



Volume 6	Issue 1	July (2026)	DOI: 10.47540/ijqr.v6i1.2898	Page: 125 – 135
----------	---------	-------------	------------------------------	-----------------

Anticipated social remittances: knowledge transfer among Sudanese and Egyptian students in Indonesia

Yasir Esam Osman Mohammed

Department of Sociology, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Yasir Esam Osman Mohammed; Email: yassiresam567@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: International Students, Migration, Remittances, South-South Mobility.

Received : 17 June 2026

Revised : 27 July 2026

Accepted : 30 July 2026

ABSTRACT

International student mobility research has largely focused on movement from the Global South to the Global North, leaving South-South mobility, including Indonesia as a host destination, comparatively unexamined. This qualitative study investigates the anticipated social remittances of Sudanese and Egyptian postgraduate students in Indonesia: the knowledge, practices, and civic norms they expect to carry home. Drawing on data from ten participants (five Sudanese, five Egyptian) and reflexive thematic analysis, most were found already engaged in informal sharing, mainly via WhatsApp, though only some carried clear developmental intent rather than incidental cultural exchange. Anticipated extensions remained at the idea or informal-discussion stage, consistent with participants' early program stage, and nearly all insisted anything brought home would need local adaptation. Perceptions of home-country receptivity diverged by nationality: Egyptian participants described stable bureaucratic and cultural resistance, while Sudanese participants described a landscape reshaped by ongoing conflict, marked less by pessimism than by reordered priorities and, in one case, a new opening for the digital knowledge-preservation systems observed in Indonesia. The study extends social remittances theory to a temporary, credential-seeking population in a South-South context and offers early evidence on how home-country conditions, including active crisis, shape what students believe they can carry home.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is not typically where discussions of international student mobility begin. Most of that literature still assumes a fairly settled direction of travel: students moving from less developed countries toward wealthier, English-speaking destinations in the West (Habib et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2018; Lee, 2017). Indonesia complicates that picture in an interesting way. It is the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has run government scholarship programs aimed at developing-country students since the 1970s, and has deliberately positioned itself as a South-South cooperation partner rather than a traditional study-abroad destination. And yet it hosts remarkably few international students by regional standards. Simek and Stewart (2024), drawing on multiple secondary sources, place the figure at around 6,000 before the

COVID-19 pandemic, falling to roughly 3,896 by 2021. Malaysia, a comparable Muslim-majority country in the same region, reported 159,138 international students as of December 2025. Whatever else explains that gap, it makes Indonesia an unusually under-examined case for a country that has spent decades trying to attract students from the developing world.

The broader phenomenon Indonesia sits within, South-South student mobility, is itself a relatively recent addition to the migration and higher education literature. Most existing scholarship on international students still concerns Global North destinations, and where South-South movement has been studied, the empirical base is thin and concentrated in a handful of countries: China, Malaysia, India (Xu et al., 2023). What has not been asked, in Indonesia or almost anywhere

else in this literature, is a fairly basic question: what do these students expect to do with what they learn once they go home?

That question sits at the center of a distinct body of migration scholarship. Levitt's (1998) concept of social remittances, the ideas, skills, and practices that migrants carry between the places they live and the places they come from, was developed to explain how migration reshapes sending communities even without anyone physically returning for good. It has since been extended well beyond its original context of Dominican migrants in Boston, to highly educated professionals (King et al., 2016), to returning scholarship recipients in Eastern Europe (Campbell, 2018, 2020), and to a growing literature asking how international student mobility contributes, or fails to contribute, to development in students' home countries (Wang et al., 2024). Almost none of this work has looked at South-South student flows specifically, and none of it has looked at Indonesia.

Two further concepts sharpen the questions this study asks of that broader idea. Not every stated intention to contribute is equally developed, and Cassarino's (2004) work on return migration distinguishes vague aspiration from genuine "preparedness," a plan grounded in specific resources, contacts, or institutions rather than a general wish. Whether such preparedness ever translates into anything, in turn, depends on more than the migrant's own resolve. Nevinskaite's (2016) concept of home-country "receptivity" captures the degree to which conditions at home, institutional, social, and economic, are actually positioned to absorb what a returnee might bring, a question that becomes especially pointed when the home country in question is, as with Sudan during the period of this study, in active conflict. Taken together, these ideas suggest that anticipated contribution is not simply present or absent; it varies in how concretely it can be described, and that concreteness is shaped by what students believe awaits them at home.

