



Migration, Marginality and Education: A Narrative Literature Review on Exploring Educational Challenges for Afghan Migrants in Host Society of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This narrative literature review aimed to review the existing literature concerning the education challenges of Afghan migrants in host societies specifically within the Pakistani context. Most of the literature reviews focused on developed countries' education systems and have rare considerations on refugee education, in addition, most of the refugee studies were done in Western countries and paid less attention to developing countries such as Pakistan. This study focused on the education barrier specifically Afghan migrants in Pakistan. This study analyzes various peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, and grey literature to uncover the major obstacles that prevent Afghan migrants from getting education services effectively. The findings are categorized into five thematic areas: legal and documentation barriers, economic constraints, cultural and linguistic challenges, institutional barriers, and community and informal networks. The analysis shows how undocumented immigration status together with stringent policy frameworks cause major impediments to Afghan migrant students' university entrance processes. Educational inequalities increase substantially for female students due to both financial difficulties and poverty which are intensified by severe economic problems. Afghan students face increased academic difficulties and higher school dropout rates because immigration rules and economic struggles and language barriers give them unequal treatment. Institutional problems that include crammed classrooms unqualified teachers and biased educational systems make migrant students feel excluded from school systems. The Afghan migrant communities show remarkable resilience through the establishment of alternative educational efforts and organized investment programs yet receive limited recognition from official institutions and face scalability challenges. The research concludes that Afghan migrants need legally binding policies, upgraded educational facilities, and culturally sensitive educational approaches to provide every Afghan migrant with equal access to education. The analysis discusses three groups of stakeholders (policymakers alongside educators and NGOs) to demonstrate why they must implement comprehensive multi-level interventions against these persistent barriers to education access. The research provides essential understanding to shape the academic discussions about migration combined with education alongside social equity and paves the way for effective reforms supporting minority migrant learners.

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1. Introduction

Education is the fundamental human right of all human being which serves as both a fundamental instrument to create social equality and as a tool for personal empowerment at micro level and society development at broader level (Osler, 2016; Tibbitts, 2002). In education system and access to education marginalized peoples specially immigrants face profound challenges. (Castles, 2004; Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016; Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014). The Afghan immigrant's population in Pakistan serves as an important example which demonstrates how difficult it is for people to obtain educational opportunities in their immigrants' environment. For four decades Pakistan has welcomed millions of Afghan refugees who fled their homeland because of warfare and political instability coupled with economic difficulties within Afghanistan (Iqbal, Hongcheng, & Liang, 2025; Nazeer, Khan, & Ashraf, 2024; Tariq et al., 2024). The long duration of Afghan migrant residence in Pakistan has not eliminated their substantial obstacles when seeking educational opportunities and benefits in this territory (Alimia, 2019; Ghufuran, 2006). Primary obstacles to educational access for Afghan migrants in Pakistan include multiple factors from economic through sociopolitical and cultural aspects (Mangrio, Talpur, & Satti, 2024). As youth face interrupted educational progress because of migration they find themselves worse off in hosting countries that maintain systemic inequalities and discriminatory systems (Bridges & Walls, 2018; Hall, 2021).

Educational institution biases, language barriers and cultural incompatibility issues and legal status uncertainty and economic barriers affect Afghan students who are seeking an education (Esfandiari & Jalilzadeh, 2024; Iqbal, Hongcheng, & Liang, 2025). The host country education framework faces challenges which involve equal access but also extends to disparities in quality while maintaining students' retention and reaching desired outcomes (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2019; Swail, 2003). Education obstacles affecting Afghan migrants come from fundamental structural imbalances alongside multiple social political and financial system constraints (Loschmann, Kuschminder, & Siegel, 2014; Stempel & Alemi, 2021). A major challenge stems from the transient nature of their legal status since this determines public resource availability including educational institutions and creates ongoing uncertainty for parental and child futures (Stempel & Alemi, 2021). Language differences between Pakistani instruction methods and Afghan native oral communication (Chamberlin, 2024; Sadiq, 2020) act as key obstacles to school integration for Afghan communities (Rahman & Khan, 2021). The local cultural values surrounding gender expectations result in reduced female Afghan migrant access to education systems thereby creating continuous educational disadvantage throughout generations (Rahmani, 2019). Cause alongside economic fragmentation migrant family members select emergency needs over extended educational investments (Pratt, 2012). Discriminatory educational policies coupled with crowding issues and insufficient teacher training materials work together to push Afghan students away from the educational system (Bridges & Walls, 2018). Educational research unveils how Pakistani classroom discrimination against Afghan students leads to absenteeism which reduces their feeling of educational connection (Malekzai, 2024). Female Afghan students experience the worst challenges as they continue facing obstacles for independent movement and potentially face early marriages plus insufficient educational support (Rahmani, 2019). Studies demonstrate Pakistani society faces substantial impediments to Afghan refugee access for basic education although it remains home to the world's largest permanent Afghan refugee population (Borthakur, 2017; Schmeidl & Maley, 2016).

The growing literature about Afghan refugee experiences does not sufficiently address their unique educational barriers existing within Pakistani educational stands. They analyzed generic difficulties Afghan migrants encounter but a significant gap exists to understand these challenges concretely in the Pakistani educational system. Most current research studies confront the barriers to quality education for Afghan students by observing policy or socio-cultural obstacles independently from one another without integrating both domains into a unified framework. This review provides an organized analysis of the complete challenges experienced by Afghan migrants while pursuing education in Pakistan's educational framework as it addresses previously unexamined factors including undocumented status, gender biases and local community prejudices. This research extends knowledge about migrant education equity by developing policy advice for building an inclusive educational system. In addition, this review presents a synthesis of studies investigating Pakistani barriers that dismiss Afghan migrants from educational progression. It analyzes education-specific obstacles through the trifocal lens of access while integrating economic structures and cross-cultural influences and

