

Afghan Migrants in Germany: Cross-Cultural Communication and Impact of Immigration on Afghan Culture

Abdul Qayoum Safi¹, Herlina Agustin¹, Edwin Rizal¹

¹Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia

Correspondence: Abdul Qayoum Safi, Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia.

Received: July 26, 2023

Accepted: September 15, 2023

Online Published: September 19, 2023

doi:10.11114/smc.v11i7.6269

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v11i7.6269>

Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to determine how migration affected Afghan culture and cultural relations among Afghan immigrants who lived in Germany. It examined the problems faced by Afghan immigrants, their coping mechanisms, and the preservation of their cultural identity. A qualitative study methodology was utilized, and in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 Afghan migrants residing in various German cities. Secondary data was obtained through literature reviews and other relevant sources, while primary data was gathered from the interviews. To identify significant findings and patterns related to the study's objectives, a thematic analysis was performed using NVivo 12. The study revealed that language limitations, cultural differences, and discrimination posed significant obstacles for Afghan migrants in their cross-cultural communication efforts. However, through community groups, cultural events, and educational initiatives, they actively participated in preserving their cultural heritage. The results underscored the importance of cultural awareness, empathy, and tolerance in fostering intercultural understanding and facilitating integration. Consequently, practical recommendations were proposed, including expanding Afghan immigrants' access to language instruction, cultural resources, and support systems. Creating a welcoming environment also necessitated the development of strong bonds between German residents and Afghan migrants. This study contributes to the field of intercultural communication and offers guidance to practitioners and policymakers seeking to integrate Afghan immigrants into German society.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, immigration, Afghan culture, Afghan migrants, Germany

1. Introduction

The global phenomenon of migration and the increasing movement of people across borders have brought about the necessity to promote intercultural communication skills. Intercultural communication has become crucial as it enables people from diverse cultural backgrounds to interact and communicate effectively. People migrating to foreign countries face cultural and linguistic barriers that can hinder their integration into the new society. The communication between newly arrived immigrants and locals holds significant importance to ensure social cohesion and avoid conflict.

According to researches, Intercultural communication, or communication between people from various cultures, cannot be predicated on an unthinking assumption of similarity (Ruben, 1974). Therefore, it is unlikely that an individual will make an attempt to forecast the shared assumptions of others and anticipate that their answers to communications will be effective. Because cultures reflect particular patterns of perception and behavior, communication strategies in cross-cultural situations must be cautious about unnecessary similarities and encourage understanding of differences (Safi et al., 2022).

Afghanistan has a rich cultural heritage, and the Afghan people possess unique cultural values, norms, traditions, and beliefs but this country has experienced decades of political instability, war, and insecurity, forcing a significant number of Afghans to flee the country in search of a better life. specially Germany has welcomed a large number of Afghan immigrants in recent years (Fischer & Van Houte, 2020). The integration of Afghan immigrants into German society relies heavily on intercultural communication skills to enable social cohesion, mutual understanding, and cultural exchange. (Wardak, 2021).

According to the above discussion, the focus of this study is cross-cultural communication and impact of immigration

on Afghan culture: “the Case Study from Afghan migrants in Germany”. The researchers examine this impact from two aspects: the negative Impact of Migration on Afghan Culture in Germany and the Positive impact of migration on Afghan culture in Germany. The study also addresses the barriers that Afghan immigrants face while interacting with German citizens.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of immigration on Afghan culture, specifically focusing on the cross-cultural communication between Afghan migrants in Germany and the native German population. The study aims to understand how the Afghan community in Germany adapts to the new culture and how their cultural identity is influenced by this integration. Additionally, the study intends to identify the challenges and opportunities that arise from cross-cultural communication in this context, with the goal of promoting positive multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue.

In the course of this research, the researcher has tried to answer the following questions related to the topic. 1) What are the key challenges that Afghan migrants face in cross-cultural communication with German society, and how do these challenges impact their ability to integrate and access opportunities in their host country? 2) How do Afghan migrants in Germany maintain and adapt their cultural identity in a new cultural environment? 3) What are the factors affecting the culture of Afghan immigrants in Germany?

However, cross-cultural communication is a vital aspect of our globalized world, enabling different societies to interact and understand one another. The impact of immigration on Afghan culture is a complex issue that requires an in-depth analysis of the cultural dynamics at play. The case study of Afghan migrants in Germany can provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by immigrants in adjusting to the host culture and their impact on the host society.

2. Literature Review

According to previous studies, (Alemi et al., 2014; Fischer & Van Houte, 2020; Kutor et al., 2021) the number of Afghans migrating to Germany over the previous ten years has significantly increased. Afghans have fled their country in search of safety and better opportunities abroad due to issues like political unrest, armed conflict, economic hardship, and human rights concerns. In order to provide a context for their experiences in the host nation, the literature highlights the particular migratory trajectories and motivations of Afghan migrants. The literature in this study highlights the multifaceted nature of Afghan migration to Germany, emphasizing the importance of cultural connections and the impact of immigration on Afghan culture. This section has three parts, which include the number and history of Afghan immigrants in Germany, the impact of immigration on Afghan culture, and cultural adaptation.

2.1 Number and History of Afghan immigrants in Germany

Germany has been one of the major destinations for immigrants in Europe. According to official statistics, Germany has experienced a significant influx of immigrants over the past decade. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany reported that in 2019, the country had a total of 13.5 million residents with a migrant background, which accounted for approximately 16.4% of the total population. According to Statista, from 2001 to 2019, there were 876.28 million immigrants worldwide, including 290 million immigrants, 553 million internally displaced, and 33.28 million asylum seekers. See FIG1

