

**THE EMERGING ROLE OF ACADEMIC DEANS
IN THE TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION**

LANDSCAPE OF KAZAKHSTAN

by

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Declaration of Originality

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: Altynay Mustafina

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Abstract (in English)

Within Kazakhstan's fast-changing higher education landscape, the nature of academic deanship is also rapidly changing (Arntzen, 2016; Wepner et al., 2015). While deanship has traditionally been associated with curriculum design, student admissions, and faculty hiring, it now also requires engagement in strategic planning, human resource management, budgetary issues, fundraising, and communication with business and industry (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Gmelch et al., 2012). Thus, the role of the dean has become a more complex and multifaceted position in academia. Therefore, this study aimed to explore academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities to find out how deans perceive and experience their jobs, what roles they play as school administrators, and what challenges they face in their positions. For this purpose, this study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with 15 academic deans from seven public universities (national and regional universities) in Kazakhstan.

The study's findings indicate that the dean's executive behavior in public universities is rule-bound and context-dependent due to the inherited centralized governance system in Kazakhstan as a post-Soviet republic. These factors explain top-down control, tight control, hierarchical relationships, and centralized decision-making in universities. Under these conditions, the dean's autonomy in managing academic schools are restricted in the issues associated with finances, decision-making, and problem solving (Hartley et al., 2016; Sagintayeva et al., 2017; Yembergenova et al., 2021). This suggests that deans who are selected as administrators are limited to fully carry out their administrative and managerial functions. These discrepancies in which deans operate explain their role conflict and role ambiguity in the workplace.

These findings contribute to the understanding of academic deanship in the context of the post-Soviet higher education system, highlighting that the dean's managerial potential

remains unrecognized (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Wepner et al., 2015). Therefore, the practical implications emphasize the need for empowering deans in Kazakhstani public universities by delegating them greater authority. This will strengthen grassroots leadership among deans, enhancing their administrative-managerial status. Regarding the theoretical implications, executive behavioral theory showed that the dean's managerial behavior is prone to norm-following behavior, suggesting that this theory is more suitable for analyzing decentralized university governance systems. Role conflict and ambiguity theory allowed to examining the dean's roles from different perspectives, such as individual and institutional levels, offering deeper insights into understanding the phenomenon under study.

Keywords: academic deanship, Kazakhstan, managerial roles, role conflict, role ambiguity.

Abstract (in Kazakh)

Қазақстандағы жоғары білім берудің өзгермелі жағдайда факультет декандарының қызметі де өзгеруде (Arntzen, 2016; Werner et al., 2015). Деканның жұмысы дәстүрлі түрде оқу жоспарын әзірлеуге, студенттерді қабылдауға және оқытушыларды жалдауға бағытталса, енді оған стратегиялық жоспарлау, персоналды басқару, бюджеттеу, қаражат жинау және жұмыс берушілермен байланыс кіреді (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Gmelch et al., 2012). Осылайша деканның қызметі күрделеніп, сан қырлы бола түсті. Осыған байланысты, бұл зерттеудің мақсаты декандардың рөлін қалай қабылдайтынын, факультет әкімшісі ретінде қандай басқару рөлдерін атқаратынын және қандай қиындықтарға тап болатынын анықтау үшін Қазақстандағы мемлекеттік жоғары оқу орындарындағы (ЖОО) декандарының рөлін зерттеу болды. Зерттеу барысында Қазақстанның жеті мемлекеттік университетінің (ұлттық және аймақтық) 15 деканымен жүргізілген жартылай құрылымдық тереңдетілген сұхбаттар пайдаланылды.

Зерттеу нәтижелері мемлекеттік ЖОО-да декандардың басқарушылық тәртібінің шектеулі екенін көрсетті. Бұл Қазақстандағы ЖОО-дағы мұрагерлік орталықтандырылған басқару жүйесімен байланысты. Бұл фактор мемлекеттік университеттердегі қатаң бақылауды, басшылық пен декандар арасындағы иерархиялық қарым-қатынастарды және орталықтандырылған шешім қабылдауды түсіндіреді. Мұндай жағдайларда факультет басқарудағы қаржы және шешім қабылдауға қатысты мәселелерде деканның дербестігі шектеледі (Hartley et al., 2016; Sagintayeva et al., 2017; Yembergenova et al., 2021). Осылайша, факультет әкімшісі болып сайланған декандар өздерінің әкімшілік және басқару функцияларын толық орындауда шектеледі. Декандардың қызметіндегі бұл сәйкессіздіктер олардың рөлдік қақтығысы мен рөлдік екіұштылығын (анық емес екендігін) түсіндіреді.

Бұл зерттеудің нәтижелері посткеңестік жоғары білім беру жүйесі контекстіндегі декандардың рөлі туралы түсінік береді және бұл декандардың пайдаланылмаған басқару әлеуетін көрсетеді (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Werner et al., 2015). Осыған байланысты зерттеудің практикалық салдарлар қазақстандық мемлекеттік университеттер декандарына үлкен өкілеттіктерді беру арқылы олардың құқықтарын арттырудың маңыздылығын көрсетеді. Бұл декандардың көшбасшылық әлеуетін күшейтіп, басқарушылық мәртебесін көтерер еді. Әрі қарай, зерттеудің теориялық салдарға қатысты басқарушылық мінез-құлық теориясы орталықтандырылмаған университеттің басқару жүйелерін талдау үшін қолайлы болып шықты. Сондықтан ол декандарының басқарушылық мінез-құлқысы университет басшылықтың шешімдерінен және нормативтік актілерден тәуелді болып, олардың басқару өкілеттігі мен дербестігі шектейтінін сипаттады. Өз кезегінде рөлдік қақтығыс пен екіұштылық теориясы факультет декандарының рөлдерін әртүрлі аспектілерден, соның ішінде жеке және институционалдық деңгейде қарастырды. Бұл зерттелетін құбылысты тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

Түйінді сөздер: факультет декандары, Қазақстан, басқарушылық рөлдер, рөлдік қақтығыс, рөлдік екіұштылық.

Abstract (in Russian)

В условиях быстро меняющейся системы высшего образования в Казахстане, характер работы деканов факультетов также меняется (Arntzen, 2016; Wepner et al., 2015). Если раньше деятельность декана традиционно была связана с разработкой учебных планов, приемом студентов и наймом профессорско-преподавательского состава, то теперь она также включает стратегическое планирование, управление персоналом, бюджетирование, привлечение средств и поддержка связи с работодателями (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Gmelch et al., 2012). Таким образом роль декана стала более сложной и многогранной. Целью данного исследования было изучить роль деканов в государственных вузах Казахстана, а именно как они воспринимают свою роль, какие управленческие роли они выполняют будучи администраторами факультетов и с какими трудностями им приходится сталкиваться. Для исследования были использованы полуструктурированные глубинные интервью, проведенные с 15 деканами из семи государственных университетов (национальных и региональных университетов) Казахстана.

Результаты исследования показывают, что управленческое поведение и роли декана в государственных вузах ограничено. Это обусловлено унаследованной централизованной системой управления вузами в Казахстане. Этот фактор объясняется жестким контролем, иерархическими взаимоотношениями между руководством вуза и деканами и централизованным принятием решений в государственных вузах. В этих условиях полномочия и автономия декана в вопросах управления факультетом, например, вопросы касающиеся финансов или самостоятельного принятия решений, становятся уязвимыми (Hartley et al., 2016; Сагинтаева и др., 2017; Yembergenova et al., 2021). Таким образом деканы, избранные на должность администраторов факультетов, ограничены в полноценном исполнении своих административно-управленческих функций. Эти несоответствия в деятельности деканов объясняют их подверженность к

ролевому конфликту и ролевой неоднозначности. В связи с этим, результаты данного исследования помогают глубже понять роль деканов факультетов в контексте постсоветской системы высшего образования, указывающая на непроявленный управленческий потенциал деканов (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Wepner et al., 2015). Соответственно практические последствия исследования указывают на необходимость расширения полномочий и самостоятельности деканов в государственных вузах путем делегирования им больших полномочий. Это позволило бы укрепить лидерский потенциал деканов и повысить их административно-управленческий статус. Далее, касательно теоретических последствий исследования, то теория поведения руководителей показала, что она более применима для анализа децентрализованных систем управления в вузах. Поэтому она охарактеризовала управленческое поведение деканов как исключительное следование решениям вышестоящего руководства и государственным нормативным актам, ограничивающим полномочия и самостоятельность деканов в принятии решений. В свою очередь, теория ролевого конфликта и неоднозначности позволила рассмотреть роль деканов с различных точек зрения, включая индивидуальный и институциональный уровни что дало возможность глубже понять роль деканов в государственных вузах Казахстана.

Ключевые слова: деканы факультетов, Казахстан, управленческие роли, ролевой конфликт, ролевая неоднозначность.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The present study seeks to explore academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan. The position of academic deans refers to a mid-level manager who presides over an academic school or unit comprising a single discipline or a range of disciplines, such as arts, sciences, nursing, engineering, and business. Their responsibilities include managing the faculty, curriculum development, budgeting for their respective units, and maintaining high academic standards. Notably, this study exclusively focuses on academic deanship. It does not consider deans overseeing administrative-organizational issues in universities, such as youth affairs, international students, and the like. Therefore, the terms academic deanship, academic deans, and deans are used interchangeably throughout this study, referring to deans who oversee academic programs.

The rationale for conducting this research is driven by unprecedented institutional reforms in Kazakhstani higher education. For example, the Law on Changes and Amendments in the Legislative Acts of Kazakhstan aimed to expand academic freedom and managerial autonomy in higher education institutions (HEIs) (Nazarbayev, 2018). This legislation has led to the reorganization of public universities from state-owned enterprises into non-profit joint-stock companies (NJSC) with 100% state participation in the authorized capital. Other reforms addressed university decentralization, internationalization, and university-industry collaboration (Hartley et al., 2016; Jonbekova et al., 2020; Jumakulov et al., 2018; Sagintayeva et al., 2017, 2018). Due to this university restructuring in Kazakhstan, the nature of academic deanship has also changed considerably. It shifted the focus of academic deans from exclusively student matters and provision of academic leadership to human resource management, strategic planning, goal-setting, budgeting and fundraising, and communication management with external stakeholders (employers, alumni, sponsors, and

donors) (Arntzen, 2016; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; G. Scott et al., 2008). The newly emerging duties and responsibilities in the dean's job require an incumbent to transition from traditional middle academic managers to "manager-academics" who deal with administrative and managerial functions (Deem & Brehony, 2005; Gatenby et al., 2015; Gmelch & Buller, 2015).

It is noteworthy that the dean's changing role may emphasize a dilemma, which relates to the dean's position in the middle of the organizational hierarchy. The dean's position makes them involved in multiple and complex relationships with the superiors (boards of trustees and senior university administrators), constituents (faculty and students), and the benefactors (taxpayers, legislators, and endowers) (Gmelch et al., 2012; Gmelch & Buller, 2015). Often, these internal and external stakeholders have opposing expectations and demands from academic deans (Arntzen, 2016; Coll et al., 2019; Gmelch et al., 2012). In turn, this makes deans "synchronistically both master and slave," serving the demands and expectations of superiors and constituents (Lapp & Carr, 2006, p. 656). Given the ongoing institutional reorganization and the dean's emerging managerial roles, this study seeks to explore academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan.

Statement of the Problem

The Kazakhstani higher education system is undergoing a significant shift, transitioning from state regulation to institutional autonomy. As this change unfolds, academic leadership must adapt to reforms while complying with existing normative requirements of the Ministry and internal bylaws (Sagintayeva et al., 2018). This study aims to explore the role of deans in Kazakhstani public universities, focusing on their active engagement in translating institutional strategies into actions and overseeing their implementation within dean's offices, departments, units, and among academic and administrative staff to ensure organizational success (De Boer et al., 2010).

Exploring academic deanship requires understanding the university governance and its organization in Kazakhstani public universities, which are typically regulated by a number of codes, laws, government decrees and orders issued by the state authority – the Ministry of Education and Science. The organization of public universities presents a line management structure organized in a vertical manner, with governing bodies at the top level. They are boards serving as a buffer body between the Ministry of Education and Science and universities. The boards' tasks include determining institutional strategic goals, their development plans, approving annual budgets, and appointing, defining terms of office of senior executive administration (rectors and vice-rectors) and their termination (Sagintayeva et al., 2018).

Rectors (or chief executive officers) are in charge of the overall management of institutions bearing full responsibility for decisions, maintenance, and effective use of university assets. Notably, if rectors are more focused on external relations associated with networking and fundraising, vice-rectors engage in internal relationships associated with labor relations and academic planning within institutions (Bennett, 2019; Lavigne & Sa, 2021). The latter helps rectors in overseeing institutions. Therefore, the vice-rector for academic affairs (or a chief academic officer) holds the “number two” position serving as the right hand to the rector by overseeing the academic programs, faculty affairs, budgeting, and other related matters (J. Martin & Samels, 2015). It is important to mention that the role of vice-rectors is interconnected with the work of schools, dean's offices, and departments. They collaborate with deans and department chairs to meet the institution's academic mission and goals to coordinate the activities of various academic units, each contributing to the administration and management of the institution but at different organizational levels (Buller, 2015). In turn, deans report to vice-rectors but closely work with department chairs addressing the needs of all faculty members and students to provide the quality of academic

programs within a school. Therefore, while vice-rectors concentrate on the institution's broader authority and vision on academic activities, as well as their long-term planning, deans, more specialize within their designated schools, by aligning faculty goals with the institutional mission, ensuring a link between senior administration and operational units. In this regard, the role of department chairs also lies in aligning the departmental goals with overall institutional and specific school goals. They oversee day-to-day operations of departments by managing their faculty, students, and academic programs (Buller, 2007, 2015).

While each role of university leader has its distinct responsibilities, there is a hierarchical relationship among them. Department chairs and vice-deans report to deans, and deans, in turn, report to vice-rectors, and so on up to rectors reporting to the boards. Communication and coordination between these roles are essential for maintaining the institution's academic standards, managing resources effectively, and aligning departmental and school goals with the broader institutional objectives, mission, and values. Senior university administrators rely on deans and department chairs to implement policies, ensure academic quality, and drive the institution's mission at all organizational levels. Therefore, deans function as communication bridges, leading from the middle to balance multiple needs, advocate for faculty interests, manage resources, and steer academic development (Arntzen, 2016; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016).

The contemporary role of academic deans in Kazakhstan has evolved into a "more demanding, more senior, more strategic, more complex, and more managerial" profession within academia (De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009, p. 347). This is why deans are associated with the organizational "nerve center" (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 66), acting as "the delicate but crucial backbone of university decision-making" (Arntzen, 2016, p. 2071). The dean's role allows introducing substantial and sustainable transformative changes within schools, by

guiding and overseeing departments, faculty members, and students; developing a quality system to train professionals; and designing innovative academic programs and curricula. However, this ability of deans depends on how they interpret what is required and what they can personally do, the actions and initiatives deans can take due to their interpretations, and how their initiatives are supported (Balogun, 2003; Gatenby et al., 2015; Wisniewski, 1998). Therefore, deans are not just passive change recipients, but “influential change intermediaries” (Balogun, 2003). This underscores the important yet challenging position of deans, who are experts in the change process by building a vision of what the higher education institution would look like if the change takes place, and taking the initiative in planning and implementing these changes (Montez & Wolverton, 2000). Consequently, the change agency of academic deanship has become a requisite aspect of this role (Gatenby et al., 2015; Wisniewski, 1998).

Despite the critical role that deans play, there is little known about them in Kazakhstan (Hartley et al., 2016; Jonbekova et al., 2020; Romyantseva & Caboni, 2012; Sagintayeva & Kurakbayev, 2015). Existing studies focus on the preparedness of universities for the reforms (Ahn et al., 2018; Jonbekova et al., 2020; Monobayeva & Howard, 2015; Yembergenova et al., 2021), the perceptions of senior administrators and academic staff regarding the transition to university autonomy (Hartley et al., 2016; Sagintayeva et al., 2017, 2018; Sagintayeva & Kurakbayev, 2015; Sarinzhypov et al., 2012), and the ability of academic staff for self-regulation (Chekmareva et al., 2016; Romyantseva & Caboni, 2012). Unfortunately, previous research did not focus on how higher education reforms influence middle academic managers, namely deans. This might be explained by the dean’s equivocal position in the university hierarchy between senior administrators and faculty members. For instance, Arntzen (2016, p. 2071) claims that academic deans serve “as extensions of the presidency; on the other, they are regarded as extensions of the academic staff ... walking a

delicate administrative tightrope.” In other words, academic deanship and deans are often left behind in the research inquiry, being ‘extensions’ of administrators and faculty. Moreover, the overall complexity of the dean’s role, coupled with the growing demands, may cause job-related stress, fatigue, dissatisfaction, and even burnout in deans who are incapable of fully meeting the expectations of internal and external stakeholders (Bako, 2014; Coll et al., 2019; Jackson, 2000; Wolverton et al., 1999). The possible pitfalls in the dean’s job require a rigorous examination of this phenomenon, making critical explore academic deanship in an increasingly changing higher education landscape of Kazakhstan.

Purpose of the Study

Considering the dean’s ability to contribute strategically to institutional development, this study seeks to explore academic deanship in Kazakhstani universities. Examining deanship becomes vital taking into account institutional bylaws that traditionally classify deans as faculty members of academic schools. Meanwhile, reviewing other studies on deans underscores a shift in the dean’s job toward more managerial roles, functions, and responsibilities (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Gatenby et al., 2015; Lavigne, 2019). The different conceptualization of deanship in Kazakhstan and other education systems justifies the need to pay greater attention to academic deanship in Kazakhstan. Consequently, this will prevent misunderstanding and equivocality about the job bringing more clarity to the roles of deans as mid-level academic managers and leaders. Potentially, this study may help university administrators understand that academic deans are valuable university assets as change agents.

Given the issues mentioned above, the present study aims to uncover the essence of Kazakhstani academic deanship. In doing so, the study will identify how academic deans experience their work in Kazakhstani public universities. Then, the study will examine how deans think the position has changed over time and how they experience their roles.

Moreover, given the changing institutional landscape in Kazakhstan, the study will identify what managerial roles (interpersonal, information exchange, and decisional roles) academic deans play to perform their complex job (Mintzberg, 1973, 1989). Finally, the study will determine how academic deans perceive role conflict and role ambiguity as they work with diverse constituents (senior administrators, vice-deans, department chairs, faculty members, students, and other external stakeholders) (Bako, 2014; Coll et al., 2019; Rai, 2016; Wolverton et al., 1999; Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019).

Research Questions

To understand the role of academic deanship in the transforming public universities in Kazakhstan, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do academic deans describe their decanal job in Kazakhstani public universities?
2. In what way do they think their job has changed over time?
3. How do academic deans perceive and experience managerial roles (interpersonal, information exchange, and decisional)?
4. How do academic deans perceive role conflict and role ambiguity in their job as they work with diverse constituents (senior administrators, faculty, students, and external stakeholders)?

These research questions are developed to uncover contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstan. Given the ongoing higher education reforms and the lack of empirical research on deans, it is essential to determine how they perceive and experience the decanal position and roles in university management and leadership. Therefore, Research Question 1 aims to reveal the diverse individual experiences of deans. Next, Research Question 2 seeks to determine what significant changes occurred in deanship and how deans experience them. Research Question 3 tends to determine how academic deans perceive their emerging

managerial roles using Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory. Finally, Research Question 4 aims to explore how academic deans perceive role conflict and role ambiguity in their jobs as they work with superiors and constituents (senior administrators, faculty members, students, and external stakeholders) employing the role conflict and ambiguity theory (Biddle, 1986, 2013; Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). The next section of this chapter will briefly introduce these two theoretical frameworks of the study.

Brief Overview of Theoretical Frameworks

Given the changing nature of academic deanship worldwide, this study seeks to explore academic deanship in public universities of Kazakhstan using two theoretical frameworks. The rationale for employing two theories is that they complement each other and address the research goals of this study. The first framework is executive behavioral theory (Mintzberg, 1973, 1989). It is used to examine the shift to managerial duties of academic deans given the ongoing institutional restructuring in Kazakhstan (Hartley et al., 2016; Jonbekova et al., 2020; Jumakulov et al., 2018; Sagintayeva & Kurakbayev, 2015). The second theory is role conflict and ambiguity theory. It will help determine potential challenges that academic deans may encounter working with diverse university stakeholders who often have opposing expectations about the dean's job, their roles, duties, and responsibilities. Combined, these two theories will help analyze academic deanship in-depth.

Executive Behavioral Theory

The choice of this theory is linked to Research Question 3 of the present study, which aims to detect the changing nature of academic deanship in Kazakhstan toward managerial roles. In addition, this theory allows researchers to capture "the manager's job in terms of various "roles" or organized sets of behaviors identified with a position" (Mintzberg, 1989, p. 15). Even though the model was created more than 40 years ago and mainly addresses businesses, it has advocates in academia. This is because modern universities increasingly

acquire corporate behavior and business processes to generate new sources of income. For instance, Anderson et al. (2002), Balıkcı (2020), Mech (1997), and Muma et al. (2006) applied the theory to get an in-depth insight into the roles of chief academic administrators in American community colleges and universities.

Notably, the theory allows researchers to scrutinize and assess the job incumbent's social roles based on different aspects of professional duties and responsibilities. This is because the theory consists of three role clusters: interpersonal roles (Figurehead, Liaison, and Leader); informational roles (Monitor, Disseminator, and Spokesperson); and decisional roles (Entrepreneur, Disturbance handler, Resource allocator, and Negotiator) (Mintzberg, 1973, 1989). Any manager's work is characterized by varied interpersonal relationships, information exchange and processing, transfer, and decision-making roles (Mintzberg, 1989). However, the essence of the theory lies in not only classifying and clustering administrative-managerial roles. In addition, it exemplifies the strengths and weaknesses in the manager's daily operations to increase the effectiveness and productivity of employees and organizations (Kumar, 2015). Therefore, Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory is beneficial to examine the role of academic deans in Kazakhstan.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity Theory

This study will employ role conflict and ambiguity theory to address Research Question 4, which seeks to understand the dean's experiences and perceptions in their relationships with diverse constituents. The theory will help examine potential challenges that academic deans may face in performing their day-to-day operations. Role conflict and ambiguity theory emphasizes the complexity of professional duties and the existence of stressors that cause job-related stress, fatigue, job dissatisfaction, and turnover because of conflicting role expectations and growing role pressures (Bako, 2014; Coll et al., 2019; Wepner et al., 2015).

Notably, the theory can analyze the academic dean's communication and relationships with university superiors and constituents to determine what challenges they may face in performing their jobs (Nyanga et al., 2012; Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019). In doing so, the theory utilizes specific terms to characterize such relationships. For instance, in this study, academic deans refer to focal persons (Biddle, 2013). Senior university administrators, faculty members, students, employers, and other stakeholders are categorized as role senders vis-à-vis academic deans. In turn, public universities in Kazakhstan where academic deans work refer to a role set that serves as a background for the interactions between role senders and focal persons.

Significance of the Study

Given the changing nature of academic deanship worldwide, this research will provide new perspectives and insights into academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. This study signifies the complexity of contemporary deanship and emphasizes the potential of incumbents to become effective change agents and intermediaries (Balogun, 2003; Gatenby et al., 2015; Hilosky & Watwood, 1997; J. L. Martin, 1993). Rigorous research on academic deanship in the post-Soviet context can broaden the theoretical understanding and enrich empirical research on middle academic managers in Kazakhstan.

In general, this research will contribute to a better understanding of university stakeholders about the role of mid-level academic managers, namely deans in Kazakhstani public universities. For this reason, this study may draw the attention of a broad research community to academic deanship in Kazakhstan:

University Administrators

Given the tendency to grant Kazakhstani public universities greater autonomy, senior university administrators will benefit from this study. University administrators cannot effectively oversee every aspect of the daily operations of academic schools, dean's offices,

and university departments. In other words, it becomes critical for university leadership to share their executive authority with other university staff to minimize unnecessary bureaucratic burdens, centralized decision-making, and hierarchical relationships between administrators and other employees at public universities in Kazakhstan. Thus, shared leadership becomes crucial in delegating authority from senior administrators to mid-level academic managers, namely deans whose direct responsibilities include overseeing every detail related to their schools, departments, faculty members, and students. As such, the study has the potential to inform senior university administrators about the changing nature of academic deanship and the deans' emerging administrative-managerial roles, duties, and functions. This will enrich the understanding of contemporary academic deanship by reconsidering their roles in institutional strategy-making, goal-setting, and operational activities, such as decision-making and problem solving.

Academic Deans

Academic deans will also benefit from this study by understanding their roles as mid-level academic managers in Kazakhstani universities. The essence of academic deanship lies in the ability to ensure institutional development and growth. This implies that deans can contribute to substantial and sustainable transformative changes depending on how they interpret what is required and what deans can personally do, the actions and initiatives they can take due to their interpretations, and how their initiatives are supported (Balogun, 2003; Gatenby et al., 2015; Krahenbuhl, 2004; Wisniewski, 1998). In addition, novice deans will know about the potential pitfalls of their jobs serving multiple internal and external university constituents with often opposing demands and expectations about the decanal job.

Theoretical Contribution of the Study

This study has a potential theoretical contribution by employing executive behavioral theory and role conflict and ambiguity theory in the post-Soviet context. Using Mintzberg's

theory may help better conceptualize academic deanship by exploring the roles academic deans play and do not play at public universities of Kazakhstan. In addition, the theory will determine the extent of the dean's executive powers and authority in public universities in Kazakhstan. Thus, the theory may illuminate the weaknesses and strengths of the dean's position as a mid-level academic manager in a very different higher education context. Furthermore, the study on academic deans in Kazakhstan will be the first attempt to apply Mintzberg's theory to analyze academic deanship in the post-Soviet education system. In other words, the theory can add new nuances to the theoretical framework and empirical studies on deans as chief academic administrators at a school level (Anderson et al., 2002; Brousseau et al., 2006; Gmelch et al., 2012; Mech, 1997; Muma et al., 2006).

It should be noted that this study is groundbreaking in applying role conflict and ambiguity theory to explore Kazakhstani academic deanship. This theory will help identify challenges and imbalances in the current dean's job that impede their successful job performance. As a consequence, it can prevent the adverse effects of role conflict and role ambiguity in the workplace. Similar to Mintzberg's theory, the theory of role conflict and role ambiguity will be applied for the first time to study academic deanship in the post-Soviet context, which will potentially illuminate new perspectives about academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities.

Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter starts by introducing the study's problem statement, research questions, and significant contributions to the research field. Then, the second chapter begins with a brief historical background on the development of the higher education system of Kazakhstan in the post-independence period. Then, the Literature Review describes the development of academic deanship in Kazakhstan and Russia, referring to their common historical roots as former Soviet republics. Next, it reviews

academic deanship in Western countries (Australia, the Netherlands, and the USA) to highlight the similarities and dissimilarities of academic deanship in the post-Soviet and Western higher education systems. The third chapter of the thesis reviews the theoretical frameworks of the study by examining Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory and role conflict and ambiguity theory to explore Kazakhstani academic deanship. Furthermore, the fourth chapter presents the methodological basis of the study by introducing the research design, data collection, and analysis strategies and techniques. The chapter also reviews the important ethical considerations to protect the data obtained from the research participants. The fifth chapter presents the research findings to answer research questions developed for the present study. The sixth chapter analyzes and discusses the significant findings of the study. In addition, this chapter presents theoretical and practical implications of the study's key findings. Finally, the seventh chapter concludes the entire study by summarizing the research findings and introducing the limitations and delimitations of the study. The chapter also presents a set of recommendations for researchers, such as continuing further research on Kazakhstani academic deanship, and for public universities, such as supporting professional development of academic deans.

Summary

This chapter has introduced a research gap to justify the importance of examining academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. The Introduction chapter has explicitly explained the rationale for exploring Kazakhstani deans who are now playing an increasingly important role as mid-level academic managers in Kazakhstan's changing higher education landscape. The chapter has also presented the study's objectives and introduced research questions. Moreover, it has justified the rationale for examining Kazakhstani academic deanship using Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory and role conflict and ambiguity theory. The study draws the broad research community's attention to studying Kazakhstani

academic deanship by highlighting potential contributions to knowledge about this position in the post-Soviet higher education context. Finally, the chapter has provided an overview of the organization of the thesis to help readers navigate through this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The Literature review chapter introduces studies on academic deanship in different education systems to set the context for the present study. This chapter provides an overview of the neoliberal reforms in Kazakhstani higher education during the post-independence period, marked by severe political and economic turmoil in the education sector. In addition, this chapter seeks to assess the impact of these neoliberal reforms on Kazakhstani academic deanship by examining academic deanship in Russia. These two countries share similar historical backgrounds in the development of their national education systems following the dissolution of the Soviet regime. Moreover, the existing literature on the Russian system can provide valuable insights for understanding the situation in Kazakhstan, where there have been no previous studies conducted on academic deanship.

Furthermore, the literature review seeks to elucidate how academic deanship in Western educational systems developed due to the adoption of neoliberal reforms in the public sector. This review is essential for tracing the development of national education systems in diverse geographical, cultural, and economic settings. It helps identify both similarities and differences that may influence the evolution of academic deanship in various educational contexts. Consequently, reviewing academic deanship in the post-Soviet and Western education systems is crucial as it can uncover new nuances related to the similarities or, on the contrary, dissimilarities in decanal roles. In addition, it can help in understanding how academic deanship evolved to address new challenges, such as pursuing new markets, developing fundraising skills, advocating for policy changes, and marketing educational programs to respond to political and economic pressures (Gallos, 2002; McClure & Teitelbaum, 2016). The explicit review of different studies on the dean's role explores how, despite geopolitical, cultural, and historical differences among the selected educational

systems, the challenges of contemporary academic deanship remain relevant to each of the reviewed countries.

New Public Management in Higher Education of Kazakhstan

New Public Management (NPM) as a reform model had a ubiquitous effect on education systems worldwide (Bleiklie, 2018). Similarly, in Kazakhstan, it was reflected in a complex set of legislative frameworks, institutional restructuring, funding allocation models, and general changes in the higher education system (Brunner & Tillett, 2007; De Boer & File, 2009; OECD-World Bank, 2007). The main goal of NPM was to redefine the state-controlled higher education system, where academic institutions have limited institutional autonomy, to state-supervised systems, where the state steers institutions from a distance granting universities a substantially higher degree of freedom (Estermann et al., 2011; Ferlie et al., 2008; Fielden, 2008; Neave & Van Vught, 1994). Therefore, the sections below present higher education reforms in Kazakhstan from the post-independence period till the present time to determine the development of the higher education governance system in Kazakhstan.

Higher Education Reforms in the Post-Independence Period (1991-2009)

The post-independence period in Kazakhstan was characterized by drastic political and economic turmoil (Ahn et al., 2018; Brunner & Tillett, 2007; OECD-World Bank, 2007). In particular, according to Brunner and Tillett (2007, p. 75), that time is described as the “most complicated and controversial period” in the Kazakhstani higher education sector, marked by a fiscal crisis:

The budget funding of education system was significantly reduced; the share of the GDP spent on education decreased from 6 percent in 1990 to 3.5 percent in 2000. The education component of the national budget ranged from 8.1 percent in 1993 and 6.3 percent in 1998 to 4 percent in 1999. Public expenditures on education covered only 55 percent of costs. (Brunner & Tillett, 2007, p. 75)

Due to underfunding, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Kazakhstan were unable to adequately meet the new demands of the labor market. This situation was further exacerbated by mandatory common core curricula in all academic fields and the requirement to comply with state educational standards inherited from the Soviet era (Chekmareva et al., 2016). Consequently, higher education was marked by poor learning outcomes, low employability of graduates, and inadequate training and reward schemes for academic staff (Chekmareva et al., 2016; OECD-World Bank, 2007).

To overcome those challenges, a series of reforms in the education sector were launched to depart from a centrally planned command economy to a market economy (Ahn et al., 2018; Monobayeva & Howard, 2015; OECD, 2017). The reforms, known as the “postsocialist education reform package,” aimed to shift Kazakhstan from the post-Soviet “global periphery to the global core” (Silova, 2011b, 2011a). They addressed market relations by focusing on supply and demand, performance, efficiency, and effectiveness (Bleiklie, 2018; Bleiklie et al., 2011; De Boer et al., 2007). For instance, the first attempt to reform higher education in Kazakhstan involved changes to the legal framework. The adoption of the Law on Education in 1992 manifested the democratization of education (Ahn et al., 2018; Brunner & Tillett, 2007; Hartley et al., 2016; OECD, 2017). Within a year of gaining independence, the Law on Higher Education legalized private education, which had been illegal during the Soviet era (Hartley et al., 2016; Massyrova et al., 2015). However, the privatization of education led to the uncontrolled growth in for-profit universities, often with a dubious quality of training (Chekmareva et al., 2016; OECD, 2017). In addition, the issues of corruption were present in the higher education system (Heyneman, 2007, 2011; Petrov & Temple, 2004). Those challenges in the developing education sector strengthened the role of the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter the Ministry or the MoES). The Ministry became the central executive body to warrant fairness, efficiency, uniform quality, and

combat corruption (Hartley et al., 2016; Heyneman, 2011; Rummyantseva & Caboni, 2012; Sagintayeva et al., 2017). It carried out a series of mergers, downgrading, and closures to reorganize universities and optimize their numbers (Ahn et al., 2018; OECD-World Bank, 2007). Public universities were categorized into state universities, primarily focusing on regional labor markets, and a few national universities specialized in preparing the workforce for the entire domestic economy (Hartley et al., 2016; Sagintayeva & Kurakbayev, 2015). The latter were granted privileges that had not been accessible before, such as the ability to develop their own academic programs, determine the faculty salaries with a high coefficient, set higher admission criteria, and charge higher tuition fees. Furthermore, another regulatory provision, the Law on Joint-Stock Companies (Government of RK, 2003), corporatized a number of public universities, turning them into joint-stock companies (JSC) and privately owned legal entities. The rationale for corporatization was to grant JSC universities decision-making independence, financial management autonomy, and flexible governance (Hartley et al., 2016; Jumakulov et al., 2018). Despite a series of reorganizations to diversify universities, they remained under rigid ministerial control. This control took the form of state attestation, primarily aimed at ensuring compliance with ministerial norms and bylaws for both public and private universities (Ahn et al., 2018; OECD, 2017; Smolentseva et al., 2018). Before 2010, the Ministry controlled not only the acceptable academic programs listed in the National Classifier of Majors at all Kazakhstani universities but also 70% of the undergraduate curriculum (Sagintayeva et al., 2017). Given that control, centralized selection of senior university administrators was also common. Rectors of national universities were appointed by the President of Kazakhstan, while the Ministry of Education and Science appointed rectors of state (regional) universities (Akinfiyeva, 2022; Lichanova, 2021; Sagintayeva et al., 2017).

While the higher education reforms aimed at introducing market principles and relations, public universities continued to be subject to state regulation (Bayetova & Robertson, 2019; Mustafina, 2018; OECD-World Bank, 2007). For instance, state authorities supervised the newly established external executive body – boards of directors at joint-stock companies with a minimum participation of the private sector (Sagintayeva et al., 2018). In other words, the outcomes of deregulating public universities in post-independent Kazakhstan were partial and ineffective. Institutional diversification did not bring substantial changes to the university governance and management system. Therefore, highly centralized decision-making and control continued to characterize regional, national, and JSC universities in Kazakhstan (Hartley et al., 2016; Monobayeva & Howard, 2015; Sagintayeva & Kurakbayev, 2015; Yembergenova et al., 2021).

The Move toward University Autonomy in Kazakhstan (2010–present)

The next stage of higher education reforms was associated with the accession to the Bologna Declaration. Joining the Bologna Process became a strategic goal for Kazakhstan because it could increase the visibility and competitiveness of the state. In addition, it could help Kazakhstani higher education system integrate into the global knowledge economy, bringing additional financial flows to higher education (Heyneman & Skinner, 2014; Tomusk, 2011; Zgaga, 2009). According to Silova (2011), membership in the Bologna Process is a powerful marketing tool for attracting fee-paying students. In addition, it can serve as a vehicle to move the Central Asian republics from the global periphery to Europe (Silova, 2011b). However, the accession of Kazakhstan to the Bologna Declaration in 2010 required a commitment to the principles of academic freedom and university autonomy.

In line with the 2010 accession to the Bologna Declaration, the Ministry of Education and Science launched the State Program for Education Development for 2011-2020 (SPED) to improve the quality of national higher education by adopting credit technology, a three-

tiered system of degrees, and establishing a system of national and international accreditations to replace state attestation. In addition, SPED aimed to create boards of trustees at all HEIs to build a strategic decision-making core based on the example of the newly established Nazarbayev University (NU) that initiated shared university governance mechanism in 2010 (Ruby, 2017; Sagintayeva et al., 2018). The establishment of NU signified the creation of the first autonomous institution in Kazakhstan that is “free from many ministerial instructions and norms of the MoES and Ministry of Finance” (Ruby, 2017, p. 34). Moreover, the institution enjoys unprecedented political and financial support because the separate law guarantees its autonomous status (Bilyalov, 2018). However, despite the enacted reforms for public universities in Kazakhstan, the vivid changes in managing public universities did not occur. The declared replacement of state attestation with national institutional accreditation was partial. According to the Law on Education (2007), with the latest amendments as of 2023, universities still need to pass state attestation every five years as a measure of ‘preventive control’ to comply with the national legislation. Notably, the variety of external governing bodies (boards of directors and boards of trustees) at JSC and other public universities created uncertainty in determining their roles and functions. As a result, it led to bureaucratic “structural layering” and the nominal status of collegial executive bodies (Sagintayeva et al., 2018, p. 42). Indeed, boards can control neither senior university administrators nor budgetary issues, making board members powerless to contribute to university governance and influence long-term institutional growth.

It should be noted that budgeting at public universities limits their financial autonomy. Due to the variety of public universities, such as national, state, and JSC universities, the tariffs for educational programs may also vary (Mhamed et al., 2018). For instance, comparing state and national universities, the former turns out to be in one of the most disadvantaged positions. The cost of the state educational grant (which is allocated as public

funding to train students at universities) at a national university is twice as high as the state grant at a regional university and even at joint-stock companies (Mhamed et al., 2018).

However, it should be noted that the different tariffs do not imply a difference in the quality of teaching of these academic programs offered in the three types of higher education institutions. This is because universities in Kazakhstan follow the standards prescribed by the National Classifier of Majors, which they adhere to when designing educational programs. Furthermore, the Kazakhstani higher education system experiences substantial public underfunding because of the concentration of public budget funds on a few elite universities, such as Nazarbayev University (Anarbek et al., 2016; Bayetova & Robertson, 2019; Ruby, 2017).

The abovementioned suggests that the central role of the Ministry to guarantee fairness and uniform quality of training compromises the competitiveness of universities for resources by not providing transparent and fair criteria for public funding allocation. For this reason, a recent study on university autonomy in Kazakhstan revealed specific barriers to financial autonomy in Kazakhstan (European University Association [EUA], 2018):

- Inadequate funding modalities, such as line-item budgeting with no internal funding allocation for strategic purposes;
- Restrictions to keep a surplus generated from public funding that must be returned to the Ministry of Education and Science;
- Restrictions in managing institutional lands, assets, and financial affairs;
- Lack of a diversified funding model solely based on the state grants system and the tuition fees of self-paying students.

Furthermore, the national strategy to place Kazakhstan among the world's 30 most competitive economies by 2050 has launched a new attempt to reform public universities by linking them with businesses and industries. In response to it, the launch of the Nation's Plan

of 100 Steps of Five Institutional Reforms manifested the innovativeness and entrepreneurship of universities (Nazarbayev, 2015). To support the national plan, the Ministry adopted the State Program for Forced Industrial-Innovative Development in 2010 and later the State Program for Innovation and Industry Development (SPIID-2) in 2014 to enhance the preparation of graduates for the workforce and expand the faculty research capacity with local industrial enterprises. More specifically, SPIID-2 triggered the restructuring of universities into entrepreneurial entities by establishing mutually beneficial university-industry partnerships to foster the universities' research and development (R&D) programs. The latter included the modernization of research laboratories, the promotion of collaboration with international university faculty and local industry, and the development of postgraduate programs aligned with international standards and practices (Jumakulov et al., 2018). In addition, SPIID-2 sought to develop student and faculty research capacities more consistent with international standards. Therefore, the state program served as a platform for institutions to gain institutional autonomy in financial and managerial issues.

Despite the reforms undertaken to modernize higher education by establishing university-industry collaboration, centralized state control continues to pose significant administrative obstacles to establishing partnerships with industry. The reasons for this are heavy faculty teaching loads, poor institutional support for research, constant reforms in the higher education system, and little consistency in the priorities of the fast-changing MoES (Jonbekova et al., 2020). Jonbekova et al. (2020) found that the failure to attain the goals lies in the disagreement of state policies and reforms and the constant rotation of education ministers without continuing the previous reforms and strategies.

The latest wave of decentralization has been launched with the recent Law about the Changes and Amendments in the Legislative Acts of Kazakhstan to expand the academic and managerial autonomy of HEIs (Nazarbayev, 2018). As a result, public universities shifted to

non-profit joint-stock companies (NJSC) with 100% state shares. The logic behind this reform is to enable universities with fundraising skills to generate resources from start-ups, services and products commercialization, and endowment funds (Akinfieva, 2022; Lichanova, 2021; Primeminister, 2020). In parallel, open competition for the rector's chair in national and regional universities was introduced to make the selection process more competitive and transparent. The boards of institutions select the most promising candidates who are further interviewed by the Republican Commission, which makes the final decision (Akinfieva, 2022; Chernenko, 2016; Kapital, 2019; Lichanova, 2021). These reforms signify an attempt to move toward academic freedom and financial autonomy, nurturing the university administrators' leadership and management capacities.

The most recent reforms in the legislative acts seem promising, as the state is aware of the urgency to deregulate higher education institutions to improve the quality of training and prepare the workforce for the national economy. However, the interpretation and enactment of state policies are a different matter. New policies may create confusion for HEIs, which must comply with ministerial guidelines, norms, and standards (Gmelch et al., 2012; Hartley et al., 2016; OECD, 2017). OECD and World Bank experts determined the weaknesses of Kazakhstani higher education resulting from “the proliferation of actions, the plethora of agencies and committees and the frequent changes in the related regulations and processes that confuse and overburden higher education stakeholders” (OECD-World Bank, 2007, pp. 117–118). This suggests a lack of consistency in state policy adoption and implementation. For this reason, only thoughtful and consistent policies and norms can eliminate Kazakhstan's entrenched academic and cultural barriers in the education sector (Hartley et al., 2016). This is only in the powers of the Ministry to enable HEIs and guide them if it reconsiders its role and the extent of its involvement in university governance. Indeed, the legitimization of the central role of the Ministry in the 1990s to combat corruption

was reasonable. However, the prevailing assumption that the right decision or solution belongs to the Ministry has developed formalism, the bureaucratization of higher education, uniformity, and complacency, resulting in an entrenched academic culture (Monobayeva & Howard, 2015). They developed due to state attestations that forced universities to strictly follow the model of compliance behavior with the ministerial directives and guidelines (Hartley et al., 2016).

In summary, the neoliberal reforms in higher education in Kazakhstan were primarily influenced by the inherited Soviet system of planned central control and centralized decision-making. This explains the modest paces toward deregulation of higher education in Kazakhstan, which lie in the ongoing “continuity of the Soviet frame of mind” (Yergebekov & Temirbekova, 2012, p. 1476). The latter poses obstacles, explaining the failures of the previous educational reforms and putting the following state policies and reforms at risk. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the development of New Public Management in Kazakhstan has been characterized as very modest, being still at the infancy level despite the decades of university governance reforms (Knox, 2008).

Academic Deanship in the Post-Soviet Education Systems

Kazakhstan belongs to the countries of the former socialist block, characterized by standard features developed during the Soviet era (Froumin & Smolentseva, 2014). Specifically, Smolentseva et al., (2018) argue that the post-Soviet higher education systems share legacies of a single centralized approach to higher education provision. These legacies encompass centrally planned organization and financing, subordination to multiple sectoral ministries, a national curriculum, a vocational orientation based on the combination of strong basic education and narrow specialized job-related training, a nomenclature of types of higher education institutions, tuition-free study places, and guaranteed employment upon graduation, combined with mandatory job placement (Smolentseva et al., 2018).

Considering the shared features of centralized university governance in the post-Soviet republics, it may reveal certain patterns in the development of middle academic management, such as academic deanship. Therefore, reviewing a country with a post-socialist background seems reasonable, as it can provide insights into the development of academic deanship in Kazakhstan. For this reason, it is helpful to use Russia as a reference country to understand the evolution of the dean's role in the post-independence period and determine any similarities or differences between Russia and Kazakhstan.

Furthermore, reviewing Russian higher education is particularly valuable. This is because Russia was the center of decision-making for the central communist party throughout the entire Soviet Union and, in particular, for each of the fifteen socialist republics (Kuraev, 2016). Moreover, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia was the first of the former socialist states to initiate radical reforms in higher education, such as privatization and ratification of the Bologna Process (Heyneman & Skinner, 2014; Smolentseva et al., 2018). Despite Russia's attempts to adopt best practices, such as academic freedom, Kuraev (2016) claims that freedom in the Russian university context is still at a rudimentary level, characterized as a "surrogate academic freedom," corresponding to the surrogate university model produced in the post-independence period (Oleksiyenko, 2021, p. 1116). For this reason, it may be helpful to use Russia as a reference country to draw parallels between Russia and Kazakhstan to explore academic deanship in Kazakhstan. This can help uncover the similarities and differences between decanal roles in Kazakhstan and Russia, taking into account the common historical and cultural backgrounds of the former Soviet states.