institutional barriers that result from the situation. The analysis merges multiple studies from the field to improve understanding of blocking factors that Afghan migrant students confront when pursuing equal educational opportunities within Pakistani institutions. This work provides effective recommendations to help construct adequate policies and educational practices for Afghan migrants while supporting an equal learning terrain in Pakistan. Its results provide important insights about how host communities should help migrant students with their education while fighting institutional discrimination. The findings reveal lived experiences of Afghan migrants in Pakistan thus adding to migration education social justice investigations by promoting policymaker adoption of context-specific inclusive solutions for these persistent discrepancies.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study conducts a narrative literature review procedure that incorporates the aggregation process while applying thematic evaluation to existing research (Templier & Paré, 2015). The methodology employed a narrative literature review approach because it granted the researcher ability to combine multiple perspectives from academic works and documents and grey literature sources (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). A narrative review serves as a flexible research method to study multidimensional subjects through interpretive analysis while systematic reviews and meta-analyses depend mostly on assessments of quantitative data (Cooper, Hedges, & Valentine, 2019). The research method matches perfectly with studies of Afghan migrant education difficulties because it aligns legal aspects with economic elements and cultural and institutional considerations to provide complete insight into their educational obstacles. This review accomplishes complex insights by exploring different sources thematically which otherwise might be concealed within restricted research designs thus contributing meaningful context to migrant education equity examination in Pakistan. Besides, the study design allows researchers to perform an objective evaluation of various viewpoints sourced from extensive publications. It examines Afghan migrants' educational challenges across host societies through qualitative analysis of existing literature with a major emphasis on Pakistan. This research merges various research findings to discover typical elements while building strong knowledge about educational obstacles which marginalize Afghan migrants faced. The objective is to create an extensive overview of barriers while identifying central aspects which appear across current research.

2.2. Data Collection

The literature review draws from a variety of sources, including: Peer-reviewed journal articles, Reports and publications from international organizations (e.g., UNHCR, UNESCO). Studies about Afghan migrants and education appear alongside policy documents in this analysis. The authors collected their research studies through the key databases of Google Scholar, JSTOR and institutional repositories. Relevant non-governmental organizations and research institutions alongside their reputable grey literature provided additional data sources for achieving practical insights.

2.2.1. Search Strategy

To identify relevant literature, the following keywords and phrases were used: "Afghan migrants and education challenges", "Educational barriers for refugees in Pakistan", "Refugee education access and equity", "Afghan refugee students and host societies", "Barriers to refugee education". Classifiers and combinations of selected search terms helped narrow down research toward literature involving Afghan migrants in their educational pathways.

2.2.2. Selection criteria

The research analysis includes only studies which examine significant challenges Afghan migrants encounter during their process of accessing educational services and achieving academic success. Studies were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria: The inclusion criteria were; research literature concentrated on Afghan migrants both inside their migration host nations and specifically in Pakistan. Studies examine barriers that affect educational access standards and achievement results for Afghan migrants. Studies published in English. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria were, a journal database and reports aside from those involving education and migrant studies. The analysis excludes Afghan education research that does not account for migration elements. The study excludes academic material

that fails to provide comprehensive research and direct connection to its investigation targets. Selected studies underwent reference evaluation to discover supplementary relevant research.

2.3. Data Analysis

Researchers used thematic analysis to arrange the research findings into substantial themes and subcategories. Thematic analysis of the selected literature revealed persistent thematic patterns. The process involved: Initial Screening; the research team evaluated titles and abstract components of each identified study for relevancy levels. The selection of articles for comprehensive evaluation proceeded after application of inclusion criteria. In-depth Review; Researchers examined all selected full articles from their list to obtain valuable information about Afghan migrants' educational struggles. Categorization; Research discoveries were organized into major thematic clusters that included barriers caused by law as well as social-economic difficulties and cultural language issues alongside institution-based obstacles and support from community-based networks. Each broad theme contained specific subthemes which deepened the understanding of the research. Synthesis; A unified structure was established to integrate findings as research material for subsequent interpretation and discussion sections in this review. In addition, book publications combined with literature reviews together with policy documents provided supplementary research material concerning the topic at hand. The supplementary research materials added increased framework understanding and enabled complete comprehension of the subject matter.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

Secondary data makes up the entire foundation of this research which underwent proper citation to uphold academic consistency. The researchers took great caution to display research findings correctly from the studies they reviewed.

