

Factors Affecting Internally Displaced Persons Returning to their Home Cities

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the world, millions of people have been forced to flee their homes and communities for many reasons. Some are displaced only temporarily and are able to return to their communities when conflicts are resolved or flood waters have receded, but most live many years as refugees or IDPs. The present study is conducted to assess the factors affecting the IDPs returning to their home cities. A descriptive Survey Study is conducted from the period of 1st. Nov., 2018 to 30th. Jan., 2019. The study conducted in Al-Najaf City. 139 IDPs those who selected through a non-probability accidental sample were included in the study. The data were collected through use of an assessment tool constructed by the researcher include three main parts are demographic data, clinical data, and the factors affecting on the returning and they are the economic related factors, security related factors and the psychosocial factors. The results of the study reveal that the economic related factors are the dominant factors make the IDPs undecided yet to return to their home cities. The study recommends that the economic support should be provided to the IDPs to support them to return freely to their home cities. In addition, a special symposiums should be conducted to increased the community awareness about how to support the decision of the IDPs in returning freely to their home cities. Furthermore, the decision makers should be take in consideration the economic, security, and psychosocial factors when establishing the plans and solutions.

Keywords: IDPs, factors, economic related factors.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, millions of people have been forced to flee their homes and communities for many reasons: civil wars, interstate conflicts, military campaigns, tsunamis, earthquakes, and a multitude of other disasters. Many have crossed national borders and live in nearby countries as refugees. Many more remain within the borders of their country as internally displaced persons (IDPs). Some are displaced only temporarily and

are able to return to their communities when conflicts are resolved, but most live many years as refugees or IDPs (Brookings Institution, 2009).

This massive dislocation of people affects both national development plans and individual human development. It impacts national security and personal security. It affects relationships between neighboring countries, UN Security Council discussions, and peace processes. In short, understanding—and resolving—displacement is central

to development, peace, and security (Brookings Institution, 2009).

South Asia has also been particularly affected by large-scale displacement. In terms of refugees, Afghanistan was the leading country of origin at the end of 2007 with 3.1 million refugees hosted mainly by Pakistan and Iran (UNHCR, 2008).

In Iraq, there have been three relevant, distinct phases of displacement in the modern history of Iraq. The first phase encompasses all displacement that occurred prior to 2003, the second followed the American-led intervention and the third phase came as a result of the sectarian violence that engulfed the country in 2006 (IOM, 2013).

Recently, the displacement of Iraqis—both internally and across Iraq's borders—has dramatically impacted the Muslim world. While Iraqis were subjected to mass attacks and displacements under the regime of Saddam Hussein, the ethno-sectarian violence and general insecurity which flourished under the U.S. occupation has led to unprecedented numbers of Iraqi families fleeing their homes and sometimes the country. Today, roughly two million Iraqis are refugees and another 2.8 million are IDPs (Brookings Institution, 2009a). Furthermore, Displacement in Iraq is a chronic phenomenon with major humanitarian, security, political, social and economic implications (Brookings Institution, 2009b).

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2000, recognizing that the right of refugees and internally displaced persons to return freely to their original homes or places of habitual residence in safety and dignity coupled with their right to adequate housing and property restitution or, should this not be possible, just compensation or another form of just reparation, form indispensable elements of national reintegration, reconstruction and reconciliation, and that the recognition of such rights, as well as judicial or other mechanisms to ensure the implementation of such rights, should be included in peace agreements ending armed conflicts. Recognizing also the right of all returnees to the free exercise of their right to freedom of movement and to choose their residence, including the right to re-establish residence in their original homes or places of habitual residence, including issuance of relevant documentation, their right to privacy and respect for the home, their right to reside peacefully in the security of their own home and their right to enjoy access to all necessary social and economic services, in an environment free of any form of discrimination. In addition, the right to freedom of movement and the right to adequate housing and property restitution include the right of protection for returning refugees and internally displaced persons against being compelled to return to their original homes or places of habitual residence and that the right to return to their original homes or places of habitual residence must be exercised in a voluntary, safe and dignified manner.

METHODOLOGY

Research design: A descriptive Survey Study is conducted to determine the factors affecting the returning of the internally displaced persons to their home cities from the period of 1st. Nov., 2018 to 30th, Jan., 2019.

Setting: The study conducted in Al-Najaf City.

Study sample: The accessible population of the present study is the IDPs they displaced into the Al-Najaf City. So, the study sample include 139 IDPs those who selected through a non-probability accidental sample.