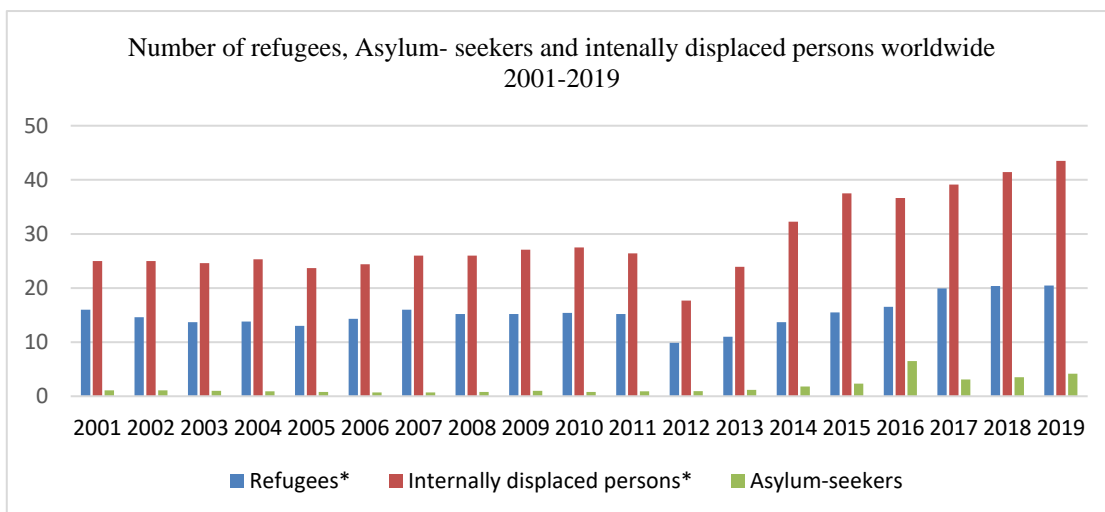


Figure 1. Number of Immigrants worldwide 2001-2019

In September 2021, Afghanistan has been one of the significant countries of origin for immigrants in Germany. According to available data, there were a considerable number of Afghan immigrants residing in Germany. Afghanistan is the second country after Syria which has the most significant number of immigrants residing in the country (European Asylum Support Office., 2021). Afghanistan has experienced decades of political instability, war, and insecurity, forcing a significant number of Afghans to flee the country in search of a better life. Germany has welcomed a large number of Afghan immigrants in recent years.

According to the 2021 annual report of the European Union Asylum Agency, the largest number of asylum seekers and immigrants to Europe are citizens of Afghanistan and Syria, whose number reaches 648,000. This number is almost the same as the number of 2018. According to Statista website data, Germany has long been involved with international asylum seekers, especially in 2022. The largest number of applications came from asylum seekers from Syria, followed by the largest number from Afghanistan. (Asylum Seekers Origin Countries in Germany 2022 | Statista, 2022). See FIG 2.

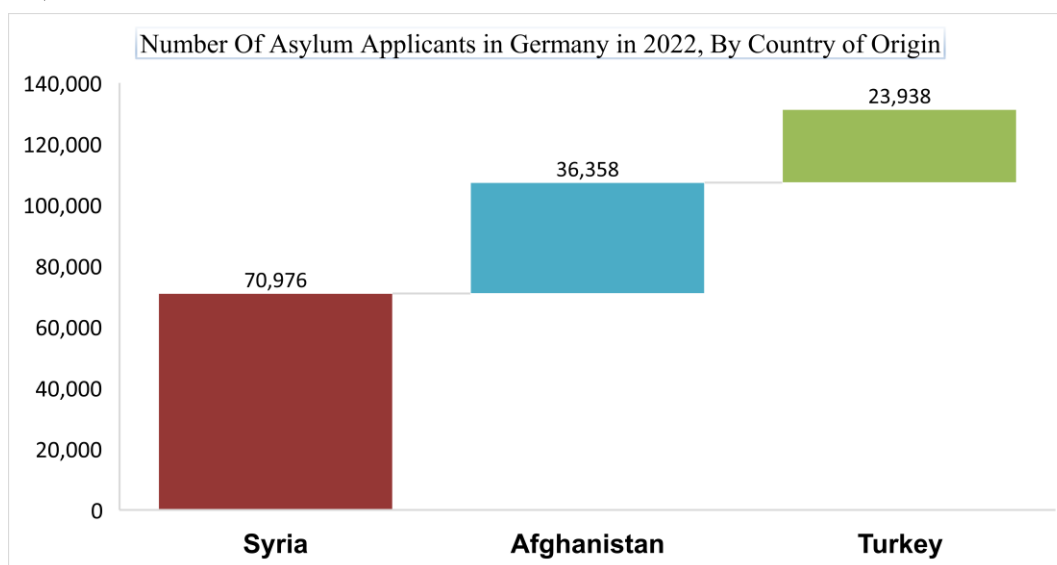


Figure 2. Number of asylum applicants in Germany in 2022, by country of origin

The process of arrival of Afghan immigrants to Germany can be divided into three distinct periods:

a. The first Afghan immigrants to Germany were carpet merchants who stored their goods and established branches in Hamburg's free-Hamburg (Ruttig, 2017). The relationship between Afghanistan and Germany was heavily fostered in the 1950s and 1960s. Graduates of the German High School in Kabul were able to enroll in a number of exchange programs between the University of Kabul and the universities of Cologne, Bochum, and Bonn, allowing them to study in Germany. During this time, business people and students from Afghanistan comprised the majority of newcomers (Vadean, 2007).

b. Following the Soviet invasion, a second wave of immigration began in 1979. Following the establishment of the communist rule in Kabul, the bulk of immigrants in this wave were followers of the Islamic Mujahedin, who were the most ferocious opponents of the Soviet troops. (Alesina Marco Tabellini et al., 2022).

c. The third wave of immigrants began in 2021, with one million people leaving Afghanistan between August and December of that year as a result of the country's deteriorating humanitarian situation. The integration problems of many immigrants remain politically contentious, despite their acceptance by destination nations (Albarosa & Elsner, 2023).

2.2 Cross-Cultural Communication and the Impact of Immigration on Afghan Culture

The exchange of ideas and information between people or organizations from different cultural origins while respecting their conventions, values, and beliefs is known as cross-cultural communication (Nedelsky, 2023). Given the importance of promoting social harmony and acceptance in our global society, this form of communication plays a crucial role (Menala, 2018). While Afghan immigrants in Germany face language barriers, cultural differences, and discrimination, they have made significant contributions to their host country. Such as showing Afghan cultural values to different communities in Germany, celebrating different special days, etc. (Fischer & Van Houte, 2020).

Daily communication is an essential aspect of intercultural communication that involves verbal and nonverbal exchanges in daily interactions. In interpersonal communication, nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, gestures,

and postures, may convey different meanings across cultures (Wardaki, 2021). Afghan immigrants interpret nonverbal cues differently than German locals, leading to potential misunderstandings. Moreover, some cultural groups may have different approaches to communication, such as direct or indirect communication (Kutor et al., 2021).

