

Accelerating the Quality of Higher Education Institutions of Afghanistan through its Diaspora – A Study

Hashmatullah Naseri, Research Scholar, Department of Business Management, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India, hashmat.naseri@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7549-8763>

Senior Professor Dr. P. Venkataiah, Research Guide, Department of Business Management, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India, profvenkat40@gmail.com

Abstract: Since 1979, Afghanistan has been caught in an ongoing and tragic series of events compound with mass immigrations of skilled and knowledgeable individuals including academicians, which has resulted in a drastic reduction of available human capacity within the country. Indeed, Afghanistan's higher education institutions face a substantial challenge, which this paper aims to tackle and make a valuable contribution to mitigating this problem. Through the collection of 157 questionnaires, this research seeks to explore the extent to which the Afghan diaspora residing in different countries demonstrates willingness and potential to engage in and contribute to accelerating the quality of higher education institutions. Moreover, this study aims to identify the preferred approaches through which the diaspora would like to contribute. Furthermore, this research will examine the challenges the Afghan diaspora perceives as significant factors affecting their involvement. To test the hypotheses, the Mann-Whitney U test and correlation analysis are applied.

Keywords: brain drain; diaspora; diaspora engagement; scientific diaspora; digital diaspora; diaspora collaboration.

I. INTRODUCTION

Scholars use the term "**diaspora**" to describe a collective of people who originated from a place different from their current residence. Diaspora refers to ethnic minority groups of migrant origins who reside in and engage with host countries while maintaining strong emotional and material ties with their countries of origin, or these individuals or groups exhibit cultural expressions and formations of identity [1], [2], [3], [4]. They may include migrants, their descendants, or distinct ethno-nationalistic communities, who maintain a connection to a physical or conceptual place they consider as their original "home," [1], [5]. Furthermore, these individuals or groups possess social, economic, and political ties that extend beyond national borders, potentially encompassing the entire world [3]. The terms "scientific diaspora" and "digital diaspora" are frequently used in relation to brain drain, especially in academic circles. **Scientific diasporas**, consisting of scientists, academicians, engineers, and other intellectuals residing abroad, are defined as communities aiming to contribute to the development of their homeland or specific regions, particularly in the fields of science, technology, and education [6], [7], [8], they are regarded as agents that facilitate the circulation of information and knowledge back to their countries of origin [9], [10]. This

idea has been discussed in various studies, including those by Chikanda and Dodson, as well as Tejada, Varzari, and Porcescu [11], [12]. Speaking of the digital diaspora [13], in a research article explores the role of diasporas in international development and how the Internet can benefit their mobilization and communication. It looks specifically at **digital diasporas**, which are diaspora communities organized online on the internet, with emerging global networks with the potential to reinvigorate efforts, and how they can address development challenges [14]. These concepts have been devised to explore the multifaceted aspects of migrant experiences in the digital realm.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

For nearly half a century, Afghanistan has gained recognition as one of the nations that has generated the highest number of migrants worldwide [15]–[17]. This is primarily attributed to ceaseless warfare and conflicts [15], [18], [19] compounded by natural disasters, which have been leading to political turmoil, poverty, and economic instability [15], [18] and social unrest [19] within the country. This country has experienced turbulent conflicts and oppressive political and religious regimes during this period [19], [20], starting from the communist party regime compounded by the military invasion of the USSR

(1979-1989), followed by civil war between Mujahideen groups due to disagreement on power sharing (1989-1996), then the first regime of the Taliban 1996-2001, afterward the Republic Government and intervention of the USA and its Allies 2001-2021, and recently the second regime of the Taliban from Aug 2021 till date [21], [22], [23], [24]. Each regime change has consistently triggered mass migration, particularly the migration of highly skilled and educated individuals. According to Yoon, during the two decades of suffering from 1979 to 1999, only Kabul University experienced the loss of 500 to 700 of its teaching staff [25]. These losses were due to professors being killed, going missing or migrating to other countries. Numerous of them migrated to neighbouring countries, Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK, Russia, Turkey, Golf Countries, and the rest of the world, resulting in a brain drain [15], [26]. Consequently, widespread deterioration is witnessed across various levels, which has left the country in a precarious state [20]. According to the UNHCR report, there are 5.2 million refugees in two neighbouring countries Pakistan and Iran, from which 1.6 million are new arrivals since August 2021 [27], and a huge number of Afghans have been migrating to the rest of the world through evacuation and other ways of relocation. This mass migration contains a huge number of skilled and educated professionals, in particular academicians. The departure of academicians and intellectuals not only represents a loss of human capital but also entails the squandering of substantial investments made in their education. Furthermore, it signifies the depletion of social and intellectual capital, which is a burden for a less developed country like Afghanistan, which strongly needs to sustain such resources. According to Miszak and Motwani, between August 15, 2021, and November 15, 2021, Afghan universities experienced a significant deficit of 200 lecturer positions [23]. However, various reports claim that in some universities such as Kabul University, more than 50 percent of their teaching staff has left the country during the last two years.

Moreover, despite being one of the largest refugee populations globally [16], [17], [28], the Afghan diaspora has received limited attention in migration, diaspora, and development research. Fischer insists that this oversight highlights a significant **"research gap"** regarding the study of Afghan diasporas worldwide [29].

However, the focus of this article is specifically on the collaboration of the Afghan diasporas in accelerating the quality of higher education institutions in Afghanistan. Therefore, this article aims to study the willingness, potential, and preferred approaches for contribution, and the challenges that exist in realizing these contributions, which has not been done before particularly in the case of Afghanistan, and this is the **"novelty"** of this paper. Additionally, this paper will suggest some practical solutions for the enhancement of this collaboration to

contribute to conquering the shortage of professors and other deficiencies in different fields.

