DOCTORAL STUDENT PERSISTENCE IN LAW PROGRAMS IN

KAZAKHSTAN

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Educational Leadership

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

June, 2018

Word Count: [14732]

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Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to my family for their support and encouragement.

I am grateful to my thesis supervisor Dr. Dilrabo Jonbekova for her guidance, encouragement and support. Her high professionalism and constructive feedback helped me to conduct research and write my thesis.

I am also thankful to all NUGSE faculty and staff for supporting and guiding us.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere love and appreciation to my mother who always believe in me and support me by looking after my children.

Abstract

DOCTORAL STUDENT PERSISTENCE IN LAW PROGRAMS IN

KAZAKHSTAN

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that successful graduates of doctoral degrees in law programs attribute to their persistence towards degree completion in Kazakhstan. A multiple case study design was implemented, with each participant considered as an individual case. The sample included six graduates of doctoral degrees in law from Kazakhstani universities both male and female, single and married, state-funded and self-funded, who graduated in the last five years and who were working in the legal field at a higher education institution in Astana. Within-case and cross-case analysis was used to answer the research questions.

The study revealed that psycho-sociocultural factors were key factors that affected doctoral persistence towards degree completion, while financial, academic and social integration factors were secondary factors in doctoral persistence. The participants had challenging experiences during their doctoral journey such as too much coursework that distracted from writing thesis, the requirement to publish an article in an international impact-factor journal in a short period of time, isolation from university life, balancing study and family obligations to raise children. However, the participants persisted towards their doctoral degree completion with strong motivation to become a researcher, psychological and social support from family, and positive role models and mentors.

This study is particularly significant as it focuses solely on doctoral persistence in law programs. No research has been conducted on this field in Kazakhstan. By understanding doctoral persistence factors strategies can be developed to improve persistence in degree completion. Although this study was conducted on a small number of

participants within Kazakhstani context, it contributes to the existing educational research by suggesting new directions to future studies in doctoral attrition and completion rates and time-to-degree in law programs.

Аннотация

ВЫПУСК ДОКТОРАНТОВ В ЮРИДИЧЕСКИХ ПРОГРАММАХ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

Цель этого исследования состояла в том, чтобы изучить факторы, которые выпускники докторских степеней в юридических программах в Казахстане относят к успешному завершению обучения. Было использовано множественный кейс-стади, причем каждый участник рассматривался как отдельный кейс. В выборку вошли шесть выпускников докторских степеней по юридическим программам из казахстанских университетов, как мужчины, так и женщины, холостые и состоящие в браке, на государством гранте и на платной основе, окончившие последние пять лет и работавшие в юридической сфере в высшем учебном заведении в Астане. Внутри-кейсовый и кросс-кейсовый анализ использовался для ответа на вопросы исследования.

Исследование показало, что психо-социокультурные факторы являются ключевыми факторами, которые влияют на успешное завершение обучения, в то время как факторы финансовой, академической и социальной интеграции являются второстепенными факторами. У участников был сложности во время обучения, например, слишком много курсовых работ, которые отвлекали от написания диссертации, требования публиковать статью в международном журнале с импакт-фактором за короткий промежуток времени, изолированность от университетской жизни, балансировать учебу и семейные обязанности растить детей. Тем не менее,

участники успешно завершили обучение благодаря сильной мотивацией, чтобы стать исследователем, психологической и социальной поддержки со стороны семьи, и положительным примерам для подражания и наставниками.

Это исследование особенно важно, поскольку оно фокусируется исключительно на докторантуре по юридических программам. В этой области в Казахстане еще не проводились исследования. Понимая факторы успешного завершения обучения, стратегии могут быть разработаны для повышения упорства в получении докторской степени. Хотя это исследование было проведено на небольшом числе участников в казахстанском контексте, оно вносит свой вклад в существующие образовательные исследования, предлагая новые направления для будущих исследований в области отчисления и успешного завершения обучения докторантов, а также продолжительности обучения для получения степени в юридических программах.

Аңдатпа

ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ЗАҢ БАҒДАРЛАМАЛАРЫ БОЙЫНША ДОКТОРАНТТАРДЫҢ ОҚУДЫ СӘТТІ АЯҚТАУЫ

Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты Қазақстандағы заң бағдарламалары бойынша докторлық оқуды бітірушілерінің оқуды сәтті аяқтау факторларын зерттеу болып табылады. Зерттеу барысында әр қатысушы бөлек кейс болып қарастырылып, көптік кейс-стади қолданылды. Іріктемеге еркек және әйел, басы бос және некелі, мемлекеттік грант бойынша және ақылы оқыған, Астанада жоғарғы оқу орнында заң саласында жұмыс істеп жатқан, Қазақстан университеттерінің заң бағдарламалары бойынша алты докторлық дәрежесін соңғы бес жылда бітірушілер кірді. Зерттеу сұрақтарына жауап беру үшін кейс-ішілік және кейс-аралық анализ қолданылды.

Бұл зерттеу оқуды сәтті бітіруде психо-социомәдени факторлар басты фактор, ал қаржылық, академиялық және әлеуметтік факторлар екінші кезектегі факторлар болып табылатындығынкөрсетті. Оқу барысында қатысушыларда мынадай қиыншылықтар болды:диссертация жазудан алаңдататын өте көп курстық жұмыстар, аз уақыт ішінде импакт-факторлы халықаралық журналда мақала жариялау талабы, университет өмірінен оқшаулану, оқу мен бала өсіру міндетін теңгеру. Дегенмен, қатысушылар зерттеуші болуға мықты уәждеме, отбасы тарапынан психологиялық және әлеуметтік қолдау, еліктеуге болатын оң тұлғалар мен тәлімгерлер арқасында оқуды сәтті аяқтады.

Бұл зерттеу ерекше маңызды, себебі ол заң бағдарламалары бойынша докторлық оқуға назар аударған. Бұл сала бойынша Қазақстанда әлі зерттеу жүргізіген емес. Оқуды сәтті аяқтау факторларын түсіну арқылы докторлық дәреже алуға табандылықты нығайту стратегиялары жасалуы мүмкін. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандық мәнмәтінде аз ғана қатысушылар арасында жүргізілгенмен, ол докторанттардың оқудан шығуы және оқуды сәтті аяқтауы, сонымен қатар докторлық дәреже алуға кеткен уақыт бойынша болашақ зерттеулерге жаңа бағыт ұсынып, білім беру саласындағы қазіргі зерттеулерге үлесін қосады.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the topic of the study. The chapter consists of six parts and includes study's background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research significance and contribution, and research questions.

Background

As individuals, institutions, and society as a whole, invest significant amount of resources and time in doctoral education, attrition of doctoral students and their persistence towards degree completion has been studied by many researchers (Naylor, Chakravarti and Baik, 2016). In the context of doctoral education, the term "persistence" is defined as "the continuance of a student's progress toward the completion of a doctoral degree" (Bair, 1999. p. 8). The opposite term to persistence is attrition, which is "generally referred to when explaining or discussing students who drop-out of doctoral programs prior to completing their doctorate degree" (Ali and Kohun, 2007, p. 35).

There are multiple reasons behind studying doctoral student attrition and persistence. Attrition is a serious issue in the doctoral education worldwide. According to the studies in the US for the last four decades, 40% to 60% of doctoral students withdraw from the program at some stage in the process (Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). First of all, attrition incurs personal cost to doctoral students, "leaving them depressed and sometimes suicidal" (Hoskins and Goldberg, 2005, p. 175). They have personal, financial and professional problems. Along with financial aid debt, they have difficulties in finding well-paid jobs. Non-completers also "have long-term emotional consequences including regret, disappointment, and frustration" (Mason, 2012, p. 260).

Important consequences of attrition to the society are loss of highly trained specialists, faculty members' time and effort spent on doctoral students and financial cost

to academic institutions. Doctoral degree holders usually occupy top positions in education and research by disseminating gained knowledge and producing new knowledge. Mason (2012) explains the consequences of attrition as following: "When students leave graduate study, it impacts departments and faculty, universities, society, and the students who leave. Departments and faculty are impacted because low graduating departments may be discontinued. Universities have to pay for recruiting new students to replace the students who leave. When doctoral students leave doctoral study, our society has fewer educated people who could work in a variety of fields" (Mason, 2012, p. 259).

Longer time-to-degree can also have high costs to students, institutions, and the society. As doctoral students who work full-time have to study part-time, it takes for them longer to graduate compared to full-time doctoral students (Wao & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Longer time-to-degree leads to "increased institutional costs incurred in preparing students, delayed entry into workforce, and reduction in the years of productive work-life in students' chosen professions thus diminishing the expected benefits accruing to the graduates" (Wao, 2010, p. 228).

Statement of the problem

Doctoral education in Kazakhstan has experienced major reforms since the independence. One of the most important changes is the replacement of the Soviet two-stage training system (the degree of Candidate of Science and the degree of Doctor of Science) with the one-level system (the Philosophy Doctor (PhD) degree). Consequently, credit system was introduced and included an external committee member to align with the European education area. Another important change is a requirement to publish an article in in international impact-factor journals in order to complete the degree. There is also a new requirement for PhD students to undergo foreign training (Kuzhabekova and Temerbayeva, 2016).

According to the State Compulsory Standard of Graduate Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on August 23, 2012, the doctoral program is at least 3 years and includes:1) theoretical training, including the study of the cycle of basic and profiling disciplines; 2) practical training of doctoral students: various types of professional internships, research trainings;3) research (experimental and research) work, including the writing of a doctoral dissertation;4) intermediate and final attestation. Within the framework of the Research Work of the Doctoral Student, the individual plan of the doctoral student for acquaintance with innovative technologies and new types of production provides for mandatory research training in research organizations and/or organizations of relevant industries or spheres of activity, including foreign organizations. The terms of the foreign training are determined by the university independently (adilet.zan.kz, accessed on June 27, 2018).

According to the Rules for awarding academic degrees of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the dissertation is written under the guidance of domestic and foreign supervisors who have academic degrees and are specialists in the field of scientific research of doctoral students. The main findings of the dissertation are published in at least 7 (seven) publications on the topic of the dissertation, including at least 3 (three) in scientific publications recommended by the authorized body, 1 (one) in an international scientific publication that has a non-zero impact factor or is included in the database of Scopus, according to the ISI Web of Knowledge, Thomson Reuters, 3 (three) in the materials of international conferences, including 1 (one) in the materials for foreign conferences (MESRK, 2018).

The reforms in the doctoral education system has led to changes in the number of doctoral students. According to the OECD Report on Higher Education in Kazakhstan (2017), the doctoral education system is not preparing enough doctoral graduates (OECD,

2017). Although the number of doctoral students enrolled in local higher education institutions has increased from 1337 in 2011 to 3603 in 2017 (see Table 1), the completion rate is very low; 32.8% defended dissertations in 2015, 18.9% in 2016 and 34.5% in 2017 (Committee on Statistics of the RK, 2018).

Table 1. Enrollment of doctoral students in higher education institutions of Kazakhstan (2010-2017)

	Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1	Total number enrolled	1337	1588	1892	2063	2288	2710	3603
2	Number of new entrants	609	565	638	729	794	1086	1671
3	Release of doctoral students	159	257	373	503	533	619	721
4	Defended dissertation	111	110	100	125	175	117	249
5	Share of graduates with a dissertation defense,%	69.8	42.8	26.8	24.8	32.8	18.9	

Sources: Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Committee on Statistics (MNERK)

Over 2011-2017, only 987 doctoral dissertations were defended, while during the traditional system every year about 1500 Candidates of Sciences and 300–500 Doctors of Sciences were registered (Ibrayev et al., 2015).As for the doctoral education in law programs in particular, 22 out of 42 students (52.4% of doctoral students) in 2015 and 6 out of 32 students (18.8% of doctoral students) in 2016 defended their dissertations (see Table 2).

