

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF BOLASHAK SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Assessing the impact of Bolashak Scholarship Program on graduates' cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes

Perizat Kalybaikyzy

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in
Educational Leadership

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

May, 2021

Word count: 15 740

AUTHOR AGREEMENT

AUTHOR AGREEMENT

By signing and submitting this license, I Perizat Kalybayeva (the author or copyright owner) grant to Nazarbayev University (NU) the non-exclusive right to reproduce, convert (as defined below), and/or distribute my submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video.

I agree that NU may, without changing the content, convert the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation.

I also agree that NU may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, back-up and preservation.

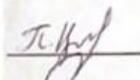
I confirm that the submission is my original work, and that I have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. I also confirm that my submission does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.

If the submission contains material for which I do not hold copyright, I confirm that I have obtained the unrestricted permission of the copyright owner to grant NU the rights required by this license, and that such third-party owned material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission.

IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UPON WORK THAT HAS BEEN SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN NU, I CONFIRM THAT I HAVE FULFILLED ANY RIGHT OF REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS REQUIRED BY SUCH CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT.

NU will clearly identify my name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to your submission.

I hereby accept the terms of the above Author Agreement.



Author's signature:

03.05.2021

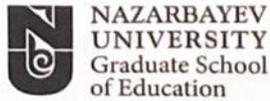
Date:

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been submitted for the award of any other course or degree at NU or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. This thesis is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated, and the views expressed here are my own.

Signed: *T. H. H.*
Date: 03.05.2021

Ethical Approval



**NAZARBAYEV
UNIVERSITY**
Graduate School
of Education

53 Kabanbay Batyr Ave.
010000 Astana,
Republic of Kazakhstan
October 2020

Dear Perizat Kalybaikyzy,

This letter now confirms that your research project entitled: "Assessing the impact of Bolashak Scholarship Program on graduates' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes" has been approved.

The changes recommended by the reviewer have been addressed and the proposed study now complies with all of the requirements of Nazarbayev University.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely,
Mehmet Karakus

On behalf of Zumrad Kataeva
Chair of the GSE Ethics Committee
Assistant Professor
Graduate School of Education
Nazarbayev University

Block C3, Room 5006
Office: +7 (7172) 70 9371
Mobile: +7 777 1929961
email: zumrad.kataeva@nu.edu.kz

CITI Training Certificate



CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 24-Aug-2020
Expiration Date 24-Aug-2023
Record ID 37586568

This is to certify that:

Perizat Kalybaikzy

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Students conducting no more than minimal risk research
Students - Class projects
1 - Basic Course

(Curriculum Group)
(Course Learner Group)
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Nazarbayev University

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w831f8449-0045-4d17-bcac-a1904475836e-37586568

Acknowledgements

The process of writing this thesis work would not have been possible without the support and advice I received from the people who accompanied me throughout this journey. I would like to express my gratitude to all the people who were somehow involved in it.

First of all, I am grateful to all the NUGSE faculty and administration members who provided us with all the necessary resources throughout these two years. I express my gratitude to my supervisor Mehmet Karakus for his support and belief in me. I am also grateful to Barclay Mullins, who served as an example of a great professional and a kind person.

Secondly, I am thankful to my family, parents and sisters, who never doubted my success in all periods of my life. I will forever be grateful to you for the support and opportunities given to me as the youngest child in the family.

Lastly, I would like to thank my fantastic group mates who shared invaluable tips and resources. Also, I want to show my appreciation to my alma mater, SDU, and especially my department, MDE and my students, who allowed me to combine my work and studies.

Abstract

The investigation of overseas study program's influence on alumni's learning outcomes is a widely discussed topic worldwide. Yet, there is limited literature regarding the effects of the Bolashak scholarship programme's graduates and the factors that influence them. The purpose of this study called "Assessing the impact of Bolashak Scholarship Program on graduates' cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes" is to explore the effect of the Bolashak scholarship program on its graduates' learning outcomes who work at one of the private higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. This study seeks to investigate the relationships between demographic factors such as gender, country of study abroad experience and graduates' self-reported cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. An online survey and semi-structured interviews with graduates who work in one university were conducted. Critical questions focused on post-programme self-assessment of participants' cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between female and male graduates in their learning outcomes, although no difference was found among graduates who had studied in different countries. Moreover, the study identified such factors of improved outcomes as an inner motivation of participants to study abroad, presence of previous experience with communicating with people from other cultures, communication practice with peers, university staff and local community during the study abroad period, as well as the impact of society.

Аннотация

Несмотря на то, что тема исследования о влиянии программ обучения за рубежом на результаты обучения выпускников является широко обсуждаемой во всем мире, ограниченное количество научных исследований посвящено влиянию и факторам влияния стипендиальной программы «Болашак» на навыки выпускников. Данное исследование под названием «Оценка воздействия программы стипендии «Болашак» на когнитивные, поведенческие и поведенческие результаты выпускников» изучает влияние программы на когнитивные, установочные и поведенческие результаты обучения ее выпускников, которые работают в одном из частных высших учебных заведений в Казахстане. Исследование направлено на определение влияния программы «Болашак» и возможных факторов путем анализа когнитивных, установочных и поведенческих результатов, о которых сообщают выпускники. В этом исследовании изучается взаимосвязь между демографическими факторами, такими как пол, страна обучения за рубежом и когнитивными, установочными и поведенческими результатами выпускников. Был проведен онлайн-опрос и полуструктурированные интервью с выпускниками, работающими в одном университете. Критические вопросы были сосредоточены на пост программной самооценке когнитивных, поведенческих и поведенческих результатов участников. Результаты выявили статистически значимую разницу между выпускниками женского и мужского пола в результатах обучения, хотя не было обнаружено никакой разницы среди выпускников, которые учились в разных странах. Более того, исследование выявило такие факторы улучшения результатов, как внутренняя мотивация участников учиться за границей, наличие предыдущего опыта общения с людьми из других культур, практика общения со сверстниками, сотрудниками

университета и местным сообществом в период обучения за рубежом, а также как влияние общества.

Аңдатпа

Шетелде оқу бағдарламаларының түлектердің оқу нәтижелеріне әсері туралы зерттеу тақырыбы бүкіл әлемде кеңінен талқыланатынына қарамастан, "Болашақ" стипендиялық бағдарламасының түлектердің дағдыларына әсері мен әсер ету факторларына арналған ғылыми зерттеулердің саны шектеулі. Сондықтан, бұл «Болашақ» стипендиялық бағдарламасының түлектерінің танымдық, көзқарастық және мінез-құлықтық нәтижелеріне әсерін бағалау» атты зерттеу бағдарламаның әсері мен түлектер хабарлаған танымдық, бағдарлық және мінез-құлық нәтижелерін талдау арқылы мүмкін болатын факторларды анықтауға бағытталған. Сонымен қатар, бұл зерттеу қатысушылардың жынысы, шетелде оқу елі сияқты демографиялық факторлар мен нәтижелер арасындағы өзара байланысын зерттейді. Бір университетте жұмыс істейтін түлектермен онлайн сауалнама және жартылай құрылымдық сұхбат жүргізілді. Сұрақтар қатысушылардың бағдарламаға қатысқаннан кейінгі танымдық, мінез-құлық және мінез-құлық нәтижелері бойынша өзін-өзі бағалауына бағытталған. Зерттеу қорытындыларына сәйкес, бағдарлама арқылы шетелде оқу нәтижелерінде әйелдер мен ер түлектер арасындағы статистикалық маңызды айырмашылықты анықталды. Дегенмен, әр түрлі елдерде оқыған түлектер арасында ешқандай айырмашылық табылған жоқ. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу қатысушылардың шетелде оқуға деген ішкі ынтасы, басқа мәдениеттердің адамдарымен қарым-қатынас тәжірибесі, шетелде оқу кезеңінде құрдастарымен, университет қызметкерлерімен және жергілікті қауымдастықпен қарым-қатынас тәжірибесі, сондай-ақ қоғамның ықпалы сияқты факторлардың нәтижелерді жақсартуға себепкер болғандығы анықтады.

Table of Contents

Chapter one: Introduction	1
Background of the study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	6
Definitions of Key Terms and Variables	6
Summary	7
Chapter 2. Literature Review	9
Overseas Study Experiences and Outcomes in Kazakhstani Context: the Bolashak International Scholarship Programme	9
Learning Outcomes of Overseas Study Experiences	14
Conceptual Framework	18
Instruments from Previous Studies	19
Summary	20
Chapter 3. Methodology	21
Research Approach and Design	21
Sample	23
Data Collection Tools	24
Data Collection Procedures	25
Data Analysis Procedures	27
Quantitative Data Analysis	27

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF BOLASHAK SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM	11
Qualitative Data Analysis	28
Ethical Issues	28
Summary	29
Chapter 4. Findings	31
Findings from the quantitative phase of the study	32
Demographic characteristics of the participants	32
Descriptive analysis of the participants' self-assessment of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes	34
T-test comparing female and male participants' evaluation of their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes	36
One-Way ANOVA to determine the influence of the place of study on the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes	38
Findings from the Qualitative Phase of the Study	38
Content Analysis of Additional factors that influence the participants' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes	38
Academic Development and Language Proficiency	39
Professional implications	41
Intercultural Awareness	42
Shared Human Values	43
Summary	45
Chapter 5. Discussion	46

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF BOLASHAK SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

12

RQ1: To what extent are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes of Bolashak graduates assessed?	46
RQ2: How do gender and place of study influence cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?	48
Gender	48
Place of Study	49
RQ3: What factors influence the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?	50
Academic Development and Language Proficiency	50
Professional Implications	51
Intercultural Awareness	51
Shared Human Values	52
Implications of the Findings for the Stakeholders	53
Summary	54
Chapter 6. Conclusion	55
Conclusion on Major Findings	55
Limitations of the Study	57
Recommendations for Future Research	57
References	58
Appendix A: Informed Consent Form	65
Appendix B: Questionnaire Part 1. Open-ended background questions:	66
Appendix C: Interview	68

List of Tables

Table 1	33
Table 2	35
Table 3	37

Chapter one: Introduction

This study explores the effect of the Bolashak scholarship programme on the self-reported learning outcomes of its graduates who work at one of the private higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. This study also explores the relationships between such demographic factors as gender, country of study abroad experience and cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. My main reason for choosing this topic is personal interest. My interest in this area developed while studying a globalisation course, where we discussed the various initiatives that countries provided for their citizens. It is interesting for me to understand how the applicants transform since most of my acquaintances who graduated from the programme are the ones who bring the western ideology of tolerance, equity, and respect to other cultures, races, and nations, as well as the support of human rights in general.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to explain the topic, its importance, and the way the work is organised. Therefore, this introductory chapter has been divided into the following sections. Firstly, it establishes the context by providing the background of the study and the rationale for investigating this topic. Next, it explains the research problem, states the research purpose and illustrates the research questions. Furthermore, the significance of the study, its potential benefits to the stakeholders, and definitions of key terms are provided.

Background of the study

Globalisation has brought the capitalistic approach to education, which is almost unavoidable in modern times. Therefore, the trend towards internationalisation, collaboration and gaining global experience is a concept that is valued worldwide. As a result, many countries worldwide have started to invest in their citizens by implementing study-abroad exchange programmes.

