research result showed that, the effectiveness or otherwise of Chinese universities' attitude to academic returnees is a signal to other academic scholars who are still negotiating their future living and working space, and this will affect the circulation of professional talents (Ai and Wang, 2017).

Bijwaard and Wang (2016) research result showed that, policies to support the return of immigrants to host countries are very influential in the return of students to their homeland. Students are generally regarded as a skilled workforce and can make a significant contribution to the economic and social development of the origin society if they return to the homeland (Bijwaard and Wang, 2016).

Corbo (2016) research results showed that, psychological, social and economic factors affect of migration on students leave home (Corbu, 2016).

Perkins and Neumayer (2014) results showed that educational factors such as: ranking of universities and its quality indicators will not have much effect on the decision-making process of student migration and most economic factors are influential in the decision-making process of students (Perkins and Neumayer, 2014).

The main goals of this paper are to investigate:

1. how do Afghanian students make decisions about staying or going back home or another country upon graduation?
2. what do they see as pivotal in shaping their decision-making processes?

According to researchers, the process of deciding to migrate in students changes over time and is multidimensional. In general, the process of deciding to emigrate students can be influenced by pre-migration processes, contextual factors (eg, cultural climate, geographical and religious common job prospects, job opportunities, family commitments, and immigration status) and issues related to repatriation (Figure 2).

In this theoretical framework, three categories of migration factors can be identified:

- A. Factors at the source (motivating or inhibiting) or repelling factors
- B. factors at the host (motivating or inhibiting) or absorbing factors
- C. Obstacles to the return of migrants to their homeland

The desire to migrate is the main determinant of real migration. However, the desire to migrate may never be transformed into a real migration decision and behavior. In the definition of this term, someone has a desire to emigrate who prefers to stay (origin) (Rezaei and Sadeghi, 2021).

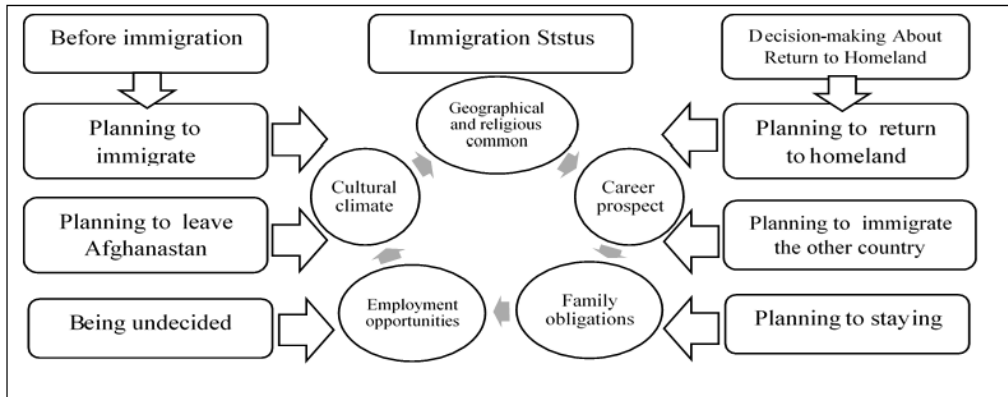


Figure 3: Process of decision-making of students (Source: Netierman et al., 2021, and modified by researchers)

2.1 Planning to leave Afghanistan

Governments in developing countries, in order to take advantage of technological opportunities and strive for appropriate economic and social development, welcome students to study at home and abroad in order to gain experience and use the capacity of the desired quality of education in developed countries. Of course, in this case, this type of migration does not become permanent residence and the phenomenon of returning home occurs for immigrant students. In Afghanistan, too, governments want elite and educated students to return to their home countries to implement the national development process (Bahir, 2021). Unfavorable working conditions, remuneration and opportunities for poor career development opportunities and other labor market pressures so-called as "push" and "pull" factors affect physicians' (Shokri et al., 2021).

2.2 Being undecided

In recent years, Many Afghan students, like other students in developing countries with high development motivation, tend to study abroad. However, proper research has not been done on the causes and motives of migration and especially the tendency of elite immigrants to return to this country (Bahir, 2021). As political tensions and consequent extensive policy changes in Afghanistan have occurred in recent years, students in a dilemma cannot accurately predict and plan for the future.