Sample size: The sample size is determined through use of the power analysis method in determining sample size. This method includes three main factors, are power (0.90), significance (0.05), and the size effect (0.30). The final sample size is about 100 IDPs, but the researcher increased the sample size into 139 IDPs to increased the confidence in the study results.

Tools and methods of data collection: An assessment tool developed by the researcher based on the previous studies. The final copy of this tool includes the following parts:

Part one: Demographic data of the IDPs.

Part two: Clinical data of the IDPs.

Part three: This part includes the factors affecting the returning of the IDPs to their home cities, these factors aggregate into three main groups of factors, are economic related factors, security related factors, and the psychosocial factors.

Before the data collection process is starting, the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire are estimated. The face validity of the questionnaire is estimated through distribution of the questionnaire to ten experts in field of Sociology, Psychology, and Community Health Nursing. While the reliability of the questionnaire is estimated through application of the alpha-cronbach reliability estimation technique and the reliability score is (0.89).

The data were collected through structured interview with each displaced persons by using the Arabic version of the questionnaire. After the ethical considerations are maintained.

Ethical considerations: The ethical consideration is an important thing in all the studies. In the current study, informed consent is obtained from the study subjects to participate in the present study. In addition, the researcher explain the title and the aim of the study to the study subjects and the participation maintained as voluntarily.

Statistical analysis

The data analysis conducted through application of the descriptive and inferential data analysis methods as follow:

Descriptive statistics include frequency, percentage, bar chart, and pie chart.

Inferential statistics include chi-square, regression, and ANOVA.

STUDY RESULTS

Figure 1. Distribution of the IDPs according to the types of shelter

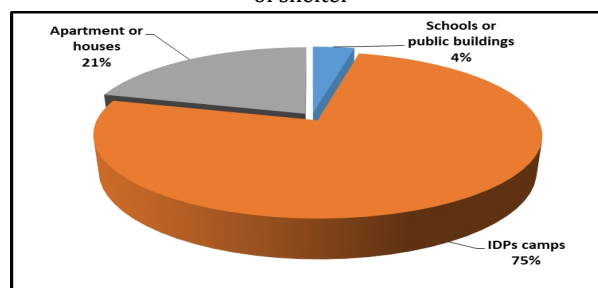


Figure 2. Distribution of the IDPs according to the reasons of displacement

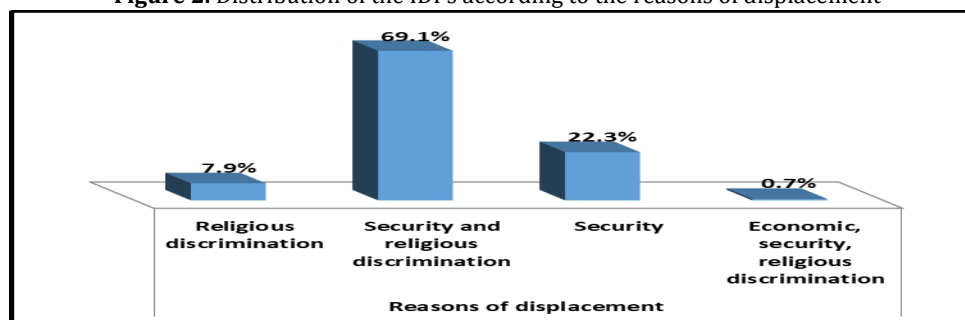


Table 1. IDPs Demographic Data

Demographic data	Rating and intervals	Frequency	%
Home City	Talaafer	73	52.5
	Sinjar	8	5.8
	Ninawa	34	24.5
	Alssahil Al'aysar	6	4.3
	Alhamdanyah	8	5.8
	Talkaif	5	3.6
	Yasso	5	3.6
Religious doctrine	Shi'a Arab	90	64.7
	Sunni	35	25.2
	Others	14	10.1
Duration since displacement / years	4 and less	94	67.6
	5 and more	45	32.4
Age / years	<= 20	2	1.4
	21- 30	28	20.1
	31- 40	51	36.7
	41- 50	23	16.5
	51+	35	25.2
Gender	Male	95	68.3
	Female	44	31.7
Education levels	Does not read and write	49	35.3
	Read and write	7	5.0
	Primary school graduated	53	38.1
	Intermediate school graduated	10	7.2
	Preparatory school graduated	10	7.2
	Institute graduated	8	5.8
	College graduated	2	1.4
Socioeconomic status	Sufficient	15	10.8
	Sufficient to some extent	47	33.8
	Insufficient	77	55.4
Residency before displacement	Rural	71	51.1
	Urban	68	48.9
Marital status before displacement	Single	9	6.5
	Married	123	88.5
	Widowed	7	5.0
Marital status after displacement	No changed	132	95.0
	Separated	1	.7
	Widowed	4	2.9
	Divorced	2	1.4
Occupational status before displacement	Retired	3	2.2
	Housewife	42	30.2
	Employee	13	9.4
	Jobless	11	7.9
	Free workers	70	50.4
Occupational status after displacement	No changed	101	72.7
	Lost the job	29	20.9
	Changed the job	9	6.5