Table 2. Number of doctoral students in law programs

	Year	2015	2016
1	Total number enrolled	96	176
2	Number of new entrants	34	111
3	Release of doctoral students	42	32
4	Defended dissertation	22	6
5	Share of graduates with a dissertation defense,%	52.4	18.8

Sources: Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Committee on Statistics (MNERK)

According to the Ministry of Science and Education in Kazakhstan, seven higher education institutions are engaged in training lawyers in doctoral studies. However, there is a shortage of faculty in regional universities. For instance, in 2014, 17students graduated

from PhD in Law which is not enough for 61 universities of the country that train future lawyers (Turetski, 2015).

With the decreasing number of doctoral dissertation defense, it is critically important to explore factors that successful doctoral graduates in law programs associate with persistence. However, there is practically no research conducted on the experiences of successful graduates of doctoral degrees in law programs in Kazakhstan.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that successful graduates of doctoral degrees in lawprograms attribute to their persistence towards degree completion in Kazakhstan, thereby,providing recommendations for program administrators and prospective or current doctoral students.

Research significance and contribution

The significance of this study is to shed light on factors that might be potentially important to doctoral students' attrition or persistence. This study is particularly significant as it focuses solely on doctoral persistence in law programs. No research has been conducted on this field in Kazakhstan. This study is aimed to inform policy-makers and practitioners by hearing the voices of doctoral graduates. The results would be helpful for students, educators, and society as a whole. By better understanding the phenomenon of doctoral persistence among students of law programs doctoral attrition can be prevented. By understanding doctoral persistence factors strategies can be developed to improve persistence in degree completion. Although this study was conducted on a small number of participants within Kazakhstani context, it contributes to the existing educational research by suggesting new directions to future studies in doctoral attrition and completion rates and time-to-degree in law programs.

Research questions

The overarching research question that guided the study was: What factors do successful graduates of doctoral degrees in law programs attribute to their persistence towards degree completion?

The sub-questions were:1. How do doctoral graduates perceive their educational experiences towards degree completion?

2. What persistence factors do doctoral graduates attribute to their degree completion?

The study argues that psycho-sociocultural factors are key factors that affect doctoral persistence towards degree completion, while financial, academic and social integration factors are secondary factors in doctoral persistence.

Summary

This chapter introduced the phenomena of doctoral student attrition and persistence. The rising issue of doctoral student attrition in Kazakhstan was highlighted. The purpose, significance and contribution of the present study and research questions were provided. In Chapter 2 relevant literature review will be provided to understand the phenomenon. Chapter 3 will present the methodology used in the study. In chapter 4 I present major findings of my research aimed to explore factors that successful graduates of doctoral degrees in law programs attribute to their persistence towards degree completion in Kazakhstan. Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the findings of the study and refers them to the overarching research question. Chapter 6 concludes with implications, recommendations, limitations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, a literature review related to my study is presented. I start with definitions of key terms and concepts and then discuss literature on doctoral attrition and persistence. Then, to better understand doctoral persistence I give an overview of conceptual frameworks of persistence as financial frameworks, academic and social integration frameworks, and psycho-sociocultural frameworks.

Definitions of key terms

There are three key terms that are used throughout this study such as doctoral attrition, doctoral persistence and time-to-degree. Doctoral attrition and time-to-degree is linked to doctoral persistence as factors that lead to attrition and longer time-to-degree negatively affect persistence towards degree completion. Doctoral Attrition –students who drop-out of doctoral programs prior to completing their doctorate degree (Ali and Kohun, 2007, p. 35).Doctoral Persistence – the continuance of a student's progress toward the completion of a doctoral degree (Bair, 1999, p. 8).Time-to-the-doctorate or Time-to-degree – a measure of the length of time that students take to complete the doctorate (Wao, 2010, p. 227)

Doctoral attrition and persistence

A lot of attention has been recently paid to doctoral attrition and persistence worldwide, and researchers have attempted to explore the factors affecting these phenomena. A key concern about doctoral attrition and persistence worldwide is that there is lack of comprehensive research. One of the reasons is that there are no national systematic databases on doctoral attrition. Another reason is that attrition and persistence varies according to programs and fields of study. Also, it is problematic to collect data from doctoral students who dropped out of their studies (Bair and Haworth, 2004).

The review of the existing literature revealed that doctoral attrition and persistence is affected by multiple factors. One of the most discussed factor is the departmental culture (Golde, 2000, 2005;Lovitts,2001; Ferrer de Valero, 2001; Bair and Haworth, 2004). The studies found that departmental culture, including student-faculty relationships, student-advisor relationships, and peer interaction, significantly affects doctoral persistence. However, studies also revealed that students who are successfully integrated into the departmental culture still dropout due to other factors such as program structure, financial support, employment,family support and obligations, motivation, research skills and other personal and psychological factors (Golde, 2000, 2004, 2005;Ferrer de Valero, 2001; Bair and Haworth, 2004; Ivankova and Stick, 2007; Wao and Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Willis and Carmichael, 2011; Beck, 2016; Devos et al., 2017).

Willis and Carmichael (2011) conducted a study on experiences of late-stage doctoral student attrition in Counselor Education that supported the findings of Golde (2004). The authors found that "the lived experience of attrition was related to their level of autonomy in the attrition decision. Dropping Out participants were prevented from obtaining something they wanted, which resulted in negative emotions. In contrast, the Leaving participant no longer wanted the degree and, thus, experienced positive emotions related to attrition". Like Ferrer de Valero (2001), Lovitts (2001) and Bair & Haworth (2004), the authors revealed that a problematic chair relationship was an important factor in attrition. The study also revealed that full-time employment out of campus negatively affected on doctoral study. Like Lovitts (2001), Bair & Haworth (2004) and Hoskins & Goldberg (2005), the authors found that mismatch between student and program can lead to attrition. The authors suggest that "student–program incongruence can occur even at the late stage of doctoral study as a result of a reassessment of personal goals" (Willis and Carmichael, 2011).

Wao and Onwuegbuzie (2011) conducted a study that explored factors related to time to the doctorate in Education as it is an important issue to students, education practitioners, policy-makers and employers. The authors revealed that "factors related to TTD are intertwined and involve a complex interplay of institutional and personal factors". TTD depends mostly on academic integration factors such as the program structure, academic preparation level, and enrollment status of a student. The next set of factors that have significant influence on TTD are social integration factors such as "the nature of advising and of dissertation topic chosen by students wherein the influence of economic factors (e.g., work and financial support) is moderate". TTD is also influenced to some extent by external factors like family obligations and personal attributes like the level of motivation. The authors conclude that "the level of integration in one or more of these domains of integration (i.e., academic, social, economic, personal, and external factors) influences how one progresses in the path to doctorate completion. The more integrated a student is, the higher the likelihood that the student will complete the doctorate in a timely fashion" (Wao and Onwuegbuzie, 2011).

Beck (2016) examined doctoral attrition through the Self-Determination Theory approach. According to the theory, the three innate psychological needs such as autonomy, competence and relatedness should be met for better motivation and mental health (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The author suggests that attrition is connected to a doctoral student's three SDT needs not being satisfied as the lower the intrinsic motivation is, the higher is the doctoral attrition rate (Beck, 2016). The explains,

> "If we consider doctoral attrition under the SDT lens, it is possible that the high attrition rate is due to the three SDT needs not being met. The high doctoral attrition rate could be directly related to low intrinsic motivation, which would support and extend past research findings regarding motivation and attrition. Interestingly, it has been shown that unmotivated students are more likely to drop courses, and by extension, dropout completely" (Beck, 2016, p. 10).

Devos et al. (2017) argue that previous research on doctoral attrition focused on the social working environment (i.e. supervisor, peers, department and other scholarly communities) while studies seldom address the role of intra-individual (e.g. emotional, motivational and metacognitive) dimensions". This study compared how doctoral students who completed or quit their studies perceived their experiences. The authors found that completers are different from non-completers by "the extent to which they feel that they are moving forward, without experiencing too much distress, on a research project that makes sense to them". The authors suggest that these factors are key factors in the attrition process. They argue that peer and supervisor support is not significant in differentiating completers from non-completers (Devos et al., 2017).

According to the OECD Report on Higher Education in Kazakhstan (2017), low completion rate of doctoral students in Kazakhstan is explained by several factors, including: "the period of funding is too short a time to write a paper publishable in good journals; there is insufficient time for the research project and too much time allocated to coursework; there is lack of effective engagement by foreign co-supervisors" (OECD, 2017, p. 212).

So, according to the existing literature on doctoral attrition and persistence, key factors of doctoral persistence are academic and social integration factors such as departmental culture and program structure, while financial, personal and psychological factors such as financial support, employment, family support, family obligations and motivation are secondary factors in doctoral persistence.

Conceptual frameworks

The literature review reveals that multiple factors affect doctoral persistence. To better understand a complex phenomenon as doctoral persistence, it is important to study it though conceptual frameworks that are predominant in the current literature and relevant to

the current study such as financial frameworks, academic and social integration frameworks, and psycho-sociocultural frameworks.

Financial frameworks

One of the frameworks in the literature for understanding doctoral student persistence and attrition is a financial framework. This framework helps to understand how types of financial support and employment affects doctoral persistence. Studies have been conducted to explore how and what type of financial support affects doctoral student persistence towards degree completion and time-to-degree (McAlpine& Norton, 2006; Hoffer et al., 2007; Haert et al., 2014). The studies revealed that lack of financial support leads to attrition (Bair & Haworth, 2004).

There are different sources available for supporting financially doctoral studies such as personal funds and loans, research and teaching assistantships, fellowships and traineeships. According to Survey of Earned Doctorates 2016,such sources of financing administered by institutions, such as teaching and research assistantships, traineeships, and fellowships/dissertation grants were reported as the primary source of financing their studies by 74% of the 2006 doctorate recipients, while approximately 21 percent of recipients used their own resources to support their studies (Hoffer et al., 2007, p. 33).

Previous studies show that "students with research fellowships and research assistantships often have a more successful doctoral path than teaching assistants and students who finance doctoral study with a job outside university or own earnings" (van der Haert et al., 2014, p. 1888). In the study conducted by van der Haert et al. (2014), results showed that "students supported with research fellowships have much higher PhD completion hazards than teaching assistants or unfinanced students. Concerning dropout, students with no financing showed the highest withdrawal rate, while students with selective research fellowships showed the lowest one" (van der Haert et al., 2014, p. 1885).

The Association of American Universities (AAU, 1998) recommended that universities should initiate internal funding policies such as teaching and research assistantships in order to support students towards their degree completion and prevent from out of campus job that would distract them from studies (McAlpine& Norton, 2006, p. 10). However, Wao and Onwuegbuzie (2011) argued that "the impact of economic factors including work and financial support is moderate" (Wao and Onwuegbuzie, 2011, p. 116). As a result of their quantitative-qualitative mixed research study the authors revealed academic and social integration factors have much stronger influence on persistence than economic factors (e.g., work and financial support).