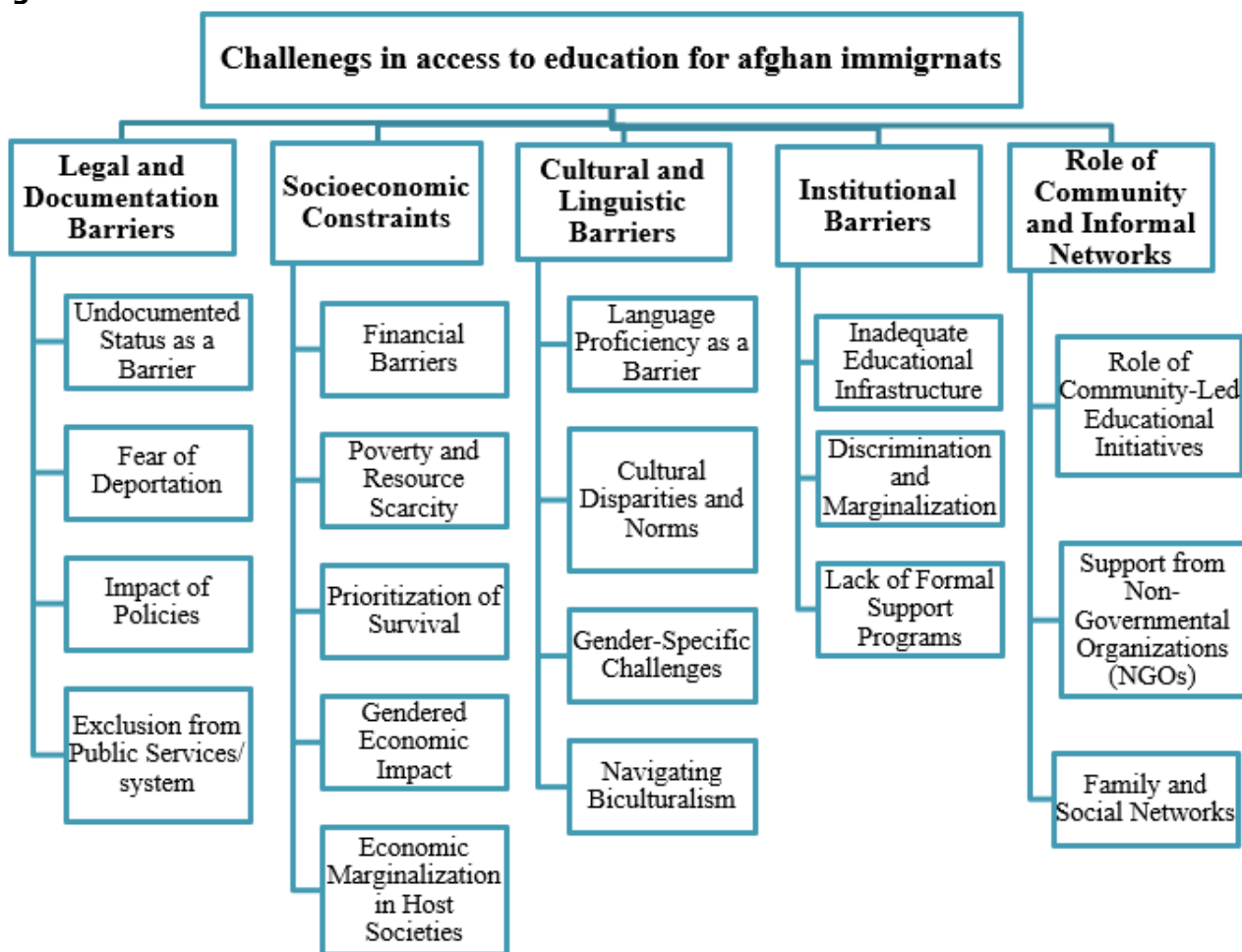
2.5. Limitations

A literature review approach lacks primary data acquisition which makes it challenging to discover immediate or primary insights from Afghan migrants. The research base on English-language publications presents an exclusion of important findings from scholarly works published in other languages. The study faces limitations due to restricted access to certain regional or unpublished research which produces gaps in the review results. Future researchers should use original data collection alongside content from multiple languages to overcome these study limitations and strengthen the investigation on this topic/ or migrants education challenges.

3. Finding and Discussion

This narrative literature review demonstrated how complex and severe educational obstacles prevent Afghan migrant students from achieving educational success in Pakistan. The combination of legal, economic together with cultural, linguistic and institutional barriers impede Afghan students from accessing quality education and continued academic advancement. Illegal immigration together with economic instability and language barriers and institutional discrimination results in decreased primary school enrollment as well as elevated school dropout rates and educational rejection. Data from the reviewed research reveal various connected themes and subthemes which illustrate education challenges encountered by Afghan migrants. Authors break down challenges faced by Afghan migrants into distinct themes for more detailed evaluation. Figure 1 shows themes and sub-themes which is extracted from data gather from studied paper. The elimination of these educational gaps needs an all-inclusive policy system implementing protective laws together with financial assistance and inclusive teaching techniques and institutional transformations. Targeted intervention measures are necessary for preventing Afghan migrant students from exclusion which results in continued educational deprivation combined with social economic disadvantage. The research demonstrates that Pakistani government institutions together with educational organizations and non-governmental groups must join forces to create enduring educational entry points which welcome Afghan migrants in Pakistani education.

Figure 1: Themes and sub themes extracted from literature



3.1. Legal and Documentation Barriers

A substantial number of Afghan migrants in Pakistan face school barriers because they do not have proper legal documentation which prevents them from enrolling in educational institutions. Refugee registration along with identity documents is unavailable thus Afghan students face barriers when accessing public education so they turn to unaccredited informal education. A discriminatory framework of exclusion affects Afghan second-generation migrants because their birth in Pakistan fails to grant them any formal educational recognition.

Figure 2: Further categorization of Legal and Documentation Barriers



The educational rights of Afghan migrants living in Pakistan depend heavily on their legal immigration registration status. A large proportion of Afghan families hold neither valid refugee status nor demonstrate official residency which makes school enrollment for their children impossible at public institutions (Iqbal, Hongcheng, & Liang, 2025). Official educational

systems exclude undocumented migrants consequently they join unregulated informal learning settings (Iqbal, Hongcheng, & Liang, 2024; Seddighi et al., 2024). The sub themes extracted from literature are presented in figure 2.

3.1.1. Undocumented Status as a Barrier

The undocumented status of Afghan migrants remains one of the largest barriers to their educational opportunities. The lack of legal recognition exacerbates educational inequities for Afghan migrants. Many Afghan families face educational exclusion because they do not hold proper legal documentation needed to obtain school enrollment for their children (Iqbal, Hongcheng, & Liang, 2025). Regulatory systems in Pakistan as well as Iran choose to prioritize their native populations alongside formally documented refugees while undocumented migrants face restricted public school enrollment access (Seddighi et al., 2024).

3.1.2. Fear of Deportation

Afghan parents refrain from both educational support and schooling for their children because they fear deportation as undocumented individuals (Kuschminder & Siegel, 2016). Educational access limitations resulting from undocumented status force children to miss out on fundamental schooling experiences that obstruct their ability to achieve professional success throughout life (Gonzales, 2010). Serial displacement due to economic difficulty triggers a self-perpetuating educational disadvantage that blocks Afghan migrant families from inclusion thus creating a destructive pattern of systemic exclusion for both migrants and their children (Bisht, 2024). This exclusion perpetuates educational inequalities and marginalization, severely impacting children's long-term educational outcomes (Hamilton, 2021).