Indonesia's own literature on international students, meanwhile, tells a narrower story than the country's stated ambitions might suggest. Simek and Stewart's (2024) systematic review of research from 2012 to 2022 found that most existing studies concern institutional strategy and the broad rationale for internationalization, with far less

attention paid to students themselves. Widiasih et al.'s (2020) earlier systematic review, drawing substantially on health-science databases given the authors' own nursing-research background, similarly found the available literature thin, identifying only six eligible studies published over a full decade. Where students are the subject, the literature is heavily weighted toward adjustment and culture shock: how international students cope with a new language, a new academic system, and social isolation (Ali et al., 2020; Nur et al., 2021; Pitriyani et al., 2024), or with navigating religious difference specifically, as Pratama et al. (2026) recently examined among international Muslim students across fourteen countries. Language and communication difficulties recur so consistently across this literature that Wilczewski and Alon's (2023) bibliometric review of 313 international articles on the topic treats it as one of the central, if still theoretically underdeveloped, dimensions of international student adaptation worldwide, a pattern Hamamah and Hapsari (2021) documented concretely from a teacher's perspective at a major Indonesian university, where the absence of a clear institutional roadmap for internationalization compounded language barriers on both sides of the classroom. A smaller cluster asks why students choose Indonesia in the first place (Fajarwati & Suyanto, 2019; Muslim et al., 2025), and Harjono and Wachyunni (2025) have examined the specific, practical strategies students use to work around language barriers once they arrive. What almost nobody has asked is what students think they are taking home with them, and whether they expect anyone there to want it.

This study looks at that question through the experience of Sudanese and Egyptian postgraduate students, a pairing chosen for reasons beyond convenience. The two countries share a language, a common religious majority, and a long history of political and administrative entanglement, including the Anglo-Egyptian condominium period that governed Sudan until 1956. They are also, at present, on visibly different footing: Sudan has been in civil conflict since April 2023, while Egypt faces a distinct set of macroeconomic pressures with its state institutions largely intact. That divergence matters here, since it may shape how differently two culturally proximate groups of students talk about

whether their own governments and institutions are in any position to receive what they bring home.

This study asks how Sudanese and Egyptian postgraduate students in Indonesia describe extending existing, small-scale instances of sharing knowledge and practices with people back home into something more deliberate after graduation, and how their sense of their home country's institutional and social receptivity shapes how concretely they can describe that process. In doing so, it aims to bring a genuinely under-studied population into a literature that has quietly assumed, for the most part, that international students head north.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative, single-method design built around semi-structured interviews, chosen because the object of interest, how students describe and make sense of their own anticipated contributions, is not something a fixed-response instrument captures well. Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis structures the coding and interpretation of the interview data throughout.

Positionality

The first author is a Sudanese postgraduate student in Indonesia on a government scholarship, who lived in Egypt from 2017 to 2024 and completed an undergraduate degree at Cairo University. This background gave direct, personal access to the study's population and a working familiarity with both national contexts that shaped how interviews were conducted and interpreted. It is also the reason the sample was recruited the way it was: primarily through the researcher's own personal and community network among Sudanese and Egyptian students in Indonesia, rather than through broader institutional channels or general social media recruitment.

Participants

Participants were postgraduate (master's or doctoral) Sudanese and Egyptian students enrolled at Indonesian universities, recruited purposively through the researcher's existing network and, where necessary, through introductions from those initial contacts. Short-term exchange students and non-degree program participants were excluded, as were undergraduates, on the reasoning that postgraduate students are more likely to have the

professional background needed to talk concretely about institutional conditions at home. The target was 10 to 15 participants overall, with a specific commitment to at least five Sudanese and five Egyptian participants, so that the study's comparison between the two groups would rest on more than a handful of anecdotes from one side.

Data collection

Interviews were planned around a 30-minute target, but in practice most ran considerably longer, averaging roughly 40-50 minutes and occasionally close to an hour; this reflected both the researcher rephrasing questions where needed to ensure a participant understood what was being asked, and the genuinely adaptive nature of the guide described below. Interviews were conducted with each participant in whichever language they indicated they preferred, Arabic or English, given the researcher's own fluency in both. Each session was audio-recorded, and the researcher took detailed notes during the interview itself rather than attempting a live verbatim transcript. Where an initial answer was unclear or seemed to warrant more depth, the researcher asked smaller, clarifying follow-up questions in the moment; the resulting detail was then folded back into the response recorded against the original question, phrased in the participant's own words, and confirmed with the participant before moving on. Each entry was subsequently checked again against the audio recording to verify it accurately reflected what the participant had said before analysis began.