Academic and social integration frameworks

Doctoral student persistence can also be well understood by academic and social integration frameworks as they allow us to explore how departmental culture and program structure affects doctoral persistence. Tinto's (1998) student integration theory is often used as a base for academic and social integration-related studies. According to Tinto's theory "individuals are more likely to persist when they are either academically or socially integrated, and even more likely to persist when both forms of integration occur"(Tinto, 1998, p. 168). Wao and Onwuegbuzie (2011) found that timely completion of doctoral students depends mostly on academic integration factors such as the program structure, academic preparation level, and enrollment status of a student (Wao and Onwuegbuzie , 2011).

Tinto (1998) argues that to promote academic integration, curriculum should be reorganized into learning communities and shared, collaborative learning experiences within the classroom should be fostered (Tinto, 1998). First of all, learning communities promote students to form peer groups that support them outside the classroom. Shared curriculum helps students to support each other academically and socially. It is also

important as it promotes students' active involvement in learning outside the classroom.

Tinto (1998) explains how shared learning leads to persistence,

> "Students spend more time on their academic work in part because they enjoy working together. Their connected learning experiences enable them to learn and make friends at the same time, thereby bridging the divide between academic work and social conduct that frequently characterizes student life. They become, in the jargon of existing theory, academically as well as socially integrated. Indeed, social integration in these settings seems to promote academic integration. The result is increased persistence." (Tinto, 1998, p. 171-172).

Golde (2000, 2005), Lovitts (2001), Ferrer de Valero (2001), and Bair and Haworth

(2004) found that student-faculty relationships, student-advisor relationships, and peer

interaction significantly affects doctoral persistence. According to Spaulding and

Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012), "social integration—feeling a sense of connection and

community with faculty and peers—is an important factor in doctoral persistence"

(Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012, p.203). In their study Hoskins & Goldberg

(2005) defined connection as "the establishment of a relationship or the failure to do so,

with faculty or fellow students and a judgment of the quality of that relationship" (Hoskins

& Goldberg, 2005, p. 183).

Gardner explains socialization as following:

> "Socialization is the process through which an individual learns to adopt the values, skills, attitudes, norms, and knowledge needed for membership in a given society, group, or organization. In relation to the graduate student, socialization is imperative to a successful graduate school experience; indeed, unsuccessful socialization contributes to the decision to depart from the degree program" (Gardner, 2010, p.63).

Similarly, Jairam and Kahl (2012) studied how social support fosters persistence

towards doctoral degree completion. An open-ended qualitative survey was conducted with

thirty-one successful doctoral graduates. According to the findings, social support from

family, friends and faculty helps to reduce stress for doctoral students (Jairam and Kahl,

2012).

However, Tinto's theory has been criticized by some researchers for being limited and not covering the experiences of doctoral student before coming to the doctoral program (Castellanos and Gloria, 2007). Although the theory of student integration provides us with understanding of the doctoral student persistence to a certain degree, it is not enough to fully understand doctoral student persistence and attrition. Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012) argue that "institutional factors (program type, structure, and curriculum) and student expectations about the relationship between these factors and their own personal and professional goals play a central role in doctoral student persistence" (Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012, p.202). The authors explain that doctoral students' academic and social integration is largely influenced by the type and structure of program. They supported their arguments by the study conducted by Hoskins & Goldberg (2005) with the counselor education doctoral students.

According to Hoskins & Goldberg (2005), doctoral student persistence is shaped by the student-program match. The student-program match consists of 4 elements such as student expectations, student experience, academic match and social-personal match. The academic match and the social-personal match are the key components of the student-program match. The academic match, which consists of the reason why the student is pursuing the degree and the goal in pursuing it, is compared with the focus of the program and curriculum. The relationship of the student with the faculty and peers forms the social-personal match which is the second key component of the student-program match. These student-faculty and student-peer relationships were evaluated "in terms of whether they helped or hurt their decision to persist in or leave their program. Finally, two additional elements-student expectations and student experiences-were described by participants as important to the student-program match" (Hoskins and Goldberg, 2005, p. 179).

So, student-program match explains whether the doctoral student is satisfied with his/her program and whether his/her expectations are met, where satisfaction is critical for the successful completion of the degree.

Psycho-sociocultural frameworks

Alongside with financial, academic and social integration frameworks, researchers have recently started to apply psycho-sociocultural frameworks to understand persistence. This framework enables to evaluate how students' well-being influences their ability to persist in their doctoral studies. According to Gloria and Rodriguez (2000), "cultural environment, ethnic identity, acculturation, and social support (e.g., family and role models/mentors) are important psycho-sociocultural constructs" (Gloria and Rodriguez, 2000, p. 147). However, there are many other factors that psycho-sociocultural frameworks consist of such as "demographic variables, personal attributes, motivation and goals, responsibilities, and coping skills" (Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

Demographic variables related to persistence include age, gender, ethnicity, and marital status (Wao & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Lovitts (2005) explored six personal psychological and social resources that may facilitate or impede graduate students' transition to independent scholarship: "intelligence, knowledge, thinking styles, personality, motivation and environmental context"(Lovitts, 2005, p.143).

Balancing doctoral studies with family and work relationships is a challenge for doctoral students across disciplines. Wasburn-Moses (2008) reported that "doctoral students felt least satisfied with their ability to juggle work and family with their overall workload" (Wasburn-Moses, 2008, p. 265). As Smith et al. (2006) explain that being a parent, having multiple extended families and other relationships causes stress for doctoral students. Doctoral students who have children and have to support them financially can be overwhelmed by family obligations (Smith et al., 2006, p. 23).

Balancing time spent on study and family is quite stressful as time is always limited. Doctoral students constantly feel guilty if enough time is not spent with family or studies. As a result, stress can be destructive for persistence towards degree completion (Smith et al., 2006).

Personal and professional motivation is critical for doctoral student persistence (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005). Gardner (2009) investigated "the cultural contexts and structures that facilitate or hinder doctoral student completion" (Gardner, 2009, p. 97). The study revealed that a lack of motivation is considered by faculty members as a key reason for doctoral student attrition. Students explained that lack of motivation is connected with not having a good fit with the program (Gardner, 2009).

In his autoethnographic study Templeton (2016) explains motivation as "a part of our everyday lives affecting almost every decision we make regarding current and future personal and professional trajectories" (Templeton, 2016, p.43). Doctoral education is one of such trajectories. The author divides motivation as extrinsic and intrinsic where extrinsic "involves undertaking a task because there is a beneficial outcome" and intrinsic "infers undertaking inherently interesting or enjoyable tasks" (Templeton, 2016, p.40). Although intrinsic motivation is believed to be the key factor in doctoral students' persistence towards degree completion, it does not help in understanding the reasons of attrition. The author concludes that "intrinsic motivations formed from predispositions and a supportive socio-cultural environment may be more resilient than intrinsic motivations formed from an aspiration and an increasing interest to attain a socioeconomic role that requires the completion of a doctoralqualification" (Templeton, 2016, p.44).

Hinkle et al. (2014) conducted a study to explore what motivated doctoral students in Counselor Education and Supervision to pursue the degree. Being aware of what

motivates students "may foster student success by helping them match with relevant

programs and faculty interests" (Hinkle et al., 2014, p. 12).The author explains further,

> By eliciting information about students' motivations to pursue a CES degree by using professional goal statements in the doctoral program application process (Nelson, Canada, & Lancaster, 2003), counselor educators can assess for academic match and use this information to inform decisions about program admissions. Through talking with students about the motivations that have influenced their decisions to begin doctoral work in CES, Counselor Educators can help them find programs that will match their needs (Hinkle, 2014, p. 12)

Mason (2012) studied how innate psychological needs such as autonomy,

competence, and relatedness influenced doctoral student satisfaction with the program and

motivation to persist. The study revealed that these innate psychological needs should be

met in order for doctoral students to persist towards degree completion (Mason, 2012).

In summary, factors associated with doctoral persistence are grouped under three

conceptual frameworks such as financial frameworks, academic and social integration

frameworks, and psycho-sociocultural frameworks (see Table 3).

Table 3. Conceptual frameworks

Conceptual frameworks	Financial	Academic and social integration	Psycho-sociocultural
factors	Type of funding	Program structure	Motivation
	Employment	Curriculum	Family support
		Student-faculty relationships	Family obligations
		Student-advisor relationships	Role models and mentors
		Student-peer interaction	Demographic variables

Summary

The review of existing literature on doctoral attrition and persistence shows that

persistence of doctoral students in law programs in Kazakhstan has not been studied

previously. The literature review reveals that multiple factors affect doctoral persistence.

According to the existing literature on doctoral attrition and persistence, key factors of

doctoral persistence are academic and social integration factors such as departmental

culture and program structure, while financial, personal and psychological factors such as

financial support, employment, family support, family obligations and motivation are secondary factors in doctoral persistence. To shape this study,the findings of the previous studies on doctoral persistence were discussed under three conceptual frameworks including financial frameworks, academic and social integration frameworks, and psycho-sociocultural frameworks. These frameworks will be the bases for constructing a comprehensive model of doctoral persistence to explore factors of doctoral students' persistence in law programs in Kazakhstan.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the research design and methodology, methods of data collection, instruments, approach to data analysis and ethical considerations in this study. First, I present the research approach that was applied to this study and discuss the rationale on choosing the qualitative design. Next, the sampling strategy is introduced followed by the research data collection instruments and their relevance to the topic of the project. Further, I present the data analysis procedures that were employed on this study. The chapter ends with ethical considerations by each of the research steps.

Research Design

This study was conducted using a qualitative method. The purpose of the qualitative research is to describe and interpret the nature of a situation, setting or process, to verify certain assumptions and evaluate the effectiveness of particular practices, innovations and processes (Njie&Asimiran, 2014). According to Creswell (2013), the qualitative research process "involves emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants' setting; analyzing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p. 247). The qualitative method helps to "explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work and the significance of the meanings that they generate" (Mason, 2002, p. 1).

Most studies on doctoral students' attrition and persistence have been quantitative and correlational that examined how a variety of independent and dependent variables were related. Attrition, persistence and time-to-degree have been as dependent variables,

while academic indicators such as scores on GRE and GPA, personal and psychological variables such as motivation and goals, program variables as department culture, and demographic variables such as age, gender, ethnicity and marital status have been used as independent variables. All these variables illustrate that research on doctoral attrition and persistence is quite complicated. The qualitative method was chosen as it emphasizes treating phenomena holistically and interpreting it personally. The rationale behind studying doctoral persistence by the qualitative method was the finding of Bair and Haworth (2004) that doctoral persistence varies significantly by fields of study and "in-depth, qualitative case studies of doctoral programs are needed to understand more fully how various cultural practices within them, potentially unique to fields of study, affect doctoral student retention" (Bair and Haworth, 2004, p. 515).

As qualitative research is broad, a study design should be chosen as a direction to achieve a result. This study was guided by a case study design. Case study is "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97).A case study design "enables the researcher to answer "how" and "why" type questions, while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 556). It is distinct from other study designs for comprising the entire range of behaviors and also linking the relationships of such behaviors to both the history and the environment of the subject. Thus, the case study "does a holistic inquiry by looking at the process or practice, the interaction within such a process and the meaning of such interaction for a more generic understanding of the case under study" (Njie & Asimiran, 2014, p. 37). Compared

to other methods case studies have several advantages such as "their potential to achieve high conceptual validity, strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses, usefulness for closely examining the hypothesized role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases, and their capacity for addressing causal complexity" (Starman, 2013, p. 36).