2.3 Geographical and religious commonalities

The results of previous research show that the geographical index, especially the distance between the two countries of origin and host, has a significant effect on

students' tendency to emigrate, so it can be said that the geographical location of countries influences the decision to migrate students (Hung and Yen,. 2020). Afghanistan is a neighbor of Iran and there are common historical, religious and cultural roots between the two countries, so this factor can affect the decision of students to immigrate and study in Iran.

2.4 cultural climate

Hung and Yen (2020) research result emphasis that, the biggest factors international students cared about were economy and language. Language proficiency is undeniably a key consideration of students choosing to study abroad (Hung and Yen,. 2020). Cultural climate, especially the common language (Persian) can be one of the factors influencing the decision of Afghan students to choose Iran to study.

2.5 Career prospects

Career planning and research is one of the most important factors influencing students' decision to immigrate. Students live in a certain period of life that they have to decide in this regard what job they will have in the future, so in order to get that job in the future, they must develop their ability and skills in this period so that they can hope that obtain good professional achievements in the future. Numerous types of funding and scholarships such as: career prospects strategies have proven successful as increasing numbers of international students are traveling to countries that supply these facilities for education (Hung and Yen,. 2020,. ; Yu-Chuan,. 2019). Over the past years, Iran has tried to create better working conditions for immigrants, especially educated Afghan immigrants, by changing the laws.

2.6 Planning to return to homeland

While studying abroad, students acquire extensive technical and personal skills, become acquainted with global culture, and acquire a wide range of social skills. When they return home, they can apply all these skills in the development of their communities (Bahir,. 2021). Repatriation of students and university graduates can provide positive aspects of elite migration for the country of origin. Usually, this decision depends on the return to the political, economic and social conditions of Afghanistan, so that as the living conditions and welfare in Afghanistan improve, the desire of the elites to return home will increase.

2.7 *Planning to immigrate to other country*

Immigrant and elite students in developing countries face two major issues in a decision-making process after completing their studies. Regarding repatriation, there are generally problems in the countries of origin, such as: poor living and working environment, high unemployment rate and poor infrastructure, and on the other hand, in the host countries where these people aspire to live, the driving forces such as: quality Good life, available jobs and convenient transportation. Combining these factors together will make it very difficult for students to decide whether to stay permanently or return home (Hung and Yen,. 2020). Afghan immigrant students also compare living conditions in Iran and Afghanistan with living conditions in other countries, especially the developed countries of the world, and in some cases decide to emigrate to a developed country to continue their education or life.

2.8 *Planning to staying in Iran*

Nations use immigration policy to meet many objectives, including economic, humanitarian, political, cultural, and national security (pozo, 2018). Factors that encourage students to stay in the country they choose to study are higher living standards and better job opportunities (Hung and Yen,. 2020). As stated in the section on the tendency of migrants to return to their homeland, the tendency to stay or return based on the theory of 'pull and push' will be related to the general conditions prevailing in the host country and origin.

3. **Methodology**

Historical and cultural ties influence the ease with which transnational education can occur, and many international students are choosing to study abroad in countries (Almeida and Rosa,. 2020). The present study is an applied research in terms of purpose and descriptive-survey research in terms of data collection (Sarmad et al., 2018). The present study consists of two sections: field and non-field. In the field section, researchers were present in the field to collect data and in interviews with Afghan immigrant students tried to explain the causes and factors affecting migration, as well as their motivations and desire to return home. Also in the non-field section, researchers have reviewed articles and books related to the subject of elite immigrants, which can be called library studies. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from primary and secondary sources through field observation, structured interview schedule (Wordofa et al,. 2020). The statistical population of the present study is Afghan students studying in Iranian universities. In 2020, about 45,000 international students were studying in Iranian universities, of which more than 85% were Afghan students (Saidi and Falahi,. 2020). Cochran's formula was also used to determine the sample size, which

is one of the most widely used methods in determining the sample size. (Equation 1, Cochran's formula was also used to determine the sample size).

$$n = \frac{\frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left[\frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2} - 1 \right]} \quad \text{Eq (1)}$$

Where:

n = Number of research samples (161)

$z^2 = 1.96$

p = 0.5

q = 0.5

d^2 = Sampling accuracy (0.05 to 0.1) (0.077)

N = Number of research statistical population (38,000)

The data gathering tool in this research is a structured questionnaire that was prepared according to the goals and hypotheses of the research and according to the indicators and was conducted through an interview (Habibpour and Safari, 2018). In this study, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument (Table.1). Cronbach's alpha for the whole questionnaire was 0.778 (Equation 2 was used to calculate Cronbach's alpha).