Culture is another critical factor in intercultural communication, and it is shaped by various factors, including religion, history, values, beliefs, and customs. The cultural differences between Afghan immigrants and German locals may be significant, and these differences may lead to misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and conflicts (Miron & Rapoport, 2021). For instance, in Afghanistan, religion and family are highly valued, and social relationships are paramount. Thus, it is common for Afghans to prioritize family obligations over work or education. (Kutor et al., 2021).

2.3 Cultural Adaptation of Afghan immigrants in Germany

According to Robert Kohl's, Society members learned behavioral patterns make up its culture, which is an interconnected system (Erisen & Kentmen-Cin, 2017). Culture is an individual group of people's whole way of life. The systems, attitudes, and sentiments of a group of people are all included in what they think, say, do, and create (Ruttig, 2017). Culture norms are different in one society from the other one, and when individuals move or immigrate from one part of the world to the other it means that they are experiencing a new culture and tradition. Moving "from one country, place, or region to another" is the definition of migration (Liu, 2017).

Afghan and German cultures are very different, these differences are challenging for new immigrants and in some cases, new immigrants face big problems. Language is a significant factor in intercultural communication, especially when immigrants are not fluent in the language of the host country (Nedelsky, 2023). Learning the language of the host country is the first step for newcomers to integrate into the new society. For many newly arrived Afghan immigrants, German may be their second or third language, and they may struggle to learn it (Albarosa & Elsner, 2023). Moreover, the German language poses a challenge to some immigrants due to its complex grammatical structures and pronunciation. Language barriers may result in misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and lack of effective communication between immigrants and locals (Xu et al., 2019). Thus, fostering language education programs and encouraging language learning may help overcome linguistic barriers (Li, 2009).

According to (Ruttig, 2017; Vadean, 2007; Wardaki, 2021) the process of Afghan immigrants adapting to German culture is intricate and multifaceted, influenced by a number of variables including language, social conventions, values, traditions, and cross-cultural exchanges. Between keeping aspects of Afghan culture and assimilating into the German host society is a delicate balance that must be struck during the adaptation process (Ruttig, 2017; Vadean, 2007; Wardaki, 2021)

3. Methodology

3.1 Method

The method used for this study is a case study method, which is a qualitative research approach. According to Creswell the case study method is a research design approach that involves a detailed and in-depth exploration of a particular case or multiple cases in their real-life context (Creswell, 2014). This approach is often used in qualitative research to examine complex social phenomena, behaviors, or events. In the case study method, the cases may be an individual, group, organization, community, or even a specific event or situation (Berg & Lune, 2017). In this method data is gathered from multiple sources, including interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts, to provide a comprehensive and rich description of the case. The aim is to develop a holistic understanding of the case and identify common patterns, themes, or issues that could inform theory development, policy, or practice (Gillham, 2000). This approach allows for an in-depth investigation of a particular phenomenon, which in this case is the impact of immigration on Afghan culture and cross-cultural communication in the case study of Afghan migrant communities in Germany.

3.2 Study Area

In this research paper focused on Afghan immigrants living in Germany, their experiences in intercultural communication, and the impact of immigration on Afghan culture. The main area of interest of this research is Germany and the impact of immigration on Afghan culture in Germany has been investigated the participants in this research were selected from the five largest cities (Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Mainz and Hannover) in Germany where most Afghan migrants live. The details are presented in the figure below. See Figure 3



Figure 3. Cities of participant in Germany for this study

3.3 Subject of the Study

The subject of this research is the Afghan migrants living in Germany. The focus is on exploring the cultural differences between Afghan and German societies and their impact on the experiences of Afghan migrants. The research seeks to investigate the challenges faced by Afghan migrants in Germany and the ways in which they adjust to the new culture.

3.4 Data Collection

The data collection for this study included both primary and secondary data sources. 1) Primary data was collected through interviews with Afghan migrants living in Germany to understand their personal experiences with cross-cultural communication and the impact of immigration on their cultural identity, using Zoom meetings and WhatsApp. 2) Secondary data collected through literature reviews, relevant research articles, books, relevant reports and news articles to provide context and a broader understanding of the topic.

The participants in this study were Afghan immigrants who have been living in Germany for the past three years. Participants were selected in this sampling design using purposive sampling. According to (Etikan, 2017) in purposive sampling, the researcher's assessment of which participants would be most useful in achieving the study's objectives forms the basis of the sampling plan. In order to collect the necessary information and find people who are willing to share it, the researcher should focus on those who share their ideas (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This means that they are selected based on their relevance to the research questions and their ability to provide valuable insight into the topic (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

For this research, interviews were conducted with 15 Afghan male and female immigrants living in different German cities in order to present a broad picture of the relations between Afghan and German citizens in different cities. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide, which consisted of open-ended questions focused on the following these themes:

1) The impact of immigration on Afghan culture. 2) Cross-cultural communication challenges and opportunities. 3) Experiences of integration and assimilation in German society. 4) The role of language and cultural identity in cross-cultural interactions. See Table 1.

Table 1. Participant for this study

Participant	Gender	Age	City of Residence	livingin Germany	Tool used for interview	Interview Duration
Participant 1	Female	35	Berlin	3 years	WhatsApp	25 Minutes
Participant 2	Male	38	Munich	4 years	Zoom	35 Minutes
Participant 3	Female	39	Hamburg	4 years	WhatsApp	20 Minutes
Participant 4	Male	48	Mainz	10 years	Zoom	42 Minutes
Participant 5	Female	36	Hannover	6 years	WhatsApp	30 Minutes
Participant 6	Male	40	Hannover	11 years	Zoom	35 Minutes
Participant 7	Male	40	Mainz	9 years	Zoom	41 Minutes
Participant 8	Female	23	Hamburg	3 years	WhatsApp	27 Minutes
Participant 9	Female	32	Berlin	6 years	Zoom	43 Minutes
Participant 10	Male	36	Berlin	4 years	WhatsApp	27 Minutes
Participant 11	Male	33	Munich	4 years	Zoom	43 Minutes
Participant 12	Female	22	Munich	3 years	WhatsApp	20 Minutes
Participant 13	Male	32	Mainz	4 years	Zoom	30 Minutes
Participant 14	Male	36	Mainz	6 years	Zoom	36 Minutes
Participant 15	Male	45	Mainz	12 years	Zoom	46 Minutes
Female Participants					6	
Male Participants					9	
Total Participant					15	

3.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study involves a qualitative approach, which includes an in-depth analysis of the interview data. The analysis involves coding the data using software such as NVivo 12 to identify common themes and patterns related to the impact of immigration on Afghan culture and cross-cultural communication. After the identification of themes, the researcher develops a narrative that explains the findings and mad connections between the themes identified and the broader topic of study (Woods, 2006). See Figure 4.