This study was conducted using a multiple case design and each participant was considered as an individual case. A multiple case design is when "each case is studied as if it is a singular study and is then compared to other cases" (Starman, 2013, p. 33).Multiple case studies emphasize both similarities and differences among chosen cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The multiple case study design is particularly helpful in this study as it is important to explore first-hand experiences of doctoral graduates and different perceptions of doctoral graduates on persistence towards degree completion.

Research Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used in this study as in a qualitative study it is relevant to use this method of sampling. Creswell (2013) explains it in this way, "this is not a probability sample that will enable a researcher to determine statistical inferences to a population; rather, it is purposeful sample that will intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination"(Creswell, 2013, p. 146). Therefore, the researcher selected the site and participants as they could help to answer the research questions. The sampling strategy that was employed in this study was convenience as it was easier for the researcher to have access to collect data, to save time and effort. Considering multiple case study design, the sample included six participants that met the sampling criteria. The names of the participants were changed to preserve anonymity (see Table 3).

Table 4. Sample

Case #	Name	Gender	Marital status	Type of funding
1	Ainur	female	married	Self funded
2	Aisha	female	single	State grant
3	Azamat	male	married	Self funded
4	Aigul	female	single	State grant
5	Aliya	female	married	State grant
6	Aisulu	female	single	State grant

The sample included sixgraduates of doctoral degrees in law from Kazakhstani universities both male and female, single and married, state-funded and self-funded, who graduated in the last five years and who were working in the legal field at a higher education institution in Astana. The sample size was six as it was difficult to recruit more participants with the above-mentioned criteria. Moreover, as this study was guided by a multiple case study design, it would have been time-consuming to have a large sample size. Both male and female, single and married, state-funded and self-funded graduates were included in the sample in order to find out whether gender, marital status and type of funding affects doctoral persistence. The participants had to be graduates of Kazakhstani universities as this study aimed to explore doctoral education in Kazakhstan.

Instruments

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data for this study as through this type of data collection the researcher can obtain first-hand accounts of experiences of the participants by hearing their voices. The interview questions were developed based on the research questions and conceptual frameworks on doctoral persistence. The relationship between the research questions and corresponding guiding interview protocol is included in Table 4.

Table 5. Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research Questions	Guiding Interview Questions
RQ1. How do doctoral graduates perceive their educational experiences towards degree completion?	1. Can you tell me about your educational background?
	2. Why did you decide to pursue doctoral education?
	3. How long did it take you to complete the doctoral studies?
	4. What challenges did you experience during your doctoral studies? What positive moments did you experience during your doctoral studies?
	5. Were you satisfied with the program? Were your expectations met?
RQ2. What persistence factors do doctoral graduates attribute to their degree completion?	6. Did you receive financial support during your studies? How did finance your studies? Did you work during your studies? Does financial support affect persistence?
	7. What was the environment or culture in your department? Do you think it affects persistence?
	8. What was your relationship with the faculty? Do you think it affects persistence?
	9. What was your relationship with your peers? Do you think it affects persistence?
	10. Did your family support you during your doctoral studies? Did family obligations distract you from your doctoral studies?
	11. Were personal factors important in your persistence? Were you prepared for the research work?
	12. What other factors (age, gender and marital status) affect persistence?

Data collection procedure

After receiving approval to conduct the study from NUGSE research ethics committee, I requested the HR department of the selected higher education institution to provide me a list of employers who have completed PhD degrees in the last five years. After receiving the list, I contacted eight potential participants that meet the selection criteria using purposeful sampling approach by phone. Once I introduced who I am and provided them with a brief overview of the research study and the data collection process, I inquired if they are willing to be participants in the study. They were also informed about anonymity and confidentiality and that they can ask questions about the study by e-mail or by telephone. Six participants expressed their willingness to participate in the study.Then I set-up an appointment with them for the semi-structured interview at a time and place that was convenient for both parties.

The day before the interview, the participants were contacted to remind about the interview, agree on time and location. Interviews were conducted at a time, language, and location convenient for the participants. Before starting the interview, I provided each prospective participant the consent form (see Appendix A) and requested their signatures for consent. Using an interview guide, the interviews were conducted (approximately one hour to complete) and audio-recorded or in case if participants did not agree interview being recorded, I took extensive notes. Before concluding the interviews, participants were asked if they had any other questions or concerns. After addressing any questions or concerns, the interviews were concluded and participants were thanked for their participation.

Data analysis procedure

The interviews were recorded and transcribed (see Appendix B).The transcripts were analyzed first within each case and then across the cases. Within-case and cross-case

analyses were used as they were relevant in multiple cases study design. According to Creswell (2013), when the researcher decides to conduct multiple case study, "a typical format is to first provide a detailed description of each case and themes within the case, called a within-case analysis, followed by a thematic analysis across the cases, called a cross-case analysis, as well as assertions or an interpretation of the meaning of the case" (Creswell, 2013, p. 101). Therefore, within-case analysis was used to answer the first research question and cross-case analysis was used to answer the second research question. Transcripts were read thoroughly and coded, then the codes were aggregated to develop themes(see Appendix C). Then the themes were connected and a case study was constructed. Finally, thematic analysis was performed across six cases to find similarities and differences, and to discover overarching themes.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the parameters established by NUGSE Research Committee to ensure the ethical protection of research participants. After the data were collected, all identifiable data were eliminated. Interviews were numbered or coded to match the participant; thus, protecting participants' identities. Participants were informed that the interviews would be audio-recorded and that a verbatim transcription would be made and analyzed later. I secured all data and only shared the information with my supervising committee. A consent form was provided to participants prior to any data collection. The consent form outlined participants' protections and the ethical guidelines I followed during the research project. Specific areas outlined in the consent form included the voluntary nature of the study and that participants could withdraw at any time. In addition, the consent form outlined risks (physical or psychological) that the participants might experience and they were informed that they were not obligated to complete any part of the study if they were uncomfortable. Participants were informed that all data would be

kept in a locked file cabinet and password protected laptop at my residence for the period of time required by Nazarbayev University. I was the only one with access to the data stored in my private laptop. I only shared data information with my thesis supervisor. Participants were provided with my contact information and the contact information for my thesis supervisor in case they had any further questions or concerns about the research study. Participants were also provided with the contact information of the Nazarbayev University representative with whom they could talk privately about their rights as participants.

Summary

This chapter presented the methodology that guided the studyincluding the rationales for choosing the particular design, instruments and sampling methods. Also, ethical considerations and data analysis procedures were described. This study was conducted using a qualitative method. A multiple case study design was implemented, with each participant considered as an individual case. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data for this study. The sampling strategy that was employed in this study was convenience purposeful sampling. The sample included six graduates of doctoral degrees in law from Kazakhstani universities both male and female, single and married, state-funded and self-funded, who graduated in the last five years and who were working in the legal field at a higher education institution in Astana. Within-caseand cross-case analysis was used to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present major findings of my study aimed to explore factors that successful graduates of doctoral degrees in law programs attribute to their persistence towards degree completion in Kazakhstan. The findings are organized in two sections: doctoral graduates' educational experiences using within-case analysis and persistence factors towards successful degree completion using cross-case analysis. The first section consists of findings that answer the first research question and is comprised of two themes such as academic experiences and support. The second section consists of findings that answer the second research question and is organized under three themes such as financial factors, academic and social integration factors, and psycho-sociocultural factors. The chapter ends with a summary of the main findings of persistence factors associated with the successful completion of a doctoral degree in the field of law.

Doctoral graduates' educational experiences

Case #1

Ainur was married and had two children. At the time of the interview, she got job promotion and was very excited to be Head of a department at the higher education institution.

Academic experiences. Overall she was satisfied with the doctoral program. However, she believed that it would be much better if the program was more practical. She recalled that "the studies were too much theoretical" (Ainur). One of the challenges that she encountered during her studies is that there was not enough literature to research her topic in Kazakhstan. Another challenge is the requirement to publish an article in an international impact-factor journal as it was hard to find a journal that would accept the article and there was not enough time to publish an article. Doctoral students are required

to publish the main findings of their research in an international scientific publication that has a non-zero impact factor or is included in the database of Scopus, according to the ISI Web of Knowledge, Thomson Reuters before completing their program which is three years. What was positive about the program is that there were two foreign trainings financed by the university. According to the State Compulsory Standard of Graduate Education, doctoral students are required undergo training in foreign research organizations. The terms of the foreign training are determined by the university independently. The foreign trainings gave an opportunity to consult with foreign supervisors, to gain relevant knowledge and skills to conduct research and write the dissertation.

Support. In 2010 tuition-based PhD programs were introduced, so she enrolled into this program. There was only one state grant allocated to her university and there was strong competition, so she could not get this scholarship. As she was a university employee, she got 50% discount on tuition fees. She worked during her PhD studies in order to pay her tuition and other expenses. However, as she worked at the University where she studied, working did not distract her from her studies.

During her interview, she mentioned several times that the faculty in her Ph.D. program was very supportive. They supported her by guiding and mentoring her in her research and writing her dissertation. She noted that her professors were prominent in the field of legal sciences. She believed that "Having the opportunity to interact with them was very inspiring" (Ainur). Ainur also mentioned that she communicated intensively with her thesis supervisor and there was a constant feedback from her thesis supervisor during the thesis writing process. Her supervisor supported her hugely and showed her the right direction.

Regarding peer support, Ainur recalled that relationships with peers were also great, those who defended their dissertations earlier supported others by consulting and advising how to organize the dissertation and publish main findings. She was happy to have an opportunity to network with peers and they still communicate with each other. Throughout her interview, she talked about encouragement and support that she received from her family throughout her educational journey. She recalled, "I had huge support from my family" (Ainur). She was grateful to her husband and parents as they supported both financially and emotionally. However, she had to take a maternal leave that led to longer time to degree.

Case #2

Aisha was single and did not have children. She was Head of a research center at the higher education institution.

Academic experiences. She was satisfied with the doctoral program as all her expectations were met. She stated,

"It was completely prepared, classical university, therefore the fundamentality still exists. Both foreign professionals and our well-known, very outstanding scholars were teaching, we listened to the lectures of these scholars. It seems to me that the most necessary academic atmosphere during the training was present" (Aisha).

However, the requirement to publish an article in an international impact-factor journal was a challenge. She recalled,

"One of the challenges was that we were the first students to enter doctoral studies when some normative legal acts were adopted that to some extent complicated the training in doctoral studies. That is publication of articles in such journals that are included in Scopus and Thompson Reuters and since we were one of the first, for us it was a big challenge. We entered the doctoral studies in 2011, the law was adopted in late 2012. That period of time we just were in ignorance" (Aisha).

So, Aisha had very limited time to publish her main findings in a journal with a non-zero impact factor. Nevertheless, she recalled that there were positive moments during her studies. She stated,

> "The more difficult it was the more interesting it got, this is probably one of the pleasant moments. In the process when we searched for these journals we corresponded with the authors and editors of these journals, we established contacts, broadened our horizons, expanded some communication, and established relations with some universities" (Aisha).

She recalled that a foreign training during her doctoral studies was also a positive experience as they gained knowledge and skills that were important to conduct research and write dissertation.

Support. Her doctoral studies were state-funded. She received a stipend. The training was also funded by the government. She did not work as state-funded doctoral students were not allowed to work. The relationships with the faculty were warm and friendly. Peers were very few as one or two state grants were allocated to the program. Overall, the relationships were friendly. Parents and other family members supported her in her studies. She mentioned, "Of course, the support from the family, close people, parents is part of the doctoral persistence" (Aisha). So, Aisha believes that family support is important for persistence in doctoral studies.

Case #3

Azamat was married and had two children. He is Head of a research center at the higher education institution.