$$a = \frac{k}{k-1} \left[1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k s_i^2}{\sigma^2} \right] \quad \text{Eq (2)}$$

Where:

a = Cronbach's alpha coefficient

k = Number of questions per component

s_i = The variance of each component

δ^2 = The total variance of the test

The results of Cronbach's alpha test in determining the reliability of the research tool (questionnaire) are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficient for questionnaire elements

Component	Number of variable	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Hesitation in returning home	11	0.747
Cultural, religious and historical homogeneity	13	0.714
Planning to immigrate to a third country	5	0.707
Scientific, professional and financial position	12	0.865
Toal	41	0.778

Source: Study's finding

4. Results

In this section, first the characteristics of immigrant students are examined and then their desire to return to their homeland or immigrate to another country is examined and then the relationship between some personal characteristics and the desire to stay or return to the homeland is evaluated.

4.1 Individual Characteristics of the Respondents

As the results show, half of the women (43%) and half of the male students (57%) tried to be in the sample. Research also shows that more than 80% of students are less than 30 years old. About 58% of the respondents were undergraduate students and 42% were in graduate school. Field of study the majority of students (58%) are studying engineering at Iranian universities. The family dimension of the majority of students (40%) is 5 and 6 people. 92% of mothers and 77% of fathers of students have primary education and only 3% of mothers and 10% of fathers have academic education (Table. 2).

Table 2: Description of the characteristics of Afghan students studying in Iranian universities

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Sex			
Male	92	57.1	57.1
Female	69	42.9	100
Total	161	100	-
Age (years)			
22 >	23	14.3	14.3
22-26	58	36.0	50.3
26-30	49	30.4	80.7
>30	31	19.3	100
Total	161	100	-
Grade			
Bachelor	93	57.8	57.8
MSc	60	37.3	95.1
PhD	8	5.0	100
Total	161	100	-
Field of Study			
Basic Sciences	41	25.5	25.5
Humanities	27	16.8	42.2
Engineering	93	57.8	100
Total	161	100	-
Father Educational level			
Primary school	124	77.0	77.0
High school	20	12.4	89.4
Post high school	17	10.6	100
Total	161	100	-

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Mother Educational level			
Primary school	148	91.9	91.9
High school	8	5.0	96.9
Post high school	5	3.1	100
Total	161	100	-
Family size			
3	8	5.0	5.0
3-5	37	23.0	28.0
5-7	63	39.1	67.1
7-9	40	24.8	96.9
≥ 9	13	3.1	100
Total	161	100	-

Source: Study's finding

One of the important indicators studied in changing the rate of cultural integration of Afghan students with the culture of the host country (Iran) has been. The results of the research showed that from the students' point of view, the average cultural integration was close to 46%. It seems that due to the high cultural homogeneity between the two countries (Iran and Afghanistan) such as common language, religion and history, Afghan students have not yet been able to achieve the index of cultural integration (Table 3).

Table 3: Student cultural integration index

Level of cultural integration	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Very low	7	4.3	4.3
Low	62	38.5	42.9
Medium	76	47.2	90.1
High	15	9.3	99.4
Very high	1	0.6	100
Total	161	100	-

Source: Study's finding

Interest in Afghan culture and the need to preserve it among students were also examined and the average interest rate was close to 49%. Results show that 77% of students also believe in the need to preserve and support their indigenous values and culture (table 4).

Table 4: Preserving Afghan culture index

Preserving Afghan culture	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Very low	8	5.0	5.0
Low	45	28.0	32.0
Medium	74	45.3	77.4
High	35	21.7	100
Very high	-	-	-
Total	161	100	-

Source: Study's finding

The scientific and professional position of students in the host country, Iran, was also explored, and 80% of them did not consider this position desirable (table 5).

Table 5: The scientific and professional position of students

Preserving Afghan culture	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Very low	45	28.0	28.0
Low	84	52.1	80.1
Medium	32	19.9	100
High	-	-	-
Very high	-	-	-
Total	161	100	-

Source: Study's finding

Students' willingness to immigrate to another country was also examined. The results showed that the average willingness to immigrate among students is 51%, so that 27% of students have a strong desire to immigrate to a third country (table 6).

Table 6: The students' willingness to immigrate to another country

Preserving Afghan culture	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Very low	7	4.3	4.3
Low	43	26.7	31.0
Medium	67	41.6	72.7
High	44	27.3	100
Very high	-	-	-
Total	161	100	-

Source: Study's finding

Students' desire to return in Afghanistan was explored and research result showed that

the average of students' desire to return in Afghanistan was 54%. Only 34% of students were very willing to return to their country (Table 7).

