

**The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in Kazakhstani
Research-Oriented Universities: A Mixed-Methods Study**

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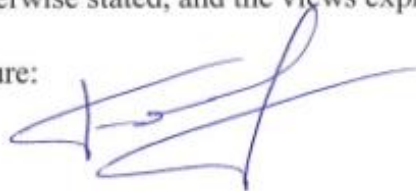


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Date: November 11, 2024

Dear Altynbek Toleubay:

This letter now confirms that your research project titled “The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in Kazakhstani Research-Oriented Universities” has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

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

Yours sincerely,

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Abstract

Exploring the Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance and Institutional Support in Kazakhstani Research-Oriented Universities

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are important in helping students grow holistically. However, their influence within the context of research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan remains understudied. This mixed-methods study aimed to identify the types of ECAs students participate in, explore the relationship between ECA engagement and academic performance, and evaluate the role of institutional support in facilitating meaningful student involvement.

The study involved 389 students from four research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan. Quantitative data were collected through an online survey, and qualitative data were received from semi-structured interviews with 10 participants selected via purposive sampling. Findings revealed that students engaged in various ECAs, including academic clubs, volunteering, sports, and student governance. Although no statistically significant correlation was found between ECA participation and GPA ($\rho = -0.070$, $p = 0.170$), qualitative insights indicated that overcommitment could interfere with academic focus, aligning with the Zero-Sum Framework (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Conversely, institutional support was a significant factor in improving the benefits of ECA involvement, which is consistent with the Developmental Framework (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Students also cited internal motivations such as skill development and autonomy, reinforcing the relevance of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Overall, the findings highlight the need for more strategic engagement policies and cross-institutional collaboration to improve the accessibility and quality of extracurricular opportunities for students across diverse academic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Keywords: extracurricular activities, academic performance, institutional support, student engagement, personal development, research-oriented universities, Kazakhstan, mixed-methods research.

Аңдатпа

Зерттеу университеттеріндегі студенттердің академиялық үлгеріміне және институционалдық қолдауға әсер ететін сыныптан тыс қызмет түрлерінің маңыздылығын зерттеу (Қазақстан мысалында)

Сыныптан тыс қызмет (СТҚ) студенттердің академиялық және тұлғалық дамуына маңызды үлес қосады. Алайда Қазақстандағы зерттеу университеттері контекстінде СТҚ-ның әсері жеткілікті зерттелмеген. Осы аралас әдісті қолданған зерттеудің мақсаты – студенттердің қатысатын СТҚ түрлерін анықтау, СТҚ-ға қатысу мен академиялық үлгерім арасындағы байланысты зерделеу, сондай-ақ институционалдық қолдаудың рөлін бағалау болды. Зерттеуге Қазақстандағы төрт зерттеу университетінен 389 студент қатысты. Сандық деректер онлайн сауалнама арқылы, ал сапалық деректер әртүрлі студенттерден мақсатты іріктеу арқылы алынған 10 жартылай құрылымданған сұхбат негізінде жиналды.

Нәтижелер студенттердің академиялық клубтар, еріктілік, спорт және студенттік өзін-өзі басқару сияқты әртүрлі СТҚ-ға белсенді қатысатынын көрсетті. Сауалнама нәтижелері бойынша СТҚ-ға қатысу мен GPA арасында статистикалық тұрғыда маңызды байланыс анықталған жоқ ($\rho = -0.070$, $p = 0.170$), бұл Marsh пен Kleitman (2002) ұсынған Нөлдік-теңгерім (Zero-Sum) үлгісімен сәйкес келеді.

Сонымен қатар, Fredricks & Eccles (2006) ұсынған Дамытушы үлгіге сәйкес, институционалдық қолдау СТҚ-ның тиімділігін арттыруда маңызды фактор ретінде танылды. Студенттердің СТҚ-ға қатысу себептері ретінде өзін-өзі дамыту мен автономияны атауы, Deci & Ryan (2000) ұсынған Өзін-өзі анықтау теориясын (Self-Determination Theory) қолдайды.

Жалпы, зерттеу нәтижелері студенттердің әртүрлі әлеуметтік және академиялық

контексттердегі СТҚ-ға қолжетімділігін арттыру үшін стратегиялы институционалдық саясат пен университетаралық тәжірибе алмасудың маңыздылығын көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: сыныптан тыс қызмет, академиялық үлгерім, институционалдық қолдау, студенттердің белсенділігі, тұлғалық даму, зерттеу университеттері, Қазақстан, аралас әдіс.

Аннотация

Исследование влияния внеучебной деятельности на академическую успеваемость и институциональную поддержку студентов исследовательских университетов Казахстана

Внеучебная деятельность (ВУД) играет ключевую роль в личностном и академическом развитии студентов. Однако в контексте казахстанских исследовательских университетов влияние ВУД на академическую успеваемость и институциональную среду остаётся малоизученным. Целью настоящего исследования является выявление типов ВУД, установление взаимосвязи между участием студентов и их академическими результатами, а также определение роли институциональной поддержки.

В исследовании, выполненном с использованием смешанного метода, приняли участие 389 студентов из четырёх исследовательских университетов Казахстана.

Количественные данные были собраны через онлайн-опрос, а качественные — посредством полуструктурированных интервью с 10 студентами, отобранными по принципу максимального вариативного отбора.

Анализ данных показал, что студенты активно вовлечены в различные формы ВУД, включая академические клубы, волонтерские инициативы, спорт и студенческое самоуправление. Тем не менее, статистически значимая корреляция между частотой участия во ВУД и GPA не была выявлена ($\rho = -0.070$, $p = 0.170$), что соответствует модели нулевой суммы (Zero-Sum Framework) Marsh & Kleitman (2002). Это указывает на то, что избыточное участие без навыков саморегуляции может снижать эффективность академического процесса.

С другой стороны, качественные данные демонстрируют важность институциональной

поддержки, особенно в виде гибкой системы финансирования, менторства и консультационного сопровождения, что согласуется с моделью развития Fredricks & Eccles (2006). Кроме того, мотивация студентов в выборе ВУД подтверждает актуальность Теории самоопределения Deci & Ryan (2000), согласно которой студенты стремятся удовлетворить базовые потребности в автономии, компетентности и социальной включённости.

Полученные результаты подчёркивают важность разработки стратегических политик вовлечения, направленных на расширение доступности ВУД и повышение её эффективности для всех категорий студентов.

Ключевые слова: внеучебная деятельность, академическая успеваемость, институциональная поддержка, вовлечённость студентов, личностное развитие, исследовательские университеты, Казахстан, смешанные методы исследования.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Higher education institutions have increasingly emphasized holistic student development in recent decades, with extracurricular activities (ECAs) playing a central role in this broader educational mission (Kuh, 2009). In research-oriented universities, ECAs are often viewed as engagement platforms and avenues for students to enhance leadership, teamwork, and personal growth (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Numerous international studies have demonstrated that participation in ECAs contributes positively to students' academic success, personal development, and social integration (Buckley & Lee, 2018; Tchibozo, 2007). However, this relationship remains context-dependent, and its dynamics in post-Soviet systems such as Kazakhstan remain underexplored.

Following Kazakhstan's independence, the country has undertaken significant reforms in higher education to align with global academic standards, emphasizing institutional autonomy, internationalization, and student-centred learning (Fimyar et al., 2014; Kuzhabekova, 2024). Research-oriented universities like Nazarbayev University, Astana IT University, and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University are expected to lead this transformation by adopting best practices, including robust extracurricular infrastructures. Nonetheless, the extent to which these institutions support students' engagement in ECAs and how this relates to their academic performance remains a question of educational and policy significance.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing recognition of ECAs' value, there is a lack of empirical data on how these activities influence academic outcomes and student development in Kazakhstan's research-oriented institutions. The cultural, structural, and historical factors shaping student engagement in Kazakhstan differ significantly from those in Western contexts, which dominate the literature. Moreover, issues such as institutional bureaucracy,

unequal access, and time management challenges may influence both the quality and outcomes of student participation in ECAs. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic performance, considering the role of institutional support in Kazakhstani universities.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance and personal development in Kazakhstani research-oriented universities. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the extent to which institutional support facilitates or limits students' involvement in ECAs. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how and why students engage in ECAs and what academic and developmental outcomes emerge from their participation.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What types of extracurricular activities are recognized in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan?
2. What is the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic performance?
3. What is the relationship between institutional support and students' participation in extracurricular activities?

Justification of Research Questions

The first question explains the type of extracurricular activities available in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan. It is essential to identify which activities are most important and how they contribute to the overall student experience. The second question, examining the connection between extracurricular involvement and academic performance, addresses an aspect of student life where balancing academic responsibilities

with extracurricular activities can impact academic results. The third question examines the relationship between institutional support and extracurricular participation, which is critical to understanding how universities can influence student engagement.

Gathering students' qualitative insights will help higher education institutions understand the subjective benefits and challenges students face during the study, leading to a more student-centered approach to extracurricular activities. Kireyeva and Sabdenaliyev (2022) argue that extracurricular activities in Kazakhstani universities are often closely linked to the academic environment, functioning as extensions of formal education rather than voluntary or social initiatives. Moreover, Kireyeva and Sabdenaliyev (2022) highlight that involvement can create a more formal atmosphere around extracurricular activities, contrasting with the often more relaxed and socially navigated nature of similar activities in Western educational contexts. This formalization might prevent some students from participating, as the activities may be perceived as additional academic duties rather than opportunities for personal satisfaction or socialization. Therefore, the results of this study can provide the necessary advice for educators, policymakers, and university administrators, facilitating the creation of balanced and supportive educational settings that promote academic achievement and comprehensive personal development. Overall, the complete approach will interpret extracurricular activities that most effectively promote academic success and personal satisfaction.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the limited literature on student engagement in post-Soviet higher education contexts, particularly in Kazakhstan. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, the study offers practical insights for university administrators, educators, and policymakers aiming to improve institutional support for ECAs. The findings may inform policies that enhance student well-being and academic

success by addressing barriers to participation and designing more inclusive and effective student engagement strategies.

1.5 Outline of the Study

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the study and presented the research problem, objectives, and significance.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on ECAs, academic performance, and institutional support. Chapter 3 describes the methodology, including research design, sampling, instruments, and data analysis techniques. Chapter 4 presents the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter 5 provides a discussion that integrates findings with the theoretical framework and previous research. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the study's conclusions, discusses limitations, and offers recommendations for practice, policy, and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review is organized into four main sections, each addressing a required part of the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance. The first section explores the challenges associated with extracurricular activities, focusing on students' participation barriers and how they can influence their academic performance. Second, the study examines the advantages of extracurricular participation, underlining the positive impacts on educational research and developing 'soft' skills such as interpersonal talents, time management, and motivation. The third section discusses the role of institutional support in promoting extracurricular participation, analyzing how universities can impact student engagement in these activities and the following impact on academic success. Finally, the literature review considers students' motivations throughout their university experience and how they influence personal development.

2.1 Defining Extra-Curricular Activities

In addition to academic study, higher education institutions provide opportunities for extracurricular activities. In recent years, the significance of extracurricular activities, including sports, arts, student governance, and volunteer work, has been recognized for their role in improving personal development, building social networks, and improving life skills (Buckley & Lee, 2018). Participation in extracurricular activities, including student clubs and societies, improves the student experience by promoting the gaining of complementary skills. Similarly, Anjum (2021) found that extracurricular activities positively influence students' behavior, exam scores and class attendance. It included improvements in discipline, social interaction and influential social life contributions. For example, involvement in sports has been connected to improved academic results due to the discipline and time management skills it facilitates. In the arts, participation in creative

activities such as music and visual arts improved students' mental abilities, including critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Anjum's study underlined that students interested in these creative venues often performed better in subjects requiring innovative thinking and complex problem-solving, such as mathematics and science. Moreover, students engaged in volunteer work often indicated improved empathy and social responsibility, positively influencing academic motivation and engagement. Those who volunteered for community usefulness projects reported a stronger connection to their studies as the students understood the situations more consciously and what tasks needed to be completed. These examples highlight the benefits of extracurricular engagement, which can improve academic performance and show meaningful progress in personal development and social competencies.

However, extracurricular activities are "conducted under the school's authority but take place outside regular classroom hours and are not included in the academic curriculum" (Bartkus et al., 2012, p. 698). Student communities, including cultural and social organizations, student publications, and athletic groups, provide a range of extracurricular activities. Despite this, because these activities typically do not involve grades, academic credit, and voluntary participation, their broader contributions to academic success and society are difficult to quantify.

2.2 Challenges of Extra-Curricular Activities

Students face numerous challenges with extra-curricular activities. Fredricks and Eccles (2006) highlighted the issue of over-commitment, noting that extreme extracurricular involvement could drive stress and decrease academic outcomes. Students who spend too much time on extracurricular pursuits may struggle to keep up with their academic responsibilities. This can result in lower grades, missed deadlines, and overall academic decline. The stress of juggling multiple activities can also affect students' mental

health, leading to pressure, exhaustion, and reduced well-being. These findings underscore the importance of a balanced approach to student engagement, where academic and extracurricular activities are manageable.

Penjor (2021) also examined the balance between extracurricular participation and academic performance. While the study confirmed that extracurricular activities generally boost academic performance, it also highlighted students' pressure to balance these activities with their studies. The dual needs of academic and extracurricular commitments create a time-management challenge, where students may find it difficult to assign satisfactory time and energy to both areas. This can show compromised performance affecting their educational experience and development.

The literature identifies that one of the main challenges is time management. Effective time management is required for balancing academic and extracurricular activities. Students who need help managing their time effectively may have a conflict between their academic responsibilities and extracurricular engagements (Penjor, 2021). Contests can lead to missed classes, incomplete assignments, and preliminary exam preparation. Chronic stress can manifest as sleep disturbances and physical illnesses, damaging academic performance and overall well-being. Therefore, effective time management shows a connection with social and emotional perspectives (Darling et al., 2005).

Students constantly engaged in activities may have little time for rest, which is necessary for supporting emotional health. It can result in feelings of being overwhelmed and separation, reducing the enjoyment and benefits of extracurricular participation. Social tiredness can also impact students' relationships, as they may work to maintain meaningful connections with peers, family, and friends.

2.3 Benefits of Extra-Curricular Participation

Anjum (2021) conducted a study at a large public university in Pakistan, focusing on the impact of extracurricular activities on diverse aspects of student development. The research showed that participation in these activities improved students' behaviour, academic performance, exam scores, class attendance, and personal views. Anjum's study, performed in a research-intensive environment, provided evidence that extracurricular engagement promotes discipline and time management skills necessary for academic success. For instance, students involved in organized sports and leadership roles within student societies demonstrated higher self-discipline levels, summarised into better educational results. The structured nature of these activities in a strict academic environment highlights their potential to improve academic performance by stimulating patterns that support effective study practices.

Similarly, Buckley and Lee (2018) showed their research at several universities across the United States, including research-intensive and liberal arts institutions. Their findings underlined the role of extracurricular activities in promoting life skills like social networks. Specifically, they reported that students actively participate in extracurriculars develop interpersonal skills. The study emphasized that these activities provide students with opportunities to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, enriching their educational experience and widening their perspectives.

Moreover, the study by Eccles et al. (2003) at the University of Michigan, a top research-oriented institution, supports that extracurricular activities contribute particularly to personal development. Eccles et al. (2003) longitudinal research confirmed that students who participated in extracurricular activities were more likely to support high academic standards and demonstrate extraordinary strength in the face of educational challenges. The study found that involvement in these activities promotes a sense of belonging to the

university, positively affecting academic motivation. Students engaged in extracurricular activities develop a stronger connection to their academic institution, which improves their overall educational experience.

2.4 The Role of Institutional Support

Institutional support plays a critical role in helping students manage challenges. Higher education institutions must provide acceptable resources and guidance to help students balance their academic and extracurricular commitments. Support includes presenting time-management workshops, counselling services, and flexible scheduling options. Mishra and Aithal (2023) demonstrated that reliable institutional support structures, such as mentoring programs and academic advice, are crucial for promoting student well-being and success. Institutions that actively support students in managing their time and responsibilities can reduce the negative impacts of over-commitment and help students achieve a healthier balance.

As well as specialization-specific extra-curricular activities, Mishra and Aithal (2023) recommend that higher education institutions should provide interaction with students about life skills, emotional intelligence, and values that will give them confidence in the future. In addition, institutions can adopt a holistic approach to student development by integrating extracurricular activities into the broader educational framework. Identifying the value of extracurricular activities in developing soft skills such as leadership, teamwork, and time management, universities can create opportunities for students to earn academic credit for participating in these activities .

Moreover, Pimentel and Checkoway (2021) highlighted that institutional support must be developed outside organizations to include active student engagement. This could interest opportunities for discussion, feedback, and idea development, which are necessary for increasing student motivation and sustaining participation in these activities. Such

engagement promotes a sense of ownership among students who found that when students are actively involved in the planning and executing these events, their educational experience becomes more personally meaningful.

The recommendations motivate students to engage in extracurricular pursuits and acknowledges their significant role in their personal and academic development (Mishra & Aithal, 2023). As a result, Universities can gather data on students' experiences with time management and the impact of institutional support services through surveys and focus groups. This information can be used to define existing programs and develop new strategies that better address students' needs. Institutions can create a more responsive educational environment by actively involving students in decision-making (Chapman et al., 2023).

2.5 Differing and Changing Motivations at University

Chapman et al. (2023) found significant differences in motivations between early-year and final-year students. Early-year students tended to be driven by social and intrinsic factors, prioritizing making friends and enjoying university life. Conversely, senior-level students were more motivated by extrinsic and pro-social factors, focusing on job market preparation. This difference highlights the need to understand the changing motivations of students throughout their time in university to provide appropriate support and resources. Their study highlights the complex factors that drive students to participate in these activities by identifying extrinsic, intrinsic, social, and pro-social motivations.

Another study by Diniaty and Kurniati (2014) analyses the types, motivations, benefits, and effects of extracurricular activities on personal development and academic achievement among students at the Islamic State University of Suska Riau, Indonesia. The research focused on 300 students across eight faculties, using descriptive statistics and regression correlation to analyze the data. The findings showed that most respondents

participated in leadership activities such as intrinsic engagement, which means enjoying student life. Also, the most cited benefit from extracurricular activities was improving understanding, knowledge, and critical thinking. “Extracurricular activities significantly influenced personal development, with 58.67% of students noting improvements in talent, interests, and personal abilities” (Diniaty & Kurniati, 2014). However, the study found no significant relationship between extracurricular activity and academic achievement.

Students who were highly active in extracurricular activities had lower academic performance, while those with less involvement showed better academic results.

Moreover, some studies argue that the relationship between high ECA participation and lower academic performance may not be causal but rather reflect different student orientations or preferences. For instance, students who identify strongly with sports, arts, or leadership roles may be more intrinsically motivated by these domains than academic achievement (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Consequently, these students may not necessarily underperform academically due to ECAs but instead prioritize alternative forms of success and self-expression. In addition, the researchers note that Universities should develop balanced programs that allow students to engage in extracurricular activities. Institutional support should include workshops in communication and leadership programs, such as time management and developing student clubs. This study highlights the necessity of comprehending the motivations and effects of extracurricular activities on student’s personal and academic growth. While participating in these activities presents various advantages, institutions must assist students in balancing these engagements with their academic responsibilities to prevent adverse outcomes. The findings provide significant insights for educators, policymakers, and university administrators, assisting students in creating a supportive environment that motivates holistic student development.

In addition, Fischman and Gardner's (2022) research suggests different understandings into the challenges related to extracurricular engagement based on the "mental models" that students and educators have regarding the purpose of college. They highlight a disconnect between two approaches: the transactional model, where students visit college, especially to achieve a degree, and the transformational model, which instructors support, emphasizing college as a time for deep personal and intellectual growth. For those who follow a transactional model there may be difficulties in engagement with extracurricular activities, as they may prioritize primary educational results over the long-term advantages of these activities for personal development. In such conditions, students often depend towards a transactional view, focusing more on academics and less on broader personal growth. Fischman and Gardner (2022) claim that higher education's philosophy should develop to realize its transformational potential fully. They highlight that extracurricular activities are essential for developing Higher Education Capital (HEDCAP), containing critical thinking, analytical skills, and reflective abilities. The HEDCAP approach suggests a change from simply meeting the traditional expectations of educational institutions to adopting a more holistic view of student development.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and the Developmental Framework (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). The Self-Determination Theory emphasizes intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence as drivers of student engagement, offering a helpful lens to understand why students participate in ECAs. The Developmental Framework, meanwhile, posits that ECAs provide cognitive, emotional, and social benefits, aligning well with the goals of research-oriented universities that aim to produce well-rounded graduates

2.7 Conclusion

The review literature provides a broad overview of the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance in higher education. Despite the benefits, there are notable challenges with extracurricular involvement; with time management as a significant issue and students needing help balancing academic and extracurricular responsibilities (Diniaty & Kurniati, 2014; Penjor, 2021). Again, over-commitment can lead to stress, negatively impacting physical and mental health and decreasing academic performance. Therefore, institutional support has a role in reducing the unpleasant effects of extracurricular activities (Mishra & Aithal, 2023). The literature synthesis therefore shows a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance. While the benefits of extracurricular engagement are verified, the challenges and potential negative impacts underline the need for balanced involvement and reliable institutional support.

Higher levels of student involvement could lead to more significant personal development and academic success. Educational policies should be designed to support students in achieving a healthy balance between academic and extracurricular duties, providing that their involvement in these activities enhances rather than reduces their overall educational experience. That is why research on this topic should continue to explore the diverse motivations for student participation in extracurricular activities and the variable impacts of these activities on different student populations. There is also a need for more studies focused on the specific context of research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan due to the lack of research in this context and because this context presents unique challenges and opportunities for student engagement.

The literature review highlights that extracurricular activities are related to academic performance. Extracurricular engagement is necessary for higher education and

significantly contributes to students' academic achievements and personal growth. This study aims to fill a necessary gap in the current literature by providing empirical evidence specific to the context of Kazakhstani research-oriented universities, delivering practical insights for improving educational policies and practices.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter summarises the methodological approach used to explore the impact of extracurricular activities (ECAs) on students' academic performance and the role of institutional support within Kazakhstani research-oriented universities. It describes the research design, data collection instruments, sampling strategies, and quantitative and qualitative data procedures. The rationale for using a mixed-methods approach is also explained. The chapter details the ethical considerations, data analysis techniques, and strategies to provide the study's validity and reliability. Each section fully explains how the research was completed to address the study's three research questions.

The mixed-methods approach uses quantitative and qualitative data to explore the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance (Den Saul, 2024). Data collection will initially focus on quantitative methods, with open-ended questions allowing participants to provide broad responses. Approximately 300 respondents are expected to provide satisfactory data. Should this number not be completed, the qualitative data collection through interviews will be employed to receive more detailed information on specific research questions. This mixed method is guided by embedded design. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) argue that embedded design improves understanding of complex research phenomena. Combining qualitative data with a primarily quantitative approach helps researchers gain a more exact and detailed understanding of the patterns found in the quantitative results (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This method is especially beneficial in applied research, where valuable understandings are needed to inform findings. The quantitative part of this study involves a survey with open-ended questions from a representative sample of undergraduate students. These variables include the types and times of extracurricular activities students engage in, academic performance measured through GPA and self-reported academic success, time

management skills, self-evaluation and strategies used, and perceptions of institutional support, focusing on the availability and effectiveness of support services.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the impact of extracurricular activities (ECAs) on academic performance, institutional support, and student development in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan. The explanatory sequential design was adopted, where quantitative data was collected and analysed first, followed by qualitative data to explore and explain the initial results in more depth. This approach enabled triangulation and provided a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, aligning with the study's aim to explore measurable trends and individual experiences.

3.2 Research Questions

The research addressed the following questions:

1. What types of ECAs are recognized in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan?
2. What is the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic performance?
3. What is the relationship between institutional support and students' participation in ECAs?

3.3 Research Site

The study was conducted in four research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev University, Astana IT University, KIMEP University, and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. These institutions were selected to capture variations in institutional structure, student demographics, and ECA offerings.

The quantitative phase involved 389 undergraduate students selected through convenience sampling. Participants came from all academic levels and fields of study. The qualitative phase used purposive sampling with maximum variation and criterion-based approaches. Ten participants were selected based on survey responses indicating willingness to be interviewed, representing different levels of ECA participation (active, minimally involved, and not involved), gender balance, and diversity in academic disciplines.

3.4 Sampling

This study used a mixed sampling approach appropriate for the explanatory mixed-methods design. The survey will use a stratified random sampling method to provide a representative sample. Therefore, this approach is selected to catch a diverse field of students across various faculties and academic disciplines, providing that the findings are generalizable across different university contexts. Stratified sampling will help understand how extracurricular activities impact students with different academic focuses and how these impacts might vary across engineering, natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities disciplines. For example, if 25% of the university's total student population is enrolled in engineering programs, 25% of the study sample will be drawn from this group. This guarantees that the sample accurately reflects the distribution of students across different academic disciplines after selecting the balance of students sampled from each discipline. This random selection provides that every student within a particular discipline has an equal chance of being included in the study.