3.1.3. Impact of Policies

Afghan refugees in Iran must abandon their refugee status before securing limited student visas for college through an immigration policy that results in both separation from their families and interrupted education according to previous studies (Seddighi et al., 2024). Pakistan-based policies prevent unregistered Afghan migrants from accessing formal education while confining them to nonstandard educational models (Iqbal, Hongcheng, & Liang, 2024).

3.1.4. Exclusion from Public Services/ system

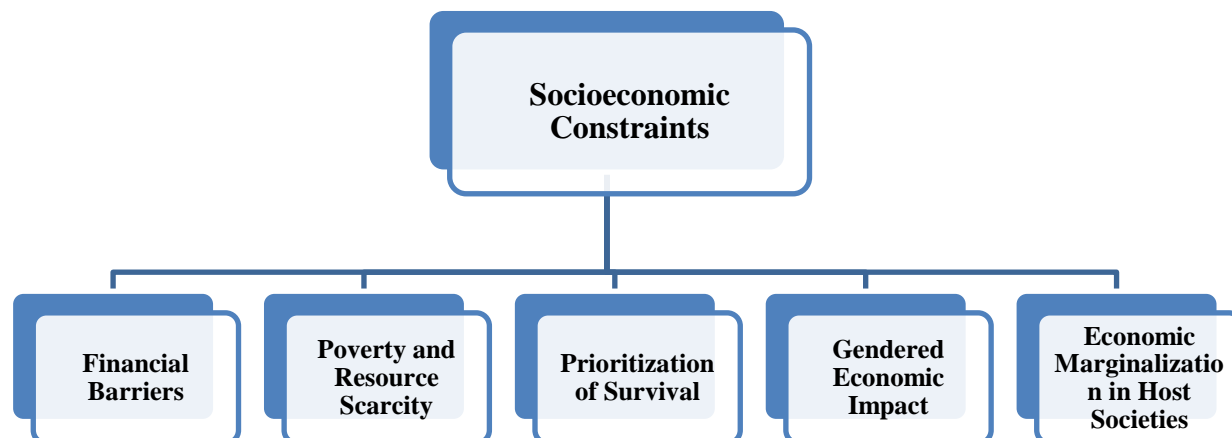
Due to undocumented status undocumented Afghan migrants frequently, education takes place in the private network of community-run schools or madrasas. These educational institutions help students develop basic reading and math abilities yet they cannot provide a complete educational product for formal system integration. Students encounter difficulties obtaining higher education and work opportunities because formal certifications from such institutions are difficult to secure (Jahangir & Khan, 2021). Besides, the obstacles Afghan migrants encounter because of lack of legal documents emphasize why governments must modify their policies to deliver equal educational chances to all immigrants. Host countries must create policies which guarantee every child including undocumented families receives education while working to eliminate social divisions and create better integration opportunities between people. Lack of proper interventions means legal barriers will persist in excluding vast populations from academic education while creating self-perpetuating poverty along with social exclusion patterns.

3.2. Economic constraints

Financial crisis continues to block Afghan students from moving forward in their academic paths. The shortage of stable employment and insufficient financial help has compelled Afghan families to choose basic needs survival over continuing education investments. High school dropout rates affect especially female students due to exorbitant fees combined with the costs of uniforms and transportation as well as essential learning materials that families primarily invest in educating boys. The unstable economic state of Afghan families blocks their children from schooling and drives them into risky labor markets which deepens poverty along with reduced educational possibilities. Economic difficulties present a widespread challenge which affects Afghan migrant families as a whole (Divkolaye & Burkle Jr, 2017). The economic struggle continues to burden many immigrants because they must devote their resources to essential needs instead of educational costs which include enrollment expenses and learning materials and transportation (Hashemi & Amiry, 2024). Education proves challenging to Afghan migrant families because they face severe economic challenges alongside financial problems (Monsutti, 2008). The financial reality prevents access to good education

and creates problems with both admission and academic success throughout academic period of an individual (Baum & Flores, 2011). The alliance of financial difficulties and institutional barriers creates additional educational obstacles that create broader social marginalization of Afghan migrant communities (Hoodfar, 2007; Oeppen & Zaman, 2021). Economic constraints further categorization into sub themes based existing literature are shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Further categorization of economic constraints theme



3.2.1. Financial Barriers

Pakistan's Afghan migrant communities endure harsh financial difficulties since they cannot procure fundamental survival needs (Bari & Faraz; Schmeidl & Maley, 2016). The prohibitive costs of educational expenses including tuition along with books, transportation and uniforms make it impossible for families to afford education which results in both low enrollment rates combined with high student dropout rates (Hashemi & Amiry, 2024). The education programs available through the government cannot be accessed by undocumented families due to their financial difficulties under which they reside (Iqbal, Hongcheng, & Liang, 2024).

3.2.2. Poverty and Resource Scarcity

Current decisions by families to focus on basic survival needs above educational pursuits produce high dropout levels alongside inadequate possibilities for children to find suitable quality educational environments (Zandi-Navgran et al., 2024). Education quality for Afghan students suffers because of overcrowded classrooms coupled with insufficient teacher-student ratios found at north-western reception locations (Dundar et al., 2014; Terry, Yeoh, & Terry, 2015).

3.2.3. Prioritization of Survival

The financial demands which families face often cause them to select urgent needs over educational opportunities particularly for their female children (Baum & Flores, 2011). Children work in labor jobs after parents remove them from school because economic pressures demand their work contribution thus sustaining both economic hardship and educational exclusion (Zandi-Navgran et al., 2024). Many Afghan families create their own community initiatives alongside informal learning programs to deliver basic literacy and numeracy education despite the programs preventing students from joining standard formal institutions (Jahangir & Khan, 2021).

3.2.4. Gendered Economic Impact

The situation for Afghan girls remains particularly complex because both financial circumstances and cultural customs create their own special barriers (Jamal, 2016). The restricted financial resources of families lead them to distribute educational opportunities unevenly by giving preference to boys because girls reportedly delay marriage and fulfill roles as domestic caregivers (Shayan, 2015).