Consistent with an iterative approach to data collection, in a small number of cases a later interview surfaced a question or theme that had not been asked of earlier participants, or prompted a revision to how an existing question was phrased. In these cases, the researcher conducted a brief follow-up conversation with the relevant earlier participants specifically to capture their perspective on the new or revised item, rather than treating their original interview as the only opportunity to gather that part of their perspective.

As a further accuracy check, once all ten interviews were complete, the researcher held a brief validation session with each participant individually, showing them the final questions alongside their own recorded responses and asking them to confirm these reflected what they intended to say. No participant requested any change; all

confirmed the record as accurate. This was an informal check rather than a formal member-checking protocol, offering modest additional confidence in the dataset's fidelity.

The interview guide functioned as a starting structure rather than a fixed script applied identically across all ten interviews. Where an answer surfaced something the guide had not anticipated, a follow-up question was constructed in the moment; not every participant was therefore asked exactly the same questions, and the items reflected in the dataset represent the pooled set used across all interviews, including those developed ad hoc. This flexibility was aided by the researcher's positionality: sharing the lived experience under study and being personally acquainted with most participants allowed much of a given conversation to be anticipated. A small set of exploratory interviews conducted beforehand also informed the guide's initial shape, which was refined before the remaining interviews were carried out.

Each interview nonetheless covered three areas by design: the kinds of knowledge, professional practice, or civic norms participants were already informally sharing with people back home; how they described extending that sharing into something larger after they finish their studies; and how they assessed the institutional, social, and economic conditions awaiting them at home, and what that assessment meant for how concretely they could describe their plans. A small number of additional questions, on participants' backgrounds before arriving in Indonesia, on whether their plans involved any financial dimension, and on whether Indonesian practices would need adapting to fit their home context, were asked when time and the flow of conversation allowed, but were treated as secondary to the three core questions above.

Two features of the interview design are worth noting. First, participants were only credited with a genuine "micro-transfer", the building block of the analysis, if they described sharing something with a developmental purpose in mind, rather than simply passing along an interesting story or cultural observation; the latter was still recorded, but set aside from the main analytic category. Second, follow-up questions asked participants to be specific: who exactly they had spoken to, whether an idea had gone anywhere concrete, roughly how many people they had reached. The aim was to

distinguish a real, developing plan from something said mostly to sound impressive in the moment.

Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and coded directly in the original language by the researcher, with selective translation into English for material identified as analytically significant during coding. A neutral academic peer, acting as a critical friend in the manner Braun and Clarke's reflexive approach recommends, reviewed a subset of coded material to challenge the researcher's interpretations rather than to independently verify them, consistent with reflexive thematic analysis's treatment of coding as an interpretive act rather than something to be checked for inter-rater agreement, a distinction Braun and Clarke (2019) themselves draw explicitly against approaches that import coding-reliability logic from a different, non-interpretivist research paradigm. Coded material was organized around a simple four-level scale, from a bare idea through informal sharing and a concrete plan to actual institutional collaboration, applied to how participants described their anticipated contributions rather than to what they were already doing. This scale draws on Cassarino's (2004) concept of migrant "preparedness," which distinguishes a vague aspiration to contribute from a concrete, resourced plan grounded in specific contacts or institutions, and is used here to avoid treating every stated intention as equally developed. Participants' assessments of home-country conditions were coded around Nevinskaite's (2016) concept of home-country "receptivity," the degree to which institutional, social, and economic conditions at home are perceived as ready to absorb ideas or practices brought from abroad, which is the analytic lens behind what is described in the Results as participants' perceptions of receptivity.

Ethics

As an independent research project outside the scope of institutional thesis-related ethical review, this study adopted a deliberate ethics-by-principles approach, with safeguards designed around the three core principles of the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979): respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Respect for persons was addressed through fully voluntary participation, with no consequence for declining or withdrawing, the freedom to skip any