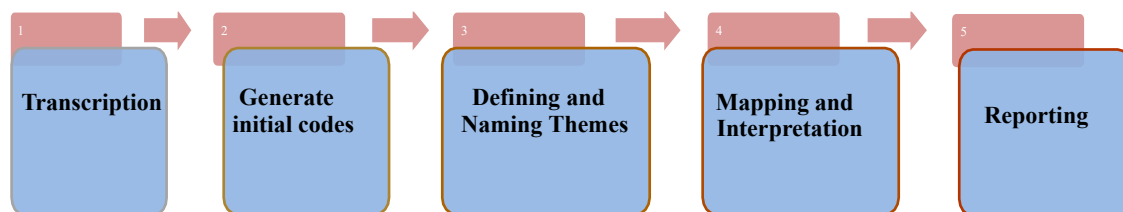


Figure 4. Data analysis process for this study used by researchers

The research findings are presented in a case study report that includes a detailed description of the research methodology, data collection, analysis, and conclusions. Additionally, the report provides recommendations for policymakers and others interested in improving cross-cultural communication and integration of Afghan migrants in Germany.

4. Results

The results of the study provide valuable insights into the cross-cultural communication processes and the impact of immigration on Afghan culture, specifically within the context of Afghan migrants in Germany. Through in-depth interviews and observations, a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, challenges, and adaptations of Afghan migrants in their host society has been gained. The findings reveal a multifaceted picture of the interactions between Afghan migrants and the German culture, highlighting both positive and negative consequences on their cultural identity. This section will discuss the key findings in detail, analyzing their implications for cross-cultural communication theory and providing practical recommendations for improving intercultural understanding and integration for Afghan migrants in Germany.

The descriptive analysis of qualitative data in this research provides insightful information about the cross-cultural communication experiences and the cultural effects of immigration on Afghan migrants in Germany. The ability to engage with people from other cultural origins is demonstrated by the participants' typically favorable experiences in cross-cultural dialogue (Sinning, 2010). This conclusion is confirmed by the question on cross-cultural communication, which had a mean rating of 4.642 from 5 points and a rather small standard deviation of 0.633. In the second question participants gave the impact of immigration on personal identity and cultural traditions a significant ranking, with a mean score of 4.571.

This shows that how Afghan immigrants view themselves has been impacted by their immigration to Germany.

In the third question, with a mean rating of 4.714 and a small standard deviation of 0.468, participants prioritized preserving the Afghan cultural legacy in Germany. This demonstrates the migrants' strong desire to uphold their cultural customs and practices while adjusting to their new surroundings. Also, in the fourth question the participants acknowledged the existence of cultural misunderstandings, as shown by the high mean rating of 4.857 and the low standard deviation of 0.363. This demonstrates the difficulties Afghan immigrants encounter while overcoming cultural differences and effectively sharing their viewpoints with members of the host society.

Question five with a mean rating of 4.714 and a moderate standard deviation of 0.611, the participants understood the value of adjusting to cultural differences. This demonstrates their understanding of the necessity to comprehend and adapt to German society's cultural norms and traditions. Question six was about discrimination against Afghan immigrants in Germany. The participants acknowledged discrimination against Afghan immigrants, as evidenced by the mean rating of 4.428 and a standard deviation of 0.646. This shows that issues connected to discrimination, bigotry, or unfair treatment due to their cultural heritage exist for Afghan immigrants.

In the seventh question the mean rating of 4.571 and a moderate standard deviation of 0.513 show that the relationships between various immigrant groups in Germany were recognized. This shows that Afghan immigrants and people from various cultural backgrounds have interactions and linkages inside German society. Eighth question was about advice from Afghan immigrants to new immigrants. The Afghan immigrants gave recommendations for improving cross-cultural communication a mean grade of 4.6 and a comparatively high standard deviation of 0.736. This demonstrates their grasp of the significance of fostering improved communication and understanding among various cultural groups in order to promote better integration and interaction.

As in the ninth question evidenced by the mean rating of 4.666 and a moderate standard deviation of 0.617, the development and adaptation of Afghan culture to the realities of cultural diversity in Germany were seen as positive developments. In the tenth question, participants gave tips for assimilating into society to other Afghan immigrants in Germany, with a mean rating of 4.4666 and a somewhat high standard deviation of 0.743. This implies that Afghan immigrants have a variety of opinions about the integration process and the advice they would give to other immigrants.

Lastly, in the eleventh question the mean rating of 4.666 and the low standard deviation of 0.487 show that the participants were aware of the cultural distinctions between German and Afghan society. This shows that immigrants from Afghanistan are aware of the unique cultural traits of the two societies. Overall, these findings contribute to a better understanding of cross-cultural communication and the effects of immigration on Afghan culture by offering insightful information about the experiences and viewpoints of Afghan migrants in Germany. See (Fig 4) for descriptive statistical analysis of interview answers mean rating and standard deviation. Figure 5

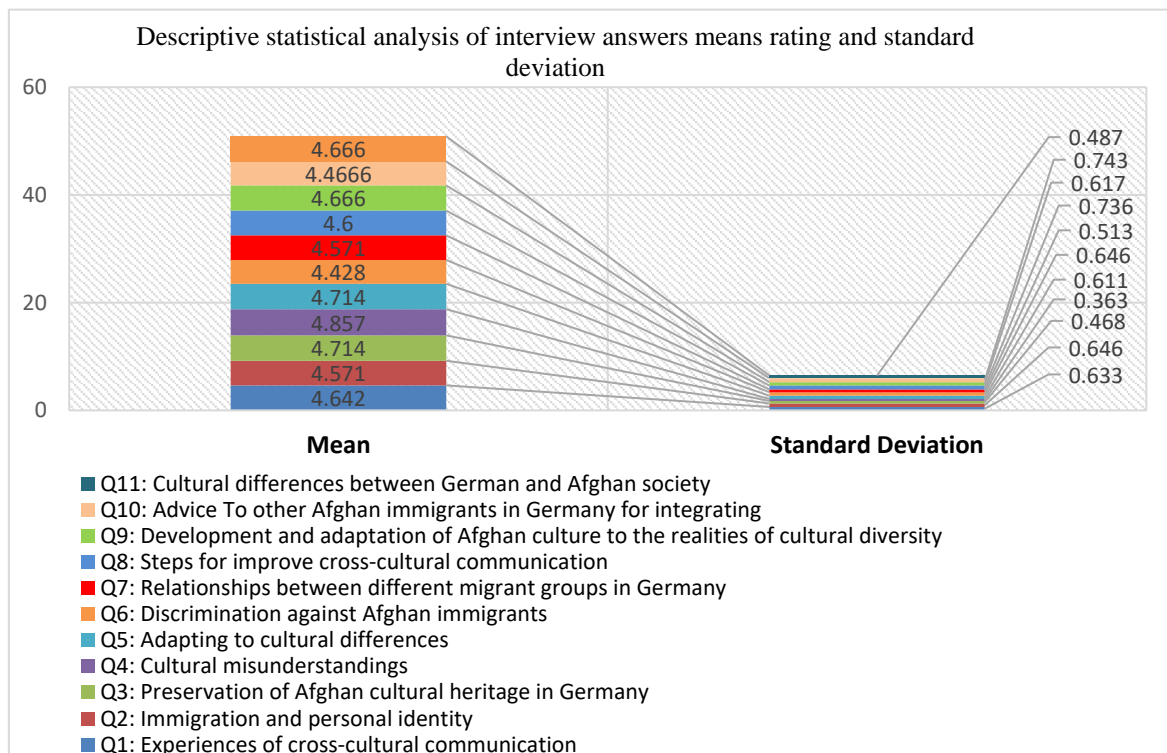


Figure 5. Descriptive statistical analysis, means rating and standard deviation

According to our thematical analysis of interviews conducted by using NVivo 12. The thematical analysis led to the discovery of different key challenges that Afghan migrants face in cross-cultural communication with German society, and how do these challenges impact their ability to integrate and access opportunities in their host country.

Challenges of Cross-Cultural Communication for Afghan Migrants in German Society was our first main theme. As a finding of our thematical analysis show that, for Afghan immigrants assimilating into German society, cross-cultural communication poses a variety of difficulties. Language difficulties are one of the biggest obstacles because speaking German well is essential for integration and efficient communication (Fetzer & Soper, 2005). Misunderstandings and potential cultural conflicts are also exacerbated by differences in communication norms and styles, such as directness versus indirectness (Haslberger, 2005). In order to promote understanding and successful integration, it is crucial for Afghan migrants to traverse and bridge cultural gaps caused by different values, beliefs, and worldviews between Afghan and German cultures. See Figure 6.

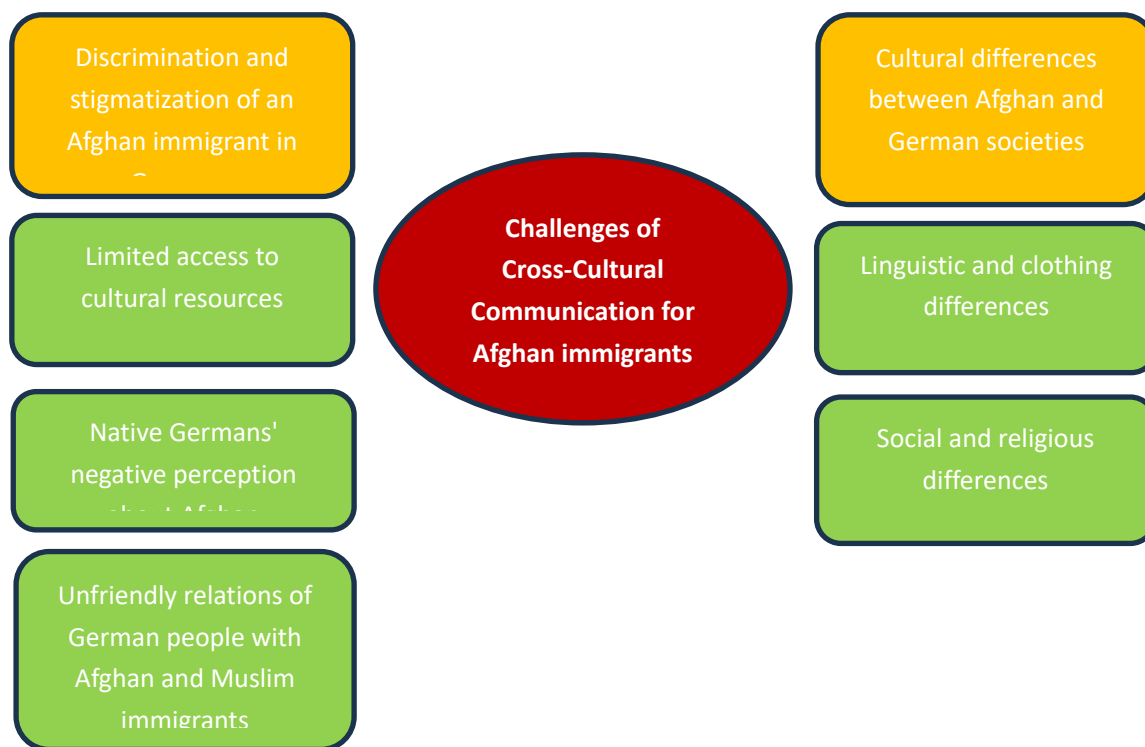


Figure 6. Challenges of Cross-Cultural Communication for Afghan Migrants in Germany, thematical analysis of interviews conducted by using NVivo12

According to our thematical analysis of interviews conducted by using NVivo 12. Afghan immigrants in Germany encounter numerous difficulties in intercultural communication. There are impediments that prevent effective understanding and engagement between Afghan and German societies because of the vast cultural disparities between them.

Cultural differences between Afghan and German societies were the main sub-theme under the Challenges of Cross-Cultural Communication for Afghan Migrants in Germany's central theme in thematic analyses in NVivo. According to our interviews, the assimilation of Afghanmigrants into German culture is significantly hampered by the cultural contrasts between Afghan and German societies. In contrast to German culture, which tends to value individualism, egalitarianism, and personal autonomy, Afghan culture frequently places emphasis on collectivism, respect for authority, and close familial ties:

((Social life in Germany is much weaker than in Afghanistan, social relations are weak, and everyone is so busy with their work that they don't even have time for their relatives)). (P7, may 2023).

These discrepancies may cause misunderstandings, make it difficult to communicate effectively, and make it difficult to adjust to German society's social dynamics and expectations. For Afghan immigrants to build mutual understanding and successfully integrate into German society, they must navigate and bridge these cultural differences.

A: language barriers: Language barriers are a big problem because speaking German well is essential for communication and integration. The language barrier is the main challenge because it affects the ability to communicate with others. and creates delays in two-way communication that may negatively impact the quality of informed decision-making and the care experience for migrants. Language barriers can also amplify the effects of other sources of vulnerability. In some countries, immigrants receive poor quality services because they cannot speak their mother tongue well. Furthermore, the differences between the languages of first-generation and second-generation immigrants can disadvantage immigrants.

((...If I personally say that the language issue is a big issue for us, especially when a new immigrant arrives, he cannot make linguistic connections to preserve his cultural identity. Then when he spends time here, he gradually distanced himself from his cultural habit)). (P3, may 2023).

In addition, there are significant disparities in clothes and attire between Afghan and Germancommunities, which may lead to misunderstandings and cultural differences.

B: Social and religious differences: As Afghan immigrants negotiate foreign social habits, norms, and religious practices in German society, social and religious disparities further complicate problems (Ruttig, 2017). Negative ideas and preconceptions held by some native Germans might result in social marginalization and limited prospects, which exacerbate discrimination and stigmatization. Furthermore, Afghan migrants struggle to bridge the cultural divide and form deep ties due to their restricted access to cultural resources like language classes and community programs:

((I have not faced such a big case, but my children sometimes complain that the behavior of other children and teenagers at school is not good towards immigrants. Also, immigrants hardly get good jobs. A friend of mine has studied until a Ph.D. degree but still can't find a suitable job. There are many such cases.)) (P9, June 2023).

According to our thematic analysis of interviews conducted using NVivo 12. Discrimination and stigmatization of Afghan immigrants in Germany was another main theme that had three sub-themes. Which presents discrimination and defamation against Afghan immigrants in Germany.

A: Native Germans' negative perception about Afghan immigrants: According our thematic analysis cross-cultural understanding and integration are significantly hampered by native Germans' unfavorable opinions of Afghan immigrants. The acceptance and integration of Afghan immigrants into German society might be hampered by stereotypes and prejudices against them, which can result in stigmatization and discrimination (Rieti et al., 2020). Such unfavorable opinions frequently ignore the different backgrounds, abilities, and contributions Afghan immigrants provide to the neighborhood:

((Germans generally have the erroneous impressions of all immigrants, but especially of Afghan immigrants. They do not view immigrants favorably and believe that they are abusing their resources. However, the reality is that immigrants benefit Germany more than they hurt)). (P15, June 2023).

In order to overcome these prejudices and create a more inclusive and accepting environment for Afghan immigrants in Germany, efforts should be made to develop empathy, education and cultural dialogue.

B. Unfriendly relations of German people with Afghan and Muslim immigrants: Unfriendly relations between some segments of the German population and Afghan and Muslim immigrants is another big challenge in cross-cultural communication and integration (Rapoport et al., 2020). These unfriendly relations can be influenced by a combination of factors, including cultural misunderstandings, fear, and prejudices:

((In some cases, the behavior of German people, especially towards Muslim immigrants, is not appropriate. They do not associate with Afghan immigrants, and behave very coldly)). (P2, may 2023).

It is crucial to promote intercultural understanding, empathy, and dialogue to address these unfriendly relations, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society that embraces the contributions and cultural richness that Afghan and Muslim immigrants bring to Germany.

C. Limited access to cultural resources: Limited access to language classes, cultural organizations, and social services can hinder their ability to bridge the cultural gap and build meaningful relationships with German society. Limited access to cultural resources is one of the problems that have created obstacles for Afghan immigrants in terms of integration. In our thematical analysis of interviews conducted using NVivo 12, Adaptation of Afghan immigrants in Germany and maintaining their cultural identity was our second main theme. According our analysis It takes careful balancing to accommodate Afghan immigrants in Germany while still keeping their cultural identity. See Figure 7

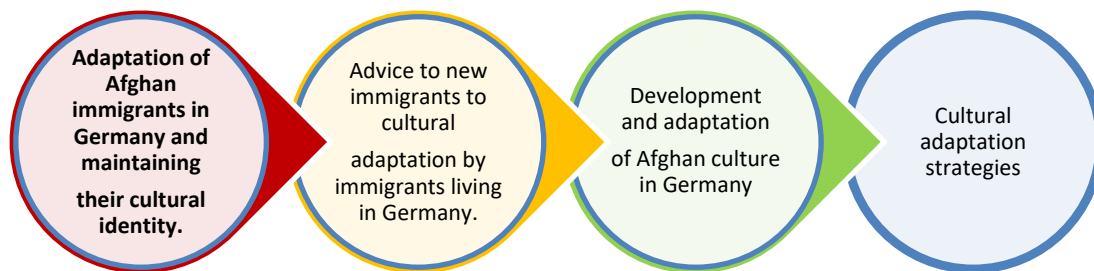


Figure 7. Adaptation of Afghan immigrants in Germany and maintaining their cultural identity, thematical analysis of interviews conducted by using NVivo 12

According to our thematical analysis of interviews conducted by using NVivo 12. On the one hand, successful settling and participation in numerous elements of life depend on integration into German society. This entails picking up the language, becoming familiar with cultural customs, and accepting societal standards. The preservation of Afghan immigrants' cultural history and identity, however, is just as crucial. (Ober, 2019).

A: Development and adaptation of Afghan culture in Germany: According to our interviews, Afghan immigrants actively promote and preserve their cultural traditions, language, and customs in Germany. This is accomplished through neighborhood associations, cultural celebrations, and educational programs that seek to pass on Afghan traditions and ideals to future generations (McCarthy, 2018). The Afghan culture is simultaneously evolving organically as it combines with aspects of German civilization.

((I think Afghan immigrants living in Germany have made a concerted effort to pass on their cultural traditions, language, and heritage to the younger generation. Community gatherings, language programs, traditional festivals, and maintaining contact with Afghan migrant networks can all be used to preserve culture.)) (P3, may 2023).

The growth and adaptation of Afghan culture in Germany serve as a testament to the Afghan community's fortitude, ingenuity, and adaptability as it navigates the difficulties of heritage preservation while seizing the chances for development and enrichment within the multiracial fabric of German society.

B: Cultural adaptation strategies: According to our thematical analysis, Afghan immigrants in Germany use a variety of cultural adaptation strategies to overcome integration-related obstacles while retaining their cultural identity. See these strategies in the Figure 8.