3.2.5. Economic Marginalization in Host Societies

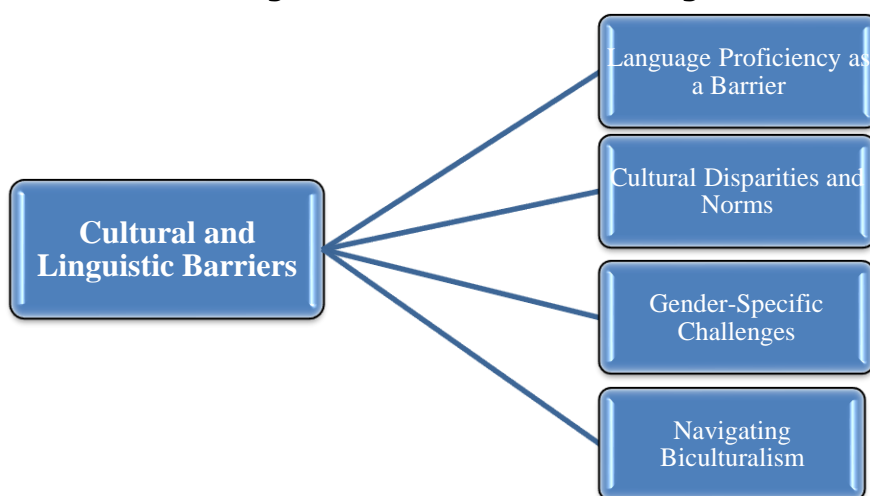
Afghan migrant education suffers because of their sociodemographic marginalization within European communities (Akbaş et al., 2022; Iqbal, Hongcheng, & Liang, 2025). Children from Afghan migrant families encounter troubled education paths due to their economic limitations which force them into uncompetitive low-wage jobs (Zandi-Navgran et al., 2024). The dearth of access to financial assistance together with scholarship programs and trade-specific training opportunities blocks aspirational social movements because of persistent discriminatory practices (Bohl et al., 2023). Besides, budget difficulties push Afghan families to authorize the use of community schools or madrasas as alternative educational environments. Students who study in these institutions gain basic literacy skills but experience limited professional or higher educational preparation because the schools lack official accreditation (Merali, 2018). Furthermore, Eruptional educational fees and a shortage of financial resources prevent Afghan migrant children from ever breaking the cycle of generational poverty. The absence of educational investments in migrant communities results in both personal family obstacles combined with social barriers towards complete integration as active citizens (Hashemi & Amiry, 2024).

The ability of Afghan migrant children to attend school exists within complex limitations which arise from the country's economic situation. Addressing these issues requires a dual approach: Policy Interventions; Governments need to make tuition-free or discounted education available to Afghan refugees who don't have legal status while funding public school expansion to increase school resources and establish better school facilities. Financial aid programs should specifically support vulnerable families by prioritizing girls' education because this assistance reduces economic barriers and drives improved enrollment figures together with student retention. Community and NGO Engagement; Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) along with community initiatives ought to sustain their vital function of delivering informal education and vocational training in addition to delivering financial support. Strategic connections between educational organizations and local communities enable them to overcome formal infrastructure weaknesses. The extended challenges of social disadvantages prove urgent the need for multiple-level intervention strategies focusing on inclusive and equitable education access for Afghan migrants.

3.3. Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

Language acts as a major obstacle due to the Pakistani education system using Urdu and English yet most Afghan students predominantly know Dari and Pashto. This linguistic disconnect results in limited classroom engagement, academic underperformance, and increased dropout rates. The societal beliefs about gender roles create substantial obstacles for Afghan girls who want to pursue their education.

Figure 4: Cultural and linguistic barriers further categorization



The practice of conforming to traditional values among families leads to school restrictions for girls to protect their mobility and safety as well as prevent early marriage which results in continued gender imbalance in educational achievement rates. Among Afghan migrants the chances to access education and educational success in new host societies

diminish through cultural and linguistic barriers. The identified barriers interfere with school performance and create obstacles for social adaptation as well as student alienation effects. Cultural and linguistic barriers were further categorized into three sub themes based on existing literature which are shown in figure 4.

3.3.1. Language Proficiency as a Barrier

Language acquisition stands as a substantial educational obstacle which burdens Afghan migrant students (Ahmadi Safa & Karbakhsh Ravari, 2024; Rashidnejad, 2024). Pakistan along with other host societies predominantly teaches through Urdu and English to its students yet Afghan families speak mainly Dari and Pashto as their native languages (Sadiq, 2020). Students struggling to understand classroom language properly face difficulties in curriculum interaction as well as classroom dialogue and peer-teacher communication (Troia, Graham, & Harris, 2017). This linguistic disconnect leads to feelings of isolation and disconnection from the educational process (Delahunty, Verenikina, & Jones, 2014). Unfamiliar academic languages pose significant obstacles for Afghan students which produce both academic failure and elevated rates of students dropping out (Jahangir & Khan, 2021). In addition, language barriers block students from meaningful relationships with their peers while reaching across academic boundaries. Their education persistence diminishes because social isolation strips away both their connection to school and their drive for academic success according to previous studies (Zandi-Navgran et al., 2024).

3.3.2. Cultural Disparities and Norms

Traditional cultural practices together with gendered norms limit educational access for girls most severely. Traditional Afghan families follow cultural traditions focused on household duties alongside arranged marriages for girls which lead to contradictions with public schooling standards according to study (Shayan, 2015). Many Afghan families demonstrate sociocultural values which push them to place household obligations and marriage before formal education for girls sustaining gender inequality (Shayan, 2015). Additionally, cultural stereotypes create discrimination and bias received by Afghan students from their peers and teachers driving their further marginalization inside the classroom (Esfandiari & Jalilzadeh, 2024; Sadat, 2019). Academic institutions frequently omit culturally relevant educational material and seldom train their educators to serve culturally diverse students thus making their environments less inclusive (Khan, Iqbal, & Khakwani, 2023). Moreover, the integration process for educational fulfillment demands Afghan migrants to achieve both cultural adaptation toward their host environment and maintenance of their original cultural heritage. The coexistence of Afghan cultural values with Canadian norms creates motivational conflict which suppresses student education effort and affects parental educational backing (Taherizadeh, 2021).