question, and the option not to have one's name recorded at all, an option some participants exercised; the study proceeds by pseudonym for every participant regardless of whether a name was originally collected. Beneficence was addressed by avoiding unnecessary probing into sensitive political or conflict-related experiences, allowing participants to redirect or skip uncomfortable questions, and generalizing or aggregating quotations that could otherwise identify a specific participant, whether to an outside reader or to another member of the same small community; this was applied with particular care for Sudanese participants discussing a country currently in conflict, where personal or family details of the conflict itself were not probed for. Justice was addressed through clear, consistently applied inclusion and exclusion criteria, with participants selected because they fit the study's population rather than for convenience, and with both national groups included deliberately to support a genuinely comparative design rather than an arbitrary or one-sided sample. The study's reporting also follows the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ; Tong et al., 2007), including transparent reporting of researcher positionality, recruitment strategy, participant selection criteria, interview procedures, audio recording and verification practices, the iterative development of the interview guide, and post-interview participant validation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ten participants were interviewed: five Sudanese and five Egyptian postgraduate students, referred to here as SD1-SD5 and EG1-EG5. Fields of study ranged widely (food science, public health, electrical engineering, Islamic banking, literature, environmental engineering, information systems, and agricultural economics), and time in Indonesia ranged from roughly one year to nearly three. Four themes are discussed below: what participants are already sharing and why; how far, if at all, that sharing has extended into concrete plans; the near-universal insistence that anything brought home would need adapting; and a divergence between the two national groups in how home-country receptivity is understood, most sharply visible in how Sudanese participants describe conditions reshaped by conflict.

Sharing is frequent, but only some of it constitutes a genuine social remittance

Every participant described talking to people at home about their time in Indonesia, almost always through WhatsApp voice or video calls with parents, siblings, or former colleagues. The content of these conversations clustered around a few recurring observations: how neighborhoods and communities organize themselves and cooperate (mentioned independently by SD1, SD3, SD5, and EG4), the visible role of technology in daily services such as QR-code payments (EG5, SD1), and the general disposition of Indonesians toward patience and hospitality with people struggling with the language.

Not all of this sharing carried the same weight, and the distinction matters for how the concept of a social remittance is applied here. Some participants described a fairly deliberate motive behind what they chose to share. SD1 put it directly when explaining why he told his brother about Indonesia's approach to punctuality and digitized services: "what was in my mind was the idea of sharing knowledge and improving services in my country, because there is a lack of punctuality and most services are purely paper-based, unlike what I saw and used in Indonesia." SD4 similarly framed her sharing as purposeful: "I wanted to share practical experiences rather than just academic knowledge. Since Sudan is facing many challenges, I think hearing about approaches used elsewhere may help generate useful ideas." Other participants described something closer to incidental cultural exchange. EG5 was explicit that no developmental motive was involved: "I wasn't really thinking about teaching anyone something. It was more that I found these things interesting myself, so I naturally shared them." EG2's account of sharing "the advantages and disadvantages" of her experience read similarly, as an ongoing exchange of impressions rather than a transfer of anything meant to be used. Coding these two kinds of sharing separately, rather than treating any mention of Indonesia as a social remittance, is what allows the more purposive cases to stand out rather than being diluted by the much larger volume of everyday, incidental conversation every participant reported.

One further observation is worth noting on where this content actually comes from. Several participants distinguished, when asked directly,

between what they learned in coursework and what they picked up simply from living in Indonesia, and most placed more weight on the latter. EG5 (PhD, environmental engineering) was typical: “it comes from both, but probably more from everyday life. My coursework provides the theoretical background, while living here allows me to see how these ideas actually work in practice.” This matters for interpreting the accounts of participants who arrived more recently and have not yet advanced far into their degree programs: the content they have to share is not obviously thinner than that of participants further along, because much of what gets shared was never expected to come from specialized coursework in the first place.

This division between purposive and incidental sharing is consistent with Isaakyan and Triandafyllidou’s (2017) finding, based on 324 interviews with migrants across four European countries, that social remittances vary systematically in how much agency and intentionality senders bring to them, rather than forming a single undifferentiated category, and with Boccagni and Decimo’s (2013) broader argument that the concept only retains analytical usefulness if researchers actively distinguish which transfers are substantive from which are incidental, rather than treating any cross-border mention of a host-country experience as evidence of a remittance. It also converges with Vari-Lavoisier’s (2016) observation that social and economic remittances are frequently intertwined rather than cleanly separable, since several participants in the present study described sharing knowledge as something that might, if it ever became concrete, later involve resources as well. Notably, every participant relied on WhatsApp rather than any formal or institutional channel: whatever anticipated remittances exist here travel entirely through the same personal infrastructure used for ordinary family contact.

