

**Orphaned Students: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Their Educational  
Experience**

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in  
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Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

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Date: 24 October, 2024

Dear: Altynay Jumasheva

This letter now confirms that your research project titled:

Orphaned Students: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Their Educational Experience

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,

Dr Janet Helmer

**On behalf of:**

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## Abstract

Kazakhstan boasts a well-developed education system, but in terms of inclusivity and equal opportunities for some members of the population, improvement is needed. One critical issue is that the education of orphaned students is still associated with systemic problems and social vulnerability. This qualitative phenomenological study examined life and educational experiences of young Kazakh students who grew up without parental care, paying special attention to the unique challenges they face in their academic journey. The study addresses three main issues: how cultural and social factors shape their educational experience, what kind of support they receive, and what they believe is necessary to improve their overall well-being. This study is important because it examines a population group that is largely ignored and little known, especially in Kazakhstan. This study provides insight into both equity and equality in educational opportunities and addresses systemic deficiencies in support structures for this group. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with six participants, some currently in university and some graduates, all of whom are orphans. The findings reveal that transitions between learning stages, such as going to school, university, or college, create serious adaptation issues, which is further complicated by limited finances and lack of support. However, mentoring, emotional support from caregivers, teachers, and friends with similar experiences, government scholarships, and personal resilience have become crucial factors contributing to success. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive measures to improve academic performance and social outcomes for orphans by providing educators, social workers, and policy makers with evidence to create a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable educational environment.

*Keywords: orphaned children, educational experience, Kazakhstan, phenomenology, support, resilience, inclusivity.*

## Аңдатпа

Қазақстан жақсы дамыған білім беру жүйесімен мақтана алады, бірақ инклюзивтілік және халықтың кейбір топтары үшін тең мүмкіндіктер тұрғысынан жақсартулар қажет. Ең маңызды мәселелердің бірі-жетім студенттерге білім беру әлі де жүйелік мәселелер мен әлеуметтік осалдықпен байланысты. Бұл сапалы феноменологиялық зерттеуде ата-анасының қамқорлығынсыз өскен қазақстандық жас студенттердің өздерінің академиялық жолында кездесетін бірегей мәселелерге ерекше назар аудара отырып, өмірлік және білім беру тәжірибесі зерделенеді. Зерттеу үш негізгі сұрақты қарастырады: мәдени және әлеуметтік факторлар олардың білім беру тәжірибесін қалай қалыптастырады, олар қандай қолдау алады және олардың жалпы жағдайын жақсарту үшін не қажет деп санайды. Бұл зерттеу өте маңызды, өйткені ол негізінен еленбейтін және онша танымал емес халық тобын қарастырады, әсіресе Қазақстанда. Бұл зерттеу білім беру мүмкіндіктеріндегі әділеттілік пен теңдік туралы түсінік береді және осы топтың қолдау құрылымдарындағы жүйелік кемшіліктерді қарастырады. Қолданылған жауаптар университетте мен колледжде оқып жатқан болмаса түлектермен алты жетім студенттен жиналды. Нәтижелер мектепке, университетке немесе колледжде түсу сияқты оқу кезеңдері арасындағы ауысу қаржылық мүмкіндіктері шектеулі және қолдаудың жетіспеушілігімен одан әрі қиындайтын күрделі бейімделу мәселелерін тудыратынын көрсетеді. Алайда тәлімгерлік, тәрбиешілердің, мұғалімдердің және ұқсас тәжірибесі бар достардың эмоционалды қолдауы, мемлекеттік стипендиялар мен жеке табандылық табысқа жетудің шешуші факторларына айналды. Бұл нәтижелер тәрбиешілерге, әлеуметтік қызметкерлерге және саясаткерлерге неғұрлым инклюзивті, қолайлы және әділ білім беру ортасын құру үшін осы деректер беру арқылы жетім

балалардың оқу үлгерімі мен әлеуметтік нәтижелерін жақсарту бойынша кешенді шаралардың қажеттілігін көрсетеді.