Overview of a Dean's Position and a Dean's Office in Russia

Faculty positions in Russian universities remain highly formalized and are governed by regulations and bylaws on personnel hiring, promotion, compensation, and evaluation. The status and qualification requirements of Russian academic deans are outlined in the

Typical Provisions about Educational Establishments of Higher Professional Education (2008). Compliance with these formalized “typical” regulations is mandatory (Kuznetsov, 2009).

The dean’s position is an elected one, and the incumbent is selected from a pool of the most qualified senior faculty members with exceptional academic and research records (Kuznetsov, 2009; Startsev, 2014; Yudkevich & Kuzminov, 2021). Faculty selection contests may formally involve the participation of either one employee from the hiring institution or an outsider who has been personally invited (Nazarova, 2011; Startsev, 2014). Moreover, the Provisions on the Competitive Selection for Faculty Positions specify the eligibility of university employees to participate in contests for vacant academic positions (MoES of RF, 2015). However, these provisions have recently been amended to allow both current university employees and candidates outside the hiring institution to participate in the faculty position contests. Nevertheless, Yudkevich and Kuzminov (2021) note that despite the introduction of open, transparent, and fair contests for faculty recruitment, Russian universities still tend to prefer a more traditional hiring strategy. The latter implies that internal hiring in academia is acceptable and remains one of the most preferred recruitment practices (Alipova et al., 2018; Gorelova & Yudkevich, 2015; Sivak & Yudkevich, 2009). In addition to internal hiring, academic inbreeding is another widespread hiring strategy in Russian academia, where universities deliberately recruit their graduates (Alipova et al., 2018; Altbach et al., 2015; Horta, 2013).

According to Reznik (2007) and Zagirova (2017), contemporary Russian academic deans are increasingly dealing with administrative and organizational functions within universities. This is further exemplified by an aggregate summary of the typical tasks and duties of deans, generated from randomly selected job descriptions of Russian academic deans at state and federal universities available on the Internet (See Table 1).

Table 1*Typical Academic and Managerial Duties of Deans in Russia*

Academic duties	Managerial duties
- Manage educational, methodological, and research works;	- Manage organizational, financial, and economic activities;
- Organize and carry out professional recruitment of faculty;	- Maintain contractual duties in contracts and agreements;
- Organize professional training (retraining);	- Ensure the quality of the material and technical base;
- Provide the quality of the academic, research, and social activities;	- Provide targeted and efficient use of subsidies and extra-budgetary funds;
- Ensure the introduction and use of innovative technologies in education;	- Raise funds from income-generating activities (the provision of educational services, participation in R&D);
- Manage the organization of the career guidance work in schools, lyceums, colleges, etc.;	- Supervise the construction and repair works on the premises of the School, as well as the delivery and installation of equipment (timing, completeness, quality, compliance with the declared requirements);
- Provide the annual fulfillment of the admission plan;	- Introduce the quality management system and develop quality assurance management goals;
- Control over students and their academic performance;	- Maintain communications with external stakeholders (alumni, employers, etc.).
- Ensure the realization of academic programs in compliance with the established federal educational standards and quality management requirements.	

Note. (HR-portal, 2019; Kazan Federal University, 2012; St. Petersburg State University of Telecommunications, 2015; Tomsk State University, 2005)

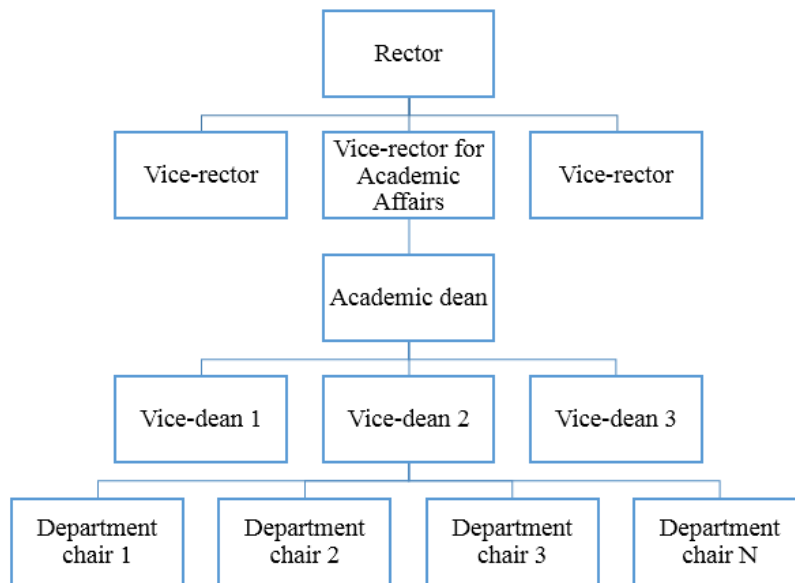
Table 1 clearly demonstrates that the roles and responsibilities of deans have been diversified. They are not limited to traditional academic duties but extend to managerial and entrepreneurial responsibilities. Despite this illustration of their managerial tasks, Reznik

(2007) argues that the dean's primary role still centers around teaching and research, while their managerial responsibilities remain secondary. This is mainly because deans are categorized as faculty members and are expected to engage in teaching activities (Kuznetsov, 2009). For instance, according to the Job Description for deans at Tomsk State University, incumbents are required to fulfill an annual teaching workload of 450 hours (2005). These teaching requirements explain the strong academic identity of Russian deans, even though their managerial functions have expanded considerably (Zagirova, 2017). Reznik (2007) raises the question of how to define the role of contemporary Russian deans, who appear to have managerial duties but are officially categorized as faculty members expected to teach and conduct research.

In terms of the organizational structure of dean's offices in Russia, they typically consist of a maximum of three vice-deans and a secretary, whose role is to ensure the smooth operation of the academic unit. However, the number of vice-deans can vary from one higher education institution to another, depending on the factors like student enrollment and institutional size. The vice-deans are responsible for overseeing specific management areas, including educational, methodological, research, and social issues within the school (Reznik, 2020; Reznik et al., 2016) (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

Typical Position of Academic Deans in the Organizational Structure of University



The well-defined allocation of functional responsibilities among vice-deans helps deans more efficiently oversee and manage their academic schools. In addition, similar to deans, all vice-deans also have teaching responsibilities.

Empirical Studies on Academic Deanship in Russia

Given the shared legacy of centralized university governance and its impact on the Russian higher education system, it is important to review the available empirical research on academic deanship in Russian universities.

In the study, Reznik (2007) interviewed 20 senior university administrators and middle academic managers, including rectors, vice-rectors, academic deans, and department chairs from 18 universities in Russia. His goal was to identify the skills and competencies considered most important for the effective performance of the dean's job. Reznik asked the respondents to rank the most important group of competencies in a dean's work (1-tier classification of competencies). The results of this ranking are presented in Table 2 below (See Table 2):

Table 2

Classification of the Dean's Essential Competencies in Russian Universities

Group of competencies (1-tier classification)	Rank	Percentage of responses (%)	Content of a group of competencies (2-tier classification)
Professional competencies	1	22	Managerial skills Economic skills Legal knowledge Teaching activities Scholarship
Organizational competencies	2	20	Leadership Communication skills Ability to organize the joint activities (with faculty, employees, graduate and undergraduate students) Reputation and authority
Moral competencies	3	17	Spiritual qualities Culture of social behavior
Entrepreneurial skills	4	16	Strategic thinking Entrepreneurship Self-organization
Political culture	5	15	Ability to understand and consider societal interests (state, institution, and academic unit) Ability to understand and consider the individual's interests (faculty member, employees, graduate and undergraduate students)
Working capacity	6	10	Emotional and volitional potential Physiological potential

Note. (Reznik, 2007, p. 54)

Table 2 illustrates that 22% of respondents ranked an individual's professionalism as the most important competency. This professionalism includes knowledge and experience in professional management, fundraising, budgeting, legal matters, teaching, and scholarship. In addition, 20% of respondents emphasized the importance of organizational skills for the dean's successful job performance. Moral qualities (17%) and entrepreneurial qualities (16%)

were also recognized as essential skills. Finally, respondents placed high value on political culture (15%) and work efficiency (10%).

Furthermore, as the dean's professional knowledge was considered critical, Reznik also asked the respondents to specify the skills and knowledge that are part of the dean's professional competencies. Table 3 below presents the results of a 2-tier classification of the dean's essential professional competencies (See Table 3):

Table 3

Professional Competence Model of Academic Deans in Russia

Professional competencies	Rank	Value, %
Managerial skills	1	27.6
Economic skills	2	23.7
Legal knowledge	3	19.9
Teaching activities	4	17.6
Scholarship	5	11.2

Note. (Reznik, 2007, p. 55)

Table 3 indicates that the respondents identified management as the primary expertise of the dean in their professional duties. In other words, an incumbent is expected to serve as an administrator first, implying that an individual's previous record of excellence in teaching and research takes a secondary role in the administrative position (Reznik, 2007). This suggests that today's deans in Russia must effectively balance both academic and administrative-managerial functions at the same time.

However, this presents a paradox: respondents emphasized the need for professional management skills in the dean's role, while institutional bylaws governing academic deanship assign the incumbent's primary role to teaching and research activities (Reznik, 2007). This implies that academic deans are classified as full-time faculty members rather than school administrators. For this reason, Reznik's (2007) study underscores the importance of nurturing the dean's management capacity to adhere to the rapid changes in the higher

education system. However, due to the increased teaching load of deans, they typically spend less than 60% of their time on management (Reznik, 2007).

Reznik found that only 28.2% of academic deans dedicated 75%-100% of their time to managing academic schools. Another 37.5% allocated 51%-75% of their time to management. In addition, 25% of deans devoted 26%-50% of their time to academic school management, while 9.4% of respondents spent up to 25% of their working time on school management (Reznik, 2007; Reznik et al., 2016). This suggests that academic deans in Russia are expected to navigate both academic and administrative roles and functions within a single decanal position.

The focus on teaching and research in the deanship is understandable, as it is rooted in the Soviet era when teaching and research were distinct domains. Universities were primarily focused on workforce preparation, while research activities were conducted by the Academies of Sciences to generate knowledge for the needs of the national economy (OECD-World Bank, 2007; Smolentseva et al., 2018). However, in the current competitive global landscape, research output has become a key measure of university success (Rodionov et al., 2016; Yudkevich et al., 2015). Consequently, academic deans in Russia are required to lecture and conduct research at the same time, leaving them less time to oversee academic schools.

In 2013, the launch of the national program Project 5-100 brought considerable changes to the role of middle academic managers in Russia (Zagirova, 2017). This federal program aimed to position five Russian universities among the top 100 universities in the world according to the QS World University Rankings by 2020 (Rodionov et al., 2016). Achieving this strategic goal required a transformation of the management core to strengthen institutional competitiveness. As a consequence, the role of the dean was “re-evaluated” (Zagirova, 2017, p. 15), becoming more complex. The delegation of power from top to

middle levels and increased autonomy of academic units required deans to adopt a more business-like and entrepreneurial behavior. However, this “double-role position” of Russian deans (Zagirova, 2017, p. 20) as both academics and managers simultaneously has resulted in an excessive workload and a decline in work quality, as incumbents struggle to fully attend to all aspects of their multifaceted job.

Given the transformation of Russian higher education institutions into competitive business entities, the status of the dean as a faculty member has become irrelevant and inappropriate. Denisova-Schmidt (2020) explains this situation through the crisis of the academic profession in Russian universities. This crisis derives from the overwhelming control of senior administrators, excessive paperwork and administrative workloads, heavy teaching loads with restrictions on academic freedom, and diminishing funding and incentives (Denisova-Schmidt, 2020). Consequently, a dean with a heavy teaching load can only perform some of the required and expected administrative-managerial tasks. Given these existing circumstances, contemporary Russian deans rely primarily on their “enthusiasm” rather than favorable working conditions to perform their direct administrative and organizational functions for which they were initially recruited (Reznik, 2007, p. 55).

Academic Deanship in Kazakhstan

Compared to the studies on Russian deans, there has been limited empirical research on academic deanship in Kazakhstan. The available information regarding Kazakhstani deans is primarily derived from state regulations, institutional job descriptions, and research on academic staff in Kazakhstan.

Before 2019, the qualifications and selection criteria for deans were regulated by the Typical Qualification Requirements of Academic Staff and People Equated to Them (with amendments as of 2018) (MoES, 2009a). This uniform regulatory framework provided detailed guidance on staffing regulations for both public and private universities, outlining

the structure of academic structural units and job descriptions for senior administrators (rectors and vice-rectors), middle academic managers (academic deans, vice-deans, and department chairs), and faculty members (professors and associate professors).

It is important to mention that the amendments (as of 2019) made to the Typical Qualification Requirements of Academic Staff and People Equated to Them allowed universities to develop their own staffing policies and procedures (MoES, 2009b). Institutions of higher education are now responsible for creating their own qualification characteristics of academic staff to determine the qualification requirements and selection criteria for university administrators, middle academic managers, and academic staff.

Given that public universities in Kazakhstan were in the process of shifting toward the status of non-profit joint-stock companies (NJSC) and were updating their institutional bylaws and regulations, it was essential to analyze academic deanship in those institutions that had undergone restructuring and had newly developed qualification requirements and selection criteria for deans available on the Internet. As a result, four public universities were found with NJSC status and newly adopted staffing regulations to scrutinize the functions and responsibilities of deans in Kazakhstani public universities. These institutions were Atyrau University named after Dosmukhamedov, Atyrau Oil and Gas University, Toraighyrov University, and Yessenov University.

The analysis showed that academic deans in these institutions deal with a wide array of academic and managerial tasks and duties, including teaching activities (Atyrau Oil and Gas University, 2020; Atyrau University, 2021; Toraighyrov University, 2020; Yessenov University, 2019). For example, one of the managerial functions of academic deans is to maintain external communication with employers, businesses, and alumni (See Table 4).

Table 4

Examples of Typical Duties and Responsibilities of Academic Deans in Kazakhstan

Teaching activities	Academic activities	Managerial activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To conduct lectures on disciplines; - To supervise the students' theses; - To engage undergraduate and graduate students in the social life; - To foster the students' research activities (grant proposals, publications, and projects); - To develop methodological aids and write textbooks and books; - To attend professional development programs regularly; - To develop elective courses, syllabi, academic plans, and program courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To coordinate the work of academic and scientific units (e.g., textbooks, publications); - To control the learning process (the students' transfer, admission to exams, final exams and vivas; class and exam scheduling; - To approve the students' individual study plans, the theses' themes and awarding scholarships; - To manage the employees' work; the admission committees and state attestation committees; - To organize and conduct sittings of the Academic Council; interdepartmental meetings, seminars, scientific and methodological meetings and conferences; - To ensure the interdisciplinary scientific-methodological collaboration among faculty; - To introduce innovative technologies in teaching and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To plan the School's development strategy; - To maintain the interaction with state authorities, businesses, and industry; - To analyze the market of the educational services and the labor market; - To maintain communication with alumni; - To develop and maintain quality assurance procedures; - To ensure and control the employability of the School graduates; - To organize and coordinate effective staffing policies; - To develop the staff schedules; - To strengthen the material-technical base of the School.

Note. (Atyrau Oil and Gas University, 2020; Atyrau University, 2021; Toraighyrov University, 2020; Yessenov University, 2019)

The position of a dean in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan is highly competitive. Typically, the selection process involves choosing candidates from a pool of qualified and experienced senior faculty members. Once selected, the dean enters into a labor contract with a rector for a five-year term, with a maximum of two terms in office.

Regarding the academic dean's management and leadership skills, the incumbent must either provide a certificate of completion of a professional development program in education management or have prior work experience as a manager in academic institutions (Atyrau Oil and Gas University, 2020; Atyrau University, 2021; Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education [NUGSE], 2018; Toraighyrov University, 2020; Yessenov University, 2019).

Deans are also expected to engage in teaching activities and deliver lectures. The maximum annual teaching load for faculty members is set at 680 academic hours per year (MoES, 2021). Moreover, deans actively participate in research. For instance, academic deans at Karaganda State Technical University are classified as scientific and pedagogical staff members, indicating that university deans are involved in both research and academic activities (2018). The engagement of academic deans, along with faculty, in research and scholarship significantly influences the competitiveness and performance of Kazakhstani universities in terms of producing research outputs, generating, and disseminating knowledge (Jonbekova et al., 2020; Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018).

Deans operate within a pivotal organizational level by leading from the middle. They connect central university leadership with department chairs to ensure effective operations and adherence to the overall academic vision of the institution within their schools. This suggests that while vice-rectors typically concentrate on the institution's broader authority, vision, finances, and long-term planning, deans specialize within their respective schools. They ensure faculty goals align with the institution's mission, creating a link between senior administration and operational cores, such as departments and faculty.

Deans play a crucial role in fostering a productive and cohesive academic environment. Their responsibilities encompass managing multiple departments, recruiting faculty, supporting student success, overseeing graduate employment, setting strategic

objectives, allocating resources, and shaping academic programs. This also includes fostering research and innovation, accrediting programs, and analyzing educational and labor markets. Ultimately, they ensure the progress and quality of academic programs within their schools.

Vice-deans, whose numbers vary from institution to institution depending on the student enrollment and institutional size, provide support to the work of deans. For instance, a vice-dean for academic affairs oversees methodological work, student attendance, class scheduling, and faculty workload. Apart from administrative duties, vice-deans also engage in teaching activities and student theses supervision.

Finally, department chairs lead individual academic departments. Their responsibilities involve managing department faculty, overseeing the curriculum, and handling day-to-day operations. They also prepare proposals to plan funding for department faculty and student travels, as well as capital repairs for departmental facilities like classrooms and labs. Deans gather these applications from all school departments to be approved by senior administrators. This process aligns with the centralized funding allocation system in Kazakhstani public universities.

Given the dean's complex and multifaceted job, they often struggle to find sufficient time to manage schools effectively. This is evident when comparing faculty workloads in Kazakhstan to those in the USA. In 2007, the average teaching load for faculty in Kazakhstan ranged from 800 to 900 contact hours per year (or 20-26 class contact hours per week), compared to 180-240 hours in the United States (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018; OECD-World Bank, 2007; Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012). More importantly, this situation persists until the present time, with the recommended teaching workload comprising 680 academic hours per year.

Table 4 above provides an overview of the typical duties and responsibilities of academic deans in Kazakhstan, indicating a variety of their daily operations. This highlights

the dean's pivotal role in organizing and coordinating the work of academic schools. To be an effective academic dean, an incumbent is expected to fulfill multiple roles, ranging from a lecturer and researcher to a coordinator, negotiator, human resources manager, accountant, or economist, and market analyst. These diverse roles are driven by the need for senior university administrators to have "a combination of a high professional level of the managerial staff with strong executive leadership" (Tarakanov, 2009). Notably, the continued engagement of deans in teaching and research activities while in administrative positions raises questions. As Birnbaum (1988) argues, faculty and administrators have different roles, encountering and being influenced by different aspects of the environment, and have different backgrounds and areas of responsibility. Therefore, there is a growing need for deans in Kazakhstan to shift from the role of scholar-deans into the role of school administrators. Nevertheless, academic deans remain anchored to teaching, research, and administrative activities to comply with state educational standards and other regulatory requirements (Jonbekova et al., 2020; Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012; Sarinzhapov et al., 2012).

NPM and Academic Deanship in Different Education Systems

To explore Kazakhstani academic deanship in a wider context, it is vital to have a broader perspective on the phenomenon of academic deanship. Therefore, it makes sense to consider academic deanship beyond the Kazakhstani education system and the post-Soviet context. For this purpose, Australia, the Netherlands, and the USA are selected to explore the neoliberal reforms and their impact on academic deanship to compare them with the dean's jobs in Russia and Kazakhstan. The reference to these countries demonstrates the geographical, historical, and cultural differences in the three countries to illustrate the changes in the dean's role and indicate any differences or similarities between the post-Soviet and Western higher education systems.

The overarching trend toward NPM began with the reforms propagated in the UK and the United States to accelerate economic development through the central role of knowledge and innovation (De Boer et al., 2007; Schulze-Cleven & Olson, 2017; Slaughter et al., 2004). In line with this trend, higher education and research progressively reached the top of the governmental agendas at the national and regional levels worldwide (Bleiklie et al., 2011; De Boer & File, 2009). The changing environment of higher education institutions, with severe public budget cuts, has led to the emergence of market-sensitive, business-like organizations that have become more aggressive in their pursuit of diverse forms of income (Weerts et al., 2014). As a result, the organizational identity and university governance of institutions have changed considerably in an attempt to gain greater fiscal autonomy from the states (Clark, 1998; Weerts et al., 2014). Therefore, universities, under great pressures from societal and economic demands and accountability, have been characterized by marketization, privatization, managerialism, the increased role of stakeholders and the diminished collegial role of academics (Ferlie et al., 2008; Morpew & Hartley, 2006; Tolofari, 2005). These transformations fundamentally changed the identity of universities called as the enterprise university (Marginson & Considine, 2000) or the entrepreneurial university (Clark, 1998). More importantly, these changes have occurred as an overarching trend in both developed and developing countries (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006).

Academic Deanship in Australia, the Netherlands, and the USA

The rise of neoliberalism had a global impact due to the political and economic pressures that emphasized the development of academic capitalism (Schulze-Cleven & Olson, 2017; Slaughter et al., 2004; Slaughter & Leslie, 1999). The latter developed on the premise of declining government support and developing market relations and market-like behaviors of universities (McClure & Teitelbaum, 2016). The effect of neoliberalism was explicitly evident in the subsequent education policy reforms worldwide, for instance, in the

United States, Canada, Australia, England, Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands since the 1980s (Boyko & Jones, 2010; De Boer & File, 2009; Lavigne, 2019; Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, et al., 2010; G. Scott et al., 2008). As a result of those reforms, higher education institutions were deregulated and forced to identify and capitalize upon new revenue flows and extend the managers' capacities to leverage institutional resources to generate new sources of income. Consequently, the dean's managerial functions increased, leading to the evolution of deans from "chief academic officers to chief executive officers" at the school level (Wolverton et al., 2001, p. 28). For this reason, the dean's primary functions and roles were reconsidered and enriched with new characteristics that are more pertinent to professional managers (Arntzen, 2016). As a result, academic deans transformed from mid-level academic managers or "scholar-deans" (Wolverton et al., 2001, p. 24) into "manager-academics" (Deem & Brehony, 2005, p. 2017).

Australia. Australia is a quintessential example of the marketization and internationalization of higher education. This is because of the rapid increase in student numbers that accelerated throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Harman, 2002; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010; Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, et al., 2010). Australian higher education, as elsewhere, has experienced a substantial shift toward a managerial approach to running universities that was deliberately encouraged by government policies. New managerialism required universities to adopt market-like behavior, orienting at the greater performance and effectiveness of higher education institutions. The latter required the "professionalization of university administration and administrators" (Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010, p. 41). The strong management of university operations turned vice-chancellors into chief executive officers and councils became boards of governors. At the same time, the traditionally elected position of academic deans evolved into a formally appointed job that became an integral part of institutional line management

(Harman, 2002). New Australian academic deans replaced traditional methods of collegial decision-making (Harman, 2002; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, et al., 2010; G. Scott et al., 2008). They became heavily involved in administration and committee works that marked the increase in the range and demands of the dean's managerial functions and duties. The new governance model manifested the need for "a new generation" of deans whose roles have become more critical and more challenging than ever in organizational performance than the roles of university top managers (De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009, p. 349). Meanwhile, deans remained academics with superior qualifications and impressive research achievements (Harman, 2002).

As a result of the professionalization of academic deanship, job incumbents are often unprepared for their jobs; they are traditionally referred to as teachers and scholars first and administrators second (Wilkes et al., 2015). However, if professional managers have substantial managerial expertise, it turns out that they are not experienced "in dealing with academic issues for which professional managers are not trained" (Harman, 2002, p. 55). Therefore, to be a dean, an incumbent must have both disciplinary expertise and management knowledge. This means that academic deanship implies constant maneuvering in the workplace (G. Scott et al., 2008):

... so busy to comply with bureaucratic and reporting procedures that do not demonstrably add value to achieving the core purposes of their roles; so occupied by dealing with complaints arising from faulty systems or miscommunication; so involved in responding to unexpected events or attending meetings that are poorly formulated, chaired, or which have no outcome; that they have little time left to lead or to think and operate strategically. (p. xiv)

Unsurprisingly, Australian deans describe their job as one of the most complex academic jobs for which successors need to be trained and prepared accordingly (G. Scott et al., 2008).

The review of Australian academic deanship development exemplifies that changes in the national higher education system indispensably affect middle academic managers, namely deans. Thus, the dean's position, roles, and responsibilities evolve into a more comprehensive and complex position in academia, requiring an incumbent to develop not only disciplinary expertise but also professional management skills and competencies to succeed in their work.

The Netherlands. Dutch higher education governance and management have changed considerably over the last couple of decades. The dramatic changes are characterized by moving away from tight state control and regulation of higher education toward a less restrictive state supervisory model (De Boer et al., 2007, 2010; Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010). The shift to new managerialism in higher education professionalized the jobs of university administrators. In 1997, the Dutch Law on University Governance pushed radical changes in the collegiate structure of management (De Weert, 2001). It transformed academic deanship from a limited-term and elected position to a model in which a dean is expected to be a professional manager with budgetary and staffing responsibilities (De Weert, 2001). The span of control of academic deans has expanded considerably and now includes the following duties and responsibilities (De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009):

- Strategic management, including participation in setting institutional strategies and responsibility for faculty strategies;
- Operational management, including resource allocation and support services;
- Human resource management, including performance evaluations;
- Academic management, including overseeing teaching and research programs and the faculty's relationship with students;

- External stakeholder relationship management. (p. 352)

The abovementioned functions in the dean's job force an incumbent to be knowledgeable about administrative and academic issues simultaneously. In other words, Dutch deans must already have tangible administrative experience, such as fundraising skills, which have become a prerequisite for the dean's job. In contrast, academic and research records alone are not sufficient to perform a decanal job successfully. Unsurprisingly, Dutch academic deanship has evolved into a "more demanding, more senior, more strategic, more complex and more managerial job" within academia (De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009, p. 347).

A review of academic deanship in the Netherlands demonstrates that incumbents must handle increasing managerial duties and responsibilities. These new functions emphasize the complexity of the job, requiring the Dutch academic deans to be competent in a professional management domain. For this reason, they increasingly deal with strategic planning, goal-setting, budgeting and fundraising, human resource management, and communication management with alumni, employers, sponsors, and businesses.

The USA. Wolverson et al. (2001) assert that neoliberal reforms in the United States had a considerable impact on academic deanship:

Over the past 30-40 years, as universities grew in size and complexity, the deanship became decidedly more managerial. Presidents began shifting external duties, such as alumni relations and fundraising, in part to deans. Academic deans, although still charged with the intellectual leadership of their colleges, were also expected to be fiscal experts, fundraisers, politicians, and diplomats. (p. 15)

The dean's evolution from scholar-deans to managers underscores the paradigm shift in the incumbent's qualifications and competencies (Deem & Brehony, 2005; Gmelch et al., 2012; Gmelch & Buller, 2015). If previously deans were required to have excellent

scholarship and academic records; now they are more expected to be competent and skillful in professional management and leadership.

It should be noted that the multitude of the dean's duties and responsibilities may cause various challenges for the incumbent. First, they feel disconnected from both faculty and senior administration. This is because the dean's research achievements become less valuable as they refer to administrators, not scholars (Gmelch et al., 2012). At the same time, deans do not have the substantial autonomy that they used to have being faculty members, being accountable to senior administrators (Bisbee, 2007). This creates the dean's unique position between the organization's strategic apex and operating core, making incumbents feel isolated working in two different domains attempting to be competent administrators on the one hand and protecting the academic autonomy of faculty members on the other hand (De Boer et al., 2010; Gmelch & Miskin, 1995).

Given the complexity of academic deanship, deans need a set of new skills, knowledge, and experience, for which they are not always prepared. This happens because academic deans are most likely trained as scholars, researchers, and lecturers to pursue scholarship and academic endeavors, rather than professional management (Arntzen, 2016; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; White, 2014). However, due to severe public budget cuts in the education sector, academic managers must be experienced in fundraising campaigns, generating new income resources, and commercialization (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Hodson, 2010; Mercer, 1997). Layne (2010) suggests that academic deans may have prior experience in leadership roles in the education sector but usually have little formal training. Therefore, the rapidly changing higher education environment requires modifications in the dean's qualifications and experience. Consequently, modern deans often find their jobs too challenging to perform successfully because of the lack of professional development programs and training for novice deans (Ahmad et al., 2020; Coll et al., 2019; Gmelch, 2000;

Wepner et al., 2015). As a result, deans are prone to job-related stress, fatigue, dissatisfaction, emotional burnout, and job underperformance (Bako, 2014; Coll et al., 2019).

Setting higher demands on the dean's background, qualifications, and experience underscores the need to prepare novice deans for the job. Without such preparation, an incumbent perceives increasing effort-reward imbalance, over-commitment, and occupational burnout (Bako, 2014; Coll et al., 2019; Montez & Wolverton, 2000). These perceptions are unsurprising because academic deanship is characterized by the "inherent difficulties of the job in trying to fulfill varied and often conflicting demands" (O'Connor, 2008, p. 41). More specifically, Rosser (2004, p. 317) compares academic deans as "the unsung professionals of the academy – unsung because their contributions to the academic enterprise are rarely recognized."

It should be noted that underestimating the essence of academic deanship is a serious issue. The dean's roles go far beyond the roles of a lecturer, a scholar, or a manager. In fact, the dean's functions include a variety of everyday roles, such as a chief administrative officer, chief academic officer, chief development officer, chief communication officer, chief adjudicator of differences, chief morale officer, principal steward, lead mentor, and master of ceremonies (Krahenbuhl, 2004). As such, the dean's job has become one of the most contested academic jobs that requires to "swivel without appearing dizzy, schizophrenic, or 'two-faced,' employing a facilitative leadership style while working with faculty in the academic core and a more traditional line-authoritative style with the administrative core" (Gmelch, 2000, pp 2-3).

The abovementioned suggests that academic deans need specific guidelines to navigate them in the increasingly complex academic position (Bray, 2012). For this reason, academic deanship requires greater attention from university administrators who can provide their mid-level managers with appropriate support, such as professional development

programs and training to prevent “the dean stress” (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, et al., 2010). This support is vital for deans, who are subject to enormous responsibilities, little positional power, insufficient resources, and limited authority (Gallos, 2002). Otherwise, the dean’s struggles and effort-reward imbalance may become costly to universities (Coll et al., 2019).

The Dilemma of Academic Deanship

The previous sections on academic deanship in the post-Soviet and Western education systems demonstrate relatively similar pathways toward the liberalization of higher education and the changing nature of academic deanship. However, these countries have both similarities and differences due to their varied geopolitical, cultural, and systemic settings.

One of the evident similarities among the education systems is that academic deanship is evolving into a complex and multifaceted managerial position that responds to considerable internal (institutional) and external (environmental) challenges. Along with the complexity of the dean’s job, there is considerable uncertainty about finding the right balance between diverse campus groups and other constituents. Similarly, juggling academic and administrative responsibilities and the constant search for the right balance can negatively affect an individual’s emotional and psychological well-being (Coll et al., 2019; Gmelch, 2003; Pepper & Giles, 2015; Sarros et al., 1998). If traditional deanship was clear and straightforward, today’s academic deanship is characterized by the ambiguity associated with being “between a rock and a hard place” (Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010; Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, et al., 2010; G. Scott et al., 2008). According to Arntzen (2016), the dean’s duties and responsibilities have recently expanded considerably:

Being exclusively staff, student and curricula oriented to include a multifaceted array of activities, such as budgeting and fundraising, personnel and environment management, program oversight, and external public relations. As a result of legal and

organizational changes, the position of deans was ‘enriched’ with administrative duties. (p. 2070)

The fast-changing institutional landscape underscores the need for deans to develop managerial skills in areas such as budgeting, fundraising, faculty and student morale, classroom facilities, and resource acquisition – all within a single position (Arntzen, 2016; Sensing, 2003; Wepner et al., 2015). This has accelerated the search for deans with substantial managerial expertise and experience. In addition, the considerable expansion of the dean’s functions has allowed universities to select outstanding professional managers to achieve their strategic goals.

Another similarity between the post-Soviet and Western academic deanship is that traditionally, deans in both systems previously held senior faculty positions (Arntzen, 2016; Gmelch et al., 2012). Moreover, they often had limited managerial experience and leadership training to ensure effective job performance (Ahmad et al., 2020; Bray, 2012; Layne, 2010; Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010). Nevertheless, Western universities have made efforts to recruit professional managers or academics with substantial professional management experience (Franken et al., 2015; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Krahenbuhl, 2004; G. Scott et al., 2008; Wepner et al., 2015).

As for differences, a notable difference between Western and the post-Soviet academic deanship lies in hiring strategies and practices. In the post-Soviet education systems, selection and recruitment are primarily based on internal hiring, including academic inbreeding (Alipova et al., 2018; Altbach et al., 2015; Gorelova & Yudkevich, 2015; Horta & Yudkevich, 2016). Academic deans in Russian universities are selected from a pool of the most qualified senior faculty members with exceptional academic and research records. The recruitment of university employees often occurs through job rotations, where academic or administrative staff move from one position to another if they qualify for the job (Kuznetsov,

2009; Zagirova, 2017). This practice means that academic deans who have been in faculty positions for a long time may not have sufficient managerial experience if they have not served as vice-deans or department chairs with minimal administrative experience.

According to Rodionov et al. (2016) and Yudkevich and Kuzminov (2021), despite the introduced changes in the selection procedures allowing external candidates, universities in Russia still prefer traditional recruitment from within institutions. This suggests that academic deans in the post-Soviet educational contexts may lack professional management skills and competencies to address the demands and expectations of the changing higher education environment.

Furthermore, academic deans in Russian and Kazakhstani universities, classified as faculty members, are expected to fulfill their mandatory teaching workload (Reznik, 2007; Zagirova, 2017). Thus, academic deans are expected to perform academic, research, and administrative roles simultaneously within a single dean's position. Consequently, this signals that academic deans in the post-Soviet higher education systems are likely to encounter difficulties in coping with their newly emerging managerial roles and functions.

The distinct cultural norms between the post-Soviet and Western educational systems contribute to differences in the development of academic deanship in various organizational settings. These differences are rooted in centralized control, uniform regulatory provisions, and bureaucratic burdens within the post-Soviet higher education systems (Hartley et al., 2016; Jonbekova et al., 2020; Kuraev, 2016; Oleksiyenko, 2021; Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012; Yembergenova et al., 2021). Tight state control leads to top-down or hierarchical relationships and decision-making in higher education institutions, thereby limiting the executive authority and power of academic deans, who often become dependent on senior university administration and their decisions.

Despite similarities in the evolving roles of academic deans, transitioning from academic managers to entrepreneurs (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016), it is evident that the increasing demands placed on deans create a significant pressure. While attempting to navigate the power dynamics among multiple campus groups, academic deans are often confronted with situations of power imbalances and conflicting roles intersect. Given the nature of the dean's profession, an incumbent's effectiveness depends on their ability to find a right balance and establish effective communication with diverse campus stakeholders, including boards of trustees, senior administrators, faculty, students, and employers – all of whom evaluate their work. This supports the argument of Bray (2008, p. 718) that the failure to communicate effectively with key stakeholders, such as faculty, can result in “strong sanctions against the dean.”

It should be noted that deans often face challenging decisions and emotional issues related to faculty evaluations, promotions, tenure, and salaries (Coll et al., 2019; Feltner & Goodsell, 1972; Gmelch et al., 2012). If a faculty member or department chair is dissatisfied with the dean's decision, it can lead to strained relationships. Similar situations arise concerning the budget allocations and curriculum reforms within academic units. Frequently, deans must defend their decisions against the departmental choices to meet the needs and expectations of the school. Therefore, academic deans must be prepared for the ambiguities of their roles, regardless of their country of origin. The evolving institutional environment requires academic deans to develop a new set of skills, competencies, and executive powers, addressing the changing demands and expectations of diverse internal and external stakeholders.

Summary

The Literature review chapter has introduced the development of higher education in Kazakhstan after the dissolution of the Soviet Union to the present, tracking how neoliberal

reforms have impacted the national higher education system in Kazakhstan. The review has presented state bylaws and empirical studies on Russian academic deanship to explore this phenomenon in the post-independence period. Next, the review has scrutinized Kazakhstani academic deanship based on the state and institutional bylaws and regulations. This examination helped determine the development of the decanal position by reviewing the state policies and selected dean's job descriptions to identify what qualifications, functions, duties, and responsibilities are placed on job incumbents. Finally, the review demonstrated that neoliberalism has significantly influenced middle academic management, resulting in the changing character of academic deanship. This change has shifted the role from primarily focusing on academic issues to encompassing more administrative and managerial duties and responsibilities.

Likewise, the reference countries such as Australia, the Netherlands, and the USA have exemplified the changing nature of the dean's role due to neoliberal reforms in their respective public sectors. The review of academic deanship in Western countries underscores new criteria for dean selection, as well as qualifications and competencies required. Academic deans in the USA, the Netherlands, and Australia are expected to possess expertise in their disciplines, along with skills in fundraising, strategic planning, and effective communication management with multiple stakeholders.

Furthermore, the final section of this chapter has identified both similarities and differences in academic deanship between the post-Soviet and Western educational settings. The comparison emphasizes the complexity and diversity of contemporary academic deanship, irrespective of differences in higher education systems.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter introduces two dominant theoretical frameworks that will guide the research inquiry of the present study. The first theory is Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory, which will explore the changing nature of academic deanship in public universities of Kazakhstan and their ability to exercise managerial roles. The second theory is role conflict and ambiguity theory. It is selected to grasp the changing nature of modern academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. This theory will illuminate the deans' potential challenges and complexities in performing their jobs successfully. Finally, the two theories are integrated into one conceptual framework to facilitate the research inquiry process and navigate the use of the theoretical frameworks in exploring academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities.

Role Theory

To understand the complexity of the dean's role in the transforming academic environment of Kazakhstan, it is helpful to refer to role theory. Role theory examines human behavior in terms of how the behavior is shaped by the demands and rules of others, the sanctions, and by individuals' own understanding and conception of what their behavior should be (Biddle, 2013; Biddle & Thomas, 1979; Kahn et al., 1964; Sarbin & Allen, 1968). The essence of the theory lies in one of the most critical features of social life - behavior patterns or roles. A role refers to a set of predictable and dependable activities that define the individual's potential behavior (Kahn et al., 1964). People behave in ways that are different depending on their respective social identities and situations.

Three stages can be identified in the development of role theory. The first stage took place at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century and was a "precursive stage" (Biddle, 2013, p. 10). This includes the preliminary work of early

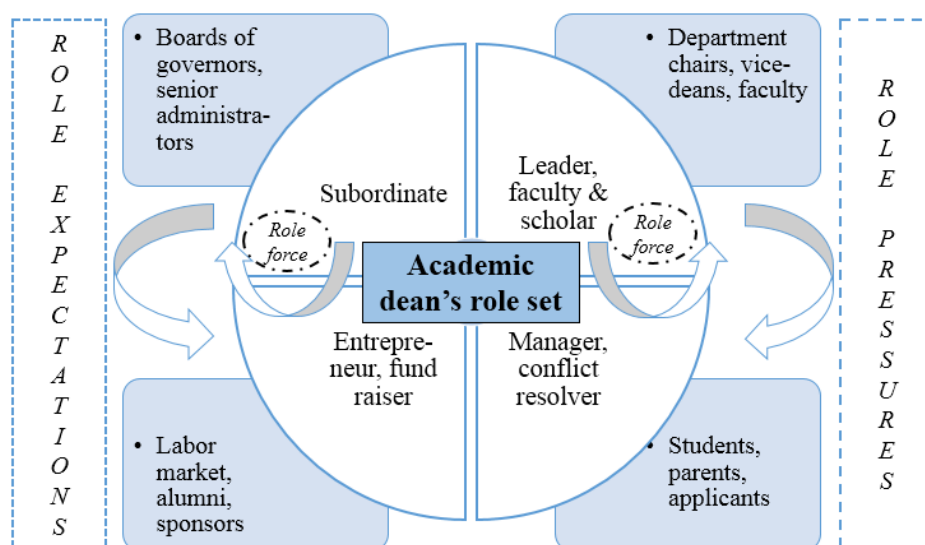
scientists, such as Cooley (1902), who gave a stimulus for theory development. The second stage took place in the 1930s, when various role concepts were conceptualized. During the 1930s and later, the works of Mead (1934), Moreno (1934), and Linton (1936) were influential. They started applying the concepts of role theory in discussing diverse social events. The third stage in the history of role theory started in the 1950s. This stage is characterized by extensive empirical research using role concepts in social science disciplines. Most of the studies conducted at that stage were concerned with practical organizational problems rather than with fundamental propositions in role theory (Biddle & Thomas, 1979, 1979; Kahn et al., 1964; Sarbin & Allen, 1968). Currently, role theory is widely used in various disciplines, such as international relations or marketing (Kozlenkova et al., 2015; Thies & Breuning, 2012). The theory serves as the foundation for developing role theory applied in different organizations.

The present study employs role theory in organizational settings to focus on how individuals accept and enact an array of roles in preplanned, task-oriented, and hierarchical social systems (Biddle, 2013). Scott and Davis (2007) characterize organizations as rational, natural, and open systems, which demonstrate collectivities oriented toward pursuing specific goals and exhibiting relatively formalized social structures. This definition of organizations also applies to higher education institutions. They are specific organizations characterized by teaching and research activities, but are also actively transforming into organizations using nonacademic models (Musselin, 2006; Schulze-Cleven & Olson, 2017; Slaughter et al., 2004).

Role theory incorporates a specific language, the central terms and concepts of which are illustrated in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2

Typical Role Set of Academic Deans in University



Note. Adapted from (Kahn et al., 1964)

Figure 2 exemplifies a role set that refers to an organizational setting where a group of individuals has various relationships due to their positions, roles, and statuses at the higher education institution. In particular, Figure 2 illustrates a role set of academic deanship. This *role set* shows interrelations and communication flows between academic deans and their multiple stakeholders, representing superiors (boards of trustees and university leadership), colleagues (vice-deans, department chairs, and faculty members), customers (students, employers, businesses, and industries) and benefactors (sponsors and donors).

In Figure 2, the role set represents relationships and interactions of academic deans with their multiple stakeholders. Academic deans are situated in the center of these complex relationships. Therefore, they are classified as *focal persons* located amidst networks of power relations, whereas the dean's stakeholders refer to role senders. *Role senders* refer to a group of individuals who address their role expectations, role pressures, and demands to a focal person. As the title suggests, *role expectations* refer to the role senders' prescriptions and proscriptions toward the focal person's behavior (Kahn et al., 1964). Meanwhile, a focal person serves as a receiver of the role senders' demands and expectations. *Role pressures* are

defined as “the numerous acts that make up the process of role sending influence attempts, directed toward the focal person and intended to conform to the expectations of the role senders. They may come from formal and informal sources; they may be legitimate or not, punitive or benevolent, subtle and indirect or direct or blatant” (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 6). As such, a focal person reacts to external stimuli (role pressures and role expectations) following their job duties and responsibilities. This is known as *a role force*, which is the focal person’s source of motivation for role-taking (job performance) (Kahn et al., 1964) (See Figure 2).

The use of role theory is essential for this study as it connects with Mintzberg’s executive roles theory. The theory serves as the foundation to examine the dean’s roles, functions, and relationships from the perspective of their interactions and communication with their diverse role senders (Arntzen, 2016; Balikçi, 2020; Muma et al., 2006). Dean’s role senders include but are not limited to boards of trustees, senior administrators, faculty, students, and employers. According to the role-senders’ functions and goals, they have different role pressures and role expectations vis-à-vis deans. This means that behaviors and roles of academic deans vary depending on role senders, their demands, and expectations. In this regard, Mintzberg’s classification of the manager’s behavior becomes helpful. This theory examines executive behaviors of all managers in all types of organizations being applicable to academic institutions. Mintzberg’s executive behavior theory helps examine the dean’s job and roles based on different aspects of their professional duties and responsibilities. For instance, the dean’s daily interactions are not limited to university administrators, faculty, and students. In addition, deans seek partnerships and collaboration with the labor market, businesses and industries, sponsors, and alumni. This is why any manager’s work is characterized by varied interpersonal relationships, constant information exchange and processing, transfer, and decision-making roles (Mintzberg, 1989). In other

words, Mintzberg's theory can bring new perspectives and nuances to the dean's relationships with different university internal and external stakeholders.

Role theory is also beneficial for the theory of role conflict and role ambiguity. It may add depth to the dean's relationships with diverse university constituents by determining the quality of those relationships. The theory detects weaknesses and strengths in the incumbent's job performance. For this reason, the theory of role conflict and ambiguity can add new insights into the dean's executive behavior. In other words, this theory is helpful in understanding the dean's experiences and perceptions of their jobs working with diverse stakeholders. Consequently, it can detect potential challenges that academic deans may encounter in their daily operations. Challenges in the workplace may become "detrimental to a manager's performance and satisfaction because they produce job-related tensions and dissatisfaction in individuals" (Mech, 1997, p. 284). Mech (1997) indicates that "low productivity, poor quality work, excessive turnover, and difficult employee relations are organizational symptoms" of role conflict and role ambiguity (p. 284).

In this way, role theory smoothly interconnects two theories – executive behavioral theory and role conflict and ambiguity theory – and benefits from their strengths. The theory helps examine academic deanship in Kazakhstan from the perspectives of the dean's individual perceptions and experiences in relation to their emerging managerial roles. Furthermore, the use of the theory of role conflict and role ambiguity may help understand the dean's ability or, in contrast, their inability to meet the varied demands, interests, and expectations of their multiple constituents.