For the quantitative phase, convenience sampling was applied. Three hundred eighty-nine (389) undergraduate students from four research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan participated in the online survey: Nazarbayev University, KIMEP University, Astana IT University, and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

Table 1*Profile of Participating Universities*

University	City	Total Students	Undergraduate Students
Nazarbayev University	Astana	~ 7.200	~3,000
KIMEP University	Almaty	~ 4.000	~1,700
Astana IT University	Astana	~ 3500	~ 3.000
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University	Almaty	~ 28,000	~19 000

Note. The figures are approximate and based on publicly available data from each institution's official websites.

These institutions were purposefully chosen to represent national and international research-focused institutions in different academic and institutional contexts. The sample included students from various academic years (first to fourth year), majors, and demographic backgrounds. This broad representation allowed the study to capture diverse patterns in ECA participation and perceptions of institutional support.

Purposive sampling with maximum variation and criterion-based strategies was employed for the qualitative phase. From the survey, participants who agreed to be interviewed were shortlisted. From this pool, 10 students were selected to represent a range of characteristics:

Table 2*Characteristics of Interview Participants*

Pseudonym	University	Major	Gender	ECA Involvement
Participant #1	Nazarbayev University	Political Science	Female	Highly Active
Participant #2	KIMEP University	Business	Male	Moderately Active
Participant #3	Astana IT University	Computer Science	Female	Non-Participant
Participant #4	Al-Farabi Kazakh Nat. U.	Medicine	Male	Highly Active
Participant #5	Nazarbayev University	Sociology	Female	Moderately Active
Participant #6	KIMEP University	Economics	Male	Non-Participant
Participant #7	Astana IT University	Software Eng.	Female	Highly Active

Participant #8	Al-Farabi Kazakh Nat. U.	Law	Male	Moderately Active
Participant #9	Nazarbayev University	Education	Female	Highly Active
Participant #10	KIMEP University	International Relations	Male	Non-Participant

This method allowed the study to explore rich and contrasting perspectives on the role of ECAs in academic and personal development and institutional support structures.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative data was collected via an online survey that included closed-ended questions about ECA participation frequency, GPA (self-reported), and perceived institutional support.

Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview guide included open-ended questions exploring students' motivations, barriers, and perceptions of institutional support. Interviews were conducted in English and Kazakh, depending on the participant's preference, and lasted approximately 30–40 minutes.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed specifically for this research, drawing upon validated constructs from prior studies (Eccles et al., 2003; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). It included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to measure the following dimensions:

1. Types of ECA participation (e.g., academic clubs, sports, volunteering, student governance)
2. Frequency and intensity of involvement
3. Self-reported GPA (as a measure of academic performance)
4. Perceptions of institutional support
5. Motivational factors behind participation

This study gathered students' self-reported experiences and responses using a structured questionnaire informed by previously validated measures developed to assess related constructs (Pae & Misieng, 2012). The instrument was piloted with a small group of undergraduate students (n=15) from one participating university to test clarity, content validity, and timing. Based on feedback, minor adjustments were made before full distribution.

The final questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms and distributed through university mailing lists, student organizations, and academic advisors.

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before the survey started.

Semi-Structured Interviews

This study's second data collection tool was a semi-structured interview, commonly called qualitative interviewing (Warren, 2002) with 10 students. It is one of the human and social sciences' most widely adopted interview formats (Leavy, 2014).

The interview protocol was developed around the key themes of the study and included open-ended questions focusing on:

1. Motivation for ECA participation
2. Perceived benefits and challenges
3. Time management strategies
4. Institutional facilitators and barriers to involvement

The interviews were conducted in English or Kazakh, depending on the participants' preference, and lasted approximately 30–45 minutes each. Interviews were recorded (with permission), transcribed verbatim, and translated into English when necessary. This flexible format allowed for rich, descriptive data and follow-up questions to explore themes more deeply. Tuckman (1972) suggests that practical interview questions may vary in form, including both direct and indirect, as well as general and

specific types. Students should select question types that best suit their purpose while avoiding bias. A pilot interview was conducted before the primary data collection to ensure the questions' clarity, relevance, and appropriateness.

The triangulation of survey and interview instruments improved the credibility, validity, and depth of the data collected, supporting the mixed-methods approach of this study.

3.6 Data Analysis

The survey instrument for this study used validated scales that have been proven reliable in prior research. It was carefully modified to fit Kazakhstani higher education's unique context. This dual approach ensured that the survey maintained a high level of validity and reliability while being contextually appropriate to the specific environment and experiences of students in Kazakhstan. The survey was broad, including multiple sections designed to catch a wide range of relevant information from participants.

Demographic information gathered primary data such as age, gender, academic discipline, year of study, and socio-economic background. Understanding the demographic profile of respondents was crucial for analysing how different factors influence the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance. Also, detailed questions explored the types of extracurricular activities students were involved in, the frequency and duration of their participation, and the roles they undertook (e.g., leadership positions and member participation). This section aimed to map out the extent and nature of students' engagement in extracurricular activities, providing a clear picture of their involvement outside the classroom. The section on academic performance collected data on students' academic achievements, primarily through self-reported GPA and other indicators of academic success.

Additionally, it included questions about students' perceptions of their academic performance and any academic awards or recognitions they received. The method of

quantitative (GPA) and qualitative (self-perception) measures provides a complete understanding of academic performance. Questions about time management evaluate how students manage their time, including their self-assessment of time management skills and the specific strategies they use to balance academic and extracurricular commitments. The time management section helped identify standard time management practices and challenges among students, which can inform potential interventions. Finally, the section on institutional support evaluated students' perceptions and the effectiveness of institutional support services, such as academic advising, counselling, time management workshops, and extracurricular support programs. Understanding how students perceive and utilize these services is critical for evaluating their impact on balancing academic and extracurricular activities. Before the whole administration, the survey will experience pilot testing with a small, diverse group of students representative of the larger target population.

The pilot test clarifies the survey questions' reliability and validity. Participants in the pilot test will provide feedback on the survey's length, clarity of questions, and any difficulties experienced while completing it. This feedback was used to refine the survey, addressing any issues that could affect the quality of the data collected. Adapting the survey to the Kazakhstani context involved translating the questions into the local language. It requires a deep understanding of Kazakhstan's cultural, social, and educational environment. This adaptation process confirmed that the questions were relevant to the respondents, catching the nuances of their experiences. For example, specific extracurricular activities in Kazakhstani universities were included, and the survey was mindful of local educational practices and support structures.

The interview guide was structured around several key themes to enable a thorough exploration of students' experiences with extracurricular activities (ECAs). The questions

aimed to identify the types of activities students had participated in, the duration of their involvement, and the reasons behind their engagement. For example, participants were asked to describe their participation in specific ECAs, how they became involved, and what motivated them to continue. This section sought to understand the scope and depth of student's extracurricular involvement.

To further explore motivations, the interviews focused on the underlying factors that influenced students' decisions to engage in ECAs. Questions were designed to explore whether personal interests, career goals, social connections, or other considerations drove students. These insights helped reveal the primary motivators behind ECA participation and how such motivations shaped students' engagement patterns.

A separate interview section addressed the challenges of balancing academic obligations with extracurricular commitments. Participants were encouraged to discuss time management difficulties, stress, or other obstacles. These responses provided valuable insight into common barriers and students' strategies to overcome them.

The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions to capture the depth of students' experiences. This approach encouraged detailed and reflective responses, allowing participants to express their experiences in their own words. For example, instead of asking, "Do you find extracurricular activities beneficial?" the guide included questions such as, "Can you describe a specific extracurricular activity you were involved in and how it impacted your academic and personal life?" While the guide offered a consistent structure for all interviews, it remained flexible, allowing interviewers to follow the natural flow of conversation and uncover unexpected insights.

The quantitative data collected through the survey was analysed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics were first used to summarise key features of the data, such

as participant demographics and overall levels of ECA involvement. This initial step provided a foundational understanding of patterns in the data.

Further analysis involved inferential statistical techniques, which allowed for examining relationships between key variables. Correlation analysis assessed the strength and direction of the relationship between ECA participation and academic performance (measured by GPA). Regression analysis was employed to identify predictors of academic success, accounting for factors such as ECA involvement, time management, and perceived institutional support.

The transcribed interview data was coded systematically to identify recurring themes and patterns. The thematic analysis focused on understanding students' motivations for participating in ECAs, their challenges in managing multiple responsibilities, and their perceptions of institutional support mechanisms. This qualitative insight complemented the quantitative findings, offering a more nuanced understanding of student experiences and informing potential directions for future research.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Dörnyei (2007) recommended that following the ethical clearance granted (like by the GSE Ethics Committee), the survey and interview protocols were piloted to consider the clarity and effectiveness of the questions. Ethical approval was obtained from the Graduate School of Education's Research Ethics Committee at Nazarbayev University. All participants were informed about the study's aims and signed consent forms. Participation was voluntary, and all data were anonymized to protect confidentiality. Interview recordings and transcripts were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

3.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, established survey items were used to confirm the validity of the quantitative findings, and data cleaning was performed before analysis. In the qualitative

phase, credibility was ensured through member-checking, where participants verified the accuracy of their transcripts. Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative data enhanced the study's overall trustworthiness. The researcher maintained a reflexive journal to acknowledge personal biases during data interpretation.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted to examine the impact of extracurricular activities (ECAs) on students' academic performance, personal development, and institutional support's role in Kazakhstan research-oriented universities. The findings are structured according to the research questions, integrating statistical analyses and thematic interpretations to understand the data comprehensively. The results are presented in an explanatory sequential approach, where qualitative insights for each research question follow the quantitative findings. The research used two data collection tools: survey and semi-structured interviews. About the participants, 389 undergraduate university students reacted to the study, and 10 students from four research-oriented universities participated in interviews.

The results are reported according to the research questions:

RQ1: What types of extracurricular activities are recognized in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan?

Sub-questions: What motivates students to engage in extracurricular activities?

RQ2: What is the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic performance?

Sub-questions:

a. What skills do students gain from extracurricular activities that influence their academic success?

b. How does the frequency of participation in extracurricular activities relate to students' GPA?

RQ3: What is the relationship between institutional support and students' participation in extracurricular activities?

Sub-questions:

- a. What types of institutional support are available for ECAs?
- b. What types of institutional support are available for ECAs?
- c. How do students perceive the effectiveness of institutional support for

ECAs?

4.1 Quantitative Findings

This quantitative section presents the results of the statistical analyses conducted to address the research questions and test the hypotheses regarding the impact of extracurricular activities on student's academic performance, personal development, and the role of institutional support.

This section analyses student survey data to identify patterns and relationships between extracurricular participation and academic performance. The analysis is organized into descriptive and inferential statistics to provide a comprehensive overview of the findings and their implications. Data were collected from 389 participants enrolled in four Kazakhstani research-oriented universities. Key variables analysed included GPA, frequency of participation, types of extracurricular activities, institutional support, and personal development.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

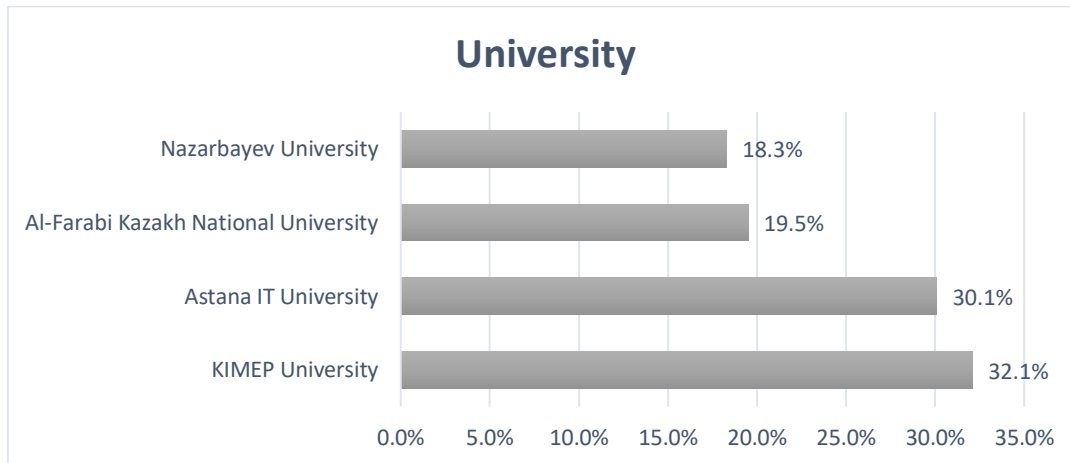
This part of the analysis provides an overview of the data, summarizing key features and trends.

Figure 1 highlights the diversity of the sample. KIMEP University had the highest representation (n = 125, 32.1%), followed by Astana IT University (n = 117, 30.1%), Al-

Farabi Kazakh National University ($n = 76$, 19.5%), and Nazarbayev University ($n = 71$, 18.3%). These proportions reflect the participation rates but do not necessarily represent the overall student population at each institution.

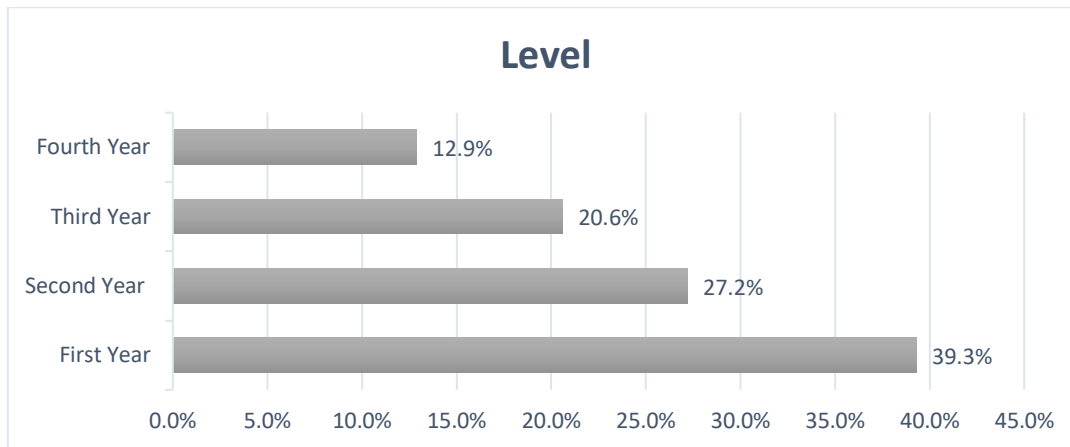
Figure 1

Distribution of Survey Participants Across Universities



Note. The figure presents the percentage overall ($n=389$) of respondents from each university

The Figure 1 presents the percentage overall ($n=389$) of respondents from each university, highlighting the diversity of the sample. KIMEP University had the highest representation ($n = 125$, 32.1%), followed by Astana IT University ($n = 117$, 30.1%), Al-Farabi Kazakh National University ($n = 76$, 19.5%), and Nazarbayev University ($n = 71$, 18.3%). These proportions reflect the participation rates but do not necessarily represent the overall student population at each institution.

Figure 2*Percentage Distribution of Survey Participants by Academic Year Level*

Note. The figure illustrates the percentage distribution of survey participants (N = 389) across different academic year levels.

The largest group of respondents were first-year students (39.3%, n = 153), followed by second-year students (27.2%, n = 106), third-year students (20.6%, n = 80), and fourth-year students (12.9%, n = 50). These percentages represent the surveyed sample and do not necessarily reflect the overall student population distribution across academic levels. Possibility of the limitation of this study is the composition of the sample by academic year. Nearly 40% of the survey participants were first-year undergraduate students, whose engagement in extracurricular activities may still be developing. Their responses may not reflect long-term involvement or the full range of experiences students in higher academic years typically acquire. This irregular distribution may have influenced the overall findings, particularly those related to sustained participation and perceptions of institutional support.

4.3 RQ 1 Types of Extracurricular Activities

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents' engagement in various extracurricular activities. Since participants could select multiple activities, the percentages

reflect the selection frequency rather than separate individual responses. The most common extracurricular involvement was in sports (17.7%), followed by volunteer work combined with academic clubs (16.2%) and academic clubs alone (11.1%). A unique proportion of students participated in sports, arts, volunteer work, and educational clubs (10.3%), reflecting various and multidimensional engagement in extracurricular activities. This underscores students' engagement in academic and entertaining activities, highlighting the role of extracurricular activities in promoting holistic development and well-rounded personal growth.

Table 3

Participation in Extracurricular Activities by Type

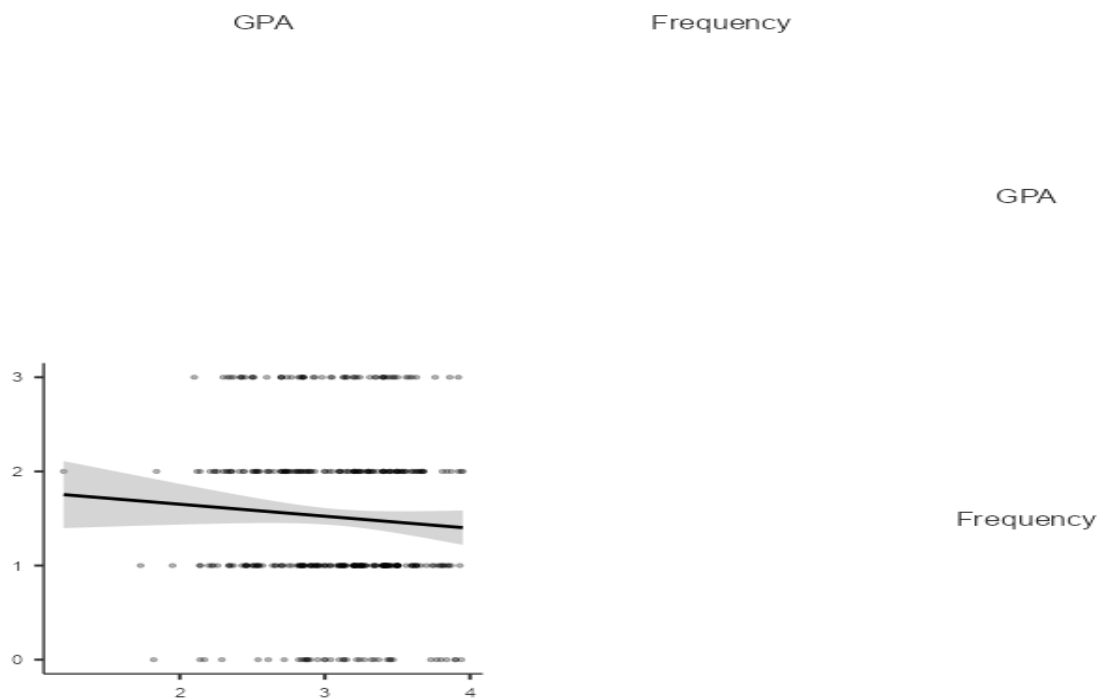
	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Extracurricular Activities	Academic Clubs	43	11.1%
	Arts	24	6.2%
	Arts, Academic	6	1.5%
	Arts, Volunteer work	1	0.3%
	Sports	69	17.7%
	Sports, Academic	33	8.5%
	Sports, Arts	9	2.3%
	Sports, Arts, Volunteer work, Academic	40	10.3%
	Sports, Student Governance, Academic	69	17.7%
	Sports, Volunteer work	2	0.5%
	Sports, Volunteer work, Academic	30	7.7%
	Volunteer work, Academic	63	16.2%

4.4 RQ2. Relationship Between Extracurricular Activities Influence and Academic Performance

Spearman's correlation analysis results indicated no statistically significant relationship between the extent of students' participation in extracurricular activities and their academic performance ($\rho = -0.070$, $p = 0.170$). In this study, a p-value of less than 0.05 was considered the standard threshold for statistical significance. The correlation is not statistically meaningful since the observed p-value exceeds this cut-off. To aid in the interpretation of the correlation coefficient (ρ), this study adopted the classification guidelines proposed by Evans (1996), who defined correlations from 0.00 to ± 0.19 as very weak, ± 0.20 to ± 0.39 as weak, ± 0.40 to ± 0.59 as moderate, ± 0.60 to ± 0.79 as strong, and ± 0.80 to ± 1.00 as very strong. According to these points, the current correlation ($\rho = -0.070$) falls within the very weak range and is statistically insignificant. Therefore, while there appears to be a slight negative trend where students more involved in extracurricular activities tend to report lower GPAs—this trend is not strong enough to draw a reliable conclusion. This finding challenges common beliefs that more significant involvement in ECAs directly improves academic performance and instead suggests that the relationship may be more nuanced or influenced by other mediating variables.

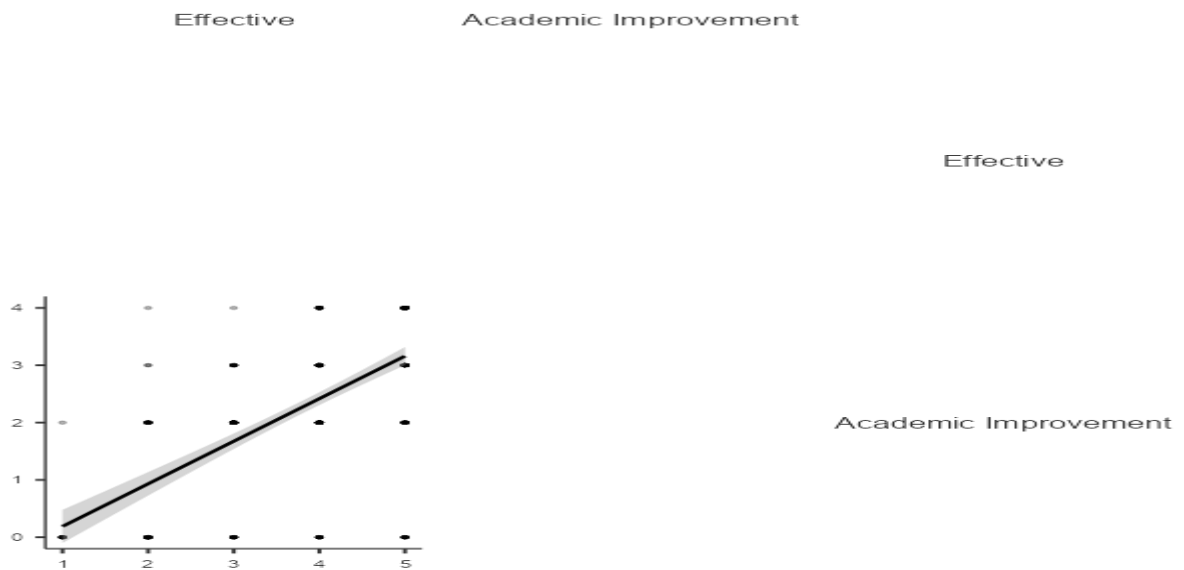
Figure 3

Relationship Between Extracurricular Activities Influence and Academic Performance



4.5 RQ3. Institutional Support and Academic Performance

A correlation was conducted between the perceived effectiveness of institutional support and academic improvement through extracurricular activities. In this study, institutional support is directed to universities' wide range of services and resources to facilitate students' participation in ECAs. This includes financial assistance (e.g., financial conditions for improving ECAs), administrative support (e.g., extracurricular coordination, equipment access), academic flexibility (e.g., modified deadlines, mentorship), and student services (e.g., event organization, transportation).

Figure 4*Institutional Support and Academic Improvement*

According to Evan's (1996) classification of correlation coefficient (ρ), the scatterplot illustrates this strong positive correlation, showing a clear trend between institutional support and academic improvement ratings (see Figure 3). Figure 3 demonstrates the relationship visually, emphasizing the significance of institutional support in improving educational outcomes. This highlights the importance of effective support systems in increasing students' academic performance.

- A Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ($\rho = 0.617$, $p < 0.001$).
- This significant result underscores the important role of practical institutional support in maximizing academic benefits.

4.6 Quantitative Results Summary

The study results indicate that extracurricular activities (ECAs) support students' personal and professional growth; however, they appear to have minimal direct effect

on academic performance. The correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between the frequency of ECA participation and students' GPA ($\rho = -0.070$, $p = 0.170$). As the correlation coefficient falls within the very weak range and the p-value exceeds the standard threshold for significance ($p < 0.05$), this result does not provide sufficient evidence to claim an association between these variables. One possible explanation is that students more willing to engage in extracurricular activities may prioritize non-academic plans, potentially skipping a lower focus on academic achievement. On the other hand, although a statistically significant positive correlation was found between students' perceptions of ECAs' impact on personal development and their GPA ($\rho = 0.103$, $p = 0.044$), the strength of the correlation is very weak and, therefore, likely lacks practical significance. This finding suggests that while students may feel that participation in ECAs supports their personal growth, the measurable impact of this perception on academic performance stays minimal. The most influential relationship was observed between the level of institutional support and students' perceived academic improvement from participating in ECAs ($\rho = 0.615$, $p < 0.001$). According to interpretation points proposed by Evans (1996), correlations between 0.60 and 0.79 are considered strong, while others, such as Cohen (1988), classify 0.50–0.70 as moderate, turning on the research context. As a result, the study reflects a meaningful relationship, suggesting that supportive institutional environments funding student clubs, guidance, and organizational support may play a key role in maximizing extracurricular participation's academic benefits. Overall, these findings suggest that the quality of involvement, available institutional resources, and effective time management play more meaningful roles in achieving academic success than participation in ECAs alone. It highlights the need for structured support procedures and initiatives that increase student attention to maximize the benefits of ECAs.