3.3.3. Gender-Specific Challenges

The natural cultural values in Afghan communities generally fail to support girls' educational development by setting these opportunities at a low value. Afghani mothers believe their daughters do not need formal education because they are expected to work in the home instead of going through school (Hashemi & Amiry, 2024). Additionally, when parents need to accept the school requirements their own traditional ways of thinking often face conflict. Home-based education support becomes compromised when familial expectations fail to harmonize with school requirements either academically or socially (Rahiminezhad & Mohammadianroshan, 2024).

3.3.4. Navigating Biculturalism

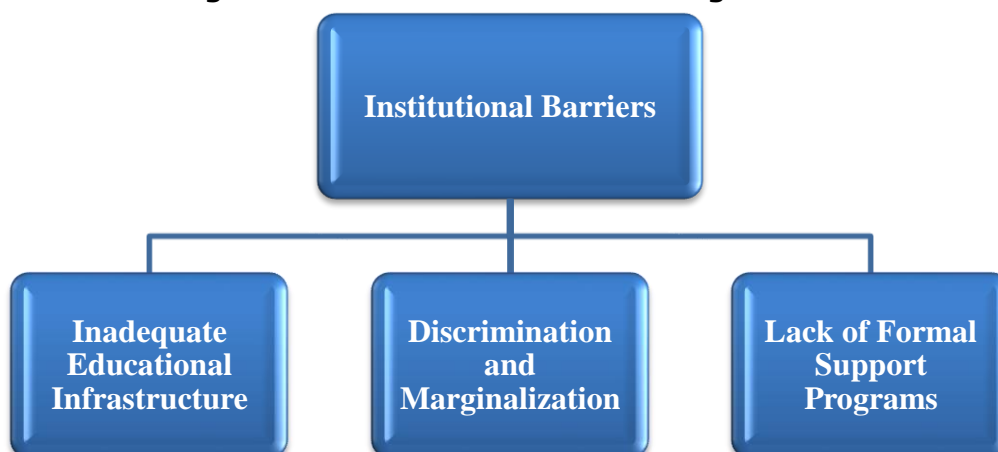
Achieving biculturalism through the combination of cultural pride with foreign society adaptation produces greater academic achievement along with successful social integration for Afghan students (Hewad, 2018; Khanlou, Koh, & Mill, 2008). The school needs to actively support policies for cultural inclusion and diversity practice implementation to make this approach work (Kafi Anaraki, 2017). Educational systems require cultural sensitivity with language inclusiveness in their practices because cultural and linguistic barriers exist. Addressing these challenges involves: Language Support Programs; Afghan students need schools to start language support programs with bilingual education and focused language classes to bridge their language difference for academic success. Cultural Competency Training; Schools need to train all educational staff members about teaching techniques that handle Afghan students' distinct cultural traditions. Schools That Include multicultural teaching

materials alongside celebrations of student diversity will create improved inclusivity in learning settings. Community Engagement; Pedagogical alliances between educational institutes and Afghan populations serve to connect different cultural backgrounds by supporting cultural communication through shared educational involvement of parents. Educational success and social growth both need cultural and linguistic barriers to be addressed so Afghan migrants can fully integrate.

3.4. Institutional Barriers

Afghan students must face severe obstacles in Pakistani educational institutions because their schools contain overcrowded classrooms and inadequate resources and minimal sensitivity toward cultural differences in teaching methods. Lacking necessary training about diversity makes many educators demonstrate implicit bias through classroom practices that exclude students. Victimized Afghan students demonstrate reduced academic motivation because they face school-related discrimination alongside social discrimination and lower expectations from their teachers at school. Education systems in host countries including Pakistan introduce institutional challenges which create substantial obstacles for Afghan migrants who want to study in formal education systems (Changezi, 2009). Currently existing barriers across multiple infrastructure departments create academic and integration challenges due to limited resources and insufficient assistance alongside discriminatory treatment. Institutional challenges were further categorization into three sub themes based existing literature which are shown in figure 5.

Figure 5 Further categorization of Institutional challenges



3.4.1. Inadequate Educational Infrastructure

Many Afghans migrant students must deal with educational facilities which suffer from limited governmental support and insufficient physical space as well as staff availability. Lacking fundamental resources including qualified teachers alongside sufficient learning materials and adequate facilities leads these schools to deliver diminished educational quality (Jahangir & Khan, 2021). Inadequate Infrastructure: Inadequate school funding together with insufficient cultural capability fails to effectively serve diverse student populations thus creating highly unfavorable outcomes in both student retention and academic progress (Maier et al., 2017). Afghan students encounter difficulties keeping pace with academic standards because schools maintain high student enrollment ratios alongside language barriers they face (Rashidnejad, 2024). Besides, The economic gaps which limit families' mobility also affect educational facilities throughout the host nation (Bridges & Walls, 2018). The educational institutions which host Afghan migrants experience inadequate funding along with insufficient resources leading to overcrowded classrooms while lacking adequate teaching materials and underprepared staff (Richardson, 2018). The poor learning environment produced by these substandard conditions harms educational quality and intensifies Afghan students' sense of estrangement. Educational facilities lack sufficient training programs to support Afghan migrant students because their staff lacks the means to address their special academic requirements and language and cultural needs (Kanu, 2008). Migrant student disengagement and unsuccessful academic outcomes are directly linked to insufficient support structures for migrant students (Gonzales, 2010). Furthermore, The high density of students in schools and classrooms makes teaching more challenging while diminishing both personal support for

students and clear instructional delivery. In such circumstances Afghan students encounter marked difficulty because they already face challenges with language assimilation plus cultural transitions (Jahangir & Khan, 2021).

3.4.2. Discrimination and Marginalization

Discriminatory behaviors along with negative attitudes against Afghan migrants regularly appear in schools throughout the education system (Alemi & Stempel, 2018; Hoodfar, 2010). Teachers together with their students contribute to harmful bias that results in disruptive school environments which lead students to miss school. Social stigma against Afghan students who migrated or escaped as refugees erodes their participation in school activities while causing social detachment and hurt self-confidence (Rashidnejad, 2024). The educational institutions lack established policies as well as systematic mechanisms which would both fight discrimination and support inclusivity goals (Mour, 2022). Without culturally responsive frameworks Afghan students often experience alienation and disengagement from their educational setting according to Gouleta (2015).

3.4.3. Lack of Formal Support Programs

Proposed support programs for students seem particularly inadequate since schools fail to provide structured support systems (Faubert, 2012). Migrant learners need three vital supports: language acquisition programs and psychological counseling and academic tutoring to overcome their special learning challenges (Cooper III, 2014; Johnson, 1986). Most Afghan students face challenges learning the language of instruction yet schools provide limited established programs to develop Urdu or English proficiency. This lack of support exacerbates learning difficulties and academic underachievement (Sadiq, 2020). Students from Afghanistan commonly face psychological wellness and emotional care requirements because they commonly had traumatic experiences following displacement. Such student services are extremely limited in educational facilities which results in their exposure to emotional and psychological distress (Rahiminezhad & Mohammadianroshan, 2024). For Afghan migrants to have equitable educational opportunities the educational systems must fix their systemic gaps which lead to such barriers.

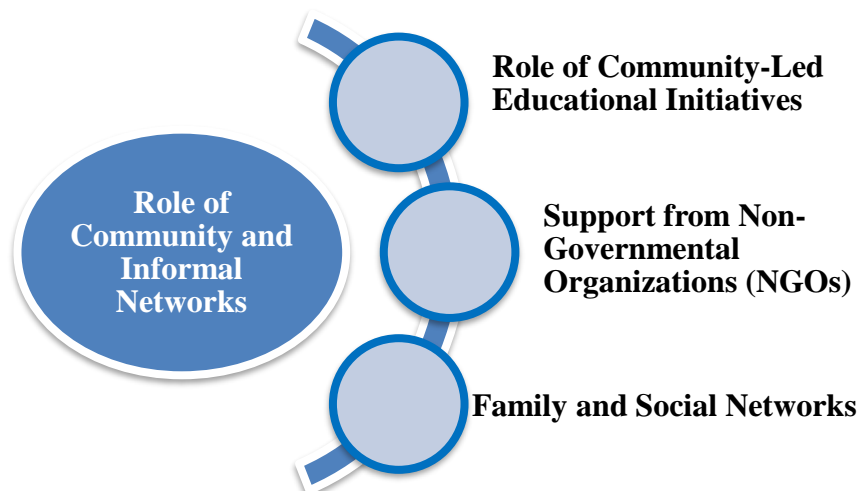
These barriers require attention at both the policy and implementation levels: Infrastructure Investment; Education providers need financial backing from governments to develop proper infrastructure at places where Afghan migrant populations are concentrated. Additional infrastructure development and qualified staff recruitment along with sufficient learning supplies must be sustainably supported. Training for Educators; The teacher training curriculum must feature cultural sensitivity models in addition to methods which support multicultural learners across multiple language backgrounds. A new inclusive approach to teaching can build classrooms that promote equality and avoid discriminatory teaching standards. Support Services; Schools need to establish official support structures that combine language learning courses alongside academic tutoring services along with mental health therapy services to serve Afghan pupils' individual requirements. Anti-Discrimination Policies; Educational institutions need to introduce and enforce discrimination protections which create security along with support structures for Afghan migrant students. Educational institutions need to launch awareness efforts in addition to developing systems for bias detection and solution. Equitable educational opportunities together with more successful future outcomes require solutions to institutional barriers that improve Afghan migrant integration into new host societies.

3.5. Role of Community and Informal Networks

Afghan migrant communities established their own educational networks along with madrassas and community-run learning centers to provide literacy and numeracy training for their members since they encountered educational barriers. The educational venues operated by migrant communities do not receive government backing while failing to connect students to official university enrollment or career certification methods. Community-run education functions as the only possible means to maintain educational continuity because the lack of institutional support requires it (Bray, 2003). Their families utilize local community connections along with informal networks to solve educational issues since support programs are inadequate. Migrant communities gain learning pathways and build resilience through the essential function of these networks which overcome educational obstacles (Scheffran, Marmar,

& Sow, 2012). The Role of community and informal networks were further categorization into three sub themes based existing literature and which are presented in figure 6.

Figure 6: further categorization of the role of community and informal networks



3.5.1. Role of Community-Led Educational Initiatives

Afghan migrants depend on their communities to operate informal educational learning centers because many prospects are absent from public education systems (Arooje & Burrige, 2021; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). Locally based organizations and religious groups and community leaders through NGOs support educational initiatives that teach basic reading and math skills. Alternative learning spaces monitored by non-authoritative institutions across Afghan society many madrasas and community-run schools accept undocumented children who failed to attain enrollment at state schools. These sites maintain vital educational frameworks which support continuous learning activities (Merali, 2018). The community-initiated programs function as educational support which enables students from Afghanistan to overcome barriers in their public-school studies (Rahman & Khan, 2021). Unfortunately, the accreditation shortage in these programs prevents students from moving to traditional educational or professional tracks.