Table 1 include the demographic assessment of the study subjects. The study results indicate that the majority of the study subjects were from Talaafer city, shi'a arab, displaced since 4 years, 31-40 years old, males, primary school graduated, rural residents, married, and free

workers.

Table 2 refers to the assessment of the clinical data of the internally displaced persons. The study results indicate that (43.2%) of the study subjects are suffering from chronic diseases. While for the injuries, the study results

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indicate that (23%) are suffering from injuries. In addition to that, the (48.9%) of the study subjects are need medical interventions.

Table 3 refers to assessment of the study subjects preference to return to their home cities with respect to the economic related factors. The study results indicate that 66.9% of the study subjects are prefer to stay displaced because the economic barriers that make them disagree with the returning.

Table 4 refers to assessment of the study subjects preference to return to their home cities with respect to the security related factors. The study results indicate that 70.5% of the study subjects are still undecided about the returning due to the instability in the security in their home cities.

Table 5 refers to assessment of the study subjects preference to return to their home cities with respect to the psychosocial factors. The study results indicate that 82% of the study subjects are still undecided about the returning to their home cities.

Table 2. IDPs Clinical Data

Clinical data	Rating	Frequency	%
Suffering from Chronic diseases	Yes	60	43.2
	No	79	56.8
	Total	139	100.0
Suffering from injuries	Yes	32	23.0

	No	107	77.0
	Total	139	100.0
Needs to Medical intervention	Yes	68	48.9
	No	71	51.1
	Total	139	100.0

Table 3. IDPs preference to returning to their home cities based on the economic related factors

Levels of preference	Frequency	Percent
Disagree With Return	93	66.9
Undecided Yet	38	27.3
Agree With Return	8	5.8

Table 4. IDPs preference to returning to their home cities based on the security related factors

Levels of preference	Frequency	Percent
Disagree With Return	9	6.5
Undecided Yet	98	70.5
Agree With Return	32	23.0

Table 5. IDPs preference to returning to their home cities based on the psychosocial factors

Levels of preference	Frequency	Percent
Disagree With Return	14	10.1
Undecided Yet	114	82.0
Agree With Return	11	7.9

Figure 3. Distribution of the IDPs according to their preference to returning based on the different studied domains