4.7 Qualitative Findings

This section presents the research findings from analysing the qualitative data collected through student interviews. The focus of this chapter is to share the themes that emerged during the analysis and provide evidence from participant responses to support the discussion. These findings help address the research questions on how extracurricular activities impact academic performance, personal development, and the role of institutional support in this process.

The data collection involved semi-structured interviews with 10 undergraduate students from various institutions in Kazakhstan, conducted over two months. The qualitative data used purposive sampling, specifically employing criterion-based and maximum variation approaches. The selection ensured a diverse range of participants, including students actively engaged in ECAs across different universities and those who did not participate in ECAs. Moreover, the selection process secured equal gender representation and included students from diverse majors and academic backgrounds. Participants were purposively chosen to reflect a balanced mix of male and female students and various fields of study, including STEM, social sciences, and humanities. Participants ranged from first-year to fourth-year students, with varied extracurricular engagements, including sports, student governance, volunteering, and artistic clubs. Interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and were transcribed verbatim for analysis. The inductive coding approach was used to identify themes from the data, allowing the participants' voices to guide the findings.

The analysis revealed seven key themes that capture students' experiences about their extracurricular activities (Table 3). The following sections provide a detailed exploration of each theme, integrating direct student narratives to illustrate the findings. The themes are organized systematically to reflect key areas of student engagement,

challenges, and institutional influences on ECA participation. Each theme is attended by appropriate subthemes, presenting a deeper understanding of how extracurricular activities shape students' academic experiences and broader personal development.

Table 4

Summary of Key Themes and Subthemes Identified in the Study

Themes	Subtheme 1	Subtheme 2	Subtheme 3
Balancing Responsibilities	Time Management	Adaptation to Deadlines	-
Institutional Engagement	Institutional Support	Campus Environment	-
Skills and Personal Growth	Skill Development	Personal Growth	Social Connections
Barriers to Participation in Extracurricular Activities	Family Responsibilities	Burnout	Financial Barriers
Leadership and Initiative	Leadership Development	Role Models	-
Academic and Career Outcomes	Positive Impact of Extracurricular Activities	Disadvantages of Extracurricular Activities	Career Readiness
Motivations for Participation	Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic Motivation	-

4.8 Balancing Responsibilities

One of the most prominent themes was balancing responsibilities. Students highlighted the complexity of managing academics, work, and extracurricular activities simultaneously. Two subthemes were identified: (1) time management and (2) adaptation to deadlines.

Time Management

Time management is essential in students' balancing academic responsibilities with extracurricular activities (ECAs). The findings suggest that students who develop structured time management strategies are more likely to successfully engage in ECAs without risking their academic performance. Many participants highlighted the importance of deciding priorities, using scheduling tools such as Google Calendar, and making conscious decisions about when to participate in ECAs and when to step back. One student described how keeping a well-organized planner helped them manage their commitments. For example, Respondent #1 said: "I use a planner to organize my week to ensure I do not miss assignments or practices. I usually use a planner as an app on the phone".

This strategy reflects a broader trend among students who view time management as necessary for maintaining academic performance while remaining involved in ECAs. However, while some students found ways to integrate ECAs into their schedules, others struggled to find a balance. Participant #7 expressed that the lack of structured time management was due to stress and academic difficulties: "During event preparation, I barely had time to sleep, and my academics suffered. Preparations were often accompanied by tea drinking and long discussions, sometimes unnecessary gatherings until the morning."

This highlights a key challenge—students who engage too heavily in ECAs without proper time management may experience burnout, negatively affecting their academic progress and personal well-being. Some students acknowledged that they had to make difficult choices, especially during exam periods. Participant #5 explained, "I need to reduce my extracurricular involvement during midterms and finals, but sometimes, obligations to my club make it hard to step back."

This reflects the reality that even when students recognize the need to adjust their level of involvement, external pressures—such as leadership roles in ECAs—can make it difficult. In some cases, students found it challenging to say no to commitments, which resulted in added stress and compromised academic performance.

The findings suggest that the ability to manage time effectively is not just an individual responsibility but also one that universities should support. Institutions could offer resources such as time management workshops, mentorship programs, or structured extracurricular schedules that align with academic demands. While students have agency in deciding how to allocate their time, institutional interventions can help them develop sustainable habits that allow them to benefit from ECAs without negatively impacting their academic success. Faculty and staff need to have more dialogue with students. For example, universities could consider implementing flexible academic arrangements, such as allowing student-athletes to reschedule midterm exams when competitions or major extracurricular commitments conflict with assessment dates. These insights also address broader questions about how universities prepare students to balance multiple responsibilities. Effective time management is an academic and professional competency necessary beyond university life. Therefore, equipping students with the tools to manage their commitments efficiently is fundamental to higher education.

Adaptation to Deadlines

While time management focuses on long-term planning and structured organization, adaptation to deadlines is more about how students react and modify when unexpected academic or extracurricular demands emerge. Even the best-planned schedules can be disrupted by sudden exam changes, additional coursework, or last-minute extracurricular duties, requiring students to be flexible and make quick decisions about prioritization. Many students shared that they often had to make on-the-spot decisions

about prioritising academic tasks or extracurricular responsibilities. Participant #8 described how he manage such situations: “Sometimes, I have to skip club meetings when exams are close, but I try to catch up later.”

The response highlights a key difference between proactive time management and reactive adaptation. While some students keep a structured plan for their activities, others must change their priorities dynamically based on changing circumstances. Moreover, participant #4 explained how unexpected changes to deadlines affected his ability to balance commitments: “If an assignment deadline suddenly changes, I have to reorganize everything. Sometimes, that means skipping training or postponing my club duties.”

Last-minute adjustments can be particularly stressful for students heavily involved in ECAs, especially when their extracurricular roles involve responsibilities to others, such as leadership positions or team responsibilities. Student #6 shared he struggle with balancing duties: “I know my grades come first, but sometimes I feel guilty about missing a club event I initiated plan as a head.”

This kind of emotional pressure differentiates adaptation to deadlines from general time management. While time management is about creating a routine, adapting to deadlines requires rapid swaps between duties. Many students reported feeling rushed between their academic and extracurricular responsibilities, mainly when unexpected events required them to shift their focus unexpectedly.

The findings suggest that adaptability is a necessary skill in balancing multiple responsibilities. Students who can quickly reorganize their priorities experience less stress when faced with sudden changes. However, adaptation is not always easy, and some students struggle with the unpredictability of university life. The difference between long-term time management and short-term adaptation to deadlines is essential in

understanding how students navigate their academic and extracurricular duties. While structured planning helps maintain balance, changing dynamically under pressure is equally critical in developing strength and decision-making skills outside university life.

4.9 Institutional Engagement

Institutional Engagement highlights the role of universities in supporting extracurricular activities and creating an enabling environment for students.

Two main sub-themes were identified: (1) institutional support and (2) campus environment.

Institutional Support

Institutional support enables students to participate in extracurricular activities (ECAs) by providing financial resources, mentorship, and administrative assistance. Many students recognized that their universities provided various support services; however, they noted that considerable bureaucratic barriers restricted their access to these resources. Several participants described how institutional inefficiencies slowed funding approvals and created administrative duties that discouraged student engagement. Participant #5 shared her frustration with the bureaucracy in securing financial support for extracurricular initiatives: “The funding process is bureaucratic and takes too long to get approvals. Due to the lengthy process, our student club often makes mistakes in its finances and requests reimbursement. The reimbursement also takes half a year.”

Others who found the procedural requirements for bringing institutional support overly complex and time-consuming reproduced the sentiment. In some cases, students reported abandoning their plans for extracurricular projects due to unreasonable paperwork and long waiting periods for funding approval. Another participant #6 described the difficulty in securing logistical support for club events: “We had to wait

weeks to get permission to use university space or halls for our event, and by the time we got approval, the lecturers had been rejected due to the short notice.”

These barriers indicate that while universities aim to encourage student engagement through formal support structures, the efficiency of the processes significantly impacts how accessible these resources are in practice. Some students touched that university policies were not designed to make student services flexible, making it difficult and bureaucratic for extracurricular projects.

At the same time, students who successfully navigated the system and received institutional support reported positive academic and professional outcomes. Respondent #7 reflected on how mentorship from faculty members helped them manage their club responsibilities: “Having a professor as a mentor helped us push our project forward. They guided us through the application process and connected us with external sponsors in funding.”

This suggests that while bureaucratic challenges exist, personalized guidance and faculty involvement can help students maximize the benefits of institutional support. The findings emphasize that streamlining administrative processes, increasing transparency in funding distribution, and providing dedicated support staff could enhance students’ ability to engage meaningfully in ECAs without unnecessary barriers. These insights point to a broader discussion on how institutional structures facilitate or hinder student participation. While formal support mechanisms exist, the efficiency and accessibility of these processes determine whether students can fully utilize them. Universities could improve their impact by ensuring students receive timely responses, clear instructions, and proactive assistance to make extracurricular involvement more feasible and rewarding.

Campus Environment

The university campus environment influences students' participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs). Many participants noted that improvements in campus facilities, accessibility of spaces, and the overall student-friendly atmosphere directly impacted their involvement in ECAs. A well-designed campus environment promotes opportunities for social interaction, collaboration, and informal learning, making it easier for students to participate in extracurricular activities. Respondent #9 highlighted how contemporary campus developments improved student experience: "The administration has made the campus more student-friendly by building many relaxing, open-centred meeting areas and adding new student clubs."

The statement reflects a more comprehensive trend among students who appreciate measures made by universities to create an engaging and welcoming space for extracurricular participation. Many respondents underlined that the availability of reliable areas for clubs, study lounges, and recreational spaces stimulated them to spend more time on campus and engage with peers. Another participant, #3, explained how the campus infrastructure influenced involvement in ECAs: "A well-maintained gym and a proper dance studio made it much easier for us to practice regularly and plan performances. Moreover, our student club has room to train. However, not all students had equally positive experiences."

Some students mentioned that certain limitations in campus infrastructure and resource distribution restricted their ability to participate in ECAs effectively. Student #5 noted, "We do not always get access to the rooms we need for club meetings, and sometimes, we cancel events because of space limitations. In that situation, our club visits coffee shops outside the university."

This finding suggests that while campus development can facilitate participation, limited structure accessibility remains a barrier for some students. Universities that invest in improving common areas, increasing the number of club spaces, and ensuring that all students have fair access to facilities can significantly improve student engagement in ECAs. Additionally, students reported that a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere made them more likely to participate in activities and feel a sense of belonging within the university community. The findings indicate that a supportive campus environment influences student participation in extracurricular activities. Universities prioritize student-friendly infrastructure, accessible facilities, and a vibrant social atmosphere create opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, build peer networks, and enrich their overall university experience.

4.10 Skills and Personal Growth

Extracurricular activities significantly contribute to students' skill development and personal growth.

Three subthemes were identified: (1) skill development, (2) personal growth, and (3) social connections.

Skill Development

Participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs) significantly contributes to developing essential skills that support academic success and prepare students for future careers. Many students have described that involvement in ECAs has helped them improve their critical thinking, leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Although ECAs may not directly impact academic performance in terms of GPA, they provide students with transferable skills that increase overall university experience and promote professional development. For instance, student #1, reflecting on their experience in the

debate club, remarked: “Being in the debate club has improved my ability to think critically and present arguments.”

Students participating in academic clubs and leadership roles, who highlighted the unique opportunities provided by ECAs, repeated the idea. Another respondent, #6, described his experience leading a volunteer project: “Leading a volunteer project taught me to coordinate a team and make important decisions under pressure.”

Involvement in ECAs allows students to gain real-world problem-solving experiences, allowing them to apply knowledge in practical environments. Many students believe that extracurricular participation has better prepared them for future careers by improving their abilities to work in groups, manage responsibilities, and develop confidence in public speaking. Moreover, participant #9 explained: “By organizing events and working in student government, I became much better at managing responsibilities and working with people from different backgrounds.”

Furthermore, ECAs provide students with skills necessary for real-world challenges like time management and adaptability. Some students noted that the hands-on experiences offered by ECAs made them feel more prepared for real-world challenges than traditional classroom learning alone. As respondent #4 mentioned: “My classes taught me theories, but my extracurricular activities prepared me to apply them in real situations.”

The discoveries demonstrate that ECAs complement academic learning by delivering experiential opportunities that improve students’ practical skills. Universities that actively promote and support student participation in ECAs help foster academic success while preparing students for the demands of the professional world. While the advantages of skill development through ECAs are widely recognized, the degree to which students can fully use these opportunities depends on institutional support and individual motivation. Some students reported difficulties balancing ECAs with coursework,

sometimes limiting their ability to engage meaningfully in skill-building. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that ECAs provide valuable learning experiences that contribute to students' academic, personal, and professional growth, highlighting the empowerment and inspiration that individual initiative can bring to the ECA experience.

Personal Growth

Beyond academic and professional skill development, extracurricular activities (ECAs) are influential in promoting personal growth among students. Many participants have expressed that their involvement in ECAs has improved self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and social adaptability. These activities allow students to step outside their comfort zones, confront new challenges, and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others. Respondent #8 shared experiences with volunteering, stating: "Volunteering has taught me how to empathize with others and work with people from different backgrounds."

Numerous peers reflected this opinion and reported that participation in ECAs improved their communication skills and facilitated effective teamwork. For many, being involved in clubs, sports teams, or student-led initiatives strengthened their confidence, especially when negotiating with leadership roles or unknown situations. Participant #9 described their transformative experience with student governance: "Before joining the student government, I hesitated to voice my opinions. Now, I feel much more confident speaking in public and leading discussions."

In addition to improving self-confidence, ECAs also assist students in managing stress and developing strategies for managing academic pressures. Several participants noted that engaging in sports, music, or volunteer work provided a necessary platform for relaxation and emotional well-being, indirectly raising their academic

motivation. Respondent #3 said: “Whenever I feel overwhelmed with my studies, I turn to my extracurricular activities to recharge and refocus.”

These insights illustrate that personal growth through ECAs develops outside of gaining concrete skills; it contains emotional strength, self-assurance, and adaptability to new social environments. Many students reported that their extracurricular involvement facilitated meaningful connections and a sense of belonging within their university community. However, it is necessary to recognize that not every student has had a uniformly positive experience. Some individuals mentioned that over-commitment to ECAs can lead to burnout, complicating their ability to balance emotional well-being with academic responsibilities. This highlights the need for students to adopt a balanced approach to extracurricular engagement, allowing them to attain personal benefits from participation without risking their mental health or academic success. The results indicate that ECAs provide a transformative experience for students, stimulating individual and emotional growth in ways that formal education alone cannot achieve. Universities that actively promote and support extracurricular participation improve their students’ academic journeys and equip them with essential life skills that will be invaluable in their future careers and personal lives.

Social Connections

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are essential in cultivating meaningful relationships among students and promoting a sense of belonging within university communities. Many study participants have highlighted that ECAs offer opportunities to connect with peers with similar interests, engage in collaborative initiatives, and develop continuing friendships. The social component of ECAs is consistently mentioned as a significant motivator for participation, as students often find that involvement in clubs, sports teams, and volunteer organizations promotes a smoother integration into university

life. Respondent #7 demonstrates experiences: “Joining the K-Pop Dance Club helped me make new friends and feel more connected to campus life.”

This idea reproduces a broader perspective among students who recognize ECAs as necessary to their university experience, not only for developing skills but also for promoting social networks and improving their sense of belonging. Participant #2 described the role of ECAs in their transition to university: “As a first-year student, I did not know many people initially, but joining the student government helped me meet people from different faculties and make connections.”

These reviews show that extracurricular engagements are essential for promoting inclusivity and building campus community. Many students reported that participating in ECAs significantly reduces feelings of isolation, particularly among beginners or those studying away from home. The collective nature of these activities—working in teams, participating in projects, and sharing interests—increases the overall student experience. However, some students identified challenges in forming social connections through ECAs, mainly due to the need for strict academic schedules. Participant #10 noted: “I wanted to join more clubs, but with my coursework and job, I could not commit to regular meetings. It was hard to stay connected when I was not as active in the group.”

This observation highlights some students’ barriers to social engagement, especially those balancing multiple responsibilities. The overarching findings suggest that ECAs serve dual purposes: they are required for skill enhancement and as routes for social integration and emotional well-being. Universities that prioritize student involvement in extracurricular activities contribute to more inclusive and interconnected campus environments.

4.11 Barriers to Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Despite the well-documented benefits of extracurricular activities (ECAs), students' participation levels can vary significantly due to external and internal barriers. The challenges can restrict students' engagement in ECAs, eventually limiting their personal and academic growth opportunities.

Research demonstrates that (1) family responsibilities, (2) burnout, and (3) financial barriers are the most significant challenges slowing students from fully taking advantage of extracurricular involvement.

Family Responsibilities

Family obligations are a general barrier to participation in ECAs, particularly among students tasked with household duties, caregiving for siblings, or contributing financially to their families. Such responsibilities frequently lead to involvement in extracurricular activities, which limit time for personal or professional development outside of academic pursuits. Participant #10 articulated their struggle: "I have to spend weekends helping my family, so I cannot participate in as many activities as I would like."

The opinion underscores how family expectations can interfere with students' autonomy over time, restricting their ability to engage in campus life fully. Students identified as the eldest in their families or primary financial supporters face upgraded challenges. They often feel pushed to prioritize familial duties rather than using available free time to pursue ECAs. Furthermore, some students reported that their families lacked comprehension regarding the significance of ECAs, perceiving them simply as distractions from academic achievement. Participant #6 expressed frustration regarding their family's stance: "My parents think extracurricular activities are a waste of time. They want me to focus only on my studies."

Such responses highlight how cultural perceptions of education and familial roles may limit students' engagement in ECAs.

Burnout

While some students experience difficulties in finding time to participate due to external commitments, others experience the harmful effects of overcommitting to multiple activities. The data reveal that students involved in various clubs, organizations, and leadership positions frequently experience burnout, affecting their well-being and academic performance. Respondent #7 illustrates this: "I over-committed to several clubs, which affected my sleep and studies."

Such statements show a critical reality; although extracurricular involvement has recognized benefits, it can become overwhelming for students who take on exaggerated responsibilities. Students reported that initial enthusiasm for multiple ECAs eventually led to challenges in balancing academics, jobs, and other commitments. Burnout can manifest physically, with symptoms such as exhaustion and increased stress levels, which may subsequently lead to decreased academic motivation. Participant #4 explained: "I barely had time to rest because I constantly moved from one meeting to another."

Financial Barriers

Many students at research-oriented universities often balance their studies and needs with working part-time jobs or relying on financial aid to manage tuition fees and living expenses. This economic duty necessitates difficult decisions, pushing students to prioritize work over academic and extracurricular commitments, eventually compromising their academic performance and participation in ECAs. For instance, student #10 articulated the difficulties of juggling work and studies: "It is hard to focus on my studies when I work part-time to pay for tuition and expenses."

Such financial insecurities create time constraints that limit students' ability to fully engage in academic tasks and campus life. This situation is even more evident for students from lower-income backgrounds, who may be unable to participate in activities requiring additional costs, such as membership fees or travel expenses, and, as a result, miss out on valuable opportunities that could improve their career prospects. Moreover, the pressure of financial survival often leads students to sacrifice their aspirations for extracurricular involvement, as expressed by another student #5: "I wanted to join more student organizations but hardly had time between work and classes."

It highlights the inequities on campus, where wealthier students can afford broader participation in enriching ECAs while their financially constrained peers are systematically excluded. Addressing these financial barriers is crucial for creating a more equitable environment that allows all students to succeed academically and personally. Consequently, institutions must recognize and respond to the challenges posed by financial pressures by providing more significant support and resources that facilitate students' engagement in both their studies and extracurricular ambitions.

4.12 Leadership and Initiative

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are potent platforms for students to develop leadership skills, take initiative, and gain real-world experience managing responsibilities (Kahu & Nelson, 2018). Students in leadership roles within student organizations, academic clubs, or governance bodies contribute to their campus communities and acquire essential skills transferable to their educational and professional careers.

The findings revealed two subthemes: (1) Leadership Development and (2) Role Models. Leadership Development

Leadership roles within ECAs allow students to cultivate critical skills in advocacy, negotiation, teamwork, and strategic decision-making. Many students reported that stepping into leadership positions helped them gain experience organizing events, managing teams, and resolving conflicts, all of which are highly valued in academic and professional settings. Respondent #9, a student government leader, described: “Being Student Government President taught me negotiation skills and how to represent others.”

The statement reflects how student leadership experiences enhance students’ ability to advocate for their peers, navigate institutional structures, and develop confidence in their decision-making skills. Many participants reported that leadership roles pushed them outside their comfort zones, allowing them to develop public speaking abilities, strategic thinking, and crisis management skills. Additionally, students in leadership roles often found themselves in situations where they had to balance multiple stakeholders’ interests, fostering adaptability and resilience. Another participant, #4, shared: “Leading a student organization and staff required me to juggle different perspectives and make decisions that would benefit the majority.”

This highlights the multi-faceted nature of leadership development, where students must balance practical decision-making with interpersonal communication. To maximize the benefits of leadership development, universities can offer leadership training programs, mentorship initiatives, and structured guidance on managing leadership responsibilities effectively. Teaching students negotiation, project management, and strategic leadership can help them develop the skills necessary for long-term success.

Role Models

Mentorship and peer support significantly encourage students to take on leadership positions and actively engage in extracurricular initiatives. Many students indicated that having role models, whether faculty, seniors, or peers, inspired them to

pursue leadership opportunities actively. Respondent #1 described their debate club mentor's role in shaping their aspirations: "My debate club mentor inspired me to compete nationally."

This finding illustrates how mentorship fosters ambition and goal setting, as students are more likely to push themselves beyond their perceived limits when they receive encouragement and guidance from experienced individuals. Additionally, students who observed their peers in leadership roles were often inspired to take on similar responsibilities. Another participant, #3, shared: "Seeing my friend organize campus events made me realize I could do the same."

The responses indicate that positive role models contribute to a leadership culture within student organizations, where leadership becomes a self-sustaining cycle of inspiration and mentorship. Role models provide inspiration, invaluable practical guidance, and support that help individuals navigate leadership challenges (Kuh, 2009). Students who receive guidance from mentors and senior peers are more likely to develop leadership aspirations, engage in student-led initiatives, and contribute meaningfully to their university communities.

4.13 Academic and Career Outcomes

Many students report that engagement in ECAs improves their academic performance and prepares them for future careers. However, extreme involvement can have adverse effects. This theme is divided into three fundamental subthemes: (1) the positive impact of ECA on academics, (2) the disadvantages of ECA on academic impact, and (3) the contributions of ECAs to career readiness.

Positive Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academics

Participants have expressed how their involvement in ECAs strengthens their academic learning, especially when the activities are aligned with their fields of study

or personal interests. For example, participant #8 described how engagement in a healthcare-related ECA bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application: “The Red Crescent Club provides hands-on experience that complements my academic learning.”

This experience demonstrates how applied learning through ECAs improves traditional academic instruction, making conceptual visions more concrete. Students involved in debate clubs, research groups, and student-led workshops reported impressive progress in public speaking, analytical reasoning, and collaboration skills. Participant #3 reflected on how participation in an academic club motivated them to engage more deeply with their studies: “Being part of an academic club motivated me to study because I saw real-world applications of my learning in class.”

The insight suggests that ECAs can enrich intrinsic motivation by specifying meaningful connections between coursework and ECAs. While these benefits are significant, the overall impact of ECAs on grade point averages (GPA) tends to be moderate, as indicated by the quantitative analysis.

Disadvantages of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Impact

Several participants stated their challenges in balancing extracurricular activities with educational responsibilities, noting that undeserved involvement often resulted in stress, lack of sleep, and declining academic performance. Participant #7 noted, “My GPA dropped during event preparation, but I gained time management skills.”

The opinion defines the trade-off many students experience: while their academic performance may suffer temporarily, they gain valuable skills. The quantitative analysis supports this notion, revealing no significant relationship between the frequency of ECA participation and GPA, indicating that students who engage in too many activities do not necessarily achieve excellent academic results.

Additionally, some participants described experiences of academic burnout, particularly when they felt forced to keep high grades while being deeply involved in ECAs. Student #6 remarked: “I was so involved in club activities that I had to study midnights to keep up with coursework.”

Career Readiness

Many participants reported that their involvement in leadership roles, volunteer organizations, and educational clubs equipped them with a skill set greatly valued in the job market. A healthcare-related ECA member #8 stated: “The Red Crescent Club helps me prepare for a healthcare career.”

The example shows how ECAs provide industry-specific experiences, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical techniques. Similarly, students engaged in IT programming clubs, entrepreneurship societies, and leadership organizations shared that these experiences afforded them technical skills, networking opportunities, and orientation to real-world problem-solving. Moreover, participant #9 reflected on how extracurricular activities influenced her career aspirations, stating: “Through my involvement in student governance, I learned negotiation and public speaking skills that will help me in my future career.”