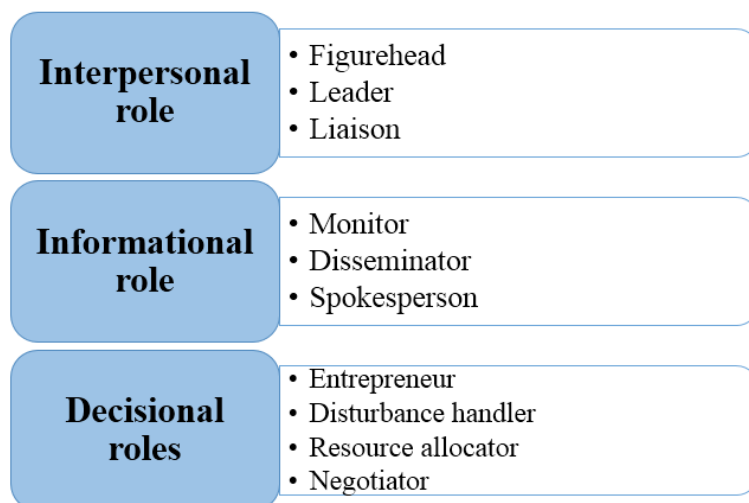
Executive Behavioral Theory

Given the complexity of academic deanship described in the previous section, the dean's job demonstrates that an incumbent engages in different interactions within and outside the organization for which they are working (Yukl, 1989). In the context of

Kazakhstan, these interactions require a dean to be aware of information flows regarding orders and decrees from state authorities, boards of trustees, rectors, and vice-rectors to applications and other documents from faculty, students, and employers. As such, a substantial amount of documentation has to be processed to make a range of decisions, for example, changes in the curriculum, renewing accreditation of academic programs, and amendments to the strategic plans. This endless circuit of the dean's tasks and functions can be understood using Henry Mintzberg's "theory of what managers do" or executive behavioral theory (Mintzberg, 1973, 1989). Mintzberg observed the everyday activities of executive officers from five different organizations: a consulting company, a faculty, a technology company, a purchase items manufacturer, and a health center for one week. He classified the behaviors and developed ten roles of a manager emanating from the individual's formal authority and status. These ten roles fall into three clusters of role categories: interpersonal relationships (Figurehead, Liaison, and Leader); information exchange (Monitor, Disseminator, and Spokesperson); and decisional roles (Entrepreneur, Disturbance handler, Resource allocator, and Negotiator) (See Figure 3):

Figure 3

Mintzberg's Managerial Roles



Note. Adapted from (Mintzberg, 1973, 1989)

Even though the study on the manager's work was conducted in the USA in the 1970s, Mintzberg's data collection instrument and role categories have been replicated and validated across different international contexts and fields (Kumar, 2015; Kurke & Aldrich, 1983; Shapira & Dunbar, 1980; Tengblad, 2006). Mintzberg's work is a classic work on the behavior of managers. Kurke and Aldrich (1983) confirmed Mintzberg's results by replicating his data collection procedures and coding. The researchers (Kurke & Aldrich, 1983, p. 977) conclude that they got "an amazing degree of similarity in managerial behavior across all nine organizations" (Mintzberg's five organizations and Kurke and Aldrich's four organizations). Before that replication study, Shapira and Dunbar (1980) applied an in-basket technique or a simulation of the chief executive's managerial behavior on the first day in office. The researchers sought to identify whether MBA students and managers select Mintzberg's managerial roles and how they classify them. The results showed that all ten roles were present in the chief executive's behavior. However, Shapira and Dunbar (1980) found it is more practical to abandon interpersonal roles and leave only information processing and decisional roles. This is because informational and decisional role clusters fully encompass the executive behavior of an individual who does not work in isolation but with people and the environment. Furthermore, Tengbald (2006) conducted a comparative study on Swedish top managers' behavior and found both differences and similarities with Mintzberg's work on "*The Nature of Managerial Work*" (1973). He argues that most of Mintzberg's propositions work, but managerial practices develop over time and are context-related. For instance, Mintzberg's study was on American managers in the 1970s, whereas Tengbald (2006) researched the behavior of Swedish chief executive officers in the 2000s. The differences include a more extensive workload of managers, a greater emphasis on information exchange, and less preoccupation with administrative work (Tengblad, 2006).

However, the difference in the manager's workload between Mintzberg's study and Tengblad's study exemplifies the tendency of the manager's work to become more intensive and complex across the world (Hassard et al., 2009). Furthermore, a recent study on the management roles of assistant principals in Turkish schools showed that they perform mainly bureaucratic roles pertaining to interpersonal and information exchange roles (Balikçi, 2020). At the same time, school principals are authorized with executive authority and status that legitimizes them to perform decisional roles, such as leadership, supervision, and evaluation. Therefore, assistant principals comply and implement more administrative (bureaucratic) job functions. For this reason, Saah et al. (2020) argued that the exercise of managerial roles depends on the extent of the legitimization of executive behavior or the extent of the implementation of the managerial roles. In other words, the differences in managerial roles may result from the variety of leadership and corporate culture models, organizational structures, the extent of legitimization, and even the geographical dispersion of companies (Tengblad, 2006). As for the similarities in managerial roles, Tengblad (2006) argues that older management practices are always combined with new working practices that explain management as a much more complex and paradoxical phenomenon making complex organizations function.

Although the study on the manager's work was used mainly in organizations other than academia, there are advocates of Mintzberg's theory in institutions of higher education that increasingly adopt a more corporate culture and business-like behavior (Anderson et al., 2002; Balikçi, 2020; Mech, 1997; Muma et al., 2006; Saah et al., 2020). For example, Mech (1997) applied Mintzberg's typology to the roles of chief academic officers (CAOs) in American public and private universities. He found that employing Mintzberg's typology of managerial roles is helpful in the selection, development, and retention of CAOs. This is because "the misunderstanding about the managerial nature of this position can result in poor

managerial performance, unnecessary turnover, and wasted institutional resources” (Mech, 1997, p. 283). Therefore, the more candidates and hiring committees know about the managerial nature of the academic leadership position, the better the possible fit between candidates and the behaviors needed to perform successfully in the job. In addition, the more CAOs know about their jobs, the more sensitive they can be to the needs of their organizations. Next, Muma et al. (2006) applied Mintzberg’s theory to measure the administrative activities of physician assistant (PA) department chairpersons in American universities and determine the framework’s applicability in an academic setting. The researchers found that despite the multiple roles that might describe the functions of PA department chairpersons and faculty, the comparison of new functions with Mintzberg’s model matches each role defined in the model. Muma et al. (2006) conclude that academic leaders mainly adopt and implement managerial roles. They are the most important executives who influence the sustainable development and growth of HEIs worldwide. The more recent study with the use of Mintzberg’s managerial roles in academia was undertaken by Saah et al. (2020). They used the theory to study academic leaders and heads of units on three campuses of the North-West University in South Africa (Saah et al., 2020). They determined that all three managerial roles work well in academic leadership and management settings but with a different degree of implementation. The most prominent managerial roles appeared to be interpersonal (leadership and liaison) and informational (information exchange and dissemination). In contrast, the decisional roles of academic leaders are the weakest roles of campus leaders (Saah et al., 2020). These empirical studies justify the universal nature of Mintzberg’s executive behavioral theory that can be applied not only in the corporate world, but also in academia.

The close relation of Mintzberg’s theory to the managerial character of academic deanship is apparent from various studies. For instance, Arntzten (2016) identified the

professionalization of the decanal job, which signifies that the dean's roles and functions have become "more and more management oriented" (p. 2074). This underscores the need for changes in the dean's recruitment criteria, their provision with better supplementary education, and other incentives. In addition, Cleverly-Thompson (2016) found that modern academic deans are expected to raise funds, diversify sources of income, and collaborate with sponsors and employers, which become a part of their job responsibilities. However, she noted that a set of conditions must be met to develop the dean's entrepreneurial behavior. They are the incumbent's autonomy, control, and accountability in managing the school budget, incentives or rewards for increasing revenue, clear job expectations regarding revenue-generating activities, and reduced administrative loads (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016). This suggests that HEIs need to assess their expectations and opportunities, the incumbent's span of control and authority, and independence that support or, on the contrary, hinder their ability to realize entrepreneurial activities. For this reason, Lee and Hoyle (2002) assert that a successful dean must excel in all core functions, such as management, academic leadership, and professional leadership. These expectations and demands from modern deans require them to be "whole package" administrators (Erwin, 2000). This is also reflected in the study on leadership competencies of medical school deans in Uganda (Kyamanywa & Redding, 2021). Kyamanywa and Redding (2021) found that successful deanship encompasses personality, education and training, and organizational management competencies. In other words, the selection, recruitment, development, and assessment of academic deans should be based on the candidate's prominent academic records, scholarship, and leadership competencies that go far beyond exceptional academic training and qualifications. Thus, an incumbent must possess personality-related competencies, such as humility, trustworthiness, confidence, diplomacy, patience, maturity, and empathy, and organizational competencies, such as people management, work ethics, financial and resources management,

communication and collaboration, strategic management and change management along with professional disciplinary knowledge and research skills (Kyamanywa & Redding, 2021).

Given this professionalization of academic deanship, Arntzen (2016) claims that this position gives “little credit to the dean’s academic career” because it is difficult for deans to combine their main administrative jobs with teaching and research (p. 2074). This means that the dean’s previous teaching and research achievements and experiences are not necessarily important for their successful job performance (Arntzen, 2016). In other words, the dean’s traditional roles as lecturers and scholars have been weakened at the expense of the growing entrepreneurial behavior. This proves that “the time of amateur administration [*academic deanship*] is over” (Gmelch, 2000, p. 69), implying that the dean’s job is much bigger than exclusive academic work. This job also entails expertise in academic leadership and management, which underscores the complexity of contemporary academic deanship, where an incumbent performs a variety of roles as faculty leaders, scholars, student advisors, disciplinarians, admission officers, bookkeepers, personnel managers, and fundraisers (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Krahenbuhl, 2004; Lavigne, 2019). Given that, Mintzberg’s model of executive behavior is a universal theoretical framework that becomes applicable in academic settings. In addition, the theory may highlight the changing nature of academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities to help redefine and strengthen the decanal job.

Mintzberg’s executive roles are grouped into three role clusters: interpersonal relations, information exchange and processing, and decision-making:

Interpersonal Roles

The manager’s everyday work involves channeling communication networks with employees and other stakeholders. Through these interactions, the manager can achieve organizational goals. For instance, deans participate in official ceremonies, such as the weekly meetings with senior administrators, graduation ceremonies, social or other events

meeting with colleagues from other universities, labor market representatives, and state authorities. These are examples of how a manager is engaged in interpersonal relationships within and outside the organization. The first role that a manager holds is symbolically represented by the *Figurehead* role. This role allows a manager to act on behalf of the organization (an academic unit) in all matters of their formal status. The next role that a manager plays is the *Liaison* role. In this role, the incumbent needs to network effectively by building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with all stakeholders, facilitating communications, and coordinating activities among academic and administrative staff and students. Finally, the *Leader* role refers to the relationships between leaders and subordinates. In a formal organization, such as a university, a leader executes through the powers delegated by the university administration, and the provisions about the dean's office, etc. (Mintzberg, 1973). As a leader, the person's role is to motivate, inspire, empower, and lead the subordinates toward the organizational goals. Moreover, the role refers to staff support, such as supporting employees in their professional development or faculty consultations about the tenure track system.

Informational Roles

The interpersonal roles of managers place them in a unique position to access information from various sources and types of data, such as orders, plans, strategies, briefings, annual or semiannual reports, income reports, and other information reception and transmission sources across the institution and beyond. A manager receives, exchanges, or transmits information to react, such as to make decisions or take necessary actions and initiatives. The manager's maintenance of contacts within and outside the organization allows them to serve as the unit's "nerve center" (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 66). The first of the informational roles taken by a manager is as the *Monitor*. This is not a passive receiver and collector of information. Instead, a manager seeks information from various sources to detect

changes, identify problems and opportunities, build up knowledge about their milieu, and finally to make decisions (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 67). The received information can be categorized into internal operations (the progress of organizational operations), external events (data concerning customers, the market, services, products the organization produces, competitors, and changes in suppliers), analyses and reports, trends and ideas, as well as internal and external pressures that the information may impose on a manager. The second is the *Disseminator* role, in which a manager receives external information, transmits it into the organization, and then distributes it among subordinates. Next, the *Spokesperson* role involves disseminating the organization's data into its external environment. Finally, as a formal authority, the manager speaks on behalf of the organization. The individual has the information to do so through lobbying for their organization and serving as its public relations head. The role requires academic deans to inform several groups of people, such as boards of trustees, senior university administrators, faculty, students, and employers.

Decisional Roles

The final set of managerial activities involves strategic decision-making. This is the most crucial part of the manager's role and is the one that justifies the job incumbent's appointment. The manager's position as an executive, their formal status, and access to information authorizes a job incumbent with decision-making authority and power, which may meaningfully affect organizational performance and its sustainable growth. The decisional roles describe a manager's responsibility to use the information they gain to develop business strategies and make strategic decisions. In the *Entrepreneur* role, the manager behaves like the "initiator and designer of much of the change in the organization" (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 78). Entrepreneurial work starts with scanning the organization for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that must be considered before decision-making. The *Disturbance handler* role deals with unexpected situations in change

implementation that are beyond the manager's control. This role is synonymous with conflict management. When the problem occurs during change implementation, it should be addressed by a manager. The problems encompass conflicts between the task groups, such as the subordinates, contractors, and others, to enact the change. The disturbance may comprise three situations (Mintzberg, 1973):

- Conflicts between the subordinates because of the resource demands, personality clashes, or overlap of specialties;
- Exposure difficulties between one organization/unit and another;
- Resource losses or threats.

The role of the *Resource allocator* is one of the significant strategic roles of a manager. To make strategic decisions, it is essential to distribute financial and non-financial resources accordingly (money, time, material and equipment, human resources, and reputation). The manager can allocate resources in a variety of ways – by scheduling their own time, assigning work to subordinates, implementing change that will involve new facilities, approving budgets, and hiring a new staff member (Mintzberg, 1973). This role involves very complex choice-making behavior. The *Negotiator* role is the final role in the manager's decision-making. It refers to negotiating with other organizations, structural units, and people. This role underlies the manager's function to communicate with different stakeholders and negotiate on the issues and matters that are beneficial for the manager's organization, unit, or people.

Given the changing nature of academic deanship toward entrepreneurial activities, Mintzberg's model of executive behavior is vital to use in this study. The model can scrutinize the dean's roles, duties, and responsibilities applying its ten specific roles to address different aspects of the school administrator's job. In other words, the theory helps determine the roles that contemporary academic deans play in public universities in

Kazakhstan, given the ongoing institutional restructuring. The changes emphasize the need for deans to be competent academic leaders and managers whose previous teaching and research records are no longer important. For this reason, Mintzberg's managerial roles theory is helpful in analyzing the deans' roles and determining their weaknesses and strengths.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity Theory

This section explains the theory of role conflict and role ambiguity that, apart from Mintzberg's managerial roles, allows researchers to evaluate and interpret the productivity and performance of organizations and understand the relationships of employees and groups within the organizations (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1981; Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). Kahn et al. (1964) believe that "conflict and ambiguity are among the major characteristics of our society, and we are marked by them" in social lives (p. 3). For this reason, empirical research devoted to organizational performance and efficiency and human behavior are almost exclusively devoted to role conflict and role ambiguity (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1981; Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970).

Organizational performance is often dependent on employees and the theory of role conflict and role ambiguity can provide valuable information about both employee underperformance with their work-related stress or, in contrast, incumbent's effectiveness and efficiency. The theory evaluates the quality of the employees' performance, from being reluctant and inert actors unsuccessfully tasked with managing change or being the institution's strategic assets that make significant contributions to reconciling strategic aspirations with operational requirements (Birnbaum, 1988; Gatenby et al., 2015). The quality of job performance, implying effectiveness and productivity, is conveyed by role conformity and role consensus, whereas low job commitment and job dissatisfaction are characterized by role conflict and role ambiguity (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970).

Understanding key factors that contribute to and impede successful organizational performance helps organizations and administrators increase employee performance and minimize stress (Clark, 1998; Shattock, 2010). Therefore, the essence of role conflict and role ambiguity theory lies in the understanding that organizational productivity improves as employees are aware of the role expectations, role pressures, and demands of their employers and customers and can meet them (Biddle, 2013; Rizzo et al., 1970).

The central point of role consensus and role conformity implies an alignment between role senders' expectations and focal persons' abilities to meet those expectations and demands (Kahn et al., 1964). *Role consensus* denotes a certain degree of agreement of a focal person with their roles, duties, and responsibilities. As such, a job incumbent is aware of what they should do and, more importantly, how to do it with sufficient resources, such as time, finances, and people (Biddle, 2013). Furthermore, *role conformity* implies compliance with the accepted pattern of behavior through norms, beliefs, and preferences (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1981; Biddle, 1986, 2013). In role conformity, a job incumbent complies with the expectations and rules of the job and the role sender's requirements until these rules, needs, and expectations satisfy the incumbent. Under these conditions, organizations can function smoothly. In contrast, when employees understand that they cannot fully accomplish all role expectations, role pressures, and demands of role senders, their behaviors are characterized by role conflicts and ambiguities (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). In addition, the theory of role conflict and role ambiguity is helpful not only in evaluating the quality of the employee's job performance. It may measure the employees' job satisfaction level and predict employee retention in organizations (Buller, 2007; Gmelch, 2000; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Wolverson et al., 2002). Thus, the theory considers different factors, such as workload, time pressures, lack of job meaningfulness, low work autonomy, external disturbances (such as noise and overcrowding), and toxic work systems as potential triggers that may hamper

organizational productivity and the individual's effectiveness (Abbas et al., 2012; Nyanga et al., 2012; Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019).

The theory of role conflict and role ambiguity consists of two main concepts:

Role Conflict

This subsection introduces the notion of role conflict. It refers to a stressor that influences organizational performance and individual productivity. Kahn et al. (1964) define role conflict as the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of pressures where compliance with one would make it more difficult or render impossible compliance with the other. According to Rizzo et al. (1970, p. 155), role conflict emerges in situations with “the conflicting organizational expectations and demands in the form of incompatible policies, requests, standards.” Therefore, the dimensions like congruence-incongruence or compatibility-incompatibility in the role requirements describe contradictions that cause role conflict. In addition, congruency or compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards and norms regulating job performance (Rizzo et al., 1970). Biddle (2013) explains role conflict as a situation when opposing expectations appear concurrently, affecting the person's behavior and emotions. Therefore, employee job satisfaction contributes to better performance and productivity of organizations (Bako, 2014; Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019). In contrast, the symptoms of individual dissatisfaction, anxiety, and fatigue signal to organizations and administrators about role conflict that leads to low job commitment (Bako, 2014).

Role conflict is characterized by the degree to which expectations of a role of an individual are incompatible or incongruent with the values, abilities, and expertise of the role incumbent (Rai, 2016). Therefore, Kahn et al. (1964) single out four types of role conflict:

- *Intrasender conflict*. It implies incompatible prescriptions and proscriptions from a single role sender;
- *Intersender conflict*. It refers to opposing pressures from different role senders;

- *Inter-role conflict*, which means that the role pressures associated with membership in one group conflict with the pressures stemming from membership in other groups;
- *Person-role conflict*. It occurs when role requirements appear to violate the individual's moral values. (pp. 19-20)

These types add more depth to understanding the roots of the incumbent's tensions and states of strains to perform the job effectively, which organizations and administrators should strive to identify and reflect in the measures and mechanisms addressed to better organizational performance and employee job satisfaction.

Role Ambiguity

Similar to role conflict, role ambiguity is another stressor that predicts job-induced tensions and stress. It refers to the degree to which job incumbents have sufficient information to perform their jobs effectively (Wolverton et al., 1999). In other words, role ambiguity develops when an individual is unclear about the expectations of others and the extent of uncertainty associated with one's performance (Rai, 2016). Thus, the triggers of role ambiguity are incomplete or inconsistent job specifications and inadequate work requirements or conditions for effective job (Biddle & Thomas, 1979; Nyanga et al., 2012). Role ambiguity appears when an incumbent knows about their roles and what they are, but they do not always know how to exercise their roles effectively because of certain limitations (Abbas et al., 2012; Nyanga et al., 2012; Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019).

Role ambiguity is characterized by two types of objective and subjective role ambiguities (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Kahn et al., 1964). *Objective role ambiguity* is characterized by the situation in which an incumbent (a focal person) lacks a clear focus on the scope of job responsibilities and what they are supposed to do as part of their job. In this type of role ambiguity, individuals know about their role and what it is, but do not always

know how to do it more effectively. *Subjective role ambiguity* occurs when an incumbent experiences a lack of structure in their roles and behavior. Consequently, they are uncertain which role behavior is appropriate and also cannot foresee how other members of their role set will behave (Sarbin & Allen, 1968).

Biddle (1986) singles out three sources of role ambiguity:

- *Role overload* connotes many role expectations and pressures faced by an incumbent;
- *Role discontinuity* means that an individual must perform a sequence of disintegrated roles in one position;
- *Role malintegration* occurs when the expected roles of the focal person do not fit well. (p. 83)

It is noteworthy that role ambiguity is inevitable in complex organizations that continuously change in response to their environment (Davis et al., 2016; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Wepner et al., 2015). This is why it is almost impossible to remove all role stressors in complex organizations, including higher education institutions (Schulze-Cleven & Olson, 2017). Nevertheless, organizations and administrators must strive to minimize role ambiguity. This is because role ambiguity may deepen uncertainty about the expectations that employees (focal persons) are required to meet first, as it is sometimes challenging to distinguish between legitimate role senders and other role senders (for instance, in the case of the university administration and academic staff) (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). To prevent role ambiguity, the organizational norms and standards must be clear, consistent, and straightforward to provide the necessary guidance and instructions in role requirements. This can be achieved by timely and properly revised job descriptions that inform job duties and functions. In addition, formal trainings, succession plans, and socialization strategies also prepare employees for new role requirements (Rohr, 2016; Terjesen, 2022).

Applicability of Role Conflict and Ambiguity Theory

Role conflict and ambiguity theory is paramount in human service organizations where the raw materials are human beings (Rai, 2016). The essence of the theory lies in illuminating the causal relationships in work-related relationships and role perceptions (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1981). The theory identifies the antecedences and consequences of job-induced tensions that can help organizations and administrators determine and eliminate factors resulting in job dissatisfaction and low organizational performance. This suggests that the theory can be an appropriate tool to explore academic deanship in the changing higher education landscape of Kazakhstan.

According to Rosser (2004, p. 2), academic deans are situated in “the center of controversy, conflict, and debate.” Furthermore, Franken et al. (2015) describe academic deanship as a highly complex phenomenon characterized by negotiation amidst networks of professional and power relations. For instance, despite the reforms addressed to modernizing higher education in Kazakhstan, this system still preserves cultural aspects and norms pertaining to the Soviet era. Therefore, university administration in the post-Soviet higher education systems is traditionally very influential due to the long-established centralized university governance structure (Froumin & Smolentseva, 2014; Hartley et al., 2016; Yergebekov & Temirbekova, 2012). This means that Kazakhstani deans work in highly hierarchical organizational settings, acting in a way framed by their job descriptions, regulations, and expectations of administrators, faculty, students, and other stakeholders. This makes the dean’s position predominantly weaker than the central role of senior university administrators and faculty members enjoying their positional power and academic freedom (Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012; Sagintayeva, 2014).

Furthermore, given the rapidly changing national higher education landscape, it is likely that academic deans are confronted by new demands and expectations that require

better performance and efficiency through changes in curriculum design, research grant applications, publications in peer-reviewed journals, etc. High-performance expectations increase the complexity and ambiguity of the dean's job performance (Davis et al., 2016; Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010; Wepner et al., 2015). For instance, Sarros, Gmelch, and Tanewski (1998) reported that Australian academic deans are likely to experience role conflict and role ambiguity, especially during higher education restructuring when they are uncertain about their level of positional authority and power. For instance, if some deans had little power in one university, other deans in different universities had considerable executive power and authority. This is why the issues concerning the dean's position, their power, and responsibilities have important implications for the incumbent's satisfaction and organizational performance (Sarros et al., 1998).

In the recent study, Coll et al. (2019) surveyed academic deans, who were members of the Council of Academic Deans from Research Education Institutions (CADREI). This Council is an assembly of deans of education from research and land grant institutions (doctoral granting) in North America, the purpose of which is to prepare education personnel in all phases of leadership development and the discussion and formulation of plans, policies, and programs to make the Council member institutions more effective in their work. Coll et al. (2019) found that contemporary academic deans are prone to role conflict and role ambiguity because of effort-reward imbalances, hardships, over-commitment, and emotional exhaustion in the workplace. These issues derive from a variety of challenges that deans encounter, such as financial constraints, the lack of administrative support from the provost office, the lack of time and energy to focus on promoting a new vision for academic disciplines, a work-life imbalance, internal conflicts, and change resistance of colleagues and faculty members (Coll et al., 2019). Therefore, the more complex and competitive the environment in which current universities operate, the greater the potential for the deans'

increased stress levels. Moreover, the dean's role stress depends mainly on their ability to perform contradictory roles vis-a-vis each stakeholder since senior administrators, faculty, students, and employers seek different goals. For instance, while university administrators are more concerned with the overall interests of the university, academic deans are more concerned with the well-being of academic units, their academic staff, students, or academic programs (Birnbaum, 1988). Given these obstacles, deans sometimes become unable to lead positive changes. This develops a dilemma for deans who turn out to be "sandwiched between competing expectations of central administration and departmental staff" (Pepper & Giles, 2015, p. 46). Deans have to engage in complex power relations in which they act multiple roles at once, being subordinate to those in more senior leadership and management roles, an equal among middle leaders holding comparable positions and superior regarding those they are assigned to lead (Lapp & Carr, 2006). For this reason, the dean's behavior is attributed to "walking a delicate administrative tightrope within a university, where they hold legitimate authority, but within their school, such direct power can rarely be exercised because of their functions as a disciplinary expert, who happens to be carrying out administrative tasks, among other disciplinary experts" (Wolverton et al., 1999, p. 81). Thus, the dean's administrative-managerial role becomes unrecognized but attributed to serving as a buffer from the university's intrusion and usurpation of the faculty's professional autonomy (Montez et al., 2003; Wolverton et al., 1999).

Given the abovementioned, the greater the dean's stress, anxiety, and job dissatisfaction, the greater their role conflict and role ambiguity due to conflicting or overly high expectations and demands (Wolverton et al., 1999). It is challenging for a dean to perform a variety of roles, simultaneously addressing a group of individuals and prioritizing stakeholders, communications, and their behavior, but the dean's job presupposes the ability to be flexible and independent to juggle multiple teaching activities, research projects, and

administrative-managerial duties as a school administrator. As a result of the dean's stress, it is likely that job incumbents may seek to quit their jobs. For instance, Gmelch and Miskin (2011) have estimated that one in five academic deans and department chairs in the US leave their positions each year. The primary causal culprits for abandoning administrative jobs in academia are the incumbent's high stress and low job satisfaction (Coll et al., 2019; T. Morris & Laipple, 2015; Wolverton et al., 1999).

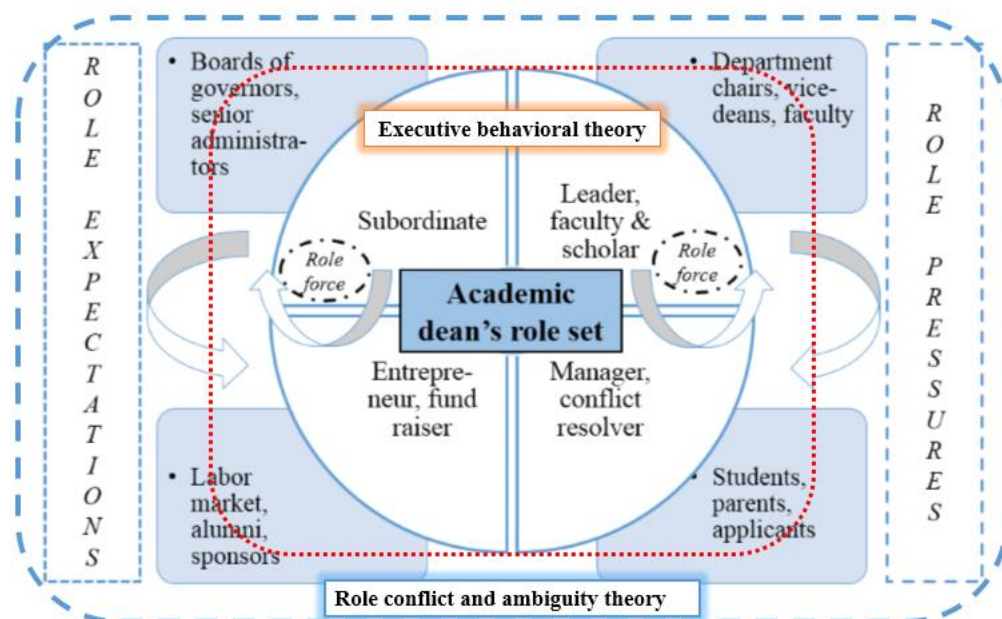
To prevent role conflict and role ambiguity, deans need support to find common ground between different interests, expectations, and demands from role senders (Montez & Wolverton, 2000). For this reason, it is essential to create mechanisms to support academic deans by helping them find a proper balance among different aspects of their jobs, i.e., the value systems, administrative careers, and emotional well-being. Therefore, understanding what brings role conflict and role ambiguity in academic deanship in Kazakhstan and learning to minimize them are critical to any university and administrator striving to survive under the pressures of higher education transformations (Wolverton et al., 1999).

Conceptual Framework to Analyze Academic Deanship in Kazakhstan

Using the executive behavioral theory and the role conflict and ambiguity theory in one study may seem overwhelming to navigate throughout the research inquiry. Therefore, the following integrated conceptual framework is created to illustrate how two theories can be combined to capitalize on each of them and examine academic deanship in public universities of Kazakhstan (See Figure 4):

Figure 4

Integrated Conceptual Framework to Analyze Academic Deanship in Kazakhstani Public Universities



Note. Adapted from (Biddle, 2013; Kahn et al., 1964; Mintzberg, 1973, 1989)

Figure 4 represents two layers of theoretical frameworks employed in the present study. The first layer considers the interaction of role senders (state authorities, senior university administrators, faculty members, students, and employers) and focal persons (academic deans). The interaction between university stakeholders and academic deans is represented by the multiple roles that deans play in response to their constituents' demands, expectations, and pressures (role senders). For instance, academic deans subordinate to university administrators and serve as leaders, managers, and colleagues to other faculty members in the academic school. Figure 4 illustrates that role senders have different role expectations and impose various role pressures on a focal person, for instance, in meeting tight deadlines or submitting reports to state authorities. In turn, a focal person uses their knowledge, experience, and intuition to react to the role sender's demands by their role force (based on the extent of their legitimization to respond and behave). These interrelations between role senders and a focal person are scrutinized with the help of Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory to understand the strengths and weaknesses of managerial roles that academic deans can exercise dealing with diverse university constituents and situations.

Furthermore, the role conflict and ambiguity theory underscores the quality of the interactions of an academic dean with these diverse constituents, namely how academic deans respond based on their level of legitimate authority and power and how they react and behave towards the university constituent's multiple and varied pressures and expectations. In addition, this theoretical framework is valuable in identifying the challenges that are relevant to the role set of academic deans in public universities of Kazakhstan. Thus, the integrated conceptual framework enables the researcher to comprehensively address the study's research questions.

Summary

This chapter has introduced two major theories of the study derived from the fundamental role theory. The first theory is executive behavioral theory, which has been selected to scrutinize the newly emerging managerial roles of academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan. This theory helps display how and to what extent academic deans can exercise their functional duties as school administrators in Kazakhstani universities, highlighting the extent of the dean's executive behavior at public universities in Kazakhstan. In contrast to the first theory, role conflict and ambiguity theory is chosen to examine individual experiences and perceptions of academic deans about their jobs, roles, duties, and responsibilities. This will help understand what challenges and pressures academic deans encounter in their daily operations, working with diverse university superiors and constituents and balancing academic and administrative-organizational functions. The two theories have been integrated into one conceptual framework to facilitate the research inquiry process in exploring contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities.

Chapter 4

Methodology

The Methodology chapter introduces the data collection and analysis tools and procedures to investigate the role of academic deans in the transforming higher education landscape of Kazakhstan. The chapter begins with reviewing social constructivism as my philosophical assumption that comprises the ontological, epistemological, and methodological stances in conducting the present study. Furthermore, I explain my positionality as a researcher to clarify the insider-outsider positions in approaching the research inquiry. The following section describes the selection of participants, sampling strategies, and the choice of research sites. The following sections discuss the data collection tools, such as semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis, used to develop a robust approach to exploring Kazakhstani academic deanship. Then I explain how I conducted a pilot study to test my interview protocol and refine interview questions before formal data collection. Next, I describe the procedures undertaken in approaching research sites and participants identified as elite interviewees. This is followed by a section describing the step-by-step strategy I adopted to ensure rigorous and systematic qualitative data analysis. The chapter ends with issues of trustworthiness and a discussion of research ethics in data collection, analysis, and reporting findings about academic deans at public universities in Kazakhstan.

Research Paradigm

This section reviews the research paradigm, which is the researcher's fundamental belief system in approaching a research inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The research paradigm acts as a philosophical lens to describe the researcher's 'worldview' that informs the meaning and interpretation of research data (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Similarly, Willis et al. (2007) define a research paradigm as a comprehensive belief system or framework that

guides research and practice in the field. Moreover, the research paradigm explicitly determines the researcher's ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological assumptions in their study. Therefore, the research paradigm is essential for a researcher, as it is deeply connected to what is studied, how it is studied, and how the research findings should be interpreted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Khatri, 2020; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

To identify my paradigm, it is essential to review my study's objectives and research questions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The goal of my study is to explore academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. The research questions seek to understand the dean's experiences and perceptions of their role in the Kazakhstani rapidly changing higher education system to determine whether the nature of academic deanship has changed over time and how. In addition, I sought to determine what managerial roles deans play and how they work with multiple university stakeholders. Given these study goals and considering the limited research on deanship in Kazakhstan, I decided to choose a social constructivist theory to frame my research inquiry. The essence of this theory lies in the ability of researchers to examine academic deanship in Kazakhstan from multiple perspectives. Thus, it rejects a single social reality that exists independently of others. In contrast, this theory creates a space for new perspectives and insights into the phenomenon under study, such as academic deanship in Kazakhstan. For this reason, the epistemological beliefs of constructivists are based on subjective and multiple realities that are created rather than discovered (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

To design my research study, I had to assume that complex social reality is apprehensible in the form of the individual's subjective and experientially developed interpretations of the world in which we live and work (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Based on this ontological assumption, social reality is alterable due to constant reconstructions of social reality and the individual's changing interpretations. For this reason, to explore academic

deanship in Kazakhstan, I had to acknowledge “multiple, apprehendable, and equally valid realities” of the research participants who know their job based on their individual experiences, interpretations, and perceptions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Ponterotto, 2005; Schwandt, 1994). Thus, my ontological approach was based on various apprehendable and equally valid realities of academic deans (Schwandt, 1994).

Social constructivism builds upon the interdependence of social reality and subjective interpretations in knowledge generation. Therefore, my epistemological stance was based on the individuals’ co-construction of social realities, including the researcher’s reality (Baxter & Jack, 2008). To gather data, I had to organize a series of transactions between the researcher and the research participants. I, as a researcher, recognized subjectivism in the dean’s varied, individual, and experiential interpretations of their jobs (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For this reason, to generate knowledge on Kazakhstani deanship, I had to collect data through the lens of the participants’ individual perspectives on their social reality (academic deanship) and their interpretations of it (Taylor et al., 2015). Therefore, my goal in data collection was to recruit participants with diverse perspectives, unique views, attitudes, and experiences about Kazakhstani academic deanship (Creswell, 2014).

Framing my study in social constructivism helped me choose an appropriate method to collect data. To collect extensive data in the social constructivist stance, it is essential to be mindful of the central role of close interaction and collaboration between the research participant and the researcher, where the former tells their stories (Miller & Crabtree, 1999; Ponterotto, 2005). Therefore, to develop an interactive researcher-participant dialogue, it is natural to choose interviews. They help obtain rich, deep, and relevant data to uncover the participants’ multiple hidden realities and capture the multiplicity and complexity of academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities (Krauss, 2005).

Positionality of the Researcher

Researcher positionality is an integral part of qualitative research. It “reflects the position the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study” (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013, p. 71). Positionality encompasses the researcher’s philosophical, personal, and theoretical beliefs and perspectives through which a researcher approaches a research inquiry.

To identify positionality, researchers should follow a three-step process. First, they need to locate themselves in relation to the subject by acknowledging personal positions that have the potential to influence the research (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Second, researchers should identify themselves regarding the participants, meaning each researcher considers how they view themselves and how others view them. Finally, researchers should position themselves in relation to the research context and process, acknowledging that research will necessarily be influenced by the research context (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013).

To determine my positionality, I began with self-reflexivity, which implies reflecting on one’s preconceptions and considering how they might affect my research process (Holmes, 2020; Sultana, 2007). A reflexive approach helped me reduce my biases and subjectivity by acknowledging my positions to the phenomenon under study and achieving “empathetic neutrality” by considering alternative perspectives and multiple individual experiences (Holmes, 2020, p. 4).

First, I positioned myself as both an insider and an outsider of academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan. My insider position derives from my work experience in the higher education system of Kazakhstan. Although I did not work as a faculty member, I was an administrator in the position of a senior manager of the International Cooperation Office. My institution, Astana Medical University, underwent a transition to a non-profit

joint-stock company (NJSC) and is categorized as a public university. Therefore, I am familiar with how NJSC and public universities function and are governed. In addition, I worked closely with senior university administrators (rector and vice-rectors), academic deans, vice-deans, department chairs, academic staff, and domestic and international students. I was involved in the admission of international students and the selection of students for academic exchange and mobility programs. These functions involved regular meetings, negotiations, and collaboration with the dean's offices. Therefore, to minimize my biases, I selected research sites located in different regions of Kazakhstan and differed by their types (national and state universities).

Next, I acknowledged my outsider position in recruiting academic deans for individual interviews. Despite working closely with the dean's offices and deans, that work was limited. Our collaboration concerned international students, i.e., their registration with the migration authorities, study permit extensions, or coordination of student exchange and mobility programs. It should be noted that academic deans are in charge of academic, methodological, research, and social affairs. In addition, they work with faculty and students. Thus, the dean's work and duties encompass a variety of tasks with which I am unfamiliar. Therefore, to reduce my subjectivity related to the participants, I recruited as many research participants as possible from different academic disciplines and with long or short work experiences in the dean's role. In addition, I was genuinely interested in understanding contemporary academic deanship and the participants' experiences and perceptions of their roles. Self-awareness of subjectivity and curiosity helped me build a constructive dialogue with respondents and collect data with an open mind.

It should be noted that it is impossible to avoid all biases (Shah, 2019). Therefore, it is critical for a qualitative researcher to identify other researcher biases that may stem from data collection, analysis, and interpretation resulting in biased and inaccurate research findings.

Shah (2019) categorizes researcher biases into three types, such as *confirmation bias*, when a researcher interprets the data to support their hypotheses or intentionally omits data that does not favor research hypotheses. In addition, a *question-order bias* may influence responses to the subsequent questions. This bias occurs when participants compare and judge subsequent questions based on their response to the first question. The third type of a researcher bias associates with *leading questions* and *wording biases* that lead participants in the direction of probable outcomes. These researcher biases result in inaccurate responses. In order to avoid them, it was important for me to address these pitfalls in advance. For this reason, to avoid confirmation bias, I reviewed and analyzed all the data collected, constantly re-evaluating impressions and responses to ensure that I was keeping my pre-existing assumptions in check. Next, to prevent a question-order bias, I had to consider this bias when constructing the order of the interview questions. For this reason, I conducted a study pilot to test my interview questions. The study pilot is discussed in detail in the next section of this Methodology chapter. My approach to avoid a question-order bias was based on asking general questions before moving to specific questions related to the dean's managerial roles and challenges in the workplace. In addition, to avoid leading questions and wording bias, I had to be careful with words that could introduce a potential bias (i.e., questions about the dean's role conflict and role ambiguity). I also had to avoid leading questions that could prompt the participants to respond in favor of a particular assumption.

The aforementioned measures, including self-reflexivity and awareness of potential researcher biases, helped me establish my position in the study and reduce my subjectivity and preconceptions as a researcher. Furthermore, they enabled me to conduct this research ethically and obtain more balanced and objective outcomes (Sultana, 2007).

Participant Selection

Participant selection is an important component of a qualitative research inquiry. In this study, I followed a systematic sampling strategy. First, I determined the study population or a sample universe by setting inclusion and exclusion criteria (Robinson, 2014). The essence of these criteria is to determine specific attributes to ensure a homogeneous sample universe. Sample universe homogeneity is achieved using various parameters, such as demographic homogeneity. It refers to the research participant's status, position, age, and gender characteristics (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995; Robinson, 2014). In this study, I used only the inclusion criteria to determine the specific attributes of my study population:

1. Currently holding an academic deanship or acting deanship position;
2. Employed full-time in Kazakhstani national and regional (state) universities.

Due to the exploratory nature of my study, I attempted to achieve a proportionate number of male and female academic deans and acting deans recruited at different research sites and in different regions of Kazakhstan. This is called geographical diversity when a researcher tries to “reach a sample population in geographically diverse locations” (Berg, 2001, p. 82).

After delineating my study population, I had to decide on my sample size. The national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic forced all Kazakhstani institutions of higher education to shift to online mode of operations. That circumstance affected my initial plans to visit research sites and recruit research participants in person so that I could organize and conduct in-person interviews. Therefore, I had to adapt to the situation being more flexible in recruiting participants. The researcher's flexibility in data collection is essential since, according to Robinson (2014), “Collecting in-depth data leads to challenges that are *never* entirely predictable at the outset of a project [*author emphasis*]” (p. 31). Given that data collection is “an unpredictable business” (Robinson, 2014, p. 31), I decided to determine

a provisional sample size that may be increased or decreased during the process of data gathering. For this reason, at the initial stage, I planned to have approximately 20 research participants.

Once a sample universe and sample size were determined, I began the process of selecting an appropriate sampling strategy. To determine a sampling strategy, it was important to understand that the key informants of this study are academic deans and acting deans from public universities in Kazakhstan. This type of research participants qualify as a single source of data because they have a first-hand knowledge and experience about academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities (Gentles et al., 2015). For this reason, I decided to use a purposeful sampling, which is specifically applicable to qualitative research (Gentles et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). This recruitment approach refers to a non-probabilistic purposeful sampling, which assumes that only individuals have unique, different or important perspectives on the phenomenon under study due to their specific experience and knowledge about a group or (sub)culture to which they belong (Berg, 2001; Mack et al., 2005; Robinson, 2014). In addition, the decision for using purposeful sampling was based on the inclusion criteria with predetermined characteristics of a sample population. Thus, the essence of purposeful sampling lies in the anticipated richness and relevance of the information that participants can provide regarding the study's objectives (Yin, 2011). Patton (2015) describes purposeful sampling as follows:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry...Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding (p. 264).

After deciding on a sampling strategy, I started selecting research sites. It is noteworthy that Kazakhstani higher education has many types of universities based on their

forms of ownership and legal-organizational forms of management. For this reason, at that stage I had to determine what type of universities I would select to gather data. Based on Sagintayeva et al. (2018), Kazakhstani universities divide into national (10 HEIs), international (1 university), autonomous (1 university), state (regional) universities (32 HEIs), joint-stock companies (17 HEIs), and private universities (55 HEIs). Given this typology of universities, I decided to select national and state universities (public universities) in Kazakhstan. More specifically, I decided to select those universities that have undergone a transformation from state-owned enterprises into non-profit joint-stock companies (NJSC) with 100% state participation in the authorized capital. The essence of the reorganization was to change the nature of institutional management to expand the universities' financial and managerial autonomy, which would allow institutions to directly enter into contracts with businesses and attract investments from different sources (Akinfiyeva, 2022; Lichanova, 2021; Primeminister, 2020). In other words, the institutional restructuring served as an initial platform for public universities to gain independence in financial and management issues. I assumed that the ongoing changes in public universities of Kazakhstan will indispensably affect academic deanship. This is because the changes in the status quo of how institutions and academic schools function will be reflected in the dean's offices. As such, these changes could reveal new perspectives and insights into academic deanship, the dean's job, their roles, and functions.

As of August 2019, 27 public universities became non-profit joint-stock companies (Informburo, 2019). Therefore, I decided to select eleven reorganized public universities out of 27 that were located in different regions of Kazakhstan (See Table 5).

Table 5

Types of the Research Sites and their Regional Distribution

No.	Region in Kazakhstan	Public university type	Number of selected research sites	Total number of research sites in the region
1	Center	National	1	3
		State	2	
2	South	National	3	4
		State	1	
3	North	State	2	2
4	East	State	1	1
5	West	State	1	1
<i>In total:</i>			11 research sites	

Table 5 shows that seven state and four national universities from five regions were selected for data collection. In addition, Table 5 indicates that the majority of the selected research sites are located in southern and central Kazakhstan, namely Astana (the capital city), Almaty, and Shymkent. These cities are densely populated cities in Kazakhstan with a population of over one million citizens. I assumed that selecting research sites in these locations would provide me with relevant research sites and research participants that qualify for my study compared to other regions in Kazakhstan. Therefore, I selected one or two public universities for data collection in the north, west, and east.