3.5.2. Support from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-governmental organizations and international groups including the UNHCR contribute essential support toward filling the gaps which occur after standard educational programs end (Mommers & Van Wessel, 2009). The entities direct their support toward resources along with advocacy and specialized programs which specifically address Afghan migrant needs. Young Afghan students receive practical skills for future employment through the vocational training program services which NGOs provide in addition to their basic education offerings (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). Through these programs families receive hope because they present viable alternatives to the menacing future experienced by many refugee communities. Advocacy for Policy Reforms: Organizations helping the Afghan migrant population seek policies which eliminate educational deprivation. Through their work organizations maintain communication between refugee groups and government authorities to help both sides understand why education matters for these populations (Varghese, Kumar, & Ramachandran, 2024).

3.5.3. Family and Social Networks

Educational obstacles in Afghanistan often require families to depend on their expanded social connections for help (Malekzai, 2024; Monsutti, 2008). Through these networks mobile members build emotional connections and exchange resources while developing approaches to handle restrictions that include financial barriers alongside legal problems and challenges related to cultural adjustment. Migrant families work together through their community network to exchange information regarding non-formal educational prospects and opportunities to access funding assistance together (Cardozo, Higgins, & Le Mat, 2016; Shrestha, Wilson, & Singh, 2008). Through unified efforts migrant families can partially overcome educational obstacles which they encounter in formal institutions. Social networks help maintain Afghan cultural traditions among migrant families in a way that supports their overall family resilience (Kohistani, 2012). Community-led educational programs incorporate traditional content into

their teaching methods so students develop cultural pride within these educational environment (Kakkar, 2000).

Research outcomes demonstrate that educational hurdles Afghan migrants encounter exist in a complex array of legal and socioeconomic and cultural and institutional components. Implementing successful solutions requires educational institutions to collaborate with community programs and policy changemakers to build capacity in addition to community engagement. Policy Implications: Host governments should implement policies which place Afghan student enrollment and academic maintenance above legal status restrictions. State institutions partnering with Non-Government Organizations will help provide accessible and culturally sensitive educational openings for all students. Community-led initiatives and informal educational programs join forces to help students immediately yet simultaneously improve their access to formal education. These initiatives act both as a cultural heritage preservation system and social solidarity platform.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

This research highlights the complex barriers Afghan migrants meet in obtaining educational access within Pakistani host societies. The negligence of services and multiple legal, economic, cultural, linguistic and institutional roadblocks and inadequate support underlie these barriers. The enormous strength of Afghan migrants does not eliminate the various structural obstacles preventing their full participation in formal educational systems and achieving fair learning results.

4.1. Policy Implications

Legal and institutional reforms: The Pakistani government must establish temporary educational permits to let undocumented Afghan students attend public schools through temporary measures that do not require official refugee registrations. The development of an inclusive education policy framework remains essential because it serves to protect Afghan students through national education strategies by ensuring anti-discriminatory and anti-exclusion measures. Economic support mechanism: The financial problems of Afghan families require scholarship programs and conditional cash transfers as economic support for migrant students who face higher educational discontinuation risk especially female learners. Universities need to make two major changes by canceling costs for enrollment and offering free textbooks to Afghan refugee students because these steps decrease their financial obstacles.

Cultural and linguistic inclusion: The educational system should implement dual-language programs with Pashto-Dari classes next to Urdu-English teaching to help Afghan refugee students better understand their curriculum. Education training initiatives must teach teachers how to create culturally sensitive teaching approaches and help them develop capabilities to support students from different cultural backgrounds while stopping discrimination. Strengthen community and NGOs partnership: The government must work to expand its partnerships with agencies together with NGOs and international organizations for delivering alternative education programs as well as vocational training and psychosocial support to Afghan students. Official accreditation of local educational programs would facilitate student transfer from home-based to standard schooling systems. Gender-sensitive educational policies: The increase of female Afghan student enrollment rates and retention should focus on establishing specialized education policies which create all-girls educational facilities and community learning centers and provide transportation assistance programs to overcome cultural mobility restrictions. The population of Afghanistan needs to learn about the lasting advantages that female education brings by carefully focused awareness programs within their communities.

Inclusive Education Policies: Governments in host countries need to establish policies which guarantee undocumented children complete access to education during which they remain protected from possible legal sanctions. Educational enrollment policies should include a waiver of mandatory documentation along with broadened opportunities for cost-free or substantially subsidized education. Funding for Educational Infrastructure: A priority for policy decision-makers needs to be funding improvements for educational facilities in areas where many Afghan immigrants reside. To support education efforts there should be a reduction in

classroom sizes and new hiring of qualified teachers alongside sufficient learning material supply. Anti-Discrimination Measures: Educational establishments together with governmental entities both need to introduce official hate-discrimination decrees while conducting public awareness efforts to oppose stigma against people who study internationally.

4.2. Educational Practice Implications

Language Support Programs: Migrant children will benefit from designated language education services that combine bilingual educational curricula with after-school tutoring to confront their language barriers. Teacher Training: Teachers need training to learn culturally responsive teaching techniques because these methods help them serve students of different cultures and languages more effectively. Psychosocial Support: Educational institutions should combine mental health counseling services with peer support groups as a way to verify psychological and trauma-related needs among their Afghan students.

4.3. Community and NGO Collaboration

Formalizing Informal Education: Public-led educational programs together with self-taught teaching platforms need to receive backing from state authorities and non-profit organizations. Programs with accreditation standards offer students access to accredited training which provides bridges to educational pathways and professional opportunities. Scaling NGO Programs: The expansion of vocational training with supplementary education and advocacy is needed by NGOs for Afghan migrant communities. The combination of local authorities working with these programs allows them to extend both their impact and reach across communities. Parental Engagement: Schools together with NGOs need to work with Afghan families through partnerships to build trust while promoting cultural understanding. A robust parental engagement program in educational initiatives will lead to greater parental support for schoolwork.

4.4. Research Implications

Future researchers should specifically examine how educational exclusion affects Afghan migrant populations during long periods of time when it comes to their economic and social progress. Research is necessary to discover how education obstacles change across different gender perspectives among girls and women in Afghanistan. Studies which compare education approaches in host societies uncover optimal solutions to respond to migrant education challenges worldwide.

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