These insights signify that ECAs strongly link academic learning and professional development, preparing students with essential soft skills for future careers. ECAs enrich academic performance and promote the competencies and connections necessary for successful career paths.

4.14 Motivations for Participation

The theme investigates why students engage in extracurricular activities (ECAs), providing insights into the attraction of specific activities and how universities can stimulate increased participation.

The findings indicate that two primary types motivate students: (1) intrinsic motivation, which is connected to personal satisfaction and self-improvement, and (2) extrinsic motivation, which is oriented toward career aspirations and external verification.

Intrinsic Motivation

Many students engage in extracurricular activities because they extract personal satisfaction and enjoyment from these experiences. Intrinsic motivation is principal among those involved in academic clubs, the arts, and student-led initiatives that resonate with their interests and passions. For instance, respondent #1 remarked: “I joined the debate club to improve my public speaking skills.”

This report demonstrates how self-improvement is a significant motivator for participation, particularly in activities that promote intellectual and social development. Many students stated the enjoyment and sense of personal satisfaction from participating in clubs, sports, and innovative purposes, providing further energy for continued engagement in ECAs. Participant #4 emphasized the social and emotional advantages of extracurricular activities:

“Being part of a student organization made me feel more connected to the university. It is not just about academics—it is about belonging.”

Extrinsic Motivation

In contrast to those motivated by personal fulfilment, many students view participation in ECAs as a strategic move toward achieving career success. Particularly among those who engage in volunteering, professional organizations, and leadership positions, extrinsic motivation manifests as a strong driver. Respondent #8 explained: “I wanted to gain experience to help me stand out in the job market.”

The message underlines the practical advantages of ECAs, focusing on career readiness and employability. Several participants noted that they gravitated toward

activities aligning with their professional aspirations, such as joining student government to gain leadership experience or engaging in research projects to improve their academic certifications. Another participant, #6, stated: “Employers value leadership and teamwork. I knew extracurricular activities would help me develop those skills and build my resume.”

This indicates that students carefully select ECAs based on their potential to provide a competitive advantage in the job market. The findings are supported by existing literature demonstrating that students frequently pursue ECAs to gain networking opportunities, practical skills, and leadership experience—all factors that improve their career prospects (Tchibozo, 2007). Moreover, some students reported feeling external pressure to partake in ECAs due to societal or familial expectations. Respondent #5 said: “My parents inspired me to participate in extracurricular activities because they believed it would help me get scholarships and better job opportunities.”

Some students may engage in ECAs not purely out of personal interest but due to external influences from family, peers, or academic advisors. This highlights the complex interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, where external pressures can significantly shape students’ decisions to participate in extracurricular activities, eventually affecting their personal and professional development routes.

4.15 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings explains the relationship between extracurricular activities (ECAs) and students’ academic and personal development. While the quantitative data highlight statistical relationships and general trends, the qualitative narratives offer deeper insights into students’ lived experiences, shedding light on factors influencing their engagement, challenges, and benefits derived from ECAs.

Comparison and Contrast of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

A key comparison between the two data sets reveals that while the quantitative findings show no significance relationship between extracurricular activities (ECA) participation and academic performance, the qualitative responses provide context to these results. Many students emphasized that their academic success depended on whether they participated in ECAs and how effectively they managed their time. This explains why some highly involved students in ECAs maintained strong academic performance, whereas others struggled due to over-commitment.

Additionally, while the quantitative findings suggest that institutional support plays a significant role in enhancing the benefits of ECAs, qualitative data highlight the challenges students face in accessing these resources. Many students reported bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of awareness about funding opportunities, and limited mentorship, which restricted their ability to benefit from ECAs. The contrast between the statistical significance of institutional support and students' experiences suggests that universities must improve communication and accessibility of ECA-related resources.

Triangulation of Data

The findings from this study attained through a triangulated approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, underline the positive impact of extracurricular activities (ECAs) on student development. However, the effectiveness of these activities is mediated by several critical factors, including institutional support, financial accessibility, and individual time management strategies. The data consistently indicate that students who benefit from faculty mentorship and structured institutional guidance are more likely to experience significant academic and personal gains from ECAs. This observation supports the quantitative correlation between institutional support and academic performance.

Furthermore, the mixed-methods approach has revealed insights into the varying degrees of benefit experienced by students engaging in ECAs. Moreover, qualitative data indicate that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds report considerably more profitable experiences due to decreased financial constraints and more significant availability of time for participation. Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings underscores the importance of balance, systematic support, and effective institutional policies in maximizing student extracurricular engagement (Mahoney et al., 2003). While ECAs may not directly result in improved academic performance, their significance in developing leadership skills, networking opportunities, and professional competencies is well-documented across qualitative data. Thus, optimizing the conditions for ECA participation is necessary to harness their full potential in promoting holistic student development.

4.16 Summary of Findings

The findings present an in-depth look at the role of extracurricular activities (ECAs) in student academic success, personal growth, and engagement with their institutions. Although it is clear that ECAs provide a wide range of benefits, the direct impact on academic performance is varied and affected by several key factors.

Students constantly participate in various ECAs, such as academic clubs, sports teams, volunteering opportunities, and student government. Many individuals engage in multiple activities at once, which can improve their leadership skills, build social networks, and improve problem-solving abilities. However, this broad involvement does not necessarily lead to improved academic outcomes. The effect of ECAs on academic performance primarily depends on students' time management skills. Some students have reported that their involvement in ECAs helped them develop organizational skills that positively affected academic achievement. Conversely, others have had trouble such as

over-commitment, resulting in exhaustion and decreased study time, eventually affecting their grades.

A predominant theme arising from the study is the necessity of balance. Students who effectively combine their ECAs with their academic responsibilities care to see the most benefits during university life, whereas those who overwork themselves face academic reverses. Furthermore, institutional support is a core coordinator in maximizing ECA benefits. Universities that present structured support, such as funding opportunities and administrative advice, create environments where students can engage in ECAs without risking academic performance. However, some students face barriers to participation, including financial limitations, lack of institutional promotion of ECAs, and overwhelming academic workloads. Additionally, first-year students often struggle to uncover information about available ECAs, indicating a need for universities to improve the realization of ambitions.

Furthermore, ECAs significantly contribute to personal and professional development by improving critical skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, and resilience, which are essential for career readiness. Many students also represent that their involvement in ECAs promotes a sense of belonging and strengthens their connection to the university community.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The discussion chapter examines the findings presented in the previous section, including the study's research questions and theoretical framework. The explanatory discussion analyses the data, compares the results with existing literature, and highlights the study's contributions to understanding extracurricular activities (ECAs) in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan. The chapter is structured around three research questions: (1) the types of ECAs available to students, (2) the relationship between ECA involvement and academic performance, and (3) the role of institutional support in shaping students' participation in ECAs. The three sections synthesize quantitative and qualitative findings, comparing them with existing research and using theoretical perspectives, particularly Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the Threshold Framework (Fredricks, 2012), the Zero-Sum Framework (Coleman, 1961), and the Developmental Framework (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006).

5.1 RQ1: What Types of Extracurricular Activities are Recognized in Research-Oriented Universities in Kazakhstan?

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are increasingly recognized as fundamental elements of higher education, providing students with opportunities for academic development, social engagement, and personal growth (Bartkus et al., 2012). Engagement in ECAs is often associated with improved academic performance, stimulating critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills (Eccles & Barber, 1999). The findings from this study demonstrate that students at four research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan participate in a wide range of ECAs, including academic clubs, sports, volunteer work, student governance, and arts-related activities. These findings are similar to previous studies highlighting the various characteristics of ECA engagement and its role in holistic student development (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006).

Key findings

Firstly, the survey results revealed that students' ECA involvement was highly varied, with some participating in multiple activities. The most typically noted extracurricular activities were sports (17.7%), volunteer work (16.2%), and academic clubs (11.1%), as well as a notable percentage of students engaged in a combination of activities (10.3%), such as sports, academic clubs, and volunteer work. The findings suggest that students perceive ECAs as supporting their academic experience, choosing activities that align with their interests and professional ambitions.

Moreover, the data demonstrated differences in participation rates across university levels. First-year students showed higher engagement in ECAs than upper-year students, perhaps due to more confidence in exploring campus life. However, as students progressed academically, their participation in ECAs decreased, likely due to increased academic workload and prioritization of coursework. Diniaty and Kurniati (2014) found a similar pattern, and agreed that students in their last university years usually reduce their ECA engagement to focus on graduation and career preparation. Furthermore, similar trends have been observed in Western higher education systems, highlighting that structured ECAs contribute to student identity formation and career readiness (Chapman et al., 2023).

Secondly, the qualitative data provided a deeper understanding of students' motivations for choosing specific ECAs and the barriers to participation. Many students highlighted that academic clubs and research organizations were required for career preparation and skill building. Respondent #4 explained that participating in the IT Programming Club qualified them to earn practical experience with real-world projects and significantly improve their technical abilities and skills they felt would not have been fully developed through coursework alone. Such insights suggest that students engage in ECAs for academic or career advancement and emotional and psychological enrichment.

These findings align with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation arises from a need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Engaging in activities that resonate with their passions and strengths improves students' potential for personal growth and sustained commitment.

Similarly, students involved in volunteering and student government reported that their extracurricular experiences improved their sense of social responsibility and leadership. Another participant, Participant #9 described how involvement in student governance helped them develop negotiation skills and gain experience-representing students when engaging with university administration competencies he believed would be valuable in their future professional lives.

However, the findings also identified barriers limiting ECA participation. Some students, particularly those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, had financial conditions that made it difficult to be employed in activities requiring membership fees, travel expenses, or equipment costs. In addition, Diniaty and Kurni (2014) found that socioeconomic factors significantly impact students' ability to engage in ECAs. For example, students who juggle part-time work alongside their studies face more significant barriers to maintaining their involvement in extracurricular activities (Tchibozo, 2007). Besides, first-year students highlighted a lack of attention to available ECAs, pointing to low institutional advertisement and communication. This reflects findings by Kuzhabekova (2024), who emphasizes that Kazakhstani universities must improve and extend actions to provide students with information about extracurricular opportunities. The results align with previous research indicating that moderate engagement in extracurricular activities (ECAs) can be advantageous. Nevertheless, excessive participation may lead to stress, exhaustion, and a lack of academic interest. (Fredricks, A., & Eccles, S., 2006).

RQ 1 and Theoretical Explanation

The Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) delivers a framework for understanding why students choose specific ECAs. According to this theory, students engage in activities that satisfy their basic psychological needs. Firstly, their position as independent individuals who decide based on their interests reflects their need for self-directed growth and exploration. Secondly, many students have the competency to participate in academic clubs and student governance to develop skills and gain recognition for their achievements. Thirdly, sports and volunteer work engagement suggest that students pursue social connections and community engagement through ECAs. Additionally, the Developmental Framework (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006) supports the idea that ECAs contribute to students' overall growth in academic performance, emotional intellect, and leadership skills. This framework explains why students in this study respected leadership positions and student government roles, as these activities provide opportunities for decision-making and organizational experience.

During data collection, significant similarities were observed in students' academic environments, and the values supported by the four research-oriented universities studied. The ongoing Westernization of Kazakhstan's higher education has contributed to a more student-centred approach, emphasizing autonomy, personal development, and institutional support for extracurricular activities (Fimyar et al., 2014). Unlike the Soviet-era educational model, which accentuated authoritarian structures, standardized knowledge transmission, and passive learning, modern institutions actively encourage students to shape their educational experiences.

While extracurricular activities did exist during the Soviet period, they were primarily state-directed and focused on promoting political ideology, mass physical culture, and collective participation rather than personal growth or leadership development

(Silova, 2011). Participation in activities such as the Komsomol, mandatory athletics, and organized cultural events was often compulsory and lacked the flexibility or student initiative present in contemporary ECAs. The current evolution in Kazakhstani universities images pedagogical transformations and a broader cultural transformation in how student engagement, mentorship, and holistic learning are understood.

Furthermore, volunteering and sports participation, typically associated with community service and social engagement in Western contexts (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), have been reframed within the Kazakhstani context. Many students perceive these activities not solely as opportunities for civic contribution but as strategic components of career advancement, using them to enhance their resumes and secure institutional grants or scholarships. Implementing Social GPA (SGPA) systems and providing financial incentives for active athletes across research-oriented universities exemplify how extracurricular participation is being institutionally recognized and rewarded. These cultural transformations indicate the emergence of unique trends in student engagement, reflecting a hybrid educational model that integrates global best practices while accommodating Kazakhstan's distinct sociocultural and historical background.

5.2 RQ2. What is the Relationship between Extracurricular Involvement and Academic Performance?

This research question investigated whether participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs) is associated with academic performance as measured by GPA. The quantitative analysis found no significant relationship between the frequency of ECA participation and students' GPA ($\rho = -0.070$, $p = 0.170$). Since the p-value exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05, these results indicate no significant relationship between ECA involvement and academic achievement. These findings challenge the belief that ECAs naturally improve academic performance and suggest that their impact can vary

depending on individual circumstances and the type of activity. To sum up, participation in ECAs provides practical learning experiences, opportunities for professional networking, and skills development that improve formal education (Mahoney et al., 2003).

Moreover, the qualitative findings highlighted slight perspectives on how ECAs contribute to students' academic experiences. Some students reported that participation in academic-focused ECAs, such as debate clubs and research groups, provided skills and experiences that indirectly benefited their coursework. Others, particularly those engaged in sports and volunteering, perceived their involvement as beneficial in developing teamwork, leadership, and time-management skills that could indirectly support academic success (Chapman et al., 2023). However, some students believed that comprehensive engagement in ECAs periodically interfered with their ability to balance coursework, particularly during extreme academic periods. While the advantages of participating in ECAs are clear, overcommitting can lead to academic stress (Sieglova, 2023). The discovery is consistent with previous research suggesting that excessive commitment to ECAs can adversely affect students' well-being and academic outcomes (Eccles et al., 2003). Thus, while moderate participation boosts skill development and engagement, over-commitment without effective time management can lead to educational challenges and increased stress.

The findings align with previous research that underscores the complexity of the ECA-academic performance relationship. For instance, Hunt (2005) argued that participation in ECAs is an additional hobby not strongly related to academic success. Broh (2002) notes that ECAs may not affect students' educational outcomes. Moreover, the findings of this study support the Zero-Sum Framework (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), which suggests that as students allocate more time to ECAs, their academic focus may decline, reducing potential benefits. This strengthens the idea that the educational impact

of ECAs is highly individualized and contingent upon how students manage their commitments.

RQ2 and Theoretical Framework

The relationship between extracurricular activities (ECAs) and academic performance remains an issue, shaped by factors such as time allocation, institutional policies, and students' ability to balance responsibilities. The Zero-Sum Framework (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) theory secures that time is a limited resource; therefore, increased extracurricular involvement intrinsically determines the time available for studying, completing assignments, and preparing for exams. Students who engage in multiple challenging ECAs without effective time management strategies often face upgraded academic tension. Penjor (2021) suggests that over-commitment to ECAs can lead to burnout, eventually hindering academic performance.

However, the quantitative analysis suggests that students can generally balance ECAs with their studies, even though participation does not improve GPA. Instead, ECAs contribute to students' personal development, social capital, and career readiness. The Developmental Framework (Eccles et al., 2003) supports this view, highlighting that the primary value of ECAs lies in promoting competencies such as leadership, teamwork, and emotional intelligence rather than directly improving academic outcomes. Chapman et al. (2023) found that students engage in ECAs for networking, career development, and skill development rather than academic gains. These findings indicate that ECAs function as additional knowledge, showing developmental benefits that cannot independently be fully seized through GPA.

The findings of this study must also be examined within Kazakhstan's unique educational and socio-cultural context. Unlike in Western universities, where extracurricular participation is often navigated by intrinsic motivation or personal interest

(Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), Kazakhstani students often engage in ECAs for institutional encouragement and career advancement opportunities.

A notable feature of Kazakhstani higher education is the role of institutionalized extracurricular engagement. Many universities implement Social GPA (SGPA) methods, which award students for ECA involvement by integrating extracurricular participation into scholarship criteria, internship eligibility, and even dormitory placement. In contrast to Western education systems, where ECAs are seen as voluntary activities that complement academic learning, in Kazakhstan, students may feel compelled to participate as part of a structured educational and career progression strategy. This blurs the line between voluntary engagement and institutional requirements, making the relationship between ECAs and GPAs more complex.

Furthermore, government policies and university regulations encourage students to engage in ECAs as part of a national strategy to foster well-rounded graduates. For example, Kazakhstan's State Program for Education and Science Development (2020-2025) emphasizes the importance of extracurricular participation in leadership training, social responsibility, and employability skills. Moreover, on the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, K. Tokayev, 2020 was declared the Year of the Volunteer. This type of initiative creates many projects aimed at developing industry volunteering. This policy framework pushes universities to integrate ECAs into their academic and career development models, reinforcing that extracurricular participation is a personal choice and a structured expectation.

Additionally, cultural perceptions of academic success and extracurricular engagement play a role in shaping students' decisions. In many Kazakhstani families, academic success is prioritized above all else, powerfully underscoring GPA and formal education as key determinants of future success. This differs from Western contexts, where

employers often value diverse extracurricular participation (Bartkus et al., 2012). As a result, Kazakhstani students may be hesitant to fully engage in ECAs if they perceive these activities as being distracting from their primary academic goals.

The findings of this study suggest that while students acknowledge the value of ECAs in skill development and career preparation, they do not necessarily view these activities as academic enhancers. There are not relationship between ECA participation and GPA could reflect a pragmatic approach, where students strategically engage in ECAs to maximize career benefits rather than academic performance. This is evident in how many students prioritized extracurricular involvement in leadership positions, volunteer organizations, and networking opportunities that enhance job opportunities rather than academic outcomes.

5.3 RQ3: What is the relationship between institutional support and students' participation in extracurricular activities?

The findings from this study highlight a strong correlation between institutional support and student participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs), suggesting that well-structured university policies and resources are important in encouraging student engagement. However, the nature of this support and its accessibility are equally significant as its very existence. While universities often present financial aid, mentorship, and dedicated areas for ECAs, students' ability to fully utilize these resources is mediated by bureaucratic limitations, understanding of available support, and institutional priorities.

Institutional Support as a Catalyst for Engagement

Quantitative analysis showed that students who perceived high levels of institutional support were likely to report positive experiences with ECAs. This highlights previous research underscoring that universities with well-integrated extracurricular

frameworks improve student participation by promoting a sense of belonging, academic confidence, and leadership development (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Theoretical perspectives, such as the Developmental Framework, support this notion, indicating that individuals navigate academic and personal growth trajectories more effectively in institutions that help structure opportunities for student involvement. However, institutional support is not always evenly spread or efficiently communicated. Qualitative findings from student interviews revealed concerns about limited funding allocations, lack of transparency in resource distribution, and strict administrative procedures that often prevent participation rather than facilitate it. These challenges reflect broader structural issues in Kazakhstani higher education, where funding for student activities is usually secondary to academic investments (Kuzhabekova, 2024). Respondent #8 noted the challenges in receiving financial support for a student-led project, explaining that although the university promotes support for student initiatives, the approval process is often prolonged and bureaucratic. As a result, funding is often postponed until after the event has already emerged, causing students to cover the expenses themselves.

The gap between available resources and student awareness is an essential challenge in institutional support systems. Many students in this study reported that they were unaware of financial aid programs, leadership workshops, or networking opportunities or found the information difficult to navigate. This aligns with previous research, which suggests that students from underrepresented backgrounds are less likely to access institutional resources due to a lack of proactive outreach by universities (Fischman & Gardner, 2022).

One possible explanation for this issue is that universities primarily find only proactive students who have already developed skills from school education. For example, institutions prefer to promote individuals like highly integrated students who

have achieved in specific disciplines. Furthermore, the institutions can independently plan the events and invite and finance the same proactive individuals to events each time. The institution should provide inclusive approaches in each ECA discipline to promote student engagement.

In conclusion, this study's findings suggest that while institutional support strongly predicts student participation in ECAs, its effectiveness depends on three key factors: accessibility, awareness, and institutional priorities. Bureaucratic barriers and poor visibility can limit the impact of otherwise well-intended support programs, while academic culture plays a decisive role in shaping student engagement (Chapman et al., 2023). For universities to truly maximize the benefits of ECAs, they must move outside surface-level support and adopt a student-centered, integration-focused approach.

The Need for Strategic Engagement Policies

Institutional support is central to promoting student engagement in extracurricular activities (ECAs). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of that support depends not only on availability but also on accessibility and responsiveness to student needs. Research underlines the importance of institutional investment in encouraging ECA participation (Buckley & Lee, 2018). Findings from this study suggest that implementation practices across Kazakhstani research-oriented universities often fall short due to bureaucratic barriers and inflexible administrative structures.

For example, students from Astana IT University, Nazarbayev University, and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University reported that internal regulations and procedures significantly limited their ability to organize impactful extracurricular events. In these cases, club activities largely depended on fixed student fees collected each semester, with limited opportunities to engage external sponsors or promote events and commercial practices that could otherwise improve performance quality and values. These

institutional limitations, ingrained in outdated regulations and risk-averse management, reduce student independence and restrict clubs from growing their functions. Moreover, the student fee financing is not enough to organize large-scale events. Such findings are examined in the literature, as they state that without flexible policies, institutional support may fail to build its arranged developmental consequences (Darmadi, 2015).

Conversely, KIMEP University students noted more enabling conditions, where administrative staff actively support sponsorship outreach, branding possibilities, and financial freedom for student organizations. This model boosts stronger engagement in ECA and develops students' communication and event management skills. Combining commercial partnerships into student life reflects a shift toward experiential knowledge and student-led innovation, where institutions operate as facilitators rather than gatekeepers (Fischman & Gardner, 2022). The contrast between these approaches demonstrates that strategic policy design is essential to creating a supportive extracurricular ecosystem.

This study recommends greater cross-institutional collaboration between administrative departments in Kazakhstani universities to share best practices and co-develop policy guidelines that promote inclusivity, efficiency, and autonomy in ECA engagement. Kireyeva et al. (2022) argue that improving educational service quality in Kazakhstan requires transparency, adaptability, and student-centred governance. Facilitating institutional dialogues and joint student forums could empower university leaders to reconsider support strategies and reduce contrasts across institutions. Moreover, creating regulatory frameworks that allow controlled commercial participation while providing ethical standards and institutional reputation may help open.

Eventually, institutional support should be developed in resource distribution. It has to promote enabling conditions that support student procedures,

minimize bureaucratic limitations, and promote innovation in student life. Buckley and Lee (2018) highlighted that well-structured support systems are necessary for unlocking the full developmental potential of ECAs, particularly in diverse and evolving higher education contexts. To address revealed barriers, higher education institutions could implement flexible extracurricular programming, increase family awareness initiatives outlining the benefits of ECAs, and create opportunities for remote or part-time participation. Recognizing students' struggles with family responsibilities is essential for making extracurricular engagement more equitable and accessible (Poh Sun & Pan, 2014).

Comparison and Contrast with Existing Literature

The study's findings are generally consistent with previous research, which suggests that extracurricular activities (ECAs) contribute to students' personal growth, leadership development, and academic preparedness. For example, Chapman et al. (2023) reported that ECA involvement strengthens motivation, public speaking, and interpersonal competence. Similarly, Fredricks and Eccles (2006) underlined that participation in structured extracurricular programs promotes socio-emotional development, such as improved confidence, teamwork, and goal setting. In this study, participants described gaining communication, organizational, and time management skills. These shared insights underscore the role of ECAs in providing students with competencies that grow outside the classroom and support future employability (Sieglová, 2023).

Regarding institutional support, the positive correlation between support systems and academic improvement aligns with the framework proposed by Eccles et al. (2003), underscoring the importance of structured settings in optimizing student development. Research from Darmadi (2015) and Buckley and Lee (2018) further supports the claim that institutions must present accessible and flexible engagement structures, including individual mentorship programs, transparent funding channels or samples, and

administrative responsibilities to sustain active participation. These findings strengthen the idea that support alone is incomplete unless attended by a student-centred design and inclusive policies.

Moreover, this study's findings on participation barriers also mirror earlier research. Kireyeva et al. (2022) concluded that Kazakhstan students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to face financial limitations and time constraints that interfere with their involvement in ECAs. These barriers further increase when institutional procedures are bureaucratic. Chapman et al. (2023) noted that strict administrative systems prevent student-led initiatives and restrict access to developmental opportunities. The present study contributes to this body of knowledge by contextualizing these barriers within Kazakhstani research-oriented universities, presenting insights into how national systems may require policy reform to better align with global best practices.

Rethinking the Academic Value of ECAs in Kazakhstan

Although the literature suggests a positive correlation between extracurricular activity (ECA) participation and academic achievement, the current study found no significant relationship between the frequency of ECA involvement and GPA ($p = 0.170$). This outcome contrasts with earlier studies that reported linear academic gains from ECA engagement (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Instead, these results support the Zero-Sum Framework, which indicates that increased ECA participation may displace valuable study time, limiting its direct academic benefits.