It is worth noting that apart from selecting a study sample and determining research sites, there are important milestones, such as getting access to the research sites and participants to collect data. This stage involved contacting the selected research sites and negotiating with gatekeepers of public universities to obtain official research permits to access research sites and participants (Vuban & Eta, 2019). Research permits are necessary not only because they authorize the presence of researchers on the premises of research sites for the purpose of recruiting volunteering participants and collecting data (Vuban & Eta, 2019). In addition, they provide researchers with formal allowances or prior approval from a specific organization or institution (usually a gatekeeper) to directly approach potential respondents and collect data (Kristensen & Ravn, 2015). For this reason, I had to plan my access to research sites accordingly. For this purpose, I followed the step-by-step procedures:

First, I needed to establish legitimacy to collect data from research participants. Therefore, I started searching for contact information on the selected research sites on their websites to find up-to-date contact emails and telephone numbers. Then I prepared official letters addressed to each rector of institutions because they qualify as gatekeepers of institutions who grant formal permissions to access universities and participants (See Appendix B and Appendix C). In my official letter to rectors, I briefly introduced myself as a researcher, my study goals, the potential risks of the study, and a brief overview of the themes of the interview questions to give a general idea to university administrators and potential participants. In addition, I stated that participation in the interviews was voluntary, clearly specifying that research participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Finally, I attached an official letterhead from the Dean of Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education (NUGSE) addressed to the rectors of the selected institutions. The purpose of the letter was to support and facilitate my data collection. It legitimated my requests to rectors to obtain access to research participants at the institutional levels. As a result, I managed to obtain research permits from seven out of eleven public universities to recruit study participants and interview them (See Table 6).

Table 6

Number of the Research Permits based on the Types of Universities and Regions in Kazakhstan

Region in Kazakhstan	Public university type	Number of requests to research sites	Total number of research sites in the region	Number of research permits
Center	National	1	3	1
	State	2		2
North	State	2	2	-
East	State	1	1	1
West	State	1	1	-
South	National	3	4	3
	State	1		-
<i>In total:</i>		11 research sites	7 research permits	

It is important to note that senior university administrators did not participate in the selection or recruitment of research participants in this study. My single purpose in addressing rectors of institutions was to respect a formal administrative protocol and follow a university code of ethics in obtaining research permits from the heads of institutions that legitimized my interactions with academic deans to recruit them for individual interviews.

Second, once a research permit was granted, I started contacting potential participants whose contact details were available on the websites by email or phone. That stage was critical for me as it worked as ice-breaking between participants and me. This was my first communication with future participants, which could influence establishing a rapport and trust between the interviewees and me as the researcher. Therefore, in my first contact with participants, I introduced myself and explained the study's aims, its risks, the rights of participants, and the voluntary nature of the study. I provided participants with detailed explanations of how the confidentiality of data and interviewees would be protected. In addition, I attached two informed consent forms in the Kazakh and Russian languages so that participants could read the necessary information about the research again (See Appendix B). In other words, my goal was to provide participants with all information about the interview that could help them reach an informed, consensual decision to participate in the study. My goal was to convince participants that their input would be valuable and meaningful for this

study. As soon as research participants agreed to an interview, we negotiated convenient dates and time slots for conducting interviews.

Data Collection

This section of the Methodology chapter explains the data collection procedures of this study. In doing so, it is crucial to review the different methodologies scholars have applied to explore these phenomena before examining the roles of academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities from the perspective of their managerial responsibilities (executive behavioral theory) and the challenges they face (role conflict and ambiguity theory),

Predominantly, previous studies on managerial roles, role conflicts, and role ambiguities among academic staff have leaned towards quantitative or mixed methods. Researchers like Mech (1997), Anderson et al. (2002), and Jackson (2004) employed surveys to measure academic leaders' managerial roles based on Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory. For instance, Mech (1997) used a questionnaire to delve into the perceptions of chief academic officers regarding their job roles and associated managerial requirements. Similarly, Muma et al. (2006) utilized mixed methods to determine administrative activities among physician assistant department chairpersons, comparing them against Mintzberg's managerial role model. Recent studies, like Saah et al. (2020), also used descriptive surveys to present factors influencing academic leaders' adherence to managerial roles at North-West University in South Africa.

Regarding studies on role conflict and role ambiguity in organizations, initially Kahn et al. (1964) used mixed methods involving written questionnaires, interviews, and personality tests to explore job stress and its associated elements (role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload). In addition, Rizzo et al. (1970) developed a fundamental questionnaire used in subsequent studies to measure role conflict and role ambiguity. For instance, Wolverton et al.

(1999) used this questionnaire to examine academic deanship and establish a baseline of information about American deans, their perceptions of role conflict and ambiguity, the responsibilities associated with their position, perceptions of job-related stress, and other factors. Similarly, Rai (2016) used the same questionnaire to explore how organizational justice, formalization, and commitment minimize role conflict and role ambiguity among long-term-care staff.

Contrary to the prevalent use of quantitative methods in studying managerial roles and role conflict and ambiguity, I have opted to employ qualitative data collection methods. The rationale for choosing a qualitative research design is based on the researchers' opportunity to step beyond the known and enter into the world of participants, to see the world from their perspective, and, in doing so, make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In other words, qualitative research helps researchers understand complex social phenomena, such as human behavior, by capturing the complexity and richness of these social phenomena that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative research methods. Qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, determine how meanings are formed through and in culture and discover rather than test variables (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In addition, the choice of qualitative research stems from the absence of empirical studies on Kazakhstani deans, suggesting potential benefits in utilizing qualitative approaches. Given that academic deans are engaged in multifaceted social roles and interactions, uncovering individual's subjective experiences and perspectives through qualitative methods seems appropriate. This approach may offer valuable insights into academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. Hammarberg et al. (2016) assert that a qualitative study is used to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant. Thus, this approach allows researchers to

reveal the personal experiences and perspectives of individuals, which can provide valuable insights into the phenomenon under study, specifically academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities.

Qualitative research provides a range of tools for data collection. They include small-group discussions, structured interviews, or in-depth interviews to investigate beliefs, attitudes, and concepts of normative behavior or understand a condition, experience, or event from a personal perspective. In addition, this research uses analysis of texts and documents, such as government reports, media articles, websites, or diaries, to learn about distributed or private knowledge (Taylor et al., 2015). Given the wide array of data collection tools available in qualitative research, this research design is advantageous for capturing the complexity of academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities.

Before selecting appropriate data collection tools, it is worth noting that the proven Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity Questionnaire (Rizzo et al., 1970) could be adapted into interview questions to examine Kazakhstani deans' role conflict and ambiguity. Similarly, Mintzberg's ten managerial roles can serve as a basis for developing interview questions to gain insights into the dean's roles as academic administrators within public universities in Kazakhstan. Table 7 below presents the research questions of this study and introduces the selected data collection methods (See Table 7):

Table 7

Types of the Selected Research Methods

No.	Research Questions	Research Methods	Comments
1	How do academic deans describe their decanal work in Kazakhstani public universities?	Semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analysis.	Research Question 1 seeks to uncover academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities compared to the reviewed academic deanship in Russia, the Netherlands, Australia, and the USA. This would help determine the similarities and differences in decanal

			jobs in Kazakhstan and other education systems.
2	In what way do they think the decanal position has changed over time?	Semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analysis.	Given the ongoing higher education reforms in Kazakhstan (for instance, academic freedom and financial autonomy, the shift toward non-profit joint-stock companies, and university-industry collaboration), Research Question 2 aims to understand what changes academic deans have experienced over time, referring to their status, duties and responsibilities.
3	How do academic deans perceive and experience their managerial roles (interpersonal, information exchange, and decisional)?	Semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analysis.	Research Question 3 seeks to understand whether the nature of academic deanship in Kazakhstan shifted toward more managerial activities. Therefore, Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory is used to determine the capacity of deans to exercise these roles. The essence of this question is to reveal which roles are most present in the deans' role repertoire. Therefore, the responses may show which dean's roles are the strongest or the weakest ones. Finally, the researcher can identify the obstacles that impede the dean's executive behavior in Kazakhstan.
4	How do academic deans perceive role conflict and role ambiguity in their job as they work with diverse constituents (senior administrators, faculty, students, and external stakeholders)?	Semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analysis.	Research Question 4 intends to determine whether academic deans are fully equipped to perform their roles effectively. For instance, whether an incumbent has sufficient executive power and authority to run academic units. Moreover, this question aims to determine what obstacles impede the dean's job performance. The interviewees' responses to this question would reveal the causes that predict role conflict and role ambiguity among deans in public universities in Kazakhstan.

According to Table 7, I selected two research methods to address the four research questions of the study. They are semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis. By combining document analysis and in-depth interviews, I aimed to strengthen my data collection strategy and add multiple perspectives (governmental, organizational, and individual) on the decanal position in Kazakhstani public universities. The research methods are reviewed in detail in the following subsections:

Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

In my study, I decided to use in-depth interviews. Their essence lies in the ability to illuminate the connections and relationships that an interviewee sees between particular events, phenomena, and beliefs to depict a complete picture of what happened to whom and why (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Edwards & Holland, 2019; Mack et al., 2005). These interviews are helpful when a researcher seeks to obtain detailed information about the individual's thoughts, experiences, and behaviors or needs to explore new issues succinctly. For this reason, in in-depth interviews, the interviewee serves as an expert, whereas the interviewer is considered a student (Mack et al., 2005). Using in-depth interviews, I could interview respondents in a nondirective way "with little or no direction from the interviewer, and participants are encouraged to relate their experiences, to describe whatever events seem significant to them, to provide their definitions of their situations, and to reveal their opinions and attitudes" (Franken et al., 2015, p. 196). Therefore, in-depth interviews helped me elicit a vivid picture of the participant's life experiences, knowledge, and perceptions about academic deanship with different nuances (Jamshed, 2014; McGrath et al., 2019; A. Morris, 2015).

There are three major categories of interviews: structured (formal or standardized) interviews, unstructured (unstandardized, informal, or non-directive) interviews, and semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2014; Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2015; Stuckey, 2013).

Reviewing these types of qualitative interviews, I decided that structured and unstructured interviews are not convenient for my study. For instance, even though *structured interviews* are designed to elicit the subjects' thoughts, opinions, and attitudes about the phenomenon under study, they use a set of predetermined questions. This means that a researcher follows a specific set of questions in a certain order with a limited number of response categories for interviewees (Denzin, 2008; Edwards & Holland, 2019). In contrast to the rigidity of structured interviews, *unstructured interviews* do not follow a predetermined questionnaire. Instead, they operate naturally, assuming that they do not know all the necessary questions in advance. Consequently, a researcher cannot fully determine a list of interview questions. In this type of interview, a researcher must develop and generate questions, and follow-up probes appropriate to the given situation and the central purpose of the study directly during the interview (Edwards & Holland, 2019; Mack et al., 2005; A. Morris, 2015). Therefore, this type of interview is often called a narrative interview that is based on the stories, events, or actions from the perspective of the participant's experience and perceptions (Stuckey, 2013). Given that review of structured and unstructured interviews, I decided that *semi-structured interviews* are more beneficial for my study, combining the strengths of both types of interviews.

In semi-structured interviews, a researcher asks questions in a systematic and consistent order, but interviewees are free to probe far beyond the answers to the prepared and standardized questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Edwards & Holland, 2019; Mack et al., 2005; A. Morris, 2015). In other words, a researcher sets the outline for the topics covered, but the interviewee's responses determine the interview flow (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Edwards & Holland, 2019). Moreover, semi-structured interviews guide with open-ended questions to provide a clear set of instructions for interviewers and

ensure reliable and comparable qualitative data (Denzin, 2008; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Edwards & Holland, 2019; Stuckey, 2013) (See Appendix A).

Next, before announcing the national lockdown due to COVID-19, I planned to visit research sites and recruit participants for in-person interviews. However, my data collection period from April to December 2020 coincided with the global pandemic, followed by the national lockdown and universities' online mode of operations. Therefore, I had to adjust to the circumstances and collect data using information and communications technologies (ICT) (Archibald et al., 2019; Khan, 2022). Instead of conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews in person, I chose to conduct voice-only interviews using WhatsApp and Zoom applications (Archibald et al., 2019; Khan, 2022). This is because, according to Mack et al. (2005), although in-depth interviews typically take the form of face-to-face interactions between an interviewer and a research participant, online or telephone interviews can also qualify as in-depth interviews. Therefore, I conducted audio interviews via WhatsApp and Zoom applications because of their meaningful advantages. First, they are accessible due to their user-friendly interface and widespread use, not requiring any specialized knowledge or preparation to use them (Archibald et al., 2019; Khan, 2022). Second, conducting interviews via WhatsApp or Zoom applications was the personal preference of the research participants.

Despite the advantages of audio interviews, it should be noted that their limitation lies in the researcher's inability to see the participants' visual expressions. They lack the "face-to-face nonverbal cues that researchers use to pace their interviews and to determine the direction to move in" (Berg, 2001, p. 83). However, because of the safety measures for both the research participants and me as a researcher, the most effective way to conduct interviews was via WhatsApp and Zoom platforms during the national lockdown in Kazakhstan (Archibald et al., 2019; Khan, 2022).

Once I recruited research participants, I started planning and organizing interviews. The interview dates depended on the individual schedules of academic deans. Before the interview, I asked each participant to consent to take part in the study and be audio recorded both orally and in a written form (See Appendix B). Fifteen participants consented to take part in voice-only interviews and be recorded. In addition, they were asked to sign consent forms and send them to me via email or WhatsApp.

My approach to interviewing participants was based on asking questions in a neutral manner, listening attentively to participants' responses, and asking follow-up questions and probes based on those responses without leading participants according to any preconceived notions or encouraging them to provide particular answers by expressing approval or disapproval of what they say (Mack et al., 2005). This allowed participants to gain comfort in talking, which influenced the natural flow of voice-only interviews. The interviews with participants were perceived as a conversation or a dialogue that unfolded smoothly and gradually (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

To guarantee effective interviews, I had to be prepared for each interview. For instance, before the interviews, I checked the Internet connection and readiness of the recorder for work. I read my questions before interviews to ensure a smooth conversation flow with participants. In addition, 30 minutes before the interview, I sent emails to the participants to remind them about the scheduled interviews and check their availability. Furthermore, I maintained time management with interviewees respecting their limited time available for the interview and their busyness (Harvey, 2011; Morse, 2018; Richards, 1996; K. E. Smith, 2006). Finally, I think that my curiosity in investigating academic deanship helped me establish trust with participants. Being a student-researcher, I was an outsider for deans who felt safe and confident in answering the interview questions. For instance, there were situations during the recorded interviews when participants asked me to pause the

recording, as they did not want to record private information. In those situations, I pressed the pause button of the recorder and did not record the conversation until the research participant permitted me to continue the interview audio recording (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Edwards & Holland, 2019; McGrath et al., 2019). As a result, I recruited and interviewed 15 participants, who preferred to be interviewed in Russian (See Table 8).

Table 8

Number of the Recruited Research Participants

Number of the recruited participants						
Research site 1	Research site 2	Research site 3	Research site 4	Research site 5	Research site 6	Research site 7
2 deans	2 deans	4 deans	1 dean	3 deans	2 deans	1 dean
Total number:		15 academic deans				

Despite interviewing 15 deans compared to my initial plans to have 20 participants, I reached data saturation with this sample size. This happened when I was continuously collecting the same stories, themes, issues, and topics told by the interviewees (Boyce & Neale, 2006). This reflected the experience of other studies. For instance, in the research study of women involving reproductive health care in Africa, Guest et al. (2006) found that their data saturation had occurred at a very early stage. Of the thirty-six codes developed in the study, thirty-four were developed from the first six interviews, and thirty-five codes were developed after the twelfth interview. Guest et al. (2006) conclude that for studies with a high level of homogeneity among the population, “a sample of six interviews may [be] sufficient to enable the development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations” (p. 78). The data saturation emerges from the continuously emerging patterns and themes from the researcher’s time-intensive interviews for one or two hours and even more hours, depending on the

interviewee. Therefore, despite my relatively small sample size, the fact that I recruited participants based on the predetermined inclusion criteria and employed semi-structured in-depth interviews helped me reach data saturation. I collected rich data about academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities, signaling to me that my research sample sufficed. Moreover, Crouch and McKenzie (2006), Mason (2010), and Robinson (2014) state that it is a norm to have a small sample size in qualitative studies when researchers are concerned with the meanings of the phenomenon under study and not with generalized hypothesis statements.

Overall, the interviews with research participants lasted for 1-1.5 hours. After conducting the interviews, I sent a message of gratitude to my participants. I thanked the interviewees for taking the time and making valuable contributions to the research. Finally, I sent the transcribed interviews for the participants' revision if they expressed their willingness to be acquainted with their responses before the data analysis and reporting. This procedure is called member checking, which will be discussed in detail in the Trustworthiness section.

Document Analysis

In this subsection, I explain the rationale for using document analysis to support my exploratory study on academic deanship. I decided to include document analysis as another research method of my study because it helps systematically review or evaluate publicly available documents (both printed and electronic) related to Kazakhstani academic deanship to form a general understanding of the decanal position in Kazakhstani public universities. In my study, I specifically reviewed state programs, bylaws, and regulations on higher education institutions, strategic goals in education and science, organization and structure of universities, academic units, institutional bylaws on selection and recruitment of the dean's office staff, and the norms in teaching workloads (See Table 9).

Table 9*List of State Policies and Bylaws Related to Academic Deanship in Kazakhstani Universities*

Governmental documents	
Title of the Document	Comment
- Concept of Kazakhstan to become the top 30 most developed countries in the world;	Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) No. 732 on 17 January 2014
- State Program for Innovative-Industrial Development for 2015-2019;	Decree of the President of RK No. 874 on 1 August 2014
- Nation's Plan of 100 Steps of Five Institutional Reforms;	Program of the President of RK on 20 May 2015
- State Program of Education and Science Development for 2016-2019;	Decree of the President of RK No. 2015 on 1 March 2016
- Typical Qualification Requirements of Pedagogical Workers and Persons Equated to Them;	Order of the MoES No. 338 on 13 July 2009) (with amendments as of 2018 and 2019)
- List of Positions of Pedagogical Workers and Persons Equated to Them;	Government of RK No. 77 on 30 January 2008
- List of Job Titles related to the Faculty, Teaching Support Staff, Administrative Staff, and Service Staff;	Order of the MoES No. 374 on 7 August 2009
- Law on the Changes and Amendments in the Legislative Acts of RK to Expand Academic and Managerial Autonomy of HEIs;	Law of RK No. 171-VI on 4 July 2018
- About Determining the Recommended Annual Teaching Workload and the Minimum Salary of Academic Staff in HEIs.	Order of the MoES No. 122 on 25 March 2021

In addition, I used and analyzed available institutional documents, which included organizational charters, strategic goals, operational plans, annual and semi-annual reports, and provisions of academic units, dean's offices, academic staff, and deans' job descriptions. It should be noted, however, that institutional documents are often restricted and not available on websites. Therefore, I negotiated access to electronic versions of institutional documents and bylaws with the academic deans on an individual basis. In general, I used the following internal documents for document analysis:

1. Strategic Plan for University Development for 2014-2019 (e.g., University 1);
2. Operational Plan of University for 2019-2020, annual and semi-annual reports (e.g., University 1);
3. University Charters (e.g., Universities 1, 3, and 5);
4. Provisions on the Dean's Office (University 3);
5. Job descriptions of academic deans (Universities 1 and 3);
6. Qualification Requirements for Academic Staff (Universities 1, 3, and 6).

The rationale for using document analysis in my study was the understanding that documents could provide me with background information and context of academic deanship in Kazakhstan, help me formulate additional questions to research participants, obtain supplementary data, get a means of tracking a change dynamics in the development of Kazakhstani deanship, and verify my findings from other data sources (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, reviewing and evaluating state policies, regulations, and internal institutional bylaws allowed me to elicit meaning, understand, and develop theoretical and empirical knowledge to specify the dean's functions and responsibilities in Kazakhstani public universities (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Another rationale for employing document analysis was explained by its combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation, which is "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1970, p. 291). In a qualitative study, a researcher is expected to draw upon at least two sources of evidence to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods (Bowen, 2009).

Pilot Study

To conduct successful in-depth interviews, a researcher needs skills and experience in communicating with research participants to establish trust between an interviewer and an

interviewee to promote a constructive dialogue. Therefore, collecting the most detailed and rich data requires some practice from novice researchers (Turner, 2010). For this reason, it is useful for researchers to conduct pilots with volunteers who meet the criteria for selecting research participants (Majid et al., 2017). The pilot study is the researcher's final attempt to verify their interview protocols, learn to elicit in-depth information from respondents, and determine whether there are flaws, limitations, or other weaknesses in the interview design (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Edwards & Holland, 2019; A. Morris, 2015). Therefore, the essence of pilot studies is to ensure the relevance of the field questions, identify limitations within the interview design, and check the logistics of the field inquiry to manage to do necessary modifications in the data collection process (Yin, 2011).

Given that my study had an exploratory nature, the decision to test the interview protocol was appropriate to provide me with clear and accurate questions before my formal data collection. Moreover, the pilot study was helpful for me as a novice researcher to gain necessary confidence and practice in conducting interviews. Consequently, I conducted a pilot with a volunteer academic dean who fully met the selection criteria for the study's research participants. This allowed me to test my data collection instrument in a real-life setting, get valuable insights into recruiting research participants and select the most appropriate data collection strategies. Piloting the interview protocol helped me not only test questions, but also to revise and refine them as they were based on the research questions and theoretical frameworks of the study.

I developed more effective interview techniques by using open-ended questions, which invite research participants to unfold their answers in detail (Majid et al., 2017). In addition, I started the interview with factual questions before opinion questions, using prompts or the so-called 'grand-tour' questions (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Jiménez & Orozco, 2021). For instance, "Tell me, please, how you became an academic dean?" In addition, the

questions about the dean's potential managerial roles were based on prompts using a 5-point Likert scale to determine the participant's degree of agreement or disagreement with the managerial roles and reveal their strengths and intensity (Joshi et al., 2015). For instance, "How would you rate yourself as a dean in the Figurehead role in performing legal, social, and ceremonial roles from 1 – very low, 2 – low, 3 – average, 4 – high, to 5- very high?" (See Appendix A).

The rationale for using prompts is that they are helpful "to generate the most critical types of information researchers wish to learn from interview respondents, such as the salience of events, attributes, and experiences, structure of what is normal, perceptions of cause and effect, and behaviors, experience, and views related to sensitive topics" (Jiménez & Orozco, 2021, p. 507). Using prompts, the respondent takes the position of an expert, making the interview a more inductive data-gathering instrument (Jiménez & Orozco, 2021). As a result, it is likely that the respondent will offer new and unanticipated findings.

Another takeaway from the pilot interview was that an interviewee needed some probes to be more specific about the terminology or some peculiarities of their jobs (Boyce & Neale, 2006). This helps researchers follow up with more specific prompts to get the respondent to discuss in more detail what the respondent has defined as salient (Jiménez & Orozco, 2021) (See Appendix A). Therefore, I had to ask questions such as "Would you give me an example?" or "Could you elaborate on that, please?" As such, the pilot gave me useful insights and practice in preparing the final data collection instrument (See Appendix A). I understood that I need to avoid yes/no and leading questions, using formal body language, keeping personal opinions in check, and including short and straightforward follow-ups to allow respondents to go deeper in their interpretations. This helped me revise and polish my interview protocol.

Individual Interviews with Elites

The elite status of research participants stipulates that there are “individuals or groups who ostensibly have closer proximity to power or particular professional expertise” (Lancaster, 2017, p. 93). This status suggests that accessing elites may become challenging for researchers. Unsurprisingly, Morse (2018) considers accessing elites as “a mixture of prestige, craft, and luck” (p. 279).

In my study, academic deans possess executive authority and power instilled in their position at Kazakhstani universities. They preside over academic schools, units, and divisions and oversee vice-deans, department chairs, academic and administrative staff, and students. This means that academic deans meet the definition of elite participants in this study. Consequently, I must recognize the participants’ exclusive status in their recruitment and interviews. For instance, the participants’ authority may limit my access to them or may reveal the deans’ dominance and guidance in interviews (e.g., avoiding answering the questions) (Harvey, 2011; Lancaster, 2017; Richards, 1996; K. E. Smith, 2006; Welch et al., 2002). Moreover, centralized control and top-down management in Kazakhstani public universities could also affect my in-depth interviews with elite research participants (Froumin & Smolentseva, 2014; Hartley et al., 2016; Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012; Sagintayeva et al., 2017; Smolentseva et al., 2018).

However, being aware that there are always power differences between the researcher and research participants, I considered potential challenges and obstacles that may arise before, during, and after interviewing elite participants to tackle them effectively and timely (DeCarlo, 2018; Harvey, 2011; Richards, 1996).

Preparation. I had to be well-prepared and organized for the interviews. Therefore, before the formal interview, I tested my interview protocol to ensure I had appropriate and accurate questions on academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities.

Power imbalances in my study are related to academic deans whose authority and status can dominate over students, including me – the student-researcher. In addition, Morse (2018) and Welch et al. (2002) distinguish additional factors referring to power imbalances. They are the *gender differences* between male and female research participants and the *degree of openness* the researcher can expect from elite research participants. To address those issues, it was essential to establish rapport and trust with the participants before and during in-depth interviews, be respectful to research participants, plan interviews according to the participants' schedules, answer their questions, and be grateful for their valuable contribution to my study (DeCarlo, 2018). In actual fact, I found power imbalances between academic deans and me as a doctoral student advantageous. As an outsider, I was not in relation with the interviewees as a student to an academic dean. I was open to their individual and subjective experiences and attitudes about the position—my purpose as the interviewer was to facilitate conversations with an interviewee. I used positive engagement techniques such as active listening, asking thoughtful questions, and knowing when to stay silent and let the interviewee talk freely to express my interest and engagement in the dialogue (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Kvale, 2006). Therefore, the research participants with an elite status felt free, safe, and confident sharing with me their experiences, attitudes, and perceptions about academic deanship in public universities of Kazakhstan.

Researcher-respondent relationship. The essential element in building a productive relationship in elite interviews is to show respect to the research participants, their time, and individual stories to help them feel comfortable. Moreover, respect for the participant provided a solid foundation for rapport, that is, a sense of connection between the researcher and the participants. Therefore, to establish rapport with the interviewees, I needed to build trust and show respect for them. In this regard, my interest in exploring academic deanship in Kazakhstan, my respectful attitude toward the research participants, and my readiness and

flexibility to adjust to the busy schedules of academic deans were valued by the participants who tried to find time slots for the interviews in their working schedules.

Time management. I had to be mindful of time management and balance open-ended and close-ended (clarifying) questions to give interviewees the flexibility and freedom to think and reflect on their answers. In addition, being aware of the participants' busyness, I was always prepared for the interviews (i.e., the charged batteries of the recorder, rehearsing the interview questions, diagnosing an Internet connection, and maintaining time management).

Pitfalls. In case of difficulties, I needed to be patient and respectful to reschedule the interview for another day and time. In a nutshell, the interviews and interviewees varied. Therefore, it was important not to let a difficult interview hamper my confidence and attitude in subsequent interviews (DeCarlo, 2018; Richards, 1996).

Elaborating on the potential challenges in interviewing elites helped me approach academic deans and interview them effectively. They allowed me to gain confidence as an early-career researcher to deal with the privileged status of the research participants. I was prepared to handle different situations, for instance, staying in control over the interview flow when the interview was off-topic. I maintained control over all interviews and successfully led the conversation flows with the research participants (DeCarlo, 2018).

Data Analysis

In this section of the Methodology, I explain my data analysis strategies and techniques. I conducted data analysis in accordance with the five steps outlined by Yin (2011): raw data compiling, data disassembling and reassembling, interpreting the data, and concluding.

At the beginning of the data analysis stage, I had to compile all collected data into files. My data comprised open sources of state policies (national educational programs, state

decrees, and strategies), institutional documents (provisions on the dean's offices, the dean's job descriptions, and qualification requirements for academic staff in universities that were accessible on websites or shared by the research participants), audio recordings of interviews, transcribed interviews, backup files on Google Drive with interview recordings and transcripts, and analytic memos with my reflections on data analysis.

After organizing the raw data, I began verbatim transcribing. Transcribing is one of the most time-consuming aspects of qualitative research (Bailey, 2008; Boyce & Neale, 2006; Mezmir, 2020). For instance, my in-depth interviews with the research participants lasted 1-1.5 hours. Just a one-hour recording could take four to six hours to transcribe depending on the interviewee's articulation, rate of speech production type, and quality of the recording (i.e., background noise as telephone calls, visitors, etc.) (Bailey, 2008; Mezmir, 2020; Sutton & Austin, 2015). In addition, transcribing is not a straightforward technical procedure. Instead, it involves judgments about the level of detail to choose (e.g., omitting non-verbal dimensions of interaction), data interpretations, and data representation (Bailey, 2008). Moreover, transcribing takes time because of the careful observation of data through repetitive listening to the audio files, which is an integral part of qualitative data analysis. Transcribing refers to a preparatory stage of the raw data for further meticulous data analysis and interpretation. Consequently, I transcribed 15 interviews verbatim. Furthermore, I decided to transcribe the interview recordings myself. This was a great opportunity to become acquainted with the participants' responses to the questions. Subsequently, I reviewed all the collected research materials, constantly reading and rereading transcripts, listening to audio recordings, and my analytic memos to understand the meaning of the data and facilitate further data reduction (disassembling and reassembling) (Mezmir, 2020; Yin, 2011).

Before proceeding to data reduction, I was aware that one of the challenges in qualitative data analysis is dealing with the open-ended nature of data (Castleberry & Nolen,

2018). As such, to analyze “thick data,” I had to choose an appropriate method to code data to make it more readable and comprehensible (Berg, 2001; Ponterotto, 2005). For this reason, I decided to create theoretical considerations for the pre-coding stage:

1. *Inductive and deductive coding approaches.* They help determine a framework for generating codes (Mezmir, 2020). The combination of the two coding methods is the most commonly used approach, often referred to as a blended approach (Graebner et al., 2012) or abduction (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). Both coding methods have their strengths and weaknesses. Abduction can use the benefits of both approaches to strengthen data analysis, allowing me to code data and generate new categories from the data while staying attuned to existing theories (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Hence, abduction encourages a flexible theoretical framework and a flexible approach to the empirical framework, which manifests in a combination of inductive and deductive coding (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

2. *Coding at the semantic and latent levels.* Coding at the semantic level implies to code data that stay close to the content of the research participants’ responses (phrases and words) that generate semantic codes or descriptive codes. On the other hand, latent or interpretative codes refer to coding that goes beyond the participant’s responses and the content of the interview transcripts. They interpret the meanings of the data and look for underlying ideas and concepts that are not on the surface of the data. Researchers must uncover and interpret latent codes themselves (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

3. *Thematic analysis.* I used this data analysis to systematically identify, organize, and create data patterns by focusing on meanings across the data set (Clarke & Braun, 2013). In doing rigorous thematic coding, I decided to employ a manual method of qualitative data coding. This choice depends on the size of the study, time availability, and the inclination and expertise of the researcher (Basit, 2003). Moreover, computer-assisted qualitative data

analysis software does not do the analysis for the researcher, whose responsibility is to create categories and codes, as well as decide what to retrieve and collate (Basit, 2003). In other words, coding is an intellectual exercise in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. It requires thinking, deliberation, generating codes, and rejecting and replacing them with others that are more illuminating and better explain the phenomenon under the study (Basit, 2003).

For initial coding, I followed the recommendations of Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019). They suggest simple color-coding with markers may suffice in smaller projects with limited data. One color for each code would be sufficient to use hard copies of the transcripts or Microsoft Word or Excel documents for copy-and-paste pieces of transcripts into new Word or Excel documents. In particular, I used a two-column Microsoft Word document for the coding process. The left column had the written interview transcript, and the right column was blank for identifying patterns and themes in the text. At the beginning of each Microsoft Word document, I had the research questions to read before starting coding. I highlighted everything that was relevant or potentially interesting in relation to specific research questions using colors. I also used open coding without pre-set codes to develop and modify the codes, as I worked through the coding cycles. As such, I coded various phrases and words about the decanal job functions and responsibilities, the respondents' opinions and experiences of academic deanship, the changes they observed, and the challenges that academic deans encounter in one color. When all data in the first transcript was coded, I repeated reviewing the first codes to identify the relevance of the codes to the data in the first transcript. As I progressed in reviewing the coded data, I modified the existing codes using different colors, trying to reveal similarities among codes and marking them with one color, establishing differences among codes with other colors. The coding process of the first transcript ended when all data in the transcript was coded, and the data relevant to each code

was collated (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Clarke & Braun, 2013). I repeated the abovementioned coding cycles with the rest of the interview transcripts. Then I reread the coded transcripts to determine themes and categories among codes. The iterative process of code reviewing allowed me to notice the appearance of the same codes repeatedly, which signaled to me the emerging patterns in the coded data. The patterns in the data helped me have a more condensed overview of the main points and common meanings that were recurring throughout the data set. The iterative examination of the coded data in the data set helped determine categories identifying coherent similarities and dissimilarities in the coded data and patterns. I put the emerging patterns in the second column of the Microsoft Word document to collate the patterns with the coded data.

During the second and third coding cycles, I started observing new themes from patterns that I reorganized into more distinct themes. Hence, the initial themes were predominately descriptive, characterizing some aspects of the patterns in the data relevant to the research questions (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In the third coding cycle, I again reviewed and clustered all codes relating to the themes to explore the relationship among themes in terms of their correspondence to the coded data and the entire data set. This process is called *quality checking* to ensure that the themes correspond to the coded data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). I reviewed the preliminary themes and considered whether the data, in fact, supported each theme and whether the themes work in the context of the entire data set (within a single interview transcript and across the rest of the interview transcripts). I reviewed those themes again to achieve their coherence and distinction from each other. At that stage, I could modify the constructed themes and create new subthemes that included all relevant codes to answer the research questions. For example, I had several codes that related to the selection and recruitment of deans, their status, and functions that refer to the dean's teaching and administrative functions. I grouped those codes into a broader

theme called “The characteristics of the academic dean’s job.” I then created subthemes, such as “The recruitment of academic deans” and “The dean’s duties and responsibilities,” etc.

Reviewing the themes and subthemes, I aimed to obtain consistency throughout the data set. However, if the theme did not correspond to the coded data, I had to either discard the code or relocate it to another theme. At that stage, I refined the themes by modifying them, combining the overlapping themes into one theme, and eliminating themes that did not capture anything meaningful about the collected data. In addition, I added subthemes to the themes that better captured the meanings of what the respondents were saying. At the end of the third cycle, the codes were organized into more condensed themes that were more specific and relevant to the posed research questions.

The iterative process of reviewing codes and themes and their refinement helped me write analytic memos during data analysis. They included my reflections, ideas, and thoughts during data collection and analysis on the decanal job, the interviewees, and their different experiences of academic deanship. In addition, the analytic memos helped me organize and structure the data coding process, making it systematic and rigorous. According to Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019), analytic memos are an excellent tool for qualitative researchers to help materialize ongoing reflections serving as a log that can inform subsequent data collection and lead to richer explanations in the data analysis.

As a result of four coding cycles, I determined the final themes and subthemes that were robust and consistent throughout the data set. The list of themes and subthemes is illustrated in Table 10 below (See Table 10):

Table 10

List of Themes and Subthemes

No	Research Question	Theme	Subtheme
1	How do academic deans describe their job in Kazakhstani public universities?	Career trajectories in academic deanship (AD) Skills and competencies for effective AD	- Internal hiring; - Academic inbreeding; - External hiring.
2	In what way do academic deans think their position has changed over time?	Changes in AD No changes in AD	- Dean's status upgrade; - Impact of COVID-19 on AD. - Top-down management in public universities; - Dean's restricted authorities and autonomy
3	How do academic deans perceive and experience their managerial roles (interpersonal, information exchange, and decisional)?	Roles of academic deans Self-perception of AD	- Dean's exclusive informational and interpersonal roles;
4	How do deans perceive the role conflict and ambiguity in their job as they work with diverse constituents (senior administrators, faculty, students, and external stakeholders)?	Role conflict stressors Role ambiguity stressors	- Dean's administrator-faculty job; - Work-life imbalances. - Internal inconsistencies in AD; - External inconsistencies in AD.

The demographic data (age, gender, work experience in the dean's position, and academic discipline) of the study included additional information about the research participants and the characteristics of the dean's offices. The themes of Research Question 1 characterized academic deanship from the beginning, for instance, what strategies universities employed to recruit academic deans and what previous posts deans had before they were appointed as deans. The themes of Research Question 2 illuminated the changes in academic deanship and the dean's perceptions of those changes. In addition, Research Question 2 included the theme of what changes academic deans would like to have in their jobs. I also

included categories of the COVID-19 pandemic, as data collection coincided with the national lockdown. In other words, COVID-19 was an additional trigger that affected academic deanship, the dean's roles, and functions. As for Research Question 3, it aimed to record any shifts (related to Research Question 2) in the dean's job toward growing managerial duties and responsibilities. Moreover, in the case of the administrative nature of deanship, the data provided insights into how deans perceive themselves and their roles and how power dynamics in public universities impact academic deanship in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, the themes from Research Question 4 identified the organizational stressors that influence the stress and anxiety of academic deans, resulting in role conflict and role ambiguity due to inconsistencies in their workplaces.

Trustworthiness

For any research inquiry, it is essential to meet the criteria that acknowledge the quality of the research. I ensured the trustworthiness of in-depth qualitative interviews by addressing the issues of credibility (validity), dependability (reliability), transferability (or generalization), and confirmability (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Schwandt et al., 2007).

To ensure credibility, I employed techniques proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1986, p. 77), such as cross-checking (triangulation) and member checking. I used *member checking* to minimize my bias in interpreting the interviewees' responses by sending the interview transcripts to participants so that they could evaluate my recording of their responses to the interview questions. If they identified any misreporting, they were encouraged to suggest changes (Schwandt et al., 2007). I used *data triangulation* (cross-checking) as a validation strategy to test the convergence of the collected data from a variety of sources (Carter, 2014). Data triangulation often refers to the use of multiple research methods, at least two methods, about the same phenomenon across time, space, or different people (Anney, 2014; Carter,

2014). In my study, I recruited as many research participants as possible who qualify as novice and experienced deans from national and state universities located in different regions of Kazakhstan over a period of nine months (April-December 2020). As a result, I could corroborate my findings across data sets, which were not an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's bias (Patton, 2015).

To ensure both the *dependability* and *confirmability* of my study (Anney, 2014; Carcary, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1986), I can provide readers with an audit trail with a detailed research process in terms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Bowen, 2009). The audit trail is necessary to show readers that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination, but are clearly derived from the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Furthermore, *transferability* refers to the generalizability of an inquiry (Nowell et al., 2017; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Thick descriptive data show my informed decisions about the generalizability of the findings to their specific contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The use of purposeful sampling added to the transferability of the study since the sampling strategy allowed me to focus on the key informants who are knowledgeable sources about academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities (Anney, 2014).

Ethical Issues

According to Denscombe (2014), "Research ethics is not an option – it is a fundamental feature of all good research, even for small-scale research projects" (p. 306). To address the ethical considerations in my study's data collection, analysis, and interpretation, my first principle as the researcher was to do no harm to the research participants.

In the data collection stage, it was essential for me to explain to potential respondents their rights to privacy and freedom (Cohen et al., 2013; Sieber & Tolich, 2013). To do so, while recruiting participants, I explained to them that the study was voluntary, and the

participants had to decide themselves to take part in the research or not, including the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time with no penalty to the participants. To recruit research participants, I sent informed consent forms in invitation emails to potential research participants. That way, they could read and familiarize themselves with the purpose of the study on academic deanship, the study's benefits and risks, and the procedures that the researcher would take to ensure the confidentiality of the participant's responses (See Appendix B).

My study examined the relationships between academic deans and university superiors and constituents that could raise potentially sensitive issues for academic deans to discuss with a researcher. Therefore, to conduct research ethically, it was essential to determine the potential risks for the research participants before data collection. As such, I determined one risk associated with academic deans – the *infrastructural vulnerability* (Sieber & Tolich, 2013, p. 16). This type of vulnerability is peculiar to my research as it involves participants who are key informants about the phenomenon of academic deanship in Kazakhstan, being both subordinates to superiors (boards of trustees, rectors, and vice-rectors) and leaders to constituents (faculty and students). Such a position of deans revealed their vulnerability in discussing their relationships with colleagues. To address that risk, I had to guarantee the *confidentiality* of the participants. Therefore, during and after the voice-only interviews via WhatsApp and Zoom, I did my best to ensure the confidentiality of participants to other people (Cohen et al., 2013). For that purpose, I used member checking to allow participants to review their responses in the interview transcripts to avoid the researcher's bias and data misinterpretation and the option to revise or delete any remarks they had made with which they were uncomfortable. In addition, I assigned pseudonyms and code numbers to universities, types of academic deans, and respondents (See Table 11).

Table 11*Code Numbers Assigned to the Research Sites and Participants*

Number of research participants	Number of the research sites					
	<i>University 1</i>	<i>University 2</i>	<i>University 3</i>	<i>University 4</i>	<i>University 5</i>	<i>University n¹</i>
Participant 1	X					
Participant 2		X				
Participant 3			X			
Participant 4				X		
Participant 5					X	
Participant n						X

I ensured confidentiality by informing participants that data was confidential and would only be shared between me (the researcher) and the members of my advisory committee, whose names and contact details they could see in the informed consent forms (See Appendix B) and invitation email letters to recruit deans for interviews (See Appendix D). Furthermore, I ensured that the transcripts that I would use for data analysis did not contain any identifiers. For example, I deleted the names, titles of the institutions, names of senior administrators, regions, and other means of identification from the interview transcripts (Cohen et al., 2013). Moreover, I paid particular attention to data reporting, so that direct quotes from research participants did not have identifiable information about the research participants, the research sites, other people, or any other details that might compromise confidentiality. In addition, to guarantee the safety and privacy of all data generated from the data collection and analysis, I filed and organized them on a personal computer with a password. Then, I created two backup folders with all data collection and analysis information on my hard drive disc and on Google Drive, access to which was granted only to the advisory committee members.

¹ The total number of research sites and research participants.

Summary

In the Methodology chapter, I have introduced my philosophical position from the social constructivist standpoint to explore academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. My role as the researcher in social constructivism was to rely on the research participants' stories, their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes to build knowledge about academic deanship in Kazakhstan. I have acknowledged my insider-outsider positions in the research, which helped me reduce my subjectivity and biases that might influence the research inquiry process.

In my study, I decided to select public universities (both national and state universities) which underwent reorganization in Kazakhstan. As for sampling strategies, I chose to employ purposeful sampling to collect data directly from academic deans who qualify as single sources of knowledge.

Given that my study was exploratory, I employed qualitative research using semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis to strengthen my data collection instrument, which I decided to test with one volunteer dean who met my predetermined criteria for recruiting research participants. In addition, the pilot study allowed me to revise and refine the interview questions.

At the formal data collection stage, I had to be aware of the power imbalances between me, the researcher, and the academic deans who refer to elite research participants. To prevent these power imbalances, I followed a strategy that ensured effective data collection, from accessing the research sites to interviewing elite research participants. In the following sections, I introduced my data analysis considerations and the use of thematic analysis to obtain usable data for interpreting and reporting. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the trustworthiness of my research findings based on the validity and reliability criteria in the data collection and analysis procedures. Finally, the chapter concluded by

addressing the ethical considerations in conducting research on academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan.

Chapter 5

Research Findings

This chapter introduces the most significant findings of the present study. The first section presents the demographic data of the research participants to understand their background information regarding the region they represented, the participants' age, gender, and work experience in the decanal position. Next, the following section describes the common trajectories leading to the dean's job and the skills and competencies incumbents need to effectively perform their work (Research Question 1). Furthermore, the section highlights the changes the research participants perceived and experienced in the decanal position (Research Question 2). To answer Research Question 3, the findings present the participants' perceptions and experiences of their managerial roles based on H. Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory. Finally, the section explains the challenges that academic deans encounter as they work with diverse constituents (senior administrators, faculty, students, and external stakeholders) that may cause the dean's role conflict and role ambiguity (Research Question 4).

Description of the Research Participants

The research participants of this study represent a diverse group of academic deans. For this reason, it is essential to briefly introduce the participants' demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, work experience in the dean's role, and present their disciplinary expertise. This provides additional information about academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities (See Table 12).

Table 12

Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants

Research site	Participant number	Position	Gender	Age range	Work experience as a dean (yrs)	Discipline cluster
1	Participant 1	Dean	Male	46-50	10 yrs and over	Technical Sc.
	Participant 2	Dean	Male	41-45	2-4 yrs	Technical Sc.
2	Participant 3	Acting dean	Male	46-50	Under 2 yrs	Humanities
	Participant 4	Acting dean	Male	41-45	Under 2 yrs	Natural Sc.
3	Participant 5	Acting dean	Female	46-50	Under 2 yrs	Technical Sc.
	Participant 6	Acting dean	Female	41-45	Under 2 yrs	Social Sc.
	Participant 7	Dean	Female	41-45	2-4 yrs	Social Sc.
	Participant 8	Acting dean	Male	40 and under	2-4 yrs	Technical Sc.
4	Participant 9	Acting dean	Female	40 and under	2-4 yrs	Technical Sc.
5	Participant 10	Dean	Male	41-45	Under 2 yrs	Technical Sc.
	Participant 11	Dean	Female	41-45	2-4 yrs	Social Sc.
	Participant 12	Dean	Female	41-45	Under 2 yrs	Technical Sc.
6	Participant 13	Dean	Female	46-50	5-9 yrs	Physical Sc.
	Participant 14	Dean	Male	46-50	5-9 yrs	Natural Sc.
7	Participant 15	Dean	Female	50 and over	Under 2 yrs	Life Sc.

The data were collected from April to December 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I conducted in-depth interviews using WhatsApp and Zoom voice-only calls. All interviews were audio-recorded on the recorder. In total, I interviewed 15 research participants from four national and three state universities (See Table 12).

The age range of the research participants varied from the youngest 38 to the oldest 56 years old. Similarly, the work experience in the position varied from a minimum of six months to a maximum of 21 years in the dean's role. In addition, 47% of the research participants were Candidates of Sciences (Participants 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12) who graduated from the aspirantura programs². Five research participants had the highest academic qualifications as Doctors of Sciences (Participants 1, 3, 13, 14, and 15). Next, Participants 4 and 8 held PhD degrees, and Participant 2 had a Master of Science degree. The participants' gender distribution consisted of seven male and eight female academic deans. Moreover, the participants represented diverse disciplinary expertise in the Humanities, the Social sciences, the Natural sciences, the Technical sciences, etc. (See Table 12).

At the time of data collection, six research participants worked as acting academic deans (specifically Participants 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9). The other research participants held official decanal positions appointed by rectors of the institutions (See Table 12). The practice of acting academic deanship is a common hiring phenomenon for novice deans who have a probation period before becoming official academic deans. After the probation, the university announces a contest for the vacant dean's position. Eligible candidates apply for the job by submitting their applications with supporting documents, such as degree certificates, a list of publications, etc. Department chairs approve the selected candidates at the school academic councils. Subsequently, a rector of the institution signs a job contract with a newly appointed dean.

² Aspirantura belongs to a double-cycle system referring to a lower doctorate in the post-Soviet countries. It is an intermediate level to train pedagogical and research staff before the formal doctoral studies. Kazakhstani universities stopped admitting to aspirantura programs, when in 2010, Kazakhstan officially joined the Bologna Declaration and shifted to a three-cycle higher education system (Mouraviev, 2012; Yergebekov & Temirbekova, 2012).

However, the temporary position of an acting dean depends not only on the provision of a formal contest. This may also depend on the institution involved. Some universities immediately appoint academic deans without any probation periods (Universities 1, 5, 6, and 7). For instance, Participant 10 was chosen as a dean six months earlier (See Table 12). However, Universities 2, 3, and 4 first appoint acting deans, organize the formal contest, and then they appoint deans. Nevertheless, Participant 5 pointed out that she did not feel any tangible differences between acting and formal dean's duties and responsibilities. Being an acting dean, Participant 5 asserted that her colleagues, such as senior administrators, faculty members, and administrative staff, treated her like a formal dean. Therefore, based on Participant 5, the only difference between acting deanship and deanship is the "formal organization of the contest for the dean's position."

Instead of acting deanship, research participants 10, 11, and 12 had fixed job contracts for a minimum of one year. The job contract prolongation for the next term of office depends on the dean's performance. Academic deans have to demonstrate goal attainment and the ability to lead academic and administrative staff and students and be in contact with employers during the term. Then, the rector decides whether to prolong the contract or not. The fixed term of office serves as another type of probation to demonstrate the incumbent's effectiveness and efficiency. The duration of probation for novice deans varies from institution to institution. For instance, the maximum term for acting deanship is two years (i.e., Participant 9 from University 4). In contrast, the minimum duration was ten months for Participants 5 and 6 from University 3 (See Table 12). Given the lack of a meaningful difference between acting deans and formal deans, they are addressed as academic deans, deans, or research participants throughout the present study.

The Deans' Experiences of Their Roles

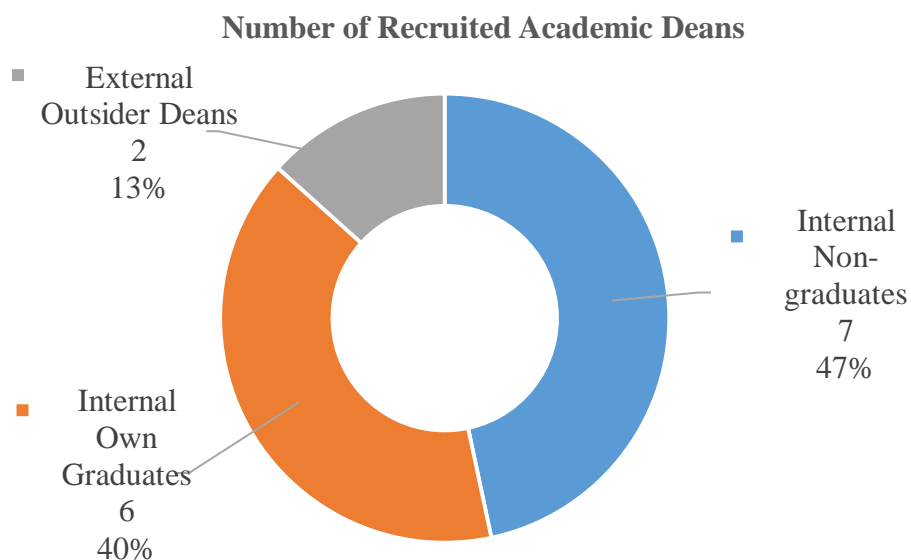
This section introduces the data collected to answer Research Question 1, which sought to understand the participants' experiences in their roles as academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities. It describes the individual experiences of incumbents in the dean's position. The findings indicate two distinct trajectories to academic deanship that involve internal and external recruitment of individuals. More specifically, hiring from within is the most common recruitment practice among public universities, allowing them to select employees who are already familiar with the university's structure, colleagues, and organizational culture. This approach enables novice deans to quickly adapt to their job responsibilities and receive necessary support and assistance from colleagues. On the other hand, external recruitment is also presented in institutional hiring practices. This type of recruitment is also observed in institutional hiring practices. In this case, senior administrators purposefully invite external candidates and offer them the dean's position. It is worth noting that both insider and outsider academic deans recognize the importance of self-education, which is critical for their effective job performance.

Pathways to the Academic Dean's Position

The pathway to academic deanship involves internal and external recruitment strategies. The most common trajectory to deanship is hiring from within higher education institutions. The majority of the research participants (87%) were affiliated with their current workplaces as the institutions' graduates or current employees. They make up 13 out of 15 research participants (Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15), further referred to as insider deans (See Figure 5).

Figure 5

Internal and External Recruitment of Academic Deans in Kazakhstani Public Universities



In contrast, only 13% of the participants (namely Participants 2 and 13) entered the decanal position from another higher education institution (Participant 13) or nonacademic sector (Participant 2). These two research participants are referred to as outsider deans (See Figure 5).

Internal Recruitment. Figure 5 explicitly shows that internal recruitment dominates over external recruitment. More specifically, internal recruitment comprises two routes to the academic deanship. The first route is when universities deliberately select their own graduates of one of their academic programs (usually aspirantura or PhD programs). This type of hiring practice is commonly referred to as academic inbreeding, and individuals hired through this approach are often called ‘pure inbred academics’ or ‘homegrown academics’ (Altbach et al., 2015; Horta, 2022). Specifically, six research participants (Participants 1, 4, 5, 9, 12, and 14) refer to these homegrown deans because of their affiliation with the employer’s aspirantura programs (See Figure 5).

The second route to academic deanship in Kazakhstan emphasizes the importance of social ties in the selection of university employees (Altbach et al., 2015; Horta, 2022). In this recruitment, public universities use a job rotation mechanism to promote employees (insiders)

by moving them from one position to another within the organization (Kuznetsov, 2009). In this case, these individuals are commonly known as ‘mobile academics’ because they started their careers at other universities (Altbach et al., 2015). Seven research participants (Participants 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 15) belong to this category of mobile academic deans. For instance, Participant 11 is categorized as an insider dean because she joined University 5 to work as a senior lecturer from another academic institution before the selection as a dean.

Furthermore, before academic deanship, the majority of research participants had managerial experience, working mainly in senior academic positions. For instance, ten participants worked as department chairs before becoming deans. As for Participant 8, he worked as a vice-dean before his appointment (Table 13).

Table 13

Administrative Work Experience of Academic Deans

Participant number	Insider deans		Outsider deans	Administrative work experience
	<i>Own graduates</i>	<i>Non-graduates</i>		
Participant 1	X			
Participant 2			X	
Participant 3		X		X
Participant 4	X			X
Participant 5	X			X
Participant 6		X		X
Participant 7		X		X
Participant 8		X		X
Participant 9	X			
Participant 10		X		X
Participant 11		X		X
Participant 12	X			X
Participant 13			X	X
Participant 14	X			
Participant 15		X		X

Table 13 indicates that previous work experience in senior academic and administrative positions may suggest further promotions. However, four participants, namely

Participants 1, 2, 9, and 14, did not have previous administrative work experience, i.e., as department chairs. For instance, Participant 1 was immediately appointed as a dean after completing his aspirantura. Participant 9 had received two job offers for the department chair position but declined them due to family circumstances and a personal belief that “not everyone can be a manager” (Participant 9). In another case, Participant 2 was offered a dean’s job because of his significant applied experience in the industry and production sectors. Finally, Participant 14 was selected for the dean’s position due to his excellent interpersonal and professional skills and competencies.

Advantages of Internal Recruitment of Deans. Recruitment from within institutions helps universities cultivate their academic leaders and managers, who are promoted because of their exceptional academic records and work experience in the institution (Horta & Yudkevich, 2016). Moreover, they are familiar with internal institutional structures, power relations, organizational culture, and behavior. This makes an insider a preferable candidate for the dean’s administrative job. Finally, they know the institutional mentality and culture that are not learned but acquired throughout the years of working in the institution.

Participant 3 claimed:

I have been working in academia for 20 years. Therefore, I know the university structure, colleagues, senior administrators, students, and even the university mentality.

Participant 4 interpreted this “university mentality” as follows:

I know my colleagues and School. All of these things help me in my job. If I were appointed as a dean at another university, I would have troubles because I do not know the institution’s “internal kitchen” and its traditions. I would undoubtedly have hardships as a dean there.

Moreover, novice deans, as insiders, tend to adapt to new job responsibilities and duties more quickly (Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, and 15). For instance, Participant 14 claimed that his “knowledge of the home School, its people, and colleagues helped him adapt to a new position.” As for Participant 9, she admitted that:

It was easy for me to adapt [*to deanship*]. I know my faculty’s names and patronymic names. I know when they started working at this university and from which institution they came. Moreover, I know faculty members who lecture only core disciplines to prepare graduates for the labor market, and I know faculty who teach basic disciplines.

Thus, prior knowledge of the university, its structure, units, and, more importantly, colleagues serves as a prerequisite for the successful socialization of novice deans, even though a dean might have limited or no prior managerial experience. For this reason, Participant 9 claimed that the colleagues’ support gives her “the wings” to work better and harder. This suggests that university affiliation helps novice deans adapt smoothly to their new administrative roles, duties, and responsibilities.

Furthermore, insider deans can access additional support from colleagues in various situations. For instance, Participant 4 had an informal Council of Aksakals based on Kazakh traditions to respect the wisdom and experience of older people in the community called aksakals. *Aksakal* is translated from Kazakh into English as ‘*ak*’ (white) and ‘*sakal*’ (beard), meaning a wise man. The aksakals can support novice deans in learning decision-making and problem solving concerning issues related to remuneration, rewarding faculty and students, and other financial matters. For instance, the Council of Aksakals of Participant 4 consisted of the most reputable and authoritative professors and academics representing diverse scientific directions and disciplines taught in the academic school. The meetings of aksakals helped Participant 4 make decisions on sensitive issues regarding the selection of candidates

for any rewards, such as medals, gratitude certificates from the Minister of Education and Science, and other monetary rewards. More specifically, when collegial decisions involve reputable representatives of the school, there are no questions or doubts raised about the fairness and transparency of the decisions made collegially:

When the representatives of all scientific directions [*of the School*] sit in my office and discuss the candidates for reward, these decisions satisfy faculty members.

Everyone in the School knows about a limited number of candidates and our collegial decision-making. (Participant 4)

Although academic schools have collegial decision-making bodies such as councils, they may not include all representatives of the disciplines taught at schools. There are cases in which one department in the academic school has more than one discipline. Moreover, informal meetings are easier to organize, gather people, and make decisions without following rigid bureaucratic protocols.

Another advantage of the incumbent's insider background is the support they can receive from their colleagues in the form of mentorship. These mentors could be former thesis advisors in the dean's aspirantura programs or former deans of the schools who continue to work at the university. For example, Participant 9 consulted with her former thesis advisor, whereas Participants 7 and 11 received support from their former deans. Participant 11 claimed that the informal mentor's support was important to her. She became more confident in managing her School, academic staff, and students. Moreover, she earned self-confidence as an administrator and perceived the recognition of colleagues and senior administrators. This is why the dean's insider background means being privileged with the support of experienced colleagues. Thus, prior knowledge of the university, its organizational structure and units, schools, and, more importantly, people is critical for deans, especially at the very beginning of their professional journey.

External Hiring. There were two outsider deans in this study who had no previous affiliation with the institution before accepting their roles as deans. Participants 2 and 13 received job offers from university administrators to fulfill specific tasks in which their expertise was more beneficial and valuable. For instance, Participant 2 was invited by a rector to set up a new knowledge transfer office. Following the successful completion of the project, the central administration offered Participant 2 the dean's job as the former dean had retired. Similarly, Participant 13 was recruited from another university due to her extensive work experience in top management positions within the academic sector. Participant 13 played a key role in launching and managing a brand new academic school within a university that has already established a strong reputation as a higher education institution in the region.

In essence, external hiring is deemed appropriate by senior university administrators. Based on the background of Participants 2 and 13 (outsider deans), their work experience, skills, and expert knowledge in specific areas play a crucial role in the administrator's decisions regarding whom to offer a job.

Given that outsider deans are not knowledgeable as their colleagues (insider deans) about the organizational culture, mentality, and behaviors, the socialization and adaptation of novice deans to the workplace become essential. Based on the examples of two outsider deans in this study, their adaptation varied. For example, Participant 2 encountered difficulties when attempting to introduce changes, facing resistance from the long-standing academic staff, whom he referred to as "the old-timers." These academics had been working in the same university departments for 20-30 years. In addition, Participant 2 faced challenges with certain senior university administrators who displayed "Soviet authoritarian leadership style." They overreacted to his initiatives and ideas for improvements, perceiving them as criticism. The background of Participant 2, coming from the industry and production

sectors, may explain the hardships he encountered. He was initially unaware of the unspoken rules and power dynamics within the academic environment.

On the other hand, it is likely that a novice dean may not encounter similar hardships if they have the opportunity to set up a new academic school and recruit a new team for positions such as vice-deans, department chairs, faculty, and other administrative employees, as exemplified by Participant 13. In the case of Participant 13, she personally selected employees and built her team of qualified professionals. Therefore, the new academic and administrative staff were all newcomers, just like Participant 13. Her prior work experience, reputation, and official mandate to establish a new academic school helped her adapt to the dean's role and its responsibilities.

The Essence of Learning in Academic Deanship

Academic deanship is a complex and multifaceted job that consists of various situations in which an incumbent must respond promptly and accurately. For this reason, 14 research participants recognized self-education as a key to their successful job performance (Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15). This means that the more deans work, the more they understand that their work experience in teaching and research does not suffice for successful academic deanship. A dean needs a toolbox with diverse skills and competencies to tackle them. Therefore, novice deans need to learn new skills and knowledge, such as decision-making, communication, leadership, problem solving, and conflict management. Moreover, the participants emphasized the urgency to learn constantly to develop strong interpersonal skills to communicate and interact with diverse constituents and get along well with state authorities, senior university administration, faculty members, students, and employers. Participant 8 described his self-learning as his “non-standard approach” to manage his academic unit:

In my daily work, I have to use non-standard approaches, read the literature, be flexible, and not take things personally. If a person enters my office with a negative attitude, it is useless to argue with them. This can lead to serious consequences. So I say, “Ok. We will talk after the meeting, and so on.” Then, the person calms down, and we can talk constructively. Therefore, you have to feel the state of the person.

Participant 8 explained this approach in detail:

To understand interpersonal relationships in the workplace, I read additional literature on psychology, such as S. Freud. Moreover, I read the business literature to determine how to be a leader. This literature helps me understand the different relationships between people.

Learning specialized literature helped Participant 8 develop empathy to sense other people’s emotions, prevent conflicts, and maintain constructive dialogues with employees.

Participant 14 also asserted that a modern dean must find an individual approach to everyone in different situations to smooth out acute conflicts, deliver the information to others, and make reasonable decisions to earn credibility with colleagues. However, to develop and harness effective communication skills, a dean must be knowledgeable about the psychology of management (Participant 13). As a consequence, the dean’s good communication skills help incumbents build teams, promote teamwork, and organize the work of departments to establish a positive working climate (Participants 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15). For this reason, learning communication and team-building skills becomes critical because the dean’s job requires strong management and leadership skills. Participant 1 claimed, “A dean ought to be a leader in everything since everything in the School depends on them.”

Participant 13 complemented, “To be an academic dean means to be both a formal and informal leader.”

In addition, Participants 4, 6, 10, and 13 acknowledged the importance of conflict management and resolution skills. Given the dean's superior position in the school, they act as judges and arbiters, responsible for resolving disputes inside the academic unit:

The dean's job is depersonalized. My role as a dean is to ensure objective judgment and assessment of work quality. I never take the side of either a student or a faculty member. I have to be objective in many situations. (Participant 10)

Summary of Deans' Experiences of their Roles

The key findings of Research Question 1 suggest that the gender distribution of deans in public universities of Kazakhstan is almost balanced, with seven male and eight female deans based on the demographic data of participants. Their age range of academic deans shows that they are mostly middle-aged professionals, around 40-56 years old, holding the highest academic credentials such as Candidates of Sciences, Doctor of Sciences, and PhD. Only one participant had a Master's degree in sciences. Notably, the data on work experience as deans varied from several months to a maximum of 21 years.

Regarding the recruitment of deans, internal recruitment is the most common practice, with 87% of the deans in the study being hired from within their institutions. This includes insider deans who are either graduates or non-graduates of the universities they serve. These deans are familiar with the university structure, colleagues, and organizational culture, enabling them to quickly adapt to their new roles. They also benefit from additional support and assistance from their colleagues. On the other hand, external recruitment is less common and typically used by senior university administrators. They select external candidates with exceptional skills and knowledge to offer them decanal positions.

It is worth noting that regardless of the recruitment pathway, the study found that both insider and outsider academic deans recognize the importance of self-education. Self-learning

is crucial for deans to develop new skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to effectively perform their complex work.

Changes in Decanal Work in Kazakhstan

This section introduces the major findings related to Research Question 2, which aimed at identifying the participants' experiences and perceptions of the changes in academic deanship. The research participants noted that their dean's status was changed. If they were traditionally referred to as faculty members, they are now categorized as administrative-managerial staff members. As a result, the dean's mandatory teaching workload was also redefined, enabling deans with teaching waivers to enjoy greater freedom and flexibility in their work. Despite these positive changes in academic deanship, the participants recognized a number of limitations that significantly reduce their effectiveness and efficiency.

Changes in Academic Deanship

Collecting data in the recently reorganized non-profit joint-stock companies (NJSC) helped identify significant changes that have affected academic deanship. These changes primarily relate to the status of academic deans at public universities, their mandatory teaching responsibilities, and their autonomy in managing individual workloads.

Dean's Status and Teaching in the Dean's Role. One of the significant changes in academic deanship relates to the job incumbent's status. According to the Approval of the List of Job Titles of Employees related to Administrative Personnel (2015), academic deans are now classified as administrative staff. In addition, recent amendments in the Typical Qualification Requirements of Pedagogical Workers and Persons Equated to Them (2009) have granted universities staffing autonomy, allowing them to independently regulate their staffing policies and procedures following the Labor Code of Kazakhstan. Consequently, public universities have been enabled to strengthen the role and status of academic deans (See Table 14).

Table 14*Workload of Academic Deans in Kazakhstani Public Universities*

Research site	Participant number	Academic dean's status		Teaching waiver	Teaching load	Research & social service
		Administrator	Faculty			
University 1	Participant 1		X			X
	Participant 2		X		X	
University 2	Participant 3		X		X	
	Participant 4		X		X	X
University 3	Participant 5		X	X		X
	Participant 6		X	X	X	
	Participant 7		X	X	X	
	Participant 8		X	X	X	
University 4	Participant 9	X		X	X	
University 5	Participant 10	X		X		X
	Participant 11	X		X		
	Participant 12	X		X		X
University 6	Participant 13	X		X	X	X
	Participant 14	X		X	X	
University 7	Participant 15	X		X		X

Table 14 shows that seven research participants (specifically, Participants 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15) from Universities 4, 5, 6, and 7 refer to deans with an administrator's status. The essence of this status is that traditionally, deans were categorized as faculty members who were expected and required to teach. However, now deans-administrators have received a teaching waiver, which gives incumbents more freedom and flexibility to organize their daily routines independently. For instance, although Participants 9, 13, and 14 were exempted from mandatory teaching, they decided to continue lecturing students. On the other hand, Participants 5, 10, 12, and 15 decided to deal with graduate student advising and research work instead of teaching (See Table 14). As for Participant 11, she decided to focus solely on her administrative functions.

Furthermore, Table 14 illustrates that despite the staffing autonomy of universities, not all research participants were privileged by the administrator's status. For example, four participants from Universities 1 and 2 are still categorized as faculty members with compulsory teaching responsibilities. However, as an exception, Participant 1 was exempted from teaching:

We [*academic deans*] were told to focus on administrative duties. Before that, deans were busy with teaching responsibilities, and we could not fully oversee academic schools. Therefore, I was given a teaching waiver.

Notably, Participant 1 did not have a formal teaching waiver fixed in his Job Description. This means that he is still formally categorized as a faculty member:

Since the 2019-2020 academic year, my dean's position relates more to the administrative staff. I do not teach anymore. I perform only administrative functions. However, I do not say that I have the status of an administrative-managerial staff. We [*academic deans*] were just allowed not to teach. In addition, I also supervise the master's and doctoral students and their theses. (Participant 1)

In University 3, four academic deans (Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8) refer to academic staff with teaching waivers. Nevertheless, Participants 6, 7, and 8 preferred to lecture students, except Participant 5, who decided to deal with graduate student advising.

The findings regarding deans who are exempted from teaching but continue to teach indicate that deans also work part-time. According to Article 1 of the Labor Code of Kazakhstan, full-time employees are eligible to work part-time either within their current workplaces or outside their organizations. Therefore, full-time academic deans who are willing to take on a teaching load can work part-time. It is important to note that if a full-time employee works based on a standard 1 pay rate, a part-time employee works based on a maximum 0.5 pay rate and a minimum 0.25 pay rate. This is achieved by concluding separate

labor contracts for both full-time and part-time jobs with the employer (senior university administrators).

Regarding the volume of the teaching load of part-time academic deans, it is established based on the state norms and regulations. According to Decree No. 122 on the Recommended Teaching Load and Minimum Salary of Academic Staff at Kazakhstani HEIs issued on 25 March 2021 (MoES, 2021), the recommended teaching load for academic staff is not more than 680 academic hours (equivalent to 1 pay rate). Therefore, academic deans who choose to work part-time have a reduced teaching load compared to other academic staff due to their prevailing administrative functions and responsibilities. For instance, the average teaching load of academic deans at Atyrau Oil and Gas University is 400 academic hours (See Table 15).

Table 15

Teaching Load of Academic and Administrative Staff at Atyrau Oil and Gas University for the 2021-2022 academic year

Rank of academic and administrative staff		Teaching, not less than hours
Professor	All departments	550
	“Physical Culture and Sport,” “Pedagogy,” “Social-Humanitarian Disciplines”	450
Associate Professor	All departments	600
	“Physical Culture and Sport,” “Pedagogy,” “Social-Humanitarian Disciplines”	500
Senior Lecturer	All departments	650
Lecturer	“Physical Culture and Sport,” “Pedagogy,” “Social-Humanitarian Disciplines”	550
Academic Dean		400
Vice-Dean		500

Note. (Atyrau Oil and Gas University, 2021)

Specifically, the average teaching load of academic deans may vary depending on academic institutions. For instance, based on the Provisions on Planning and Calculating of Working Time Budget of Academic Staff at Toraighyrov University, the average teaching load of academic deans is 360 academic hours (Toraighyrov University, 2022).

It should be noted that based on Table 15, the average teaching load of academic deans does not significantly differ from the teaching load of professors at Atyrau Oil and Gas University. This indicates that academic deans must balance their engagement with teaching, research, and administrative tasks, striving to function effectively as both academics and administrators (See Table 14). For instance, Participant 7 admitted that she is working as a Professor in the Department based on a 0.5 pay rate. This means she is expected to handle multiple responsibilities, including lecturing students, writing research articles, applying for grants, and participating in designing a new master's program. However, in order to handle all tasks, Participant 7 can only dedicate 50 per cent of her time to administrative duties, with the remaining 50 per cent allocated to research and teaching.

In addition, the findings indicate that academic deans who have administrative responsibilities also actively engage in teaching and scholarly work that demonstrates their continued interest in academic careers. For example, 12 out of 15 research participants (Participants 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15) emphasized the significance of teaching in their roles as deans. Specifically, this importance was expressed by both deans with the administrator's status and deans who are categorized as faculty members. They claimed that teaching helps them stay well-informed about faculty responsibilities and aware of the requirements for designing academic programs to assess the quality of training and learning in their schools.

It is worth noting that academic deans are expected to support their faculty by mentoring junior faculty members on the tenure track, helping them succeed in meeting the requirements for tenure, and providing all school faculty with the necessary guidance, resources, and advocacy. In addition, by teaching, deans can connect with students, assisting them in learning and obtaining high-quality training that corresponds to international standards and the labor market's needs (Participants 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15). Thus, teaching is an integral part in the dean's work because it allows an incumbent to better perform their responsibilities:

A dean must be someone who has worked as a faculty member or department chair before deanship. The incumbent has to go through all steps of the academic career to understand the job peculiarities and know what to demand from the employees and faculty members. If a dean does not understand the School's internal processes, it will be difficult for them to perform this job. (Participant 13)

Participant 9 explained the importance of her engagement in teaching activities. First, this experience provides her with valuable insights into the internal operations of the academic unit, which allows Participant 9 to establish reasonable expectations for academic staff. Second, she noted that understanding the essence of syllabus design, lesson execution, and student evaluation enables her to offer meaningful support to less experienced faculty members. Finally, Participant 9 was convinced that administrative and managerial functions in academia must not exclude teaching responsibilities. Similarly, Participant 14 emphasized the following:

If I do not lecture and teach students, as a dean, then I will not know the level of the students' knowledge who are studying at our university, how they are prepared, or not prepared in secondary schools. Since I teach doctoral students, I can determine their preparation level and how they were trained in previous courses.

Furthermore, eight research participants affirmed the need for research work in the dean's position (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 14, and 15). For example, Participant 13 claimed, "A dean must carry out research, have periodical publications, obtain a scientific degree, and participate in research projects not to lag behind the research endeavors in the taught disciplines." The dean's requirement to conduct research implies their responsibility to develop this aspect as well:

I have no obligation to carry out research. However, we have rankings and tough competition. Therefore, I must do research, write grant proposals, and so on. In other words, it is crucial to keep moving forward. In addition, I must involve each School department in research production. This means that an academic dean must be a scholar. Indeed, it is challenging to oversee the School and carry out research.

Anyway, an academic dean must conduct research, hold a degree, have publications from time to time, and participate in research projects. (Participant 13)

The abovementioned suggests that there are different motives for deans with teaching waivers to continue lecturing students. First, to perform the dean's role successfully, it is essential for the incumbent to act as a role model for faculty and students, demonstrating skillful leadership while overseeing diverse internal processes within the academic units, such as teaching and learning, research, and administrative-organizational activities. Second, since current deans were previously senior faculty members, they strongly associate themselves with academic identities and careers. For example, Participant 13 highlighted that she took on a minimum teaching load (0.25 pay rate) not to lose her teaching competencies. As for Participant 6, she enjoys working with students and, despite her teaching waiver, she opted for a 0.5 pay rate to have the opportunity to continue teaching students.

These findings on the dean's status and teaching waiver exemplify that, on the one hand, there is a significant step forward in reconsidering the dean's role from a faculty

member to an administrator without mandatory teaching. On the other hand, the administrative aspect of academic deanship closely relates to teaching and research work. Therefore, despite having a teaching waiver, deans-administrators find it necessary to lecture to “connect” with faculty and students, enabling them to perform their jobs more effectively. Apart from this connection, a teaching waiver gives current deans more freedom to plan and adjust their busy work schedules:

I decided not to teach because of my previous teaching experience. The educational process takes a lot of time, such as preparing lecture materials, monitoring the timely delivery of work, developing materials for knowledge control, and much more. As a dean, I already have many tasks and assignments to be done. (Participant 12)

However, mandatory teaching does not necessarily stimulate deans to fulfill their functions better, especially when it relates to deans who are categorized as faculty members. This is because teaching responsibility is a part of their dean’s role. These deans, as faculty members, become extremely busy being expected to manage teaching, research, and administrative work all at once. They are involved in designing academic programs, carrying out research, publishing articles, supporting faculty and students, designing curriculum, developing academic programs, and assessing the quality of teaching and learning. Unsurprisingly, academic deans often feel pulled in different directions as they struggle to balance teaching, research, and administrative activities.

Limitations in the Dean’s Job

This section presents a set of limitations that the research participants identified in their dean’s roles. These limitations include top-down management and hierarchical relationships with senior university administrators, unnecessary bureaucratic burdens, and the deans’ restricted authority to behave as school administrators. In addition, this section

describes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic deans since the data collection coincided with the national lockdown.

Top-Down Management. One of the obstacles the research participants emphasized in their jobs pertains to the existing top-down management in universities and hierarchical relationships between senior university administrators and academic deans. These power imbalances over three decades were developed because of the centralized university governance system, resulting in academic deanship with little power and authority as school administrators. Six research participants (Participants 2, 5, 8, 10, 13, and 14) noted hierarchical relationships in their universities, including the senior administrator's micromanagement of the dean's offices. Participant 14 explained:

The deans' relations with senior administrators are based on a system of strict vertical interactions. If something should be done, it must be done. Our country has a strict vertical management system that implies obedience to authority. If an administrator says to do something, it must be done without any objections. If a decision has been made at the top level, we [*academic deans*] cannot ignore it and must realize the decision. Therefore, it is not always feasible to perform our jobs effectively.

These "vertical interactions" encompass more than just communication between deans and university administrators. In fact, they also involve interactions between universities and the Ministry of Education and Science, which sets the regulatory frameworks that all universities must adhere to. The authority and expertise of the Ministry in policy-making are unquestioned. Therefore, state regulations can impede the work of universities and dean's offices, which have to navigate through complex and ambiguous norms and standards.

Participant 13 shared a situation that involved the adoption of a new state standard on a particular major. The state standard provided detailed instructions on how the elective component should be developed, including specific disciplines and schedules to be followed.

It is important to note that each university has the right to individually design their own electives. However, due to the limitations and restrictions imposed by the standard, Participant 13 and her colleagues sent an official letter to the Ministry, requesting corrections to the standard. Unfortunately, their requested changes were not implemented, which meant that Participant 13 and her colleagues had to find a way to design the elective in accordance with the approved standard.

This situation with the Ministry exemplifies the potential ambiguities and shortcomings of existing standards and norms, highlighting the importance of good law-making to eliminate any equivocality. Despite universities striving to operate within the boundaries of the law, the presence of potential discrepancies, ambiguities, or outdated regulations puts significant pressure on universities, including deans like Participant 13. Consequently, dealing with policy ambiguities and discrepancies becomes a burdensome task for academic institutions, emphasizing the importance of clear, updated, and well-considered law-making to minimize discrepancies and allow institutions to focus on their core responsibilities.

For this reason, Participant 2 compared his communication with university authorities to top-down interactions similar to the Soviet era:

Unfortunately, at the level of university management or state agency, there are primarily people of the Soviet mindset. Wherever such people exist, it is impossible to speak of any initiatives. For example, if I raise some issue, it might be perceived as I am against the university administration. These people work based on an outdated system that does not affect institutional development. In contrast, it limits institutions in many issues. For example, when I want to initiate improvements, the answer is no. My initiatives are perceived as a criticism.

This is why top-down relations in universities do not support the dean's ideas and plans, compromising positive changes. As a result, subordinates in such vertical relations do not propose initiatives and improvements. Instead, they comply with the senior administrator's decisions. Participant 2 explained that the established vertical relations developed the fear of disagreement with the administration:

Unfortunately, we have administrators who have been working since the Soviet times. If any faculty or mid-level manager speaks against superiors, the person will be prosecuted and punished. This is how the old Soviet system works. If you resist the university leadership, it means you 'go against the tide.' Thus, anyone can be accused of something and fired at any moment. This is an authoritarian management style.

This is why the top-down management of public universities does not assume the dean's executive authority. Moreover, if there are weaknesses in the administrator's decisions, deans have no power to influence those decisions. For instance, Participant 1 underwent a downsizing of vice-deans due to the newly established Department for Student Affairs (DSA), which took half of the dean's office's functions on student matters (i.e., the stipends, references, and other student-related issues). Given the 'decreased' workload of the dean's offices, the administration reduced the number of vice-deans:

The university administration reduced the number of my vice-deans with the creation of DSA. They think that one vice-dean in the dean's office suffices because a dean has a teaching waiver. However, we resent it because we need at least one more vice-dean on academic or research matters. Nevertheless, our administration says that we must cope with one vice-dean. I used to have four vice-deans, but now I have only one vice-dean, one secretary, and me in the dean's office.

It is noteworthy that Participant 1 managed one of the largest schools at the university. It comprised about 3500 students, whom he could oversee with the help of four vice-deans.

Nevertheless, Participant 1 had to accept the university administration's decision. In total, six research participants expressed their frustration with the lack of vice-deans (Participants 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14). Moreover, Participant 8 claimed that one vice-dean is "categorically insufficient" to manage his School effectively. It is worth noting that Participant 8 had only 600 students in the School. He asserted that the essence of vice-deans is to oversee specific areas in academic, methodological, social, and research domains to support academic deans and the dean's offices:

It would be much better if there were vice-deans dealing with their areas of responsibility. We [*deans*] do not always have sufficient time to cover everything. We can assign tasks to our faculty members, but they do not implement all of the tasks, because they [*tasks*] are voluntary and unpaid. If vice-deans were responsible for their particular functions, the work of the dean's offices would become more productive.

(Participant 7)

Furthermore, deans at University 3 (Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8) experienced the dissolution of the departments. This restructuring replaced department chairs with academic program heads (APH) to improve the quality of the taught programs. Consequently, restructuring improved the quality of educational programs but negatively influenced managing people inside academic units:

It is difficult for me without department chairs. In the past, a dean worked with 3-4 department chairs to distribute them assignments. Now I have to work with each of the 10-15 academic program heads. Indeed, they improved the quality of our academic programs, but in terms of managing teams, it became worse. (Participant 8)

Participant 6 addressed this issue as follows:

I think the dissolution of the departments and the removal of the department chair's position were not the right decisions. Department chairs used to organize faculty and

their work. They were leaders who supervised faculty members. More specifically, deans lost somebody on whom they could lean in their work.

It should be noted that Participant 6 does not have a vice-dean because the primary focus of her academic unit is to teach basic disciplines, such as Physical Training, Kazakh language, History of Kazakhstan, and others. However, her colleagues (Participants 5, 7, and 8) have one vice-dean each due to their schools teaching core disciplines and preparing students for the labor market.

The introduction of academic program heads overlooked the essence of the traditional function of department chairs. However, based on Participant 5, the idea behind APH was not only to improve the quality of the taught programs but also to transfer all functions of traditional department chairs to APHs. However, the inconsistencies in designing and evaluating a new job with clear duties and functions resulted in the APH's "unconfirmed status" in dealing with faculty management (Participant 5).

In the top-down university governance system in Kazakhstan, academic deans hold little power and authority to behave as school administrators. As a result, their main role has become to provide formal control over the academic unit, faculty members, and students (Participant 1).

Restrictions of the Dean's Authority. Given the strict control over academic deans and their offices, it is not surprising that the dean's decision-making is dramatically limited:

There is very little that depends on a dean. I must work not on my own initiatives but on requests, orders, and goals set outside my office. There is not much I can do under such circumstances. (Participant 14)

Participant 5 doubted that the current academic deans have any of the dean's authority and powers to make decisions:

At present, deans have no status as it was before. Now a dean is someone in between a faculty and an administrator. However, academic deans need more independence in decision-making and finances. For instance, I decided that our School will not have an intake for a particular major or we will open a new major this year... What I mean by the dean's independence is that senior administrators do not question my decisions as a dean.

In total, eight academic deans (Participants 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, and 14) acknowledged the weaknesses of their administrator's status and recognized their vulnerable positions:

I would enable academic deans with more management levers referring to not waiting for the administrators' approvals and permissions, but the ability of deans to take decisions independently. Deans need more freedom to manage their schools. (Participant 6)

In addition, Participant 14 commented on this issue as follows:

Many minor issues could be resolved at the dean's level. However, we have to resolve them at the level of the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs. I think these minor issues the Vice-Rector could transfer to deans. The simplest issues, such as the sick leave of a student or the student's failure to submit a course paper on time, must be solved at the Vice-Rector level. This is because academic deans do not have access to the computer-based student database to prevent corruption risks.

The limited decision-making of academic deans also concerns financial matters.

School funding is centralized and controlled by vice-rectors or directors who oversee finances. However, the participants from all seven universities (Participants 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, and 15) disagreed with centralized decision-making on school funding because it leads to a 'one-size-fits-all' approach in managing diverse academic schools. This approach

to funding allocation fails to address the unique needs and challenges of each particular academic school:

All finances should be in the hands of the deans. This means the administration spends money only with the agreement of academic deans. For instance, my office was given ten notebooks for the academic year. However, it is clear that what I need are file folders instead of notebooks! Therefore, academic schools need funding, so we [*deans*] decide what to buy and what quantity. (Participant 4)

However, the dean's efforts to request separate funding from the administration did not reveal significant shifts in the situation:

I would like to encourage students or faculty for their outstanding achievements... But I cannot do that because our School does not have its own funding. I have already discussed this question with the administration to give us [*academic deans*] minimum funding with mandatory control to allow Schools to decide what to buy and who to award and encourage. Academic deans stay closer to department chairs, faculty members, and students. (Participant 10)

More specifically, academic deans are also restricted from attending meetings where school funding is discussed and allocated:

We [*academic deans*] would like to be better represented in the allocation of funds at the highest level – at the level of the Supervisory Board. Unfortunately, we [*deans*] are not represented in such top-level meetings. (Participant 10)

The role of the dean's office in the school funding process is to create an annual financial school budget for the upcoming year. This task involves collecting applications and proposals from department chairs within the school, who provide justifications for necessary capital repairs in laboratories and classrooms. The school budget primarily focuses on three key components: expenditures on faculty (including professional development and training

courses), students (involving participation in events like Olympiads, contests, and internships), and equipment for laboratories. With this budget, the necessary expenses for equipping laboratories and purchasing teaching aids and materials are adequately covered. However, equipment, materials, and services procurement occurs through the state system, which prioritizes the lowest prices for services and goods. This, in turn, can often result in poor quality of these services and goods (Participant 12). Academic deans are responsible to prepare funding allocation requests for the trips of students or faculty members, which then must undergo approval or disapproval by university administrators.

Notably, academic deans can sometimes maneuver within this rigid funding allocation system. For instance, Participant 12 noted that she can reallocate funding from one line item to another if they are similar in terms of the subject of the expense, such as trips to attend conferences. Therefore, if there are no funds available to organize the student's trip, but there is funding allocated for faculty trips, Participant 12 reassigns the funding initially earmarked for faculty to cover the students' needs.

Despite the limitations in the dean's role, they bear full accountability for any issues related to their academic schools. For example, Participant 2 highlighted that when an emergency happens to a student, the first person questioned is the dean regarding why the student's safety was not ensured, even though such responsibility is not specified in the dean's job descriptions. Participant 5 explained this full responsibility of the dean's office as follows:

The Dean's Job Descriptions clearly indicate the duties, but in fact, the incumbent must do everything! They are responsible for absolutely everything! There is a recent example of a graduation ceremony. In general, the dean's offices organize the graduation ceremony, whereas the Office Registrar is in charge of the graduates'

degree certificates. This year, it turned out that the Office Registrar left the entire graduation ceremony on us [*the dean's office*].

Based on the aforementioned, despite academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities operate with limited authority and powers, they must comply with centralized decision-making and funding, which hinders their effective job performance. For this reason, more autonomy could make the dean's work "almost ideal," as noted by Participant 5.

Bureaucracy in the Dean's Job. The limitations in the work of the deans and the dean's offices discussed above (top-down management, centralized school funding, and the dean's restricted authority) create unfavorable working conditions, when bureaucratic burdens characterize the deans' work. Participant 6 noted that the dean's limited decision-making makes them waste time waiting for the administrators' approvals and permissions:

The speed of decision-making does not always depend on me as a dean of the School. There are always higher-level 'vertical structures' that may slow down the speed of decision-making. (Participant 13)

Likewise, Participants 6 and 10 were disappointed because of "the long process of the administrator's approvals." Moreover, paperwork is another obstacle that complicates the dean's work. Four research participants (Participants 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 14) complained about the increased number of administrative departments that put immense pressure on the dean's offices requiring various reports and papers:

To my mind, academic schools must be free from the policy of paperwork. A large amount of A4 papers are wasted on various reports, self-evaluations, etc. I wish the reporting load was reduced and replaced to make people's work more productive... (Participant 14)

Another concern related to the administrative departments is that irrespective of their existence, the dean's offices have to do the entire job themselves:

We have many administrative departments. They all want something from the dean's offices, but they work like extras! I would like them to do their jobs. In my previous job, the Internship Department was responsible for signing internship contracts. At this university, I have to sign internship contracts in the accountant's office. Then I have to distribute copies of the contract to students, the Internship Department, etc. I do everything myself. At the end of the year, they required a report on the number of employed graduates. However, this is their job to work on graduate employment! Our job is to train students. (Participant 8)

Similarly, Participant 6 questioned the need for structural units at the university if deans do the entire work themselves:

The dean is responsible for the entire school, and for me, that responsibility is too much. I do not think that a dean should be responsible for everything. The dean has many incidental functions, such as job interviews for faculty positions. I think the Human Resources Department should do this. If you look at the dean's functions, it seems that all of them refer to the dean's job. However, when you start working, you ask yourself why we need all those structural units if a dean is in charge of the personnel potential development, personnel reserve list, etc.

These real-life examples of the research participants demonstrate that the dean's offices and academic deans are stuck in the extensive responsibilities and duties coupled with bureaucratic burdens.

COVID-19 and Its Impact on Academic Deanship. The data collection for this study coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic in Kazakhstan, highlighting the crucial role played by academic deans during this disruptive time for higher education institutions.

The pandemic emphasized the importance of academic deans, who had to quickly reformat themselves to adjust to new environmental requirements and challenges. They

efficiently organized and coordinated the transition from traditional learning (face-to-face lectures, workshops, etc.) to distance learning, applying new technologies and knowledge (Coll & Ruch, 2021). In addition, they managed final qualification examinations, supervised graduate students' theses, facilitated the professional development of faculty members to enable online lectures, organized meetings with students and administrators, and provided career guidance for school leavers in the city and region. Moreover, deans had to cancel activities and events in a matter of weeks to shift any communication with the administration, faculty, and students to technology-facilitated communication, which also required time for learning and adaptation.

It is important to note that often academic deans had no experience or needed skills to guide actions, such as moving to a remote learning mode, sending students off campus, and closing dorms and campus facilities, such as libraries and gyms (Participants 4 and 6). As a result, the pandemic underscored the critical role of deans in problem solving and crisis management, where they had to make decisions regarding new policies, health and safety protocols, provide guidance on online teaching methodologies, and address technical challenges faced by faculty and students. Consequently, deans worked closely with university administrators, faculty, administrative staff, and students to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on academic operations, ensuring that everyone had the necessary resources (such as equipment, computers, and the Internet connection) and support to continue teaching and learning remotely. For instance, Participant 4 negotiated with *akims* (mayors) of the regions to secure the Internet access for undergraduate students living in rural areas. Participant 6 encountered a situation where a faculty member, who was a sole provider for her family, did not have a computer at home for work. In response, Participant 6 requested university administrators to allow the faculty member to borrow a university laptop and also raised funds to cover the Internet expenses.

Furthermore, the pandemic presented additional challenges for deans, including a lack of planning and time management in their work:

My work starts at 8 am. I have to check the emails and messages on WhatsApp.

Moreover, I have numerous calls and discussions regarding various issues. I have 3-4 Zoom video conferences per day. I work until almost midnight. (Participant 2)

Participant 5 expressed her frustration with the excessive number of daily meetings: The endless meetings take a lot of time. You can be informed that there will be a meeting in an hour and be sure it will last for one hour. However, the worst thing is that it may not have anything constructive to discuss and decide. Currently, we have an increasing number of pointless meetings. Moreover, nobody can manage their time.

The research participants noted that meetings were often arranged spontaneously without sufficient preparation, questioning their effectiveness:

Our meetings are scheduled spontaneously. They lack efficiency because before discussing and solving an issue, a dean must be acquainted with it and prepare for the meeting with the administration. What we have is that administrators ask us [*academic deans*] questions, but you do not know the issue in detail. As a result, the meeting ends with the dean's tasks to do this and that and report the results tomorrow in the meeting. In other words, these meetings do not make any sense. (Participant 5)

Participant 6 also highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic placed significant burdens on academic deans, resulting in their overwork to address a wide range of issues.

These real-life examples demonstrate the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic deans and their offices. The pandemic not only emphasized the pivotal role of academic deans in mobilizing resources, coordinating activities, managing

personnel, and solving problems but also imposed irregular working hours and extreme busyness, ultimately affecting their emotional well-being and personal lives.

Summary of the Changes in Decanal Work

The key findings from Research Question 2 indicate that the introduced changes in academic deanship resulted in deans being categorized as administrative-managerial staff with teaching waivers. This allowed them to be free from mandatory teaching and research responsibilities to focus on administrative tasks. However, the findings also suggest that despite the dean's administrator status and teaching waivers, they still prefer to engage in lecturing students to ensure teaching and learning quality and support and guide their faculty members. This finding suggests that deans still associate their professional identities with academic careers.

It is important to note that despite the dean's status upgrade, there are specific obstacles that continue to impede the effectiveness and efficiency of academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities. These obstacles include top-down university governance and centralized funding, which limit the dean's authority to behave as school leaders. Consequently, despite academic deans in Kazakhstan refer to administrators, they hold little power to realize their potential in the administrative position.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on deans and their offices. It emphasized the pivotal role that deans play in responding to and adapting to disruptive changes by mobilizing resources and coordinating personnel. However, the pandemic also put additional pressures on deans, leading to their regular overwork.

Managerial Roles of Academic Deans

This section of the Findings chapter introduces the dean's experiences and perceptions of their managerial roles in public universities in Kazakhstan to answer Research Question 3. The section presents the findings aligned with Henry Mintzberg's ten executive

roles related to interpersonal relations, information exchange and processing, and decision-making capacity. Finally, the section characterizes the perceptions of current academic deans of their roles as school administrators.

Managerial Roles of Academic Deans in Kazakhstani Public Universities

To identify the managerial roles of academic deans in public universities of Kazakhstan, I created the interview protocol with prompts on Mintzberg's executive roles based on a 5-point Likert scale to determine the interviewees' degree of agreement or disagreement with their roles. The research participants specified their responses using a scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high), which allowed me to explore the extent of respondents' managerial roles, their strengths, and the intensity of those roles (See Appendix A). The executive behavior ranking of academic deans at Kazakhstani public universities is illustrated in Table 16 below (See Table 16):

Table 16

Managerial Roles of Academic Deans in Kazakhstani Public Universities based on Mintzberg

Role category	Roles	Very low (1)	Low (2)	Average (3)	High (4)	Very high (5)
Interpersonal	1. Figurehead	1	1	2	3	8
	2. Leader	-	1	-	3	11
	3. Liaison	-	2	1	6	6
Informational	4. Monitor	-	-	1	2	12
	5. Disseminator	-	-	1	1	13
	6. Spokeperson	-	1	2	3	9
Decisional	7. Entrepreneur	1	1	1	6	6
	8. Disturbance handler	2	2	1	4	6
	9. Resource allocator	1	3	7	2	2
	10. Negotiator	1	2	1	1	10

Table 16 shows that the research participants perform all ten managerial roles related to interpersonal relations, information exchange and processing, and decision-making. However, it is important to highlight that the participants' ranking of their individual

executive behavior, based on a scale, differed from their own interpretations of these roles. As a result, the variations were identified between the participants' ranking scores and their perceptions and experiences of the managerial roles. Considering this, the following subsections will analyze each category of managerial roles separately to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the dean's executive behavior.

Interpersonal Roles. The role of an academic dean is a public position that involves interactions with multiple and diverse stakeholders both within and outside the institution. In this study, eight participants confirmed their *Figurehead* role and rated it as "very high" (See Table 16). In addition, three other participants rated this role as "high." This *Figurehead* role is essential for deans as they act on behalf of the academic school and carry out various social and ceremonial responsibilities. They include welcoming new first-year students, delivering speeches at graduation ceremonies, hosting delegations and visitors, as well as organizing and coordinating social activities and events. However, it is important to mention that this role does not grant "legal authority" (Participant 7). Participant 7 acknowledged her role as a *Figurehead* in organizing and coordinating different social events to promote her academic school and university within the public community. Nevertheless, when it comes to matters of legal authority, such as signing memorandums of understanding with another school, that responsibility falls to university leadership, who is authorized to sign legal documents, not the dean. For this reason, four participants (namely Participants 2, 3, 4, and 14) rated their *Figurehead* role as ranging from very low to average, indicating that they have little influence in their dean's position. In this case, it is worth noting that Participant 10 rated his *Figurehead* role as "high." However, he interpreted his experience of this role as being akin to "a wedding general." This interpretation of the role suggests that Participant 10 relates himself to a dummy person, who is recruited only to represent the academic school, having imaginary authority, and playing no significant role in any matter. This response from

Participant 10 highlights the importance of considering not only the participant's ranking of the role but also their individual interpretations of it.

In terms of the role of the *Leader*, 11 research participants marked it as "very high." Participants 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 14 understand their leadership roles as taking responsibility for actions and decisions at the levels of their academic schools, faculty members, and students. This is why Participants 1 and 2 asserted that they are "leaders in everything," Participant 3 claimed that he is "a leader all year round," and Participant 13 said that she is "an everyday leader." Participant 10 described the dean's leadership role as "to advocate the interests of the School being always on the cutting edge," being responsible for "everything," and being accountable for the outcomes and consequences. Participant 14 explained his role as follows:

In the workplace, I use collegial discussions and decision-making. However, eventually, I make decisions; therefore, I take full responsibility for decisions. In addition, when there is no agreement among my colleagues, I again decide how to solve the problem. I instruct my colleagues on what to do and how.

In addition, the dean's leadership role is understood as being a role model for faculty and employees:

A dean must exemplify how to work and in what direction to move forward. The incumbent must bring people together to build teamwork and convince a person or a group of people to accomplish assignments. This quality [*leadership*] develops gradually, becoming vital to the team. (Participant 13)

The participants' responses indicate that academic deans interpret their leadership role as providing guidance and support for the team and the university. They also focus on managing the performance and responsibilities of everyone in the group, being good

communicators, motivators for teamwork. In addition, they set personal examples for faculty members, employees, and students, becoming a source of inspiration for them.

Twelve participants marked the *Liaison* role as “very high” and “high” (See Table 16). The dean’s representative position denotes acting on behalf of the school to develop and maintain communication with internal (senior administrators, faculty members, administrative units, and students) and external stakeholders (employers, alumni, etc.). However, academic deans do not do this job alone. This role is jointly shared with other academic and administrative departments. For instance, advisors and vice-deans on academic and social affairs oversee students’ learning progress and maintain communication with students and their parents. Deans may engage in the process when vice-deans cannot solve the conflict between a student and faculty at their level of responsibility (Participant 13). Furthermore, if there is a problem with international students, then the dean’s offices cooperate with the International Office (Participant 1). Similarly, communication with the state authorities occurs through a buffer body. For instance, deans submit the required data to the Research Department, which collects all school reports, aggregates them, and sends a single report to the Ministry of Education and Science (Participant 3). In addition, deans liaise with businesses and industries to manage and maintain communication with alumni, employers, donors, and sponsors (Participants 1, 2, 8, 10, 13, 14, and 15). Thus, the dean’s position stipulates interpersonal relations within and outside universities.

Informational Roles. Thirteen participants marked their role as *Disseminators* of information as “very high” (See Table 16). This role implies that deans receive all information, such as assignments from the administration, decrees, reports, meeting minutes, and others, to analyze them and communicate potentially useful information to their faculty members, administrative staff, and students. If there is an assignment, then deans familiarize themselves with it, its complexity and volume, the deadlines, and the resources needed to

delegate the task to employees (vice-deans, department chairs, and faculty) to ensure the timely accomplishment of the assignment. In the *Disseminator* role, deans may share their experiences and knowledge with less experienced faculty members to organize teaching and learning processes to assess the student's academic progress. As such, they may also serve as mentors for junior faculty members.

Furthermore, the role of the *Monitor* is critical. Twelve respondents marked this role as "very high." This role is essential in analyzing the effectiveness of the school's performance in teaching, learning, research, and social activities (See Table 16). Participant 1 asserted that control is critical in his job, as deans must control all internal processes. For instance, deans control the provision of lectures and their quality. In parallel, academic deans check the punctuality of lecturers and oversee the students' attendance (Participants 7 and 9). Moreover, Participant 14 acknowledged, "There is no School without analytical work." Therefore, Participants 4, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15 emphasized the importance of analyzing internal and external processes within and outside their institutions, conducting benchmarking to learn from the best practices in comparing universities, schools, departments, and academic programs.

The final role in the informational role cluster is the *Spokesperson* role. Nine study participants emphasized the importance of this role by rating it as "very high," while three other participants marked it as "high." The importance of the *Spokesperson* role lies in the dean's accountability to represent and speak on behalf of their academic schools. They are responsible to transmit information about their schools and universities, as well as their goals to public communities outside the institution. In addition, academic deans hold weekly meetings with the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs or the First Vice-Rector to keep them updated on school matters. Furthermore, once a year, they report the progress and achievements of their academic units during the annual meetings of the Institutional

Academic Council. During these meetings, they present reports to university administrators, faculty members, and other university employees to inform them about the performance of the academic unit.

Decisional Roles. Despite ten study participants indicated the *Negotiator* role as “very high,” this role cluster presents a contradictory picture about the dean’s managerial roles in Kazakhstani public universities.

Academic deans perform this role when they engage with employers or sponsors to explore potential partnerships that can be mutually beneficial. These partnerships may involve co-advising student theses, organizing student internships, or creating graduate employment opportunities. As Participant 15 noted, negotiations become an “integral part of the job” for deans. Ten respondents confirmed that the *Negotiator* role is valuable in managing schools as it allows them to be directly involved in significant negotiations within the team, at the school level, and with external stakeholders such as businesses and industries. However, it is important to highlight that the responses from the participants indicate that the extent to which the *Negotiator* role is exercised can vary depending on the specific situation. The scope of this role depends on what issues need to be negotiated and the parties involved. For instance, certain aspects of the dean’s participation in high-stakes meetings, such as funding allocation for the school, may not be negotiable due to centralized funding. As a result, funding is allocated equally to all schools, regardless of their size, specific needs, and individual peculiarities. Therefore, the dean’s role as the *Negotiator* is situational, despite ten participants marking it as “very high.” In other words, the extent of the dean’s *Negotiator* role is more focused on functions related to the day-to-day operations, such as discussing the organization of internships for students or employment opportunities for graduates (Participants 8 and 10).

Ten participants emphasized the importance of the *Disturbance handler* role in their work (See Table 16). Typically, deans exercise this role to address conflicts that arise between faculty and students or among faculty members. Conflicts are a common phenomenon in large teams, such as academic units, and as a result, deans often serve as arbiters to resolve such conflicts among employees. However, it is essential to note that the dean's *Disturbance handler* role has a much broader meaning and scope beyond merely managing interpersonal relations and resolving conflicts within teams. According to Tovmasyan (2017), when a team faces an unexpected roadblock, it is the team leader's responsibility to take charge, plan an action plan, and engage the necessary personnel to address and solve the problem. These roadblocks may relate to critical issues, such as a lack of resources – both material and nonmaterial – that can influence the functioning of academic units, departments, research centers, or laboratories. In addition, challenges may relate to the need for human resources, time pressures, and other concerns. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Participant 10 mentioned, "Where the matters involve finances, I stay out of it." This reaction by academic deans to financial constraints does not characterize them as effective *Disturbance handlers*, indicating that this dean's role also becomes situational when dealing with high-stakes issues.

Next, 12 out of 15 research participants emphasized the importance of their *Entrepreneur* role. The dean's entrepreneurship can be observed in various examples, such as utilizing 3D printing to design academic programs (Participant 1), conducting market analysis to identify unique selling points for launching business projects (Participant 7), or performing competitive benchmarking to learn from best practices (Participant 13). In addition, other deans associate their entrepreneurial role with fostering communication and collaboration with businesses and industries. In essence, the participants highlighted the critical role of their entrepreneurial behavior. However, to realize these 'entrepreneurial' initiatives,

academic deans need to secure funding to invest in business projects. It should be noted that not all deans have access to this initial funding base, except for those whose academic schools were selected for public financing within the SPIID-2 program (as noted by Participant 1). This program funded the development of laboratories, equipment purchases, and the establishment of business incubators. Moreover, the centralized funding and bureaucracy limit the dean's ability to address problems in a timely manner, generate new ideas, and effectively lead projects and initiatives to tangible results (Participants 2 and 11). As a result, as Participant 3 pointed out, "The commercialization of services [*at the school level*] has become a painful issue with the transition to NJSC."

Given the situational character of the *Negotiator*, *Disturbance handler*, and *Entrepreneur* roles, the *Resource allocator* role is the least presented role in the dean's role repertoire. Seven research participants rated this role at an average level, while four participants considered it "low" and "very low" (See Table 16). These responses suggest that the dean's ability to make decisions about finances is considerably limited. The dean's role in creating the school budget is restricted to forming an annual budget by collecting applications from department chairs for equipment purchases and capital repairs. The school budget is based on the state procurement services (Participants 8, 10, and 14). This finding is thought-provoking because the reorganization into NJSC was supposed to grant universities financial autonomy to foster their innovativeness and entrepreneurship.

However, currently, financial and budgetary issues are still centrally determined. For instance, academic deans may recommend or propose rewards for their academic staff or students, but senior administrators have the authority to approve them. Similarly, the school budget may include provisions for academic staff travel, but it is the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs who authorizes the expenditures on travel funding for faculty or students (Participants 13 and 15). In this case, the dean's role is to justify the request for a professional

development program (Participants 6 and 13). Nevertheless, the final decision rests with the university administration (Participants 6, 10, and 13).

Academic deans perform *Figurehead*, *Leader*, and *Liaison* roles to effectively manage and maintain diverse relations with internal and external stakeholders. They provide leadership to faculty, administrative staff, and students, taking full responsibility for the performance of their schools. In addition, deans actively monitor industry-related information and ensure its effective transmission to their teams, staying responsive to the changing environment. They act as *Spokespersons* to represent their academic units and take accountability for the performance and achievements of faculty members and students. However, the dean's decisional roles are subject to limitations. The roles of *Negotiator* and *Disturbance handler* are situation-specific, primarily associated with resolving conflicts within teams or conducting negotiations with employees or businesses and industries. However, when it comes to negotiating with senior university administrators for separate funding, this role weakens. Furthermore, the *Resource allocator* role received ratings ranging from "very low" to "average" among all participants due to the constraints imposed by centralized funding. This limitation in the dean's resource allocation role negatively affects their entrepreneurship and innovativeness, which weaken not only the incumbent's decision-making roles but also their executive behavior.

Self-perception of Academic Deans

Understanding the essential skills, experience, and competencies required for successful academic deanship is crucial to comprehending how the research participants perceive themselves as deans and experience academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. In doing so, the study's findings revealed two different patterns in how deans describe their roles. Six deans expressed concerns about the weaknesses of their positions, often finding themselves in a relatively mediocre position within the administrative hierarchy.

This is unexpected, as academic deans are supposed to hold a prominent administrative status. However, a closer examination of the dean's functions, duties, and responsibilities, coupled with their limited executive authority, indicates the passive and weaker roles that deans occupy. The participants shared similar perceptions of their roles as deans. For instance, Participant 10 portrayed himself as "a wedding general" with "ghostly powers," comparing himself to a dummy person recruited for the dean's position only for representation, possessing imaginary authority and playing no substantial role in any matters. Participant 1 described his position as a dual role, functioning both as a dean and a faculty member simultaneously. Similarly, Participant 5 expressed uncertainty about the decanal role, positioning herself as "someone in between a faculty member and an administrator." On the other hand, Participant 6 provided a more straightforward characterization of her dean's role, seeing herself as "an implementer" of someone else's decisions, initiatives, and goals. This attribution of the dean's role to an implementer suggests the job incumbent's weaker position in Kazakhstani public universities.

Furthermore, university leaders grant authority to the deans, which is why they primarily handle organizational and coordination functions to ensure the school's smooth day-to-day operation. They maintain communication with internal and external stakeholders, including academic and administrative staff, students, parents, and employers. Deans delegate tasks, manage deadlines and progress, organize work processes, and oversee them, all while collecting data and analyzing strategies. The discrepancy between the dean's formal status and their limited decision-making capacity and authority underscores the participants' concerns regarding the uncertainty surrounding academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities.

Another perspective on the academic dean's role relates to the dean's image as a martyr or a sacrifice:

Only selfless people become academic deans in our country. I think this is true for all universities in Kazakhstan. I have talked to many other deans, and unfortunately, the Kazakhstani dean is the first person to fall on the grenade. (Participant 6)

According to Participant 6, the sacrifice or martyrdom of academic deans lies in the dean's "too heavy responsibility for the entire school." Participant 2 affirmed that his responsibility goes far beyond the duties described in his Job Description. In addition, Participant 15 claimed that inconsistencies in the dean's duties and responsibilities make a dean a sacrifice:

Considering how much moral, physical, and time resources and expenses academic deanship requires, I think deans deserve a much higher salary and much more attention. The work of the entire university depends on the dean's functions. They supervise the research activities of faculty and departments, oversee social work and organizational moments, and control the teaching and learning processes. Academic deans are key actors in all institutional activities.

In other words, the academic dean's efforts in performing their duties are neither acknowledged nor supported by higher salaries, better working conditions, executive authority, or even recognition from administrators. This observation applies not only to state universities but also to national universities. Consequently, academic deans in public universities perceive themselves more as implementers than executives.

Summary of the Managerial Roles of Academic Deans

The results of Research Question 3 indicate that the executive behavior of academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities is context-related and remains partial. The authority and powers of the deans mainly revolve around interpersonal and informational roles, while their decision-making ability is significantly limited. Although deans can perform the roles concerning entrepreneurship, disturbance handling, and negotiations, their resource allocation

role is restricted, preventing them from making decisions on financial matters. Furthermore, the dean's negotiation role weakens when interacting with senior university administrators. Consequently, the dean's decision-making authority becomes situational, depending on the specific issues and actors involved in decision-making.

The limited decision-making of deans can be attributed to the existing top-down university management system, characterized by hierarchical relationships between deans and senior administrators, centralized decision-making and funding. These factors can explain the limited executive authority and positional autonomy of deans as school administrators.

Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity of Academic Deans

This section of the Findings chapter strives to explain in detail the challenges and obstacles that academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities encounter as they work with multiple internal and external stakeholders represented by university leadership, faculty members, students, and labor market representatives, which cause the dean's role conflict and role ambiguity.

Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity of Academic Deans in Kazakhstan

In higher education institutions, academic deans play a crucial role by providing a vital link between the central administration and academic departments, and vice versa. This role makes deans function as both "extensions of the presidency" and "extensions of the academic staff" (Arntzen, 2016, p. 2071). In addition, the dean's role extends to alumni, employers, donors, and sponsors, placing them in a complex network of communications. However, with this multifaceted role comes a vulnerability for academic deans due to existing power imbalances. This suggests that deans must learn to navigate diverse communication networks where they serve as both subordinates to their superiors and as leaders to their employees to effectively manage their roles and responsibilities.

While stress is a common phenomenon when trying to meet various job expectations and demands, the study findings indicate that current academic deans experience significant job-related stress. This research suggests that academic deans feel less stressed when interacting with faculty, students, and engage in collaborative partnerships with businesses and industries. However, the findings also highlight that deans face higher levels of stress and frustration when dealing with state authorities and senior university administrators, mainly due to top-down relationships. In other words, academic deans experience job-related stress that varies based on their interactions with internal and external stakeholders. The study revealed that 12 academic deans from public universities in Kazakhstan are exposed to role stress, excluding Participants 9, 13, and 15. More importantly, these participants' stress is specifically attributed to role stressors, such as role conflict and role ambiguity (See Table 16):

Role Ambiguity. Role ambiguity triggers job dissatisfaction among deans. It is primarily caused by inherited inconsistencies in the organization of work conditions at public universities in Kazakhstan. The discrepancies in the dean's job can be characterized by two levels of bureaucracy. They are internal bureaucracy (within institutional bureaucracy that exists in each institutional process to correspond to state policies and regulations) and external bureaucracy (related to the state authorities and policy-makers, such as the Ministry of Education and Science that issue decrees and norms). State policies and institutional bylaws regulate the daily operations of the deans' offices and academic deans, respectively (Terjesen, 2022).

Internal Inconsistencies in the Dean's Job. The dean's internal stress roots in the growing requirements for their work. They are in charge of various duties, such as quality assurance management, staff management, graduate employment, providing students with internships at workplaces, and attracting businesses for mutually beneficial collaboration.

Participant 13 acknowledged that a dean has become like “a chief executive officer of the academic school” because of the growing managerial functions, duties, and responsibilities. However, the entrepreneurial approach in performing the dean’s job is limited by the existing power dynamics and centralized decision-making in which university leaders retain control and supervision over academic schools and dean’s offices (Participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 14, and 15). This is why deans have minimal authority and independence in performing the job for which they were recruited:

Currently, a dean is like the top manager of a large company. Deans must have many competencies, 100% of which they just do not have. We [*the deans*] are now working by trial and error. (Participant 6)

The dean’s restricted authority is a result of the excesses in anti-corruption measures and mechanisms, which strengthened centralized control and top-down management in Kazakhstani universities:

The modern dean is not the same dean like 5-10 years ago. Many of the dean’s functions were removed because they contained potential corruption risks. For instance, the dean’s completion of the student’s information card was risky because the card included all students’ personal data. In addition, deans could approve the student retaking of the courses. However, all these functions have been centralized. (Participant 10)

Participants 10 and 14 consider these restrictions pointless because they concerned all issues, including minor functions. For instance, the students’ sick leaves or failures to submit course papers on time have to be resolved at the level of the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, who authorizes the access to the computer-based student database (Participant 14).

Furthermore, deans are restricted from accessing Supervisory Board meetings. However, Participant 10 did not see the point of limiting deans in attending such meetings:

Perhaps our [*deans*] nonattendance [*of the Supervisory Board's meetings*] reduces corruption risks, but to my mind, if the finances are under the control of all accountants, economists, etc., it would be possible to give us financial autonomy. We [*deans*] cannot spend money uncontrollably. So why not? After all, I need [*finances*] only to motivate my faculty members and students.

The restrictions in the dean's job do not support and promote the entrepreneurial development and behavior within academic schools. Instead, such limitations on the dean's potential opportunistic behavior foster inertia and complacency among job incumbents:

Now, I can confidently say that I understand the system [*centralized decision-making and control*] in which I am currently working. I know where it is worth seeking challenges and where it is not. (Participant 2)

That is, highly centralized university governance demotivates the dean's proactivity and innovativeness to work more productively setting up new projects and realizing ideas (Participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 13, and 14). Participant 14 admitted, "It is not always feasible to perform the role of a dean effectively," suggesting that deans often lack the necessary resources and powers to realize their responsibilities. Moreover, the participants shared the opinion that despite university leadership employing centralized decision-making, they cannot guarantee the progress of their academic schools either:

University leaders sit at the top [*of the organizational structure*]. They do not see the real things that we [*academic deans*] know about schools staying closer to faculty, department chairs, and students. (Participant 10)

However, the dean's lack of authority does not diminish their overarching responsibility for the entire school, faculty, and students (Participants 2, 14, and 15). For instance, Participant 5 asserted that her Job Descriptions determine the dean's functions in a way that she has to do "absolutely everything:"

The dean's job has expanded considerably compared to existing normative acts and documents prescribing the position. Nowadays, the dean's job has too broad tasks. For instance, in the Job Descriptions, there are 8-9 large functions and responsibilities. However, there are even more tasks behind these 8-9 functions. As such, one function contains multiple sub-functions. (Participant 15)

The growing expectations and demands from the dean's administrative-organizational functions require deans to perform multiple duties. However, the existing top-down university governance and centralized decision-making impede the incumbent's capacity to grow into a competent academic manager and leader.

External Inconsistencies in the Dean's Job. The external inconsistencies that provoke the dean's role ambiguity in Kazakhstani universities relate to the "inherited system of vertical management" (Participant 13). The system of rigid state regulation symbolizes the power and authority that require deans to comply with it even though they might be contradictory.

The research participants asserted that sometimes ministerial decrees are not always accurately planned and designed, "taking much time and energy" of universities to deal with discrepancies in the regulations (Participant 13). Besides the equivocal bylaws, the inadequacies in the dean's job refer to the standards, such as the standardized systems of student enrollment and state educational grant allocation. All school leavers take the Unified National Test (UNT), which assesses their knowledge based on five disciplines. After taking UNT, an applicant receives the certificate with the UNT scores, which makes an applicant eligible to participate in the state educational grants contest. The applicant chooses a maximum of four majors in university or four universities according to the Rules for the Award of an Educational Grant to Pay for Higher or Postgraduate Education with the Award of "Bachelor" or "Master" Degrees (2008). However, the state grant is allocated to only one

major and university. Often, the first major and university are the most desired choices for applicants. Therefore, if an applicant does not win a state grant on the desired major or university, or does not want to study a particular major even with a grant, the student's academic performance drops (Participant 1). In addition, it may happen that the students' parents do not permit their children to study in another city (Participant 1). These cases of standardized state regulations and rules lead to low student enrollment, low student attendance, and poor academic performance (Participants 1, 2, 6, and 7):

We have students who are not very motivated to study. They came to the university to study for the sake of a degree certificate or a state grant. They study without any desire to learn. Therefore, they miss the classes. (Participant 1)

Furthermore, academic deans encounter the problem of uncontrollable growth of students at one university, whereas another university experiences a decline in student enrollment (Participants 1, 5, 7, 8, and 14). This issue relates to universities located in the central cities of Kazakhstan and state (regional) universities located in the peripheries, creating imbalances in student enrollment rates:

The problem with the dean's job is the lack of control over the student population.

The educational system is organized in a way that 50,000 state grants might be allocated to one undergraduate program per year. Theoretically, these 50,000 students with their grants, may come to one university. Can you imagine what will happen at the university? (Participant 14)

Participant 14 exemplified the situation of public universities whose existing infrastructure cannot accommodate the constantly growing number of students because of the limited resources and facilities.

Moreover, given the growing student population, public universities cannot raise the cost of education (Participants 13):

Price dumping impedes our competition in the education market. Schools that position themselves as a provider of quality education and training in the market are confused about how to provide cheap, but quality education.

This is why Participant 5 expressed her desire to have more clarity from the Ministry of Education and Science:

The only thing that I would like to have in my job is more consistency and clarity. Specifically, this consistency does not depend on us [*the universities*]. This depends on the Ministry! The Ministry does not know what they want. For example, during the pandemic, we were told that there was even a decree that universities do not need to submit reports to the Ministry. After some time, it turned out that the ministerial decree was about hard copies of reports. Therefore, we had to submit an electronic report. Then the Ministry informed universities to organize creative admission exams online. However, then, we were instructed to conduct creative admission exams offline. This means the Ministry itself cannot decide what it needs, but universities suffer.

The aforementioned external inadequacies are rooted in the unsystematic policies and inconsistent regulations that misguide universities and the dean's offices, whose day-to-day operations depend on ministerial standards, norms, and decrees. The dean's work is based on complying with the state policies and regulations. Therefore, the Ministry has to provide universities with clear guidelines and instructions, leaving no room for misinterpretation to allow the dean's offices and deans to perform their work more effectively and efficiently.

Role Conflict. Kazakhstani academic deans suffer from role conflict due to pre-existing ambiguities in their jobs. Role conflict emerges because of the incongruent and sometimes incompatible demands and expectations placed on academic deans. These incompatibilities in the dean's job are divided into two types of role conflict:

Intra-Role Conflict. This conflict is caused by a lack of agreement in determining the dean's role, status, and the degree of executive authority. A well-developed job does not confuse an incumbent, and it does not limit their effectiveness and efficiency. In other words, it is critical to conduct a thorough job analysis and clear design of its duties and responsibilities in order to ensure role clarity (Rohr, 2016). This role clarity is essential for achieving successful job performance.

Role clarity is characterized by straightforward instructions regarding the job incumbent's duties, responsibilities, rights, and authority (intra-role). Participant 8 explained the importance of his role and status as follows:

My first instrument to manage staff and influence them is my position as a dean and my status as the first administrator. The position and status obligate employees to subordinate.

Therefore, the weight of the dean's status and role is vital for managing and leading employees. According to Table 16, eight academic deans at Universities 1, 2, and 3 categorize as faculty members based on their Job Descriptions (See Table 16). In contrast, seven deans from Universities 4, 5, 6, and 7 are referred to as school administrators. The positions of the two groups of deans are identical. They hold a position of academic deans at universities. However, the dean's status in the two groups differ. For instance, the dean's faculty status implies a mandatory teaching workload. Their jobs presuppose a combination of administrative work and teaching. Deans who are classified as administrative-managerial staff members take advantage of their teaching waivers. These teaching waivers allow deans

to regulate their individual workloads by deciding whether or not to take on an additional teaching load. Unsurprisingly, the research participants from Universities 1, 2, and 3 noted their uncertainty about their roles as deans:

An academic dean refers to a faculty member, not an administrator. That is, I must work as both a dean and a faculty member. (Participant 1)

Such an attitude toward the dean's position is not surprising. Participant 1 admitted that he was "too busy with teaching" that he could not pay greater attention to his administrative duties. Therefore, his teaching workload was replaced with doctoral supervision. This replacement helped him cope with performing two roles as a supervisor of graduate students and an administrator. It seems that teaching duties take much time and energy to prepare for classes, conduct lectures, assess the students' papers, etc., and deans cannot effectively balance teaching and administrative responsibilities. Therefore, if deans engage in teaching and administration at the same time, it may adversely affect their job as school administrators. In addition, such combinations in the dean's single role lead to confusion. Participant 5 characterizes herself as "someone who is in between a faculty and an administrator." This controversy in determining the dean's exact role and functions weakens the incumbent's job performance. Moreover, deans feel stressed and dissatisfied, holding administrator's role without executive powers to perform this role (Participant 14).

Interrole Conflict. In addition, the study results suggest that academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities are prone to work-to-family conflict (WTFC). This denotes any tension when work responsibilities interfere with family and familial obligations. The research participants from Universities 2, 3, 5, and 7 (Participants 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, and 15) acknowledged their exposure to WTFC:

It would be a lie if I say that my job does not influence my private life and family.

Organizing and carrying out different events require time and energy. My family feels

it and feels my busyness. I spend a lot of time on phone calls and negotiations with people in the evenings after work. Indeed, this strains my family. However, I knew what awaited me and what emotional pressures the position had. (Participant 15)

Participant 6 claimed that “a woman-dean is a hero of the workforce because she has to work on two fronts: work and family.” Apparently, academic deanship affects the familial responsibilities of both female and male deans:

My Job Descriptions and the real dean’s job differ. According to my job contract, I work as a dean from 9 am to 3 pm. However, after that time, students or faculty members come to my office for personal conversations. Therefore, if my work ends, it does not mean it ends. In addition, the classes are conducted in two shifts: at 8 am in the morning and in the evening until 8 pm. Sometimes my master’s students have classes at 6 pm. This means that I work from 8 am to 6 pm. Therefore, I am working 10 hours per day. In reality, the work is my “home,” not my family and home. (Participant 4)

Furthermore, the dean’s responsibility for every aspect of the academic unit’s lifecycle (academic-methodological work, research, and social activities) may cause the incumbent’s tensions and busyness:

As an academic dean, my primary task is not only education, but also research. I am in charge of the Schools’ potential development in all spheres. I have to spend time on research not only on weekdays but also in my free time. Sometimes, I meet with my project team on Saturdays because I am the principal investigator of the research projects. I take responsibility for the project’s success. (Participant 12)

Thus, the dean’s involvement in administrative functions and combining them with teaching and research responsibilities may cause the dean’s role stress. This stress affects not

only academic deans and their job performance, but also it may affect their personal lives, influencing families and the incumbent's physical and emotional well-being (Gmelch, 2003).

Summary of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity of Academic Deans

The responses of the research participants regarding Research Question 4 indicate that deans at public universities in Kazakhstan experience significant job-related stress. The main stressors identified were role ambiguity and role conflict. Role ambiguity is caused by both internal and external inconsistencies at the ministerial and institutional levels. External inconsistencies result from inconsistent policies and regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science, which overburden academic deans and their offices. Their operations are entirely dependent on complying with state policies, standards, and norms. On the other hand, internal inconsistencies arise from centralized decision-making and excessive anti-corruption measures in public universities. These factors minimize the role and authority of academic deans as administrators, being subject to the excessive supervision and control by senior administrators. Consequently, deans feel themselves deprived of their key roles, leading to complacency, formalism, and inertia in their workplace.

Furthermore, academic deans also face role conflict, which arises from a lack of agreement on the status, roles, functions, and responsibilities of the dean. This conflict forces deans to juggle multiple roles as academics, researchers, and administrators within a single dean's position, suggesting that the essence of academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan is not clearly determined. As a result, the incumbents are prone to experiencing job-related stress, which is evident in the participants' perceptions of their weak and powerless positions as school administrators.

Summary

This chapter has presented the significant findings on academic deanship at public universities in Kazakhstan. Research Question 1 indicates that academic deans are primarily

recruited from within institutions. This hiring strategy prevails over external recruitment, which occurs in cases when university administrators seek professionals with specific knowledge and experience that their current employees lack. Furthermore, both insider and outsider deans acknowledged the importance of self-education in academic deanship to gain new skills and knowledge for successful job performance.

According to Research Question 2, the main changes in academic deanship are associated with the dean's status upgrade to an administrator with a teaching waiver. This redefined academic deans from traditional faculty members to administrative-managerial staff members. However, not all universities have reconsidered the dean's status and role. Therefore, other research participants continue to categorize as academic staff with mandatory teaching responsibilities. Nevertheless, both deans-administrators and deans as faculty members hold little authority to decide on matters directly related to their units due to the centralized decision-making and top-down relationships within public universities in Kazakhstan.

Based on Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory, academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan can perform managerial roles. However, this ability to exercise managerial roles is contingent on situations. In other words, the dean's managerial roles are mainly focused on interpersonal and informational roles, whereas their decision-making authority is largely limited (Research Question 3). The limitations in the dean's decision-making roles pertains to issues related to finances. Consequently, deans struggle to solve issues, make decisions, and realize successfully initiatives, despite their formal administrator's role.

According to Research Question 4, the dean's restrictions derive from preexisting ambiguities and inconsistencies in the highly centralized governance system of universities, where final decisions belong to central administration, and deans are required to comply with

them. This explains the dean's limited authority and decision-making capacity. Consequently, they are exposed to job-related stress and frustration triggered by role ambiguity, caused by the highly centralized university governance and inconsistent ministerial policies and norms. These limitations result in the dean's role ambiguity and role conflict. The deans' role ambiguity stems from institutional (internal) and external (governmental) inconsistencies that create obstacles in the deans' work. As for role conflict, academic deans experience it due to the uncertainty of their roles, being expected to implement administrative, teaching, and research functions simultaneously, with minimal decision-making capacity and little positional power to effectively perform the work.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The Discussion chapter aims to analyze and interpret the major findings of the study within the context of previous research on academic deanship. This chapter is structured into four main sections. The first two sections discuss the key findings of the present study. The first section highlights the influence of the highly centralized governance system in public universities in Kazakhstan on academic deans, who serve as school administrators. This centralized university governance system relies on structured processes and norms, including top-down decision-making and the recognition of authority by fostering hierarchical relationships among university stakeholders. This concentration of power in the hands of a small group of stakeholders, such as senior university administrators, weakens the role of mid-level academic managers, such as deans. The phenomenon of a centralized university governance structure highlights the lack of grassroots or bottom-up leadership within Kazakhstani public universities thereby diminishing the role of academic deans.

The second section of the Discussion chapter focuses on the discrepancies associated with contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. These discrepancies stem from the absence of grassroots leadership, where academic deans have limited authority and autonomy to manage their units on the one hand, while bearing full accountability for the performance and progress of these units on the other hand. Moreover, academic deans are required to engage in roles such as lecturers, scholars, and role models within their single dean's role. This discrepancy in the complexity of the dean's responsibilities and functions makes them susceptible to role stress, which was identified by the theory of role conflict and role ambiguity. The latter is evident based on the research participants' perceptions and experiences of their own roles, emphasizing the lack of clarity about the dean's role in Kazakhstani public universities.

Furthermore, the remaining two sections of this chapter present practical and theoretical implications of this study. The practical implications emphasize the importance of fostering distributed leadership within public universities in Kazakhstan. This is critical due to the identified weaknesses in mid-level management, specifically, in academic deanship. Therefore, these implications suggest that if deans in Kazakhstani public universities are facing challenges in their administrator's roles, it is likely that other mid-level managers (such as vice-deans and department chairs) are also experiencing similar issues due to centralized funding allocation and limited decision-making authority. Consequently, the practical implications suggest that senior university administrators reconsider the roles of mid-level academic managers across all organizational levels. Strengthening their roles could potentially lead to greater contributions to institutional performance and progress.

The theoretical implications of the study discuss the applicability of Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory and role conflict and ambiguity theory to academic deanship in Kazakhstan. According to Mintzberg's theory, Kazakhstani deans cannot fully attribute to school administrator's role due to their limited decision-making powers and autonomy. For this reason, the theory characterizes deans as primarily engaged in information exchange and processing activities and interpersonal relationships with stakeholders. Moreover, it was found that the theory is better suited for organizations operating in decentralized systems. Therefore, Mintzberg's theory does not seem applicable for organizations that are influenced by centralized decision-making, rigid control, and top-down hierarchical relationships among stakeholders affecting the managerial roles and behavior of individuals.

Regarding the theory of role conflict and role ambiguity, it demonstrated its applicability in exploring academic deanship in Kazakhstan, including its specific higher education governance system. The theory underscored the causal relationships between the dean's limited autonomy and authority and the existing centralized university governance

system, resulting in role conflict and role ambiguity for the job incumbents. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the Discussion chapter.

The Lack of Grassroots Leadership in Kazakhstani Public Universities

This section argues that the highly centralized university governance system established in Kazakhstan has significantly reduced the role of deans as mid-level academic leaders and managers. The system recognizes the authority of senior administrators and centralizes decision-making by promoting top-down hierarchical relationships among university stakeholders (Davis et al., 2016; Terjesen, 2022). As a result, this governance system has shaped the organizational structure of university leaders and other employees, emphasizing that all authority and powers in Kazakhstani public universities are concentrated in the hands of a small group of individuals – senior administrators. Consequently, mid-level academic managers, such as deans, find themselves in weaker positions within the university structure.

The study's findings highlight the limitations of the dean's role, primarily stemming from their dependence on top-down communication with senior administrators and centralized decision-making processes, including funding allocation system. This is because the system of centralized university governance is based on bureaucracy and paperwork, requiring all university employees to follow structured administrative processes and adhere to established norms, protocols, and procedures to ensure consistent organizational functioning (Participants 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 14). Consequently, the functions of academic deans tend to align more with bureaucratic roles than managerial ones within public universities in Kazakhstan (Balikçi, 2020; Mintzberg, 1989). This is why contemporary deans in Kazakhstan resemble more administrative bureaucrats rather than competent middle academic managers and leaders (Fitzgerald, 2009; Terjesen, 2022).

In addition, due to the excesses in top-down decision-making, the dean's authority in matters with minimal corruption risk was also considerably restricted (Participants 10 and 14). For instance, the decisions related to school funding are centralized. Therefore, Participant 10 is limited in deciding whom to incentivize to retain the most qualified faculty members or encourage the students' excellence in sports or academics. Moreover, minor issues such as student sick leaves or late submission of course papers require authorization from the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs due to the dean's restricted access to student databases containing their personal data (Participant 10). Consequently, as noted by Participant 13, "The speed of decision-making does not depend on a dean" because of "higher-level 'vertical structures,' which slow down decision-making" (Participant 13). This is why Participants 6 and 13 noted that, due to the dean's limited decision-making, they have to wait for "the administrators' approvals and permissions" to take initiatives and actions. As a result, the effectiveness of deans is dependent on the decisions made by senior administrators. This means that, in addition to centralized decision-making, dean's offices and deans, in particular, encounter micromanagement, when they are subject to external supervision and excessive control (Participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, and 14).

It is important to note that the centralized university governance tends to lead to a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to different academic schools. This approach standardizes schools, which vary not only in terms of their size or taught disciplines but also in terms of their mission, target audience, and strategic goals. In other words, centralized decision-making hinders the competitiveness and performance of academic schools.

Participant 2 compared the behavior of public universities in Kazakhstan similar to the Soviet "authoritarian management style," with university leadership applying the Soviet mindset. In such conditions, any attempt by Participant 2 to introduce innovations would be qualified criticism of university leaders that may result in punitive actions, including

dismissal. Thus, any critique directed at the established system is equivalent to “being against the university administration” (Participant 2). This is why he is convinced that “Wherever such people [*with the Soviet mindset*] exist, it is impossible to speak of any initiatives” because this “outdated system” hampers the development of higher education institutions (Participant 2). This underscores the dean’s limited capacity to introduce and promote innovations, as they are unable to question, and more specifically, oppose the decisions made at the top level. For instance, Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8 from University 3 were compelled to manage faculty due to restructuring oversights. This restructuring aimed to upgrade the department chair functions to create a new position of an academic program head (APHs), which contained the traditional responsibilities of department chairs with a greater focus on the quality of taught academic programs. However, in designing APHs, the function on managing faculty members who teach high-quality programs was overlooked, and thus, not specified in the job descriptions of APHs. Consequently, deans, who are in charge of the overall performance of academic units, obtained additional responsibilities.

Similarly, despite deans recognizing the need for more vice-deans to maintain better control over the departments, faculty members, and students, Participants 1, 6, 8, and 14 did not question the decision of university leadership to downsize vice-deans. Consequently, Participant 8, who had about 600 students, claimed that one vice-dean is “categorically insufficient” for his school. At the same time, Participant 1, who used to have four vice-deans, had to run the school with a total number of 3500 students with the help of a single vice-dean. These examples justify the words of Participant 14, who acknowledged, “It is not always feasible for deans to perform their work effectively” due to the “obedience to authority,” which does not tolerate objections (Participant 14).

These insights from contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstan highlight the existing centralized university governance system, which is unable adequately address the

unique needs of academic schools and provide them with tailored support. Participants 4 and 10 emphasized that university leadership does “not see the real things” happening in academic schools, which deans, being “closer to faculty, department chairs, and students,” know better. In other words, deans understand better how to address the problems of their units, departments, faculty members, and students. However, while they may know what needs to be done and, more importantly, how to do it, deans lack the necessary resources to introduce them (Biddle, 1986, 2013).

This finding underscores the underdeveloped nature of grassroots leadership (or bottom-up leadership) in public universities in Kazakhstan. This can explain the weaknesses of contemporary academic deanship due to the highly centralized governance system. This system has developed “trained incapacity” (Davis et al., 2016, p. 1491) among academic deans, who operate in accordance with the norm-following behavior, complying with accepted patterns of organizational behavior, established standards, culture, and beliefs. This behavior of academic deans poses the risk of fostering the individual’s complacency, inertia, formalism, and resistance to change (Davis et al., 2016; Terjesen, 2022). Participant 2 acknowledged that, understanding the system in which he operates; he knows where he can “seek challenges” and “where he cannot” in his role as a dean.

The existing university governance system in Kazakhstan, characterized by centralized decision-making and funding, poses a significant challenge to developing competent academic deans. This argument resonates with Mintzberg’s executive behavioral theory, which emphasizes that without appropriate decision-making authority and powers, an individual is limited to exercising interpersonal and informational roles that do not align with the behavior of executives (Balikçi, 2020).

The inconsistency in the authority granted to deans in Kazakhstani public universities can be explained by Tengblad (2006) and Saah et al. (2020). They understand the practice of

management as context-specific and influenced by factors such as the organization's management style, leadership culture, and its structure. They determine a degree of legitimization of managerial roles. This variation in managerial behavior corresponds to Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory, which highlights the limited decision-making responsibilities of Kazakhstani academic deans, as they work within a highly centralized governance system. This characterizes academic deanship in Kazakhstan as a complex and paradoxical phenomenon, which is based on rigid control, centralized decision-making and funding, recognition of central authority, bureaucracy, and hierarchical relationships among stakeholders (Hartley et al., 2016; Smolentseva et al., 2018; Yembergenova et al., 2021).

To promote grassroots leadership in Kazakhstani public universities, it is essential to empower academic deans with greater authority and resources. The core principle of this leadership approach is that leadership exists at all levels within organizations and requires the delegation of authority. Senior administrators play a crucial role in this process by sharing their authority, thereby establishing a system of distributed or shared leadership (Kezar et al., 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Terjesen, 2022). This approach goes beyond the roles of university presidents and provosts and encourages less formalized and less hierarchical leadership (Kezar, 2012). Participant 6 emphasized the need for deans to have "more management levers," underlining their limited influence in managing their academic units. Strengthening academic deanship through grassroots leadership can facilitate horizontal communication, promote coordinated teamwork, and foster trust among senior administrators and deans in Kazakhstan (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Wepner et al., 2015). Consequently, this can remove existing hierarchical relationships and enhance decision-making efficiency. Participant 5 also acknowledged this, stating that more autonomy in her job would make it "almost ideal," enabling her to manage resources, recruit professionals to build teams of experts, take initiatives, negotiate deals, and establish

partnerships. Therefore, if Kazakhstani deans continue to operate within the centralized governance system, they will remain to be “ill-defined ‘middle’ academic administrators,” who are mere “spectators in the campus power games” (Dill, 1980, p. 273).

In conclusion, this section has shed light on the detrimental effects of the highly centralized university governance system on academic deanship in Kazakhstan. This system emphasizes centralized decision-making and funding allocation within universities, resulting in a top-down hierarchical structure and excessive micromanagement of dean’s offices. Consequently, this diminishes the authority and autonomy of academic deans while reinforcing the single authority of university leadership. These findings align with Mintzberg’s theory of executive behavior, suggesting that current roles of deans are primarily focused on bureaucratic tasks, such as interpersonal relationships and information processing activities, rather than managerial responsibilities. These bureaucratic roles stem from the limited autonomy and decision-making capacity of deans and the excessive control over funding allocation processes. Thus, this section argues that the highly centralized governance system serves as a significant barrier to empowering academic deans and developing them into competent mid-level academic leaders and managers within Kazakhstani public universities.