Anticipated contributions remain at the idea and informal-discussion stage

Following the concreteness rubric developed for this study, ranging from a bare idea, through informal sharing with someone specific, to a concrete plan, to institutional collaboration, not a single participant’s anticipated extension reached the level of institutional collaboration or an actual concrete plan; the most advanced cases reached the upper end of informal sharing, discussion with a

specific named contact, without progressing further. SD4 had discussed the idea of community health workshops with two former colleagues from her NGO and reported some agreement in principle to explore it “if conditions become more stable.” EG4 had raised the idea of stronger university-community-government cooperation on environmental projects with a former professor, who “thought the idea was interesting and suggested exploring small pilot projects,” though he was careful to describe this as still “only an informal discussion.” SD2 described discussions with friends and former classmates about adapting Indonesian community cooperation practices, again explicitly framed as informal: “these are still ideas and informal discussions rather than a formal project.”

Most participants, however, had not gone even this far. EG5 had mentioned his digital-services idea “only casually” to a former coworker, with the explicit acknowledgment that “nothing has become an actual plan yet.” SD5 described a similar state: an interesting idea about farmer cooperation, discussed with a former colleague, but shelved somewhat by more immediate concerns, since “with the current situation in Sudan there are bigger concerns right now.” SD3’s answer was the most direct: when asked whether he had thought through what he might do with an observation he found interesting, he answered simply, “I didn’t think it through to that degree, to be honest.”

This pattern is not read here as a weakness in the participants’ engagement with the question, but as a finding in its own right, and one anticipated in the study’s design. Participants were, without exception, still in Indonesia and still some distance from the point of return; several noted this directly. EG5 observed that he expected “to go back to working first” before any opportunity to act on his idea would even arise, and SD5 made a comparable point about needing “to see what opportunities are available” upon return. Anticipated social remittances, at this stage, appear to function less as settled plans than as a stock of ideas and loose contacts that participants expect to draw on later, when circumstances allow.

Asked separately whether their current thinking reflected something they had wanted to do before arriving in Indonesia or something that took shape only because of the experience, most

participants placed themselves somewhere in between, with Indonesia sharpening or redirecting an existing interest rather than creating one from nothing. EG4 described this precisely: he had been interested in community engagement before arriving, but “my experience here made the idea much more concrete.” SD5 offered a similar account, noting that her interest in agricultural development predated Indonesia but that “living in Indonesia made me think more about the social side” than the purely technical focus she had held before. A smaller number described something closer to a genuinely new realization. SD3’s account of Indonesia’s gotong royong ethic of mutual community support was framed this way: “I didn’t see we had a harmony problem until I came here.”

That no participant’s plan reached institutional collaboration is consistent with the broader pattern identified in Campbell and Neff’s (2020) systematic review of 105 studies on Global South scholarship programs, which found that the existing literature has documented why such programs are designed the way they are far more thoroughly than what recipients actually go on to do with their training. It also fits de Haas’s (2021) distinction between migration aspirations and migration capabilities: participants in this study consistently displayed the aspiration to contribute, but the capability, in Cassarino’s (2004) sense of resource-backed preparedness, had in every case not yet caught up with it.

Participants consistently expect adaptation rather than direct transfer

If one finding here can be called close to unanimous, it is this: participants across both nationalities and across every field of study insisted, usually without being pushed to say so, that whatever they might bring home would require adaptation rather than direct transfer. SD1 made the point concretely about his own idea for Arabic-language digital record-keeping systems: “it would be better to design systems in the Arabic language that all Sudanese use, instead of transferring the same digital systems that exist in Indonesia, which were sometimes designed to support both the Indonesian and English languages.” SD3 stated the general principle plainly: “you can’t just bring something from another country and expect it to work as it is; you must adapt it to the new

environment and even give it a different name sometimes.” EG4, EG5, SD4, and SD5 all made functionally the same point in their own words, each tying it to different local conditions, whether farming systems, health infrastructure, or professional culture.

This caveat was occasionally sharpened into something closer to a theory of why direct transfer fails, rather than a general disclaimer. EG3 offered the most developed version of this, describing how a difference in culture “usually takes a bad turn, where the recipient feels that this new information has come to demolish their culture and take away their authority.” This framing, that unadapted outside knowledge can be perceived as a threat to local standing rather than a neutral gift, is a more specific mechanism than “cultural difference” as such, and it echoes a related point made by EG5 about the reflexive response he anticipated at home: the moment someone says “this works in Indonesia,” the likely first reaction is “our situation is different,” a reaction he suggested sometimes forecloses a genuine hearing for the idea before it has been considered on its merits.