Importantly, this finding may be context-dependent. In Kazakhstan's research-oriented universities, the structure and needs of ECAs may differ significantly from those of Western institutions. ECAs in Kazakhstan backgrounds can require high levels of commitment, formal planning, and regular reporting, placing additional pressure on students already navigating strict academic schedules. This differs from models in other

contexts where ECAs may be more flexible, socially focused, or designed primarily for leisure and community engagement (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). As such, the passion and expectations attached to ECAs in Kazakhstani institutions may reduce the possibility of academic improvement, mainly when not supported by time management training or institutional flexibility.

Furthermore, this analysis's lack of significant correlation suggests that academic performance may depend less on participation frequency and more on how students engage with these activities. Factors such as the type of ECA, the skills it develops, and the alignment with students' academic goals are likely to negotiate effects. These insights stimulate a more crucial examination of ECA design and delivery in local institutional contexts rather than carrying even academic advantages across all forms of participation.

5.4 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter discussed and interpreted the findings of the three research questions. The first research question explored the types of extracurricular activities (ECAs) in research-oriented Kazakhstani universities. Quantitative and qualitative data revealed various ECAs, from academic clubs and student governance to sports and volunteering. Students reported participating based on intrinsic motivations, career aspirations, and institutional motivation, aligning with the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Again, this theory posits that individuals are motivated to engage in behaviours that satisfy their basic psychological needs for independence, competence, and connection to others. In this study, students chose activities such as academic clubs, volunteering, and student administration for pleasure or skill-building, to feel connected to others, and to claim control over their personal and professional growth. For example, students participating in Red Crescent Club (Nazarbayev University)

activities mentioned that helping others and working as a team gave them emotional satisfaction and supported their social communication, indicators of relatedness satisfaction. These models provide insight into the internal and external motivational factors influencing ECA participation across Kazakhstani research-oriented universities.

The second research question examined the relationship between ECA participation and academic performance. The quantitative analysis discovered no significant relationship between participation frequency and GPA, challenging beliefs of a direct educational benefit. Qualitative insights proposed that over-commitment to ECAs can restrict academic focus, supporting the Zero-Sum Framework (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). However, students also reported that moderate involvement contributed to soft-skill development, which may support academic performance indirectly.

The third research question focused on institutional support and its impact on ECA participation. The results demonstrated a strong positive correlation between institutional support and students' perceived academic improvement. Interview data highlighted effective practices and institutional limitations, particularly in budgeting systems and accessibility. The findings underlined the importance of strategic engagement policies and cross-institutional collaboration to improve student involvement.

The next chapter summarizes the overall contributions of this study, reflect on its limitations, and offer practical and theoretical recommendations for policy and future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This mixed-methods study investigated the impact of extracurricular activities (ECAs) on academic performance, institutional support, and personal development in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan. Three research questions guided the study:

RQ 1: What types of ECAs are recognized in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan?

RQ 2: What is the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic performance? RQ 3: What is the relationship between institutional support and students' participation in ECAs?

6.1 Summary of Main Findings

The first research question explored the types of ECAs students engage in across different institutions. The results revealed a wide range of student participation, from academic and career-oriented clubs to volunteering, sports, and arts. These activities were outlets for recreation and critical platforms for personal growth, social interaction, and career preparation. Notably, the motivations behind participation often reflected intrinsic interests, alignment with academic disciplines, and opportunities for skill development—demonstrating the relevance of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) in understanding ECA choices.

The second research question addressed the link between ECA involvement and academic performance. While the quantitative data indicated no significant relationship between participation frequency and GPA, qualitative responses revealed a more complex relationship. Students described the benefits and trade-offs of their involvement, especially when juggling multiple responsibilities. These findings support elements of the Zero-Sum Framework (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), emphasizing the

potential for over-commitment to negatively impact academic outcomes while highlighting how students' time management skills and self-regulation mediate these effects.

The third research question examined the role of institutional support in facilitating student engagement in ECAs. A strong correlation emerged between perceived support and students' reported personal benefits from ECAs. However, student narratives exposed persistent structural issues—bureaucracy, limited funding, and poor communication—that inhibit the full realization of this support. Institutional strategies varied widely, with some universities enabling greater flexibility and student agency than others, suggesting a need for more unified and effective engagement policies.

6.2 Strengths and Limitations

The study focused on four research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan, meaning the findings may not be fully generalizable to all research-oriented organizations and other institutional types, such as technical colleges, vocational schools, or private universities. Different universities have varying levels of institutional support, funding for ECAs, and academic cultures, which can influence the extent to which students engage in extracurricular activities.

Future research should consider conducting comparative studies across different university settings, exploring how institutional structures and academic expectations influence ECA participation. Additionally, studies could examine how extracurricular engagement differs across student demographics, such as gender, socioeconomic background, and field of study.

While this study categorized ECAs into academic, leadership, sports, and volunteer activities, it did not assess differences in the intensity of involvement or specific ECAs. Some students may participate irregularly, while others hold leadership roles in

organizations, which could lead to different academic and personal outcomes (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006).

Future research should differentiate between low, moderate, and high levels of participation and examine how different types of ECAs impact students in specific academic disciplines. This would provide insights into which activities yield the excellent benefits for student development.

One limitation of this study is the reliance on self-reported data for GPA and perceptions of institutional support, which may be subject to response bias. Participants might overestimate or underestimate their performance and experiences, leading to potential data inaccuracies (Kuncel et al., 2005). This contrast raises worries about the accuracy of the findings, as it could misinterpret the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic performance.

In addition, the cross-sectional design of this research limits the ability to draw causal conclusions. Wang and Eccles (2012) argue that the data only represent a specific point in time, and longitudinal studies would be necessary to establish causality between extracurricular activities, institutional support, and academic outcomes. Furthermore, longitudinal research designs, which track participants over a symbolic period, would be necessary to define causal ways and better understand the long-term effects of extracurricular involvement on academic success (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006).

6.3 Implications

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to improve the role and impact of extracurricular activities (ECAs) in research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan.

The research revealed notable inconsistencies in how universities structure and perceive institutional support. While some institutions (e.g., KIMEP) enable student-

led fundraising and sponsor engagement, others maintain strict policies that limit commercial partnerships and budget autonomy. To address this disparity, it is recommended that Kazakhstani universities develop unified strategic policies for student engagement with clear guidelines for flexible financial support, commercial sponsorships, and administrative procedures. Institutions should consider revising their ECA budgeting models to encourage sustainable student-led initiatives while maintaining accountability. Creating cross-institutional platforms for experience-sharing—such as student affairs conferences or national ECA development networks—can foster stronger cooperation between universities and help standardize successful engagement models.

Additionally, targeted financial aid or grant programs for active ECA participants should be established to address financial barriers affecting student participation, especially among lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Students' reactions show that university administration workers should increase communication procedures. These policies can be supported by implementing a social capital points system (e.g., Social GPA), which incentivizes involvement and tracks student engagement beyond academic grades. Moreover, policymakers should pay attention to adaptation to the context of Kazak

University practitioners and student affairs professionals should prioritize enhancing visibility and communication regarding ECA opportunities. Many students reported a lack of awareness about existing clubs, funding opportunities, and institutional support. Therefore, Universities should adopt more proactive strategies in advertising ECAs during orientation programs, academic advising sessions, and digital platforms.

Moreover, time management and leadership training workshops should be integrated into student development programs. The study showed that students with stronger time management skills were better equipped to balance ECAs with academic

responsibilities. Equipping students with these tools early—especially during the first year—may enhance their capacity to benefit from ECAs without compromising academic performance.

In addition, institutions should consider decentralizing the coordination of ECAs, empowering student leaders to make decisions while providing faculty mentorship when necessary. A shift from highly centralized bureaucracy to student-driven governance, supported by clear administrative frameworks, can foster a culture of ownership, initiative, and innovation in student engagement.

This study contributes to the growing literature on ECAs in non-Western higher education systems, especially in the post-Soviet context. However, the scope was limited to four research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan. Future research should adopt comparative designs, exploring how ECA engagement differs between private and public universities, technical and liberal arts institutions, or urban and rural campuses.

Additionally, future studies could employ longitudinal designs to explore causal relationships between ECA participation, academic development, and post-graduate success. Another valuable line of inquiry would be discipline-specific ECA outcomes—examining how different majors (e.g., STEM vs. humanities) benefit from specific types of extracurricular involvement.

Finally, while this study applied the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and the Developmental Framework (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), doing so would deepen our understanding of student motivation and institutional engagement in transitional educational systems.

6.4 Reflection

This research has been a meaningful journey for me as it closely relates to my experiences as a research-oriented university student in Kazakhstan. Throughout my

academic life, from my bachelor's degree, I have been a very active student and still an administrative worker involved in developing various extracurricular activities (ECAs) in the Department of Student Services. This observation motivated me to explore how ECAs influence students' academic performance and development.

Through interviews and data analysis, I discovered how motivation, resource access, and personal goals shape each student's ECA experience. Interestingly, university students face different realities regarding support and opportunities, which reminds us that although policies might look the same on paper, students' experiences can differ. Overall, I am grateful for the opportunity to complete this research. It helped me grow as a student and a researcher who can contribute to improving the student experience in Kazakhstan's universities.

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Appendix A

Declaration of the Use of Generative AI



**Thesis Title: The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in
Kazakhstani Research-Oriented Universities: A Mixed-Methods Study**

Declaration of the Use of Generative AI

I hereby declare that I have read and understood NUGSE's policy concerning appropriate use of AI and composed this work independently (please check one):

- with the use of artificial intelligence tools, or
- without the use of artificial intelligence tools.

(If you have used AI tools as defined in the GSE policy document, please complete the rest of this form.)

During the preparation of this thesis/examination, I used Grammarly Premium to check the Academic English grammar and find meaningful.

I also declare that I

- am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),
- have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,
- am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,
- have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work, and
- acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed NUGSE's guidelines regarding appropriate AI use.

Name: Altynbek Toleubay

Date: 17.04.2025

Signature:

Appendix B

The questions are designed to gather structured, numerical data from students about their involvement in extracurricular activities, academic performance, and institutional support.

Use frequency tables, Likert scales (1-5), and yes/no options.

The first section of questionnaire

1. What degree program are you currently enrolled in?
2. What is your current level of study?
3. What types of extracurricular activities do you participate in? (Select all that apply)
4. How often do you participate in extracurricular activities?
5. How satisfied are you with your participation in extracurricular activities?
6. What are your reasons for participating in extracurricular activities? (Select all that apply)
7. To what extent have extracurricular activities influenced the following aspects of your personal development?

The second section of questionnaire

8. What is your current GPA (Grade Point Average)?
9. How would you rate your time management skills?
10. How much time do you spend in general academic and extracurricular activities?
11. In your opinion, how much do extracurricular activities interfere with your academic workload?
12. To what extent do you believe balancing extracurricular activities has improved your academic performance?
13. What factors can limit your participation in extracurricular activities? (Select all that apply)

The third section of questionnaire

14. Which Department/Office is responsible for supporting extracurricular activities at your University?
15. How has your university supported your participation in extracurricular activities? (Select all that apply)
16. How effective is your University's support of extracurricular activities on campus?
17. The institutional support has improved my academic performance through extracurricular activities.
18. The institutional support has improved my personal development through extracurricular activities.

Осы сұрақтар студенттердің қосымша сабақтан тыс белсенділіктері, академиялық көрсеткіштері және институционалдық қолдау туралы құрылымдалған, сандық деректерді жинауға арналған. Жилік кестелерін, Ликерт шкаласын (1-5) және иә/жоқ жауаптарын қолданыңыз.

Сауалнаманың бірінші бөлімі

1. Қазіргі таңда қандай білім беру бағдарламасында оқисыз?
2. Сіздің қазіргі оқуыңыздың деңгейі қандай?
3. Қандай қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысасыз? (Барлығын таңдаңыз)
4. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қаншалықты жиі қатысасыз?
5. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысуыңызға қаншалықты қанағаттанасыз?
6. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысуыңыздың себебі неде? (Барлығын таңдаңыз)
7. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шаралар келесі жеке даму аспектілеріңізге қаншалықты әсер етті?

Сауалнаманың екінші бөлімі

8. Қазіргі GPA (орташа балл) көрсеткішіңіз қандай?
9. Уақытыңызды басқару қабілетіңізді қалай бағалайсыз?

10. Жалпы академиялық және қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қанша уақыт жұмсайсыз?
11. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шаралар академиялық жүктемеңізге қаншалықты кедергі келтіреді деп ойлайсыз?
12. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларды теңестіру академиялық жетістігіңізді қаншалықты жақсартты деп ойлайсыз?
13. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысуыңызды шектейтін қандай факторлар бар? (Барлығын таңдаңыз)

Сауалнаманың үшінші бөлімі

14. Университетте қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларды қолдау жауапкершілігін қай бөлім/кеңсе атқарады?
15. Университет қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысуыңызды қалай қолдады? (Барлығын таңдаңыз)
16. Сіздің университетіңіздің кампусағы қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларды қолдауы қаншалықты тиімді?
17. Университет тарапынан көрсетілген қолдау қосымша сабақтан тыс шаралар арқылы академиялық көрсеткішімді жақсартты.
18. Университет тарапынан көрсетілген қолдау қосымша сабақтан тыс шаралар арқылы жеке дамуыма әсер етті.

Эти вопросы предназначены для сбора структурированных, числовых данных от студентов об их участии во внеклассных мероприятиях, академической успеваемости и институциональной поддержке. Используйте таблицы частотности, шкалы Лайкерта (1-5) и варианты ответов "да/нет".

Первая часть опроса

1. На какой образовательной программе вы обучаетесь в настоящее время?
2. Каков ваш текущий уровень обучения?
3. В каких внеклассных мероприятиях вы принимаете участие? (Выберите все подходящие варианты)
4. Как часто вы участвуете во внеклассных мероприятиях?
5. Насколько вы удовлетворены своим участием во внеклассных мероприятиях?
6. Каковы причины вашего участия во внеклассных мероприятиях? (Выберите все подходящие варианты)
7. В какой степени внеклассные мероприятия повлияли на следующие аспекты вашего личностного развития?

Вторая часть опроса

8. Каков ваш текущий средний балл (GPA)?
9. Как бы вы оценили свои навыки управления временем?
10. Сколько времени вы в целом уделяете академическим и внеклассным мероприятиям?
11. Насколько, по вашему мнению, внеклассные мероприятия мешают вашей академической нагрузке?
12. В какой степени, по вашему мнению, баланс между внеклассными мероприятиями улучшил вашу академическую успеваемость?
13. Какие факторы могут ограничивать ваше участие во внеклассных мероприятиях?
(Выберите все подходящие варианты)

Третья часть опроса

14. Какой департамент/отдел отвечает за поддержку внеклассных мероприятий в вашем университете?
15. Как ваш университет поддержал ваше участие во внеклассных мероприятиях?
(Выберите все подходящие варианты)

16. Насколько эффективна поддержка вашего университета в отношении внеклассных мероприятий на кампусе?

17. Институциональная поддержка улучшила мою академическую успеваемость через внеклассные мероприятия.

18. Институциональная поддержка улучшила моё личностное развитие через внеклассные мероприятия.

Appendix C

Open-ended questions help researchers better understand student experiences with extracurricular activities, time management, and institutional support.

The first section part of the interview

1. What do you do during your typical week at the university?
2. Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?
3. Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?
4. How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?
5. What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?

The second section part of the interview

6. How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities related to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.
7. How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?
8. How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?
9. What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?

The third section part of the interview

10. What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your University?
11. Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?

12. In what ways do you think your university would provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?
13. Can you talk about (If there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?
14. What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

Ашық сұрақтар студенттердің қосымша сабақтан тыс шаралар, уақытты басқару және институционалдық қолдауға қатысты тәжірибелерін тереңірек түсінуге көмектеседі.

Сұхбаттың бірінші бөлігі

1. Университеттегі әдеттегі аптаңыз қалай өтеді?
2. Сіз университеттің жатақханасында тұрасыз ба?
3. Университетте қатысатын қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларыңызды сипаттап бере аласыз ба?
4. Бұл қосымша сабақтан тыс шаралар сіздің жеке қанағаттануыңыз бен жалпы университеттік тәжірибеңізге қалай әсер етеді?
5. Ғылыми-зерттеу бағытындағы университет жағдайында қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысудың басты қиындықтары мен артықшылықтары қандай?

Сұхбаттың екінші бөлігі

6. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысуыңыз академиялық жетістігіңізге қалай әсер етеді деп ойлайсыз? Нақты мысалдар келтіріңіз.
7. Академиялық міндеттер мен қосымша сабақтан тыс шаралар арасында уақытыңызды қалай бөлесіз?
8. Күтпеген жағдайлар немесе мерзімдер туындағанда, уақытыңызды қалай бейімдейсіз?
9. Сізді қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысуға не ынталандырады, және қатысуыңызды шектейтін қандай қиындықтар болуы мүмкін?

Сұхбаттың үшінші бөлігі

10. Университетте қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға арналған институционалдық қолдау қолжетімділігі туралы не ойлайсыз?
11. Қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысуға қатысты оң және теріс тәжірибеңізбен бөлісе аласыз ба?
12. Университет студенттердің қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға белсенді қатысуы үшін қандай мүмкіндіктерді жақсарту алады деп ойлайсыз?
13. Институционалдық қолдау сіздің жеке және академиялық дамуыңызға тікелей әсер еткен нақты тәжірибелеріңіз бар ма? Солар жайында айта аласыз ба?
14. Университеттің студенттердің жан-жақты дамуын қолдау үшін институционалдық қолдауды жақсарту бойынша қандай ұсыныстарыңыз бар?

Открытые вопросы помогают исследователям лучше понять опыт студентов в отношении внеклассных мероприятий, управления временем и институциональной поддержки.

Первая часть интервью

1. Как проходит ваша типичная неделя в университете?
2. Проживаете ли вы в общежитии на территории кампуса?
3. Можете ли вы описать внеклассные мероприятия, в которых участвуете в университете?
4. Как эти внеклассные мероприятия влияют на ваше личное удовлетворение и общий опыт в университете?
5. Каковы основные трудности и преимущества участия во внеклассных мероприятиях в научно-исследовательском университете?

Вторая часть интервью

6. Как, по вашему мнению, ваше участие во внеклассных мероприятиях связано с вашей академической успеваемостью? Приведите конкретные примеры.
7. Как вы распределяете свое время между академическими обязанностями и внеклассными мероприятиями?
8. Как вы адаптируете свое время, когда возникают непредвиденные события или приближаются дедлайны?

9. Что мотивирует вас участвовать во внеклассных мероприятиях, и какие трудности могут ограничивать ваше участие?

Третья часть интервью

10. Что вы думаете о доступности институциональной поддержки для внеклассных мероприятий в вашем университете?
11. Можете ли вы поделиться своим положительным и отрицательным опытом участия во внеклассных мероприятиях?
12. Как, по вашему мнению, ваш университет мог бы предоставить больше возможностей для вовлечения студентов во внеклассные мероприятия?
13. Можете ли вы рассказать о случаях, когда институциональная поддержка напрямую повлияла на ваше личное и академическое развитие?
14. Какие рекомендации вы можете дать вашему университету для улучшения институциональной поддержки всестороннего развития студентов?

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

With your consent, we will use a voice recorder to record your responses. These recordings will be accessible only to the researcher conducting this study. All audio and written notes will be destroyed after transcription. You will be asked to sign a consent form in accordance with research ethics standards. By signing, you acknowledge that:

1. All information will be kept confidential.
2. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

This interview will last approximately 30 minutes. The aim is to explore your experiences with extracurricular activities (ECAs), your motivation for participation or non-participation, and your perception of institutional support. The results will help us better understand how ECAs impact student academic performance in Kazakhstani research-oriented universities.

Researcher:

Date/Time:

Location:

Participant:

Please answer each question honestly. If you are uncomfortable answering any question, you may skip it

Interview Questions:

1. Do you currently participate in any extracurricular activities at your university? If yes, which ones and why did you choose them?
2. How long have you been involved in these activities, and how often do you participate?
3. Do you believe your involvement in ECAs has affected your academic performance? If yes, how?
4. What kind of skills have you developed through ECAs (e.g., leadership, time management, teamwork)?
5. Have you experienced any challenges in balancing academic responsibilities and extracurricular involvement?
6. How would you describe the institutional support provided for students involved in ECAs (e.g., funding, flexible scheduling, mentoring)?
7. Do you think more should be done by universities to support ECAs? If so, what improvements would you recommend?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with or opinion on extracurricular activities?

Сұхбат хаттамасы

Сіздің келісіміңізбен біз сұхбат жауаптарын жазып алу үшін диктофон қолданамыз. Жазбалар тек осы зерттеуді жүргізетін зерттеушіге ғана қолжетімді болады. Барлық аудио және қағаз жазбалар транскрипциядан кейін жойылады. Сіз ғылыми зерттеу этикасына сәйкес келісімге қол қоюыңыз қажет. Бұл келісімге қол қоя отырып, сіз:

1. Барлық ақпарат құпия түрде сақталатынын,
2. Сұхбатқа қатысу ерікті екенін және егер өзіңізді жайсыз сезінсеңіз, кез келген уақытта сұхбатты тоқтатуға құқығыңыз бар екенін растайсыз.

Сұхбат шамамен 30 минутқа созылады. Мақсаты — сіздің университеттегі сыныптан тыс (внеучебная) белсенділіктерге қатысу тәжірибеңізді, оған деген мотивацияңызды және университеттің қолдауын қалай бағалайтыныңызды білу. Нәтижелер Қазақстандағы зерттеу университеттеріндегі студенттердің академиялық үлгеріміне әсер ететін факторларды тереңірек түсінуге көмектеседі.

Зерттеуші:

Күні/Уақыты:

Өтетін орны:

Қатысушы:

Әр сұраққа шынайы жауап беруіңізді сұраймыз. Егер өзіңізді жайсыз сезінсеңіз, кез келген сұрақтан бас тартуға құқығыңыз бар.

Сұрақтар:

1. Қазіргі кезде университеттегі қандай да бір сыныптан тыс (внеучебная) белсенділікке қатысасыз ба? Иә болса, нақты қандай және неге дәл сол белсенділікті таңдадыңыз?
2. Бұл белсенділікке қанша уақыттан бері қатысып жүрсіз? Аптасына/айына неше рет қатысасыз?
3. Бұл белсенділіктер сіздің академиялық үлгеріміңізге әсер етті деп ойлайсыз ба? Иә болса, қалай?
4. Сыныптан тыс белсенділіктер арқылы қандай дағдыларды дамыттыңыз (мысалы, көшбасшылық, уақытты басқару, топта жұмыс істеу)?
5. Академиялық міндеттер мен сыныптан тыс белсенділіктерді қатар алып жүруде қандай қиындықтар кездестірдіңіз?
6. Университеттің сыныптан тыс белсенділікке қатысатын студенттерге көрсететін қолдауы туралы не айтасыз (мысалы, қаржылық көмек, икемді кесте, менторлық)?
7. Университеттер тарапынан сыныптан тыс белсенділіктерге көбірек қолдау көрсетілуі қажет деп ойлайсыз ба? Иә болса, қандай ұсыныстарыңыз бар?
8. Сыныптан тыс белсенділіктер туралы қосымша бөліскіңіз келетін басқа қандай ойларыңыз немесе тәжірибеңіз бар?

Протокол интервью – Russian language

С вашего согласия мы будем использовать диктофон для записи ваших ответов. Эти аудиозаписи будут доступны только исследователю, работающему над данным исследованием. Все аудиозаписи и бумажные записи будут уничтожены после завершения транскрипции. Вы должны подписать согласие, основанное на стандартах проведения научных исследований. Согласно этому согласию: (1) вся информация будет храниться в тайне; (2) ваше участие является добровольным, и вы можете прекратить интервью в любой момент, если почувствуете себя некомфортно.

Это интервью продлится около 30 минут. Цель интервью — узнать больше о вашем опыте участия или неучастия во внеучебной деятельности, а также о восприятии вами поддержки со стороны университета. Эти данные помогут исследовать, как внеучебная активность влияет на академическую успеваемость студентов в исследовательских университетах Казахстана.

Исследователь:

Время:

Место:

Участник:

Пожалуйста, ответьте на каждый вопрос. Однако если вам неудобно отвечать на определённые вопросы, вы можете отказаться от ответа.

1. Участвуете ли вы во внеучебной деятельности в университете? Если да, то в каких именно мероприятиях/организациях? Почему вы выбрали именно эти виды деятельности?

2. Как долго вы участвуете в этой деятельности, и как часто?
3. Как вы считаете, участие в этих мероприятиях повлияло на вашу академическую успеваемость? Почему?
4. Замечали ли вы, что внеучебная активность помогла вам развить определённые навыки, например, лидерство, управление временем, командную работу?
5. Какие трудности вы испытывали при совмещении учебной и внеучебной нагрузки?
6. Как, по вашему мнению, ваш университет поддерживает студентов, участвующих в подобных активностях (например, стипендии, гибкий график, доступ к ресурсам и пр.)?
7. Считаете ли вы, что в университете должна быть усилена поддержка внеучебной активности? Если да, то в какой форме?
8. Есть ли что-то, что вы хотели бы добавить относительно вашего опыта участия или отказа от участия в студенческой активности?