The Discrepancies in Academic Deans in Kazakhstani Public Universities

This section argues that contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities is prone to contradictions due to the lack of grassroots leadership, as discussed in the previous section. The discrepancies in the dean’s role are twofold: on the one hand, they have limited authority as administrators, and on the other hand, they are held fully accountable for the performance of academic units. Despite their limited control over centralized decision-making in Kazakhstani public universities, deans must navigate these challenges. Furthermore, the discrepancy of academic deanship is associated with the

incumbent's involvement in multiple roles, including those of lecturers, scholars, and role models, all within a single dean's position. Consequently, these contradictions render the dean's role equivocal and dual, serving as a main source of role conflict and role ambiguity among academic deans in Kazakhstan.

Regarding the dean's authority as a mid-level administrator, it may vary depending on the specific context and the actors involved. The extent of the dean's authority is considered sufficient in situations where they interact with subordinates, such as faculty members or students, and external stakeholders like the labor market representatives. Deans are independent in negotiating collaborations, discussing agreements, facilitating graduate employment, and organizing student internships or co-advising. A notable example highlighting the effectiveness of the dean's authority in addressing critical situations occurred during the transition to distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This transition showcased the dean's ability to effectively handle the technical challenges faced by students and faculty members (Participants 4 and 6). For instance, Participant 4 played a pivotal role in negotiating with akims (mayors) to ensure the Internet access for undergraduate students residing in rural areas. In this case, Participant 4 acted on behalf of the entire academic school, engaging in high-level negotiations with representatives of the local government in Kazakhstan.

However, the majority of the findings emphasize that the dean's authority in decision-making and problem solving lacks clear-cut boundaries. For instance, deans engage in discussions and negotiations for mutually beneficial collaborations with industries and businesses. Still, when these negotiations necessitate legally binding documents, deans step aside (Participant 13). This is because senior university administrators are only authorized to sign such documents, including a memorandum of understanding between two academic schools (Participant 13).

The dean's limited authority in decision-making is also evident in financial matters. Due to centralized funding in Kazakhstani public universities, which is based on line item budgeting, deans have to maneuver to access it. Participant 12 acknowledged that she could reallocate funds from one line item to another only if they serve a similar purpose of expenditure. Therefore, if there are no funds available to organize the students' trip, but there is funding allocated for faculty trips, Participant 12 can redirect the funds initially designated for faculty to cover the students' needs. Notably, the rigid funding allocation system makes deans prefer to "staying out from any matters involving finances" (Participant 10). This points out that the dean's managerial role is highly dependent on the context of the matter and actors involved in the situation. This is why the application of Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory to explore managerial roles of deans indicated that the incumbent's managerial activities are situational and constrained primarily to interpersonal relationships and information processing activities, which limit their decision-making authority.

Furthermore, despite the fact that the dean's performance is highly context-bound, they bear full accountability for the performance and achievements of their schools, departments, faculty members, and students. This remains true regardless of their little or no influence on centrally made decisions (Participants 2, 4, 14, and 15). Participant 2 admitted that he is in charge of responsibilities not specified in his job descriptions. Consequently, in the event of an emergency involving his students, Participant 2 would be held accountable for these students and their safety. As expected, Participant 5 acknowledged that she is responsible for "absolutely everything," and Participant 6 complained that this encompassing responsibility for the entire school feels "too heavy," especially considering the incumbent's limited opportunities to influence decisions made by senior administrators and contribute their input to the organization's performance.

In addition, the dean's overarching responsibility adds to another inconsistency in their role. The findings indicate that the dean's administrative responsibilities are intertwined with teaching and research functions. Specifically, deans with administrative status and teaching waivers (Participants 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15) emphasized the significance of these functions in their position. It should be noted that this study did not intentionally examine the reasons behind the dean's engagement with teaching and research activities. There may be multiple reasons, but it is likely that, due to their "absolute responsibility" for the entire school, academic deans are also expected to take on teaching and research roles.

The participants acknowledged that engaging in teaching activities helps them stay updated on new requirements and standards necessary for designing innovative academic programs (Participants 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15). Consequently, teaching enables deans to maintain control over and evaluate the quality of instruction and training provided by their faculty, ensuring that students obtain a high-quality education. Specifically, Participant 9 mentioned that she chose to work part-time as a lecturer to establish reasonable expectations and demands for academic staff. Furthermore, Participants 2, 9, 10, 13, and 14 emphasized that teaching also allows them to mentor junior faculty members and foster their career development, helping them meet the requirements for tenure.

Since deans have previously worked as senior faculty members, they are inclined to perform teaching responsibilities, as noted by Participant 6, 9, and 13. For instance, Participant 6 enjoys lecturing and working closely with students. Consequently, she decided to choose a maximum teaching load (0.5 rate). On the other hand, Participant 13 emphasized the importance of maintaining her competencies as a lecturer, opting for a minimum teaching load (0.25 rate).

Other motivations driving deans to engage in teaching may arise from a sense of freedom and satisfaction that academic deans can experience. This freedom allows deans to decide what to teach and how to teach without the same level of intrusions they encounter in their administrative positions. Moreover, deans may opt for part-time teaching as an opportunity to supplement their income.

Similarly, the participants also highlighted the importance of conducting research within their dean's role, as noted by Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Although Participants 12 and 13 pointed out that research is not mandatory, they still found themselves compelled to engage in research activities due to "rankings and tough competition" in the educational market (Participant 13). Consequently, Participant 13 is required to "carry out research, have periodical publications, obtain a scientific degree, and participate in research projects not to lag behind the research endeavors in the taught disciplines," while Participant 12 must develop a research cluster within her school by pursuing research funding and projects to involve academic staff in knowledge generation and dissemination.

The aforementioned responsibilities of deans, as outlined by Participant 15, position contemporary deans as "key actors in all institutional activities and processes." They are responsible for overseeing various facets, including supervising faculty and departmental research activities, managing social work and organizational aspects, and ensuring the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes (Participant 15). This underscores the significant role that academic deans play as valuable assets within Kazakhstani public universities. However, despite the complexity and multifaceted nature of their roles, deans often lack the sufficient level of authority and autonomy. For these reasons, the identified inconsistencies in the dean's position characterize academic deanship in Kazakhstan as situational with varying underlying contexts and nuances, largely influenced by the centralized university governance system. More specifically, these contradictions in academic

deanship are expected to accumulate due to the rapidly changing university environment, which does not align well with the existing situational leadership of deans. Unsurprisingly, these inconsistencies and responsibilities make the dean's work prone to role conflict and role ambiguity, as the dean's authority and autonomy, essential for their effective job performance, are often limited, restricted, or withheld (Nyanga et al., 2012).

The situation regarding the contradictions in contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstan invites a comparison with the crisis in the academic profession specified by Denisova-Schmidt (2020). The scholar argued that the academic profession in Russia is under threat because of the overwhelming control of senior administrators, excessive paperwork and administrative workloads, heavy teaching loads with restrictions on academic freedom, and diminishing funding and incentives in Russian universities (Denisova-Schmidt, 2020). The findings from the present study also point to a crisis of academic deanship in Kazakhstan. Therefore, failing to address the discrepancies in the dean's role could exacerbate the critical situation, leading to an individual's work alienation. The latter occurs when job incumbents lack a sense of ownership in their work (Vanderstukken & Caniëls, 2021). This work alienation among deans in Kazakhstan is already evident when considering the participants' individual perceptions of their roles. For example, Participant 1 recognized that he is a dean who "must work as both a dean and a faculty member." Participant 5 expressed her uncertainty with her role as being "someone in between a faculty member and an administrator." Other participants characterized themselves as mere implementers, as they have limited authority and freedom within the highly centralized university governance system. Consequently, Participant 10 compared himself to "a wedding general" with "ghostly powers," feeling like a dummy person recruited for an imaginary mid-level administrative role that lacks authority in any meaningful matter. As a result, contemporary deans often

resemble the “puppets on strings pulled in different directions” (Montez et al., 2003, p. 254), rather than being seen as effective school administrators.

The discrepancies identified in the roles of deans emphasize the lack of clarity regarding their positional autonomy and authority of deans in Kazakhstan. These issues hamper the incumbent’s self-identity as administrators, which in turn affects their level of job satisfaction and emotional well-being (Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019). This suggests that the absence of role clarity poses a risk factor that can lead to role conflict and role ambiguity, detrimental to both individuals (employees) and organizations (employers) (Rai, 2016). Therefore, role clarity is essential for an individual’s self-efficacy, leading to higher work engagement and lower role stress (Bandura et al., 1999). Therefore, the ability of an incumbent to perform their jobs in accordance with the job requirements, utilizing their knowledge, experience, skills, and having the necessary authority and powers, are important attributes in any profession (Rohr, 2016). Conversely, the violation of professional autonomy and authority can lead to the incumbent’s “deprofessionalization,” when they feel discouraged and demotivated to work effectively and efficiently (Roberts & Donahue, 2000, p. 367).

To ensure role clarity, it is important to achieve coherence and consistency in the dean’s job descriptions, institutional bylaws, and standards. These documents should instruct and guide deans regarding the extent of their executive behavior and available resources. Such measures can enhance the incumbent’s self-efficacy (Nyanga et al., 2012; Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019). As a result, it will improve an individual’s job commitment and performance (Bryman, 2007; Harris & Jones, 2017; Wepner et al., 2015). The failure to define the dean’s roles, functions, responsibilities, resources, and the level of their authority in Kazakhstani public universities poses the risk of producing a generation of “disempowered” (Davis et al., 2016) school administrators in Kazakhstan.

In summary, this section has identified the contradictions surrounding the role of academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities. These contradictions stem from the highly centralized university governance structure, which results in inconsistencies in the dean's responsibilities as school administrators. This highlights the complexity of mid-level academic management in Kazakhstani universities on an example of deans, whose level of authority and powers can vary depending on the actors involved and the specific issues they are dealing with. Despite these challenges and limitations in the authority and autonomy of deans, they remain accountable for the performance and achievements of their respective academic units. Furthermore, deans are often expected to balance their administrative functions with teaching and research responsibilities. Consequently, academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan are susceptible to role ambiguity and role conflict in the workplace.

Given these intricacies in academic deanship, the study's findings emphasize the importance of introducing consistency and clarity in the dean's role. This entails providing deans in public universities in Kazakhstan with well-defined job descriptions, a clear outline of their authority and powers within the university structure, and ensuring that they have the necessary resources to effectively carry out their professional duties.

The Implications for Practice

This section discusses the practical implications for public universities in Kazakhstan. They aim to strengthen the role of academic deans as mid-level university managers. To achieve this, it is important to introduce a distributed leadership mechanism, which emphasizes that university administrators delegate an appropriate level of their authority, powers, and positional autonomy to academic deans. This measure will strengthen academic deanship in Kazakhstan and enable deans to fully perform their administrative-managerial functions as school administrators.

Distributed Leadership as a Means to Empower Deans in Kazakhstan

The findings of this study characterize public universities in Kazakhstan as institutions with highly centralized governance systems that rely on rigid control, top-down decision-making, and centralized funding allocation. This hierarchical structure in universities acknowledges the single authority of senior administrators that limit the authority and autonomy of mid-level academic managers, such as deans. As expected, the recent status upgrade of academic deans had minimal effects, not corresponding to the authority that they should have as school administrators because the change did not address the university governance system. As a result, despite deans formally refer to administrators who deal with managerial tasks and functions, they continue to operate within a highly centralized governance system, when they have little or no influence on centrally made decisions.

Based on the aforementioned, the implication from this study emphasizes the importance of strengthening academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan. To achieve this, it is essential to devolve authority from senior administrators to deans. This is known as distributed leadership, which involves sharing leadership responsibilities and authority with others in organizations (Kezar, 2012; Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). Specifically, in the context of public universities in Kazakhstan, senior administrators should delegate appropriate authority and positional autonomy to deans to empower them to fulfill their administrative roles and duties effectively.

In this regard, university administrators should understand that authority devolution is a key to foster academic deans, who could contribute significantly to organizational performance and progress even more than top managers. This is because deans maintain multiple communication networks with internal and external university stakeholders and manage key operations of academic schools, departments, faculty members, and students (Currie & Procter, 2005; Gatenby et al., 2015). Therefore, the failure to devolve authorities

from university leadership to deans will continue the dean's alienation from the work for which they were hired (Vanderstukken & Caniëls, 2021).

Given this, distributed leadership can serve as a critical tool to strengthen academic deanship to develop their potential as competent leaders and managers (Kezar, 2012; Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). Birnbaum (1992), Davis et al. (2016), and Gatenby et al. (2015) believe that organizational success relies on the collective efforts of all higher education levels. This means distributed leadership acknowledges the importance of leaders throughout the organization, recognizing their considerable expertise and valuing individual contributions to organizational performance (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). This is because distributed leadership values and accepts the existence of multiple perspectives and solutions to problems (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017; Terjesen, 2022). Distributed leadership suggests that the best practices in decision-making are done for "the good of the organizations and its members, and not to help managers save their reputations from damage" (Terjesen, 2022, p. 126). Therefore, passing decisions to individuals who are more knowledgeable about the subject of decision-making is a good practice. This is an important aspect of distributed leadership because university administrators cannot oversee every detail of academic schools, dean's offices, administrative departments, structural units, faculty members, and students. Deans, with their expertise and responsibility for overseeing and maintaining the smooth functioning of academic schools, have a better understanding of the needs and expectations of their units (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Gmelch et al., 2012; Lavigne, 2019).

Furthermore, distributed leadership is helpful in eliminating the dean's disengagement from the job, who operate through the command and control mechanisms, requiring deans to comply with the norm-following behavior (Chaharbaghi, 2007; Davis et al., 2016; Floyd, 2016; Harris & Jones, 2017). For this reason, distributed leadership can serve as a powerful

tool to enhance the current vulnerable position of deans and enable them to become active “initiators and designers of much of the change in the organization” (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 78).

The aforementioned suggests that the distributed leadership style is beneficial in minimizing centralized decision-making and top-down control, fostering collaborative relationships and teamwork in organizations. It recognizes bottom-up leadership of mid-level academic managers and their authority, leveraging management at all levels of the organization (Davis et al., 2016; Gatenby et al., 2015). Therefore, by developing this leadership model, it can meaningfully reduce administrative burdens and bureaucracy in the dean’s daily operations by allowing them to focus on their work (Currie & Procter, 2005; Terjesen, 2022). This makes distributed leadership a valuable tool to not only strengthen academic deanship and foster leadership capacity among deans but also to improve the performance of public universities in Kazakhstan.

The Implications of the Limited Dean’s Role on Other Mid-Level Academic Managers

Despite the study findings highlighted the underdeveloped nature of academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities, these findings can be also extended to other mid-level academic managers. For example, leadership and management roles of vice-deans (associate deans) and department chairs. This is because as previous section suggested the lack of grassroots leadership concerns not only deans but also their colleagues such as vice-deans and department chairs. Therefore, if deans experience limited decision-making and restricted positional autonomy due to centralized decision-making and funding allocation, the same is likely to be experienced by vice-deans and department chairs. Notably, there is little knowledge about the roles of vice-deans and department chairs in Kazakhstan. Therefore, if deans function within a highly centralized university governance system, it means that vice-deans and department chairs also suffer from the same limitations in their jobs.

Given the lack of empirical studies on the roles of vice-deans and department chairs in Kazakhstan and relying on the findings on deans in public universities, there is a pressing need for senior executive administrators to re-evaluate their mid-level managers (Zagirova, 2017). According to Preston and Floyd (2016), the role of associate deans in UK universities is largely undefined and under-researched to meet the growing demands to this position. As a result, associate deans whose roles entail providing support to deans, actually lack the necessary administrative support and leadership development training to fulfill their duties (Preston & Floyd, 2016; White, 2014). Similar to the roles of associate deans in the UK, the role of department chairs in the USA is also little researched (Gardner & Ward, 2018; Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Wolverton et al., 2005). Nonetheless, Gardner and Ward (2018) emphasize that the role of chairs matters even though they describe their job as “thankless, stressful, and, in some instances, minimally compensated” (p. 59). The essence of the department chair’s role lies in interpreting the university mission to departments and their department faculty to lead changes, engaging in recruitment of quality faculty and their retention, as well as influencing their productivity and job satisfaction. Despite this, similar to deans in Kazakhstan and associate deans in the UK, department chairs in the USA do not receive adequate support, training, or preparation to become successful department leaders (Gardner & Ward, 2018; Wolverton et al., 2005). In addition, based on Wolverton et al. (2005), department chairs lack adequate compensation trying to fulfill the tasks of administrators, remaining faculty members and continuing research. This adds to “a unique aspect to the department chair position” (Wolverton et al., 2005, p. 229). Moreover, this indicates that incumbents do not possess the necessary skill sets, i.e., conflict management and resolution and counselling skills to perform their roles effectively. Unsurprisingly, department chairs also have little power to act as mid-level managers lacking clarity about their roles (Wolverton et al., 2005). As a result, chairs are also pertinent to role conflict and

role ambiguity learning their jobs by trial and error without the real powers to influence their departments. Consequently, department chairs similar to Kazakhstani deans feel frustrated finding themselves caught between conflicting interests of faculty and administration being unclear which party to serve and where to turn for advice (Wolverton et al., 2005).

The aforementioned suggests that since the ongoing higher education reforms in Kazakhstan address institutional efficiency to streamline operations and demonstrate measurable outcomes, senior university administrators in Kazakhstan must reconsider the roles of mid-level academic managers across all levels of organizational structure to strengthen their academic deans, vice-deans, and department chairs. However, again this step requires transformations at senior leadership level, which must decentralize the existing university governance system, which restricts positional autonomy and authority, as well as productivity of schools, dean's offices, departments, and other units.

Acknowledging the meaningful role of mid-level academic managers across universities will establish trusted teamwork and collaboration among university stakeholders. Consequently, sustainable modernization of higher education institutions in Kazakhstan cannot proceed further without modernizing the entire organizational structure.

The Implications for Theories

This section focuses on the theoretical implications of this study by evaluating the theoretical frameworks employed in this study to examine academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. These theories are executive behavioral theory and role conflict and ambiguity theory. Employing two theoretical frameworks was useful in this study, as it allowed to examine the role of academic deans in the transforming higher education landscape in Kazakhstan in-depth.

Executive Behavioral Theory

Henry Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory is an analytical framework originating from the corporate business world. It was initially designed to address the managerial roles of chief executives in decentralized systems. Therefore, this framework appears to be better suited for organizations functioning within state-supervised systems, where the state oversees them without tight control and regulation (Fielden, 2008; Saah et al., 2020). According to this theory, executive behavior is composed of a combination of interpersonal, informational, and decision-making roles (Balikçi, 2020; Kumar, 2015; Mintzberg, 1973). If the incumbent's decision-making is limited or withheld, it compromises the essence of a manager's executive behavior. Thus, managerial behavior is achieved by leveraging professional communication networks and necessary information to make critical decisions (Mintzberg, 1989).

Given the specificity of the Kazakhstani higher education system, characterized by a highly centralized and opaque university governance structure, this poses a certain challenge to the applicability of Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory. Deans in Kazakhstan work within an environment marked by rigid control, centralized decision-making, and hierarchical relationships with university administrators.

Consequently, the theory can overlook important aspects and nuances relevant to organizations with predominantly state-controlled systems, such as their cultural norms, ideologies, and historical backgrounds. These factors contribute to the understanding of complex management and leadership models in such organizations. Therefore, when applying Mintzberg's theory to the roles of academic deans in Kazakhstan, it portrays them as bureaucrats preoccupied with administrative functions, encompassing interpersonal and informational roles, and having limited decision-making authority (Balikçi, 2020; Davis et al., 2016; Tengblad, 2006). The theory lacks an elaboration on the rule-bound and context-

dependent nature of leadership among individuals operating in a highly centralized governance system.

In summary, Mintzberg's theory of managerial roles does not adequately account for the context of organizational settings and cultural aspects that play a crucial role in characterizing an individual's managerial behavior and roles. This suggests that the theory is better suited for decentralized systems, which are less hierarchical and bureaucratic. Thus, it may not be suitable for analyzing organizations influenced by centralized decision-making practices and norms. This underscores the importance of tailoring the choice of using executive behavioral theory to the specific context and backgrounds of organizations. These considerations will provide a more concise understanding of an individual's executive behavior and roles.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity Theory

The theory of role conflict and role ambiguity is a comprehensive analytical tool for exploring social roles within various organizational settings (Rai, 2016). The core principle of this theory lies in analyzing a focal person's behavior in relation to the organization (referred to as role set) and their multiple stakeholders within and outside the organization (referred to as role senders). This theory allowed me to analyze the role of academic deans (focal persons) from different perspectives at the individual level (their perceptions and experiences regarding the dean's role), interpersonal level (the dean's relationships with their internal and external stakeholders, such as university administrators, department chairs, faculty members, employers, and students), and finally at the institutional level (public universities in Kazakhstan). This provided me with new insights and perspectives about the role of academic deans in the changing higher education landscape in Kazakhstan.

The theory emphasizes that an organization performs better when employees have a clear understanding regarding their roles and responsibilities (role clarity). Employees should

be well-informed about the expectations and demands of their employers and customers, and more importantly, these employees should be well-equipped with the necessary authority and resources to meet these expectations (Biddle, 2013; Rizzo et al., 1970). As such, the theory is helpful in identifying job-induced tensions in organizations, helping administrators address factors leading to staff underperformance, job dissatisfaction, or job turnover (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1981).

This theory served as a universal tool, enabling me to identify both role ambiguity and role conflict within academic deanship in Kazakhstan. Given the centralized university governance system with hierarchical relationships between administrators and deans and rigid control, deans are prone to experiencing role ambiguity. Role ambiguity among deans results from internal inconsistencies stemming from the national higher education governance system. Despite holding positions as school administrators responsible for managerial functions, such as fundraising, budgeting, personnel management, strategic planning, and goal setting, they have little or no control over their implementation. Moreover, despite their limited decision-making authority and autonomy, they bear full accountability for their unit's performance and progress. Unsurprisingly, deans are subject to excessive control and supervision, depending on the administrator's decisions and approvals to take actions.

This role ambiguity of deans is further exacerbated by role conflict that deans also experience. They are expected to perform multiple roles as both academics and administrators within a single dean's position. Given the lack of clarity about the dean's status in a university hierarchy and their full responsibility for the schools' performance, they engage in dual roles to provide high-quality education, knowledge production, and excellence in administrative tasks. This "double-role position" of deans affects both their job performance quality and emotional well-being, as they struggle to balance their complex, controversial, and multifaceted work (Bako, 2014; Zagirova, 2017). This inevitably leads to

job meaningfulness (Nyanga et al., 2012) when the incumbent's input to organizational progress is underestimated, causing an incumbent to lose a sense of ownership for their work, which may result in work alienation (Coll et al., 2019; Vanderstukken & Caniëls, 2021).

The identified discrepancies in the dean's work lead to role conflict and role ambiguity. This indicates that the theory is a valuable tool for examining the roles of individuals within organizations, providing a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. Consequently, this theory is applicable for in-depth investigation of the Kazakhstani higher education system.

Summary

The Discussion chapter has presented and interpreted the significant research findings and introduced the implications for both practice and theory. The research has shed light that public universities in Kazakhstan operate within a highly centralized governance system. This results in top-down communication and interaction between university administrators and academic deans. The concentration of power at the top level diminishes the authority and role of deans within the organizational structure. Consequently, this underscores the underdeveloped nature of grassroots leadership, which is characterized by less formalized and less hierarchical leadership at all levels of the organization. The study has also highlighted the prevalence of micromanagement, with the dean's offices and deans being subjected to excessive supervision and control by senior university administrators.

The second section of this chapter has argued that the combination of centralized decision-making and the lack of grassroots leadership leads to inconsistencies and discrepancies in the roles of academic deans. These tensions stem not only from their limited authority as administrators but also from their accountability for the performance and achievements of their designated academic units. Moreover, deans are also expected to

balance administrative responsibilities with teaching and research activities, further exacerbating role conflict and role ambiguity surrounding academic deans.

Given these findings, the practical implications of the study underscore the importance of introducing distributed leadership in Kazakhstani public universities to strengthen academic deanship, including vice-deans and department chairs. Sharing adequate executive authority and autonomy with these mid-level academic managers and leaders will empower them to take strategic actions and achieve targeted goals at school and departmental levels. This, in turn, will reduce centralized decision-making and hierarchical relationships, fostering grassroots leadership in public universities in Kazakhstan.

Regarding the theoretical implications, the research suggests that Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory is more applicable for organizations operating in decentralized systems. This theory characterizes the academic dean's behavior in Kazakhstani public universities as having limited decision-making authority, primarily dealing with interpersonal and informational roles. Thus, the theory does not provide insights into the context behind the organizations where individuals function under the pressure of rigid control and excessive supervision by senior administrators, which restricts the development of their managerial roles and behavior. Consequently, this implies that Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory is not suitable for analyzing academic deans in Kazakhstan, who are influenced by a highly centralized governance system.

In addition, role conflict and ambiguity theory has been found to be more applicable for exploring academic deanship in Kazakhstan. This theory demonstrates that since dean's powers and autonomy are limited, they are prone to job-related stress due to the inability to perform their work without adequate positional autonomy and authority and external intrusions. Role stress is triggered by role conflict and ambiguity in the dean's roles and the inconsistencies they face. Therefore, this theory highlights the importance for organizations

and administrators to provide employees with role clarity to prevent role conflicts and ambiguities.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This final chapter marks the conclusion of the present study on the role of academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section consists of four subsections summarizing key research findings, each organized around one of the four research questions posed at the beginning of this study. Specifically, the first subsection summarizes the findings regarding how academic deans experience their work in Kazakhstan (Research Question 1). The second subsection presents the changes that deans have faced in their positions, roles, and functions (Research Question 2). The third subsection introduces the dean's experiences of executive behavior, delving into three role clusters: interpersonal relationships, information exchange and processing activities, and decision-making capacity (Research Question 3). Finally, the fourth subsection provides a summary of the findings related to how deans perceive role conflict and role ambiguity in their multifaceted roles while working with diverse university stakeholders (Research Question 4).

After summarizing the key research findings, the second section of the Conclusion highlights the original contribution of this study to the knowledge about academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan within the post-Soviet higher education context. This study contributes new knowledge about contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstan, addressing both individual and institutional (systemic) aspects of the job. It underscores the challenges faced by deans who operate with limited executive authority and positional autonomy in performing their duties. The study also sheds light on the centralized university governance system in Kazakhstan, which serves as a significant barrier to empowering academic deans. Consequently, this study calls for strengthening academic deanship by reconsidering the relationships between university leadership and deans, emphasizing the

need for distributed leadership, where senior administrators share their authority and powers with mid-level academic managers.

Furthermore, the third section of this chapter presents the limitations of the study, which were beyond the researcher's control, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this research. In addition, this section outlines the delimitations of the study, demonstrating how these identified limitations were addressed.

The final fourth section of the chapter introduces recommendations for further research on academic deanship in Kazakhstan. These recommendations suggest including private universities as research sites and involving multiple stakeholders of the deans to enrich data collection and analysis with diverse perspectives and insights into the phenomenon of academic deanship in Kazakhstan. Moreover, the recommendations are directed at public universities in Kazakhstan, urging them to address issues of bureaucracy and review institutional bylaws to prevent ambiguities in staff regulations and other provisions. The recommendations also suggest organizing professional development for novice academic deans to prepare them for the complexities of their role. Finally, the chapter concludes with a short summary of this Conclusion chapter.

Summary of Key Research Findings

Dill (1980) describes academic deanship as an “unstable craft.” This is not surprising, as academic deanship continually shapes and reshapes itself under the pressures, expectations, and demands of governments, labor markets, and public communities.

Given the changing landscape of higher education in Kazakhstan, it was important to examine academic deanship, which plays a critical role in channeling networks of communication and information flows within and beyond the institution (Coll & Ruch, 2021; Gatenby et al., 2015; Wepner et al., 2015; Zagirova, 2017). The success of the dean depends on how they interpret what is required and determine what they can personally do to enhance

organizational performance. It also relies on the actions and initiatives they undertake based on their interpretations, as well as the support they can receive from faculty members and senior administrators (Arntzen, 2016; Franken et al., 2015; Pepper & Giles, 2015). Therefore, the role of the dean has become both influential and challenging at the same time, requiring a closer examination of academic deanship in Kazakhstan.

Experiences of Academic Deans in Public Universities of Kazakhstan

The findings from Research Question 1 reveal that public universities in Kazakhstan primarily rely on internal hiring strategies when recruiting deans. Specifically, they tend to select academic deans from their existing pool of employees. Notably, these institutions deliberately hire their own graduates who remain to work at the same university after graduation. In addition, public universities in Kazakhstan employ a job rotation mechanism, where employees are promoted and moved within the organization (Altbach et al., 2015). It should be noted that public universities also consider external job applicants, but they tend to select candidates with specific work experiences and competencies tailored to the vacant positions.

The recruitment strategies employed by Kazakhstani public universities reflect their intentional prioritization of social connections and relationships within the organization. This aligns with the argument made by Godechot and Louvet (2008), which highlights that academic inbreeding places a strong emphasis on personal relationships rather than standardized evaluations of qualifications and individual skills. The emphasis on social ties helps foster staff loyalty, commitment to their jobs, and a culture where employees adhere to the university's norms, values, and mission. Ultimately, this leads to the effective adaptation of new employees who are already familiar with the university's culture and practices, resulting in a committed workforce, high morale, and low turnover (Wilkinson, 2020).

However, despite the apparent benefits of academic inbreeding, it carries negative consequences, as noted by various scholars (Godechot & Louvet, 2008; Horta, 2022; Horta & Yudkevich, 2016). This practice can lead to staff immobility, strong attachment to alma mater, and a reliance on institutional networks, which can hinder the ability of universities to adapt and innovate (Altbach et al., 2015). In contrast to the study's findings that emphasize the advantages of internal hiring and academic inbreeding, existing empirical studies underscore the disadvantages of this practice. First, recruiting exclusively from within organizations limits universities in selecting qualified candidates by not considering a diverse pool of job applicants. Second, academic inbreeding can hinder knowledge creation and research performance by perpetuating institutionally accepted knowledge, potentially leading to a skills gap among employees (Alipova & Lovakov, 2018; Horta, 2022; Horta & Yudkevich, 2016).

Furthermore, academic inbreeding influences all aspects of university management, organizational structure, and interpersonal communication. It can maintain the status quo, foster organizational rigidity, and promote organizational cultures marked by mediocrity. This effect extends to governance systems, leadership styles, and institutional structures (Hermanowicz, 2013). Academic inbreeding can also impact communication channels, creating power imbalances and hierarchical relationships within universities. Consequently, it may result in traditional leadership and management styles that increase bureaucracy, resistance to change, inflexibility, uniformity, and formalism within the organization (Horta, 2022; Terjesen, 2022).

In summary, public universities in Kazakhstan employ traditional internal recruitment practices, including academic inbreeding, due to the importance they place on close professional ties and personal relationships between employers and employees. This approach is believed to benefit both the institutions and their staff, providing job

commitment, better performance, reduced turnover, and effective adaptation to the workplace. Nevertheless, it is important not to underestimate the disadvantages of academic inbreeding, which often outweigh its initial advantages.

Changes in Academic Deanship in Kazakhstani Public Universities

The results of the study regarding Research Question 2 emphasize a significant shift in the role of academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan. If traditionally, deans had teaching responsibilities alongside their administrative duties, which included strategic planning and goal setting, budgeting and fundraising, personnel management, and maintaining communication and partnerships, now deans acquired a status of administrative-managerial staff of the university with a teaching waiver, granting them greater managerial flexibility and autonomy.

It is important to note that not all public universities in Kazakhstan reconsidered the role and status of deans. Therefore, there are academic deans who still retain their faculty status despite taking on increased managerial functions and duties.

However, despite this shift in the status, the findings also underscore that deans face challenges in exercising their authority and powers as administrators. These challenges stem from centralized decision-making and funding processes, as well as top-down relationships between senior university administrators and deans. These conditions limit the positional autonomy and authority of deans, subjecting them to excessive control, external supervision, and bureaucratic burdens. As a result, deans must seek administrative approval and permission before addressing problems and taking action, even though they bear full responsibility for the progress of their academic units, departments, faculty members, and students.

The root of these limitations on deans lies in the highly centralized university governance system inherited from the Soviet times (Ahn et al., 2018; Chekmareva et al.,

2016; Sagintayeva et al., 2017). This system is characterized by rigid regulations and top-down communication between superiors and subordinates (Hartley et al., 2016; Sagintayeva & Kurakbayev, 2015). Consequently, most of the authority and power rest with the central university administration. These institutional norms and practices affect contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstan, minimizing their role as school administrators.

In summary, the findings from Research Question 2 suggest that changes such as upgrading the dean's status and expanding their managerial functions cannot be fully attributed to positive advancements in academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan. This is because deans continue to operate within a highly centralized governance system, restricting their administrative status, executive authority, and autonomy.

Managerial Roles of Academic Deans in Public Universities

The findings from Research Question 3 reveal that academic deans exhibit managerial behavior in public universities in Kazakhstan. However, the extent to which managerial roles are legitimized and their intensity in the dean's behavior are rule-bound and context-related. In the centralized university governance system within which deans operate, their behavior is characterized as norm-following, depending on the stakeholders involved and the matters they are handling.

Mintzberg's theory highlights that deans in Kazakhstani public universities engage in interpersonal relationships with both internal and external university stakeholders. They actively participate in information exchange and processing activities. Regarding interpersonal roles, deans, as representatives of their schools, maintain and control networks of communication within and outside their institutions. They also fulfill ceremonial functions on behalf of the entire academic unit (Figurehead role). In their role as Leaders, deans guide and motivate their teams, including administrative staff, faculty members, and students, to

achieve targeted goals. Moreover, deans are responsible for establishing external partnerships and collaborations, exercising the Liaison role.

In terms of their informational roles, deans receive various types of information, such as reports, protocols, orders, and decrees, which they must process, distribute, or assign tasks to the appropriate executors. In this role, deans act as Disseminators, transmitting information or distributing tasks and assignments to departments while overseeing their timely and proper execution (Monitor role). In addition, deans analyze information about key competitors and their products and services, which they use to remain competitive in the educational market. In the role of Spokesperson, deans are accountable for their designated units to senior university administrators and other stakeholders, reporting on the performance and progress of their schools.

However, when it comes to decisional roles, the dean's authority to exercise them is not clearly defined. An individual's decision-making capacity is a key aspect of Mintzberg's executive behavioral theory. The dean's roles in entrepreneurship, disturbance handling, resource allocation, and negotiation are situational. For instance, deans may negotiate with faculty members, students, alumni, or labor market representatives regarding the content of academic programs, internships, and graduate employment. However, this negotiation competence of deans with senior administrators becomes limited due to their norm-following behavior. Deans occupy a lower level in the organizational hierarchy and follow centrally made decisions in the university. As a result, the dean's entrepreneurial and resource allocation roles are constrained. For instance, deans may plan innovations, offer initiatives, or seek opportunities, but centralized funding and bureaucratic burdens in terms of the administrator's approvals and permissions hinder the timely realization of the dean's plans and ideas, which compromises the nature of entrepreneurial behavior. As for the Disturbance handler role, it is primarily used by deans to resolve conflicts among academic staff and

students. However, in fact, it is more than conflict management and resolution, as it is about the ability of an individual to handle unexpected situations requiring critical thinking, strategic decision-making, and creative problem-solving.

Executive behavioral theory suggests that deans primarily assume interpersonal and informational roles, with limited involvement in decision-making (Brousseau et al., 2006; Kumar, 2015; Shrestha et al., 2019). However, Saah et al. (2020), Balikçi (2020), Mech (1997), and Muma et al. (2006) emphasize that the capacity to build social networks, utilize information, and make decisions is crucial for managers in any organization. Therefore, the dean's limited decision-making authority and the lack of positional autonomy restrict their ability to solve problems, initiate projects, and act based on their beliefs, knowledge, and experience (Berdahl, 1990; Chekmareva et al., 2016; European University Association [EUA], 2018; Raza, 2009). This makes academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities inflexible, rule-bound, and heavily dependent on university leadership, despite their position and administrative status. Consequently, the dean's behavior is characterized by formality, hierarchical structures, uniformity, and administrative burdens. Nonetheless, according to De Boer and Goedegebuure (2009), academic deans play a pivotal role in implementing plans and goals, transforming them into tangible actions and outcomes. Thus, the decision-making ability and autonomy of deans are critical to their roles.

The aforementioned factors in the dean's behavior may signal their underperformance due to the identified challenges. According to Kumar (2015) and Mintzberg (1973, 1989), an individual's ability to oversee budgeting, raise funds, and allocate funding using entrepreneurial and managerial approaches determines their success as a manager. Therefore, an individual's decision-making capacity, along with interpersonal communication skills and information processing activities, is a prerequisite for the executive's effective performance. In other words, without adequate authority and autonomy

to make decisions, and take actions and initiatives, deans in Kazakhstan will continue to be mere “spectators in the campus power games” (Dill, 1980, p. 273). This emphasizes the need for empowering academic deans in Kazakhstan.

Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity of Academic Deans in Kazakhstan

Based on the findings from Research Question 4, Kazakhstani deans experience both role conflict and role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is primarily caused by systemic inconsistencies within the environment in which deans operate. They function in a highly centralized university governance system that restricts individual authority and autonomy, concentrating these powers in the hands of senior administrators. This centralized structure in public universities serves as a source for role ambiguity among academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan. In terms of role conflict, it arises from the extensive demands and expectations placed on deans. They are accountable for the performance of their designated academic units, departments, faculty members, and students. However, deans have little or no influence on centrally made decisions, which limits their ability to perform their work effectively. Moreover, deans are also engaged in dual roles performing teaching and research activities to provide the high quality of academic programs offered at the university. They are also required to involve their academic staff in knowledge generation and dissemination processes. This makes deans balance multiple responsibilities, including overseeing unit functioning, monitoring faculty quality, and supporting academic staff and students, all within their dean’s role. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the dean’s job descriptions are not clearly defined. This lack of clarity in the incumbent’s responsibilities puts them under pressure, leading to inconsistent demands and expectations from their roles.

Based on these findings, academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan are prone to work-related stress stemming from both role conflict and role ambiguity. Such stressors can occur in any workplace when an individual’s roles, status, and authority are

constrained or withheld (Nyanga et al., 2012). As expected, the findings highlight that these stressors have detrimental effects not only on the dean's job performance but also on their emotional well-being and even their personal lives. This suggests a critical need for role clarity among academic deans in Kazakhstan. Role clarity informs the incumbent's status, delineating their duties and responsibilities, and specifying the degree of their positional authority and autonomy in a workplace (Rai, 2016). Moreover, role clarity can serve as a foundation for an individual's self-efficacy, fostering their higher work engagement and reducing role stress (Bandura et al., 1999). Consequently, role clarity is a valuable tool to enhance the self-efficacy and confidence of individuals, removing barriers that can hinder job performance and job satisfaction (Gmelch, 2000; Harris & Jones, 2017; Wepner et al., 2015).

The Contribution to the Knowledge about Academic Deanship in Kazakhstan

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan. This study aimed to understand the role of mid-level academic managers, specifically deans, in the post-Soviet higher education system. It explored the experiences, perceptions, and managerial roles of deans, as well as the challenges they may encounter in the changing landscape of the national higher education system.

The significance of the original empirical study was to draw close attention to contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities at both the individual and institutional (systemic) levels. At the individual level, the study scrutinized academic deanship and the role incumbents play in institutions of higher education in Kazakhstan. This study revealed that deans increasingly deal with managerial tasks to foster entrepreneurial development of their academic units. For this reason, the dean's status was redefined from mere faculty members to administrators without teaching responsibilities. Deans are expected to engage in strategic planning and goal setting, budgeting and fundraising, personnel

management, and maintaining communication and partnerships with alumni and businesses (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016).

Nevertheless, despite the upgrade in the dean's status and their involvement in managerial activities, it was found that their role lacks the necessary decision-making powers and autonomy to effectively perform the work. This inconsistency in the dean's role can be attributed to systemic issues existing within the higher education system in Kazakhstan. Academic deans operate in an environment characterized by a highly centralized university governance system inherited from the Soviet times (Froumin & Smolentseva, 2014; Sagintayeva et al., 2017; Smolentseva et al., 2018). Consequently, this system functions on a basis of top-down decision-making, strict control, centralized funding allocation, bureaucracy, and hierarchical relationships between university leadership and other employees, including deans. This poses a risk to deans, as their administrative authority is often withheld. This limitation hinders the dean's ability to contribute significantly to organizational performance and progress. Thus, this study highlights the systemic inconsistencies that lie in a highly centralized university governance system, which expects deans to excel in their work but without empowering them with essential authority, powers, and autonomy. As expected, deans feel confused and stressed, as they continue to bear full accountability for the performance of their academic units, departments, faculty members, and students.

It should be noted that these discrepancies in the dean's work point to the fact that all authority in public universities in Kazakhstan is concentrated in senior university administrators. This characterizes the organizational structure of universities as hierarchical, consisting of senior administrators and other employees. This, in turn, signals the absence of mid-level academic management or grassroots leadership in public universities in Kazakhstan, which explains the limited executive authority and autonomy of deans.

However, it is also important to note that university leadership cannot provide comprehensive supervision and control over academic schools because deans have a better understanding of academic units and their challenges. This is why it is critical to foster mid-level academic managers and cultivate their leadership capacity. For this reason, another contribution of the study is to emphasize the importance of fostering bottom-up leadership, which can empower academic deans with the necessary authority and resources. This aligns with the argument of Gmelch (2000) that “The time of amateur administration [*academic deanship*] is over” (p. 69). In doing so, it requires greater commitment from university administrators to reconsider their relationships with deans as mid-level academic managers, delegating them authorities and nurturing their decision-making capacities and positional autonomy.

Given the aforementioned, the original contribution of this study lies in developing a new understanding of the role of contemporary academic deanship in public universities in Kazakhstan. It sheds light on the current experiences of deans in their roles and the challenges they face. Therefore, this study calls for strengthening academic deanship by introducing distributed leadership in universities. This approach entails senior administrators sharing their authorities and powers with deans to enhance organizational performance (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). Consequently, this will allow senior administrators to capitalize on academic deans as valuable administrative assets.

Limitations of the Study

In this study, I have identified and acknowledge the following limitations that were outside of my control as the researcher:

The COVID-19 Pandemic

Data collection for this study took place from April to December 2020, which coincided with the national lockdown imposed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, there were limitations and challenges in conducting this research.

It should be noted that instead of visiting research sites, negotiating my access to research sites with gatekeepers of organizations (rectors) to obtain research permits, and conducting individual face-to-face interviews with deans, I had to modify my recruitment strategies. Therefore, due to the social distance and online mode of operations of universities in Kazakhstan, I had to adapt to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to adjust my data collection instruments, revise approaches to accessing research sites, and recruit participants for interviews. For these reasons, I used information and communication technologies (ICTs). First, I had to find the email addresses and phone numbers of the institutions in order to contact the research sites and negotiate my access to them. However, the corporate email addresses of academic deans were not updated and posted on institutional websites in a timely manner to contact them. Second, due to the unstable epidemiological situation in the state, I decided to use WhatsApp and Zoom applications because of their user-friendly features, simplicity, and accessibility (Archibald et al., 2019; Edwards & Holland, 2019; Khan, 2022). These applications served as my primary means of communication with the research participants, allowing me to organize audio calls and conduct interviews.

In summary, the data collection process took place during a particularly hectic time for the universities and academic deans. The latter were busy with organizing distance learning, final exams, graduation ceremonies, student admissions, and similar activities. Therefore, a significant amount of time was spent in obtaining research permits, recruiting potential research participants by finding their current phone numbers and email addresses, organizing interview schedules, and conducting interviews with them.

Self-Reported Data

The research participants in this study were acting deans and academic deans from public universities of Kazakhstan. They provided self-reported data about their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes in their roles as academic deans. It is important to note that this

study did not consider the perspectives of other key stakeholders of the dean's roles, such as vice-rectors, vice-deans, department chairs, faculty members, or students. These individuals may have different expectations and demands from academic deans. However, for this study, it was particularly important to gather self-reported data as a starting point in exploring the phenomenon of academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. Therefore, I focused exclusively on academic deans as the primary sources of data.

Moreover, collecting self-reported data aligned with my epistemological approach to understand the roles, functions, and responsibilities of academic deans as perceived by the deans themselves. Consequently, I relied on the participants' own interpretations of academic deanship, recognizing the subjectivity in their diverse experiences, unique individual perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions of the dean's roles in Kazakhstani public universities (Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Taylor et al., 2015).

Furthermore, I made efforts to recruit research participants from diverse national and regional universities in Kazakhstan. This approach allowed me to reach data saturation, capturing both similar and dissimilar patterns in the dean's individual experiences and perceptions of their roles. As a result, the participants provided valuable information about their behaviors, attitudes, experiences, and perceptions regarding their work, in parallel emphasizing the needs, demands, and expectations of their multiple internal and external stakeholders.

Generalizability

Qualitative research often faces limitations regarding its ability to generalize the study's results to a larger population due to the use of small samples and non-random (non-probability) sampling strategies (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

To address this limitation in my study, it should be noted that the primary goal was to explore individual perceptions and experiences about academic deanship and the dean's roles

in public universities in Kazakhstan (B. Smith, 2018). Therefore, while my findings may not be directly generalizable to the entire population, they hold theoretical generalizability or transferability. This means that the study's results can be applied to other cases, situations, and contexts (B. Smith, 2018).

To achieve transferability, I used purposeful sampling to obtain a comprehensive and representative sample from the population, focusing on academic deans serving as experts about the phenomenon under study (Anney, 2014). Next, to minimize my researcher bias in a sample population selection, I established the inclusion criteria for the participants with predetermined characteristics. Potential participants were required to meet the following criteria: to be currently employed full-time as acting deans or academic deans, representing various age groups and gender balances, and spanning different academic disciplines. In addition, they were recruited from various national and regional universities (public universities) in Kazakhstan (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Edwards & Holland, 2019; A. Morris, 2015). As a result, I interviewed 15 deans from seven public universities located in the north, south, east, and center of Kazakhstan. This geographical diversity of the participants also contributed to the transferability of the results to other academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan, suggesting that the challenges encountered by deans are common across both national and state universities in Kazakhstan (Andrade, 2021).

Guest et al. (2006, p. 78) argue that studies with a high level of homogeneity among the population can yield meaningful themes and useful interpretations, reaching data saturation, even with a relatively small sample size. Therefore, despite the small sample size, this sample homogeneity allowed attaining data saturation, where the same stories, themes, issues, and topics continuously emerged from the interviewees. This signaled that I had obtained both a sufficient sample size and data saturation (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

These techniques allowed me to ensure the transferability of my study's results, encompassing multiple aspects of academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities.

Delimitations of the Study

Considering the study boundaries mentioned in the previous section, I have identified the following delimitations:

Academic Deans in Public Universities of Kazakhstan

Given the ongoing higher education reforms in Kazakhstan, this study aimed to provide better understanding about the role of academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities during organizational restructuring. The study explored the experiences and perceptions of contemporary deans regarding their work and the observed changes over time. In addition, this study sought to determine the capacity of deans to fulfill their newly emerging management and leadership roles within the context of ongoing decentralization reforms in Kazakhstan. Moreover, this study aimed to identify and explain the challenges faced by contemporary deans in managing academic schools. As a result, this study represents the first exploratory empirical research that aimed to conceptualize the work of deans and determine their roles in the changing landscape of higher education in Kazakhstan.

The Choice of Public Universities in Kazakhstan

In this study, I have specifically selected national and regional (state) universities in Kazakhstan. The rationale behind this selection is the ongoing institutional restructuring, which moves these institutions toward autonomous operations. This restructuring encompasses areas such as finances, staffing, academic issues, and management. For example, one notable reorganization has been the transformation of these universities into non-profit joint-stock companies (NJSCs). The goal is to equip these institutions with the necessary authority and flexibility to compete for resources and foster entrepreneurship.

It is important to emphasize that such institutional restructuring has a direct impact on the dean's offices within these universities. Specifically, it influences the roles and responsibilities of academic deans. Consequently, deans are likely to face pressures and tensions as they adapt to changing expectations and demands from various stakeholders. They are responsible for managing operational tasks, including planning, organizing, and coordinating renewed academic and research agendas.

Credibility of the Research

To meet the study's quality criteria, I recognized the importance of gathering extensive data from different sources. To achieve this, I employed a data triangulation technique to ensure the reliability of the information. This approach involved cross-referencing data from at least two research methods: document analysis and semi-structured in-depth interviews. The two methods explored the role of academic deans in Kazakhstani public universities from different perspectives and dimensions, such as time, space, and the individuals involved (Anney, 2014; Carter, 2014).

Given the unstable sanitary-epidemiological situation in Kazakhstan, I made efforts to recruit as many eligible research participants as possible. I established predetermined criteria to ensure sample homogeneity and geographical diversity across research sites. These criteria included two types of public universities, different locations, and specific characteristics for recruiting participants (i.e., they work full-time as acting deans and academic deans with varying levels of experience, representing diverse age groups and academic disciplines).

Although I initially planned for data collection to take two or a maximum of three months, the process of interviewing the deans extended over nine months, from April to December 2020. This extended timeframe proved beneficial, allowing me to gain insights into the dean's roles across different aspects of their operations, including student enrollment, exam sessions, graduation, and more. These unique conditions enabled me to identify

common behavioral patterns and distinctive traits in the roles of deans, offering me a deeper understanding of their responsibilities and a more comprehensive perspective on the challenges faced by Kazakhstani deans. It also provided an opportunity to evaluate the diverse relationships that deans establish with both internal and external stakeholders. Consequently, I could corroborate my findings across multiple data sets, ensuring that my conclusions were not influenced by the limitations of a single research method, data source, or researcher bias (Patton, 2015).

Recommendations

This section offers several recommendations for researchers to further explore Kazakhstani academic deanship considering it may offer new insights and perspectives. For this reason, it is recommended for researchers along with public universities to consider private universities, include multiple internal and external stakeholders of deans, and employ quantitative research methods. The inclusion of private institutions, different role senders of deans, and the use of different research methods will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of academic deanship in Kazakhstan.

Recommendations for Further Research

This exploratory empirical research has highlighted the critical role of academic deanship in the changing landscape of higher education in Kazakhstan. However, this study has only scratched the surface of contemporary academic deanship. Therefore, it is highly recommended to continue researching Kazakhstani deans, considering their increasing significance as influential change agents (Balogun, 2003; Wisniewski, 1998).

While this study exclusively focused on the roles, experiences, and perceptions of deans in Kazakhstani public universities, it is recommended that future studies broaden their scope by encompassing deans from private universities. This will provide new perspectives and insights into mid-level academic management in Kazakhstan.

It is also recommended to include multiple role senders of the dean including internal stakeholders – such as university administrators (e.g., vice-rectors), vice-deans, department chairs, faculty members, and students. The inclusion of these actors in the research will add more depth and clarity to the phenomenon of academic deanship in Kazakhstan because the essence of the dean's role consists of engaging in a variety of complex interpersonal relationships and networks of communication flows.

Moreover, employing quantitative or mixed methods to explore academic deanship in Kazakhstan is recommended. For example, survey questionnaires are commonly used in social sciences to gather quantifiable data from a large number of people simultaneously (Stockemer et al., 2019). They are more cost-effective saving time in data gathering and analysis compared to semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Following these recommendations will enable researchers to fully explore the phenomenon of Kazakhstani academic deanship. This approach will allow collecting rich and relevant data on the dean's roles, gaining valuable insights into this mid-level academic management position. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of their research on academic deanship, ensuring a comprehensive, all-rounded, and holistic understanding without a one-sided perspective focused only on the academic dean as the central figure in Kazakhstani deanship.

Recommendations for Public Universities in Kazakhstan

These recommendations include suggestions for senior administrators of Kazakhstani universities. Following these recommendations has the potential to enhance organizational performance and functionality by reviewing institutional bylaws to improve regulatory provisions and norms, providing clear guidelines for the smooth functioning of academic schools, dean's offices, departments, and other units, as well as minimizing bureaucracy and reducing administrative burdens. In addition, it is advised to prepare novice

academic deans in Kazakhstan for their increasingly complex and multifaceted work. This could be achieved through professional development and mentorship programs. These measures can help strengthening academic deanship in Kazakhstan by promoting grassroots leadership and future authority devolution from senior administrators to mid-level academic managers, such as deans.

The Quality of Institutional Bylaws. Institutional bylaws are essential documents that outline the rules and regulations governing the operation and management of an organization (Hampton, n.d.). They establish the framework for decision-making by defining the authority and powers of various entities within the institution (Terjesen, 2022). Therefore, well-formulated bylaws provide clarity, promote fairness, and ensure the smooth functioning of the organization.

The results of the study indicated that not all deans interviewed have a clear understanding of their roles, status, level of authority, and duties. Moreover, they noted that they are responsible “for absolutely everything” (e.g., Participants 2, 3, 7, and 16). This indicates that the dean’s functions and tasks lack clear-cut responsibilities, being broad. Consequently, academic deans often face complexities and ambiguities in their work, leading to their stress and anxiety.

In addition, the public universities reviewed do not fully use the benefits provided by the Typical Qualification Requirements of Academic Staff and People Equated to Them (with amendments as of 2019) (MoES, 2009b). This document allows universities autonomy in staffing policies and regulations. As a result, deans in Universities 1 and 2 continue to be classified as faculty members, balancing both academic and administrative responsibilities. In contrast, deans with an administrator’s status have more flexibility and freedom in organizing their daily operations. Dean-administrators can decide freely on combining their administrative functions with teaching, conducting research, or advising graduate students.

This suggests that the dean's administrator status is more beneficial because it enables deans to decide on their own how to effectively organize time.

Moreover, when reviewing the available job descriptions of deans, it was found that the incumbents have the right to "make suggestions to university administrators for improving the academic school's activities" (Toraighyrov University, 2020, p. 17). They have also the right to appeal against orders, decrees, and other organizational and administrative acts of the university administration in the established order (Toraighyrov University, 2020, p. 18). However, the dean's responses regarding their disagreement with reducing the number of vice-deans, inconsistencies in the job descriptions of academic program heads, and the lack of support to incentivize students and faculty members for achievements show that these dean's rights are often overlooked. These real-life examples indicate that considerable staff regulations may contain inconsistencies that do not clearly instruct on an incumbent's functions, rights, and responsibilities.

For this reason, it is highly recommended that universities and administrators review their staff regulations and other provisions on dean's offices, departments, and structural units. This will help better address the abovementioned issues and effectively incorporate them into the organizational structure, governance, staff qualifications, and functions. Rohr (2016) argues that well-written and regularly updated regulations help prevent misunderstandings in the workplace by focusing staff on their intended goals and facilitating their successful achievement. Therefore, job analysis, development, and review are vital for administrators to accurately capture the essence of each position and each department (Hampton, n.d.; Rohr, 2016). Clearly formulated functions, duties, and rights outlined in job descriptions guide an individual in keeping their jobs running smoothly, clarifying obscure questions, and saving significant time and deliberation (Rohr, 2016).

It is worth noting that the quality of bylaws contributes to role clarity and enables individuals to perform their duties more effectively. Inconsistent bylaws only lead to confusions and hinder organizational performance and employees' self-efficacy (Bako, 2014; Nyanga et al., 2012). Therefore, providing the quality of institutional regulations, including their formulation, content consistency, and regular review, ensures that current employees and job seekers are well-informed and qualified for the positions (Rohr, 2016).

In summary, clear and consistent bylaws create a win-win situation for university administrators and their employees. First, university administrators can significantly reduce role ambiguity and provide clear expectations for incumbents (Nyanga et al., 2012; Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019). Second, reviewing institutional bylaws and clearly determining the roles of university staff can strengthen the dean's current weak position in the institutional structure. This ensures that all levels of management in institutions have the necessary information and resources to perform their duties, allowing them to control effectively organizational processes and govern the functioning of structural units and subunits.

Reduction of Bureaucratic Burdens. The study's findings highlight that academic deans are key actors of universities in Kazakhstan. They are in charge of internal operations serving as front-line workers dealing with a variety of roles and functions simultaneously, while administrative units of universities (e.g., office registrar, international cooperation office) serve as back-line workers, who provide supporting functions by organizing and facilitating the work of dean's offices, faculty members, and students (Andrews et al., 2017). However, based on the participants' responses, they and their offices are often distracted by excessive reporting and paperwork from administrative units and departments, and unnecessary delays. This situation is unacceptable for contemporary universities that are striving to become entrepreneurial because it hampers productivity, innovativeness, proactivity, and freedom of academic institutions. In addition, it creates administrative

pressures on the dean's offices signaling the bureaucratization of the institution (Terjesen, 2022). Therefore, the quality of internal processes and intradepartmental communication can serve as an indicator of achieving better individual and organizational performance. For this reason, it is recommended for universities and administrators to minimize power disparities, top-down relationships, and excessive paperwork within the organizations. This can be achieved by implementing anti-bureaucracy policies and adopting strategies and mechanisms that promote innovation at all levels of the organization (Terjesen, 2022). As a result, horizontal relationships and improved communication channels will be fostered among university staff, schools, departments, and units.

Professional Development of Novice Deans. Given that a typical dean in a Kazakhstani university usually comes from a senior faculty position due to internal recruitment practices, it becomes evident that deans are most likely trained as scholars, researchers, and lecturers rather than professional managers (Floyd, 2016; T. Morris & Laipple, 2015; Nadeem & Garvey, 2020). Consequently, they are primarily recruited for their outstanding scholarship and disciplinary expertise rather than their managerial experience.

Traditionally, deans were mainly expected to be knowledgeable about academic-related matters such as academic program design, curriculum development, and research efforts. However, the expectations for deans have changed. Nowadays, they are increasingly tasked with strategic planning, personnel management, fundraising, and external communication management (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Davis et al., 2016; Lavigne, 2019). These skills are critical for deans to effectively identify and address challenges, introduce innovations, and achieve the targeted goals (Shrestha et al., 2019). These competencies enable deans to improve the functioning of academic schools and offer fresh perspectives rather than relying on outdated practices and experience (Franken et al., 2015).

The lack of sufficient knowledge and experience in professional management among deans in Kazakhstan suggests a shortage of qualified individuals who can effectively navigate the complexities of the dean's work. The lack of adequate preparation for deanship often leads to a trial-and-error learning process, which is costly, time-consuming, and inefficient for both the institutions and academic deans (Wepner et al., 2015). Therefore, it is recommended that Kazakhstani public universities invest in the professional skills and competencies of their mid-level academic managers by providing professional training and mentorship programs to retain the most talented and outstanding professionals (T. Morris & Laipple, 2015). Consequently, university administrators should prioritize the professional development of middle academic managers by offering programs and courses focused on strategic planning, leadership, delegation of authority, organizational and team-building skills, communication and networking skills, problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict resolution (Arntzen, 2016; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Lavigne, 2019; Pepper & Giles, 2015). These skills and competencies can equip deans with the specialized knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities and ambiguities of their work (Birnbaum, 1992; Floyd, 2016; Nadeem & Garvey, 2020).

Without adequate professional development, novice deans may continue to comply with bureaucratic processes and power imbalances, remaining 'disempowered' middle academic managers in Kazakhstani public universities (Davis et al., 2016). Therefore, supporting academic deans requires collaborative efforts and coordinated actions among university leaders, human resources, and other units. This approach will strengthen academic deanship and recognize deans as competent academic leaders and managers, underscoring the importance of investing in their professional growth and success.

Summary

This concluding chapter provides a brief summary of the findings regarding academic deanship in Kazakhstani public universities. The study revealed that, based on Research Question 1, academic deans in Kazakhstan are predominantly recruited from within institutions. This internal hiring, including academic inbreeding, seems to be beneficial for both universities and deans. Universities receive a committed workforce, and deans quickly adapt to the workplace and receive support from their colleagues. According to Research Question 2, the dean's role has shifted from that of a traditional faculty member to that of an administrator. However, this shift does not equip deans with sufficient executive authority and positional autonomy because they continue to operate within a highly centralized governance system with all authority concentrated in the hands of senior university administrators. Therefore, deans face obstacles to effectively perform their duties. Regarding Research Question 3, the managerial roles of deans are rule-bound and context-dependent, which is explained by the environment in which they function. Centralized decision-making and limited positional autonomy restrict the dean's decisional roles. Therefore, they exclusively deal with interpersonal relationships and information processing and exchange activities. Finally, Research Question 4 revealed that academic deans in Kazakhstan are prone to role conflict and role ambiguity due to the increasing demands and expectations placed upon them having limited resources to meet these expectations. Role ambiguity arises from the centralized environment in which deans function, and their full accountability for the performance of the schools. As for role conflict, the dean's status as a school administrator does not correspond with their limited executive behavior. In addition, they engage in multiple roles, including teaching and research responsibilities, all within a single dean's position, which also adds pressure to their role.

Furthermore, the second section introduced the original contribution of this study to the knowledge about academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan within the post-Soviet higher education context. This study contributes to the understanding of contemporary academic deanship in Kazakhstan, addressing both individual and institutional (systemic) aspects of this role. It underscores the challenges faced by deans who operate with limited authority and autonomy in performing their duties. Consequently, this study draws attention to strengthening academic deanship by reconsidering the relationships between university leadership and deans, emphasizing the need for establishing distributed leadership in public universities in Kazakhstan.

The third section of this chapter presents the limitations and delimitations of the study. The limitations include the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on research strategies, self-reported data, and the lack of generalizability of study findings to a larger population. The delimitations acknowledge that this study is the first attempt to examine academic deanship in Kazakhstan. It conducted interviews with 15 research participants from seven national and regional universities (public universities) located in five regions of Kazakhstan.

Finally, the chapter ends with recommendations for future researchers and public universities of Kazakhstan. It suggests considering private universities and multiple role senders of the dean, as well as employing quantitative research methods to develop a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of deanship within the changing landscape of higher education in Kazakhstan. It also recommends reviewing institutional bylaws, providing staff with clearer instructions and guidelines and reducing bureaucracy. Finally, given the ability of deans to serve as effective change agents, the further recommendations highlight the need for preparing novice deans for their complex and multifaceted roles. For this reason, university administrators are also encouraged to support academic deans with

specialized development programs and training to enhance their knowledge and competencies in the areas of professional management.

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Appendices

Appendix A 1. Interview Protocol (in English)

Part I. Demographic data about the participant.

Date:

Position (Acting Dean or Dean):

Gender:

Academic degree:

Year of birth:

Family status:

Part II. Main questions.

1. Tell me about how you became a dean?
 - What are the responsibilities of your position?
2. How would you characterize the job of a dean?
3. Did your perceptions of the dean's position change before you became a dean and now? In what ways?
 - In your opinion, is there a difference between the job you are doing now and the Dean's job description? Give an example.
4. Have you taken any courses in educational management?
 - In your opinion, do you apply the knowledge acquired in the course in your work? In what cases?
5. How do you prioritize your diverse work?
6. In your opinion, do you have sufficient authority to perform the duties of a dean?
 - Do you have enough resources (time, finances, personnel, etc.) to do your job?
7. As a dean, you have to work with various stakeholders (MoES, boards of trustees/supervisory boards, university administration, faculty, students, and employers). Tell me how you interact with these groups?
 - Which of these groups takes up more of your time and why?
 - How do you cope with this?
8. What difficulties do you face in your work? Give an example.
 - How do you solve them?
9. What do you do in case of conflict in the academic unit and why?
 - Do you have any support in solving conflict situations (e.g., instructions)?
10. What do you like or dislike about your job?
11. In your opinion, are you susceptible to stress in the workplace?
 - What is its cause and how do you cope with it?
12. What would you change about the dean's job, duties, and functions if you could do it?
 - Why?

Part III. Managerial roles

Table A 1. The questionnaire to determine the academic dean's managerial roles based on H. Mintzberg

Task: Rate your answers to the questions below from 1 to 5:

No	Questions	Rate the role from 1 to 5				
		Very low (1)	Low (2)	Average (3)	High (4)	Very high (5)
Interpersonal roles						
1	How would you rate yourself as a dean in the Figurehead role in performing ceremonial, social, and legal functions? (Example, signing memoranda, receiving and escorting delegations, participating in events, etc.)?					
2	How would you rate yourself as the Leader ? (Example, motivating the team, supporting their professional development and training, making them more effective in assigning tasks, orders, recruiting, etc.)?					
3	How would you rate yourself as the Liaison , i.e., networking, maintaining contacts and correspondence with partners, employers, etc. for the development of the faculty as a whole?					
Informational roles						
4	How would you rate yourself as the Monitor , i.e., tracking information regarding the state of the labor market, educational services in the profile of the department to identify new opportunities, trends, etc.?					
5	How would you rate yourself as the Disseminator of information, i.e., analyzing information, communicating information (e-mails, instructions, decrees, government programs, meeting minutes, etc.) to other faculty and/or university employees?					
6	How would you rate yourself as the Spokesperson , i.e. communicating information (plans, goals, reports, results, etc.) about your university/faculty to external stakeholders (employers, business, industry, and government agencies)?					
Decisional roles						
7	How would you rate yourself as the Entrepreneur to analyze the labor market and the educational market for new partnerships, trends in science and learning, and the development of new educational services?					
8	How would you rate yourself as the Disturbance handler in managing the academic unit due to conflicts and problems?					
9	How would you rate yourself in the role of the Resource allocator to					

	departments/faculty members (budget allocation, awards, etc.)?					
10	How would you rate yourself as the Negotiator with government agencies, university administration, colleagues, faculty, students, and employers acting on behalf of the department and/or university?					

Appendix A 2. Interview Protocol (in Kazakh)

I бөлім. Қатысушылардың демографиялық ақпараты.

Күні:

Лауазымы (декан немесе декан м.а.):

Жынысы:

Ғылыми дәрежесі:

Туған жылы:

Отбасы жағдайы:

II бөлім. Негізгі сұрақтар.

1. Қалай декан болғаныңыз туралы айтып беріңізші?
- Міндеттерің қандай?
2. Факультет деканының жұмысын қалай сипаттай едіңіз?
3. Декан болғанға дейін және қазір декан қызметі туралы ойларыңыз өзгерді ме? Қалайша?
- Сіздің ойыңызша, қазіргі атқарып жатқан жұмысыңыз бен деканның лауазымдық нұсқауында айырмашылықтар бар ма? Мысал келтіріңіз.
4. Айтыңызшы, білім беруде менеджмент курстарынан өттіңіз бе?
- Курста алған біліміңіз бен дағдыларыңызды жұмысыңызда қолданасыз ба? Қандай жағдайларда?
5. Сіз өзіңіздің әртүрлі жұмысыңызға қалай басымдық бересіз?
6. Сіздің ойыңызша, декандық қызметті атқаруға өкілеттілік жеткілікті ме?
- Жұмысыңызды орындау үшін ресурстарыңыз (уақыт, қаржы, кадр және т.б.) жеткілікті ме?
7. Декан ретінде Сіз әртүрлі мүдделі тараптармен (БЖҒМ, қамқоршылар/бақылау кеңестері, университет басшылығы, оқытушылар құрамы, студенттер және жұмыс берушілер) жұмыс істеуіңіз керек. Осы топтармен қалай әрекеттесетіңізді сипаттай бересіз ба?
- Осы топтардың қайсысы Сіздің жұмыс уақытыңызды көбірек алады және неге?
8. Жұмысыңызда қандай қиындықтармен кезігесіз? Мысал келтіріңізші.
- Сіз оларды қалай шешесіз?
9. Факультетте жанжал туындаған жағдайда не істейсіз және неліктен?
- Сізде жанжалды жағдайларды шешуде қандай да бір қолдау бар ма (мыс. нұсқаулар)?
10. Жұмысыңызда не ұнайды және не ұнамайды?
11. Сіздің ойыңызша, Сіз жұмыс орнында күйзеліске ұшырайсыз ба?
- Оның себебі неде және Сіз күйзеліске қалай қарсы тұрасыз?
12. Мүмкіндік болса деканның жұмысында, міндеттерінде және функцияларында нені өзгертер едіңіз.
- Неге?

III бөлім. Басқарушылық рөлдер

Кесте А 2. Минцберг бойынша факультет декандарының басқарушылық қызметтерін анықтауға арналған сауалнама.

Тапсырма: Төмендегі сұрақтарға жауаптарыңызды 1-ден 5-ке дейін бағалаңыз.

№	Сұрақтар	1-ден 5-ке дейін бағалаңыз				
		Өте төмен (1)	Төмен (2)	Орташа (3)	Жоғары (4)	Өте жоғары (5)
Тұлға аралық рөлдер						
1	Салтанатты, әлеуметтік пен заңды рөлдерде өзіңізді факультет жетекшісі ретінде қалай бағалайсыз және неге? Сіздің құзыретіңіз неде айқындалады? (Мысалы, меморандумдарға қол қою, делегацияларды қабылдау және оларға еріп жүру, іс-шараларға қатысу және т.б.)?					
2	Өзіңізді 1-ден 10-ға дейін көшбасшы ретінде қалай бағалайсыз және неге? (Мысалы, ұжымды ынталандыру, олардың кәсіби дамуы мен оқуына қолдау көрсету, тапсырмаларды, бұйрықтарды бөлу, жұмысқа қабылдау және т.б. тиімділігін арттыру?)					
3	Жалпы факультетті дамыту үшін, Сіз өзіңізді байланыс орнатушы ретінде қалай бағалайсыз, яғни серіктестермен, жұмыс берушілермен және т.б. байланыс орнату, хат алмасу жөнінде?					
Ақпараттық рөлдер						
4	Сіз өзіңізді бақылаушы ретінде қалай бағалар едіңіз, мысалы, факультет профиліндегі еңбек нарығының жай-күйі қатысты ақпаратты қадағалау, жаңа мүмкіндіктерді, тенденцияларды анықтау?					
5	Ақпарат таратушы ретінде өзіңізді қалай бағалайсыз, яғни ақпаратты талдау, берілген ақпаратты (электрондық хаттар, нұсқаулар, қаулылар, мемлекеттік бағдарламалар, отырыс хаттамалары және т.б.) факультет және/немесе университет қызметкерлеріне тарату?					

6	Сіз өзіңізді шешен ретінде қалай бағалайсыз, яғни. Сіздің университетіңіз/оқытушылар құрамы туралы ақпаратты (жоспарлар, мақсаттар, есептер, нәтижелер және т.б.) сыртқы мүдделі тараптарға (жұмыс берушілер, бизнес өкілдері, сала және мемлекеттік органдар) тарату?					
Шешім қабылдау рөлдері						
7	Жаңа серіктестік мүмкіндіктері, ғылым мен білімдегі тенденциялар, сондай-ақ жаңа білім беру қызметтерін дамыту үшін еңбек нарығы мен білім беру қызметтері нарығын талдау үшін өзіңізді кәсіпкер ретінде қалай бағалайсыз?					
8	Сіз өзіңізді факультетті басқарудағы қақтығыстар мен мәселелерді реттеуші ретінде қалай бағалайсыз?					
9	Кафедралар/факультет қызметкерлері (бюджеттік қаражатты бөлу, сыйлықақылар және т.б.) арасында факультеттің ресурстарды бөлуші ретінде өзіңізді қалай бағалайсыз?					
10	Факультет және/немесе университет атынан әрекет ететін мемлекеттік органдармен, университет басшылығымен, әріптестермен, оқытушылармен, студенттермен және жұмыс берушілермен келіссөз жүргізушісі ретінде өзіңізді қалай бағалайсыз?					

Appendix A 3. Interview Protocol (in Russian)

Часть I. Демографические данные участника.

Дата:

Позиция (и.о. декана или декан):

Пол:

Научная степень:

Год рождения:

Семейный статус:

Часть II. Основные вопросы.

1. Расскажите о том, как Вы стали деканом?
 - Какие обязанности входят в Ваши функции?
2. Как бы Вы охарактеризовали работу декана факультета?
3. Изменились ли Ваши представления о должности декана до того как Вы стали деканом и сейчас? Каким образом?
 - По Вашему мнению, есть ли различия между той работой что Вы делаете сейчас и Должностной инструкцией декана? Приведите пример.
4. Скажите Вы проходили курсы менеджмента в образовании?
 - Вы применяете знания и навыки, полученные на курсе в своей работе? В каких случаях?
5. Как Вы расставляете приоритеты в Вашей многообразной работе?
6. По Вашему мнению, достаточно ли у Вас полномочий выполнять обязанности декана?
 - Достаточно ли у Вас ресурсов (время, финансы, персонал и т.д.), чтобы выполнять свою работу?
7. В качестве декана, Вам приходится работать с различными заинтересованными сторонами (МОН, попечительский / наблюдательный советы, руководство вуза, ППС, студенты, и работодатели). Расскажите, как Вы взаимодействуете с этими группами?
 - Кто из этих групп занимает больше Вашего рабочего времени и почему?
 - Как Вы справляетесь?
8. С какими трудностями Вам приходится сталкиваться в своей работе? Приведите пример.
 - Как Вы их решаете?
9. Как Вы поступаете в случае конфликта на факультете и почему?
 - Есть ли у Вас какая-либо поддержка в решении конфликтных ситуаций (инструкции)?
10. Что Вам нравится или не нравится в работе?
11. На Ваш взгляд, подвержены ли Вы стрессу на рабочем месте?
 - В чем его причина и как Вы справляетесь со стрессом?
12. Что бы Вы изменили в работе, обязанностях и функциях декана, если бы Вы могли.
 - Почему?

Часть III. Управленческие роли

Таблица А 3. Опросник для определения управленческих ролей деканами факультетов по Минцбергу.

Задание: Оцените Ваши ответы на нижеследующие вопросы от 1 до 5.

№	Вопросы	Оцените от 1 до 5				
		Очень низкий (1)	Низкий (2)	Средний (3)	Высокий (4)	Очень высокий (5)
Межличностные роли						
1	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в качестве руководителя факультета выполняя церемониальные, социальные и правовые роли и почему? В чем проявляются Ваши полномочия? (Пример, подписание меморандумов, прием и сопровождение делегаций, участие в мероприятиях и т.д.?)					
2	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в качестве лидера от 1 до 10 и почему? (Пример, мотивирование коллектива, оказание поддержки в их профессиональном развитии и обучении, в повышении их эффективности при распределении задач, распоряжений, при подборе персонала и т.д.?)					
3	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в качестве связующего звена , т.е., налаживание связей, контактов, ведение переписки с партнерами, работодателями и т.д. для развития факультета в целом?					
Информационные роли						
4	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в качестве наблюдателя , например, отслеживание информации касательно состояния рынка труда, образовательных услуг по профилю					

	факультета для выявления новых возможностей, трендов и т.д.?					
5	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в качестве распространителя информации , т.е. анализ информации, передача информации, (эл.письма, инструкции, указы, государственные программы, протоколы собраний и т.д.) другим сотрудникам факультета и/или университета?					
6	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в качестве оратора , т.е. передача информации (планы, цели, отчеты, результаты и т.д.) о Вашем университете/факультете внешним заинтересованным сторонам (работодателям, представителям бизнеса, производства и государственным органам)?					
Роли, связанные с принятием решений						
7	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в качестве предпринимателя для анализа рынка труда и рынка образовательных услуг на предмет новых возможностей для партнерства, трендов в науке и обучении, а также для разработки новых образовательных услуг?					
8	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в качестве устранителя проблем и конфликтов в управлении факультетом из-за конфликтов и проблем?					
9	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в роли распределителя ресурсов на факультета между департаментами/сотрудниками факультета					

	(распределение бюджетных средств, премии и т.д.)?					
10	Насколько Вы бы оценили себя в роли переговорщика с государственными органами, руководством вуза, коллегами, ППС, студентами и работодателями действуя от имени факультета и/или университета?					

Appendix B 1. Informed Consent Form (in English)**The Role of Academic Deanship in the Transforming Higher Education Landscape of Kazakhstan**

You are invited to take part in a study on the role of academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan. The purpose of the study is to explore the academic dean's functions and responsibilities, their interaction with multiple stakeholders (i.e., senior administration, faculty members, students, employers, etc.), as well as the challenges academic deans experience in their jobs.

Your participation in the study will consist of two parts: an interview for 50 minutes with the researcher and a survey for 10 minutes. The potential risk associated with the research is the discussion how academic deans work with various stakeholders (university administration, faculty, students, and labor market).

If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this research, please understand that your participation is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Moreover, you have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your decision to participate or to refuse to participate in any way will not affect your work at the university.

The expected results of this research are to understand the roles of academic deans in higher education institutions of Kazakhstan that are undergoing reforms. This study has no direct material benefit for you as a participant. The results of this research may be presented or published for scientific or professional purposes.

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the researcher Altynay Mustafina via an email address altynay.mustafina@nu.edu.kz. Also, you may contact the researcher's main advisor Dr. Darkhan Bilyalov via email address dbilyalov@nu.edu.kz. 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 by writing an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@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.

Appendix B 2. Informed Consent Form (in Kazakh)**Қазақстанның жылдам өзгеріп отыратын жоғары білім берудегі
декандарының рөлі**

Сіз декандардың рөлін анықтауға арналған зерттеуде қатысуға шақырылып отырсыз. Мемлекеттік университетіндегі деканның функциялары мен міндеттері, алуан түрлі мүдделі тараптармен (университет басшылығы, профессор-оқытушылар құрамы, студенттер, жұмыс берушілер және т.б.) өзара әрекеттесу мен деканның жұмысын орындау барысында туындаған мәселелерді анықтап білу зерттеудің мақсаты болып табылады.

Сіздің қатысуыңыз екі бөлімнен тұрады: 50 минуттық сұхбат және 10 минуттық сауалнама. Зерттеуде деканның мүдделі тараптармен өзара әрекеттесуде пайда болған қиындықтарды талқылау зерттеудің қаупі болып табылады.

Егер Сіз осы форманы оқып шығып зерттеуге қатысуға шешім қабылдаған болсаңыз, онда Сіздің қатысуыңыз ерікті екенін біліңіз. Сіз зерттеуге қатысудан кез-келген уақытта және ешқандай салдарсыз бас тарта аласыз. Сіз кез-келген сұрақтарға жауап бермеуге құқығыңыз бар.

Зерттеудің күтілетін нәтижесі ретінде реформалау үстінде болып жатқан мемлекеттік жоғары оқу орындары декандардың рөлін анықтап білу. Бұл зерттеудің қатысушы ретінде Сізге тікелей материалдық пайдасы жоқ. Осы зерттеу нәтижелері ғылыми немесе кәсіби мақсаттарда ұсынылуы немесе жариялануы мүмкін болтынын хабарлаймыз.

Егер жүргізіліп отырған зерттеу жұмысының процесі, қаупі мен артықшылығы туралы сұрағыңыз немесе шағымыңыз болса, Алтынай Мустафинамен электрондық пошта арқылы altynay.mustafina@nu.edu.kz немесе зерттеушінің бас меңгерушісі Др. Дархан Биляловпен электрондық пошта арқылы dbilyalov@nu.edu.kz хабарласуыңызға болады. Егер берілген зерттеу жұмысының жүргізілуімен қанағаттанбасаңыз немесе сұрақтарыңыз бен шағымдарыңыз болса, Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебінің Зерттеу комитетімен электрондық пошта арқылы gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz хабарласа аласыз.

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісіміңізді берсеңіз, берілген формаға қол қоюыңызды сұраймыз.

Мен берілген формамен мұқият таныстым;

Маған зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты мен оның процедурасы жайында толық ақпарат берілді;

Жинақталған ақпарат пен құпия мәліметтерге тек зерттеушінің өзіне қолжетімді және мәлім болатынын толық түсінемін;

Мен кез келген уақытта ешқандай түсініктемесіз зерттеу жұмысына қатысудан бас тартуыма болатынын түсінемін;

Мен жоғарыда аталып өткен ақпаратты саналы түрде қабылдап, осы зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға өз келісімімді беремін.

Қолы: _____ **Күні:** _____

Осы ақпараттандырылған келісімнің көшірмесіне күні мен қолы қойылып, қойылып, зерттеуші мен қатысушыға берілуі тиіс.

Appendix B 3. Informed Consent Form (in Russian)**Роль деканов факультета в быстро меняющемся высшем образовании Казахстана**

Вы приглашены принять участие в исследовании роли деканов в государственных вузах Казахстана. Целью исследования является изучить функции и обязанности деканов, их взаимодействие с различными заинтересованными сторонами (руководство вуза, профессорско-преподавательский состав, студенты, работодатели и т.д.), а также проблемы, с которыми деканы могут столкнуться в своей работе.

Ваше участие в исследовании будет состоять из двух частей: интервью на 50 минут с исследователем и анкетирование на 10 минут. Возможным риском данного исследования является обсуждение возможных трудностей в работе декана с различными заинтересованными сторонами (руководство вуза, профессорско-преподавательский состав факультета, студенты, работодатели). Если Вы прочитав данную форму решили принять участие в исследовании, то знайте Ваше участие является добровольным. Вы можете отказаться от участия в исследовании в любое время отозвать свое согласие без каких-либо последствий. Также Вы имеете право не отвечать на какие-либо вопросы.

Ожидаемым результатом данного исследования является определение роли деканов в реформировании высших учебных заведений Казахстана. Данное исследование не имеет прямой материальной выгоды для Вас как участника. Результаты исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в научных или профессиональных целях.

Если у Вас есть вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, процедуры его проведения, рисков и преимуществ, то Вы можете связаться с Алтынай Мустафиной по электронной почте altynay.mustafina@nu.edu.kz или с руководителем исследователя доктором Дарханом Биляловым по электронной почте dbilyalov@nu.edu.kz. Если Вы не удовлетворены проведением данного исследования, у Вас возникли какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или вопросы, то Вы можете связаться с Комитетом исследований Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета по электронной почте gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz.

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если Вы согласны участвовать в исследовании.

- **Я внимательно изучил представленную информацию;**
- **Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования;**
- **Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь;**
- **Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин;**
- **С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен принять участие в исследовании по собственной воле.**

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Копия данного информированного согласия должна быть подписана с указанием даты и передана исследователю и участнику исследования

Appendix C 1. Sample Email Letter addressed to a Rector of Public University (in English)

Dear Mr./Mrs. X,

My name is Altynay Mustafina. I am a third-year PhD student at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education (NUGSE). I am writing to kindly request permission to collect data for my doctoral research on academic deans in public universities in Kazakhstan.

The topic of my doctoral thesis is “The Role of Academic Deanship in the Transforming Higher Education Landscape of Kazakhstan.” In this study, I will examine how higher education reforms in Kazakhstan affect the role of academic deans in public universities.

My interest in this topic derives from the lack of empirical data on academic deanship in Kazakhstan and its ability to contribute to the successful realization of institutional reforms in universities. Participation in the interview is voluntary, and it will only take place on the convenient date and time with research participants. I will conduct interviews with research participants via telephone calls.

In the attachment, I am enclosing an official letter addressed to you from the NUGSE dean, requesting your support for my doctoral research in your institution.

Yours sincerely,

Altynay Mustafina

Ph.D. Candidate
Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education
Kabanbay Batyr Ave. 53
010000 Astana, Kazakhstan
E-mail:
Mobile phone:

Appendix C 2. Sample Email Letter addressed to a Rector of Public University (in Kazakh)**Құрметті Аты мен Әкесінің аты!**

Менің атым Алтынай Мұстафина. Мен Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім мектебінің (НУ ЖББМ) 3 курс докторантымын. Сізден Қазақстандағы мемлекеттік университеттердегі декандардың рөлі туралы докторлық зерттеу жүргізуге университетіңізде деректер жинауға рұқсат беруді сұраймын.

Менің докторлық диссертациямның тақырыбы «Қазақстандағы тез өзгеріп жатқан жоғары білім берудегі декандардың рөлі». Зерттеу жұмысымда Қазақстандағы жоғары білім беру саласындағы реформалардың декандардың рөліне, олардың қызметтері мен міндеттеріне қалай әсер ететінін зерттегім келеді.

Менің декандарға деген қызығушылығым Қазақстан университеттеріндегі декандар туралы эмпирикалық деректердің жоқтығына және олардың ЖОО-да институционалдық өзгерістерді сәтті жүзеге асыруға қабілеттілігіне байланысты. Сұхбатта қатысу ерікті түрде жүргізіледі. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу қатысушылардың келісімімен ғана жүзеге асырылады. Қатысушылармен сұхбат телефон арқылы жүргіземін.

Қосымшада НУ ЖББМ деканы Сіздің университет әкімшілігінің атына ресми хатын жолдап, менің докторлық диссертацияма қолдау көрсетуіңізді сұрайды.

Құрметпен,

Алтынай Мұстафина

Ph.D. бағдарламаның докторанты

Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім мектебі

Қабанбай батыр даңғ. 53

010000 Астана, Қазақстан

Эл.пошта:

Моб.тел.:

Appendix C 3. Sample Email Letter addressed to a Rector of Public University (in Russian)

Уважаемый (-ая), Имя и Отчество!

Меня зовут Алтынай Мустафина, докторант 3-го курса Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета (ВШО НУ). Я пишу Вам с просьбой разрешить мне сбор данных для моего докторского исследования о роли деканов в государственных ВУЗах Казахстана.

Темой моей докторской диссертации является «Роль деканов в быстро меняющемся высшем образовании Казахстана». В исследовании я хотела бы изучить, как реформы в высшем образовании Казахстана влияют на роль деканов в университетах, на их функции и задачи.

Мой интерес к деканам обусловлен отсутствием эмпирических данных о деканах в ВУЗах Казахстана, их способности успешной реализации институциональных изменений в университетах. Участие в интервью является добровольным и состоится только с согласия участников исследования. Я буду проводить интервью с участниками исследования по телефону.

Во вложении, я направляю официальное письмо, адресованное на имя руководства ВУЗа от декана ВШО НУ с просьбой поддержать мою докторскую диссертацию в Вашем университете.

С уважением,

Алтынай Мустафина
Докторант программы Ph.D.
Высшая школа образования Назарбаев Университета
Пр. Кабанбай батыра 53
010000 Астана, Казахстан
Эл.почта:
Моб.тел.:

Appendix D 1. Sample Invitation Email Letter to Recruit Academic Deans (in English)

Dear Mr/ Mrs X,

My name is Altynay Mustafina, I am a third-year doctoral student at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education (NUGSE). I am kindly asking you to participate in my interview as part of my doctoral research on “The Role of Academic Deanship in the Transforming Higher Education Landscape of Kazakhstan.”

The purpose of this research is to study academic deanship, understand how institutional reforms in higher education affect the position and responsibilities of deans, identify the challenges they face in the work, and explore their interactions with various stakeholders (such as university administration, faculty, students, employers, etc.). In addition, I seek to understand whether there are differences between the current duties and functions of deans and those prescribed in their job descriptions.

If you are interested in participating in an interview, please email me, and I will contact you to arrange a convenient date and time for the interview. The interview itself will take place via phone or WhatsApp and will last approximately 50 minutes. I have attached a letter from the Dean of NUGSE, and informed consent forms for your reference.

Sincerely,
Altynay Mustafina

Contact details:

E-mail: altynay.mustafina@nu.edu.kz

Tel.: +7 7713774752 (WhatsApp)

Tel.: +7 7478520803

Contact information about the student’s advisors:

1st advisor: Darkhan Bilyalov, Assistant Professor, dbilyalov@nu.edu.kz

2nd advisor: Lynne Parmenter, Professor, lynne.parmenter@nu.edu.kz

Appendix D 2. Sample Invitation Email Letter to Recruit Academic Deans (in Kazakh)**Құрметті Аты мен Әкесінің аты!**

Менің атым Алтынай Мұстафина. Мен Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім мектебінің (НУ ЖББМ) 3-курс докторантымын. Сізді «Қазақстандағы тез өзгеретін жоғары білім берудегі декандардың рөлі» тақырыбындағы докторлық зерттеу шеңберінде сұхбатқа қатысуға шақырамын.

Зерттеудің мақсаты декандардың рөлін анықтау, жоғары оқу орындарындағы институционалдық реформалар деканның қызметі мен функционалдық міндеттеріне қалай әсер ететінін, деканның жұмысында қандай қиыншылықтар туындайтынын және оның әртүрлі мүдделі тараптармен өзара әрекеттесуін түсіну. Деканның мүдделі тараптар қатарына университет әкімшілігі, профессорлық-оқытушылар құрамы, студенттер, мен жұмыс берушілер жатады. Сонымен қатар, зерттеудің мақсаты деканның ағымдағы міндеттері мен функциялары және лауазымдық нұсқаулықта көзделген міндеттері мен функциялары арасында өзгерістерін анықтау болып табылады.

Сұхбатта қатысуға қызығушылық танытсаңыз, берілген байланыс нөмірлеріне жазыңыз, Сізге сұхбаттың ең қолайлы күні мен уақытын белгілеу үшін хабарласамын. Сұхбаттың өзі телефон немесе WhatsApp арқылы шамамен 50 минутқа созылады.

Қосымша ретінде мен Сізге НУ ЖББМ деканының ресми хатын және ақпараттандырылған келісім формасын жіберіп отырмын.

Құрметпен,

Алтынай Мұстафина

Байланыс ақпараты:

Эл.пошта: altynay.mustafina@nu.edu.kz

Тел.: +7 7713774752 (WhatsApp)

Тел.: +7 7478520803

Докторант жетекшілерінің байланыс ақпараты:

1-ші эдвайзер: Др. Дархан Билялов, Ассистент Профессор, dbilyalov@nu.edu.kz

2-ші эдвайзер: Др. Линн Парментер, Профессор, lynne.parmenter@nu.edu.kz

Appendix D 3. Sample Invitation Email Letter to Recruit Academic Deans (in Russian)

Здравствуйте!

Меня зовут Алтынай Мустафина, докторант 3-го курса Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета (ВШО НУ). Я приглашаю Вас принять участие в моем интервью в рамках докторского исследования на тему «Роль деканов в быстро меняющемся высшем образовании Казахстана».

Целью исследования является изучить роль деканов, понять, как институциональные реформы в высшем образовании влияют на должность и функциональные обязанности декана, какие трудности возникают в работе декана, и его взаимодействии с различными заинтересованными сторонами (администрацией вуза, профессорско-преподавательский состав, студенты, работодатели и т.д.), есть ли различия между текущими обязанностями и функциями декана и обязанностями и функциями, прописанными в должностной инструкции декана.

Если Вы заинтересованы в участии в интервью, пожалуйста, напишите мне, и я свяжусь с Вами, чтобы договориться о наиболее удобной для Вас дате и времени интервью. Само интервью будет проходить по телефону или в WhatsApp примерно 50 минут.

В качестве приложения я высылаю Вам письмо от декана ВШЭ НУ и формы информированного согласия.

С уважением,

Алтынай Мустафина

Контактные данные:

Эл.почта: altynay.mustafina@nu.edu.kz

Тел.: +7 7713774752 (WhatsApp)

Тел.: +7 7478520803

Контактные данные руководителей докторанта:

1-ый эдвайзер: Др. Дархан Билялов, Ассистент Профессор, dbilyalov@nu.edu.kz

2-ой эдвайзер: Др. Линн Парменгер, Профессор, lynne.parmenter@nu.edu.kz

Appendix E. CITI Training Completion Certificate