Figure 8. Cultural adaptation strategies, thematical analysis of interviews conducted by using NVivo 12

Afghan immigrants in Germany actively engage in preserving and promoting their cultural traditions, language, and customs (Rieti et al., 2020). This is achieved through community organizations, cultural events, and educational initiatives that aim to transmit Afghan values and practices to future generations:

((I have hired an Afghan teacher for my children, he is teaching them Pashto online because living in Germany will cause future generations to forget their language. Every week we cook Afghan food, wear Afghan clothes and discuss Afghan culture. We participate in various cultural gatherings thus preserving our cultural heritage. In particular, we give information about our heroes to our children)). (P14, June 2023).

Afghan immigrants in Germany aim to strike a healthy balance between embracing the possibilities and ideals of their host nation and upholding their Afghan cultural heritage by using these cultural adaption techniques.

C: Advice to new immigrants to cultural adaptation by immigrants living in Germany: The participants of the interviews conducted for this research, who have years of experience living in Germany, give a number of suggestions to the new immigrants for integration and adaptation to the culture. These suggestions help the new immigrants to assimilate into the German society.

- Take advantage of the chance to learn German because it can improve your chances of communicating with others and integrating into society.
- Find social networks and local groups where you can connect with Germans and other immigrants to expand your support network and be exposed to different perspectives.
- Be willing to learn about German customs, traditions, and social affairs while remaining open-minded and willing to share your cultural history with others.
- Take advantage of educational and professional opportunities to improve your skills and improve your chances of successfully integrating.
- Remember that adaptation takes time, so be kind to yourself and welcome the learning and growth process as you settle into this diverse environment.

In our thematical analysis of interviews conducted using NVivo 12, Adaptation of Factors affecting the culture of Afghan immigrants in Germany was our third main theme. According our analysis cultural integration plays an important role in shaping our cultural traditions and norms. See Figure 9.

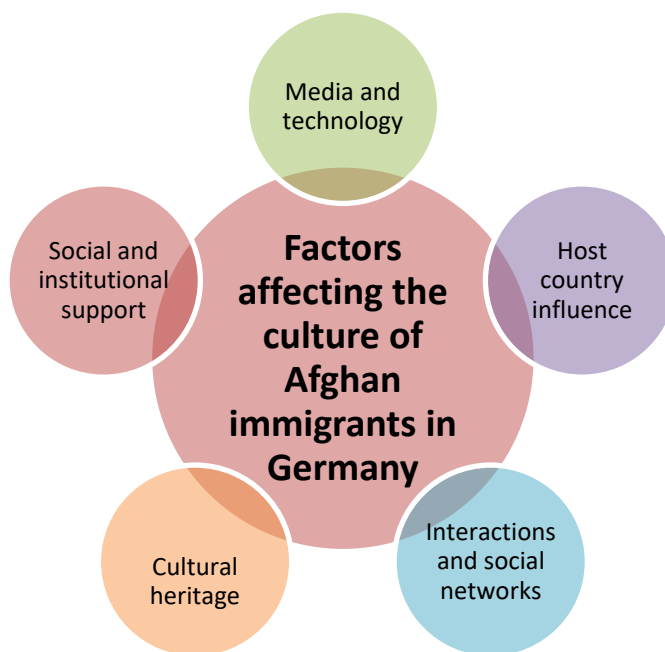


Figure 9. Factors affecting the culture of Afghan immigrants in Germany, thematical analysis of interviews conducted by using NVivo 12

According our interviews analysis these factors affecting the culture of Afghan immigrants in Germany.

((I believe that immigration in Germany resulted in a synthesis of cultures; in this country, people embrace

and incorporate aspects of other cultures into their own. As a result, one's own identity and cultural traditions may become more varied and deeper.)). (P15, June 2023).

As a conclusion of the above discussion we can say, The Afghan community in Germany, like any immigrant community, is influenced by both their home country culture and the host country culture. When it comes to Afghan culture in Germany, there are several ways in which the host country has an influence. For example: cultural exchange, food and cuisine, language, clothing and fashion, social norms and values and etc...

5. Discussion

In the context of Afghan migrants in Germany, the study's findings provide insight into the processes of cross-cultural communication and the effects of immigration on Afghan culture. A thorough insight into the experiences, difficulties, and adjustments of Afghan migrants in their host society was supplied by in-depth interviews and observations. The results emphasized both favorable and unfavorable effects on their sense of cultural identity.

One significant finding showed that Afghan immigrants valued intercultural communication. They demonstrated successful interactions with individuals from various ethnic backgrounds. This displays their capacity for navigating and interacting successfully across cultural boundaries. The effect of immigration on the cultural traditions and personal identities of Afghan migrants was another important discovery. It was clear that their experience of immigration had affected how they saw themselves, which emphasizes how complex cultural identity is in the context of migration. Participants prioritized preserving the Afghan cultural legacy in Germany, demonstrating their ardent desire to retain their traditions and practices while adjusting to the new setting. But the presence of cultural misconceptions was also noted, highlighting the difficulties in bridging cultural gaps and successfully expressing one's opinions to the host society.

According to the interviews, Afghan immigrants were aware of the necessity of conforming to the cultural norms and customs of the host nation and appreciated the importance of doing so in German society. The acknowledgment of discrimination against Afghan immigrants in Germany was one worrying conclusion. This shows that Afghan immigrants still face problems with discrimination and unfair treatment based on their cultural origin. Positively, the study emphasized the understanding of connections among various immigrant groups in Germany. The possibility of multicultural integration is demonstrated through encounters and connections between Afghan immigrants and people from different cultural backgrounds.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study and the existing body of literature can be combined to create a convincing narrative that explains the complex difficulties that Afghan immigrants face as they attempt to integrate into German society and engage in effective cross-cultural communication. These challenges led to misunderstandings, limited opportunities, and marginalization. However, the participants also demonstrated a strong desire to preserve their cultural heritage and adapt to German society, indicating their efforts to find a balance between cultural preservation and assimilation. While adapting to the German cultural environment, they work to preserve their Afghan cultural heritage. Research also identifies barriers to successful integration. According to research findings, language barriers, cultural differences, and social and religious inequalities are significant barriers to effective intercultural communication and integration. The study also found that Afghan immigrants face stigma and discrimination in Germany, which hinders their integration and access to opportunities. The inappropriate behavior and hostile interactions between some Germans and Afghan and Muslim immigrants exacerbate these issues. Through community groups, cultural events, and educational programs, they actively participate in the preservation of culture. In conclusion, Afghan migrants in Germany face numerous challenges in their cross-cultural communication and integration. Language barriers, cultural differences, social and religious disparities, and discrimination all contribute to these obstacles. These challenges result in misunderstandings, limited opportunities, and marginalization. However, it is important to note that the participants in the study displayed a strong desire to both preserve their cultural heritage and adapt to German society. They strive to find a balance between cultural preservation and assimilation, actively working to preserve their Afghan cultural heritage while adapting to the German cultural environment. Additionally, research highlights the barriers to successful integration, including language barriers, cultural differences, and social and religious inequalities. Stigma and discrimination further hinder their integration and access to opportunities. To combat these issues, community groups, cultural events, and educational programs play a crucial role in fostering intercultural understanding and participation in cultural preservation.