*Түйінді сөздер: жетім балалар, білім беру тәжірибесі, Қазақстан, феноменология, қолдау, өміршеңдік, инклюзивтілік.*

## Аннотация

Казахстан может похвастаться хорошо развитой системой образования, но с точки зрения инклюзивности и равных возможностей для некоторых слоев населения необходимы улучшения. Одна из важнейших проблем заключается в том, что образование студентов-сирот по-прежнему связано с системными проблемами и социальной уязвимостью. В данном качественном феноменологическом исследовании изучается жизненный и образовательный опыт молодых казахстанских студентов, выросших без попечения родителей, с особым вниманием к уникальным проблемам, с которыми они сталкиваются на своем академическом пути. В исследовании рассматриваются три основных вопроса: как культурные и социальные факторы формируют их образовательный опыт, какую поддержку они получают и что, по их мнению, необходимо для улучшения их общего благосостояния. Это исследование важно, поскольку в нем рассматривается группа населения, которая в значительной степени игнорируется и малоизвестна, особенно в Казахстане. Это исследование дает представление о справедливости и равенстве в возможностях получения образования и рассматривает системные недостатки в структурах поддержки этой группы. Данные были собраны в ходе полуструктурированных интервью с шестью студентами университетов и колледжей, а также выпускниками, все из которых являются сиротами. Результаты показывают, что переход между этапами обучения, такими как поступление в школу, университет или колледж, создает серьезные проблемы адаптации, которые еще больше усложняются ограниченными финансовыми возможностями и отсутствием поддержки. Однако наставничество, эмоциональная поддержка со стороны опекунов, учителей и друзей с аналогичным опытом, государственные стипендии и личная стойкость стали

решающими факторами, способствующими успеху. Эти результаты подчеркивают необходимость комплексных мер по улучшению академической успеваемости и социальных результатов детей-сирот, предоставляя педагогам, социальным работникам и политикам данные для создания более инклюзивной, благоприятной и справедливой образовательной среды.

*Ключевые слова: дети-сироты, образовательный опыт, Казахстан, феноменология, поддержка, жизнестойкость, инклюзивность.*

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Every child deserves to grow up in a caring family environment. To receive love, care, and education in their formative years is crucial, but the absence of parents due to death can create serious problems for children, especially affecting their mental development. According to recent UNICEF estimates, 153 million children worldwide are orphans, with 132 million living in developing countries (UNICEF, 2020; 2021). Often, due to the absence of parents, orphans are often forced to engage in child labor, especially in developing countries. According to a study conducted by SOS Children's Villages (Children's Statistics, n.d.), about one in four children is involved in such activities. This further complicates the lives of orphans and the opportunity to receive a good education. For children who are in a difficult financial situation, education can provide opportunities for socialization and integration into society. Without comprehensive support from actors such as governments, non-governmental organizations, charitable foundations, and society as a whole, the successful social adaptation of orphaned children will be challenging, as this process is influenced by numerous factors.

Studies show that several factors such as poverty, parental absence, social isolation, bullying, feelings of loneliness, depression and hopelessness, can influence a child's academic performance, educational achievements, and social success. In particular, orphans encounter numerous challenges in developing social competence and achieving academic success (Snetti & Asgar, 2016). The study notes that non-orphans generally possess better social and physical skills, contributing to superior educational outcomes. It has been suggested that developmental delays among orphaned children may be linked to a lack of appropriate socio-emotional experiences and consistent caregivers (Ansell, 2015; Rockers et al., 2023). This introductory

chapter presents the context and background of the study, describing the problem, articulating the purpose and main research question, highlighting the significance of the study, and defining key terms. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the structure of the subsequent chapters.

## **1.1 Background**

Over the past 20 years, Kazakhstan has experienced population growth due to increased birth rates. Moreover, in 2020, there were 3.7 million young men and women aged 14 to 29, comprising 20% of Kazakhstan's total population of 18.6 million. The increase in number of young people also points to the increase in the number of students in higher education institutions in recent years. Overall, 2.2 million young people, or 60% of the total youth population of 3.7 million, attend secondary, technical, professional, or higher education institutions. Consequently, Kazakhstan has achieved an Education Index of 0.830, ranking it 35th among 189 countries, which, according to the UN Development Programme, corresponds to the level of developed countries (UNFPA Kazakhstan, 2019).

Despite the statistics on the Education Index, there are 22,081 orphans out of the 3.7 million youth in Kazakhstan, (82%) which means that they have lost parental care for various reasons (UNFPA Kazakhstan, 2019). This fact underscores the need not only to address the issue of orphanhood in the country but also to focus on supporting orphaned children through better educational opportunities in order to improve their future job prospects. Research reveals that for adaptation and personal development, orphans are significantly influenced by their environment and the support they receive (Alimbayeva, 2018; Kroupina et al., 2014). For example, a study by Faleke et al. (2023) shows that orphans who live in orphanages tend to have lower academic performance and school attendance. Hence, this topic requires considerable

attention to increase understanding and awareness of the unique needs, support, and rights of orphans, especially orphaned students. Therefore, this research is particularly relevant for educators, school administrators, and policymakers who directly shape the educational environment.