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

for Surveys

The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in Kazakhstani

Research-Oriented Universities: A Mixed-Methods Study

Introduction. You are invited to participate in a research study entitled The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in Kazakhstani Research-Oriented Universities. This study examines the relationship between students' extracurricular involvement and academic performance, focusing on research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan.

Procedures. As a participant in this research, you will be asked to complete an online survey of multiple-choice and open-ended questions regarding your participation in extracurricular activities, self-satisfaction during the undergraduate program, academic performance, and your perception of institutional support. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Risks. Participating in this study is expected to have minimal risks. However, as with any online survey, there is a slight possibility of breaking confidentiality. We will take extensive measures to safeguard your privacy, including the secure storage of data in the researcher's protected laptop password and removing personal identifiers from the final dataset. Additionally, no survey forms will be linked to participants' emails, and no data-collection functions will be used to store or access personal email information, guaranteeing that your identity remains confidential.

Benefits. Your participation in this study will enhance our understanding of extracurricular activities' impact on academic performance within Kazakhstani universities. The knowledge gained may influence future educational frameworks and develop the

institutional support university administrations provide. Additionally, the data gathered will reflect results from leading research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan.

Compensation. No tangible compensation will be provided for participating in this study. After data collection, the participants can contact the researcher to request a summary of the research results.

Confidentiality & Privacy. All information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent the Ethics Committee permits. Data will be held securely on a password-protected researcher's laptop and accessible only to the research team. Any identifying information will be removed from the dataset before analysis. Confidentiality can be guaranteed because the survey will be sent to students through the institutions email. The researchers will not be able to track students data. The option in the survey form will be choose “without saving the respondent's email data”.

Voluntary Nature of the Study. Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the survey at any time without responses. All survey questions will be non-required. If you choose to discontinue participation, your data will be deleted, or respondents can delete responses.

Points of Contact. For questions regarding the study or if you experience any research-related issues, please contact:

Researcher: *Altynbek Toleubay*, *Altynbek.Toleubay@nu.edu.kz*, +7(747)460-61-06;

For any ethical concerns, contact the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee at *resethics@nu.edu.kz*.

Statement of Consent.

By clicking “I agree” below, you indicate that you are at least 18, have read and understood this consent form, and agree to participate in this research study.

- I Agree

- I Disagree

Сұхбат хаттамасы

«Сыныптан тыс белсенділіктердің Қазақстандағы зерттеу бағытындағы университеттердегі академиялық үлгерімге әсері: аралас әдістер арқылы зерттеу»

Сіздің келісіміңізбен біз сұхбат жауаптарын жазып алу үшін диктофон қолданамыз. Жазбалар тек осы зерттеуді жүргізетін зерттеушіге ғана қолжетімді болады. Барлық аудио және қағаз жазбалар транскрипциядан кейін жойылады. Сіз ғылыми зерттеу этикасына сәйкес келісімге қол қоюыңыз қажет. Бұл келісімге қол қоя отырып, сіз:

1. Барлық ақпарат құпия түрде сақталатынын,
2. Сұхбатқа қатысу ерікті екенін және егер өзіңізді жайсыз сезінсеңіз, кез келген уақытта сұхбатты тоқтатуға құқығыңыз бар екенін растайсыз.

Сұхбат шамамен 30 минутқа созылады. Мақсаты — сіздің университеттегі сыныптан тыс (внеучебная) белсенділіктерге қатысу тәжірибеңізді, оған деген мотивацияңызды және университеттің қолдауын қалай бағалайтыныңызды білу. Нәтижелер Қазақстандағы зерттеу университеттеріндегі студенттердің академиялық үлгеріміне әсер ететін факторларды тереңірек түсінуге көмектеседі.

Зерттеуші:

Күні/Уақыты:

Өтетін орны:**Қатысушы:**

Әр сұраққа шынайы жауап беруіңізді сұраймыз. Егер өзіңізді жайсыз сезінсеңіз, кез келген сұрақтан бас тартуға құқығыңыз бар.

Сұрақтар:

1. Қазіргі кезде университеттегі қандай да бір сыныптан тыс (внеучебная) белсенділікке қатысасыз ба? Иә болса, нақты қандай және неге дәл сол белсенділікті таңдадыңыз?
2. Бұл белсенділікке қанша уақыттан бері қатысып жүрсіз? Аптасына/айына неше рет қатысасыз?
3. Бұл белсенділіктер сіздің академиялық үлгеріміңізге әсер етті деп ойлайсыз ба? Иә болса, қалай?
4. Сыныптан тыс белсенділіктер арқылы қандай дағдыларды дамыттыңыз (мысалы, көшбасшылық, уақытты басқару, топта жұмыс істеу)?
5. Академиялық міндеттер мен сыныптан тыс белсенділіктерді қатар алып жүруде қандай қиындықтар кездестірдіңіз?
6. Университеттің сыныптан тыс белсенділікке қатысатын студенттерге көрсететін қолдауы туралы не айтасыз (мысалы, қаржылық көмек, икемді кесте, менторлық)?
7. Университеттер тарапынан сыныптан тыс белсенділіктерге көбірек қолдау көрсетілуі қажет деп ойлайсыз ба? Иә болса, қандай ұсыныстарыңыз бар?
8. Сыныптан тыс белсенділіктер туралы қосымша бөліскіңіз келетін басқа қандай ойларыңыз немесе тәжірибеңіз бар

Форма информированного согласия для опросов

Введение. Вас приглашают принять участие в исследовании под названием «Влияние внеклассных мероприятий на академическую успеваемость в научно-исследовательских университетах Казахстана». Это исследование изучает взаимосвязь между участием студентов во внеклассных мероприятиях и их академической успеваемостью, с фокусом на научно-исследовательских университетах Казахстана.

Процедуры. В качестве участника этого исследования вам будет предложено пройти онлайн-опрос, состоящий из вопросов с множественным выбором и открытых вопросов, касающихся вашего участия во внеклассных мероприятиях, удовлетворенности во время обучения по программе бакалавриата, академической успеваемости и восприятия институциональной поддержки. На заполнение опроса потребуется примерно 15-20 минут.

Риски. Участие в данном исследовании предполагает минимальные риски. Однако, как и при любом онлайн-опросе, существует небольшая вероятность утечки конфиденциальной информации. Мы примем обширные меры для защиты вашей конфиденциальности, включая безопасное хранение данных на защищенном паролем ноутбуке исследователя и удаление личных данных из окончательного набора данных. Кроме того, формы опроса не будут привязаны к электронным почтам участников, и не будут использоваться функции сбора данных для хранения или доступа к личной информации, что гарантирует конфиденциальность вашей личности.

Преимущества. Ваше участие в данном исследовании поможет глубже понять влияние внеклассных мероприятий на академическую успеваемость в казахстанских университетах. Полученные знания могут повлиять на будущие образовательные модели и улучшить институциональную поддержку, предоставляемую университетами. Также собранные данные будут отражать результаты ведущих научно-исследовательских университетов Казахстана.

Вознаграждение. Материального вознаграждения за участие в этом исследовании не предусмотрено. По завершении сбора данных участники могут связаться с исследователем, чтобы запросить краткое изложение результатов исследования.

Конфиденциальность и приватность. Вся предоставленная вами информация будет конфиденциальной в той степени, в которой это разрешает этический комитет. Данные будут храниться на защищенном паролем ноутбуке исследователя и будут доступны только исследовательской группе. Любая идентифицирующая информация будет удалена из набора данных перед анализом. Конфиденциальность гарантирована, так как опрос будет отправлен студентам через университетскую почту, и исследователи не смогут отслеживать данные студентов. В форме опроса будет выбран вариант «без сохранения данных электронной почты респондента».

Добровольный характер исследования. Участие в этом исследовании является добровольным. Вы можете в любой момент прекратить участие в опросе без последствий. Все вопросы опроса будут необязательными. Если вы решите прекратить участие, ваши данные будут удалены, или респонденты могут удалить свои ответы самостоятельно.

Контактные данные. По вопросам, касающимся исследования, или при возникновении проблем, связанных с исследованием, пожалуйста, свяжитесь

Исследователь: *Алтынбек Толеубай, Altynbek.Toleubay@nu.edu.kz, +7(747)460-61-06;*

По этическим вопросам обращайтесь в Институциональный этический комитет Назарбаев Университета по электронной почте: resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Заявление о согласии. Нажав на кнопку «Согласен» ниже, вы подтверждаете, что вам исполнилось 18 лет, вы прочитали и поняли форму согласия и соглашаетесь принять участие в этом исследовании.

Согласен

Не согласен

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form

For the Interview

Introduction. You are invited to participate in a research study entitled The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in Kazakhstani Research-Oriented Universities. This study examines the relationship between students' extracurricular involvement and academic performance, focusing on research-oriented universities in Kazakhstan.

Procedures. If you agree to participate, you will participate in a one-on-one interview lasting approximately 30-40 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded. The interview will focus on your experiences with extracurricular activities, how they influence academic performance, and personal views and feedback on institutional support. The participant responses will be transcribed for data analysis.

Risks. Participating in this study carries minimal risks. A potential risk is a breach of confidentiality, but we will take steps to protect your personal information and ensure your privacy.

Benefits. Your participation will help to provide a deeper understanding of how extracurricular activities impact academic performance and personal development. This research may influence university administrative staff to better support students, although it may not directly benefit you.

Compensation. No tangible compensation will be provided for participating in this study. After data collection, the participants can contact the researcher to request a summary of the research results.

Confidentiality & Privacy. All information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent the Ethics Committee permits. Data will be held securely on a password-protected researcher's laptop and accessible only to the research team. Any identifying information will be removed from the dataset before analysis. Confidentiality will be maintained.

Interviews will be conducted without recording personal identifiers, and responses will not be linked to participants' email addresses or other personal data.

Voluntary Nature of the Study. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at any time without providing any further responses. If you choose to discontinue your participation, any data collected during the interview will be deleted upon your request. You are not obligated to answer any specific questions during the interview.

Points of Contact.

For questions regarding the study or if you experience any research-related issues, please contact:

Researcher: *Altynbek Toleubay*, *Altynbek.Toleubay@nu.edu.kz*, +7(747)460-61-06;

Contact the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee at *resethics@nu.edu.kz* for any ethical concerns.

Statement of Consent.

By signing below, you indicate that you are at least 18, have read and understood this consent form, and agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Researcher Name: Altynbek Toleubay

Signature: _____

Сұхбатқа ақпараттандырылған келісім формасы

Кіріспе. Сізді «Қазақстандағы ғылыми-зерттеу университеттерінде қосымша сабақтан тыс әрекеттердің академиялық жетістікке әсері» атты зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамыз. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы ғылыми-зерттеу бағытындағы университеттерде студенттердің қосымша сабақтан тыс белсенділігі мен олардың академиялық жетістігі арасындағы байланысты зерттеуді мақсат етеді.

Процедуралар. Егер зерттеуге қатысуға келіссеңіз, шамамен 30-40 минутқа созылатын жеке сұхбатқа қатысасыз. Сұхбат аудиожазбаға жазылады. Сұхбат барысында сіздің қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысты тәжірибеңіз, олардың академиялық жетістікке әсері және институционалдық қолдау туралы жеке пікірлеріңіз бен ұсыныстарыңыз талқыланады. Қатысушы жауаптары деректерді талдау үшін транскрипцияланады.

Тәуекелдер. Бұл зерттеуге қатысу өте аз тәуекелдерге ие. Ықтимал тәуекел — құпиялылықтың бұзылуы, бірақ біз сіздің жеке мәліметтеріңізді қорғау және құпиялылығыңызды қамтамасыз ету үшін тиісті шараларды қолданамыз.

Пайдасы. Бұл зерттеуге қатысу сіздің қосымша сабақтан тыс шаралардың академиялық жетістікке және жеке дамуға қалай әсер ететінін тереңірек түсінуге

көмектеседі. Бұл зерттеу университет әкімшілігіне студенттерді қолдау шараларын жақсартуға әсер етуі мүмкін, бірақ бұл сізге тікелей пайда әкелмеуі ықтимал.

Өтемақы. Бұл зерттеуге қатысқаныңыз үшін материалдық өтемақы қарастырылмаған. Деректер жиналғаннан кейін қатысушылар зерттеу нәтижелерінің қысқаша мазмұнын сұрау үшін зерттеушіге хабарласа алады.

Құпиялылық және жеке деректерді қорғау. Сіз берген барлық ақпарат этика комитетінің рұқсаты бойынша құпия сақталады. Деректер құпиясөзбен қорғалған зерттеушінің ноутбугында қауіпсіз сақталады және тек зерттеу тобына қолжетімді болады. Талдау алдында кез келген жеке мәліметтер деректер жиынынан алынып тасталады. Жеке басыңызды анықтайтын мәліметтер жазылмайды, ал жауаптар қатысушылардың электрондық пошталары немесе басқа жеке деректермен байланыстырылмайды, осылайша құпиялылық сақталады.

Зерттеудің еріктілігі. Бұл зерттеуге қатысу толығымен ерікті түрде жүзеге асырылады. Сіз кез келген уақытта сұхбаттан бас тарта аласыз және жауап беруді тоқтата аласыз. Егер қатысудан бас тартсаңыз, сұхбат барысында жиналған кез келген деректер сіздің сұранысыңыз бойынша жойылады. Сұхбат барысында нақты сұрақтарға жауап беруге міндетті емессіз.

Байланыс мәліметтері. Зерттеуге қатысты сұрақтарыңыз немесе зерттеуге байланысты мәселелер туындаған жағдайда, келесі байланыстарға хабарласа аласыз:

Зерттеуші: Алтынбек Төлеубай, Altynbek.Toleubay@nu.edu.kz, +7(747)460-61-06;

Этикалық мәселелер бойынша Назарбаев Университетінің Институционалдық

Зерттеу Этика Комитетіне хабарласыңыз: resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Келісім туралы мәлімдеме. Төменде қол қою арқылы сіз 18 жастан асқаныңызды, осы келісім формасын оқып, түсінгеніңізді және бұл зерттеуге қатысуға келісім беретіндігіңізді білдіресіз.

Қатысушының аты: _____

Күні: _____

Қолы: _____

Зерттеушінің аты: Алтынбек Төлеубай

Қолы: _____

Форма информированного согласия для интервью

Введение. Вас приглашают принять участие в исследовании под названием «Влияние внеклассных мероприятий на академическую успеваемость в научно-исследовательских университетах Казахстана». Это исследование изучает взаимосвязь между участием студентов во внеклассных мероприятиях и их академической успеваемостью, с фокусом на научно-исследовательских университетах Казахстана.

Процедуры. Если вы согласитесь принять участие, вам предстоит пройти индивидуальное интервью, которое продлится примерно 30-40 минут. Интервью будет аудиозаписано. В ходе интервью будут обсуждаться ваш опыт участия во внеклассных мероприятиях, их влияние на академическую успеваемость, а также ваши личные взгляды и отзывы об институциональной поддержке. Ответы участников будут расшифрованы для дальнейшего анализа данных.

Риски. Участие в данном исследовании связано с минимальными рисками.

Потенциальный риск — утечка конфиденциальной информации, но мы примем меры для защиты ваших персональных данных и обеспечения вашей конфиденциальности.

Преимущества. Ваше участие поможет глубже понять, как внеклассные мероприятия влияют на академическую успеваемость и личностное развитие.

Данное исследование может оказать влияние на улучшение поддержки студентов со стороны университетской администрации, хотя оно может не принести вам непосредственной выгоды.

Вознаграждение. Материального вознаграждения за участие в этом исследовании не предусмотрено. После сбора данных участники могут связаться с исследователем, чтобы запросить краткое изложение результатов исследования.

Конфиденциальность и приватность. Вся предоставленная вами информация будет конфиденциальной в той мере, в которой это допускается этическим комитетом. Данные будут храниться на защищённом паролем ноутбуке исследователя и будут доступны только исследовательской группе. Любая идентифицирующая информация будет удалена из набора данных перед анализом. Конфиденциальность будет соблюдена. Интервью будут проводиться без записи личных данных, и ответы не будут связаны с электронными адресами или другой личной информацией участников.

Добровольный характер исследования. Участие в этом исследовании является полностью добровольным. Вы можете отказаться от участия в интервью в любой момент, не предоставляя дополнительных объяснений. Если вы решите прекратить участие, любые данные, собранные во время интервью, будут удалены по вашему

запросу. Во время интервью вы не обязаны отвечать на какие-либо конкретные вопросы.

Контактные данные. Если у вас возникнут вопросы по исследованию или если у вас появятся какие-либо проблемы, связанные с исследованием, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с: **Исследователь:** Алтынбек Толеубай, Altynbek.Toleubay@nu.edu.kz, +7(747)460-61-06; По любым вопросам, касающимся этики, обращайтесь в Институциональный этический комитет Назарбаев Университета по электронной почте: resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Заявление о согласии. Подписывая ниже, вы подтверждаете, что вам исполнилось 18 лет, вы прочитали и поняли форму согласия и соглашаетесь принять участие в данном исследовании.

Имя участника: _____

Дата: _____

Подпись: _____

Имя исследователя: Алтынбек Толеубай

Подпись: _____

Appendix G

Interview Coding Sample

№	Theme	Parent Node	Codes (Child Node)	Definition	Quotations as example
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1	Balancing Responsibilities	Time and Balance	Time Management, Work-Life Balance	Strategies and challenges in managing academics, work, and extracurriculars .	"I use a planner to organize my week" (Interview #1).
			Adaptation to Deadlines	How students adjust their schedules for unexpected events or priorities.	"I prioritize based on urgency when deadlines come up" (Interview #8).
2	Institutional Engagement	Institutional Resources	Institutional Support, Bureaucratic Challenges	Perceptions of university-provided resources and barriers to accessing them.	"The funding process is bureaucratic" (Interview #8).
			Visibility of Resources	Awareness of opportunities and programs offered by the institution.	"Better promotion of opportunities is needed" (Interview #7).
				How well the university advertises and communicates available resources or programs to students.	"The university needs to better promote extracurricular opportunities to new students" (Interview #7).
			Campus Environment	Efforts by the institution to improve campus infrastructure, facilities, or the overall student experience.	"The administration did a great job improving the campus environment, making it more student-friendly"

					(Interview #9).
3	Skills and Personal Growth	Extracurricular Benefits	Skill Development, Personal Growth, Social Connections	Skills, confidence, and relationships gained through extracurricular participation.	"The debate club improved my argumentation skills" (Interview #1).
		Campus Community	Peer Relationships, Faculty Relationships	How extracurriculars and university life influence students' sense of belonging.	"K-Pop Dance helped me connect with others on campus" (Interview #7).

Appendix H
Interview Transcription
Interview #1.

Participant 1-year UG student from SEDS at NU. Extracurricular: Debate Club, Volunteering (Animal Shelter). GPA: 3.51

1. Interviewer: What do you do during your typical week at the university?

- **Participant:** I attend classes during a typical week, which take up most of my mornings and early afternoons. In the evenings, I usually go to the library to study or work on assignments. I also participate in a debate club twice a week and occasionally volunteer at a local animal shelter organized through the university.

1.1 Subquestion: How do you feel about balancing these activities with academics?

- It's manageable as long as I stick to my planner. My extracurriculars give structure to my week, which helps me stay productive.

2. Interviewer: Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?

- **Participant:** Yes, I live in a dormitory on campus. It's convenient because it's close to my classes and extracurricular activities, and I can easily interact with other students.

2.1 Subquestion: What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a dormitory?

- The most significant advantage is saving time on commuting. However, it can get noisy, which sometimes makes studying harder.

3. Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?

- **Participant:** I am a member of the university "Nomad" debate club, which meets every Tuesday and Thursday. We practice public speaking and prepare for inter-university competitions. I also volunteer at the animal shelter once a month, organized by the university's community outreach program.

3.1 Subquestion: What activities do you enjoy the most, and why?

- **Participant:** I enjoy the debate club the most because it pushes me intellectually and improves my communication skills.

4. **How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?**

- **Participant:** Participating in these activities makes me feel more connected to the university community. The debate club has helped me improve my critical thinking and confidence, while volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and allows me to relax after academic work. Both activities make my university experience more enjoyable and fulfilling. For example, Debates have helped me organize ideas more effectively in academic essays and presentations. I used debate strategies in a recent group project to structure our arguments.

5. **What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?**

- **Participant:** The biggest challenge is managing my time. Balancing classes and extracurricular activities can be tricky with the demanding academic workload. Sometimes, I feel overwhelmed, especially during exam periods. However, the benefits are worth it—through these activities, I have developed better communication skills and made new friends, which have enriched my overall experience.

6. **How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.**

- **Participant:** I believe my extracurricular activities positively affect my academic performance. For example, the debate club has improved my research and argumentation skills, which helped me write essays for my social science classes. However, preparing for a competition can sometimes take up study time and require good planning.

7. **How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?**

- **Participant:** I use a planner to organize my week. I dedicate most of my weekdays to academic work and schedule extracurricular activities in the evenings or weekends. Limiting my involvement to two activities, I try to avoid over-committing.

8. **How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?**

- **Participant:** If an unexpected deadline comes up, I prioritize academic work by postponing or skipping extracurricular activities for that week. For instance, I once missed a debate practice to prepare for a midterm exam, which was a necessary compromise.

8.1 **Subquestion: Do you find it difficult to adjust when unexpected events happen?**

- **Participant:** Sometimes, it's stressful, but I've learned to be flexible and focus on what's most urgent.

9. **What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?**

- **Participant:** I'm motivated by the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills, and take breaks from studying. The main challenges are time constraints and occasional guilt if I neglect my studies.

10. **What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?**

- **Participant:** The university provides much support, like club funding, meeting room access, and organizing events. However, I think communication about these resources could be improved. Sometimes, I only find out about opportunities through word of mouth.

11. **Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?**

- **Participant:** A positive experience was when our debate team won third place in a regional competition, which boosted my confidence. A negative experience was when our club's funding request was delayed, which disrupted our practice schedule.

12. **In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?**

- **Participant:** The university could improve by offering more flexible scheduling for club activities, especially during exam periods. More workshops on time management for students involved in extracurricular activities would also be helpful.

13. **Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?**

- **Participant:** Yes, the university funded our trip to a debate competition in another city (From Astana to Almaty, 5 days of trip). This support allowed me to gain experience in a competitive setting, which enhanced my public speaking and teamwork skills.

14. **What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?**

- **Participant:** I recommend increasing awareness about available resources, such as through a centralized online platform or regular emails. Additionally, offering small grants for student-led initiatives could encourage more participation.

Interview #2.

The participant is a 4-year UG student from AITU (Computer Science).

Extracurricular: Boxing and IT Programming Club. GPA: 2.83

1. **What do you do during your typical week at the university?**

- **Participant:** My week is usually packed with classes, especially those focused on programming and software development. I dedicate my afternoons to coursework and projects. In the evenings, I attend programming club meetings twice a week, where we work on collaborative coding projects and prepare for hackathons. On weekends, I practice boxing to stay fit and relieve stress.

2. **Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?**

- **Participant:** Yes, I live in a hostel but outside of campus. Only 1-year students can live in a dormitory because of the lack of dormitory places. It's inconvenient to balance my academic and extracurricular activities. I spent most of my time walking every day, approximately one hour.
3. **Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?**
- **Participant:** I am actively involved in the IT Programming Club, where we focus on coding challenges, building applications, and preparing for competitions like hackathons. It's a great way to sharpen my programming skills and connect with like-minded students. I also train in boxing twice a week, which helps me stay disciplined and manage stress.
4. **How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?**
- **Participant:** These activities bring a sense of balance to my life. The programming club enhances my technical skills and keeps me updated with the latest trends in IT. Boxing, however, gives me physical strength and mental clarity. Together, they make my university experience more fulfilling and help me stay motivated. After graduation, I will continue my extracurricular activities as a hobby.
5. **What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?**
- **Participant:** The main challenge is time management. With the demanding coursework at AITU, finding time for extracurricular activities is not always easy. Sometimes, I have to sacrifice socializing or rest to meet my commitments. However, the benefits are worth it—improved technical expertise, physical fitness, and the chance to network with peers and industry professionals.
6. **How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.**

- **Participant:** My extracurricular activities complement my academics. For example, through the programming club, I've learned practical coding skills beyond what's taught in class, such as working with open-source tools and managing collaborative projects. This has helped me excel in my software engineering courses. Boxing also helps—it energizes me and improves my focus during long coding sessions.
7. **How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?**
- **Participant:** I divide my day using a time-blocking method. Weekdays are primarily for academics, while evenings and weekends are for extracurriculars. I also prioritize tasks based on deadlines, ensuring I stay on track with my studies while maintaining a consistent schedule for club activities and training.
8. **How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?**
- **Participant:** When unexpected deadlines arise, I focus on academics. For instance, if a project submission coincides with a programming club meeting, I inform the club beforehand and reschedule my participation. Similarly, I might skip a boxing session during exam periods.
9. **What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?**
- **Participant:** I am motivated by the desire to become a well-rounded professional. The programming club helps me build a competitive edge in the IT field, while boxing strengthens my discipline and resilience. The main challenge is the heavy academic workload, which sometimes forces me to compromise on extracurricular activities.
10. **What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?**
- **Participant:** AITU provides good support, especially for technical clubs. For instance, the programming club has access to labs, high-speed internet, and

mentoring from faculty members. However, sports facilities like the boxing gym could be better maintained.

11. Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?

- Participant: A positive experience was when our programming club won first place in a regional hackathon. It was a proud moment and validated all the hard work we'd put in. A negative experience would be the lack of proper coordination for sports events, which sometimes leads to scheduling conflicts.

12. In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** The university could offer more flexible schedules for club meetings and training sessions. Additionally, more funding for sports equipment and organizing inter-university competitions would encourage greater participation.

13. Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?

- **Participant:** The university sponsored our team's travel and registration fees for a national-level hackathon. This opportunity allowed me to gain exposure to real-world IT challenges and network with industry professionals, significantly boosting my confidence and skills.

14. What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

- **Participant:** I recommend expanding mentoring programs to include alumni and industry experts, which could guide academic and extracurricular pursuits. Additionally, better promotion of available resources through a centralized portal would ensure more students know about the opportunities.

Interview #3.

**The participant is a 1-year UG student from AITU (Computer Science).
Extracurricular: Art (painting, drawing), Volunteering, and Academics. GPA: 3.41**

1. Interviewer: What do you do during your typical week at the university?

- **Participant:** My week is pretty packed! I attend my daily general education classes, focusing on math, computer science, and critical thinking. In the afternoons, I dedicate time to extracurricular activities. I'm part of the university art club, where we meet twice weekly to paint and prepare for exhibitions. On weekends, I volunteer with a local NGO (nongovernmental organization) through the university's community outreach program, mostly organizing events or tutoring kids in basic computer skills.

2. Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?

- **Participant:** Yes, I live in a dormitory, which is helpful because it keeps me close to all the activities on campus. Living here makes attending late-night art sessions or early-morning volunteering events easier.

3. Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?

- **Participant:** Sure! I'm deeply involved in the art club, focusing on painting and drawing. We're currently working on a mural for the campus library. It's exciting because it's a collaborative effort, and I learn from talented peers. I also volunteer regularly, whether organizing charity drives or helping younger students with academics. These activities let me meet new people and contribute to something meaningful.

4. How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?

- **Participant:** They play a massive role in shaping my university experience. The art club helps me relax and express myself creatively, which balances the mental focus required for my studies. On the other hand, volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and helps me stay grounded. These activities make my first year exciting and fulfilling—I feel part of a more significant community.

5. **What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?**

- **Participant:** The main challenge is finding enough time for everything. Sometimes, I feel overwhelmed balancing classwork and extracurricular commitments, especially during exam season. But the benefits far outweigh the challenges—I've developed time management skills, built strong relationships, and discovered new passions. Being active in these activities has made my transition to university life much smoother.

6. **How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.**

- **Participant:** I think it helps a lot! For example, painting in the art club clears my mind and makes it easier to focus on studying afterward. Volunteering has improved my communication and organizational skills, which are helpful for group projects in class. Last week, I applied the time management strategies I learned while organizing a charity event to complete a big academic assignment on time.

7. **How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?**

- **Participant:** I follow a strict schedule using a planner. Weekdays are for classes and studying, while evenings are for the art club or campus events. On Saturdays, I volunteer, and Sundays are for catching up on academic work. This routine helps me stay on track without feeling burnt out.

8. **How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?**

- **Participant:** I prioritize based on urgency. For example, if I have an assignment due, I might skip an art session or reschedule a volunteering commitment. I've learned to communicate with my teammates in extracurricular activities when I need to step back temporarily.

9. **What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?**

- **Participant:** I'm motivated by the chance to learn new skills, meet interesting people, and contribute to meaningful projects. Challenges include the academic workload and, occasionally, fatigue from juggling so many activities. But the satisfaction I get from participating keeps me going.

10. What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?

- **Participant:** I think AITU does a great job supporting extracurriculars. The art club receives funding for supplies, and the volunteering office helps us connect with NGOs. However, some students don't know about all the resources available, so better promotion could help.

11. Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** A positive experience was when the art club hosted an exhibition on campus. It was amazing to see my work displayed and receive feedback. A negative experience was a lack of coordination for a volunteering event, where we didn't have enough supplies due to miscommunication with the organizers.

12. In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** They could improve by creating a centralized online platform listing all extracurricular opportunities and events. More mentorship programs connecting first-year students with experienced peers would also be great.

13. Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?

- **Participant:** Yes, the university organized a workshop on time management, which was incredibly helpful for balancing my activities and studies. Another example was when the volunteering office helped secure funding for a charity drive I led.

14. What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

- **Participant:** I would recommend offering more workshops focused on stress management and leadership skills. Also, having dedicated staff to assist with planning and logistics for student-led events could make things smoother for active participants.

Interview #4.

The participant is a 2-year UG student from AITU (Software Engineering). Extracurricular: Sports (Basketball), Art (Singing), and Volunteering (Animal Shelter). GPA: 3.13

1. Interviewer: What do you do during your typical week at the university?

- **Participant:** Oh, my week is crazy busy, but in a good way! Classes and labs take up my mornings—coding, debugging, and all that Software Engineering stuff. I usually hit the court with my basketball team for practice or games in the afternoons. Evenings are for choir practice—I sing in the university vocal ensemble. And Saturdays? That’s my favorite day because I volunteer at the animal shelter. Sundays, I call my “recharge day,” where I catch up on assignments, sleep, or binge-watch a series.

2. Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?

- **Participant:** Yep, I live on campus, and honestly, it’s the best decision I’ve made. I’m close to everything—the gym, the labs, the practice rooms—plus, I don’t waste time commuting. The dorm life also keeps me connected with friends and teammates; we hang out or study together most nights.

3. Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?

- **Participant:** Sure! For basketball, I play as a shooting guard. We practice three times a week, and our games are the highlight of my month—it’s intense but so much fun. I also sing in the university choir, which has a mix of genres, from classical to pop. Singing is my escape, where I can express myself without any rules. Volunteering at the animal shelter is a weekend, where I help with

feeding, cleaning, and even designing flyers for adoption events using my coding skills.

4. **How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?**

- **Participant:** They're like the seasoning to my otherwise academic-heavy life. Basketball keeps me physically fit and teaches teamwork, reflected in my group projects. Singing makes me happy—it's therapeutic and gives me a creative outlet. Volunteering is close to my heart because I love animals, and giving back to the community feels great. Together, these activities make my university experience vibrant and well-rounded.

5. **What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?**

- **Participant:** The main challenge is finding enough time for everything. Sometimes, I feel overwhelmed balancing classwork and extracurricular commitments, especially during exam season (October-November and March-April). But the benefits far outweigh the challenges—I've developed time management skills, built strong relationships, and discovered new passions. Being active in these activities has made my transition to university life much smoother.

6. **How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.**

- **Participant:** I'd say it's a mixed bag. Basketball keeps me disciplined—if I can handle a grueling practice and still ace a test, I feel unstoppable. Singing helps me stay calm, which is crucial during stressful coding marathons. Once, after an intense basketball game, I was so energized that I pulled an all-nighter to debug my project and scored top marks. But I won't lie—there have been days when I prioritized a game over studying and regretted it.

7. **How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?**

- **Participant:** It's a juggling act. I keep a weekly planner where I block out time for classes, practice, and study sessions. I usually study during breaks or late at night because my evenings are for practice or volunteering. I also set "non-negotiables," like never missing a basketball game or a significant assignment deadline.
8. **How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?**
- **Participant:** I go into survival mode! I prioritize what is urgent and sometimes have to skip a practice or reschedule my volunteering shift. Last semester, a surprise quiz meant I had to skip a choir session—but I made up for it by practicing extra the next day.
9. **What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?**
- Motivation comes from how good these activities make me feel physically, mentally, and socially. Challenges are mostly time constraints and, occasionally, burnout. But I remind myself why I started and push through.
10. **What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?**
- **Participant:** I think AITU is doing a pretty solid job. The sports facilities are excellent, and the administration department provides everything we need for choir practice. However, I wish they'd promote volunteering opportunities more. If we sing, we also organize the process (transportation of tables, etc.).
11. **Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?**
- **Participant:** Winning the inter-university basketball championship last year, 2024, was a positive experience. It was the most incredible feeling of achievement. A negative one was when our choir's funding got delayed, and we couldn't perform in a regional competition—it was disappointing for the whole team.

12. In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** They could create an online hub listing all clubs and activities, with schedules and sign-up options. Also, offering more flexible practice hours for athletes and musicians would greatly help.

13. Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?

- **Participant:** The university gym staff organized extra training sessions before the championship, significantly impacting our performance. They provided more time only for our training, and for others, they will close. This method gives us the feeling that we are favorites. Also, the faculty supported my volunteering by allowing me to use class projects to design digital campaigns for the shelter. Also, sometimes institutions help us promote financial charity by buying necessary items and products for animals.

14. What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

- **Participant:** Introduce mentorship programs where experienced students guide freshmen in balancing academics and extracurricular. More scholarships or grants for student-led initiatives like community projects would also be a big boost.

Interview #5.

The participant is a 3-year UG student from AITU (Cybersecurity). Extracurricular: Sports and (Yoga). GPA: 3.80

1. **What do you do during your typical week at the university?**

- **Participant:** My week revolves around academics. I usually spend mornings in lectures or labs, focusing on topics like cryptography, penetration testing, and network security. Afternoons are for independent study or group projects—cybersecurity isn't something you can just skim through; it takes deep focus. I also dedicate a few hours a week to certifications outside the curriculum, like ethical hacking. Evenings are for yoga, which I practice at a private studio. It helps me de-stress and clear my head after intense study.

2. **Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?**

- **Participant:** No, I live off-campus. The dorms feel too chaotic for me. I need my space and quiet to focus, which I wouldn't get living on campus. Plus, commuting gives me a mental break between study sessions.

3. **Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?**

- **Participant:** Honestly, none. I've looked at the clubs and activities offered, but nothing felt worth my time. Most of them seem more about socializing than providing actual value. I focus on building skills and knowledge to become a better cybersecurity professional, so I've put my energy into external certifications and yoga instead.

4. **How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?**

- **Participant:** Yoga has been great for my personal satisfaction. It keeps me grounded and helps me manage the stress that comes with such a demanding major. As for the university, I'll be honest—it doesn't do much for my overall experience. The academic side is fine, but beyond that, I feel like the institution could do a lot more to offer meaningful opportunities for students who aren't into the usual clubs or sports.

5. **What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?**

- **Participant:** The biggest challenge is finding something genuinely valuable amidst all the fluff. Most extracurriculars at AITU feel more like distractions than activities that align with professional goals. On the flip side, if you can find something like yoga or an external course, it can help balance the stress of academics. The benefit isn't from the university offerings but from what I've chosen to pursue independently.
6. **How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.**
- **Participant:** I'd say it's a mixed bag. Basketball keeps me disciplined—if I can handle a grueling practice and still ace a test, I feel unstoppable. Singing helps me stay calm, which is crucial during stressful coding marathons. One time, after an intense basketball game, I was so energized that I pulled an all-nighter to debug my project and scored top marks. But I won't lie—there have been days when I prioritized a game over studying and regretted it.
7. **How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?**
- **Participant:** It's all about priorities. I give about 90% of my time to academics—studying, working on projects, or preparing for certifications. The remaining 10% is for yoga, which I treat as essential for my mental and physical health. I don't believe in overloading my schedule with pointless commitments.
8. **How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?**
- **Participant:** I'm used to handling unpredictable situations; cybersecurity is all about solving the unexpected. If a deadline or exam comes up, I cut out everything non-essential, even yoga if I have to. I've had weeks where I barely slept, but the satisfaction of completing a complex project makes it worth it.
9. **What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?**

- **Participant:** The only motivation I have for extracurriculars is personal growth. Yoga, for example, is about self-discipline and mental clarity. The main limitation is that the university doesn't offer anything that aligns with my interests or goals. Why waste time on activities that don't add value?
10. **What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?**
- **Participant:** Honestly? It's mediocre. AITU seems more focused on quantity than quality—there are lots of clubs, but nothing that stands out as impactful. They don't seem to consider that not every student wants to join a club or play sports. There's very little for someone like me who wants meaningful, career-aligned opportunities.
11. **Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?**
- **Participant:** I haven't participated in university extracurriculars, so I can't share much in terms of positives. The negative side is the lack of options for students who prefer independent growth over group activities. It feels like the university doesn't understand the needs of all its students.
12. **In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?**
- **Participant:** They should offer more specialized activities, like coding hackathons or guest lectures from industry experts. Also, providing financial support or resources for students pursuing external certifications would be a game-changer.
13. **Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?**
- **Participant:** Honestly, I can't think of any. Most of what I've achieved has been through my efforts and external resources. It isn't very pleasant, but that's the reality.

14. What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

- **Participant:** First, they need to diversify their offerings. Not everyone wants to join a sports team or a cultural club. Second, they should collaborate with tech companies to provide internships, certifications, or real-world projects. Lastly, they need to listen to students who aren't extroverted or group-oriented—our needs matter, too.

Interview #6.

The participant is a 1-year UG student from AITU (Mediatechnologies). Extracurricular: Volunteering (Governmental Organization & AITU Charity Club) and Sports (Volleyball-Swimming) and Media (AITU Production). GPA: 3.43

1. What do you do during your typical week at the university?

- **Participant:** My week is always buzzing with energy! I attend daily general education lectures, such as Media Ethics and Intro to Technology. Afternoons are split between my extracurriculars. I have volleyball practice twice a week and swimming sessions on weekends. On other days, I work with the AITU Production Club, creating videos and editing content. I also volunteer with a governmental organization, assisting with events and helping the AITU Charity Club with fundraising initiatives.

2. Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?

- **Participant:** Yes, I live on campus, making it much easier to manage my schedule. The dorm is close to the gym and media lab, so I can move between activities without wasting time. Plus, it's a great environment to network and brainstorm creative ideas with other students.

3. Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?

- **Participant:** Of course! I'm part of the AITU Production Club, where we make promotional videos for the university and fun, creative projects for social

media. It's directly tied to my Media Technologies major, which feels like practice for my future career. In sports, volleyball keeps me active and part of a team, while swimming helps me unwind. For volunteering, I work on charity drives with the AITU Charity Club and assist with organizing youth-focused events for a governmental organization.

4. How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?

- **Participant:** They're the best part of my university experience! The media club helps me develop practical skills, like video editing and storytelling, which are invaluable for my major. Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and connection with the community. Sports keep me healthy and motivated. Overall, these activities make me feel like I'm making the most of my time at AITU.

5. What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?

- **Participant:** The main challenge is balancing everything. Sometimes, I must sacrifice sleep or socializing to meet deadlines for classes and extracurricular commitments. But the benefits outweigh the challenges. These activities teach me time management, teamwork, and real-world skills. They also help me build a strong portfolio for my Media Technologies career.

6. How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.

- **Participant:** My extracurriculars directly enhance my academics. For example, creating promotional videos in the media club has improved my video editing and creative thinking, which is reflected in my coursework projects. Volunteering has taught me organizational skills, which help me manage assignments efficiently. When I worked on a documentary for the AITU Charity Club, I applied concepts from my media lectures, and my professor gave me feedback.

7. How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** I stick to a strict schedule. I block out study time in the mornings before lectures and use evenings for extracurriculars. I also dedicate Sundays to catching up on coursework or preparing for the week ahead. Planning everything keeps me on top of both academics and activities.
8. **How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?**
- **Participant:** I stay flexible by prioritizing tasks. If a video project deadline for the media club suddenly comes up, I shift my volunteer work to the weekend. Similarly, I communicate with my volleyball teammates if I need to skip a practice to focus on an assignment.
9. **What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?**
- **Participant:** I am motivated by the chance to learn, grow, and connect with people. Extracurriculars give me skills and experiences that no textbook can. The only challenges are managing my time and sometimes feeling exhausted, but the sense of accomplishment keeps me going.
10. **What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?**
- **Participant:** AITU does a great job supporting clubs like the media club by providing access to equipment and spaces. The sports facilities are excellent too. However, I think the university could do more to promote these opportunities, especially to new students who might not know where to start.
11. **Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?**
- **Participant:** A positive experience was when the media club produced a video for the university's Open Day, which was featured on their official social media channels. It felt amazing to see my work make an impact. A negative experience was during a charity event where communication issues led to a delay in organizing supplies—it was stressful, we pulled through.

12. In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** They could introduce more workshops and training sessions for clubs, especially in technical fields like media production. Also, creating a centralized online portal for all activities and schedules would help students stay informed and get involved more easily.

13. Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?

- **Participant:** The university provided high-quality cameras and editing software for a media club project. It allowed me to experiment with professional tools, improving my club contributions and academic projects.

14. What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

- **Participant:** I'd recommend more collaboration between clubs and academic departments. For instance, media professors could mentor the media club or charity club initiatives could be tied to social science projects. This integration would create a more cohesive and enriching experience for students.

Interview #7.

The participant is a 2-year UG student from NU (School of Social Science).

Extracurriculars: K-Pop Dance Club, Sports (Gym), and NU Literacy Club. GPA:

2.99

1. What do you do during your typical week at the university?

- **Participant:** My week starts with lectures and seminars in social sciences—usually covering topics like sociology, political science, or anthropology. In the afternoons, I often hit the gym for a quick workout. Twice a week, I attend K-Pop Dance Club rehearsals, where we practice for performances. On Fridays, I participate in the NU Literacy Club, helping organize book readings and discussions.

1.1 Subquestion: How do you prioritize your activities during the week?

- **Participant:** I focus on academics during the day and reserve evenings for extracurriculars. Gym sessions are flexible, but the K-Pop and Literacy Club have set schedules, so they get priority.

1.2 Subquestion: Does your weekly routine change during exam periods?

- **Participant:** Definitely. During exams, I cut back on dance rehearsals and focus more on studying, but I still go to the gym for stress relief.

2. Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?

- **Participant:** Yes, I live in a dormitory. I can walk through the skywalk to my classes, the gym, and the dance practice hall. Thanks to the administration, NU was established very logically and correctly to comfort all residents.

2.1 Subquestion: What challenges do you face living in the dormitory?

- **Participant:** There is no challenges. Everything is comfortable and warm.

3. Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?

- **Participant:** I'm part of the K-Pop Dance Club, where we choreograph routines and perform at university events. The NU Literacy Club organizes book drives and discussions to promote reading culture. I also go to the gym thrice weekly for personal fitness and stress management.

3.1 Subquestion: How do these activities complement your academic interests?

- **Participant:** The Literacy Club aligns with my social sciences background by encouraging critical discussions on various societal issues through literature.

4. **How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?**

- **Participant:** These activities give me a mental break from academics, which helps me stay focused when studying. For example, I find it easier to concentrate on writing essays or completing assignments after an intense dance practice.

4.1 **Subquestion: Do you think these activities improve your academic skills?**

- **Participant:** Yes, the Literacy Club has improved my analytical thinking, which reflects in my sociology papers. Dance practices have enhanced my discipline and time management.

4.2 **Subquestion: Have there been times when extracurriculars negatively affected your academics?**

- **Participant:** Occasionally, when preparing for big performances, I've had less time to study, which has slightly impacted my GPA. This is especially true when we organize the annual K-POP Event, where preparation goes all nights every day.

5. **What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?**

- **Participant:** The biggest challenge is balancing academic workload with extracurricular commitments. The benefits include building skills like teamwork, discipline, and time management.

5.1 **Subquestion: Do you think the benefits outweigh the challenges?**

- Most of the time, yes. The skills and experiences I gain are worth the effort.

6. **How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.**

- **Participant:** Extracurricular activities like the Literacy Club improve my critical thinking and discussion skills, which help me write essays for my sociology courses. Dance teaches me discipline and focus, which is reflected in my approach to academics.

6.1 Subquestion: Has your GPA been affected by your extracurricular involvement?

- **Participant:** It has been slightly impacted during busy event seasons, but I believe the trade-off is worth it for the personal growth I gain.

6.2 Subquestion: Do you feel extracurriculars help you manage academic stress?

- **Participant:** Yes, they provide a healthy distraction and keep me energized.

7. How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** I dedicate my mornings and early afternoons to studying and leave evenings for club activities and gym workouts.

7.2 Subquestion: Do you think this routine has improved your time management skills?

- **Participant:** Balancing multiple commitments has taught me how to organize my time better.

7.3 Subquestion: Have there been times when you had to compromise one for the other?

- **Participant:** Yes, I've skipped rehearsals or Literacy Club meetings to focus on academics during exams.

8. How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?

- **Participant:** I prioritize urgent tasks and communicate with my clubs to adjust my participation as needed.

8.1 Subquestion: How do you handle the stress of juggling multiple deadlines?

- **Participant:** I break tasks into smaller steps and take short breaks to avoid burnout.

9. What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?

- **Participant:** I'm motivated by the personal growth and social connections these activities bring. The main challenge is the time constraints from academic responsibilities.

9.1 Subquestion: Have you ever considered stepping back from an activity due to challenges?

- **Participant:** Yes, but I always find ways to continue because these activities are essential to me.

9.2 Subquestion: What keeps you motivated to persist despite challenges?

- **Participant:** The sense of achievement and the friendships I've built keep me going.

10. What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?

- **Participant:** The university provides good resources, such as practice spaces and event funding, but smaller clubs like the Literacy Club could use more support.

10.1 Subquestion: What specific improvements would you recommend?

- **Participant:** I'd suggest more funding for smaller clubs and better promotion of opportunities for new students.

10.2 Subquestion: Have you faced any difficulties accessing institutional support?

- **Participant:** Occasionally, delays in booking practice spaces have been a challenge. All booking processes are stressful and bureaucratic. For example, some approvals should be done from the IT Department, the Department of Student Services, and finally, the block managers. Sometimes, students feel that all these administrations are miscommunicating.

11. Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** A positive experience was performing at the university's cultural festival—it was amazing to see our hard work appreciated. A negative experience was when an event was canceled at the last minute due to logistical issues. As I said before, the IT Department does not try to contact students and

usually contacts us one hour before. The event was canceled due to a lack of necessary equipment.

11.1 Subquestion: How did you handle the negative experience?

- **Participant:** We reorganized and later held a more minor performance, which turned out well.

11.2 Subquestion: What did you learn from these experiences?

- **Participant:** I learned the importance of adaptability and teamwork in overcoming challenges.

12. In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** The university could introduce leadership training workshops and a centralized online platform for managing activities.

13. Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?

- **Participant:** The university's funding for our K-Pop costumes made our performance professional and boosted our confidence.

14. What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

- **Participant:** I recommend creating mentorship programs and integrating extracurricular activities with academics by offering credits.

14.1 Subquestion: Do you think this integration would attract more students to participate?

- **Participant:** Yes, it would show students that extracurriculars are as valuable as academics. I don't know how because professors remind us this is a research-oriented university, and students should focus only on academic success. However, all soft skills are much more helpful after graduation. Academic curricula do not teach us how to work in a team.

Interview #8.

The participant is a 4-year UG student from NU (School of Medicine).

Extracurriculars: Red Crescent Club, Social Development Fund Club, Sports (Fitness and Table Tennis). GPA: 3.23

1. What do you do during your typical week at the university?

- **Participant:** Mornings are for lectures and clinical rotations—covering areas like internal medicine, pediatrics, and surgery. Afternoons are split between studying, group discussions, and attending meetings for the Social Development Fund Club, where we brainstorm ideas to support students' needs. Evenings are for physical activity—either gym sessions or table tennis practice. Once a week, I meet with the Red Crescent Club to plan health awareness campaigns or blood donation drives. Weekends are often reserved for events or volunteer work organized by the clubs.

1.1 Subquestion: How do you stay on top of such a demanding routine?

- I set clear priorities for each day and stick to a planner. I also remind myself that everything I do contributes to my personal and professional growth.

1.2 Subquestion: Do you ever feel overwhelmed by your schedule?

- Sometimes, yes. But I've learned to embrace the challenge—it's preparing me for the fast-paced life of a medical professional.

2. Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?

- **Participant:** I live on campus, which is a huge advantage. It's close to my lecture halls, the hospital like University Medical Services is on the first floor in the dormitory, and the gym makes it easier to manage my packed schedule.

2.1 Subquestion: What challenges do you face living in the dormitory?

- **Participant:** The dorm can get noisy, especially during exam seasons or social events, which sometimes makes it hard to focus. Moreover, each semester the

living prices are getting high which me think about do not continue living at my Master Degree at Nazarbayev University.

3. Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?

- **Participant:** I'm a core member of the Red Crescent Club, where I lead campaigns like first aid training and blood drives. I work on initiatives like mental health workshops and financial aid awareness in the Social Development Fund Club. For sports, I maintain a regular gym routine and participate in table tennis tournaments. Many thanks to the administration and our institution for building such a vast, comfortable campus.

3.1 Subquestion: Which of these activities are you most passionate about, and why?

- **Participant:** The Red Crescent Club stands out for me. It directly ties into my medical training and allows me to contribute to community health initiatives. I am one of the who established this student club many years ago. Now, this club is popular around medical clinics and the medical community. The aim was to combine active students to learn Medicine science better.

3.2 Subquestion: How do these activities align with your career goals?

- **Participant:** They provide hands-on experience in healthcare outreach and develop my leadership and organizational skills, which are essential for a future doctor. Moreover, I plan to apply to our University Medical Service because I love the University community. I see that the Red Crescent Club has a huge future in development, and that is why I plan to be a mentor after graduating.