The focus of these studies is also diverse depending on the features of each programme. DiFante (2016) suggested that it is essential for generations with experience of education abroad to develop a global perspective and understanding of various cultures, traditions, and values. Numerous studies on this topic primarily investigate the learning outcomes of overseas study experiences through a bottom-up approach, where interviews with study participants indicate the areas in which they have developed. Existing literature recognises various effects: increased cultural awareness, personal development, different cognitive, metacognitive, and job-related skills acquired by students who have participated in such processes. Examples of such studies vary from the impact of the programmes based on such dependent variables as the duration of overseas study (Coker et al., 2018; Hamad & Lee, 2013), and pre-departure preparation (Nguyen, 2018). There is a comprehensive meta-analysis by Varela (2017) that discussed various works with diverse learning outcomes, such as language proficiency (Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014; Hardison, 2014), intercultural sensitivity (Burton, 2012; Jackson, 2008), global awareness (Deloach & Kurt, 2015; Kurt et al., 2013; Miller & Gonzalez, 2010), and overall effectiveness in terms of cost (Hassan, 1993; Mhamed et al., 2018).

A growing body of literature recognises three actual outcomes of the overseas study experience. Thus, this work will focus on a conceptual framework that focuses on students' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes, mainly based on Kraiger, Ford, and Salas'

(1993) taxonomy. The choice of the methodology of this study will draw upon the existing literature most relevant to achieving the study goals.

The current research topic is the impact of the Bolashak International Programme on the learning outcomes of graduates who have studied abroad and returned to Kazakhstan. The Bolashak programme is a strategically driven government-funded programme that has supported the citizens of Kazakhstan to study overseas by giving full grants for almost twenty-seven years. This programme's initial purpose was associated with the country's need to compete with the economies of other nations and move from a socialist to a market-oriented system (Perna, Orosz, & Jumakulov, 2015). The programme's realisation is directly connected with the State Programme of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020. Among three main objectives is providing the higher and postgraduate education required for the industrial and innovative development of the country (Nurbek, 2013). In a broader sense, the program is aimed at long-term perspectives and benefits to the economy resulting in an increase in experts with international expertise and global mindedness.

Statement of the Problem

Students' study abroad experiences have been an interest of international scholars of higher education for many decades. Of particular concern is the impact of certain variables that influence learning outcomes. Many works have discussed the implications of international scholarship programmes on students' learning outcomes. Examples of such programmes' effects on cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills include those by DiFante (2016), Nguyen (2018), and Varela (2017). Although much research has been carried out on government-funded scholarship programmes and their impact on graduates' success outcomes, there is still very little scientific understanding of success outcomes explicitly related to the Bolashak programme.

The Bolashak programme is one of the widely discussed topics in the field of Kazakhstani higher education. The opinions divide resulting in the support and criticism of the decision of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education to allocate government's funds to the overseas study experiences of the citizens of Kazakhstan. A common criticism of the programme is the brain drain issue, whereby many graduates of the programme decided not to return to their home country. Inconsistency between the knowledge and skills gained in foreign countries and the realities of the job market in Kazakhstan is another argument of its critics. Yet, supporters of the programme tend to highlight the importance of education in top universities abroad due to its possible long-term effect on the country's economic prosperity. Although there is an ongoing dialogue about the program and its outcomes, there seems to be little research on the specific effects and the factors that might influence the success or failure of such an experience. This gap indicates the urgency to investigate the programme's impact on graduates' outcomes using a scientific approach.

Previous qualitative research about the human capital benefits of the Bolashak programme conducted by Perna et al. (2015) found such benefits as leadership skills, flexibility, and open-mindedness resulting from interviews with a group of stakeholders. Still, it is necessary to conduct more recent research systematically using instruments to include a broader range of categories of outcomes under investigation. In other words, the bottom-up approach used in interviews by eliciting answers from transcripts could be changed to a top-down approach using inventories to contribute to existing knowledge. Existing research on the programme's effectiveness is limited to its cost-effectiveness and benefits in terms of human capital development (Mhamed et al., 2018; Perna et al., 2015).

There is a gap in the knowledge due to the lack of both quantitative and qualitative studies that investigate the learning outcomes of recipients of Bolashak scholarships. Most of the data about benefits are derived from interview-based studies. Due to the official form

of the programme, the objective approach towards realistic outcomes with possible failures in studies seems to be limited. Therefore, there is a need to conduct such research to shed light on the programme's impact on graduates' acquisition of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes without biased opinion. Also, there is an urgent need to understand the factors that influence the successful completion of programmes such as Bolashak to improve the quality of this experience for applicants and provide opportunities for stakeholders to improve their work.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the influence of the Bolashak programme and the possible factors of outcomes by analysing its graduates' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. The study does not attempt to measure the effectiveness of the programme, but instead, it is designed to elicit answers about the programme's benefits by investigating various outcomes.

The research questions posed in this study are:

1. To what extent are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes of Bolashak graduates assessed?
2. How do gender and place of study influence cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?
3. What factors influence the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?

For the quantitative part, the study used quantitative hypotheses which Creswell & Creswell (2017) refer to as "predictions the researcher makes about the expected outcomes of relationships among variables" (p. 227). The suggested hypotheses are as follows:

1. H10: There is no statistically significant difference between graduate male and female participants in terms of their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes.

H1: The difference between male and female participants in their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes is statistically significant.

2. H20: There is no statistically significant difference between the country of study abroad experiences of participants in terms of their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes.

H2: The difference between the country of study abroad experiences of participants in terms of their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes is statistically significant.

Significance of the Study

The study offers some critical insights into the relationship between studying abroad as part of the programme and specific outcomes such as developing cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural aspects considered as indicators of success among graduates. The study is expected to fill the existing gap in the literature about the learning outcomes of the Bolashak graduates using a quantitative approach. Moreover, it might assist both the official bodies responsible for policies and reforms in the higher education system of Kazakhstan and researchers in this field by enriching the literature on this local issue. As Nguyen (2018) suggested, it is essential for universities to understand factors that might influence the study abroad outcomes. Therefore, this study might be helpful for the universities to improve the impact of such overseas study experience and, thus, enhance the quality of their work. Furthermore, the study could assist in the decision-making process of applicants who wish to participate in a study abroad experience by applying to the Bolashak scholarship to understand the outcomes of such experiences.

Definitions of Key Terms and Variables

To ensure clarity of specific terms and notions used throughout the research work, I provide the following definitions of the terms:

Adaptability. The ability to adjust to new or different conditions. In this study, it is considered as one of the behavioural outcomes of the overseas study experience.

Intercultural competence. According to Fantini (2009), intercultural competence can be defined as “*complex abilities that are required to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself*” (p.458).

“Bolashak” International Scholarship Programme. This programme was established on November 5, 1993, by the decree of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev (CIS, n.d.). It enables high-performing students to study abroad by receiving a scholarship, after which a graduate must return and work for five years in Kazakhstan.

Center for International Programmes. It is the name of the joint-stock company established in 2005 by Governmental Resolution No.301, which is responsible for providing affordable education in foreign countries for the citizens of Kazakhstan.

Study abroad. This term refers to a programme that allows learners to gain educational experience in foreign countries for different academic programmes. Data from this study will arrive from a study abroad programme in Kazakhstan for graduate programmes.

Learning outcomes from studying abroad. This term refers to the results of sojourn experience that a learner gains by developing various skills and capabilities such as time management, language proficiency, adaptability, and cultural awareness.

Summary

This chapter has introduced the fundamental issues regarding the background of the study in the context of Kazakhstan. Next, the problem statement that justifies the need for this research and the purpose was provided. Following this, the research questions and the significance of the study for the involved stakeholders were justified.

This paper has been divided into six parts. Following the introduction part, the next chapter, the Literature Review, is concerned with the relevant past literature surrounding learning outcomes resulting from overseas study experiences. The third chapter is concerned with the Methodology of this thesis work. The rationale behind choosing mixed methods research, the procedures related to collecting data and its analysis, and ethical considerations are explained in the aforementioned section. Furthermore, the Findings chapter is designed to report the results by systematically highlighting essential data. The fifth chapter, the Discussion, considers the implications of the results and is followed by the Conclusion chapter. This final chapter summarises key findings and provides a final comment in the form of the study's limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter presents a retrospective review of the past literature related to overseas study experiences and various forms of alumni influence. The study's primary focus is on graduates of the Bolashak Scholarship Programme, which provides grants for Kazakhstani students to study abroad. The study's dependent variables are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural changes of each individual resulting from participating in the Bolashak Programme.

The chapter is divided into several subtopics. First, the chapter analyses overseas study experiences from the Kazakhstani context and focus explicitly on literature related to outcomes of the Bolashak Programme. The second section focuses on the background information and fundamental concepts relevant to the study, such as international education and learning outcomes. Then, it provides a synthesis of previous studies about learning outcomes as a result of international education experiences and establishes the fundamental ideas around the issue from a global viewpoint. This chapter attempts to find common outcome indicators and design a conceptual framework to analyse the extent of the impact of international study experience in the following sections.

Additionally, the literature review chapter provides an overview of research designs, instruments, and sampling information applied in previous studies to construct the relevant tools and offer the current study's foundations. Furthermore, the literature review chapter highlights gaps in the literature, which play a fundamental role in identifying problems and developing research questions.

Overseas Study Experiences and Outcomes in Kazakhstani Context: the Bolashak International Scholarship Programme

The current study is focused on graduates of the Bolashak International Scholarship Programme and how this experience influences their outcomes as learners and professionals.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand the programme's background and its initial objectives to find appropriate ways of assessing its effects.

The Kazakhstani system of education and higher education was significantly influenced by the standards established in the Soviet Union. During that period, the educational system could be described as a highly centralised system controlled by government authorities which provided its citizens with free public institutions. The government prescribed the majority of specialities in order to meet its general economic goals (Ahn, Dixon & Chekmareva, 2018). This impact was still observable after Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991. At that time of uncertainty, globalisation greatly influenced Kazakhstan's higher education system, leading to capitalistic views about the market's concept of education. These changes corresponded to the period between the 1990s and early 2000s. Bilyalov (2017) described this period of massification of higher education institutions as a "mushrooming" of the private sector. Another important step towards globalisation and transformation of the higher education system into an internationally recognised structure was the decision to join the Bologna Process in 2010. As mentioned in a study by Yergebekov and Temirbekova (2012), this action took place to apply international standards of education and become a global society.

Kazakhstan's higher education system has experienced fundamental reforms since 2010 in the form of those reforms related to European standards of education. These reforms included a shift towards internationalisation, supporting academic mobility to other countries, introducing different types of grants, and scholarship programmes such as the Bolashak scholarship, which provided opportunities for Kazakhstani youth to experience studying abroad (Jumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016). The Bolashak International Scholarship Programme was initiated by the state's leadership team and started its practice in 1993. This programme's initial idea was associated with the need to compete with nations in their

economies and to move from a socialist to a market-oriented system (Perna, Orosz, & Jumakulov, 2015). Competition in modern realities is concentrated on the human capital and intellect, contributing to its improvement. The former president of the country, N. Nazarbayev, discussed this strategic decision's goal by saying: "I sent the first scholars to allow them to get new knowledge and move our country forward" (Qazaqstan tarihy, 2014). Kazakhstan's government invested in many young citizens of Kazakhstan to ensure that this investment will positively impact economic prosperity in the long run, as stated by Sagintayeva and Jumakulov (2015).

Nevertheless, there are contrasting opinions on the programme's true intentions in foreign literature apart from seeking development. The study conducted by Del Sordi (2018) described the use of Bolashak scholarship recipients to promote Kazakhstan while studying abroad. This phenomenon was explained to improve the country's international image and enhance the authoritarian regime's stability.

Since 1993, the programme has experienced various changes. Initially, the programme provided bachelor degree scholarships which were cancelled in 2011 (Qazaqstan tarihy, 2014). Multiple reasons explain these modifications. While some scholars refer to the shift of focus to research degrees (Dairova et al., 2013), other researchers highlight Nazarbayev University's creation, which provides undergraduate programmes in Kazakhstan (Sagintayeva & Jumakulov, 2015). Implementation of changes in 2008 aimed at increasing the program participants' inclusiveness by considering the categories of youth from rural areas, civil servants, as well as research and teaching staff for master programmes and fellowships (CIP, n.d.). According to the Center of International Programme's site, the current number of scholars who received the grant is equal to 11126 people with a geographic variety of education in 33 countries. The Center for International Programmes was established in 2005 and now exists as a responsible organisation for the Bolashak

programme's processes. Although the centre's accomplishments seem positive, attempts to acquire studies and statistics regarding the graduates' outcomes and achievements appeared to be confidential. This phenomenon could be explained by the political underpinnings of the programme itself. Abbasov (2007) stated that only a few studies investigate the state-funded overseas study programmes provided by authoritarian regimes (as cited in Del Sordi, 2018).

Regarding the learning outcomes of the Bolashak scholarship recipients with the overseas study experience, little is known about them. It appears challenging to assess the programme's effectiveness because it requires longitudinal and complex study to achieve objective results. However, in research about the human capital benefits of the Bolashak programme by Perna et al. (2015), critical benefits influenced by the programme were identified. The scholars interviewed the stakeholders represented by the government's official bodies, administrators of the programme, employers, and graduates. The interviews revealed certain benefits in graduates' outcomes, such as leadership skills, flexibility to new conditions, a strong understanding of the connection among people, and well-developed self-positioning abilities. Employers' answers revealed overall satisfaction with the graduates by referring to such general characteristics as open-mindedness, critical thinking, judgement, understanding of international standards in their fields, and global competence. The latter is justified with constructing efficient communication with international companies due to exposure to foreign countries' practices and understanding diverse cultures. The value added to intercultural competence and a global mindset is vividly illustrated in one of the recipients' responses, which stated that this person was being paid to have an American, rather than local, viewpoint on specific issues in the employing company. This approach to employees is interpreted as a result of the modern labour market's capitalist view. Another significant benefit of the programme is English proficiency as a global communication

language, which is tightly related to globalisation. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the research did not consider the application of those skills in the workplace or the respondents' personal lives.

Another recent study by Akhmetov (2016) is indirectly related to the issue due to the programme participants' social development. It indicated the positive relationship between the programme and the graduates' social capital. The participants included in the study either studied abroad or were members of associations. It is important to note that the majority of the graduates were holders of the Bolashak Scholarship. This qualitative study investigated the knowledge and skills acquired due to the state-sponsored programme by exploring the graduates' level of participation in social networks, thus identifying their social lives activities, leading to their contribution to society.

Furthermore, Akhmetov (2016) focused on the application of their knowledge and skills in the workplace. The research demonstrated that being part of the Bolashak community influenced the graduates' lifestyles and social class enhancement. Through analysis of interviews, the author emphasised various effects of their overseas study experience, which led to participation in a range of organisations and activities. The main aim of these activities is to apply the information gained and share it by giving back to society. The author highlights charity work, voluntarism and other activities which enable people to improve their lives. Hence, this study might shed light on the social aspect of the graduates' development which is influenced by participation in the programme. However, the research seems to lack concrete sampling criteria, and, therefore, the results may not be generalised to support claims about the whole population of Bolashak graduates. Moreover, due to the qualitative approach of the research, it appears to lack statistical data to contribute to the field of outcomes of the Bolashak graduates.

Overall, what is known about the learning outcomes of the Bolashak recipients in terms of their intercultural competence seems insufficient and requires further investigation into the issue using quantitative and qualitative research methods. The graduates of the programme represent the workforce that will interact with people from diverse societies. Therefore, it seems critical to ensure that they acquire intercultural competence and respect for other people, cultures, and values.

Learning Outcomes of Overseas Study Experiences

The central phenomenon of this study is related to the impact of the educational sojourn experience. The number of studies on the effect of overseas study programmes has covered both short-term and long-term changes in individual characteristics due to overseas study experiences. Those studies' primary areas of influence include changes in attitude, intercultural and international awareness, professional development, charitable contribution, and other personal development indicators (DeGraaf et al., 2013). The investment in graduates' productivity is often presented in their capabilities to develop skills requested by the needs of the global market. According to Berg (2012), scholars have different viewpoints about learning outcomes: the first optimistic approach is where students acquire valuable skills and qualities; the second paradigm has a suspicious character which states that students do not learn anything; the third approach looks at studying abroad as a problem which needs immediate solutions and is found as a more accepted, new model.

Multiple studies measured the efficacy of similar programmes by analysing skills, competencies gained by the graduates, changes in values, attitudes and other impact indicators. In general, the impact of studying abroad is depicted in the form of various outcomes, such as increased world-mindedness and intercultural competence. It is now well established from a variety of studies that certain factors are investigated the most. Root and Ngampornchai (2013) suggested to refer to increased intercultural competence as one of the

primary objectives of study abroad programmes and highlighted the importance of three main variables: “While a standard method to specifically measure levels of intercultural competence has not been established, scholars predominantly agree that it should be conceptualised based on cognitive, affective, and behavioural development” (as cited in Nguyen, 2018, p.8). This categorisation takes roots from the Kraiger, Ford and Salas’ (1993) classification of learning outcomes known as cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes (Varela, 2017). The initial framework has served as a basis for various self-designed frameworks of many scholars investigating the effects of study abroad programmes (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Deardoff, 2006).

Significant analysis and discussion on the benefits of study abroad were presented by the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) conducted by Dwyer and Peters (2004). This study included an analysis of study abroad programmes from 1950 to 1999 among 3400 graduates. The study found that overseas study experiences are critical periods and have a longitudinal impact on different aspects of alumni’s lives. The indicated areas of influence have fostered personal growth, intercultural development, education and career attainment.

In the survey about American students who studied in Australia and Spain conducted by DiFante (2016), the author analysed the outcomes of two study abroad programmes by identifying three concepts: knowledge outcome, attitude change, and cultural awareness. The findings of the study revealed different effects in each sample group. The participants, who studied in Spain, showed such knowledge outcomes as elevated communication skills, attitudinal changes (such as being more open to travelling), increased cultural awareness, and adaptability to diverse situations. Regarding the skills-based implications, this group’s results were categorised into two main themes: increased job-related implications; developed organisational and navigational skills. In its turn, the Spanish group’s social and personal

consequences identified the ability to network by creating relationships with locals, university students and gaining independence as mature individuals responsible for their own lives abroad. Slightly different outcomes were found among the second group of graduates of an Australian university. Knowledge outcomes included well-developed thoughtful communication skills, attitudinal changes (such as being more open-minded), heightened understanding of cultures, and more effortless adaptability. The researcher points out job-related knowledge among skill-based outcomes due to the internship programme, organisation/maritime capabilities, and time management. The researchers highlighted development in such social and personal features as social relationship building abilities and independence in the second group.

Similarly, another study about study abroad outcomes by Nguyen (2018) focused on such categories as cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills. The study used the pyramidal model of Deardoff (2006) as a theoretical model of study. The model outcomes are based on some fundamental attitudes, such as respect for other cultures, being open to discovering and interacting with diverse cultures, and having the curiosity to learn unfamiliar contexts. The pyramid's next level, located above requisite attitudes, includes knowledge about being culturally aware and a deep understanding of the culture. Also, it encompasses such skills as listening, observing, and analysing. The upper part of the pyramid model consists of anticipated internal and external outcomes. Internal outcomes are developed empathy, flexibility in new contexts, easy adjustment to diverse behaviours, and communicating in different cultures. In turn, external outcomes comprise efficient communication and behaviour, among which Deardoff (2006) highlighted intercultural competence, attitudes, and skills. The study results showed that prior examination of a host country's culture and inner motivation to increase intercultural competence was crucial in successfully acquiring such competence. On the contrary, being competent at a language of

the host culture, taking part in preparatory programmes and engagement in social and cultural activities were not directly associated with the development of intercultural competence among respondents.

The supporting claims for three significant classifications were found in the meta-analysis conducted by Varela (2017), which investigated 72 studies on study-abroad experiences and learning outcomes. These classifications were chosen using the taxonomy of Kraiger, Ford, and Salas (1993), and they include cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes. Cognitive outcomes in this study imply knowledge acquisition, cultural learning, and language acquisition. Affective outcomes are related to attitudinal changes and willingness to learn about different cultures. Skill-related outcomes include being flexible in diverse environments and intercultural adaptation.

Due to the immense impact of programmes on home countries' economic conditions, it seems necessary to consider the implications of such study abroad programmes on developing professional skills and competencies among graduates. Research findings by Teichler and Janson (2007) show that students studying in a European mobility programme have more substantial professional competencies than those without such experience.

Similar results regarding professional life were found in the outcomes-based research conducted by Franklin (2010), which strongly suggests a positive correlation between study abroad experience and professional outcomes. The results also indicated that knowledge, skills, and self-awareness outcomes result from international research applied in the respondents' professional life in intercultural competencies and personal development. The findings illustrated attitudinal or affective outcomes as a broadened worldview. This result is best demonstrated in the response of one of the participants: "*I realised how similar yet very different a culture can be from the U.S. It showed me that the world is a host of varying shades...not just black and white*" (p.184). The most significant behaviour outcome was

related to cross-cultural communication skills efficiently applied at a workplace by most interviewed alumni.

Now turning to the gaps in the literature, the earlier studies have focused on various factors that might influence the outcomes, such as length of the research in foreign countries, gender, and academic major. One of the studies on the long-term impacts of participation in a study abroad programme explored by Degraaf et al. (2013) indicated the issues that need to be considered in further research, focusing on the location of the time abroad for educational purposes. Such suggestion derived from Hutchins' (1996) work, where the importance of the site was claimed to be one of the significant factors that influence students' experiences.

Conceptual Framework

The current study uses a conceptual framework based upon three traditional outcomes of graduates of study abroad programmes: cognitive, behavioural, and attitudinal. These concepts are chosen as the most relevant to the study. The conceptual framework is based on Kraiger, Ford, and Salas' (1993) taxonomy, which identified cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes. This taxonomy is accepted in the field of research, by receiving practical validations by Ford et al. (1998) and, as mentioned by Morley et al. (2010), has also been accepted to measure international contexts (as cited in Varela, 2017).

Cognitive outcomes consider the academic interest and personal development of intercultural competence and language proficiency. Academic interest in the current study implies graduates' engagement in discussions on different topics and contribution of ideas, curiosity to learn more and enhancement of the understanding of the major discipline. Moreover, it refers to the impact of the programme on the individual's success at work. Personal development includes individual gains that were acquired as a result of studying abroad. For example, the programme might have influenced enhanced problem-solving

skills in a cultural context. Language proficiency estimates English as a language study and the local language of the host country.

Attitudinal outcomes include tolerance to other cultures, intercultural sensitivity/awareness, global-mindedness and openness to diversity. The main area of influence is focused on the participant's mindset and change in perspectives in terms of accepting ideas, behaviours, values, and norms of other people that might be different from their own.

Behavioural outcomes mainly cover the alumni's cross-cultural adaptation regarding their behaviour, style of speech, interpretation of emotions, and others' gestures by considering their cultural backgrounds.

Based on the literature discussed above and the conceptual framework, the following research questions will guide the study:

1. To what extent are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes of Bolashak graduates assessed?
2. How do gender and place of study influence cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?
3. What factors influence the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?

Instruments from Previous Studies

Some of the studies on the learning outcomes of study abroad programme used a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews (DiFante, 2016) as the most common instrument. In contrast, other research has applied a quantitative research design using the survey (Nguyen, 2018) as a critical tool to answer the research questions. However, one study, conducted by Franklin (2010), used a mix of both research designs to achieve a higher validity of results. This study's instruments included a survey, telephone interviews, and group interviews via email with follow-up questions to triangulate data. This triangulation

seems applicable to this current study. It will apply mixed research using a survey and a follow-up interview to explain the responses in depth.

Summary

In conclusion, the review of literature relevant to the topic of discussion was presented in this chapter. The overviewed studies considered the literature of study abroad programmes and their outcomes both in foreign and local contexts. The existing literature has fundamental themes regarding studying abroad outcomes in different programmes. The majority of the studies agree that the benefits of the experience gained on such sojourns result in positive outcomes leading to cognitive, metacognitive, attitudinal, behavioural, and skill-related implications (DiFante, 2016; Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Franklin, 2010). This chapter provides background information on the Bolashak Scholarship Programme and its main goals to articulate the need to establish learning outcomes to assess the programme's influence on alumni. In addition to this, a gap in the literature about the lack of quantitative studies which investigate the learning outcomes of the Bolashak programme's graduates was found. Following that, this section outlined significant studies regarding the topic with evidence from local and foreign studies.

Moreover, it was possible to design a conceptual framework based on the classification of Kraiger, Ford, and Salas' (1993) taxonomy which led to three main concepts: cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. Consequently, the literature discussed in the chapter guided this study in developing the research questions and the instruments used in the data collection procedure. In the Discussion chapter, there is an application of the mentioned theories, which connects participants' responses regarding their study abroad outcomes with the theory explanation.

Chapter 3. Methodology

As mentioned earlier, the current study explores the relationship between the International Bolashak scholarship, which enables Kazakhstani citizens to study abroad in top universities in terms of its impact on cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes among the scholarship recipients. More precisely, the current paper explores the case of one university members who graduated from this programme. The three research questions to be answered in this study are the following:

1. To what extent are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes of Bolashak graduates assessed?
2. How do gender and place of study influence cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?
3. What factors influence the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?

The previous chapter provided an overview and synthesis of the literature related to the topic. The analysis of prior studies assisted in the development of the research questions and conceptual framework. Furthermore, this chapter presents the methodology part, which involves research design, data collection tools, sampling, and data collection procedures. Moreover, this chapter clarifies ethical considerations and methods of data analysis in detail.

Research Approach and Design

Regarding the philosophical worldview, this research work takes a positivist approach. Also, this study applies the mixed-methods research design to answer the research questions, including quantitative and qualitative methods. Also, the study implemented a two-phased explanatory sequential design. The following paragraphs include an explanation of the rationale behind choosing these research designs.

In the previous studies, the learning outcomes of study abroad experiences were measured using various methods. Comprehensive studies with a large number of respondents applied quantitative design with surveys as primary research instruments. Such studies' main objective was related to the generalisation of data to the whole population. With the need to acquire more profound data, other research studies utilise qualitative research designs through interviews elicited from a smaller number of respondents. It is evident from the literature that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are suitable for studies with similar objectives as the current one. Root and Ngampornchai (2013) supports this idea by highlighting the dynamic nature of such overseas educational programmes, which requires a comprehensive approach to analyse the experiences of graduates. Among other attractive features of mixed-methods research is that it allows researchers to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to produce a holistic design (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Johnson and Christensen (2019) state that mixed-methods research allows investigators to reach "complementary strengths", which can be explained by the idea that the "*whole is greater than the sum of its parts*" (p.95). In other words, the study might increase its strength by taking the strong sides of both research methods with their features.

Additionally, the study uses an explanatory sequential design where the quantitative approach is used first and followed by the qualitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The next step is supposed to explain the data results found in the quantitative part. Regarding the current study, the first phase of the study had a quantitative nature with the survey for all participants. Following this, the second phase used a qualitative approach composed of semi-structured interviews with several participants to elicit in-depth responses.

The need to concentrate on one case of the university's staff was a practical decision to achieve the required number of respondents to conduct proper research. It would not be possible to reach a high number of respondents needed to conduct a study about the whole

population of the Bolashak scholarship recipients in Kazakhstan. Such a number was unrealistic within the given time frames. Therefore, this study focuses on one of the cases within one university with relatively high confidence to obtain valid data. Although the number of respondents in this study might be a limitation that restricts the opportunity to generalise the findings, a single-case study enables researchers to investigate a phenomenon more in-depth and apply different data types (Heale & Twycross, 2018).

Sample

The study used a non-random sampling method, and more specifically, purposive or criterion sampling. Johnson and Christensen (2014) refer to it as “*a non-random sampling technique in which the researcher solicits persons with specific characteristics to participate in a research study*” (p.352). Eligibility criteria require individuals to possess the following attributes:

- Kazakhstani recipients of International Bolashak scholarships who graduated from higher education institutions overseas as part of the programme;
- Work in the chosen private university;
- Aged 18 and above;
- Understand either of English/Russian/Kazakh languages and can independently articulate answers in written form;
- Able to read and understand the information in the consent form and independently make decisions about their willingness to participate in the study;
- Understand that the survey results would be used as data.

Fifty-six respondents were recruited for the quantitative part of the study. Six out of those participants cooperated in the semi-structured interviews as part of the qualitative approach. Almost all targeted people were considered eligible for this study since they matched the criteria mentioned above. The only factor influencing the recruitment process

was whether they wanted to share information and agree to participate voluntarily. Thus, the number of respondents depended on the willingness of each person to take part in this study. The reason for indicating this number of participants in the study is related to the number of staff members at the chosen university, approximately 60 workers, who graduated from the Bolashak programme. Being part of the university community explains the rationale for selecting those who work at this particular institution. It was easier to find access to potential participants.

The challenges that arose due to the situation with COVID-19 made it challenging to conduct a face-to-face study at a particular research site. Therefore, it was decided to use Qualtrics, the online platforms, to design and conduct surveys. Participants used the link to the questionnaire to contribute to the study by answering the questions. The following interviews took place with the help of online social platforms.

Data Collection Tools

The data was collected through a post-programme retrospective questionnaire. This first instrument is an online questionnaire with closed-ended questions adapted for the needs of this study purposes. It was developed based on existing inventories, such as the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CIS) invented by Earley and Ang (2003) and Global Perspective Inventory (GPI) by Braskamp et al. (2008). It included three scales to measure constructs. The motive for choosing the questionnaire is related to its feasibility to approach a larger population to answer the research questions. The participants self-assessed their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes and provided background information about the gender to which they most identify themselves, the country of stay while studying, and other demographic information.

The first data collection instrument used Likert's scale where numbers from 1 to 6 referred to scale indicators where 1- Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Somewhat disagree,

4 - Somewhat agree, 5 - Agree, and 6 - Strongly agree. This allocation of numbers was employed to reach higher sensitivity of the responses, leading to greater validity of the findings. The instrument was pilot tested with the researcher's peers to ensure coherence before sending it to the participants. Also, face validity was confirmed with the assistance of a supervisor. As a result, all of the items were converted to provide positively worded statements throughout the survey. Also, the specific instructions in open-ended questions were included in the questions to enable participants to understand the appropriate way to answer.

The second phase of the study employed a qualitative approach where participants answered the interview questions to explain the findings further and address the second research question. The interview questions were adapted from the interview guide originally proposed by DiFante (2016) to suit the needs of this study. The semi-structured interview feature assisted in asking follow-up questions during the interview to clarify ambiguous or incomplete answers. Both the interviewer and the interviewees were provided with the freedom to answer in a well-thought manner and clarify some questions. The interview included similar questions included in the questionnaire and aimed at receiving responses with their justification.

Data Collection Procedures

Due to the situation with COVID-19 in the country and the respective lockdown of the chosen private university, the study was implemented in an online form using email communication and online platforms. The data collection procedure started after receiving approval from the thesis supervisor and the Institutional Review Board. Then, the Human Resources Department of the chosen university sent out the questionnaire to the staff members who graduated from the Bolashak programme.

As part of the data collection procedure, participants were asked to read an informed consent letter. It comprised all the necessary information about the objectives, potential risks and harms of the study, the degree of confidentiality, and contact information. The contact information included an email address to receive any questions about the research or the study findings. Participants were informed about their ability to withdraw at any time without causing any harm to the study. After this, the respondents were asked to sign an informed consent to indicate readiness to take part in the study voluntarily. The survey was developed using the online survey tool Qualtrics. The questionnaire included informed consent to confirm the participants' willingness to take the survey by clicking on the "agree" button.

Several measures were taken to ensure the anonymity of respondents. The names of the respondents were coded to avoid revelation of data and the information connecting with specific individuals.

Convenience sampling served as an approach to conduct interviews in the next qualitative phase of the study. This sampling type suggests that the data is collected from the participants who are the most "convenient" sources of data to reach (Lavrakas, 2008). This way, six people from the university were chosen as interviewees. The participants received links to the meetings via emails and participated in the interviews through online meeting platforms as Webex and Zoom. The interview questions in three languages (Kazakh, Russian, and English) were sent in advance to make each interviewee feel as comfortable as possible. This way, the participants could approve if they were comfortable discussing specific questions. The date and time of the interviews were agreed upon through emails. Before the beginning of the interviews, the approval to record the conversation was received. The approximate duration of interviews was indicated before starting the discussion. In the

end, participants were thanked for their time and effort and their truthful answers. Some clarifications were made later to elicit more accurate responses.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data were collected using the online questionnaire, which included three main dimensions and demographic information. After the collection of the quantitative data, it was exported as an Excel file. Following this, analysis of collected data employed the SPSS software. However, it was necessary first to identify the tool's reliability and clean the collected data.

Data cleaning was necessary since some of the participants did not fully answer all the survey questions. Missing or erroneous responses were eliminated from the table not to pose a significant problem to the reliability and validity of results. The reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. As a result of this analysis, Cronbach's alpha was equal to 0,894, which referred to a good level of internal consistency.

The descriptive and inferential statistics in the next chapter aim to explore the relationship between variables and either accept or reject the following hypotheses:

1. H1₀: There is no statistically significant difference between graduate male and female participants regarding their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes.
H1_a: The difference between male and female participants on their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes is statistically significant.
2. H2₀: There is no statistically significant difference between the country of study abroad experiences of participants regarding their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes.

H2a: The difference between the country of study abroad experiences of participants regarding their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes is statistically significant.

The study applies descriptive and inferential statistics using the T-test and One-Way ANOVA test. T-test was used to test the first hypothesis, whereas the One-Way ANOVA test was used for the second hypothesis.

Qualitative Data Analysis

After receiving the data from the questionnaire, six representatives of the sample took part in the semi-structured interviews. This procedure assisted reveal answers about the factors influencing the participants' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. Once the interview sessions were complete, all the interview recordings were transcribed and saved on the researcher's computer. The information which might reveal the identity of respondents was changed and coded.

Next, the thematic analysis of data was applied, which refers to discovering dominant themes and consistencies categorised together, as indicated by Bryman (2012). The significant amount of information produced as a result of interviews was grouped into themes that were recurring in the responses. The analysis of this qualitative data was analysed using a content analysis method.

Ethical Issues

Participation in the study was voluntary, and the participants were informed about their choice to quit the study without any negative consequences. As mentioned before, the study participants signed the informed consent before taking part in the study, which implied that they agreed to share information. Recruitment of appropriate respondents started with an introductory letter with all the essential information about the researcher and aims of the

study sent to the university's Human Resources Department. Then, this department's representative sent out an email with a survey link to the potential participants.

The study attempted to guarantee the anonymity of the subjects' identities and their responses throughout the research procedure. The questionnaire did not require the participants to write their names, surnames or email addresses. Therefore, the names and any direct identifiers were kept confidential. Throughout the thesis writing process, data was kept private with shared access only to the thesis supervisor. It was guaranteed that the data related to human subjects would not be disclosed without permission from the participants. The data was stored in the personal drive with exclusive access by the investigator. The data collected in the study, which might disclose identities, will be destroyed entirely or transmitted to the supervisor after submitting the thesis work.

Summary

Overall, this chapter attempts to clarify the study's methodology focusing on the research design, sampling, data collection tools and procedures. The chosen research design is a mixed-methods design with quantitative and qualitative approaches. As mentioned above, the study uses an explanatory sequential design with two phases where the quantitative approach is followed by a qualitative one. The explanation of the participants of both phases was explained in this section. Further, it tries to shed light on the ethical issues and data analysis procedures.

One of the limitations of this study is related to the relatively low number of participants. The small size of the dataset meant that it was not possible to generalise the findings to the population of all Bolashak graduates in Kazakhstan. Therefore, further research might fulfil this gap in the knowledge. Moreover, the absence of pre-test related to the participants' outcomes before the educational experience abroad is another limitation of

the methodology of this work. The report of findings in detail will be provided in the following chapter.

Chapter 4. Findings

The previous chapter shed light on the methodology used in the study. This chapter demonstrates the findings of this study. The quantitative and qualitative data were elicited from the staff members of one of the private universities of Kazakhstan who graduated from the Bolashak programme. This process intended to reach the purpose of this thesis work to identify the influence of various factors on the graduates' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. The data has been analysed to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes of Bolashak graduates assessed?
2. How do gender and place of study influence cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?
3. What factors influence the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?

The mentioned questions were analysed by collecting quantitative data via an adapted online-based survey and qualitative data from individual interviews. The quantitative phase of data collection (n=56) was followed by a qualitative part (n=6) in an explanatory sequential manner. The survey results were analysed using two statistical processes, T-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results of the interview were analysed using content analysis. Descriptive and inferential analyses were both applied in this study to reject or confirm the following non-directional null hypotheses:

1. H₁₀: There is no statistically significant difference between graduate male and female participants regarding their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes.

H1a: The difference between male and female participants on their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes is statistically significant.

2. H2o: There is no statistically significant difference between the country of study abroad experiences of participants regarding their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes.

H2a: The difference between the country of study abroad experiences of participants regarding their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes is statistically significant.

This chapter will present the following results:

- Demographic characteristics of the participants of the study;
- Descriptive statistics about the participants' assessment of their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes;
- T-test comparing male and female participants' evaluation of their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes;
- One-Way ANOVA to determine the influence of the place of study on the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes;
- Content analysis of additional factors that influence the participants' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes.

Findings from the quantitative phase of the study

Demographic characteristics of the participants

The quantitative part of the study included an online survey conducted through the platform named "Qualtrics" for the graduates of the Bolashak programme who work in one of the higher education institutions of Kazakhstan. In total, the survey resulted in 56

responses. The data cleansing process involved the deletion of 9 responses due to incomplete or blank answers. Overall, 47 responses were collected and analysed using the SPSS programme. The questionnaire was designed using Likert's scale with six options, where on one end of the spectrum, “1” means “strongly disagree”, and, on the other end, “6” refers to “strongly agree”.

The survey included several demographic questions: gender to which the participants identify the most, countries of their stay during the Bolashak programme. This information is illustrated in Table 1. The most exciting aspect of this table is that most women participated in the study rather than men.

Overall, the survey results demonstrate the responses from 47 participants, among which 39 (82,98%) participants are representatives of the university’s faculties, and 8 (17,02%) respondents work in administrative positions. Gender statistics showed that most participants identified their gender as female, consisting of 30 (63,82%) participants out of 47, whereas male respondents consisted of 17 (36,17%) respondents.

Furthermore, Table 1 illustrates the proportion of countries where participants studied as part of the Bolashak education experience. As the table suggests, more than half of respondents have learned in the United Kingdom (63,82%). The second most popular choice of education place is the United States of America which includes nine respondents (19,14%). The third category indicates Canada, The Netherlands and Spain, with 17,02% of participants studied there.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the participants

Variable	Category	N	%
----------	----------	---	---

Work title	Faculty member	39	82,98
	Administration member	8	17,02
Faculty gender	Male	30	63,82
	Female	17	36,17
The country of stay during the overseas experience with the Bolashak programme	UK	30	63,82
	USA	9	19,14
	Other (Canada, The Netherlands, Spain)	8	17,02

Descriptive analysis of the participants' self-assessment of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes

The next step included a focus on the responses from the online questionnaire. The survey demonstrated graduates' post-programme self-assessment regarding their outcomes in a retrospective manner after graduating from the programme. This analysis aims at answering the first research question by indicating the way the participants assess their results. Overall, the survey included 24 items, each related to cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the study by focusing on the Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD) and Rank among all twenty-four items. The participants chose Likert scale answers from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree).

The survey of self-assessment among the participants demonstrated a high level of development in cognitive and attitudinal dimensions. Table 2 highlights the highest and lowest six statements. According to the statistics presented, the highest level of development refers to the seventh item in the survey: "My knowledge about my major/discipline has increased" (M = 5.36; SD = .673, rank = 1). The second highest point belongs to the statement: "My proficiency in the native language of the host country has developed" (M = 5.34; SD = .668; rank = 2). Finally, the participants indicated the item "I believe that the

race/nationality of people does not influence the level of intelligence” (M = 5.32; SD = .862; rank = 3).

On the other end of the spectrum, the three lowest items were indicated in the behavioural dimension. This is the item 23 which refers to this statement: “I regularly take part in voluntary social works” (M = 3.43; SD = 1.379, rank = 24).

Table 2

Self-assessment of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes

Items	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Rank
<i>Cognitive outcomes (CO)</i>			
My professional success was influenced by my participation in the programme.	4.85	.722	10
I am able to engage in a discussion about cultural differences from an informed position.	5.06	.763	5
I often get involved in debates with my peers or coworkers on academic topics.	4.19	1.056	19
I try to learn from more people with more knowledge than I have.	5.23	.937	4
My social/interactive skills have improved.	4.94	.845	9
My proficiency in the native language of the host country has developed.	5.34	.668	2
My knowledge about my major/discipline has increased.	5.36	.673	1
I have increased my ability to problem-solve in a cultural context.	4.79	.999	11
<i>Attitudinal outcomes (AO)</i>			
I started questioning what I have been taught about the world around me.	4.45	1.230	14
I started to appreciate my own culture.	4.32	1.385	17
My appreciation for other cultures has improved.	4.74	.943	12

It is essential to express my ideas to others in a culturally appropriate manner.	5.04	.779	6
I believe that the race/nationality of people does not influence the level of intelligence.	5.32	.862	3
It would be better to be a global citizen rather than of one country.	4.19	1.569	20
I learnt to accept multiple perspectives on different topics.	4.96	.833	8
After taking part in the programme, my awareness of global issues increased.	4.98	1.032	7
<i>Behavioural outcomes (BO)</i>			
As a result of participating in the programme, I started to interact more at social events.	4.04	1.062	22
I tend to accurately interpret other people's gestures and facial expressions and respond appropriately.	4.11	.938	21
I attend social events of a culture different from my own.	4.23	1.088	18
I tend to adapt my speech style and behaviour, taking into account my interrogator's cultural background.	4.32	.810	16
I try to interpret other people's emotions accurately and respond to them accordingly.	4.49	.831	13
I regularly take part in voluntary social works.	3.43	1.379	24
I often take part in charity events.	3.62	1.423	23
I tend to get along with people from other cultures and maintain relationships with them.	4.40	1.056	15

T-test comparing female and male participants' evaluation of their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes

A T-test was conducted to answer the second research question regarding gender's influence on the participants' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. Two groups were identified due to the survey, where "1" referred to females, and "2" referred to male

participants. The results with six statistically significant differences are illustrated below in the Table 3.

Table 3

Items with significant difference between male and female participants (T-test)

Items	Female (n = 30)		Male (n = 17)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
I try to learn from more people with more knowledge than I have.	5.50	0.630	4.76	1.200	2.764	.008**
My social/interactive skills have improved.	5.20	.714	4.47	.874	3.100	.003**
My appreciation for other cultures has improved.	4.97	.615	4.35	1.272	2.234	.030*
It would be better to be a global citizen rather than of one country.	4.53	1.456	3.59	1.622	2.052	.046*
I have learnt to accept multiple perspectives on different topics.	5.27	.640	4.41	.870	3.857	.001**
After taking part in the programme, my awareness of global issues increased.	5.27	.691	4.47	1.328	2.711	.009**

Note. *p<.05; **p<.001

As illustrated above, female participants had higher results in the highlighted six items. Namely, the male participants reported comparatively lower levels of development in terms of their cognitive outcomes to learn more from more educated people ($M_{\text{male}} = 4.76 < M_{\text{female}} = 5.50$); in terms of social/interactive skills ($M_{\text{male}} = 4.47 < M_{\text{female}} = 5.20$); abilities to accepting multiple perspectives ($M_{\text{male}} = 4.41 < M_{\text{female}} = 5.27$). Also, female graduates indicated a higher level of appreciation towards other cultures ($M_{\text{female}} = 4.97 > M_{\text{male}} = 4.35$) and awareness of global issues ($M_{\text{female}} = 5.27 > M_{\text{male}} = 4.47$) as a result of the programme.

Furthermore, female respondents' self-report on their outcomes exceeds male participants' reports regarding the preference of being a global instead of one country's citizen ($M_{\text{female}} = 4.53 > M_{\text{male}} = 3.59$). The mentioned results indicate that women participants are more likely to develop higher outcomes due to studying abroad to acknowledge diverse cultures, accept and adapt to multiple perspectives with higher levels of understanding.

The null hypothesis (H_{10}) suggests that “there is no statistically significant difference between graduate male and female participants in terms of their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes”. According to the T-test result, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the two gender groups in terms of their learning outcomes. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis (H_{1a}).

One-Way ANOVA to determine the influence of the place of study on the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes

A One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to answer the last part of the second question regarding the influence of place of study on the participants' learning outcomes. The countries have been decoded into numeric forms and set as independent variables (“UK” =1; “USA” =2; “Other” =3). Although the means of each group were different, the results of the ANOVA test showed no statistically significant difference between and within groups. Therefore, it can be stated that there is no statistically significant difference between the country of stay during the study abroad experience among participants of the research and their cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. This way, the null hypothesis (H_{20}) of the study regarding the place of study should be accepted. It could be concluded that the

graduates who studied in different countries have no statistically significant difference in the development of their cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes.

Findings from the Qualitative Phase of the Study

Content Analysis of Additional factors that influence the participants' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes

This section provides findings from the content analysis of the qualitative phase of the work. The third question of the study is about the factors influencing the learning outcomes elicited from the online semi-structured interviews conducted with six participants who participated in the first quantitative phase. The invited participants answered the questions, which aimed at explaining the reasons and potential factors that influenced their outcomes. The interview was organised in the order where the questions copied the structure of the questionnaire, which started with enquiries about cognitive development, professional implications and slightly changed its direction towards questions about attitudinal changes and the factors that influenced them. Following this, the last section of the interview was devoted to changes in the behavioural dimension. It covered such topics as an adaptation to intercultural contexts and civic initiatives, voluntary and charity work. The results of the interviews showed that outcomes related to the cognitive and attitudinal dimensions have increased in the majority of the participants at a considerable level. Yet, the behavioural implications were slightly less developed. Frequently encountered ideas were grouped under common themes. The factors that influenced results are explained further.