Theoretically, this article aims to explore the role of the diasporas and their engagement and collaboration in the development of their home countries, specifically in higher education. It does so by examining existing literature on the subject. Moreover, it offers insights for improving the practices of diaspora engagement in the development of their home countries.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 Diaspora Engagement & Development

The potential of diaspora communities to stimulate development in their countries of origin is increasingly being acknowledged [30]. Diasporas can provide opportunities to mitigate the effects of brain drain in developing countries [31], [32], [33]. Recent literature has revealed that diasporas can make favourable contributions to their country of origin in various ways and they can have a beneficial impact on the development of their homelands [31], [32], [33], [34], [35], [36], [37], [38], [39], [40], [41]. Whereas, Shin & Moon insist on the participation of the diaspora in development initiatives through temporary visits and even virtual instruments [42].

3.2 Diaspora Engagement in Higher Education Development

Academic engagement, as described by Robertson-Smith & Markwick, encompasses the absorption, dedication, motivation, and relationships of academics in order to bring about the desired change. Diaspora can play a significant role in bringing these changes [43]. According to Ardivino, Meyer, and Tejada Guerrero, diasporas are regarded as valuable assets and an avenue for the effective transfer and sharing of knowledge and social capital, and capacity improvement in such countries [6], [44], [45]. Pack & Page emphasize on valuable contribution of diaspora in research and innovation, technology transfer, and skills enhancement [46]. Tejada insists that the impact of diaspora on development, through knowledge transfer, primarily occurs through two significant avenues: diaspora trans-nationalism and physical return to the home country [47].

3.3 Diaspora Contribution in Development of Higher Education in Developing Countries

It is evident that any form of engagement by the diaspora has the potential to contribute to the improvement and quality development of research and higher education in their countries of origin. The following studies are conducted on the engagement and contribution of the diaspora in the higher education development of some developing countries.

Tsegay has conducted a study on diaspora engagement in developing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in **Eritrea**, particularly in faculty and student development [48]. The focus of the research was on individuals with a Master's degree or higher. The findings of study revealed that HEIs of Eritrea are establishing collaborative ties with its Diaspora academics located in different countries and these Diaspora academics are engaging in faculty and student development which simultaneously fostering the development of HEIs in Eritrea. Meanwhile, the research findings also revealed that certain Eritrean Diaspora academics choose not to actively participate in (HEIs) in Eritrea through official means due to the unfavourable political climate, absence of academic freedom, and their personal obligations related to work and family.

Tetty has studied the role of the diaspora in regenerating scholarly capacity through the case of **Ghana** diaspora knowledge network [49]. According to this review study, a number of African nations are struggling with the conflict between the loss of specialized knowledge in vital professions and transnational movement. Not enough teaching capacity is available to provide quality training for new generations of citizens in universities and similar establishments. The idea that highly qualified workers lost to "brain drain" can be replaced and improved via "brain circulation" has gained traction among development actors, including governments and international organizations. As a result, initiatives to combine the international flow of knowledge and experience are increasing. The creation of diaspora knowledge networks is one of these initiatives. To create and advance knowledge as well as to share, spread, and, in some cases, use that knowledge to inform policy and apply to practice is the main driving force behind these networks. According to this analysis, a large number of these networks are significantly contributing in development of universities and research centers.

Kuschminder has conducted a research on knowledge transfer and capacity building in **Afghanistan** through temporary return of its nation in the Netherland [37]. While most studies have focused on the financial effects such as remittances and investments, but this article, however, examines how the Diaspora can contribute to knowledge transfer and capacity building in post-conflict environments, using a case study of the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) to Afghanistan. The study reveals that the participants of this project contributed to knowledge transfer and capacity building in various ways, such as designing new curricula for university courses and editing the curriculum for Afghan educational centers. This study states that the situation in Afghanistan is unique because of several factors, including the significant lack of development and the aftermath of the conflict, as well as the dedicated efforts of Diaspora returnees who are strongly committed to rebuilding their homeland, although

not all members of the post-conflict Diaspora share this positive attitude.

Rahman researched the contribution of the Bangladeshi academic diaspora in the development of higher education in **Bangladesh**, primarily contributing to the development of knowledge capital in the country [50]. The entire participant in the sample for this study possessed doctoral degrees from well-known universities located in North America, Europe, and Asia. The researcher highlights that reputed public universities have constantly lost their glory/reputation due to a great extent of brain drain in the last almost five decades. On the contribution of Diaspora in development, the study identifies six key areas of engagement and the resulting developmental implications for Bangladesh such as; enhancing reputation, strengthening research tradition and national innovation system in Bangladesh, enriching tertiary education sector in Bangladesh, offering financial support and promoting the career of Bangladeshis abroad. The study findings indicate that none of the respondents residing in developed countries expressed a desire to permanently return to Bangladesh while they are actively engaged in their current positions abroad. However, what stands out is that 100 percent of the academic Diaspora participants expressed eagerness to actively participate in the socio-economic development of their home country. This study argues that the Diaspora option, as opposed to a return option, serves as a more effective strategy for mobilizing the Bangladeshi Diaspora and making meaningful contributions to the development of Bangladesh.

Palackal has focused on the potential of diaspora engagement, using the International Institute for Scientific and Academic Collaboration (IISAC1) as a case study, to contribute to the development and research efforts in Kerala, **India** [30]. the study underscores the importance of exploring the scope and relevance of Diaspora engagements in the field of education and academia. The transformative effects of IISAC's educational programs demonstrate the value of standardized cross-border learning systems and pedagogies in revitalizing and improving the education system in Kerala. This study argues that diaspora engagement have the potential to create far-reaching developmental impacts on higher education in the state.