This finding sits usefully alongside Shrivastava’s (2026) recent argument, developed from Syrian and Nepali students’ experiences in India, that South-South mobility scholarship has too readily assumed cultural or religious proximity between host and home contexts translates into easy exchange. The present study extends that caution to the return journey itself: proximity between Indonesia and Sudan or Egypt (shared faith, in several participants’ own framing) did not exempt participants from expecting resistance, and in EG3’s account, may even sharpen it, since a recipient may find a similar-seeming source’s authority more threatening than an obviously foreign one. Gerale’s (2025) analysis of KNB alumni as carriers of a specific, negotiated form of knowledge legitimacy in Indonesia’s South-South diplomacy points toward a similar dynamic: how knowledge travels between culturally adjacent developing countries appears to depend heavily on how it is framed and by whom, not simply on whether it happens to work elsewhere.

Perceived receptivity diverges: stable bureaucracy in Egypt, reshaped priorities in Sudan

Both national groups described real, if different, barriers to bringing ideas home. Egyptian participants' accounts centered fairly consistently on bureaucratic and institutional resistance operating under otherwise stable conditions. EG1, who works for a national institute, was the most pointed: barriers come from "the bureaucracy and how people in authority use it to their advantage beyond any other considerations," a condition she confirmed applied directly to her own position. EG4 and EG5 described comparable obstacles in funding and administrative caution toward externally developed ideas, though EG4 noted that his existing professional contacts at his former university might partially offset this. EG2 described a different kind of barrier, less institutional than environmental and personal: the calm she had come to value in Indonesia, she suggested, might not survive contact with an environment in Egypt she described as louder and less accommodating of that disposition, adding, with some ambivalence, that she worried about "risking my peace of mind" by returning to it.

Sudanese participants' accounts of receptivity were harder to separate from the country's ongoing conflict, and the way the conflict was discussed varied in an instructive way. For three of the five Sudanese participants, the conflict was described mainly as a reason for postponement and reordered priority rather than abandonment. SD4 was explicit about this shift: "before the conflict, I imagined returning immediately to work on community health projects. Now I realize that rebuilding basic services and supporting local communities may have to come before introducing new programs." SD5 described an almost identical reordering: "before everything happened, I imagined finishing my degree and going back to continue working in agricultural development. Now I think more about recovery and rebuilding... some ideas that seemed important before don't feel as urgent anymore." SD2 struck a similar note while still affirming the underlying commitment: "my priority is now to focus on initiatives that can make a realistic and meaningful impact, even on a small scale."

SD1's account stood apart from this pattern in a way worth highlighting rather than folding into the general picture of postponement. Rather than

describing the conflict only as an obstacle, he described it as the source of a specific new need for exactly the kind of digital systems knowledge he had been developing in Indonesia: "after the war, most institutions were destroyed, especially the archives, so we have an urgent need for digital systems to preserve the data of Sudanese institutions." Where other participants described institutional destruction as something to work around or wait out, SD1 described it as clarifying, even sharpening, the relevance of what he had to offer. SD3's response pointed in a related direction without the same institutional specificity, framing the conflict as a reason for social solidarity rather than technical need: "in these times in particular, Sudanese people need to stick together and help each other."

Taken together, these accounts suggest that Sudan's conflict does not straightforwardly suppress anticipated social remittances so much as reorganize them, sometimes toward deferral and more basic priorities, and in at least one case toward a sharper sense of which specific contribution might actually be needed. This is a modest, illustrative pattern rather than a settled finding, given the small number of participants involved, but it argues against treating "conflict-affected home country" as a single, uniformly dampening condition on what students believe they can contribute.

This pattern has a close parallel in Prashizky's (2025) study of Ukrainian labor migrants in Israel following the full-scale Russian invasion, based on 26 in-depth interviews, which found that wartime giving remained active but became more complicated: migrants continued channeling support across family, community, and national levels as an expression of solidarity, while simultaneously voicing distrust of Ukrainian state institutions rooted in perceptions of corruption. The coexistence of continued moral commitment with institutional distrust in that study echoes, in a different register, the coexistence in the present data of Sudanese participants' continued willingness to contribute alongside their descriptions of damaged or unreliable institutions at home. Isaakyan and Triandafyllidou's (2017) typology of social remittances, which explicitly incorporates the sender's degree of ongoing mobility and connection to the homeland, offers one way to make sense of SD1's account specifically: his continued, close

contact with events in Sudan appears to be precisely what let him recognize a new, unmet need rather than only a general obstacle. Read together, this small but consistent body of recent work on conflict-affected diasporas suggests that the reorganizing effect observed among Sudanese participants here is not an anomaly specific to this sample, but a documented pattern in how mobile populations relate to homelands in crisis more broadly.