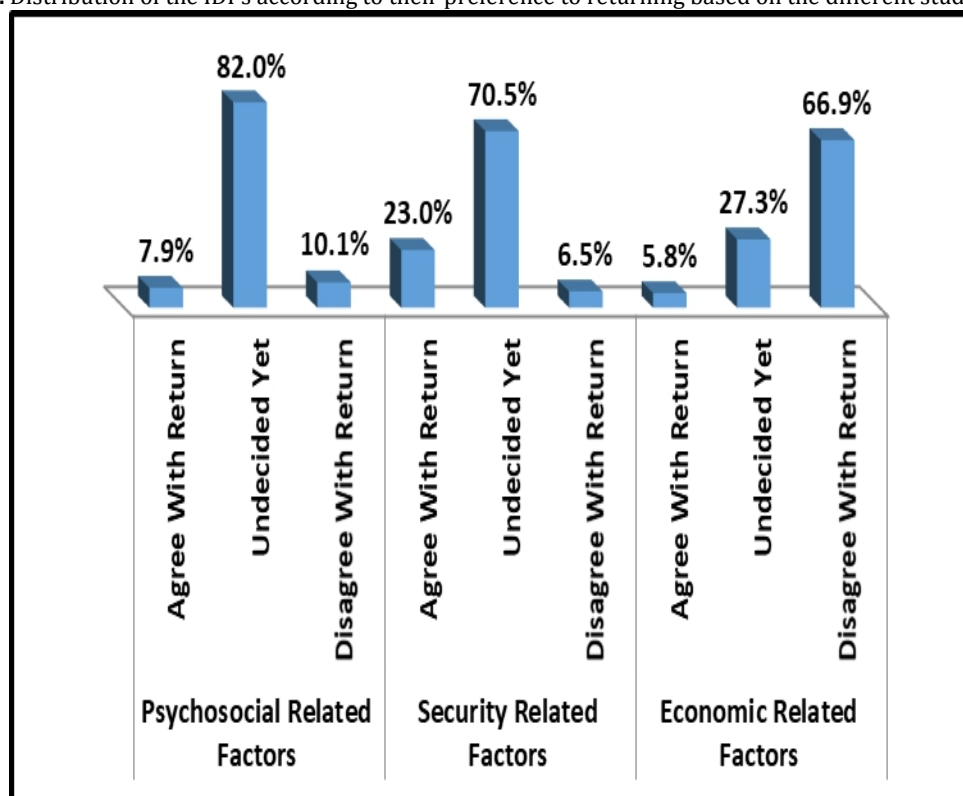


Table 6. Overall IDPs preference to returning to their home cities

Main Studied Domain	Rating	Frequency	Percent
Overall IDPs Preference To Returning To Their Home Cities	Disagree With Return	19	13.7
	Undecided Yet	117	84.2
	Agree With Return	3	2.2

Generally, the study subjects are still undecided to return to their home cities and they may adapted in the areas

that what they displaced to. And that because they have an economic, security, and /or psychosocial barriers.

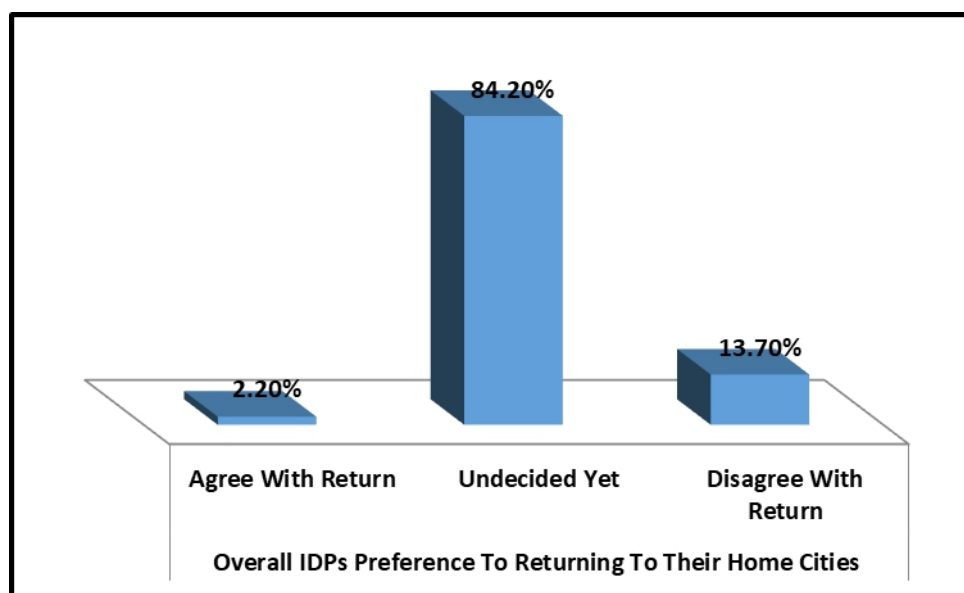


Figure 4. Distribution of the IDPs according to their overall preference to returning based on the different studied domains

Table 7. Association between overall IDPs preference to returning to their home cities and the different studied factors

Main Studied Domains	Chi-Square Value	Degree Of Freedom	P-Value	R
Economic Related Factors	50.841	4	0.0001	0.71
Security Related Factors	58.200	4	0.0001	0.53
Psychosocial Factors	21.658	4	0.0001	0.58

R (linear regression)

Table (7) shows that there a high significant association between the study subjects decision about the returning to their home cities and the economic related factors, security related factors, and psychosocial factors. With

respect to the regression analysis, the study results indicate that there is a direct relationship between the economic, security, and psychosocial factors and the overall IDPs preference about their returning to their home cities.

Table 8. Analysis of Variance of the studied factors and the overall preference of the study sample to returning to their home cities

Main studied factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P-value
Economic related factors	2.4451	.37109	13.5	0.001
security related factors	1.9700	.30446	55.2	0.001
psychosocial factors	2.0486	.26474	7.9	0.001

The analysis of variance analysis (ANOVA) is conducted to determine the differences between the different studied factors regarding the overall study subjects preference to returning to their home cities. i. e. is there an effect of the studied factors on the study subjects decision to returning and what is the most effected factors. The study results indicate that there is a high significant difference between the studied factors and the study subjects decision to returning. With respect to the statistical mean, the study results indicate that the economic factors are the most effected factors on the study subjects decision about returning to their home cities.