According to the Minister of Education and Science, Askhat Aimagambetov, the number of orphanages decreased by 30% (from 138 to 96) and the number of orphans by 32% (from 6223 to 4254 children) in 2021. The number of children returning to orphanages after a failed adoption also declined (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021). Despite these improvements, the need for support for their overall well-being remains. Research indicates that orphans are susceptible to traumatic events due to a lack of adequate adult protection, making them more vulnerable to such experiences (Ahmad et al., 2005). Many orphaned high school students face additional challenges such as academic difficulties, emotional barriers, and social isolation that hinder their education. Due to the prevalence of these challenges, more research is needed on how orphaned students cope with these issues and what actions can be taken to help them secure a better future. Due a lack of understanding of their issues, measures to improve their academic performance and overall well-being may not be effective. Therefore, comprehensive and empathetic research is needed to identify and understand the educational and psychosocial challenges orphaned high school students face to develop strategies to support their academic success and holistic long-term growth.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

A study conducted in 2022 in Russia revealed that only 1% of orphanage residents enter higher education institutions (Nikolaeva et al., 2023). Moreover, the study points out the difficulties of graduating from university for orphaned students, as they have difficulty adapting

to the educational environment and ultimately drop out; consequently, the dropout rate is much higher in this group than with other students. In comparison, the percentage of orphanage residents entering higher education in Kazakhstan is slightly higher. In 2022, 58,600 people were enrolled in higher education institutions under the admission quota, including 2,500 from orphanages and children without parental care, representing an admission rate of 4%. An article from a journal in Tajikistan discussing the perspectives of orphans on their future, indicates that only a few expect to complete the 11th grade and enter a university (Asia-Plus, 2016). The article also indicated that many opt for colleges and technical schools; in some cases, they have no choice but to start working immediately after high school graduation, often as unskilled labour such as waiters, dishwashers, or unskilled laborers. These data highlight the significant need for support to help orphaned students adapt, develop their talents, and find ways to apply them. This underscores the critical need for research on developing the educational and career prospects of orphaned students within the context of Kazakhstan.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore, within the lens of a phenomenological study, the life experiences of adults who grew up as orphans and their educational experiences in Kazakhstan. The primary research questions of the study are as follows:

1. How do cultural, social, and other factors influence their educational experience?
2. What types of support do participants receive as orphans during their educational journey?
3. What do orphans believe they need to increase their overall well-being?

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is of significant importance to researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in Kazakhstan. The findings of this study will provide teachers, school administrators, and social workers with crucial information about the specific needs of orphaned students in Kazakhstan, aiding in the development of more effective strategies for supporting and integrating these children into the educational environment. For instance, research indicates that emotional and social support play a crucial role in improving orphans' academic performance and overall well-being. According to a study conducted in Nigeria, enhancing emotional support in schools significantly improves the academic outcomes of orphans (Sanchez, 2024).

This study delves into the psychosocial and educational barriers faced by students left without parents in Kazakhstan, adding valuable data to global research on orphanhood and its consequences, thereby laying the foundation for future research in this area (Hernandez-Torrano et al., 2021). It is the phenomenological approach to this study that makes it possible to deeply penetrate into the life stories of orphans and their educational experiences. In addition, the study will be an important contribution to the possible creation of a policy aimed at supporting orphaned students. For example, implementing successful policies such as increasing funding for orphans' education, supporting orphan students, guardians, and foster families, and taking anti-discrimination measures can significantly improve orphans' access to education and academic performance (Sanchez, 2024).

## 1.5 Definition of the Central Phenomena

**Orphans** are children who have lost one or both of their parents and are not receiving parental care. A child who has lost one or both parents is considered an orphan according to the definition used in international studies, including social and biological orphans. Other

circumstances, like the death of a parent, can also result in a child becoming an orphan (Isangula, 2011).

**Educational Experience** means the entire process of learning, including everything a person learns during such an educational journey. A full picture of the learning process encompasses their academic achievement as well as interactions with classmates and teachers, and involvement/extracurricular activities at school (Fujii et al., 2022).

**Emotional support** refers to a set of actions and interactions aimed at improving a child's emotional well-being. In the context of this study, emotional support—whether provided by friends, family members, educators, psychologists, or social workers—played a crucial role in shaping the participants' personal and academic trajectories. This intervention has proven important because it leads to stress reductions, breaking the cycle of stress response and increasing feelings of safety and calmness (Zinsser et al., 2016).

**Vulnerable** are those who stand at greater risk of harm from adversity, such as poverty, family and social isolation, discrimination or illness. For instance, children at risk (orphans) may find it difficult to get access to health care and education services, thus needing more support from the state and the entire community (Kendall & Children, 2007).

## 1.6 Summary

The absence of parental care, together with social isolation and limited financial resources, put orphans in a difficult position, unlike their peers with parents. These can lead to emotional and psychological problems affecting their performance in school. These problems require a variety of solutions, including emotional, financial, and other support systems. Through the insights of adults who grew up as orphans, the study aims to provide a thorough

understanding of the diverse and special needs of orphans and to propose strategies for developing their social skills and academic performance.

### **1.7 Outline of the Thesis**

The study is structured into six chapters. Chapter 1 provided an introduction and a general overview of the research. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive literature review, analyzing current research on the educational experiences of orphans, the challenges they face, and the existing approaches aimed at addressing these issues. It focuses on identifying critical factors affecting the educational adaptation of orphans and highlights gaps in the current body of research. Chapter 3 outlines the study's methodology, justifying the use of a phenomenological approach and detailing the process of data collection through interviews. It also describes the analytical process used to identify key themes and patterns within the lived experiences of orphans. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, analyzes the responses of the participants, and highlights the main topics and subtopics, revealing and explaining them in detail. Chapter 5 discusses the data obtained, which is compared with the literature review from Chapter 2. Finally, Chapter 6 presents the conclusion, the limitations and future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter, the literature review, examines the accumulated experience in orphans' lives and the existing findings of orphan students around the world and Kazakhstan. This study requires a personal and qualitative understanding of the diverse factors and experiences of orphan students in order to apply the phenomenological methodology of analysis. This chapter describes the theoretical framework and a summary of research on the following issues: 1) Orphans; 2) The education of orphans in Kazakhstan; 3) The impact of their status on their education; 4) The educational problems they faced.

By reviewing and critically analyzing the literature on the topic presented, this review will reveal the existence of diverse and unique problems that prevent the educational development of orphans in Kazakhstan from being at a high level.

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This theory of ecological systems by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and the theory of attachment by Bowlby (1969) are combined in this research, and is applied to the educational experience of orphaned children in Kazakhstan. The main part of this model is the convergence and cooperation between institutions for orphans and schools, the impact on policy and support, as well as the effect on understanding attitudes towards orphans' educational opportunities.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory illustrates that a child's development is shaped by multiple, interconnected systems—from immediate environments like school and peer relationships to broader structures such as governmental policies and societal norms. In the case of orphaned children, these systems are often fragmented or inconsistent, particularly when there is poor coordination between educational institutions and care facilities such as boarding schools. This lack of alignment can hinder the child's adaptation and academic success.

Bowlby's attachment theory focuses on the psychological and emotional factors of learning, which focuses on the function of supportive relationships that help resilience and motivation. Orphans grow up with a strong attachment to caregivers and mentors, which makes them critically important in their emotional adjustment and involvement in learning. Integrating these theories allows for a holistic approach to addressing both external barriers (e.g., financial limitations, institutional challenges) and internal psychological factors (e.g., trauma, emotional insecurity) that influence educational outcomes. Furthermore, the resilience-building approach, within the Ecological Systems Theory, serves as a key intervention strategy, equipping orphans with life skills, coping mechanisms, and emotional support to navigate challenges effectively.

An important benefit of combining Bronfenbrenner and Bowlby's theories is that they can better account for both external and individual influences. It permits taking into account the traits of the child, their surroundings, and additional elements that might affect the educational results of orphans. In order to comprehend students' preferences in the learning environment, Bronfenbrenner's theory illustrates how different ecological system levels might be used to build a conducive learning environment. This is relevant to the study because it sheds light on how to enhance the learning environment for orphans in various environmental contexts (Amali et al., 2023; Leonard, 2011).

The immediate surroundings of orphaned children, especially the circumstances in orphanages, are central to the model. The way people interact in this setting, especially their connections with classmates and caregivers, has a significant impact on how instruction is received. Positive educational achievements are not only possible but also dependent upon caregivers being sensitive, responsive, and providing a structured, supportive atmosphere. Warm and responsive care greatly enhances children's interactions and growth, according to a

study done in orphanages in St. Petersburg, Russia (Groark et al., 2005). Orphans' educational experiences are improved when they get emotional warmth, stability, and positive reinforcement (Lerikkanen et al., 2016).