Academic Development and Language Proficiency

Academic development was one of the commonly mentioned themes elicited from the interviews with the graduates. In this context, it refers to the knowledge and skills within

the frame of participants' chosen disciplines. Most of the participants' motives behind choosing to study in this programme were related to the willingness to acquire capabilities and knowledge which assist in becoming a highly professional individual, which was later successfully fulfilled. All six participants reported that their competencies within their academic spheres have significantly increased. They have mentioned such factors that influenced those outcomes as highly professional work of faculty and administration, lectures of visiting scholars, involvement in research activities, access to facilities provided by foreign educational institutions as libraries and electronic databases.

Another vital expectation of one of the participants was improving English academic skills by studying in a country where English was spoken as a native language. It is worth noting that the interviews with all the participants were held in the English language, which is used as a language of instruction both in the institutions they studied and the university that they work now. One participant mentioned English to be the common language of the people from different backgrounds: "My surroundings at the university were people from different countries. English is the global language. It is a common language for us, so we developed it more. Especially when you face everyday problems and have to communicate with locals". Therefore, language proficiency was one of the explicit outcomes enhanced during the study abroad period due to constant practice in the academic environment with peers, university staff and in the household context with locals.

The programme has influenced other outcomes such as the work-life balance of one of the participants to focus not only on studies but also on the family. This person had a family while studying abroad, so he mentioned how he learnt about this balance from his professors. Two people highlighted the research skills due to the practice of conducting and writing research papers. Some of the respondents also mentioned time management, work

ethics and networking skills. All those outcomes were related to the organisation of the learning process in the chosen foreign universities.

Overall, the academic development, mainly in the form of an increase in the specific field of study and language proficiency, was increased due to several factors mentioned by participants. They are a high level of an educational process abroad, access to resources and facilities, academic and language environment, communication with locals.

Professional implications

The second frequently encountered outcome is related to the professional implications of the study abroad experience. All of the participants admitted the positive impact of participation in the programme on their professional lives. The majority of the participants noted finding a job quickly due to the programme's requirement to return to Kazakhstan and work there. Thus, the participants mentioned the need to start working to avoid debts.

Yet, some of the participants mentioned that their primary objective to study abroad was directly related to developing specific professional competencies that could be applied in their jobs. Those participants already had positions that required the enhancement of some skills. One of those two respondents explained the conscious choice of the applied programme because it included areas directly linked to his professional interest. This person noted the influence of this period by mentioning the following: "I was promoted to a higher position than before. Without this experience, I would have less professional capacity or skills". He also mentioned the importance of networks which enables their organisation to cooperate with foreign institutions nowadays. Likewise, another respondent highlighted that the programme was considered as a tool to boost the career and continue the teaching process with more knowledge and experience in his field.

Another interesting finding was revealed after the interview with one of the respondents who mentioned the change in career path direction. The fact of acquiring specific skills due to the Bolashak scholarship programme, in this person's opinion, was the sole factor that led to finding a job immediately after graduation. Those skills allowed this person to work in an administrative position and also apply this knowledge in the teaching process. Similarly, another participant had an opportunity to join the university's faculty and share the obtained knowledge. This participant shared the opinion regarding the employability of the programme's graduates: "In general, Bolashak graduates are positively treated here (Kazakhstan). I think there is no huge problem in finding a job. But, everything depends on a person".

Overall, all of the respondents noticed a considerable impact of participation in the Bolashak Scholarship Programme on their success in career paths. Several participants experienced a boost in their career in terms of increased expertise, promotion to a higher position and even change in the direction of the professional sphere. Several factors explained this influence. One of them was related to the need to return to the home country and work off to avoid debts to the government. Also, some factors were associated with the positive attitude towards the programme and its graduates and the individual characteristics of each graduate.

Intercultural Awareness

An increase in awareness regarding the diverse cultures, traditions and values was another central theme identified from the interviews with participants. All of the participants mentioned that increased understanding of intercultural context after the overseas experience with the programme. Yet, the level of the growth differed from one participant to another. Those changes covered all three dimensions: cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural.

An example of attitudinal and cognitive changes is mentioned by one of the participants. The topic was related to the importance of being vocal about social issues after studying abroad. This respondent provided an example of increased awareness about the social movement called Black Lives Matter which started in 2013 in the United States against racism and anti-black violence (Britannica, 2020):

“I have never differentiated people by their skin colour or cultures, but this experience taught me that it is important to acknowledge people’s different backgrounds and history. For example, during my study, the BLM movement helped me understand the struggles the U.S. minorities face and how crucial it is to speak about such problems”.

The same respondent later added about the changes in handling social problems after returning to the home country: “I have become more vocal about current problems in Kazakhstan such as domestic violence, gender discrimination, racism etc. Overall, I think my experience helped me to become less ignorant about the issues our society faces”.

Changes in communication style was another critical moment noticed in the words of one participant:

“I am more conscious about what I say or what I post on social media. My foreign education has taught me to be very cautious because you can hurt somebody’s feelings even if you do not intend to do so. So, I normally adapt how I talk depending on the person”.

However, one respondent noted the absence of significant changes in terms of intercultural and social awareness. They explained that before applying for the scholarship, this person was already aware of the intercultural and social issues:

“The idea of diversity, minorities, social justice and other things were already familiar to me. I graduated from a place where we had students from different ethnicities, countries. I was surrounded by them everywhere. We spoke in different languages and learnt about each other’s cultures. So, no, it is not because of studying abroad. Of course, to some level, I became more knowledgeable, but not drastically”.

In addition, the intercultural awareness after the programme was enhanced in terms of reconsideration of one’s own culture. Two out of six participants mentioned how participation in the programme had changed the way they thought about their own culture. One of the participants said about the influence of the programme in terms of broadening horizons regarding other cultures: “Before that experience, I had limited experience with

people from other cultures. I became more aware of my own culture. You do not think about other cultures (much) in a mono-cultured society. So, you can consciously approach your own culture”. Another respondent admitted that the views and beliefs of the host country were more suitable than her native country’s.

Shared Human Values

Overall, several participants emphasised the importance of being a global citizen and supported the idea of shared values of humanity. The interviews elicited the following values mentioned by the participants: tolerance, being non-judgemental, being open to different people and cultures, mutual respect, and recognition of human rights.

One participant described the changes he noticed: “You become more open to people, tolerate others, cultures, you don’t judge them, become more friendly with people of the world. These are the signs of changes I noticed”. The speaker meant that the background of each individual is one of the factors that, in his opinion, influence your perception. Overall, he noticed changes, but they were not significant due to working with people from different cultures at his workplace. However, he also noted that such a background experience was an influential factor because he did not have problems during his overseas experience.

“It depends on the person. If some people have very different behaviour, attitudinal peculiarities, they may see the changes. At place “X” (the name of the speaker’s workplace was mentioned), we have our views here. Our own university culture is helpful when you go abroad and communicate. Because they match those contexts, some other universities, if they are too local, may have different outcomes, I suppose. They are more experienced (foreigners) in intercultural issues, but still, no problems were met. You get more experience, get to know more about them, neighbours invite us, and we invite them. More close acquaintance with them”.

Similar ideas were found in other interviews, which were focused on the importance of recognising different viewpoints, accepting those differences and behaving accordingly: “You should always respect ideas (that) can be different from yours. Being tolerant is important. That is what I learnt. In the west, open-mindedness is crucial. I don’t know what

exactly can influence it. But, maybe, it is the society, in general. It is just not acceptable to disrespect or discriminate against others. I think it is just the social trends and, of course, the media impacts it”.

Overall, most of the respondents referred to different values, including a diversity of cultures and viewpoints such as tolerance, respect, open-mindedness, and human rights. Various factors explained those outcomes as background experience of communicating with people from different cultures, which forces attitudes among people.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the significant finding in tables, and a set of themes occurred in the analysis part. The first survey showed that participants have higher results in cognitive and attitudinal domains. The qualitative part revealed that participants consider the participation in the programme to have positive effects on the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. Those outcomes were grouped into subcategories: academic outcomes, professional implications, intercultural awareness, and human values. Yet, some respondents mentioned that they had not experienced drastic changes due to previous experiences.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The previous chapter has clarified the findings revealed as a result of analysing the collected quantitative and qualitative data. In order to do it, descriptive statistics, t-test, One-Way ANOVA and content analysis were done. This chapter aims to discuss those statistical findings and attempt to interpret them concerning the literature. It investigates the connection of participating in the government-funded international scholarship programme and the outcomes in cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural implications on the graduates of one of the institutions. The section is organised, so research questions are explained and addressed with support from the existing literature. The research questions posed in this study are:

1. To what extent are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes of Bolashak graduates assessed?
2. How do gender and place of study influence cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?
3. What factors influence the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?

RQ1: To what extent are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes of Bolashak graduates assessed?

As mentioned in the Findings chapter, the quantitative part of the study included the findings from the questionnaire, where 46 responses were analysed. The survey included twenty-four items, and each item was analysed separately. Three different tests were conducted to answer the first and the second research questions.

The first research question was related to the self-assessment of the participants regarding their cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes after participating in the programme. As a result of descriptive statistics, the top three items with the highest means were identified. This study showed that the highest mean belongs to item 7, which is about

the increase in the knowledge of the major/discipline among the graduates. The second common choice was about the language proficiency in the native language of the host country. In this situation, the majority of the participants referred to English. These findings confirm the results from the studies by Nguyen (2018), who reported the increased language proficiency.

Moreover, the findings of increased cognitive dimension also accord with the previous research by Braskamp et al. (2009) that found the most significant change in students' self-assessment in their cognitive domain. The authors explained this result: "...intellectual and cognitive learning and development is the primary focus of a college education, and apparently in education abroad, given these results" (p. 111). However, the findings were contrary to that of Ogden (2010), who revealed no overall positive changes toward academic development. It is interesting to note that intellectual development and language proficiency were frequently indicated outcomes in the interviews with the chosen six participants. It is discussed in the next section about qualitative findings in more detail.

The third most common outcome revealed from self-assessment among the participants was related to attitudinal outcomes. More precisely, it suggests that most participants strongly agree that people have the same chances of intellectual achievement regardless of their race or nationality. These findings confirm the association between the study abroad programmes and intercultural competence, increased open-mindedness to other cultures, which are evident in numerous previous works on this topic (DiFante, 2016; Kitsantas, 2004; Nguyen, 2018). This study result is crucial since it confirms the idea of Nguyen (2018), who envisions intercultural competence as a significant learning outcome of study abroad experiences.

On the contrary, the top three least popular choices among the participants were related to participation in voluntary work, charity events and enhanced social

communication at events. This study has been unable to demonstrate a connection between programme participation and civic engagement. This finding is contrary to that of Akhmetov (2016), who suggested that participation in the study abroad programmes as the Bolashak scholarship programme and other international programmes led to a lifestyle reflected in civic engagement and voluntary work after the return to the home country. The questionnaire results seem to demonstrate less likelihood of participation in such civic activities by the participants of this study.

RQ2: How do gender and place of study influence cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?

Gender

The first dependent variable in the second research question is the gender differences of the participants. Inferential statistics were applied to address this question, and it was found that gender played a role in the self-assessment process regarding the acquisition of learning outcomes.