Academic experiences. He recalled that the courses were interesting and aforeign training during his studies was a positive experience. As he was a university employee he was already integrated academically, so it was easier for him. He explains it,

> "If, of course, a person goes purposefully to get a degree, then of course the academic environment itself plays a supporting role in writing the dissertation and articles, and certain schools of scholarly ideas are formed, and you enter this school of some professors and become an integral part. You contribute to the development of certain institutions, patterns. Of course when I

worked I was already integrated, I was an instructor, it was easier for me"
(Azamat).

However, the requirement to publish an article in an international journal with a

non-zero impact factor was challenging. He recalled that "the requirements changed,

according to new requirements, you need to publish 7 articles, one of them in journals with

a high rating, impact factor, based on Scopus, Thompson Reuters. At that time, it was a

deterrent for many to defend the dissertation, because many articles were not there and a

year or two we had a vacuum"(Azamat). So, he explains that there were very few students

who defended their dissertations due to the new requirements.

Support. In 2010 there was an opportunity to study in a tuition-based doctoral

programs, so he enrolled in a tuition-based doctoral program. He worked during his studies

to pay his tuition and his parents helped him partly. The relationships with the faculty were

friendly, they were supportive by advising and guiding them in writing dissertations. Peers

were also university employees. They supported each other and consulted each other in

writing articles and publishing. His family and parents were supportive. However, he

mentioned that one of the reasons that he did not protected in 2013, that year he had a baby

daughter. Family obligations did not allow him to defend the dissertation in time.

Case #4

Aigul was single and did not have children. She was a faculty member at the higher

education institution.

Academic experiences. She recalled that the atmosphere was promoting fruitful

research work and the environment was enabling positive experiences. She did not

experience any challenges during her studies as she believes that "research is always an

interesting search, creative self-expression" (Aigul). She mentioned such positive

experiences during her studies such as "an opportunity to do research under the supervision

of the well-known scholar, to learn foreign practices directly in a foreign state and obtain

information from the first sources, and also share research results in international and foreign conferences" (Aigul).

Support. Her studies were funded by the government on the basis of the state grant. She worked during her studies at the University as an instructor. She mentioned that "monthly stipend, state-funded foreign training, conferences and publications are a great help from the government" (Aigul). Her relationships with the faculty were warm and friendly. Her relationships with peers were good, which enables positive atmosphere. Her family supported her in her studies and she did not have family obligations that might have distracted her from her studies.

Case #5

Aliya was married and had two children. She was head of a professional development center at the higher education institution.

Academic experiences. She was partially satisfied with the program as there was long and non-productive theoretical training that took away a lot of time and distracted from writing her dissertation. She recalled,

> "Theoretical training took almost all of the three years, that is, the first, the second, the fourth and the sixth terms. That was a mistake during the approval of our curriculum that was not in accordance with the State Compulsory Standard of Graduate Education. Consequently, there were courses that we had to take in a hurry. Such courses as Psychology, Pedagogics, Philosophy totally repeated the courses that I took during my studies for master's degree. I think it is not sensible to make them core courses" (Aliya).

So, she believes that PhD programs should be carefully designed and approved, otherwise they will not be effective and productive.

One of the challenges she experiences was that financing of her second foreign training was cut during the Year 2 of her doctoral studies. She recalled, "the Ministry of Education and Science directs funds to the university, but the university decides how to manage those funds. I needed the second foreign training to get consultation from my

foreign co-supervisor" (Aliya). However, she did not have the second foreign training as the university cut financing. Other challenges were lack of systematic control and monitoring during her studies from the side of the Department of Doctoral studies. She thinks that mechanism of monitoring doctoral education should be developed thoroughly. Regarding the positive experiences, she mentioned preparing the dissertation under the supervision and mentoring of foreign supervisor and publishing articles in foreign journals, also three-months foreign training where she went to the foreign supervisor, gathered literature, worked in the library, attended lectures related to her topic.

Support. Her studies were financed by the state grant. She worked part-time at the department. During her last year she gave up part-time job in order to write her dissertation. She thinks that relationships with the faculty and peers do not affect persistence towards degree completion. Her family supported her during her studies. She thinks that family or personal obligations can distract but if there is a strong motivation, everything is possible.

Case #6

Aisulu was single and did not have children. She was a faculty member at the higher education institution.

Academic experiences. For Aisulu one of the positive experiences during her doctoral studies were foreign trainings. She visited foreign research institutes and universities. It was interesting for her to plunge into another environment, to get acquainted with another culture of learning and research, with other approaches of universities and research institutes.

However, Aisulu believes that the requirements for management should be increased because doctoral programs (curricula, trainings, courses) are administered by the same methods as in the Soviet era. She also believes that new programs should be

developed as the current PhD programs are no different from the past candidate and doctoral programs. Therefore, it is necessary to launch advanced training courses for supervisors as well as for managing doctoral and master programs. She believes that "they should form the definition of vision; what tasks are facing them. Otherwise, no way. It turns out that 'we need something from you, I do not know what, how it is possible to be of higher quality and faster, but it's no worse than that of foreign students'. But in the end it turns out the same Candidate dissertation, as in the Soviet era" (Aisulu).

Aisulu explains why dissertations are written in the old way,

> "The reason is that members of the Dissertation Council are accustomed to this format. The dissertation plan, standards and scope of the dissertation should be familiar to the Dissertation Council. And hypotheses should be formulated as they were always formulated before. After all, the dissertation is passed by the Dissertation Council that consists of members who defended themselves according to Soviet requirements and try not to back off from them. As a result, trying to tune the doctoral student to foreign standards, the Dissertation Council still gets a standard dissertation polished for the Soviet standard. In addition, the doctoral student is treated as a graduate student who simply adhered to research work and remains alone with it.In the end, we are dealing with the usual replacement of signs without any transformation" (Aisulu).

In the year of her admission, only five doctoral students were trained at her university, who had an individual trajectory of training and practically did not contact peers during the entire training. They were isolated from the university life, that was filled with various events. She went only to classes and knew very little about what was happening at the university in general. She recalls,

> "There was lack of communication with other doctoral students and not enough information about the organization of trainings, publications in foreign journals, organization of research work. For example, doctoral students organized their foreign trainings themselves. And everyone goes the same way, stepping on the same rake. The formed community within the university would allow new doctoral students to master the requirements of training and the requirements for the defense of the dissertation more quickly" (Aisulu).

Aisulu believes that academic environment is very important, as it provides information exchange, allows the doctoral student to get acquainted with the general issues

that all researchers are experiencing, therefore the academic environment plays a huge role

in the information and psychological support of doctoral students throughout the training.

Aisulu argues that it is necessary to change the attitude towards doctoral training,

"It is supposed that a doctoral student is ready for research. But this is
not so. He or She goes to the doctoral studies to learn and get the right
experience. In fact, today, very high requirements are placed on the
dissertations. They are almost the same as they used to be for Soviet doctoral
dissertations. You cannot equate today's PhD with Soviet doctors of science."

She argues that defending a doctoral dissertation is not a triumph or a research

achievement, it is only the beginning of the road. She explains,

"Defending a dissertation, you get access to active research work. Even
after obtaining PhD, you are not a full-fledged scholar and expert in your field.
It was possible earlier to protect a doctoral dissertation and to rest the whole
career of a scholar on it. This is not done today. A PhD student does not have
to make a significant contribution to science like a Soviet doctoral student, he
or she must demonstrate the ability to research. The degree of PhD is a
testament to not that the "guru" is before you, this degree means that you are a
specialist who can carry out analytical work, conduct research and participate
in scientific projects. It's more about skills and abilities. In her opinion, today
the main reason for all the problems lies in the lack of understanding of the role
of the strange and unfamiliar PhD" (Aisulu).

She thinks that the doctoral student should be emotionally and psychologically

ready for learning. Like many people she thought that the most difficult thing would be to

enter a doctorate. She states,

"As long as you can enter, you can, of course, persist. However,
training in doctoral studies has shown that this is not the case. We have such
statistics that very few students defend their dissertations because preparing the
dissertation and preparing for the defense requires emotional stamina. And the
process of discussing work does not pass painlessly for self-esteem. I watched
as one and the same work was submitted for discussion of the department for
two years, but time after time received criticism and was sent for revision"
(Aisulu).

She thinks that for a doctoral student it is a challenge as he or she is not prepared

for it. In addition, in the process of research work students experience completely different

emotions: from confidence to total uncertainty one step. She states that "Research is a risk.

This is akin to the work of the archaeologist: beginning to dig up the stiffness, we are in ignorance where it will lead. We experience failures. And there are more failures than victories."

Aisulu thinks that training in doctoral studies made a great contribution to her personal growth. She learned a lot about herself and began to understand herself more. In her opinion,

> "Intelligence is good, but such personal qualities as patience, correct self-esteem, courage, perseverance, correct motivation, right values, honesty, decency, stress resistance, understanding yourself and your strengths / weaknesses, the ability to overcome failures and benefit from mistakes, devotion to their ideas and values, diligence, self-discipline determine 70% of the successful completion of the program" (Aisulu).

She recalled that she had seen very smart young people whose dishonest actions led to expulsion from the program, or smart guys who could not decide to go through the defense, because they were afraid of criticism and aggression from the scholarly environment.

Support. Her studies were funded by the state grant. She believes that the financial side greatly influences the research work of the doctoral student, and not on obtaining a degree, as such. Research includes additional financial expenses: purchase of literature, payment for copies of necessary articles and fragments of books, travel to conferences, additional professional courses on the topic of research. Finance is needed in order to bring their work to public discussion and declare themselves, as well as to access the necessary research materials on which the quality of research depends.

Aisulu believes that it is necessary to conduct additional trainings for thesis supervisors on how to work with today's doctoral student. She states that "Our system requires research according to international standards, whereas research guidance and methodology is implemented by Soviet standards. In the old-fashioned way. If you raise

the requirements for the theses, it means to raise the requirements not only for the doctoral

students, but also for their supervisors. This is in the first place" (Aisulu).

Her relationships with the faculty was very good. She recalled,

"Our teachers treated us as equal, and enjoyed working with us, because we were kind of like-minded people. In fact, they happily conducted classes with us, because they wanted to share their accumulated experience, and they knew that we would understand what they wanted to share. I am very grateful to the professors who wanted to share with us and educate us, the doctoral students of the university. Yes, it was a sort of upbringing. More than training. There were interesting talks with professors on the issues of philosophy, history of law, as well as methodology that allowed to expand the "research horizon", "look beyond the gate" of the discipline and "see the picture" as a whole." (Aisulu).

Aisulu recalled that it was interesting to participate in conversations in which the

doctoral students shared their own hypotheses, told enthusiastically about their insights and

difficulties in researching their topic. She believes that communication with like-minded

people is very inspiring. Her relationships with peers were very good, with some of them

have developed respectful relationships, and others sincere friendships. She states "I would

like them to grow further, and I could say: "But with these researchers I studied together!".

I believe in it. It is interesting to observe someone's growth and beginnings. We are

interested in successes and deeds" (Aisulu).They follow each other's destiny further,

because they sincerely empathize and managed to become attached. They share

information and news about their education and university. This allows not to break the

relationship between doctoral students and the university, in general, when a social group

and social ties form around the university. Regarding family support, she had a very

supportive family. They accepted her values and goals. She believes that it is in respecting

the choice that most of the support lies.