Acknowledgments

Acknowledge colleagues who assisted in conducting the study or critiquing the manuscript. Do not acknowledge the persons routinely involved in the review and acceptance of manuscripts peer reviewers or editors, associate editors, and

consulting editors of the journal in which the article is to appear. End this paragraph with thanks for personal assistance, such as in manuscript preparation.

Sample: We greatly appreciate the valuable contributions of our community advisory committee members. We would also like to thank the XXX Foundation and every team member who took the time to participate in this study.

Authors contributions

Sample: Dr. AAA and Dr. BBB were responsible for study design and revising. Prof. CCC was responsible for data collection. Prof. DDD drafted the manuscript and Prof. CCC revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. In this paragraph, also explain any special agreements concerning authorship, such as if authors contributed equally to the study.

Funding

Identify grants or other financial support (and the source, if appropriate) for your research.

Sample: This work was supported by YYYY Foundation [project number 888899999].

Competing interests

Sample: The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Redfame Publishing.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

Open access

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

References

- Albarosa, E., & Elsner, B. (2023). *Forced Migration and Social Cohesion: Evidence from the 2015/16 Mass Inflow in Germany*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4319003>
- Alesina, M. T. A., Boustan, L., Enke, B., Farina, S., Fouka, V., Gennaioli, N., ... & Tabellini, M. (2022). *The Political Effects of Immigration: Culture or Economics? We thank the Editor Steven Durlauf and four anonymous referees for their suggestions. We are also grateful to The Political Effects of Immigration: Culture or Economics?* <https://doi.org/10.3386/w30079>
- Berg, B. L. (Bruce L., & Lune, H. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Creswell, John W. (2014). *Creswell-ResearchDesign*.
- Boundaries. *Nationalities Papers*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.106> Oberg, K. (2019). *Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments 1*. Cambridge University Press.
- Easo. (2022). *EUAA ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT 2021 2 Annual General Report 2021*.
- Erisen, C., & Kentmen-Cin, C. (2017). Tolerance and perceived threat toward Muslim immigrants in Germany and the Netherlands. *European Union Politics*, 18(1), 73-97. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116516675979>

- Etikan, I. (2017). Sampling and Sampling Methods. *Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal*, 5(6). <https://doi.org/10.15406/bbij.2017.05.00149>
- European Asylum Support Office. (2021). *Afghanistan security situation update: country of origin information report: September 2021*.
- Fetzer, J. S., & Soper, J. Christopher. (2005). *Muslims and the state in Britain, France, and Germany*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790973>
- Fischer, C., & Van Houte, M. (2020). Dimensions of agency in transnational relations of Afghan migrants and return migrants. *Migration Studies*, 8(4), 554–572. <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnz012>
- Haslberger, A. (2005). Facets and dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation: Refining the tools. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480510571897>
- Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(5), 26. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26>
- Kutor, S. K., Raileanu, A., & Simandan, D. (2021). International migration, cross-cultural interaction, and the development of personal wisdom. *Migration Studies*, 9(3), 490–513. <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnz049>
- Li, J. (2009). Forging the future between two different worlds: Recent Chinese immigrant adolescents tell their cross-cultural experiences. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24(4), 477-504. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558409336750>
- Liu, S. (2017). *Cross-cultural adaptation: An identity approach 20 Cross-cultural adaptation: An identity approach*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501510397-020>
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). *Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars*. (Issue 3). <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335>
- McCarthy, J. (2018, July 14). *5 Ways Immigration Actually Benefits a Country's Culture*. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/how-immigrants-benefit-society-trump/>
- Menala, G. (2018). CROSS CULTURAL WAYS "An Investigation Of How Language Both Presupposes And Creates A New, Social Relations In. In *International Journal of Humanities, Art and Social Studies* (Vol. 3, Issue 1).
- Miron, J., & Rapoport, H. (2021). *Research Briefs Ineconomicpolicy Migration and Cultural Change*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4114309>
- Nedelsky, N. R. (2023). A New German 'We'? Everyday Perspectives on Germanness and its *Personnel Review* (Vol. 34, Issue 1, pp. 85-109). <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480510571897>
- Rapoport, H., Sardoschau, S., & Silve, A. (2020). *Migration and Cultural Change*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3689469>
- Igarashi, A., & Ono, Y. (2020). The Effects of Negative and Positive Information on Attitudes toward Immigration. In *RIETI Discussion Paper Series*. <https://www.rieti.go.jp/en/>
- Ruben, B. D. (1974). *Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness I*.
- Ruttig, T. (2017). *Afghan Exodus: Afghan asylum seekers in Europe (3) – case study Germany*. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/afghan-exodus-afghan-asylum-seekers-in-europe-3-case-study>
- Safi, A. Q., Dida, S., Kayen, H. S., & Shafiq, K. (2022). Intercultural Communication between Indonesian and international students at Universitas Padjadjaran. *Jurnal Manajemen Komunikasi*, 7(1), 55. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jmk.v7i1.41147>
- Sinning, M. (2010). Homeownership and economic performance of immigrants in Germany. *Urban Studies*, 47(2), 387-409. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098009349021>
- Vadean, F. (2007). *Skills and remittances: The case of Afghan, Egyptian, and Serbian immigrants in Germany*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1317135>
- Wardaki, M. (2021). Rediscovering Afghan Fine Arts: The life of an Afghan student in Germany, Abdul Ghafur Brechna. *Modern Asian Studies*, 55(5), 1544-1580. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X20000591>
- Woods, P. (2006). *Successful Writing for Qualitative Researchers*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203001721>
- Xu, K., Drennan, J., & Mathews, S. (2019). Immigrant entrepreneurs and their cross-cultural capabilities: A study of Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs in Australia. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 17(4), 520-557. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-019-00261-4>