4. How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?

- **Participant:** They make my university life fulfilling. Volunteering with the Red Crescent Club gives me a sense of purpose, while sports help me maintain physical and mental balance. The Social Development Fund Club connects me with peers and builds teamwork skills.

4.1 Subquestion: Do these activities help you manage academic stress?

- **Participant:** Yes, they act as a release valve. After a gym session or volunteer event, I feel refreshed and ready to tackle academic challenges.

4.2 Subquestion: Have these activities improved your connections with peers or faculty?

- **Participant:** Of course, thanks to the Red Crescent Club, I am in close contact with the Health and Wellbeing Center administration. They already want to hire me to work at NU. Extracurricular activities helped me find a job. As you know, most students, after graduating, cannot find a job following their specialty. This does not matter if it is research-oriented or not.

5. What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?

- **Participant:** The biggest challenge is balancing the heavy academic workload with extracurricular commitments. The benefits include developing skills like leadership, collaboration, and stress management, which are crucial in medicine.

5.1 Subquestion: Do you think the benefits outweigh the challenges?

- **Participant:** The personal and professional growth I've gained is worth every late night and missed break.

5.2 Subquestion: How do you overcome the challenge of balancing both?

- **Participant:** Setting realistic goals, delegating tasks in clubs, and using downtime efficiently. Sometimes, I overwork at night, but the self-satisfaction is unbelievable when I go to sleep.

6. How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.

- **Participant:** My extracurriculars complement my academics. For instance, organizing first aid workshops through the Red Crescent Club helped me better understand emergency care, which was invaluable during my clinical rotations.

6.1 Subquestion: Has your GPA been affected by your extracurricular involvement?

- **Participant:** Slightly, but the skills and experience I've gained more than makeup for it. I know that only good communication and leadership skills can be useful in society when the employer does not need a GPA.

6.2 Subquestion: Do you feel extracurriculars help you manage academic stress?

- **Participant:** Yes, they structure my day, which keeps me disciplined.

7. How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** I use a planner to allocate specific blocks of time for academics, club activities, and fitness. Weekends are reserved for more extended club events or volunteer activities..

7.1 Subquestion: Has this routine improved your time management skills?

- **Participant:** Absolutely. Balancing multiple tasks has taught me how to prioritize and avoid procrastination. For example, I always watch my handwatch and use the time very carefully. **7.2 Subquestion: Have you had to sacrifice any activities to stay on track?**

- **Participant:** Yes, I scale back on club activities and focus on academics during exam periods. Moreover, during the exam period, the University administration stops all extracurricular activities on campus. It is very correct and helpful to students. A bit of noise can be stressful, especially when students study in the atrium.

7 How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?

- **Participant:** I reprioritize based on urgency. For example, if I have a clinical report due, I'll inform my clubs and reschedule tasks accordingly. **I am more of an extracurricular advisor, and more freshman students are active in student clubs. That is why I am flexible and mainly focus on strategies and plans for student clubs.**

8 What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?

- **Participant:** I'm motivated by the tangible impact of these activities and the skills I gain. The main challenge is time, especially with a demanding academic schedule. Honestly, the faculty is trying to recognize the importance of

extracurricular activities. I don't know who is wrong, but a research-oriented university means better academic performance.

9 What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?

- **Participant:** The university provides good resources like meeting spaces and funding, but the process can be slow and bureaucratic. I already have four years in extracurriculars and know how bureaucracy makes events difficult. Earlier, the administration provided free halls or auditions, but now we have to wait for approval from each department responsible.

10.1 Subquestion: What specific improvements would you recommend?

- **Participant:** Streamlining the approval process for funding and providing dedicated mentors for club leaders. Funding is always long process.

10 Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** A positive experience was hosting a successful first-aid workshop that attracted over 1000 participants. A negative one was when a funding delay forced us to scale down a significant event. The student clubs mostly need support earlier; in reality, it happens one day before.

11 In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** The university could offer more leadership training programs and increase collaboration between clubs and academic departments. Students see how faculty and administration focus on different goals, but they can suffer. Faculty wants results in tasks, while the administration sees how students engage less in extracurricular activities.

12 Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?

- **Participant:** The university's funding for our health campaigns allowed us to reach a wider audience and make a significant community impact. Health

campaigns depend on funding first; however, we see that funding is cutting year to year.

13.1 Subquestion: Do you think all clubs receive equal support?

- **Participant:** Not always. Smaller clubs often struggle with visibility and resources. The administration does not provide small student clubs or club rooms for team-building and meetings. For that, small student clubs should excel in extracurricular activities and be active during the one-year academic period.

13 What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

- **Participant:** I recommend offering credits for extracurricular participation, especially for activities aligned with academic goals, like volunteering in health-related initiatives.

14.1 Subquestion: Do you think this would attract more students?

- **Participant:** Yes, it would make extracurriculars more rewarding and show their value in academic development. It would foster a culture of holistic education, producing well-rounded graduates.

Interview #9.

The participant is a 2-year UG student from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics). Extracurriculars: Student Government President GPA: 2.7

1. What do you do during your typical week at the university?

- **Participant:** My week revolves around balancing academics with my responsibilities as the Student Government President. Mornings are typically reserved for lectures and problem-solving workshops in calculus or mechanics. After class, I dive into student government duties—organizing meetings, coordinating events, and liaising with faculty. I also spend evenings strategizing with my team to improve student life, such as planning campus-wide events, addressing student concerns, and advocating for resources with the

university administration.

1.1 Subquestion: How do you stay on top of such a demanding routine?

- It's difficult, but I prioritize the most urgent tasks daily. Sometimes academics take a backseat, but leadership experience is equally valuable.

1.2 Subquestion: What part of your weekly routine do you enjoy the most?

- I love leading student council meetings and hearing student feedback—it makes me feel I'm genuinely contributing to campus life.

2. Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?

- **Participant:** Yes, I live in a dormitory. It's a central hub for my work because I can connect with students easily and discuss issues informally.

2.1 Subquestion: How does living in a dormitory help with your student government duties?

- **Participant:** It's perfect for networking and staying accessible to students who want to share their concerns or ideas.

3. Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?

- **Participant:** As the Student Government President, I oversee all student clubs, organize large-scale events like cultural festivals and academic conferences, and represent students in meetings with faculty and university leadership. My role also involves drafting proposals to improve dormitory conditions, educational resources, and campus facilities.

3.1 Subquestion: What accomplishments are you most proud of as Student Government President?

- **Participant:** We successfully increased dormitory internet speed by negotiating with the administration and partnered with local businesses to sponsor student events. I also control the student budget committee to spread equally to events. It is not easy because there are more than 12 thousand students at Al-Farabi University, and each student pays a student fee. With approximately more than 10 million tenge, I am in control of improving our student life.

3.2 Subquestion: How do you ensure student government activities benefit the majority of students?

- **Participant:** I conduct regular surveys and organize open forums to understand the most pressing issues students face. All students and administration listen to my tasks and ideas because I am head for students. Sometimes, I can decide independently because surveys and meetings take much time.

4. How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?

- **Participant:** They define my university experience. Being part of student government gives me a sense of purpose and teaches me valuable leadership skills. It's challenging but deeply fulfilling to see my efforts improve student life.

4.1 Subquestion: Do these activities compensate for the academic sacrifices you make?

- **Participant:** Yes. While my GPA could be better, the practical skills I'm developing outweigh the occasional drop in grades. One inside thing that faculty and administration love to participate in is student government. Most of the professors can pass my academic courses. I also know that research-oriented universities like KIMEP and Kazakh British University are not connected to faculty and extracurriculars, but our university is. I can easily miss classes if I have planned meetings with student government members. I am probably working for staff and faculty, but it seems like Professors make indulges for my academic success. Most professors are Kazakhs, and I can tell them my importance in extracurricular life. They respect my engagements.

4.2 Subquestion: How does your leadership role impact your sense of belonging at the university?

- **Participant:** It strengthens it. I feel like I'm shaping the university culture and leaving a legacy for future students.

5. What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?

- **Participant:** The main challenge is time management because research-focused courses demand much attention. The benefits include developing soft skills like negotiation, communication, and problem-solving not taught in lectures.

5.1 Subquestion: Do these skills make you stand out among your peers?

- **Participant:** Definitely. My leadership role has given me confidence and a network of contacts that many students lack.

5.2 Subquestion: How do you ensure your academics don't suffer too much because of your extracurricular commitments?

- **Participant:** I dedicate weekends to catching up on coursework and preparing for exams. But again, professors usually pass my exams automatically.

6. How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.

- **Participant:** While my GPA isn't stellar, the skills I've gained from student government help in group projects and presentations. For example, during a math modeling assignment, I led my team in organizing our approach and presenting our findings effectively.

6.1 Subquestion: Do you think leadership roles develop skills that support academic learning?

- **Participant:** Absolutely. My ability to communicate complex ideas has improved because of the frequent presentations I give as President.

7. How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** I block out specific times for academics and student government. For example, afternoons are reserved for academic work, while evenings are dedicated to meetings and events.

7.1 Subquestion: Do you ever feel like you're sacrificing too much personal time?

- **Participant:** Occasionally, but I remind myself that my impact is worth the effort.

7.2 Subquestion: How do you recover from weeks when your schedule is overwhelming?

- **Participant:** I take breaks to spend time with friends or watch a movie, which helps me reset.

8. How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?

- **Participant:** I reprioritize based on urgency. For example, if there's an academic deadline, I delegate my student government responsibilities to team members.

8.1 Subquestion: Do you find it easy to delegate tasks?

- **Participant:** Yes, I trust my team and make sure everyone knows their role. I also hire a team for the government board.

9. What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?

- **Participant:** My motivation comes from wanting to make a difference for students and leave a legacy. The biggest challenge is balancing leadership with academics.

10. What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?

- **Participant:** The university supports large-scale events and infrastructure improvements but could improve in areas like funding smaller initiatives. I can easily use the Main Hall Building, which has a capacity of over 1500 seats, to organize student events.

10.1 Subquestion: What specific areas of support do you think need improvement?

- **Participant:** Funding transparency and faster approval processes would make organizing events smoother. Honestly, I know the number of students who paid the student fee, but the money delivered to us is different. I do not understand why; that is why the university should be transparent.

11. Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** A positive experience was organizing the annual student leadership summit, which brought together representatives from other universities. A negative experience was dealing with faculty pushback on some student proposals. Most of the time, the administration tries to control students in meetings by not asking inappropriate questions, or the student government will suffer in meetings where students require some developments from the university.

12. In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** The university could create more funding programs and offer student scholarships. All initiatives start from money, and students can be motivated by money.

13. Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?

- **Participant:** The university's funding for our leadership summit allowed us to bring in international guest speakers and improve the event's quality, which was a great learning experience for me. For example, the summits between universities around Kazakhstan happen at our university as the hub. Any summits or events on such a high level develop my personal development.

14. What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?

- **Participant:** I recommend creating a mentorship program where experienced leaders train incoming student government members and expand resources for smaller clubs.

14.1 Subquestion: Do you think this would attract more students?

- **Participant:** Yes, it would make extracurriculars more rewarding and show their value in academic development. It would foster a culture of holistic education, producing well-rounded graduates.

Interview #10.

The participant is a 3-year UG student from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (History). Extracurriculars: None. GPA: 2.4

1. What do you do during your typical week at the university?

- **Participant:** My week is very structured, but it revolves more around work than university. I attend lectures in the mornings, usually focusing on history courses like Central Asian History, Modern History and Historical Methodology. After classes, I head straight to my job as an administrator at a local cafe, where I manage shifts, handle customer service, and help with the daily operations. My evenings are spent either working late or helping out at home. I don't have time for extracurricular activities because supporting my family financially is my top priority.

1.1 Subquestion: How do you balance work, academics, and family responsibilities?

- It isn't easy. I often feel exhausted, but I don't have much choice. My family relies on me, so I try to do what I can to keep up with my studies while working full-time.

1.2 Subquestion: Does this routine affect your academic performance?

- Yes, my GPA has suffered because I lack time to study correctly. I sometimes miss deadlines because I'm busy at work or too tired.

2. Are you residing at a dormitory on campus?

- **Participant:** No, I live off-campus with my family. The dorms are not an option since I need to be close to home to support my younger siblings and help with household responsibilities. The café where I work is near my house, so I attend classes and instantly go to my home or work. I am not connected with student life and university.

2.1 Subquestion: How does living off-campus affect your connection with university life?

- **Participant:** It makes me feel disconnected from campus activities. Most of my classmates live in dorms and join clubs, but I can't relate to that lifestyle.

2.2 Participant: Do you think living at home adds more pressure to your routine?

- I feel the weight of my family's expectations, and it sometimes feels overwhelming to manage everything. However, I have a salary, and I can buy everything that I need, like meals, clothes, and other necessities.

3. **Can you describe the extracurricular activities you are involved in at your university?**

- **Participant:** I'm not involved in any extracurricular activities. My job and family responsibilities take up all my time. But yes, sometimes I visit events on campus like movie night, charity events, or annual ceremonies. I am just visiting, not preferring to organize or volunteer.

3.1 **Subquestion: Do you feel you're missing out by not participating in extracurricular activities?**

- **Participant:** Sometimes, but I know my focus must be on earning money right now. Joining a club feels like a luxury I can't afford.

3.2 **Subquestion: Have you ever considered joining a club or activity in the future?**

- **Participant:** If my financial situation improves. But I prefer to continue working because the salary is growing.

4. **How do these extracurricular activities influence your personal satisfaction and overall university experience?**

- **Participant:** Since I'm not part of any extracurriculars, my university experience feels very basic—I come for lectures and leave. I don't have much interaction with campus life, and sometimes it feels isolating.

4.1 **Subquestion: Do you think extracurricular activities would improve your university experience?**

- **Participant:** Possibly, but I can't prioritize that over my job. It might be fun to join a history club or other, but it wouldn't help my current financial situation. I know that being in a student club or university community, you have to always spend money for happy birthdays or team building. I feel comfortable working because probably I am an introvert, and I like being alone.

4.2 **Subquestion: How does this lack of involvement impact your relationships with classmates?**

- **Participant:** I feel distant from them. Most of my peers are busy with clubs or socializing on campus while I focus on work. However, I have classmates who also work after studying. Most of the students work after classes. Some do not want to talk about it, but it is realistic. These classmates are also out of university interest, which is also okay.

5. **What are the main challenges and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities in a research-oriented university environment?**

- **Participant:** From what I see, the challenge is balancing academics. For me, though, the most significant barrier is time. Especially coming to the university by Bus. The benefit might be networking or learning new skills, but right now, those don't seem as important as earning money. Working much better to gain networking skills. You are focused on necessary skills rather than being popular, like being a leader, etc.

5.1 **Subquestion: Do you think extracurriculars are necessary for career development?**

- **Participant:** They might help for some careers, but I'm focused on gaining work experience in my current job, which I think is more practical for me. I think my work is also part of extracurricular and gives me more skills than being part of student clubs.

6. **How do you think your involvement in extracurricular activities relates to your academic performance? Please provide specific examples.**

- **Participant:** Since I'm not involved in extracurriculars, I focus on academics and work. For example, I've missed classes or turned in assignments late because of my shifts at the cafe. I think History is less necessary in our society. Most graduates from the History Faculty become teachers, but I do not want that. The business is better.

7. **How do you allocate your time between academic responsibilities and extracurricular activities?**

- **Participant:** My time is split between academics and work. Extracurricular activities don't fit into my routine.

7.1 Subquestion: Do you think your current schedule is sustainable?

- **Participant:** It's tough, but I'm managing for now. I take it one day at a time.

7.2 Subquestion: Would you change your routine if financial pressure wasn't an issue?

- **Participant:** I will focus on business. When you earn money, you start to gain more and more. I am practical; I would like to work and improve my life through money.

8. How do you adapt your time when unpredictable events or deadlines emerge?

- **Participant:** For example, if my manager asks me to cover a shift, I might have to skip a lecture or rush through an assignment. It is okay because I informed my professor and advisor about my situation and vision of my life.

8.1 Subquestion: Do you feel supported by your professors during such situations?

- **Participant:** Yes, thanks to my professors. Most of the professors are adults; they always say that they understand me and did the same things when I was young.

9. What motivates you to participate in extracurricular activities, and what challenges might limit your involvement?

- **Participant:** The biggest challenge is time—I don't have enough of it. If extracurriculars are my job, I am motivated to earn money and continue my career. Moreover, I eat every day free and take the meals to my home. This is a good motivation for students.

10. What do you think about the availability of institutional support for extracurricular activities at your university?

- **Participant:** I don't know much about it because I've never explored those opportunities. I hear that the university supports active students, but I haven't personally benefited from it.

10.1 Subquestion: Do you think the university does enough to reach students like you?

- **Participant:** No, why should institutions help students by visiting the classes? University will help you if students are helpful to them.

11. Can you share your positive and negative experiences in participating in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** I don't have personal experiences since I haven't participated. However, I sometimes feel left out when I see others enjoying club activities while I'm busy working.

11.1 Subquestion: Have you ever regretted not joining extracurriculars?

- **Participant:** Sometimes, especially considering how it might help with networking or future opportunities.

12. In what ways do you think your university could provide better opportunities for student engagement in extracurricular activities?

- **Participant:** The university could create programs that accommodate students with work or family obligations, such as online clubs or evening sessions. The last update by Law is that Universities are not considered to study online. Before, my parents preferred studying online and attending university only during the exams.

12.1 Subquestion: Do you think these changes would make extracurriculars more accessible?

- **Participant:** Yes, it would make it easier for students like me to participate without sacrificing work or academics.

13. Can you talk about (if there are any) your specific experiences where institutional support directly impacted your personal and academic development?

- **Participant:** I haven't had much interaction with institutional support. My focus has been on managing my responsibilities outside of university.

14. **What recommendations do you have for your university to improve institutional support for the holistic development of students?**

- **Participant:** I'd recommend creating more programs for working students, like evening classes or hybrid extracurricular activities. In reality, many students work, and universities do not make statistics to understand the reasons for working. Working students are not necessary for institutions. A university should provide internships after graduation. History Specialists are needed only in education landscapes. A lot of nuances and spaces exist in education. However, I am not interested in understanding them.

14.1 **Subquestion: How would this change impact your view of university life?**

- **Participant:** It would make me feel like the university cares about students with diverse needs and challenges.

Appendix I

Invitation Letter

Dear [_____],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Altynbek Toleubay, and I am a graduate student at the Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University. I am conducting a research study titled "**The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in Kazakhstani Research-Oriented Universities.**" This study aims to explore how participation in extracurricular activities influences students' academic performance and personal development.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Your wisdom and experiences would contribute value to the research, helping us better understand the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic success.

Participation details:

- ✓ You will be asked to complete an online survey, which will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
- ✓ Some participants will also be invited to a follow-up interview to discuss their experiences in more detail based on their indication of wanting to participate in the survey form. The interviews will take 30-40 minutes and will be scheduled at a convenient time for you. They will be conducted face-to-face or online through Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without liability. Your responses will remain confidential, and the data will be anonymized for analysis. No personal identifiers will be used in any reports or publications resulting from this research.

Benefits of participation:

By participating in this research, you will contribute to a study that could help improve university guidelines regarding extracurricular involvement and academic support. Although there is no direct compensation, participants may request a summary of the research findings upon completing the study.

If you are interested in participating or would like to learn more about the study, please click on the following link [_____] to access the survey or feel free to contact me directly at Altynbek.Toleubay@nu.edu.kz.

Thank you for considering participating in this research. Your involvement is highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Altynbek Toleubay

Graduate Student, Graduate School of Education

Nazarbayev University

Құрметті [_____],

Сізді жақсы жағдайда екеніңізде сенемін. Менің атым Алтынбек Төлеубай, мен Назарбаев Университетінің Білім беру жоғары мектебінің магистрантымын. Мен «Қазақстандағы ғылыми-зерттеу университеттерінде қосымша сабақтан тыс әрекеттердің академиялық жетістікке әсері» атты зерттеу жұмысын жүргізіп жатырмын. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты – қосымша сабақтан тыс шараларға қатысудың студенттердің академиялық жетістігіне және жеке дамуына қалай әсер ететінін зерттеу.

Сізді осы зерттеуге қатысуға шақырғым келеді. Сіздің біліміңіз бен тәжірибеңіз зерттеуге баға жетпес үлес қосады, бізге қосымша сабақтан тыс белсенділік пен академиялық табыс арасындағы байланысты тереңірек түсінуге көмектеседі.

Қатысу туралы мәліметтер:

- ✓ Сізге 15-20 минут уақыт алатын онлайн сауалнаманы толтыру ұсынылады.
- ✓ Кейбір қатысушылар сауалнамада көрсеткен келісімдері негізінде қосымша сұхбатқа шақырылатын болады. Бұл сұхбаттар сіздің тәжірибеңізді толығырақ талқылау мақсатында өткізіледі және 30-40 минутқа созылады. Сұхбаттар сіз үшін ыңғайлы уақытта Microsoft Teams немесе Zoom платформалары арқылы онлайн немесе бетпе-бет жүргізіледі.

Зерттеуге қатысу толығымен ерікті, және сіз кез келген уақытта ешқандай міндеттемесіз бас тарта аласыз. Сіздің жауаптарыңыз құпия сақталады, ал мәліметтер талдауға анонимді түрде қолданылады. Есептер мен жарияланымдарда ешқандай жеке мәліметтер қолданылмайды.

Қатысудың артықшылықтары: Зерттеуге қатысу арқылы сіз университеттердегі қосымша шараларға қатысуды және академиялық қолдауды жақсартуға бағытталған зерттеуге үлес қосасыз. Тікелей сыйақы қарастырылмағанымен, қатысушылар зерттеу нәтижелерінің қысқаша мазмұнын алуды сұрай алады.

Егер зерттеуге қатысқыңыз келсе немесе қосымша ақпарат алғыңыз келсе, сауалнамаға қол жеткізу үшін мына сілтемені басыңыз: [_____] немесе тікелей байланыса аласыз: Altynbek.Toleubay@nu.edu.kz .

Зерттеуге қатысуға ықылас танытқаныңыз үшін алғысымды білдіремін.
Сіздің қатысуыңыз өте жоғары бағаланады.
Құрметпен, Алтынбек Төлеубай Магистрант, Білім беру жоғары мектебі Назарбаев
Университеті

Уважаемый [_____],

Надеюсь, это сообщение застанет вас в добром здравии. Меня зовут Алтынбек Төлеубай, я магистрант Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета. Я провожу исследование под названием «Влияние внеклассных мероприятий на академическую успеваемость в научно-исследовательских университетах Казахстана». Целью данного исследования является изучение того, как участие во внеклассных мероприятиях влияет на академическую успеваемость и личностное развитие студентов.

Хотел бы пригласить вас принять участие в данном исследовании. Ваши знания и опыт будут ценным вкладом в исследование и помогут нам лучше понять взаимосвязь между вовлеченностью во внеклассные мероприятия и академическим успехом.

Детали участия:

- ✓ Вам будет предложено заполнить онлайн-опрос, который займет примерно 15-20 минут.
- ✓ Некоторые участники будут приглашены на последующее интервью (приглашение на интервью будет доступна в функции конце онлайн-опроса), чтобы более подробно обсудить их опыт. Интервью продлится 30-40 минут и будут назначены в удобное для вас время. Они будут проводиться очно или онлайн через Microsoft Teams или Zoom.

Участие в исследовании является добровольным, и вы можете отказаться в любой момент без каких-либо обязательств. Ваши ответы останутся конфиденциальными, а данные будут анонимизированы для анализа. Личные данные не будут использоваться в отчетах или публикациях, основанных на этом исследовании.

Преимущества участия: Участвуя в этом исследовании, вы внесете вклад в улучшение университетских рекомендаций относительно участия во внеклассных мероприятиях и академической поддержки. Хотя прямой компенсации нет, участники могут запросить краткое изложение результатов исследования после завершения исследования.

Если вы заинтересованы в участии или хотите узнать больше об исследовании, пожалуйста, перейдите по следующей ссылке [_____], чтобы получить доступ к опросу, или свяжитесь со мной напрямую по адресу Altynbek.Toleubay@nu.edu.kz.

Спасибо за рассмотрение возможности участия в исследовании. Ваше участие высоко ценится.

С уважением,
Алтынбек Толеубай
Магистрант, Высшая школа образования
Назарбаев Университет

Appendix J: AI Declaration Form



**Thesis Title: The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in
Kazakhstani Research-Oriented Universities: A Mixed-Methods Study**

Declaration of the Use of Generative AI

I hereby declare that I have read and understood NUGSE's policy concerning appropriate use of AI and composed this work independently (please check one):

- with the use of artificial intelligence tools, or
- without the use of artificial intelligence tools.

(If you have used AI tools as defined in the GSE policy document, please complete the rest of this form.)

During the preparation of this thesis/examination, I used Grammarly Premium to check the Academic English grammar and find meaningful.

I also declare that I

- am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),
- have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,
- am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,
- have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work, and
- acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed NUGSE's guidelines regarding appropriate AI use.

Name: Altynbek Toleubay

Date: 17.04.2025

Signature: