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(Title of paper for example) From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation: Pakistan's Migration Crisis and Pathways to Sustainable Development

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on

1. Introduction

The migration of highly skilled individuals, as is popularly known under the title of brain drain, is an important and intricate issue to developing countries in the contemporary world system of international relations (IR). It is an occurrence that exists at the cross point of the international economic inequalities, national development needs, and individual growth and prosperity desires. The concept of sustainable migration attempts to strike a balance to these dynamics and tries to establish a system whereby migration is benefited by the migrant, the country of origin, and the destination country.

2. Literature Reviews

Brain drain has long been a topic of scholarly and political discussion, with many decades of literature examining its origin and effects and possible solutions to the problem.

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

Migration studies have theoretical assumptions that provide lenses through which brain drain in Pakistan can be analyzed. Among the oldest in theory is that of neoclassical migration, which argues that people make rational decisions to move to countries where there is a difference between wages and employment opportunities wherever they move (Massey et al., 1993).

2.2 Empirical Studies on Pakistan

The amount and the extent of the brain drain in Pakistan have been documented by a major amount of empirical research. The high rates of emigration of skilled professionals of South Asian countries have been reported by international organizations like the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

with Pakistan, being one of the leading countries of origin (IOM, 2022; World Bank, 2023).-----

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3. Methodology and Data Description

This study will adopt a mixed-methods research design by incorporating quantitative and qualitative data analysis in order to obtain a holistic and well-rounded picture of the brain drain process in Pakistan.-----

The statistical part of this work is based on the research of the secondary data provided by different, authorized, and reliable sources. The statistics on the total number of workers, their level of skills, and destinations were provided by Pakistan Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) as emigration data between 2010 and January 2026 (The News International, 2026).-----

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4. Empirical Analysis and Findings

The main findings of the study are presented in the following section and consist of three subsections. It starts with a discussion of the leading causes of brain drain in Pakistan, proceeds to show the most major destinations of its professionals and concludes by discussing the long term socio-economic impacts of this movement on the country.

4.1 Drivers of Pakistan’s Brain Drain

The brain drain of skilled professionals in Pakistan is not just a chance event but a very potent blend of push and pull factors. These drivers make a strong argument to people to get a chance to go to another country and in most cases to the disadvantage of their country.-----

4.2 Key Destinations for Pakistani Professionals

The Pakistani emigrants have different destinations but there is one obvious picture that is formed after the data. According to the GCC states, especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), most Pakistani workers have always been and continue to be the main target of their labor.-----

Table 1: Major destinations and the count of Pakistani laborers who migrated to those destinations in 2025

<i>Destination Country</i>	<i>Number of Pakistani Workers (2025)</i>
Saudi Arabia	530,256
Qatar	68,376
United Arab Emirates	52,664
Bahrain	37,726
United Kingdom	4,355
United States	1,005

Source: Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment, Government of Pakistan (The News International, 2026)

Table 2: Breakdown of Pakistani Emigrants by Profession (2025)

Profession	Number of Emigrants
Labourers	465,138
Drivers	163,718
Technicians	12,703
Managers	11,777
Cooks	10,503
Engineers	5,946
Masons	5,700
Accountants	5,659
Doctors	3,795
Plumbers	2,306
Teachers	1,725
Nurses	1,640

Source: Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment, Government of Pakistan (The News International, 2026)

4.3 Discussion

The results in the preceding section indicate serious example of the multiwheeled and conflicting nature of brain drain, as in the case of a developing country such as Pakistan. This discussion will explain these findings as their connection to the theoretical frameworks identified in the literature review, and address the implications these findings out to larger issues of international relations in Pakistan, its geopolitical positioning, and the ethical aspects of migration.-----

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This section presents a set of recommendations based on a thorough analysis of the brain drain crisis in Pakistan on a course of action to internationalize the present unsustainable brain drain into a sustainable pattern of brain circulation.-----

5.1 Conclusion

This study has shown that the brain drain in Pakistan is a big development problem that has serious socio-economic, as well as geopolitical consequences.-----

5.2 Policy Recommendations

As a measure to effectively tackle the complex issue of brain drain, Pakistan should implement a multi-faceted policy that is based on the multi-pronged approach that combined will address the factors that led to emigration and that will open new channels of communication with the diaspora. The recommendations that followed are as follows:

- Encouraging Brain Circulation by Bilateral Agreements: The Government of Pakistan must actively make bilateral deals with the major destination countries with special focus on the Gulf and Europe countries in order to enable circular migration. Such treaties ought not to just involve the so-called readmission and must contain the temporary working visa, the skill development programs and the transferability of the social security benefits. Such would enable Pakistani professionals to acquire international experience and skills which later on would be passed back to Pakistan resulting in an actual brain circulation effect.-----

Declarations

There is no competing interest for this study OR Not Applicable(N/A)

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Appendix