Persistence factors towards successful degree completion

Cross-case analysis findings were grouped under the following themes: (a)

academic and social integration factors, (b) financial support factors, and (c) psycho-

sociocultural factors.The themes were in accordance with the conceptual frameworks that were predominant in the current literature and enabled to better understand doctoral persistence. The cross-case analysis revealed that the key factors in doctoral persistence were psycho-sociocultural factors, while financial, academic and social factors were secondary factors in successful degree completion.

Financial factors

The cross-case analysis showed that those participants who self-funded their studies had longer time-to-degree, while the participants who were state-funded graduated on time. This finding suggests that type of funding might affect doctoral persistence and time-to-degree. Two of the participants self-funded their doctoral studies, while the other four participants studied on a state grant. All of the participants mentioned that financial factors affect persistence towards degree completion. One of them indicated that "Monthly stipend, state-funded foreign training, conferences and publications are a great help from the government." Another participant mentioned that research incurs additional financial expenses: purchase of literature, payment of copies of necessary articles and fragments of books, travel to conferences, additional professional courses on the topic of research. Finance is needed in order to bring their work to public discussion, as well as to access the necessary research materials on which the quality of research depends.

Academic and social integration factors

The cross case analysis showed that the key academic and social integration factor that affected doctoral persistence was the departmental culture which consists of student-faculty relationship, student-advisor relationship and student-peer interaction. The findings suggest that doctoral students who were university employees before starting their doctoral studies are more academically and socially integrated than the doctoral students from other fields. Program structure and curriculum did not affect doctoral persistence of the

participants as they successfully completed their doctoral programs despite the challenges that they experienced during their studies.

Departmental culture. Most of the participants were the university employees before entering their doctoral programs. One of the participants mentioned that those students who have an experience of working at universities, they were more successful in doctoral degree completion. Another participant also believed that as he was the university employee he was already integrated academically, so it was easier for him to persist towards degree completion. Four of the participants agreed that the academic atmosphere and environment was enabling fruitful research work and positive experiences. However, two of the participants mentioned that academic and social integration of doctoral students in their program was weak. Doctoral studies were independent and each studenthad an individual trajectory of training and practically did not contact with other students during the entire training. They were isolated from the university life, they knew very little about what was happening at the university in general. There was not enough information about the organization of trainings, publications in foreign journals, organization of research work. The underlying cause for the two participants' weak academic and social integration might be that they were not the university employees before starting their doctoral studies.

Regarding the relationships with the faculty, thesis supervisor and peers, all the participants mentioned that they had warm and friendly relationships with them. The faculty treated them as equal and were happy to share their accumulated knowledge and experience. One of the participants mentioned that there was productive communication with her thesis supervisor. Her supervisor supported her hugely and showed her the right direction. However, another participant argues that thesis supervisors do not have adequate training to work with today's doctoral student as research guidance and methodology is implemented by Soviet standards in an old-fashioned way. Peers supported each other and

consulted each other in writing articles and publishing.They participated in conversations in which they shared their own hypotheses, told enthusiastically about their insights and difficulties in researching their topic. However, one of them believes that relationships do not affect persistence towards degree completion.

*Program structure and curriculum.*When asked about the challenges during the doctoral studies, three of the participants mentioned the requirement to publish an article in an international journalwith a non-zero impact factor. One of them mentioned that there was lack of literature in Kazakhstan to research her topic and also there were challenges to find a journal that would accept the article in a limited period of time. Another participant was concerned about long and non-productive theoretical training that took away a lot of time and distracted from writing her dissertation. Some of the courses totally repeated the courses that she took during her studies for master's degree. She thinks it is not sensible to make them core courses,moreover, PhD programs should be carefully designed and approved, otherwise they will not be effective and productive. Another participant indicated lack of systematic control and monitoring of program implementation as drawbacks of the program. One of the participants believes that mentoring during the studies from the side of the Department of Doctoral studies and mechanism of monitoring doctoral education should be developed. Another participant was concerned that doctoral programs (curricula, trainings, courses) were administered by the same methods as in the Soviet era. She also believes that new programs should be developed as the current PhD programs are no different from the past candidate and doctoral programs.

Regarding the positive experiences during the doctoral studies, five of the participants mentioned foreign trainings. One of them further elaborated that an opportunity to do research under the supervision of the well-known scholar, to learn foreign practices directly in a foreign state, to obtain information from the first sources,

and also to share research results in international conferences were positive experiences. Another participant indicated preparing dissertation under the guidanceand mentoring of foreign supervisor, and publishing articles in foreign journals as the best part of getting the doctoral degree. However, one of the participants was not satisfied with her foreign training. She did not have the second training as the university cut funding. The reason is that the Ministry of Education and Science directs funds to the university, but the university decides how to manage those funds.

Psycho-sociocultural factors

The cross-case analysis revealed that key psycho-sociocultural factors that affected doctoral persistence were motivation, family support and obligations, and positive role models and mentors.

Personal attributes and motivation. The cross-case analysis showed that motivation was the most significant factor in the successful degree completion of the participants and it was most prominently highlighted by all participants. All of the participants indicated that personal factors like motivation, knowledge, thinking styles, research skills do play a significant role. One of the participants mentioned that it was easier for her to do research as she was already a university employee. She believes that "…Those who have other than law undergraduate or graduate degrees have difficulties in completing the doctoral degree. She had a strong motivation to complete the doctoral degree." Another participant believes that such personal qualities of a student as patience, self-esteem, courage, perseverance, motivation, values, honesty, decency, stress resistance, understanding yourself and your strengths/weaknesses, the ability to overcome failures and benefit from mistakes, devotion to their ideas and values, diligence, self-discipline determine 70% of the successful completion of the program.

Family support and obligations. All of the participants mentioned that their families supported them during their studies. Three of the participants who were married and had children mentioned that family obligations can distract from doctoral studies. In fact, two of them believe that one of the main reasons for their longer time-to-degree is family obligations to look after their children.

Positive role models and mentors. The participants highlighted that having an opportunity to interact with the well-known scholars in their field and being part of their scholarly community was very inspiring them. These scholars guided and mentored the participants throughout their studies. Furthermore, like these positive role models, the participants pursued academic careers as a faculty member, researcher and some of them even became heads of the departments.

Summary

This chapter presented major findings of the present study aimed to explore factors that successful graduates of doctoral degrees in law programs attribute to their persistence towards degree completion in Kazakhstan. The findings were organized in two sections with several subsections in each: doctoral graduates' educational experiences using within-case analysis and persistence factors towards successful degree completion using cross-case analysis. The study revealed that psycho-sociocultural factors were key factors that affected doctoral persistence towards degree completion, while financial, academic and social integration factors were secondary factors in doctoral persistence. The participants had challenging experiences during their doctoral journey such as too much coursework that distracted from writing thesis, the requirement to publish an article in an international impact-factor journal in a short period of time, isolation from university life, balancing study and family obligations to raise children. However, the participants persisted towards

their doctoral degree completion with strong motivation to become a researcher, psychological and social support from family, and positive role models and mentors.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the literature. The discussion is based on the analysis of the findings, literature review, and personal reflection. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore factors that contribute to doctoral persistence in law programs by hearing the voices of the doctoral graduates. The cross-case analysis of the experiences of doctoral students in law programs revealed that doctoral persistence is affected by interaction of multiple factors. In order to better understand this complex phenomenon, the findings were grouped under three conceptual frameworks that are predominant in the current literature such as financial frameworks, academic and social integration frameworks, and psycho-sociocultural frameworks.

Financial frameworks

Based on the cross-case analysis, financial factors significantly affect doctoral persistence in law programs, as two-thirds of the participants reported receiving state funding with monthly stipend and one-third self-funded their studies by working and were supported by family and significant others. This finding is consistent with findings of previous studies that lack of financial support leads to attrition (Bair & Haworth, 2004).Participants reported that there were additional expenses such as purchase of literature, payment for copies of necessary articles and fragments of books, travel to conferences, and additional professional courses on the topic of research. Without the monthly stipend, part-time employment and financial support from the family, it would be impossible to cover these expenses.

Academic and social integration frameworks

Departmental culture. The cross-case analysis revealed that most of the participants were already university employees before entering the doctoral programs. This implies that they

were already academically and socially integrated into the departmental culture. One of the participants mentioned her observation that those students who were university employees before undertaking doctoral studies were more successful in doctoral degree completion. All of them reported that they had quite friendly relationships with the faculty and peers. There were well-known scholars in the field of legal sciences who were mentoring and inspiring them to persist in their studies. This finding is consistent with the previous findings that the faculty support and peer interaction significantly affects doctoral persistence(Golde, 2000, 2005; Lovitts, 2001; Ferrer de Valero, 2001;Bair & Haworth, 2004; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; Spaulding &Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Jairam & Kahl, 2012).

The findings differed regarding the support of thesis supervisors. Some of the participants reported that an opportunity to do research under the supervision of the well-known scholars and foreign supervisors was a positive experience. One of the participants was very satisfied with her thesis supervisor high involvement and professional guidance during her thesis writing process. However, one of the participants was concerned that thesis supervisors do not have adequate training to work with today's doctoral student, and research guidance is implemented by Soviet standards. This finding is supported by the OECD Report on Higher Education in Kazakhstan (2017) that "there is lack of effective engagement by foreign co-supervisors" (OECD, 2017, p. 212). This implies that the quality of thesis supervisor did not significantly affect doctoral persistence in this study as all of the participants successfully completed their programs. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of the previous studies that thesis supervisor support positively affects doctoral persistence (Golde, 2000, 2005; Lovitts, 2001; Ferrer de Valero, 2001;Bair & Haworth, 2004; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Jairam & Kahl, 2012). This inconsistency of the findings can be explained by the fact that most of the

participants were already faculty members and involved in research work before entering the doctoral programs. They were more focused to earn the doctoral degree in order to get promoted and they had access to other faculty members who were ready to guide and assist in the dissertation writing process.

Program structure and content. The findings were controversial regarding the program structure and content. Half of the participants reported that they were satisfied with the program, while the other half reported that the program should be improved. They were concerned that the programs were outdated and administered by the Soviet-era methods. There was long and non-productive theoretical training that took away a lot of time and distracted from writing thesis. This finding is consistent with the findings of the OECD Report on Higher Education in Kazakhstan (2017) that "there is insufficient time for the research project and too much time allocated to coursework" (OECD, 2017, p. 212). Most of the participants reported that the requirement to publish an article in an international journal with a non-zero impact-factor was challenging as there was not enough time available. This finding is also supported the finding of the OECD Report on Higher Education in Kazakhstan (2017) that "the period of funding is too short a time to write a paper publishable in good journals" (OECD, 2017, p. 212). However, these challenges did not influence the participants' successful degree completion. This is not consistent with the previous research findings that program structure and content play a central role in the doctoral persistence (Wao and Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Spaulding &Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012)

For most of the participants, foreign trainings were a positive experience as it was interesting to get acquainted with another culture of learning and research, with other approaches of universities and research institutes, to obtain information from the first sources, and also share research results in international conferences. However, one of the

participants was concerned that she did not have her second foreign training as the university cut financing.

Psycho-sociocultural frameworks

Personal attributes and motivation. All of the participants were highly motivated to earn the doctoral degree. Strong motivation was the most important factor in their successful completion of the program. Their strong motivation might be explained by the fact that they were already university employers and had positive role models and mentors such as well-known scholars and researchers in the field of legal sciences. This finding is consistent with the previous research findings that motivation is critical in doctoral persistence (Ferrerde Valero, 2001; Lovitts, 2001; Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; Gardner, 2009, Templeton, 2016). Other personal attributes patience, self-esteem, courage, perseverance, values, honesty, decency, stress resistance, understanding yourself and your strengths/weaknesses, the ability to overcome failures and benefit from mistakes, devotion to their ideas and values, diligence, self-discipline were also mentioned as important factors in doctoral persistence.