DISCUSSION

December 2017 marked the end of major military operations in Iraq against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). While more than 4 million returns have been recorded as of September 2018, almost 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain, of whom 71% reside outside of formal camps. Moreover, secondary displacement and new arrivals to formal camps signal the tenuous nature of some returns. Therefore, although recovery efforts in Iraq are underway, there are many factors still affecting the IDPs

returning to their home cities (IOM, 2018). The present study aimed to determine the factors affecting the returning the IDPs to their home cities. These factors include the economic related factors, security related factors, and the psychosocial factors. The present study results show that the majority of the IDPs are from Talaifer city, shi'a arab, displaced since 4 years, 31-40 years old, males, primary school graduated, rural residents, married, and free workers. According to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, over 80% of the displaced are women and young children (IRCS, 2008). IDMC reports that most displaced women are single or unaccompanied, and the elderly also make a large part of the displaced population. Approximately 58% of IDPs are Sunni Arabs, 29% are Shi'a Arabs, and 13% are minorities such as Shabaks, Christians, Armenians, and others (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2010). The differences between the statistics of the previous studies and the current study indicate that the majority of the returnee are from Sunni Dicatorine due to the religious factors, while the Al-Shi'a Arab still displaced for the same reason. Regarding to the marital status, the differences indicate that the majority of the returnee are from the single persons.

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In addition, the results of the present study indicate that the majority of the study subjects undecided yet about the returning to their cities. In addition, about 13.7% of the study sample are still disagree with returning to their home cities. And only 2.2 % of them are agree with the returning.

Furthermore, the study results indicate that the economic related factors are the major factors affecting the study subjects' returning to their home cities followed by the psychosocial factors and finally the security related factors. The major economic related factors that affecting the returning include the working opportunities provided in Al-Najaf City; an available money to build their houses, educate their children, and provide the living arrangement. Regarding to the psychosocial factors that prevent the returning, the study subjects' think that are customs and traditions; social and religious discrimination; clan or doctrine pressure; and peer support are prevent them from returning to their home cities. Besides that, the study subjects' add the security situation, and the low support of the security forced in their home cities are addition factors prevent them from returning to home cities.

According to Brookings Institution, 2009, a millions of Iraqis remain displaced within the borders of Iraq and in neighboring countries. Security concerns continue to affect displaced populations. Despite the general decrease in conflict since 2006–07, political uncertainties and the persistence of bombings, kidnappings and other incidents of violence – including those that target Christians and other minorities – have deterred people from trying to return home. The homogenization of neighborhoods along ethnic or sectarian lines may also contribute to the reluctance on the part of former inhabitants to return to the communities from which they fled.

The quality of life in Iraq has decreased dramatically since 2003 (Margesson , et al., 2013). And therefore economic and livelihood factors also play a major role in the complex decision-making processes of displaced Iraqis (Brookings Institution, 2009). Unemployment is endemic in Iraq and many IDPs, particularly women, do not have adequate access to employment opportunities. Many have also had their homes destroyed or occupied by others and must find alternative sources of shelter for themselves and their families. UNHCR estimates that over one million internally displaced Iraqis need assistance with food and shelter (Margesson , et al., 2013). In many neighborhoods, access to essential services such as clean water, electricity, basic health care, and education is still inadequate. In addition such challenges may create barriers not only to return but to subsistence.

A third barrier to return is the psychosocial barriers. The Government of Iraq has taken measures to restore private property ownership and to resolve conflicts over land, but these policies so far have had a limited impact (IDMC, 2010).

Interviews with Iraqi IDPs have revealed that, given the security and socio-economic barriers to return, many would prefer to integrate into their new communities or to relocate somewhere else (Brookings Institution, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Based on the study results, the study concludes that the economic factors are the dominant reason make the IDPs un decided yet ro return to their home cities, followed by the security related factors and the psychosocial factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study results and conclusion, the study recommends an economic support should be provided to the IDPs to support them to return freely to their home cities. In addition, a special symposiums should be conducted to increased the community awareness about how to support the decision of the IDPs in returning freely to their home cities. Furthermore, the decision makers should be take in consideration the economic, security, and psychosocial factors when establishing the plans and solutions.

Financial disclosure

There is no financial disclosure.

Conflict of interest

None to declare.

Ethical Clearance

All experimental protocols were approved under the University of Al-Ameed and all experiments were carried out in accordance with approved guidelines.

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