SD3's emphasis on solidarity also has a direct precedent in the literature: Kurokawa's (2023) study of skilled Sudanese migrants in Japan found that a spirit of mutual aid rooted in Islamic values and social ties, rather than instrumental calculation about specific skills or opportunities, was the primary driver of migrants' intention to return and contribute to Sudan. The present study's participants appear to be articulating a similar values-based motivation while still abroad, ahead of any actual decision about return, which suggests SD3's framing may reflect a broader, culturally specific pattern rather than an individual response to current events alone. More broadly, Chen et al.'s (2022) demographic analysis of return migration across sixty countries found that return migrants are consistently more educated than non-migrant populations in their countries of origin, a pattern consistent with treating this study's participants as a population with real, if not yet mobilized, human capital to offer.

One further dimension of receptivity is worth noting, since perceived barriers were consistently described in institutional and social rather than financial terms. Neither national group's participants reported any current financial dimension to their anticipated contributions; when asked directly, all who addressed the question (EG4, EG5, SD2, SD4, SD5) described their plans as involving knowledge and ideas rather than money, with several noting that funding would only become a relevant question if and when a project moved beyond the discussion stage.

CONCLUSION

This study asked how Sudanese and Egyptian postgraduate students in Indonesia describe extending small, informal acts of sharing knowledge and practice into something more deliberate after they return home, and how their

sense of home-country receptivity shapes what they can concretely describe. Three findings stand out. First, the great majority of what participants share with people at home is exchanged informally over WhatsApp and does not, on inspection, carry a clear developmental purpose; treating all such sharing as a social remittance would have obscured the smaller set of cases where participants describe a genuinely purposive motive. Second, at this stage, roughly one to three years into their time in Indonesia, no participant's anticipated contribution had progressed past an informal discussion with one or two contacts, a pattern best read as a function of where participants sit in their own trajectory rather than a lack of intent. Third, and perhaps most significant for the literature this study sits within, home-country conditions do not appear to act on anticipated transfer in only one direction. Sudan's ongoing conflict was described by most Sudanese participants as a reason to defer and rescale ambitions, but by at least one participant as a reason his specific area of expertise, digital preservation of institutional records, had become more relevant, not less.

These findings should be read with the study's scope in mind. Ten interviews, drawn substantially through the researcher's own personal and community network, cannot support claims about Sudanese or Egyptian students in Indonesia generally, and the study captures anticipated rather than realized transfer. What it offers instead is a first, grounded look at a population and a question, that the existing literature on international students in Indonesia and on social remittances more broadly has not yet examined together. Future research following students closer to or after their actual return would be well placed to test whether the patterns described here, particularly the reordering of priorities observed among Sudanese participants, persist, sharpen, or dissolve once the abstract question of "what I might bring home" becomes a concrete one.