Family support and obligations. The cross-case analysis showed that all of the participants were supported by family members during their studies. Three of the participants who were married and had children mentioned that family obligations can distract from studies. In fact, two of them believe that the reason for their longer time-to-degree is family obligations such as having to look after their babies. These findings support previous research findings that family obligations are challenging and stressful for doctoral students and can negatively affect doctoral persistence (Smith et al., 2006; Wasburn-Moses, 2008). However, this study revealed that family obligations are not the most significant factor that causes doctoral attrition. They caused longer time-to-degree but not doctoral attrition.

Demographic variables. The cross-case analysis revealed that gender is not a key factor in doctoral persistence as five of the six participants were female. However, some participants believe that marital status affects female students' persistence as married female students with children have less time for studies and research. Despite this belief, all of the married female students in this study successfully completed their doctoral programs. These findings support the previous studies that demographic variables are not important factors in doctoral persistence (Bair & Haworth, 2004).

Summary

This chapter presented the discussion of the findings of the study and referred them to the overarching research question and literature review. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore factors that contribute to doctoral persistence in law programs by hearing the voices of the doctoral graduates. The findings were discussed under three conceptual frameworks that are predominant in the current literature such as financial frameworks, academic and social integration frameworks, and psycho-sociocultural frameworks. Most of the findings were consistent with previous research findings concerning financial support, faculty and peer support, family support and obligations, motivation, and demographic variables. However, some of the findings differed from the previous research findings regarding program structure and content, and thesis supervisor and foreign co-supervisor support.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to contribute to the existing research on doctoral persistence by exploring potentially important factors that lead doctoral students in law programs in Kazakhstan to successful degree completion. The research questions of the study aimed to find out what doctoral graduates experienced in their doctoral journey and how they persisted towards degree completion. The study revealed that despite the challenges that doctoral graduates experienced during their doctoral journey, they persisted towards degree completion with their strong motivation to become a researcher. Although conducted on a small number of doctoral graduates in law programs, the study suggests new directions that potentially might be interesting for further research.

Implications

Kazakhstan needs more doctoral graduates to build up the higher education system by providing a strong new generation of teachers, researchers and education leaders. Therefore, the results of this study are aimed at policy analysts, program administrators, faculty, current and prospective students. By understanding doctoral persistence factors strategies can be developed to improve persistence in degree completion.

Based on the findings of the present study the implications for current and prospective doctoral students, doctoral education policy-makers and administrators are developed. The key finding that psycho-sociocultural factors, such as motivation, family obligations, and positive role models and mentors, have the most significant influence on doctoral persistence implies that these factors should be paid more attention and policies should be developed to improve psychological well-being of doctoral students. The finding regarding financial factors suggests that the financial status of students should be monitored by institutions as self-funded doctoral might have longer time-to-degree. The finding that doctoral persistence is affected by departmental culture suggests that more

attention should be paid to the faculty-student relationship, student-advisor relationship and student-peer interaction as they are important aspects of department culture. The implication from the finding that demographic variables such as age and gender do not affect significantly on doctoral attrition and persistence is that education policy-makers and administrators should focus on other factors that have significant influence on doctoral persistence.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Program Administrators. This study revealed that long and non-productive theoretical training take away a lot of time and distract from writing thesis. This implies that sufficient time should be allocated for the research project. The requirement to publish an article in an international journal with a non-zero impact factor was also challenging for doctoral students as there was not enough time available. Therefore, program administrators should take this into account by increasing the period of funding and the amount of financial support.

The study also revealed that there is low involvement of thesis supervisors and foreign co-supervisors during the dissertation writing process. Research guidance by thesis supervisors is still implemented by Soviet methods whereas the system requires research conducted according to international standards. This implies that additional trainings for thesis supervisors should be implemented on how to work with doctoral students.

Some participants recalled that they were not socialized into the university life, they only attended classes and had very little information about the university events in general. There was lack of communication with other doctoral students and not enough information about the organization of trainings, publications in foreign journals, organization of research work. This implies that program administrators should be more open to students,

provide more information and conduct additional workshops on how to publish articles in foreign journals and to organize research work.

Recommendations for Students. This study can be helpful to prospective students who would like to enter doctoral programs in law. They can take into account the potential challenges during the doctoral journey and be prepared for possible obstacles. This study showed that married students with children had longer time-to-degree, therefore prospective students who have children or planning to have children should think about if there is sufficient financial support for childcare or whether their family supports by looking after their children. The study also revealed that financial support from the government is important as the tuition is costly and there are additional expenses such as purchase of literature, payment for copies of necessary articles and fragments of books, travel to conferences, additional professional courses on the topic of research. These expenses can become overwhelming and balancing work and studies can be stressful.

Recommendations for Policy Analysts. Although this study was primarily aimed at program administrators and students, the findings can also be important for policy analysts as policy analysts advise government official in the policy decision making process. The study showed that financial support from the government is important as the tuition is costly and there are additional expenses associated with the studies. This implies that governmental should be more encouraged to support doctoral students. National initiatives should be promoted to increase the amount of state grants for doctoral programs and increase the period of funding as well.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study. First of all, the criterion of successful graduates of doctoral degrees in law from Kazakhstani universities both male and female, single and married, state-funded and self-funded, who graduated in the last five years and

who were working in the legal field at a higher education institution in Astana, reduced the availability of the sample. Consequently, the sample size was limited due to the above-mentioned requirement which excluded Soviet-system degree of Candidates of Sciences and Doctors of Sciences. Due to the limited sample size, it will be difficult to generalize the findings of this study.

Another limitation is that only perspectives of students themselves on doctoral persistence in the law programs were presented. Perspectives of faculty members and administrative personnel were not excluded. Moreover, as participants were asked to retell their doctoral journey, time lapses might have affected their recollection of their educational experiences. The participants might have reinterpreted their experiences differently or might have chosen to inflate responses or withhold information.

As this study is the only research on doctoral persistence in law programs in Kazakhstan, it has some unanswered questions left and further research is needed. Although this study was conducted on a small number of participants within Kazakhstani context, it contributes to the existing educational research by suggesting new directions to future studies in doctoral attrition and completion rates and time-to-degree in law programs.Future research might focus on the psycho-sociocultural factors of doctoral persistence in more depth and include larger sample size. Other important factors need to be researched thoroughly. This study was conducted using solely qualitative method, future studies can be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to get a complete picture of the research problem. Thus, the quantitative data and results will provide a general picture of the research problem, while the qualitative data and its analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring the participants' views regarding their persistence in more depth.

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Doctoral students persistence in law programs in Kazakhstan

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in **a research study** on the factors that successful graduates of doctoral degrees in law programs attribute to their persistence towards degree completion in Kazakhstan. You will be asked to answer semi-structured interview questions, the interviews will be audio-recorded and a verbatim transcription will be made and analysed later. I will secure all data and only share the information with my supervising committee. All data will be kept in a locked file cabinet and password protected laptop at my residence for the period of time required by Nazarbayev University. I will be the only one with access to the data stored in my private laptop.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 1 hour.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The risks associated with this study are spending personal time of the participants during the working hours. The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study are, firstly, the findings will be beneficial for educators and administrators of doctoral law programs in Kazakhstan to understand persistence factors towards doctoral degree completion among doctoral students. Secondly, the study may give an insight for potential doctoral students of law degrees about doctoral studies in Kazakhstan. Thirdly, the research will contribute to research and literature on persistence towards doctoral degree completion in Kazakhstan. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your employment.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled**. **The alternative is not to participate.** You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work, **Dr. Dilrabo Jonbekova, dilrabo.jonbekova@nu.edu.kz**

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Please sign this consent from if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.

According to the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan an individual under the age of 18 is considered a child. Any participant falling into that category should be given the Parental Consent Form and have it signed by at least one of his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).

Appendix B

Sample Interview Transcript

1. Расскажите немного о себе и о своем образовании?

Я являюсь доктором PhD, по специальности «Юриспруденция», докторскую степень защитила в сентябре 2015 года, и подтверждение получила в феврале 2016 года. Получила образование свое непрерывно, очно, в КазГЮУ. Там же получила базовое образование по специальности «Юриспруденция», и там же закончила магистратуру.

2. Почему Вы решили получить докторскую степень?

Так как я являлась работником вуза, для продолжения своих научных изысканий, так как за плечами была магистратура, определившись с кругом научных исседований, мной было принято решение продолжить свое образование и получить ученую степень доктора.

3. Сколько времени Вам понадобилось, чтобы закончить докторантуру?

Получилось так что в 2010 году я поступила в докторантуру, очно обучалась 3 года, 2013 году сдала госэкзамен, но так сложились обстоятельства что я вышла в декретный отпуск, поэтому в тот год не получилось защитить свою диссертацию, но она была на стадии написания, но пока еще не проходила обсуждение на кафедре. Тем не менее, я осуществляла свою работу по писанию статей. В сентябре 2015 года я вышла на защиту. Сначала у меня было 2 обсуждения на кафедре, в июне на очередном собрании комиссии было назначение даты и в сентябре 2015 года я вышла на защиту. В общем я потратила 5 лет.

4. Какие были сложности во время обучения в докторантуре? Какие были приятные/позитивные моменты обучения в докторантуре?

В принципе, в самом обучении очной докторантуры проблем не было, так как я была вузовским работником. Для меня это было познавательно, интересно заниматься научными исследованиями, ходить на занятия. Со своей тематикой тоже не было затруднений, так как сразу с научным руководителем мы определились с темой исследования. Моя тема не была ранее изучена в Казахстане, мое направление гражданская специализация, даже не было статьей по этой тематике. В связи с этим, мне приходилось искать материалы. Проблема было в том что мне надо было найти материал, это было зарубежные материалы, много было исследовано, приходилось работать с первоисточниками, переводить, очень много работы было проведено в Россий, хотя там у них отличается законодательство. Следующий момент, сложность была в публикациях. В то время у нас было 7 публикаций, одно из них с не нулевым импакт-фактором. В принципе, в написании ВАКовских статей, в международных конференциях я быстро публиковалась. Проблема была в том что нужно было публиковаться, во-первых,нужно было найти журнал который принял бы статью, во-вторых, сроки, нужно было ждать и в третьих финансовый вопрос, в основном платные публикации. Но, одна статья у меня была опубликована мной самой, и

вторая была в со-авторстве. Приходилось написать на стыке тема у меня была, потому что это был экономический журнал.

О приятных моментах, само по себе атмосфера обучения была очень интересной, познавательной, и плюс то что были стажировки, 2 стажировки которые оплачивались университетом.

5. Получали ли Вы какую-либо финансовую помощь во время обучения? Кто финансировал Ваше обучение? Работали ли Вы во время обучения? Как Вы считаете, влияют ли финансы в получении докторской степени?

Как раз в 2010 году, сейчас снова платную докторантуру открыли, я считаю это большим плюсом, хотя раньше боялись что в науку пойдут те кому надо, не надо. Я отучилась на платной осеове, в тот год нашему университету был выделен всего 1 грант, желающих естественно было больше. В тот год мной было принято решение поступить в докторантуру, хотя у меня был высокий балл, но были люди набрали еще выше балл. Я пошла на платное обучение, нас поддержал университет. Я была сотрудником этого университета и они сделали 50% скидку. Это был очень большой плюс и стажировка за счет университета. То есть они решили поддержать своих сотрудников таким образом. Я работала так как я училась не на гранте, мне было позволено работать. Я знаю что на гранте им нужно было учиться очно. Стипендий не было. Так что в какой-то степени для того чтобы публиковать статью нужны финансы, для того что бы учебники, материалы купить тоже финансы, когда защищаешься тоже финансы играют роль. Но это не первоочередно, самое главное должно двигать желание остепениться.

6. Какова была среда или атмосфера/культура в Вашей программе? Чувствовали ли Вы себя частью этой среды/культуры, то есть были ли Вы академически и социально интегрированы? Как Вы считаете, влияет ли среда или атмосфера/культура на получение докторской степени?

Возможно это не первоочередно, но тем не менее хочу сделать свой вывод те ребята которые поступали именно сотрудники университета, которые были полностью погружены в эту среду, они достаточно успешно сдали экзамены, успешно защитились и быстрее. Есть те которые поступали в 2010 году еще не остепенелись до сих пор, то есть они закончили этот курс но они не остепенились потому что они работают в иной сфере, где-то они практические работники, то есть не вузовские, не научные работники.

7. Были ли Вы удовлетворены программой обучения, то есть оправдала ли программа Ваши ожидания?

В принципе, да. Достаточно такой хороший уровень был. Но единственное, именно в тот период когда я обучалась, сейчас у них обучение на английском, в то время было на русском было, казахского не было, я считаю это минусом. Во вторых, хотелось бы чтобы обучение было практикоориентированным. Обучение было все таки теоритизировано больше.

8. Каковы были Ваши отношения с преподавателями? Является ли это фактором в получении докторской степени?

Прекрасные были отношения потому что я сама была сотрудником. Они полностью поддерживали, даже не в рамках программы, советами. Я считаю что взаимоотношения с преподавателями являются тоже одним из факторов для успешной защиты.

9. Какие были Ваши отношения с Вашими одногрупниками в докторантуре? Является ли социальная поддержка фактором в получении докторской степени?

Все друг друга поддерживали, кто защитился первый поддерживал последующих.

10.В целом, поддерживали ли Ваша семья или другие близкие люди Ваше обучение в докторантуре? В какой степени семейные или личные обязательства занимали у Вас время и отвлекали от учебы?

У меня была большая поддержка со стороны семьи. Но у меня были личные обстоятельства что я ушла в декретный отпуск и в какой то степени это замедливало.

11. Играют ли личные факторы(интеллект, знания, стили мышления, личность, мотивация и окружение) определенную роль в получении докторской степени? Если да, то насколько значительными были эти факторы для получения степени? Вы чувствовали себя готовыми к исследовательскому аспекту докторской работы?

Да, действительно решающую роль играют мотивация, интеллект, знания, мышление. Бывает кто-то более практико-ориентированный, кто-то готов к научным исследованиям. Мне легче приходилось потому что я была именно работником вуза, то есть имела представление о научных исследованиях. Но я считаю что те кто на практике тяжелее, не все могут исследовать и изложить на бумаге. Некоторые до сих пор не смогли защититься. И еще один момент, те которые пришли со смежных специальностей, то есть у них либо базовое образование не юридическое, либо магистратура, им сложнее было понять юридическую терминологию, сложнее было написать диссертацию. У меня в первую очередь была мотивация остепениться, так как я была работником вуза. Я училась к исследовательскому аспекту именно во время писания. Полное осознание мне пришло по конец. Большую поддержку мне оказал мне мой научный руководитель который давал мне правильное направление.

12. Какие другие факторы (возраст, пол, семейное положение) влияют на обучение в докторантуре?

Определенные темы выбирают женщины, определенные темы мужчины выбирают. Люди выбирают те специальности по которым легче защититься. А у меня была специальность по которой сложнее защититься. Насчет семейного положения, в силу того что женщина хранитилница домашнего очага, она должна рожать, воспитвать детей, получается у нее времени не достаточно. В моем случае так и получилось что я отложила.

Appendix C

	Interview transcripts	Axial Coding	Thematic Coding
1	Я являюсь доктором PhD, по специальности «Юриспруденция», докторскую степень защитила в сентябре 2015 года, и подтверждение получила в феврале 2016 года. Получила образование свое непрерывно, очно, в КазГЮУ. Там же получила базовое образование по специальности «Юриспруденция», и там же закончила магистратуру.	Undergraduate and graduate degree in Law at the same university	Background
2	Так как я являлась работником вуза, для продолжения своих научных изысканий, так как за плечами была магистратура, определившись с кругом научных исследований, мной было принято решение продолжить свое образование и получить ученую степень доктора.	As a university employee, to continue research	Motivation to pursue
3	Получилось так что в 2010 году я поступила в докторантуру, очно обучалась 3 года, 2013 году сдала госэкзамен, но так сложились обстоятельства что я вышла в декретный отпуск, поэтому в тот год не получилось защитить свою диссертацию, но она была на стадии написания, но пока еще не проходила обсуждение на кафедре. Тем не менее, я осуществляла свою работу по писанию статьей. В сентябре 2015 года я вышла на защиту. Сначала у меня было 2 обсуждения на кафедре, в июне на очередном собрании комиссии было назначение даты и в сентябре 2015 года я вышла на защиту. В общем я потратила 5 лет.	5 years to complete the degree	Time-to-degree
4	В принципе, в самом обучении очной докторантуры проблем не было, так как я была вузовским работником. Для меня это было познавательно, интересно заниматься научными исследованиями, ходить на занятия. Со своей тематикой тоже не было затруднений, так как сразу с научным руководителем мы определились с темой исследования. Моя тема не была ранее изучена в Казахстане, мое направление гражданская специализация, даже не было статьей по этой тематике. В связи с этим, мне приходилось искать материалы. Проблема было в том что мне надо было найти материал, это было	Not enough literature in Kazakhstan to research her theme. Requirement to publish an article in an international impact-factor journal. Challenges to find a journal that would accept the article, not enough time and finances to publish an article.	Academic experiences

зарубежные материалы, много было исследовано, приходилось работать с первоисточниками, переводить, очень много работы было проведено в Россий, хотя там у них отличается законодательство. Следующий момент, сложность была в публикациях. В то время у нас было 7 публикаций, одно из них с не нулевым импакт-фактором. В принципе, в написании ВАКовских статей, в международных конференциях я быстро публиковалась. Проблема была в том что нужно было публиковаться, во-первых,нужно было найти журнал который принял бы статью, во-вторых, сроки, нужно было ждать и в третьих финансовый вопрос, в основном платные публикации. Но, одна статья у меня была опубликована мной самой и вторая была в со-авторстве. Приходилось написать на стыке тема у меня была, потому что это был экономический журнал. О приятных моментах, само по себе атмосфера обучения была очень интересной, познавательной, и плюс то что были стажировки, 2 стажировки которые оплачивались университетом.	2 internships that was funded by the university.	
5	Как раз в 2010 году, сейчас снова платную докторантуру открыли, я считаю это большим плюсом, хотя раньше боялись что в науку пойдут те кому надо, не надо. Я отучилась на платной осеове, в тот год нашему университету был выделен всео 1 грант, желающих естественно было больше. В тот год мной было принято решение поступить в докторантуру, хотя у меня был высокий балл, но были люди набрали еще выше балл. Я пошла на платное обучение, нас поддержал университет. Я была сотрудником этого университета и они сделали 50% скидку. Это был очень большой плюс и стажировка за счет университета. То есть они решили поддержать своих сотрудников таким образом. Я работала так как я училась не на гранте, мне было позволено работать. Я знаю что на гранте им нужно было учиться очно. Стипендий не было. Так что в какой-то степени для того чтобы публиковать статью нужны финансы, для того что бы учебники, материалы купить тоже финансы, когда защищаешься тоже финансы	In 2010 self-funded PhD programs were introduced, she enrolled into this program. As there was only 1 state grant allocated to my university, she could not get this scholarship. She worked during her PhD studies in order to pay my tuition and other expenses.	Financial factors

	играют роль. Но это не первоочередно, самое главное должно двигать желание остепениться.		
6	Возможно это не первоочередно, но тем не менее хочу сделать свой вывод те ребята которые поступали именно сотрудники университета, которые были полностью погружены в эту среду, они достаточно успешно сдали экзамены, успешно защитились и быстрее. Есть те которые поступали в 2010 году еще не остепенелись до сих пор, то есть они закончили этот курс но они не остепенились потому что они работают в иной сфере, где-то они практические работники, то есть не вузовские, не научные работники.	Those students who have an experience of working at universities, they were more successful in doctoral degree completion.	Academic and social integration factors
7	В принципе, да. Достаточно такой хороший уровень был. Но единственное, именно в тот период когда я обучалась, сейчас у них обучение на английском, в то время было на русском было, казахского не было, я считаю это минусом. Во вторых, хотелось бы чтобы обучение было практикоориентированным. Обучение было все таки теоритизировано больше.	Overall she was satisfied with the program. She thinks that it would be much better if the program was more practical.	Academic experiences
8	Прекрасные были отношения потому что я сама была сотрудником. Они полностью поддерживали, даже не в рамках программы, советами. Я считаю что взаимоотношения с преподавателями являются тоже одним из факторов для успешной защиты.	The relationships with the faculty were great, they always supported her.	Academic and social integration factors
9	Все друг друга поддерживали, кто защитился первый поддерживал последующих.	Relationships with peers were also great, those who defended their theses first supported others.	Academic and social integration factors
10	У меня была большая поддержка со стороны семьи. Но у меня были личные обстоятельства что я ушла в декретный отпуск и в какой то степени это замедливало.	Her family supported her, however she had to take a maternal leave that led to longer time to degree.	Psycho-sociocultural factors
11	Да, действительно решающую роль играют мотивация, интеллект, знания, мышление. Бывает кто-то более практико-ориентированный, кто-то готов к научным исследованиям. Мне легче приходилось потому что я была именно работником вуза, то есть имела представление о научных исследованиях. Но я считаю что те кто на практике тяжелее, не все могут исследовать и	Personal factors like motivation, knowledge, thinking styles, motivation do play a significant role. It was easier for her to do research as she was a university employee. Those who have other than law	Psycho-sociocultural factors

	изложить на бумаге. Некоторые до сих пор не смогли защититься. И еще один момент, те которые пришли со смежных специальностей, то есть у них либо базовое образование не юридическое, либо магистратура, им сложнее было понять юридическую терминологию, сложнее было написать диссертацию. У меня в первую очередь была мотивация остепениться, так как я была работником вуза. Я училась к исследовательскому аспекту именно во время писания. Полное осознание мне пришло по конец. Большую поддержку мне оказал мне мой научный руководитель который давал мне правильное направление.	undergraduate or graduate degrees have difficulties in completing the doctoral degree. She had a strong motivation to complete the doctoral degree. Her supervisor supported her hugely and showed her right direction.	
12	Определенные темы выбирают женщины, определенные темы мужчины выбирают. Люди выбирают те специальности по которым легче защититься. А у меня была специальность по которой сложнее защититься. Насчет семейного положения, в силу того что женщина хранитилница домашнего очага, она должна рожать, воспитывать детей, получается у нее времени не достаточно. В моем случае так и получилось что я отложила.	Females choose particular themes and males choose particular themes. Students choose those themes that are easier to research. Marital status affects female students degree completion as married female students with children have less time.	Psycho-sociocultural factors