According to the descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics, it became clear that the female participants outnumbered the male ones by almost 66%. The results of the t-test demonstrated six cases where female participants showed higher outcome results than male participants. Those cases were related to the practice of learning from people with more knowledge than them, increase in the social/interactive skills, growth in the appreciation of other cultures, support of the global citizenship idea, acceptance of multiple perspectives and increase in the awareness about global issues after taking part in the overseas study experience. Thus, the results of this study reveal that female participants of this study tend to assess their learning outcomes higher than male respondents. This finding could be explained by the fact that there were more female participants involved. Similar

results of other studies indicated a disproportion of participants by gender (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Ogden, 2010).

Moreover, Chirkov et al. (2008), who compared female and male students' motivation to study abroad, revealed that women participants had higher levels of autonomy in their motivation to study abroad. This internal motivation, in its turn, was found to be a factor of a higher chance of success in a new setting abroad. These results might also be referred to as the higher levels of self-assessment of the participants in the current study. Since there were more female participants involved in this survey, the results must be interpreted with caution. The finding has important implications for developing and implementing a programme that might focus on motivational aspects of international scholarship programmes based on gender differences.

Place of Study

The last dependent variable considered to answer the second research question is the location of study abroad experience. The descriptive analysis identified four categories, among which the United Kingdom was the most popular place to study within the Bolashak programme (63,8%). In this case, the One-Way ANOVA test was applied.

No significant differences between studying in a particular country and self-reported learning outcomes were identified. The result was entirely unexpected due to the general belief that the peculiarities of each country might influence in different ways. The study findings partially confirmed the previous study's results by DiFante (2016), which compared two groups of students who studied in Spain and Australia. His research suggested that the country of stay could be considered irrelevant when a person must adapt to new situations regardless of a particular site. Yet, the study indicated both common and uncommon threads within groups. Overall, the current study's findings of the absence of connection between

the country of stay during the study abroad experiences and the report of learning outcomes might be connected because the majority of the participants studied in one country.

RQ3: What factors influence the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?

Turning to the last phase of the study, the qualitative part needs to overview the findings from semi-structured interviews with six participants who had taken part in the survey earlier. Overall, the findings from the qualitative part supported the results of the study: participants indicated that their cognitive and attitudinal domains have significantly increased, whereas behavioural domain did not face drastic enhancement. The content analysis results were grouped under the following themes: academic development and language proficiency; professional implications; intercultural awareness; shared human values.

Academic Development and Language Proficiency

The first finding of this phase revealed that most participants noticed development in the academic sphere and an increase in language proficiency. They refer to the cognitive domain as indicated in the literature review part of the work. Intellectual development is previously found in the work of Ogden (2010), who suggested that although there was no positive change in terms of academic development, embedded courses presented an increased academic development outcome. The results about language proficiency corroborate the findings of plenty of previous works. The study by Kinginger (2012) indicated study abroad as a productive way of developing knowledge and competence in foreign languages.

Several reasons were mentioned: faculty, administration, access to resources, and practical involvement in disciplines as essential factors. Language proficiency was reported

to receive an impact from communication practice with locals, teaching staff and peers. Another possible explanation of this finding might be the inner motivation of the participants to reach success in academic outcomes. Such suggestion is supported by the research findings, which highlighted the contribution of autonomous motivation to the magnitude of success in study abroad outcomes (Kitsantas, 2004).

Professional Implications

Consistent with the previous literature, all of the participants mentioned the influence of the overseas experience within the Bolashak programme on professional development (DiFante, 2016). Several reasons explain this finding. Firstly, the respondents admitted the feature of this state-funded programme which requires its graduates to return to their home country and work off. This fact was one reason for the need to find a job and immediately fulfil the obligations. However, some participants went to study abroad because of their inner motivation to learn more about and become professionals in their fields. As a result, those participants revealed that they had gained improvement both in the career paths (promotion) and competencies. It is worth mentioning that this finding supports the survey results where knowledge of one's own major was reported to be enhanced the most.

Intercultural Awareness

Another important finding from the interviews is the increased intercultural awareness which finds support from a study by Maharaja (2018), who pointed the following outcomes: *“They gained a better understanding of their own and other countries’ culture and cultural differences, increased their level of self-confidence, global-mindedness, patience, assertiveness, maturity, self-awareness, flexibility and adaptability”* (p.18). This awareness finds a connection with all three dimensions. From a cognitive perspective, participants noticed increased awareness about cultural differences and social issues within diverse cultures. Moreover, they started to understand their own cultures better. From the

attitudinal side, they reported being more open to accepting different cultures and viewpoints. Finally, behavioural implications are found in their willingness to be vocal about social issues as violence, gender discrimination and racism after returning home. This was found in the form of adapting the style of communication depending on the background of each interlocutor to avoid negative consequences.

Shared Human Values

Continuing the changes in the mindsets and affective perceptions of the participants due to the experience of meeting people from different backgrounds, shared human values seem to be a logical topic to appear in the conversations. Participants repeatedly mentioned an enhancement of different values referred to humanity in general regardless of belonging to one particular place, origin or culture. Among those values are tolerance, non-judgmental mindset, open-mindedness, respect and recognition of human rights. Since there is no single unitary definition or measurement of global study experience, it seems complicated to name those outcomes. Yet, the connection of overseas study experiences and improvement of the mentioned values is evident in the existing literature on this topic.

As mentioned by the respondents, the factors that influenced the findings were the experience of communicating with representatives from diverse backgrounds, which is similar in context to the international experience and the influence of local society, which emphasises the importance of shared human values. As it was revealed, having background knowledge of multiple viewpoints depending on the diversity of cultures, beliefs and attitudes positively influenced the study abroad period causing no significant problems or misunderstandings. This finding supports the conceptual premise that study abroad programmes might expand students' mindset by enabling them to envision each individual equally with recognising their human rights, different viewpoints without focusing on their origin. Such a premise confirms the results by Kitsantas (2001), which highlights the

contribution of study abroad programmes on the preparation of students to function in a multicultural society and the promotion of global understanding.

Implications of the Findings for the Stakeholders

For potential applicants and their families, the findings might imply considering the inner motivation to study abroad as a factor that might boost the educational experience and lead to more remarkable learning outcomes. Also, investigating the crucial issues like discrimination, tolerance, respect spread among a society where the students will live might prepare them and probably assist in avoiding some negative consequences. In addition, a conscious approach towards career expectations to fulfil specific academic goals. This way, conscious choice of a discipline might benefit students in their professional life later and network development.

As mentioned earlier, awareness of the factors that might influence the study abroad outcomes, as stated by Nguyen (2018), is an essential part of the work of universities. Therefore, such knowledge might enhance the work of the faculty and administration, which receive students from different countries. They might consider the enhancement of support and minimise risks of adverse outcomes by spreading awareness of the factors that influence academic success.

On the level of the government and governmental bodies responsible for the programme coordination, there may be an implication for the need to spread awareness about the potential outcomes and the factors as autonomous motivation or presence of an experience of communicating with people from diverse backgrounds that might beneficially influence the students on successful completion of study abroad experience. This implication could be explained by the need for the government to improve the learning outcomes to receive graduates with higher competencies in both academic, attitudinal and behavioural aspects.

Summary

This chapter discusses the findings in connection with the previous research relevant to the discussion and the context in Kazakhstan. It also considers the comparisons of the results, which either contradict or support the findings from previous literature. Moreover, implications of the findings with connection to the related stakeholders are mentioned. The Discussion chapter is followed by the Conclusion part, where the limitations of the study suggest future research on this topic is discussed.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The previous Discussion part explained the findings in connection with the literature and provided implications for the stakeholders. This chapter provides a summary of the significant findings and discusses the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of the Bolashak programme and the possible factors by analysing its graduates' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes.

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. To what extent are the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes of Bolashak graduates assessed?
2. How do gender and place of study influence cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?
3. What factors influence the development of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes?

Conclusion on Major Findings

The study has revealed several findings related to the influence of the study abroad experience within the state-funded scholarship programme on the learning outcomes of graduates working in one private university.

The first research question about self-assessment of participants' cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes was answered using descriptive analysis. It was found that graduates think that their mental and attitudinal outcomes improved more compared to behavioural effects.

The second research question about the demographic characteristics of the participants and whether those features have an influence on the report of acquired learning outcomes. As a result of two t-tests and the One-Way ANOVA test, the study indicated the

following results. It was found that there is a statistically significant difference between female and male participants in their self-reported assessment of cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes.

The third research question is intended to investigate outcomes more thoroughly and understand the possible factors of such effects with the help of semi-structured interviews with six respondents from the first quantitative phase. Overall, the results of the interviews demonstrated a connection with the survey results by eliciting outcomes that could be referred to three main domains (cognitive, attitudinal, behavioural). Among those outcomes were: improved academic development; enhanced language proficiency; professional implications as the boost in the skills, knowledge and promotion; increased intercultural awareness, which refers to a better understanding of other cultures as well as one's own culture; shared human values as tolerance, non-judgemental approach, open-mindedness, respect and recognition of human rights.

The possible influence factors of those outcomes were the interaction with locals, university staff, peers to enhance academic and language outcomes. The influence of autonomous motivation to study abroad and conscious choice of disciplines, and the requirement to return and work off, were among the reasons for professional outcomes. Turning to intercultural awareness and understanding of shared human values, the findings indicated the influence of background intercultural communication experiences. The impact of society among which specific values were spread via social networks was demonstrated.

The research findings might be beneficial for potential applicants of the Bolashak scholarship programme due to mentioned factors of success that can positively influence the successful learning outcomes. These findings can also have implications for the government of Kazakhstan and organisations responsible for the programme coordination to improve the overseas study experiences of students. Raising awareness among potential participants

about the factors which can impact on success of study abroad experience might assist in fulfilling the programme's initial goals which are to raise professionals in different professional fields who will contribute to the country's well-being. Universities which accept students for international educational programmes might also benefit from the study results by enhancing their programs for international students.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study is that the work focuses on one case of graduates who work in one organisation. Since the study was limited to a single case, the number of participants was quite low for a quantitative phase. Moreover, the absence of pre-test was a significant issue that limited the comparison of pre-test and post-test to assess the programme's influence more accurately.

Recommendations for Future Research

One of the weaknesses of this study is that fewer participants could be fulfilled in future investigations. In reality, recruitment of the whole population of graduates seems realistic but a difficult task to achieve. Therefore, a comparison of graduates from two different organisations or two groups of participants who studied with this programme and those who did not have such an experience could shed light on the issue in more depth. Alternatively, the future study might focus on other dependent and independent variables, which were not considered in this study as the precise measurement of participants' motivation to study abroad and how this factor influenced the learning outcomes. This gap seems to be necessary to fill since the role of motivation was indicated as one of the possible factors for higher reports of self-assessed learning outcomes.

References

- Abbasov, S. (2007). Azerbaijan: Come back, kids. *Transitions Online*, 10(16), 1–4.
- Ahn, E. S., Dixon, J., & Chekmareva, L. (2018). Looking at Kazakhstan's higher education landscape: From transition to transformation between 1920 and 2015. In: Huisman J., Smolentseva A., Froumin I. (Ed.), *25 Years of Transformations of Higher Education Systems in post-Soviet Countries* (pp. 199-227). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52980-6_8
- Akhmetov, A. (2016). *The development of social capital among Bolashak graduates and the Alumni of other international programs in Astana* (Master's thesis). <https://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/1670>
- Baker-Smemoe, W., Dewey, D. P., Bown, J., & Martinsen, R. A. (2014). Variables affecting L2 gains during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 47(3), 464-486. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12093>
- Berg, M. V., Paige, R. M., & Lou, K. H. (2012). *Student learning abroad: what our students are learning, what they are not, and what we can do about it*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Bilyalov, D. (2017). Organizational socialization, job satisfaction, and turnover intent among faculty of an emerging research university in a post-soviet context. https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/files/final_submissions/15197
- Braskamp, L. A., Braskamp, D. C., & Merrill, K. (2009). Assessing progress in global learning and development of students with education abroad experiences. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 18, 101-118. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ883693.pdf>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Burton, S. (2012). *Cultural and cognitive development in short-term study abroad:*

Illuminating the 360 experience. (Doctoral dissertation).

<https://search.proquest.com/openview/8556d201ca5afba88cdbf69a5edae898/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>

Center for International Programs. (n.d.). <http://ief.kz/en/home/o-nashej-deyatelnosti.html>

Chapdelaine, R. F., & Alexich, L. R. (2004). Social skills difficulty: Model of culture

shock for international graduate students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(2), 167–184.

Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1996). Intercultural communication competence: A

synthesis. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 19(1), 353-383.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1996.11678935>

Chieffo, L., & Griffiths, L. (2004). Large-scale assessment of student attitudes after a

short-term study abroad program. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad*, 10(1), 165-177. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v10i1.140>

Chirkov, V. I., Safdar, S., de Guzman, D. J., & Playford, K. (2008). Further examining the

role motivation to study abroad plays in the adaptation of international students in Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(5), 427-440.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2007.12.001>

Coker, J. S., Heiser, E., & Taylor, L. (2018). Student outcomes associated with short-term

and semester study abroad programs. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 30(2), 92-105. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1178991.pdf>

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and*

mixed methods approaches. Sage publications.

Dairova, K., Jumakulov, Z., & Ashirbekov, A. (2013). Government Support for Student

Mobility: The Case of Kazakhstan's International Scholarship Program 'Bolashak'.

<https://nur.nu.edu.kz/bitstream/handle/123456789/297/GOVERNMENT%20Support.pdf?sequence=1>

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1028315306287002>

DeGraaf, D., Slagter, C., Larsen, K., & Ditta, E. (2013). The long-term personal and professional impacts of participating in study abroad programs. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 23(1), 42-59. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v23i1.328>

Del Sordi, A. (2018). Sponsoring student mobility for development and authoritarian stability: Kazakhstan's Bolashak programme. *Globalizations*, 15(2), 215-231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2017.1403780>

DeLoach, S. B., Kurt, M., & Olitsky, N. H. (2015). Does content matter? Analyzing the change in global awareness between business-and nonbusiness-focused short-term study abroad courses. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 26(1), 4-31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08975930.2014.929512>

DiFante, L. (2016). *Americans abroad in Spain and Australia: a comparative study of university students' study abroad outcomes* (Dissertation). <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-131269>

Dwyer, M. M., & Peters, C. K. (2004). The benefits of study abroad. *Transitions abroad*, 37(5), 56-58. <http://www2.clarku.edu/offices/studyabroad/pdfs/IES%20Study.pdf>

Earley, P. C., & Ang, S. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford University Press.

Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Black-Lives-Matter>

- Fantini, A. E. (2009). Assessing intercultural competence. *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*, 456-476.
- Franklin, K. (2010). Long-term career impact and professional applicability of the study abroad experience. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad*, 19, 169-190. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ936414.pdf>
- Hamad, R., & Lee, C. M. (2013). An assessment of how length of study-abroad programs influences cross-cultural adaptation. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 23(5), 661-674. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2013.788461>
- Hardison, D. M. (2014). Changes in second-language learners' oral skills and socio-affective profiles following study abroad: A mixed-methods approach. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 70(4), 415-444. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.2202>
- Hassan, S. M. (1993). Cost-effectiveness analysis of the Saudi Arabian scholarship grant programs for Master's degree students studying in the United States.
- Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2018). What is a case study? <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/eb-2017-102845>
- Hutchins, M. M. (1996). *International education study tours abroad: Students' professional growth and personal development in relation to international, global, and intercultural perspectives*. (Doctoral dissertation). https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=osu1487941504296289&disposition=inline
- Jackson, J. (2008). Globalization, internationalization, and short-term stays abroad. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), 349-358. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2008.04.004>
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2019). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Sage publications.

- Jumakulov, Z., & Ashirbekov, A. (2016). Higher education internationalization: Insights from Kazakhstan. *Hungarian Educational Research Journal*, 6, 35-55.
- Kinginger, C. (2012). Language study abroad. *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0646>
- Kitsantas, A., & Meyers, J. (2001). Studying abroad: does it enhance college student cross-cultural awareness? <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED456648.pdf>
- Kraiger, K., Ford, J. K., & Salas, E. (1993). Application of cognitive, skill-based, and affective theories of learning outcomes to new methods of training evaluation. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(2), 311–328.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0021-9010.78.2.311>
- Kurt, M., Olitsky, N., & Geis, P. (2013). Assessing global awareness over short-term study abroad sequence: A factor analysis. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 23(1), 22-41. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v23i1.327>
- Lavrakas, P. J. (2008). *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Sage publications.
- Maharaja, G. (2018). The Impact of Study Abroad on College Students' Intercultural Competence and Personal Development. *International Research and Review*, 7(2), 18-41. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1188735.pdf>
- Mhamed, A., Atanu, R., Kasa, R., Shamatov, D., Tajik, M. A., Kerimkulova, S., & Hernández-Torrano, D. (2018). The Bolashak international scholarship program: an evaluation of effectiveness through analysis of costs and benefits.
- Miller, K. K., & Gonzalez, A. M. (2010). Domestic and international service learning experiences: a comparative study of pre-service teacher outcomes. *Issues in educational research*, 20(1), 29-38. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier20/knutson-miller.html>

- Morley, M. J., Cerdin, J. L., Lloyd, S., & Härtel, C. (2010). Intercultural competencies for culturally diverse work teams. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 20*(8), 845-875.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/02683941011089125>
- Nguyen, D. (2018). Study abroad outcomes: the impact of pre-departure preparation on intercultural competence. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/22404>
- Nurbek, S. (2013). State support of student mobility in Kazakhstan.
<http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/304>
- Ogden, A. C. (2010). *Education abroad and the making of global citizens: Assessing learning outcomes of course-embedded, faculty-led international programming*. (Doctoral dissertation). https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/files/final_submissions/52
- Perna, L., Orosz, K., & Jumakulov, Z. (2015). Understanding the human capital benefits of a government-funded international scholarship program: An exploration of Kazakhstan's Bolashak program. *International Journal of Educational Development, 40*, 85-97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.12.003>
- Qazaqstan tarihy. (2014). <https://e-history.kz/en/news/show/6867/>
- Root, E., & Ngampornchai, A. (2013). "I Came Back as a New Human Being" student descriptions of intercultural competence acquired through education abroad experiences. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 17*(5), 513-532.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1028315312468008>
- Sagintayeva, A., & Jumakulov, Z. (2015). Kazakhstan's Bolashak scholarship program. *International Higher Education, (79)*, 21-23.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.12.003>
- Teichler, U., & Janson, K. (2007). The professional value of temporary study in another European country: Employment and work of former ERASMUS students. *Journal*

of studies in International Education, 11(3-4), 486-495.

<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1028315307303230>

Varela, O. E. (2017). Learning outcomes of study-abroad programs: A meta-analysis.

Academy of Management Learning & Education, 16(4), 531-561.

<https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2015.0250>

Yergebekov, M., & Temirbekova, Z. (2012). The Bologna process and problems in higher education system of Kazakhstan. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 47,*

1473-1478. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.845>

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

“Assessing the impact of Bolashak Scholarship Program on graduates’ cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes: the case of one private university staff”

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a research study on identifying the degree of influence of the Bolashak program on graduates currently working at one of the higher education institutions with focus on their cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. You will be asked to complete an online questionnaire by following the link that you will receive by email.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The risks associated with this study is a chance for possible recall of negative emotions in case you have such experience related to the program. The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study are the opportunity to upgrade your awareness about your outcomes and how the program assisted in them. Also, you may contribute to the existing knowledge about the program and graduates’ outcomes and assist future applicants of the program in their application process.

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, Mehmet Karakus, mehmet.karakus@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 at resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Please sign this consent form 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). In addition, the child must give assent to participate in the research. Both parent consent and child assent scripts should be included with this application.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Part 1. Open-ended background questions:

1. To which gender do you most identify?
 - A. Female
 - B. Male
 - C. Not listed _____
 - D. Prefer not to answer
2. Could you indicate your age? (Please, insert a number, e.g. 27)
3. Could you tell me how long has it been since you graduated from the Bolashak Program? (Please, insert the number of years using the comma to indicate the months, e.g. 1,5 (meaning 1 year and 5 months) or just 3 (meaning 3 years))
4. Please, specify the country of your stay during the Bolashak Program.
5. Could you tell if you were married during the study years as part of the Bolashak program?
6. Please, indicate your GPA at the end of your participation in the Bolashak program. Please, use the 4.0 GPA Scale using the dots between numbers. (E.g. 3.7)

Part 2.

Section I. Cognitive outcomes

Please read each statement and choose your answer from 1 to 6 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Somewhat disagree, 4= Somewhat agree, 5 = Agree, and 6= Strongly agree.

1. My professional success was influenced by my participation in the program.
2. I am able to engage in a discussion about cultural differences from an informed position.
3. I often get involved in debates with my peers or coworkers on academic topics.
4. I try to learn from more people with more knowledge than I have.
5. My social/interactive skills have improved.
6. My proficiency in the native language of the host country has developed.
7. My knowledge about my major/discipline has increased.
8. I have increased my ability to problem-solve in a cultural context.

Section II. Attitudinal outcomes.

Please read each statement and choose your answer from 1 to 6 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Somewhat disagree, 4= Somewhat agree, 5 = Agree, and 6= Strongly agree.

1. I started questioning what I have been taught about the world around me.
2. I started to appreciate my own culture.
3. My appreciation for other cultures has improved.
4. It is essential to express my ideas to others in a culturally appropriate manner.
5. I believe that the race/nationality of people does not influence the level of intelligence.
6. It would be better to be a global citizen rather than of one country.
7. I learnt to accept multiple perspectives on different topics.
8. After taking part in the program, my awareness of global issues increased.

Section III. Behavioural outcomes.

Please read each statement and choose your answer from 1 to 6 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Somewhat disagree, 4= Somewhat agree, 5 = Agree, and 6= Strongly agree.

1. As a result of participating in the program, I started to Interact more at social events.
2. I tend to accurately interpret other people's gestures and facial expressions and respond appropriately.
3. I attend social events of a culture different from my own.
4. I tend to adapt my speech style and behaviour, taking into account my interrogator's cultural background.
5. I try to interpret other people's emotions accurately and respond to them accordingly.
6. I regularly take part in voluntary social works.
7. I often take part in charity events.
8. I tend to get along with people from other cultures and maintain relationships with them.

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix C: Interview

Date:

Name of Study: “Assessing the impact of Bolashak Scholarship Program on graduates’ cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes: the case of one local university staff”

Questions:

1. What was the motive behind deciding to study in the Bolashak program?
2. What did you expect to get from the experience of studying abroad with the Bolashak program?
3. Do you think that your expectations were met at the end of the program?
4. How has studying abroad impacted your communication skills with people from different cultures?
5. How has studying abroad within the program influenced your skills and abilities?
6. Has the program influenced your career? If so, in what way?
7. Has studying abroad changed you in terms of your world views? If yes, in what way?
8. Have you experienced a moment of sudden realisation while studying abroad?
9. Have you noticed changes in your attitudes towards other cultures after returning from a foreign university?

Thank you for your participation!