REFERENCES

- Ali, S., Yoenanto, N. H., & Nurdibyanandaru, D. (2020). Acculturative stress among international students at Airlangga University - Indonesia. *Society*, 8(1), 123-135.
- Boccagni, P., & Decimo, F. (2013). Mapping social remittances. *Migration Letters*, 10(1), 1-10.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589-597.
- Campbell, A. C. (2018). Influencing pathways to social change: Scholarship program conditionality and individual agency. In J. R. Dassin, R. R. Marsh, & M. Mawer (Eds.), *International scholarships in higher education: Pathways to social change* (pp. 165-186). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Campbell, A. C. (2020). "Giving back" to one's country following an international higher education scholarship: Comparing in-country and expatriate alumni perceptions of engagement in social and economic change in Moldova. *Compare*, 50(4), 573-591.
- Campbell, A. C., & Neff, E. (2020). A systematic review of international higher education scholarships for students from the Global South. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(6), 824-861.
- Cassarino, J.-P. (2004). Theorising return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 6(2), 253-279.
- Chen, C., Bernard, A., Rylee, R., & Abel, G. (2022). Brain circulation: The educational profile of return migrants. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 41(1), 387-399.
- de Haas, H. (2021). A theory of migration: The aspirations-capabilities framework. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 9(1), 8.
- Fajarwati, I., & Suyanto, A. (2019). Student mobility: Factors for choosing Indonesia as a study abroad destination. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(3), 514-530.
- Gerale, C. (2025). The Kemitraan Negara Berkembang (KNB) diplomacy: Leveraging scholarship program to advance Indonesia's epistemic soft power in the Global South. *Indonesian Journal of International Relations*, 9(2), 249-272.
- Habib, L., Johannesen, M., & Øgrim, L. (2014). Experiences and challenges of international students in technology-rich learning environments. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 17(2), 196-206.
- Hamamah, & Hapsari, Y. (2021). English and international students' adjustment in Indonesian higher education: A teacher's perspective. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 6(2).
- Harjono, H. S., & Wachyunni, S. (2025). International students' strategies for overcoming barriers in learning Indonesian. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 15(2), 289-304.
- Isaakyan, I., & Triandafyllidou, A. (2017). "Sending so much more than money": Exploring social remittances and transnational mobility. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(15), 2787-2805.
- Kim, D., Bankart, C. A., Jiang, X., & Brazil, A. M. (2018). Understanding the college choice process of Asian international students. In Y. Ma & M. A. Garcilla-Murillo (Eds.), *Understanding international students from Asia in American universities* (pp. 15-41). Springer.
- King, R., Lulle, A., & Buzinska, L. (2016). Beyond remittances: Knowledge transfer among highly educated Latvian youth abroad. *Sociology of Development*, 2(2), 183-203.
- Kurokawa, C. (2023). Sudan's brain gain: What motivates the intention of skilled Sudanese in Japan to return and contribute to their home country. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 25(2), 221-235.
- Lee, S. W. (2017). Circulating east to east: Understanding the push-pull factors of Chinese studying in Korea. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 21(2), 170-190.
- Levitt, P. (1998). Social remittances: Migration driven local-level forms of cultural diffusion. *International Migration Review*, 32(4), 926-948.
- Muslim, A. B., Imperiani, E., Musthafa, B., Farlian, T., & Francisco, A. (2025). Enhancing international student motivations in Indonesian universities: Building academic reputation in the Global South. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*.
- National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral

- Research. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.
- Nevinskaite, L. (2016). Social remittances from the professional diaspora: The issue of home-country receptivity. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, 5(2).
- Nur, R., Nasir, S. A., & Burhanuddin, W. (2021). International students in Makassar Indonesia: Do they experience any cultural shock? *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 9(3).
- Pitriyani, Wilodati, & Maftuh, B. (2024). Systematic literature review: Gelar budaya dan strategi adaptasi sosial mahasiswa asing di Indonesia. *Jurnal Dinamika*.
- Prashizky, A. (2025). Moral remittances at war: The impact of the full-scale Russian invasion on money transfers by Ukrainian female labour migrants in Israel. *Population, Space and Place*.
- Pratama, F. Y., Ramadhani, R. P., Laksono, P. T., & Saputro, H. B. (2026). Exploring the experiences of international Muslim students navigating Islamic diversity in Indonesia. *Discover Education*, 5, 183.
- Shrivastava, A. (2026). South-South student mobility and the myth of easy adaptation: Lessons for higher education institutions in the Global South. *Studies in Higher Education*.
- Simek, L., & Stewart, W. H. (2024). International student recruitment and support in Indonesia: A systematic review of literature from 2012-2022. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 28(5), 818-834.
- Tong, A., Sainsbury, P., & Craig, J. (2007). Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): A 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 19(6), 349-357.
- Vari-Lavoisier, I. (2016). The economic side of social remittances: How money and ideas circulate between Paris, Dakar, and New York. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 4, 20.
- Wang, Z., Hanley, N., Kwak, J., Vari-Lavoisier, I., Al Hussein, M., Sanchez Tyson, L., Akkad, A., & Chankseliani, M. (2024). How do international student returnees contribute to the development of their home countries? A systematic mapping and thematic synthesis. *International Journal of Educational Research*.
- Widiasih, R., Hermayanti, Y., & Ermia. (2020). International students' experience of studying at Indonesian universities: A systematic review. *Journal of International Students*, 10(S3), 24-43.
- Wilczewski, M., & Alon, I. (2023). Language and communication in international students' adaptation: A bibliometric and content analysis review. *Higher Education*, 85, 1235-1256.
- Xu, X., Tran, L. T., & Xie, X. (2023). Between decolonization and recolonization: Investigating Chinese doctoral students in Malaysia as a case of global South-South student mobility. *Higher Education*.