Table 7: The students' desire to return in Afghanistan

Preserving Afghan culture	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Very low	3	1.9	1.9
Low	29	18.0	19.9
Medium	70	43.5	63.4
High	58	36	99.4
Very high	1	0.6	100
Total	161	100	-

Source: Study's finding

4.2 Students' decision-making about return to homeland correlation with others variables

The relationship between Students' decision-making about return to homeland correlation with others variables showed that, Afghan female students have not been able to achieve good cultural homogeneity with the host community. Also, the older students are more inclined to preserve their traditional culture (Afghan culture). In addition, with the age of students, their desire to immigrate to another country (third country) has decreased. Also, graduate students are more interested in preserving their native culture and they are more inclined to return to their country (Table 8).

Table 8: The relationship between variables

Variables Correlation	Students' decision-making				
	Cultural Integration	Preserving Afghan culture	Scientific and professional position	Desire to immigrate in another country	Students' desire to return in Afghanistan
Sex (Kendalls tau-b)	-0.134* 0.048	-0.085 ^{ns} 0.197	0.002 ^{ns} 0.975	0.027 ^{ns} 0.696	-0.112 ^{ns} 0.089
Age (Pearson)	-0.100 ^{ns} 0.206	0.209** 0.008	0.097 ^{ns} 0.220	-0.199* 0.011	0.123 ^{ns} 0.119
Grade (Spearman)	-0.153 ^{ns} 0.052	0.193* 0.014	-0.028 ^{ns} 0.723	0.096 ^{ns} 0.225	0.183* 0.020
Field of Study (Kendalls tau-b)	-0.025 ^{ns} 0.703	-0.019 ^{ns} 0.766	-0.077 ^{ns} 0.234	0.063 ^{ns} 0.338	-0.062 ^{ns} 0.324
Place of birth (Kendalls tau-b)	-0.042 ^{ns} 0.534	0.362** 0.000	0.091 ^{ns} 0.180	-0.164* 0.016	0.254** 0.000

*Significant at 0.05 levels ($p < 0.05$) **Significant at 0.01 levels ($p < 0.01$) Source: Study's finding

The results show that students born in Afghanistan are more inclined to preserve their native culture and also less inclined to immigrate to a third country and generally more inclined to return to Afghanistan.

4.3 Predicting variables affecting students' decision-making about return to homeland

In order to predict the variables affecting students' decision-making about return to homeland, Step by step multiple regression analysis was used (Williams et al., 2017). According to the results, in the first step, the variable of preserving Afghan culture with 0.764 coefficients of determination was taken into the analysis. This variable specified 70% of the changes related to the dependent variable. At the second step variable of the students' willingness to immigrate to another country was analyzed. This variable specified 4% of the changes related to the dependent variable. At the third step variable of family size was analyzed. This variable specified 2% of the changes related to the dependent variable. At the fourth step variable of the scientific and professional position of students was analyzed. This variable specified 1% of the changes related to the dependent variable. At the final step the mother education level was analyzed.

Table 9: The model summary of regression for students' decision-making

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.842	0.709	0.707	8.16743
2	0.862	0.742	0.739	7.70526
3	0.873	0.762	0.758	7.42349
4	0.882	0.778	0.772	7.19879
5	0.888	0.788	0.781	7.05191

Source: Study's finding

This variable specified 1% of the changes related to the dependent variable. Analyses of these total variables showed that they specified about 78% of the changes related to predict the variables affecting students' decision-making about return to homeland. Analyzing β of the changes showed that the preserving Afghan culture was the most influential variable to determinants of students' decision-making about return to homeland. Other results are shown in Tables (9) and (10). Based on the Beta index, the inflicted variable respectively such as: preserving Afghan culture (0.764), the students' willingness to immigrate to another country (0.157), family size (0.148), the scientific and professional position of students (0.148) and the mother education level (-0.103).

Table 10: Influential factors on the conformity of students' decision-making

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	0.857	3.274	-	0.262	0.000
Preserving Afghan culture	0.730	0.038	0.764	19.067	0.000
The students' willingness to immigrate to another country	0.154	0.037	0.157	4.208	0.000

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Family size	1.061	0.267	0.148	3.971	0.000
The scientific and professional position of students	0.173	0.047	0.148	3.698	0.000
The mother education level	-1.486	-0.540	-0.103	-2.571	0.007

Source: Study’s finding

According to the regression coefficient the regression line equation could be written as:

$$Y = 0.857 + 0.730 x_1 + 0.154 x_2 + 1.061 x_3 + 0.173 x_4 - 1.486 x_5$$

x_1 = Preserving Afghan culture

x_2 = The students' willingness to immigrate to another country

x_3 = Family size

x_4 = The scientific and professional position of students

x_5 = The mother education level

As shown in the regression equation, mothers with better literacy levels are less likely to return their children to Afghanistan and are more likely to encourage their children to stay in the host country (Iran) or migrate to a third country.

4.4 Factors affecting students’ decision-making about migration

In order to clarify the factors affecting the students’ decision-making about migration, variables were entered into a factor analysis. To determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the Bartlett test and index of KMO were used. The result showed that the amount of KMO coefficient was appropriate to assess the reliability of the questionnaire for mining items agent (Bajpai and Singh., 2019). The bartlett's test was significant at the 99% level ($p < 0.01$). KMO and Bartlett’s tests for these variables show that the data are properly for factor analysis as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: KMO measure and Bartlett’s test to assess appropriateness of the data for factor analysis.

KMO	Bartlett’s test of sphericity	
	0.795	Approx. Chi- square DF
		Sig 0.000

Source: Study’s finding

The value of KMO (0.795) was larger than 0.5. Therefore, it is concluded that the number of samples is suitable for factor analysis since KMO value is between 0 and 1 and the closer to 1, the higher the sample validity. According to the Table 11, Bartlett’s test of sphericity was 1874.104 with significance $p=0.000$ and because this value is significant, it is concluded that the factors have not been classified well and the questions in each factor

have congeneric correlative factor with each other. The main object of factor analysis is to classify many variables into a few factors based on relationships among variables (Watkins, 2018). For this analysis, 30 variables were selected. Factor analysis is a statistical method that is based on the correlation analysis of multi-variables. Factors are formed by grouping the variables that have a correlation with each other (Maskey et al., 2018). The result of factor analysis categorized the variables in three factors (Table.12). The varimax rotated factor analysis is shown in Tables 13.

Table 12: Number of extracting factors, eigenvalues and variance explained by each factor.

Factors	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative % of variance1
1	5.896	19.653	19.653
2	3.622	12.073	31.726
3	2.449	8.163	39.888
4	1.713	5.709	45.597
5	1.478	4.926	50.523
6	1.472	4.907	55.431

Source: Study’s finding

In determining factors, factor loadings greater than 0.50 were considered to be significant. The first factor, i.e., convergence and cultural integration in the host community factor explained 19.65% of the total variance and 10 variables were loaded significantly. Eigenvalue of this factor is 5.896, which is placed on the first priority in Afghan students’ decision-making about migration. On this factor, three variables were loaded significantly (Table 13). The second factor associated mostly with the variables about War, insecurity and lack of scientific and financial facilities in Afghanistan factor. The eigenvalue for this factor is 3.622 which explained 12.07% of the total variance (see in Table 12). On this factor, 4 variables were loaded significantly (Table 13).

Table 13: Variables loaded in the first factor using Varimax rotated factor analysis

Name of factor	Variables loaded in the factor	Factor loadings
Convergence and cultural integration in the host community	Helping compatriots	0.690
	Social identity	0.511
	Preserving indigenous culture	0.679
	Country development	0.712
	Sense of belonging to the country	0.719
	Cultural homogeneity	0.769
	Cultural commonalities	0.710
	Cultural climate	0.614
	Traditional customs	0.657
	Common language	0.610

Name of factor	Variables loaded in the factor	Factor loadings
War, insecurity and lack of scientific and financial facilities in Afghanistan	War	0.633
	Insecurity	0.678
	Lack of facilities	0.588
	Lack of wages and salaries	0.615
Students 'professional status in the Afghanistan	Managerial and executive position	0.794
	Educational position	0.788
	Research position	0.588
Students 'professional status in the host society	Scientific status	0.615
	Suitable job	0.833
	Achieving goals and aspirations	0.611
Freedom	Social and political constraints in Afghanistan	0.536
Achievement Motivation	Study in a developed country	0.671

Source: Study’s finding

The name assigned to the third factor is the “Students 'professional status in the Afghanistan”. This factor with an eigenvalue of 2.449 explains 8.16% of the total variance. On this factor, three variables were loaded significantly. The fourth factor was loaded in factor analysis, named “Students 'professional status in the host community”. This factor with an eigenvalue of 1.713 explains 5.71% of the total variance. On this factor, three variables were loaded significantly. The fourth factor was loaded in factor analysis, named “Freedom”. This factor with an eigenvalue of 1.478 explains 4.93% of the total variance. On this factor, the social and political constraints in Afghanistan were loaded significantly. The final factor was loaded in factor analysis, named “Freedom”. This factor with an eigenvalue of 1.478 explains 4.93% of the total variance. On this factor, the desire students to study in a developed country were loaded significantly. The most important factors affecting students’ decision-making about migration respectively (in based of Eigenvalue) were included: suitable job in the host society and managerial or educational position in Afghanistan.

5. Discussion

There are a myriad of economic and non-economic forces behind the decision to migrate (Simpson., 2017). Comprehensive and friendly residency policies regarding welfare programs and employment rates after graduation is also prominent traits of host countries with a large body of international students (Hung and Yen,. 2020). Afghanistan has been the site of violent conflict and ensuing population displacement for over 35 years (IOM,. 2020). Afghanistan has not been able to maintain its effective and elite forces in the past years due to long wars and very insecurity internal conditions, and the emergence of elite migration or brain drain has been one of the

most common problems and obstacles to the country's progress. In general, the tendency for students to immigrate is much higher in developing countries. Students have a strong motivation and desire to travel around the world, see new cultures and gain experiences related to their future careers and jobs. Afghan students, like other students with these goals, decide to immigrate to other countries to continue their education (Bahir,. 2021). Iran has launched the Afghan Voluntary Return Program since 2000, with the help of the UNHCR and incentive policies such as providing services to volunteers at the Border Crossing (Dogharon) and granting repatriation grants (Sajadpour and Jamali,. 2016). After the establishment of an Islamic republic government in Afghanistan in 2004, this hope was strengthened that the emigrants will return to their country but the return advanced very slowly in spite of the international organizations contributions and interventions. But unemployment, insecurity, corruption, ethnic and religious prejudices, and the lack of specific policies and programs for the return of immigrants have made young Afghan immigrants in Iran either unwilling to return or reluctant to make a decision. In addition to the structural conditions prevailing in Iran and Afghanistan, demographic and contextual factors and variables have influenced the choice of immigration options and strategies. Due to the weak educational and research structures, the majority of Afghan students and elites have emigrated from this country. Also, one of the most important reasons for their non-return is the lack of appropriate educational, research, scientific and executive infrastructure to use and apply scientific capabilities. The results show that educational status, gender, age, parental literacy level, affects the desire of students and university graduates to return or stay in Iran. The results showed that 27% of students have a strong desire to immigrate to a third country. In other words, when students experience a different environment from their hometown, and especially accept the problems and issues of immigration, and the motivation to progress is high, they prefer to migrate to developed countries to continue their education or employment. Especially in cases where the country of origin has not created any appropriate and attractive policy for its immigrant students and has not provided the minimum stability, security and welfare for life and employment in the country. In other words, according to the theory of pull and push, there is also the attraction of life in developed countries and the backwardness and infrastructural problems and proper welfare in the country of origin. The results show that the desire to preserve culture and identity is one of the most important predictors of students' behavior and their desire to return home. It seems that the cultural observation of students, the formation of cultural associations and groups, and in general the policy of cultural support by countries of origin and the release of students in destination countries can provide the necessary ground to increase the desire for the return of university graduates. The result of research showed that six factor such as: 1-convergence and cultural integration in the host community, 2-war, insecurity and lack of scientific and financial facilities in Afghanistan, 3-students'professional status in the Afghanistan, 4- students 'professional status in the

host society, 5- freedom and 6- achievement motivation in student could be predict the Afghan students' decision-making about return to homeland. The magnitude of the talent crisis is the result of a complex combination of poor policy implementation, mismanagement, corruption, and socio-economic and political conflict (Garcia,. 2020). Considering the concepts of human and social capital theory and the need to develop third world countries by using the technical and scientific capacities of elites and the return of immigrant graduates and students to these countries, it seems that Afghanistan has in recent years for various reasons (including Political instability) has not been able to formulate and implement the appropriate policy and support in this regard, and the migration and relocation of the elites and brains of this country to other countries continues. It is necessary for the sympathetic politicians and planners of this country, while further reflecting on the important issue of brain drain, while reviewing the experiences and effective policies pursued by other countries of the world, to create a general review of their elite protection policies.

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