Finally, **OSFU** has conducted a study on African diaspora engagement in higher education development in **Africa** [51]. This study insists that the African Diaspora can contribute by establishing connections with their home country institutions like universities and research centers. These include providing occasional in-person guidance

¹ (www.iisac.org), based in New Jersey, USA

and support, collecting and distributing resources such as books, computers, and medical supplies, and mobilizing their host countries to contribute to these endeavours. In addition, African faculty members working in universities in OECD nations are facilitating study abroad programs that allow their students to visit Africa. This enables interaction and the establishment of professional relationships between faculty members in Africa and external institutions.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Diasporas have gained significant attention in academic spheres in recent times [30]. Afghanistan, with a substantial population of immigrants, has the potential to harness its diaspora in the enhancement of development, particularly in higher education. Considering this, this research aims;

- 1) To gauge the willingness of the Afghan diaspora to contribute to accelerating the quality of higher education in Afghanistan,
- 2) To explore the potential of the Afghan diaspora and their preferred areas for collaboration towards accelerating the quality of higher education institutions in Afghanistan,
- 3) To recognize the diasporas' preferred approaches for collaboration, and
- 4) To identify the challenges towards diasporas' collaboration.

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between willingness of Afghan diaspora for collaboration and their gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the willingness of the Afghan diaspora for collaboration and their current job.

H₀₃: There is no significant correlation between the willingness of the Afghan diaspora for collaboration and their potential in preferred areas.

H₀₄: There is no significant correlation between the willingness of the Afghan diaspora for collaboration and the perceived challenges towards this collaboration.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to investigate the extent to which the Afghan diaspora, residing in various parts of the world, demonstrates the potential and willingness to engage in and contribute to the enhancement of higher education quality in Afghanistan. The study adopts an explorative approach, employing a structured questionnaire for data collection. Utilizing a survey research design, data is gathered through a Google Form from 157 respondents, including university teaching staff and PhDs. The respondents are selected using a snowball sampling method. Employing a quantitative research methodology, the questionnaire comprises 29 Likert-scale questions, categorized into four sections. These sections encompass the diaspora's willingness, the potential of the diaspora for collaboration in specific areas, the preferred approaches that diaspora members favor for collaboration, and the perceived challenges faced by the diaspora concerning collaboration.

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha test is employed. Additionally, for assessing the questions' reliability, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test are conducted, accompanied by a factor analysis that encompasses communality and extraction method tests.

In pursuit of the research objectives, descriptive statistics are employed. To test the hypotheses, both the Mann-Whitney U test and correlation analysis are applied.

VII. FINDINGS AND RESULT

7.1 Demographic Analysis

Table 1. Demographic Data

		Count	Column N %
Gender	Male	127	80.9%
	Female	30	19.1%
Education Qualification	Professional	1	0.6%
	Bachelor	0	0.0%
	Master	70	44.6%
	Ph.D./Ph.D. Scholar	85	54.1%
	Post Ph.D.	1	0.6%
Current Job	Academic	100	63.7%
	Non-Academic	57	36.3%
Academic Work Experience	1-5	55	35.0%
	6-10	54	34.4%
	11-20	44	28.0%
	21-30	2	1.3%
	31-40	2	1.3%

Data in Table 1 illustrates that the respondents' ratio for females and males is around 1/5. It is to be mentioned that the total portion of female staff in government universities of Afghanistan is also around 20%. This data also indicates that the majority of the respondents (54%) are Ph.D. holder or Ph.D. scholars, whereas (44%) have a master degree. Moreover, around (63.7%) of the respondents have an academic job in the countries they live in, and the remaining (36.3%) hold a non-academic job. Furthermore, from the total respondents (35%) of them have 1-5 years of

academic work experience, (34.4%) of them have 6-10 years of experience, and (28%) have 11-20 years of work experience in academia. Considering the education qualification, current job, and academic work experiences of the respondents, it can be assumed that the Afghan diaspora would be very beneficial for development of the higher education institutions in Afghanistan, as a huge number of them hold a Ph.D. degree and are working in academia.

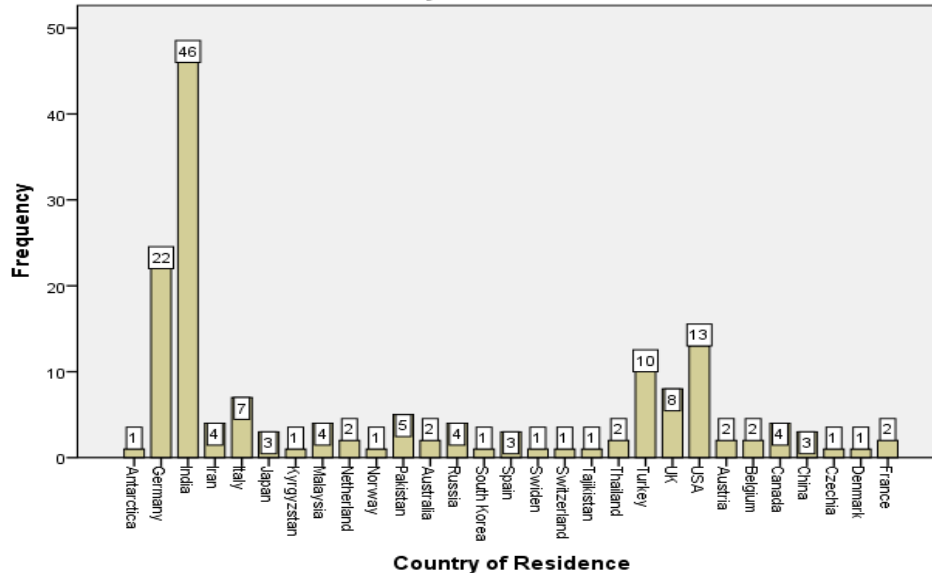


Figure 1. Number of respondents living in different countries

The data in Figure 2 indicates that 46 respondents or (29.3%) live in India, (14%) in Germany, (8.3%) in the USA, (6.4%) in Turkey, (5 %) in the UK, and (4.5%) in Italy, and the remaining (32.5%) respondents live in other

countries. Moreover, this data demonstrates that about half of the respondents live in developed countries.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.897	.897	29

The data indicates that the set of 29 items has a high level of internal consistency, with both the original and standardized versions of Cronbach's Alpha yielding a

value of (0.897). This suggests that the items in the scale are measuring a similar construct and can be considered reliable for the purpose they were designed for.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.850
	Approx. Chi-Square	2074.444
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	406
	Sig.	.000

The KMO value (0.850) suggests that the data is appropriate for factor analysis and a sample of 157 is adequate. Bartlett's test confirms that the observed

variables are correlated, further supporting the suitability of the data for this type of analysis.

7.2 Descriptive Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics is applied to achieve the set objectives of the survey. Table no 3, 4, 5 and 6 indicates the respondents' willingness for collaboration, their

potential areas for collaboration, the approaches for collaboration, and the challenges they perceived.

Table 4. Willingness of diaspora for collaboration

N	Valid	157
	Missing	0
Mean		3.68
Median		4.00
Std. Deviation		1.401

Considering the data, the willingness of the Afghan diaspora in collaborating to the accelerating the development of higher education institutions in Afghanistan is significant. With a mean of 3.68 and median of 4.00, the majority of the respondents (66.2%)

eager to collaborate, while (13.4%) are neutral on their decision and (20.3%) are not eager to collaborate at all. The data shows that the willingness for collaboration among the Afghan diaspora is high.

Table 5. Afghan diasporas' potential in the preferred areas they would like to collaborate

The Potential in Preferred Areas	Mean	(SA+A)	Neutral	(SDA+DA)	Total
1. Teaching at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)	3.7	61.2%	22.9%	15.9%	100%
2. Training Faculty Staff	3.5	48.4%	29.9%	21.7%	100%
3. Publication of Research Work	3.4	49.1%	31.8%	19.1%	100%
4. Joint Research with Afghan Fellows	3.4	45.3%	33.1%	21.7%	100%
5. Guiding and Mentoring Scholars and Students	3.2	40.7%	27.4%	31.9%	100%
6. Providing Resources for the Library	3.3	42.7%	33.8%	23.5%	100%
7. Collaboration with Lab & Research Centres	3.0	26.8%	43.9%	29.3%	100%
8. Providing Scholarship and Fellowship	2.9	18.5%	51.0%	30.5%	100%
9. Curriculum Development	3.4	45.8%	29.3%	24.8%	100%
10. Policy Development	3.3	43.3%	29.3%	27.3%	100%
11. Consultancy Services to HEIs	3.2	39.6%	29.9%	30.5%	100%
12. Linking Universities with the World	3.0	27.4%	42.0%	30.6%	100%
13. Investment in Higher Education (HE)	2.7	13.5%	43.9%	42.6%	100%
14. Financial Cooperation	2.8	15.3%	49.7%	35.5%	100%
15. Advocating for HE in Afghanistan	3.9	72.0%	17.1%	10.9%	100%

The data indicates that advocating for higher education in Afghanistan and teaching at HEIs have the highest agreement percentage (73% and 61%) and mean of (3.72 and 3.86) respectively. Followed by collaboration in the training of faculties, publication of research works in international journals, doing joint research, providing resources for the library, helping in curriculum development and policy development, and providing

consultancy services have moderate agreement percentages (48, 49, 45, 41, 43, 46, 43, and 40% respectively). Financial cooperation and investment in HE have the lowest percentage of agreement followed by providing scholarship and fellowship, and collaboration with labs and research centres in HEIs in Afghanistan (15, 14, 19, and 27% respectively), suggesting less enthusiasm for these forms of collaboration.

Table 6. Afghan diasporas' preferred approaches for collaboration

The Preferred Approaches	Mean	(SA+A)	Neutral	(SDA+DA)	Total
1. Permanent Return	3.1	33.7%	36.3%	30.0%	100%
2. Short Personal Visits	3.8	69.4%	18.5%	12.1%	100%
3. Virtual Cooperation	3.5	54.7%	29.3%	15.9%	100%
4. Voluntary-Organized Visits	3.3	44.6%	35.0%	20.4%	100%
5. Paid-Organized Visits	3.4	47.8%	33.1%	19.1%	100%

From the data in the table, we can see the preferences of Afghan diasporas for collaboration in different areas. Short personal visits have the highest agreement percentage (69.4%) with mean of 3.78, followed by virtual cooperation (54.7%). Paid-organized visits and voluntary-organized visits got 48% and 45% respectively. Permanent return has the lowest agreement percentage (33.7%),

whereas total of this 33.7% respondents who would like to permanently return are those (who live in developing countries and/or the diaspora living in developed countries but are the age of above 60 years old). Neutral responses are relatively common across all areas, indicating that some respondents might not strongly lean toward any particular option.

Table 7. Challenges towards Afghan diasporas' collaboration

The Challenges	Mean	(SA+A)	Neutral	(SDA+DA)	Total
1. Inter/Intra Diaspora Organization	3.7	61.7%	29.4%	8.9%	100%
2. Policy and Framework in HE/HEIs	3.9	70.0%	14.7%	6.3%	100%
3. Security Issues	3.6	59.9%	22.9%	17.2%	100%
4. Willingness of Authorities in HE/HEIs	3.9	69.5%	14.5%	16.0%	100%
5. Work Culture within HEIs	3.5	58.6%	22.9%	18.5%	100%
6. Infrastructures, Tools and Equipments	3.6	62.4%	25.5%	12.1%	100%
7. Work Life Balance of Diasporas	3.6	59.9%	30.6%	9.5%	100%
8. Political Obstacles	4.1	80.9%	9.6%	9.5%	100%

The data illustrates that the political challenges with an agreement rate of (81%) and a mean of 4.1, followed by absence of proper Policy and Framework, and absence of willingness and support from the authorities in Afghanistan (70% each) are more crucial challenges towards the collaboration of Afghan diasporas. Whereas,

Inter/Intra diasporas organizations and inadequate infrastructures for collaboration (62% each), security issues and work-life balance of Afghan diaspora (60% each), and finally the work culture within Afghan HEIs 59% are the rates given to the challenges by the Afghan diasporas.

7.3 Hypotheses testing

To test the hypotheses, Mann-whitney U and Correlation tests are applied in this paper.

Table 8. Test Statistics^a Gender and their willingness for collaboration

	Willingness for Collaboration
Mann-Whitney U	1839.000
Wilcoxon W	9967.000
Z	-.307
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.759
a. Grouping Variable: Gender	

A negative Z-score in the test suggests that the ranks for the variable of interest are higher in the Males compared to the Females. The p-value is greater than the conventional significance level ($0.759 > 0.05$), indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the willingness to collaborate between the two gender groups.

Therefore, we **cannot reject the null hypothesis** which states there is no significant difference between willingness of Afghan diaspora for collaboration and their gender. The non-significant p-value (0.759) suggests that any observed differences are likely due to random variation and not a true difference between the groups.

Table 9. Test Statistics^a Respondents' current job and their willingness for collaboration

	Willingness for Collaboration
Mann-Whitney U	1903.000
Wilcoxon W	3556.000
Z	-3.606
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
a. Grouping Variable: Current Job (Academic and Non-Academic)	

The P-value is very small (0.000), indicating that the observed difference between the Academic and Non-Academic groups in terms of Willingness for Collaboration is statistically significant. The negative Z-

score (-3.606) indicates that the ranks of Willingness for Collaboration tend to be lower in the non-academic job group compared to the academic job group. Therefore, we can **reject the null hypothesis** which states there is no

significant difference between the willingness of the Afghan diaspora for collaboration and their current job. The results point out that diasporas with Academic Jobs

are more likely to collaborate compared to the diasporas with Non-Academic jobs.

Table 10. Correlation b/w willingness of Afghan diasporas for collaboration and their potential in preferred areas

Correlation b/w Willingness and Potential in Preferred Areas		Willingness for Collaboration	Potential
Spearman's rho	Willingness for Collaboration	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.343**
		N	157
Potential in Preferred Areas		Correlation Coefficient	.343**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	157

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient is approximately 0.343. Since it is greater than 0, there is a moderate positive correlation. The significance level (p-value) for both correlations is < 0.01 ($p < 0.01$), indicating a high level of significance. This means that the observed correlations are unlikely to have occurred by chance, supporting the validity of the relationships. Therefore, we can **reject the null hypothesis** which states there is no significant relationship

between the potential of diaspora in preferred areas and their willingness for collaboration. The result indicates that the willingness degree of the diaspora relates to the potential of diasporas in a specific area.

Table 11. Correlation between willingness of Afghan diaspora for Collaboration and the challenges they have perceived

Correlation b/w Willingness and Challenges		Willingness for Collaboration	Challenges
Spearman's rho	Willingness for Collaboration	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.098
		N	157
Challenges towards Collaboration		Correlation Coefficient	.098
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.221
		N	157

The correlation coefficient is 0.098, indicating a very weak positive correlation. Both correlation coefficients have associated significance values of 0.221, which are greater than 0.05 (assuming a 0.05 significance level). This means that the correlations are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, we **cannot reject the null hypothesis** which states there is no significant relation between the willingness of Afghan diasporas for collaboration and the perceived challenges. This means the changes in security in Afghanistan will not have a significant effect on the willingness of the diaspora to collaborate.

between the willingness of gender (males and females) towards their collaboration (first hypothesis is accepted), while there is a statistically significant difference between Current Job of the Afghan diaspora (academic and non-academic and their willingness for collaboration (second hypothesis rejected). The study further highlights a moderate positive correlation between the potential of the Afghan diaspora in preferred collaboration areas and their willingness to collaborate. In other words, the degree of willingness correlates to the potential of diaspora (third hypothesis rejected).

VIII. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the research objectives and hypotheses regarding the potential of the Afghan diaspora in accelerating the quality of higher education institutions in Afghanistan has provided valuable insights. The study reveals that there is a significant willingness among the Afghan diaspora to collaborate in the development of higher education institutions in Afghanistan, with a majority (66.2%) expressing eagerness to contribute. However, there is no statistically significant difference

The preferred areas for collaboration include “advocating for higher education” and “teaching at higher education institutions”, which garnered the highest agreement percentages. Other areas such as collaboration in training of faculties, joint research with faculties, help in publication of research their work, providing resources for libraries, curriculum development, and policy development received moderate agreement percentages. On the other hand, financial cooperation and investment in higher education had the lowest agreement rates, indicating less enthusiasm for these forms of collaboration. However, the

correlation between the willingness for collaboration and the perceived challenges towards collaboration is weak and not statistically significant, it means the perceived challenges will not have a significant impact on the willingness of diaspora for collaboration (forth hypothesis accepted).

Regarding the approaches the diaspora prefers to select for collaboration, short personal visits received the highest agreement percentage (69.4%), followed by virtual cooperation (54.7%). Paid-organized visits and Voluntary-organized visits were also considered as viable options by around 48% and 45% respectively. In contrast, permanent return had the lowest agreement percentage (33.7%), suggesting that it might not be a preferred option for many. Additionally, almost all of those who prefer permanent return are the respondents studying or staying in developing countries or those at the age of above 64 years old.

Lastly, the analysis identifies political challenges, the absence of proper policy and framework, and the lack of willingness and support from authorities in Afghanistan as the most crucial barriers to collaboration for the Afghan diaspora. Inter/Intra-diaspora organization, security issues, work-life balance, and work culture within HEIs were identified as additional challenges, though to a slightly lesser extent.

Overall, the research provides valuable insights into the willingness and potential of the Afghan diaspora to contribute to higher education in Afghanistan, the approaches, and the perceived challenges towards this collaboration. Understanding these factors can inform efforts to engage and harness the expertise and resources of the diaspora community for the advancement of education in their home country.

However, these results are based on the data collected from 157 respondents and may not represent the opinions of the entire Afghan diaspora community. Overall, the data highlights various areas that might require the attention of the Afghan diaspora communities, Afghan Government and policy makers, the international community, and other stakeholders. They can consider this information for enhancing the involvement of the diaspora in developing higher education, and they can use these findings to identify and address challenges and foster more effective collaboration among Afghan diasporas and HEIs in Afghanistan.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the research, the following suggestions are provided:

- Facilitate collaboration platforms that can act as a bridge between the diaspora and HIEs in Afghanistan.

- Develop supportive policies and frameworks that incentivize and facilitate collaboration with the diaspora. This includes recognition of qualifications, streamlined processes for involvement, and financial support for initiatives.
- Engage in outreach and awareness efforts to encourage even greater participation from the Afghan diaspora. Educational institutions, government bodies, and international organizations should actively engage with the diaspora community.
- To address political challenges, diplomatic efforts should be made to create an enabling environment for diaspora engagement, providing reassurance and support to those willing to contribute.
- To further promote collaboration, academic exchange programs should be established between higher education institutions in Afghanistan and foreign universities with significant Afghan diaspora representation.
- To complement the efforts of the diaspora, the Government of Afghanistan and international stakeholders should invest in, support, and strengthen local educational institutions, facilitate infrastructures, and improve collaborative work culture within these institutions, which can provide a more attractive environment for diaspora engagement.
- Building and nurturing strong networks and partnerships with diaspora organizations, educational associations, and other relevant groups to create a collaborative ecosystem that maximizes the potential of the Afghan diaspora in advancing higher education in Afghanistan.
- The identified lack of willingness and support from authorities in Afghanistan needs to be addressed promptly by engaging key stakeholders within the government and decision-making bodies to recognize and value the contributions of the diaspora.

By implementing these recommendations, Afghanistan can harness the potential of its diaspora community and tap into a valuable resource pool to accelerate the quality of higher education institutions in the country. It will require collaboration among various stakeholders, sustained efforts, and an inclusive approach to ensure meaningful engagement with the Afghan diaspora in the pursuit of educational development.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This paper suggests further research to explore factors that may influence willingness and collaboration, the reasons

behind respondents' attitudes, and the initiatives to improve inter/intra-diaspora organizations that can foster effective and meaningful engagement with the Afghan diaspora for the enhancement of higher education institutions in Afghanistan.

REFERENCES

- [1] C.-E. Chikezie, "Reinforcing the Contributions of African Diasporas to Development," in *Diaspora for Development in Africa*, D. Ratha and S. Plaza, Eds. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2011, pp. 261–282. doi: 10.1596/978-0-8213-8258-5.
- [2] R. A. Lukose, "The Difference that Diaspora Makes: Thinking through the Anthropology of Immigrant Education in the United States," *Anthropol. Educ. Q.*, vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 405–418, Dec. 2007, doi: 10.1525/AEQ.2007.38.4.405.
- [3] S. Vertovec, "Three Meanings of 'Diaspora,' Exemplified among South Asian Religions," *Diaspora A J. Transnatl. Stud.*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 277–299, Oct. 1997, doi: 10.3138/DIASPORA.6.3.277.
- [4] S. Witteborn, "Digital Diaspora: Social Alliances Beyond the Ethnonational Bond," in *The Handbook of Diasporas, Media, and Culture*, J. Retis and R. Tsagarousianou, Eds. Pondicherry, India. & USA: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2019, pp. 179–192. doi: 10.1002/9781119236771.
- [5] D. Ratha and S. Plaza, "Harnessing Diaspora Resources for Africa," in *Diaspora for Development in Africa*, D. Ratha and S. Plaza, Eds. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2011, pp. 29–54. doi: 10.1596/978-0-8213-8258-5.
- [6] G. Tejada Guerrero, "Mobility, Knowledge and Cooperation: Scientific Diasporas as Agents of Change," *Migr. Dev.*, vol. 10, no. 18, pp. 59–92, 2012, Accessed: May 12, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://infoscience.epfl.ch/record/185223>
- [7] B. Séguin, P. A. Singer, and A. S. Daar, "Science community: scientific diasporas," *Science (80-)*, vol. 312, no. 5780, pp. 1602–1603, Jun. 2006, doi: 10.1126/SCIENCE.1126325.
- [8] D. Foray, *The Economics of Knowledge*. The MIT Press, 2004. doi: 10.7551/MITPRESS/2613.001.0001.
- [9] R. Barré, V. Hernández, J.-B. Meyer, and D. Vinck, *Scientific diasporas: How can developing countries benefit from their expatriate scientists and engineers?* Marseille: Institute de la Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) Éditions, 2003. doi: 10.4000/BOOKS.IRDEDITIONS.2591.
- [10] G. Tejada Guerrero and J.-C. Bolay, *Scientific diasporas as development partners: Skilled migrants from Colombia, India and South Africa in Switzerland: Empirical evidence and policy responses*. AG: Peter Lang CH, 2011. doi: 10.3726/978-3-0352-0023-2.
- [11] A. Chikanda and B. Dodson, "Medical Migration From Zimbabwe: Towards New Solutions?," in *Geographies of Health and Development*, 1st ed., I. Luginaah and R. B. Kerr, Eds. London: Luginaah, Isaac Kerr, Rachel Bezner, 2016, pp. 301–302. doi: 10.4324/9781315584379-27.
- [12] G. Tejada, V. Varzari, and S. Porcescu, "Scientific diasporas, transnationalism and home-country development: evidence from a study of skilled Moldovans abroad," *Southeast Eur. Black Sea Stud.*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 1–17, 2013, doi: 10.1080/14683857.2013.789674.
- [13] J. M. Brinkerhoff, "Digital diasporas and international development: Afghan-Americans and the reconstruction of Afghanistan," *Public Adm. Dev.*, vol. 24, no. 5, pp. 397–413, Dec. 2004, doi: 10.1002/PAD.326.
- [14] M. S. Laguerre, "Digital diaspora. Definition and models," in *Diasporas in the new media age: identity, politics, and community*, A. Alonso and P. J. Oiarzabal, Eds. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2010, pp. 49–64. Accessed: May 15, 2023. [Online]. Available: https://books.google.com/books/about/Diasporas_in_the_New_Media_Age.html?id=Lm2VDwAAQBAJ
- [15] Z. Dashti, "AFGHAN EXTERNAL MIGRATION MOVEMENTS IN THE HISTORICAL PROCESS," *Akad. Soc. Stud.*, vol. 6, no. 20, pp. 301–314, Jun. 2022, doi: 10.31455/ASYA.1055791.
- [16] W. Maley and S. Schmeidl, "The Case of the Afghan Refugee Population: Finding Durable Solutions in Contested Transitions," in *Protracted Displacement in Asia: No Place to call Home*, 1st ed., H. Adelman, Ed. Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008, pp. 131–180. Accessed: May 26, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://researchprofiles.anu.edu.au/en/publications/the-case-of-the-afghan-refugee-population->

- finding-durable-solutio
- [17] A. Monsutti, "Afghan migratory strategies and the three solutions to the refugee problem," *Refug. Surv. Q.*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 58–73, 2008, doi: 10.1093/Rsq/HDN007.
- [18] E. Lopez-Lucia, "Migration and conflict in Afghanistan," Birmingham, UK, Jul. 2015. Accessed: Apr. 22, 2023. [Online]. Available: www.gsdr.org
- [19] F. Nezami, "Brain Drain in the Afghanistan," *Int. J. Sci. Technol. Res.*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 162–170, 2019, Accessed: May 30, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JSTR/article/view/45904>
- [20] J. W. Anderson and T. Barfield, "Afghanistan: A cultural and political history," *Contemp. Islam*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 95–97, Apr. 2012, doi: 10.1007/S11562-010-0137-4/METRICS.
- [21] W. Avis, "Refugee and Mixed Migration Displacement from Afghanistan," Birmingham, Aug. 2021. doi: 10.19088/K4D.2022.002.
- [22] L. Jazayery, "The Migration–Development Nexus: Afghanistan Case Study," *Int. Migr.*, vol. 40, no. 5, pp. 231–254, Jan. 2002, doi: 10.1111/1468-2435.00218.
- [23] N. Miszak and N. Motwani, "Strengthening Knowledge Ecosystems - Afghanistan Case Study," 2021.
- [24] C. Schetter, "Translocal lives. Patterns of migration in Afghanistan. In Crossroads Asia Working Paper Series, No. 2.," Bonn, 02, Jan. 2012. Accessed: Apr. 28, 2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/projects/crossroads/webfiles/deliverables/Conrad_Schetter_-_Translocal_Lives._Patterns_of_Migration_in_Afghanistan.pdf
- [25] M. I. Yoon, *Causes of Afghan Brain Drain* له افغانستانه د مسلکي کادرونو د فرار عوامل (Translated from Pashto), 2nd ed. Kabul, Afghanistan, 2009. Accessed: Jun. 20, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://ketabton.com/books/172/read>
- [26] A. Monsutti, "Afghan Transnational Networks: Looking Beyond Repatriation," Kabul, 627E, Aug. 2006. Accessed: Apr. 21, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://areu.org.af/publication/627/>
- [27] UNHCR, "Afghanistan Situation Update: EXTERNAL UPDATE #25," 2023. Accessed: Jul. 09, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/101466>
- [28] E. Ferris, K. Koser, and S. Schmeidl, "Displacement, Human Development and Security in Afghanistan. In Displacement in the Muslim World: A Focus on Afghanistan and Iraq," Washington, D.C., DOHA DISC USSION PAPERS, 2009. Accessed: May 26, 2023. [Online]. Available: www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportID=82195.
- [29] C. Fischer, "Afghan Diasporas in Britain and Germany: Dynamics, Engagements and Agency," in *Diaspora Engagement and Development in South Asia*, 1st ed., T. T. Yong and M. M. Rahman, Eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2013, pp. 56–74. doi: 10.1057/9781137334459_4.
- [30] A. Palackal, "Diaspora Engagement in Education in Kerala, India," in *Diaspora Engagement and Development in South Asia*, 1st ed., T. T. Yong and M. M. Rahman, Eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2013, pp. 145–161. doi: 10.1057/9781137334459_8.
- [31] A. J. Gamlen, "The Brain Drain is Dead, Long Live the New Zealand Diaspora," 05–010, 2005. Accessed: Jun. 01, 2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2005/wp-2005-010-gamlen_diaspora_new_zealand/
- [32] J. B. Meyer *et al.*, "Turning brain drain into brain gain: The Colombian experience of the diaspora option," *Sci. Technol. Soc.*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 285–315, 1997, doi: 10.1177/097172189700200205.
- [33] P. Wickramasekara, "Policy responses to skilled migration: Retention, return and circulation," Geneva, 5, Dec. 2013. Accessed: Jun. 01, 2023. [Online]. Available: http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_232366/lang-en/index.htm
- [34] J. M. Brinkerhoff, "Exploring the Role of Diasporas in Rebuilding Governance in Post-Conflict Societies," *Africa's Financ. Contrib. Remit.*, pp. 239–262, Nov. 2008, doi: 10.5848/CSP.0228.00012.
- [35] A. Gamlen, "Diaspora Engagement Policies: What are they, and what kinds of states use them?," 32, 2006.
- [36] H. de Hass, "Engaging diasporas: How governments and development agencies can support diaspora involvement in development of origin countries," Oxford, Jun. 2006. Accessed: Apr. 16, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/101466>

- <https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/publications/en-gaging-diasporas-how-governments-and-development-agencies-can-support-diaspora-involvement-in-development-of-origin-countries/>
- [37] K. Kuschminder, "Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building Through the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals to Afghanistan," *Int. Migr.*, vol. 52, no. 5, pp. 191–207, Oct. 2014, doi: 10.1111/IMIG.12065.
- [38] P. Levitt, "Transnational migration: taking stock and future directions," *Glob. Networks*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 195–216, Jul. 2001, doi: 10.1111/1471-0374.00013.
- [39] K. Newland and E. Patrick, "Beyond Remittances: The Role of Diaspora in Poverty Reduction in their Countries of Origin," Washington DC, Jul. 2004. Accessed: Apr. 16, 2023. [Online]. Available: www.migrationpolicy.org
- [40] K. Newland, "Six Studies and a Road Map: Diasporas as Partners in Development," in *Diasporas: New Partners in Global Development Policy*, K. Newland, Ed. Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Research, 2010. Accessed: May 27, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/diaspora-s-new-partners-global-development-policy>
- [41] A. Terrazas, "Connected through Service: Diaspora Volunteers and Global Development," Washington DC, Aug. 2010. Accessed: Apr. 16, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/connected-through-service-diaspora-volunteers-and-global-development>
- [42] G.-W. Shin and R. j. Moon, "From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation and Linkage," Sanford University, 2018. Accessed: Jul. 25, 2022. [Online]. Available: <http://aparcs.fsi.stanford.edu>
- [43] G. Robertson-Smith and C. Markwick, "Employee Engagement A review of current thinking Published by: INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYMENT STUDIES Institute for Employment Studies. Report No. 469," Brighton, 2009. Accessed: May 25, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/469.pdf>
- [44] M. Ardovino, "THE ROLE OF DIASPORA IN CONFLICT: The Contribution of Diaspora Return to Post-Conflict and Fragile Countries. 2010," Washington DC, Feb. 2011. Accessed: Apr. 16, 2023. [Online]. Available: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADS460.pdf
- [45] J. B. Meyer, "Network Approach versus Brain Drain: Lessons from the Diaspora," *Int. Migr.*, vol. 39, no. 5, pp. 91–110, 2001, doi: 10.1111/1468-2435.00173.
- [46] H. Pack and J. J. Page, "Accumulation, exports, and growth in the high-performing Asian economies," *Carnegie-Rochester Conf. Ser. Public Policy*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 199–235, 1994, doi: 10.1007/s00016-003-0167-x.
- [47] G. Tejada, "Knowledge Transfers Through Diaspora Transnationalism and Return Migration: A Case Study of Indian Skilled Migrants," in *Diasporas, development and governance*, vol. 5, A. Chikanda, J. Crush, and M. Walton-Roberts, Eds. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016, pp. 187–201.
- [48] S. M. Tsegay, "Diaspora academics engagement in Eritrean higher education institutions: Current conditions and future trends," *Migr. Dev.*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 421–441, Sep. 2019, doi: 10.1080/21632324.2019.1675247.
- [49] W. J. Tettey, "Regenerating Scholarly Capacity Through Diaspora Engagement: The Case of A Ghana Diaspora Knowledge Network," in *Diasporas, development and governance*, vol. 5, A. Chikanda, J. Crush, and M. Walton-Roberts, Eds. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016, pp. 171–185.
- [50] T. Rahman, "From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Leveraging the Academic Diaspora for Development in Bangladesh," in *Diaspora Engagement and Development in South Asia*, 1st ed., T. T. Yong and M. M. Rahman, Eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2013, pp. 124–144. doi: 10.1057/9781137334459_7.
- [51] OSFU (Fragile States Unit), "The Role of the Diaspora in Nation Building: Lessons for Fragile and Post-Conflict Countries in Africa Prepared by Fragile States Unit (OSFU) Vice-Presidency Operations II-Sector Operations," Feb. 2012.