The model also highlights the psychosocial difficulties orphans encounter, including the psychological and emotional damage brought on by parent loss and unstable living circumstances. These elements, which include gaps in reading and language issues, can have a major influence on both academic success and general well-being (Hough & Kaczmarek, 2011). In order to lessen these psychosocial difficulties and detrimental effects on educational performance, it is therefore not only essential but also imperative to treat them through supportive relationships and mental health services (Davidson & McEwen, 2012). Due to emotional and psychological trauma, orphanhood frequently results in worse academic performance and educational delays (Escueta et al., 2014). As a result, the model can be linked to the critical need for focused interventions to assist orphans' academic success. They often had difficulties in the absence of proper counseling systems, and these problems negatively affected their academic performance (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016).

Using Bronfenbrenner's theory of the ecological system, it is possible to solve certain problems faced by orphans at school, such as prejudice, shame, and lack of resources. The constant negative attitude of peers and teachers in schools reduces their self-esteem and motivation (Montague and Rinaldi, 2001). The same problems arise in colleges due to limited financial resources, lack of mentoring, and increased educational expectations. Programs such as financial assistance, mentoring, and psychosocial assistance have an impact and are of great help to orphaned children, moreover, they help in solving these same problems (Ssewamala et al., 2014).

In addition, this model characterizes the state of ecological systems, such as the mesosystem and the exosystem. A mesosystem is the closest environment for a child and in this study it is the orphanage and the school. The exosystem on the other hand includes policies, support, and community resources that provide an implicit impact on a child's education (Iruka et al., 2020). Moreover, improved communication and collaboration between these environments enhance the educational experience of orphans. The society also plays a key role in creating a pleasant environment by providing advice and materials, which facilitates their success (Guo et al., 2012). In addition to all of the above, each student's own life experience, multiple drives and interests, and other qualities play a valuable role in choosing and deciding on academic achievements. According to Baranov et al. (2020), a detailed model draws attention to the diverse conditions in which orphans find themselves; for example, how they adapt to these conditions and whether they receive personal support based on their needs and capabilities (Timson et al., 2020). Consequently, the creation of a favorable learning environment and support at various system levels significantly help to improve the academic results of orphans. The organization of a constant supportive atmosphere with the help of mentors caring for children or teachers will reduce the negative impact and increase the results.

More resources such as access to financial support, education programs, or social welfare infrastructures, are required to back up the academic efforts of orphans. These social support networks could be anyone from classmates, teachers, or even caregivers/community. Mwoma and Pillay (2015) note that due to the special needs of orphaned children, such children may require extra classes for their educational rights, life skills training opportunities, as well as other measures in leading towards academic success. To conquer the obstacles of finance and

enable orphans to gain access to tertiary institutions, they should be supported with scholarships and financial support.

The use of the theory of ecological systems, focused on the creation of mechanisms for overcoming difficulties, leads to increased resilience, which will support and help orphans overcome these difficulties during adversity. Interventions such as life skills training, extracurricular activities, and psychological counseling can equip them with the necessary tools to manage stress and enhance academic performance (Mabasa & Flotman, 2022).

Ultimately, the model provides a reiteration of post-institutional living outcomes among orphans, focusing on growth and transitioning into adulthood as well as society. Good educational situations help in bettering social and economic status, existence, along a job. To enable orphans to experience the best in life, they need continued support throughout their educational journey (Zhiqin et al., 2012).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory helps to understand how different levels of the environment — from the immediate environment to government structures — affect the educational path of orphans. Bowlby's attachment theory complements it by emphasizing the importance of stable, caring relationships for emotional well-being and motivation in learning. Together, these theories provide a holistic framework for analyzing the problems of orphans and emphasize the need for comprehensive support, both psychological and institutional, in Kazakhstan's education system.

## **2.2 Orphans and their Education in Kazakhstan**

The term "orphan is derived from the Greek word "ορφανός" or "orfanos" which is traditionally described as a child who has suffered permanent loss of parental care. However,

today's definition of an orphan has been described as children who have lost either one or both their parents because of any cause. Though generally, diseases like HIV/AIDS are talked about, other factors contributing greatly to the increase in the number of orphans include malaria, cancer, conflicts, natural disasters, economic crises, industrial accidents, and car accidents. This has placed a high population of orphans in need of medical, psychological, and social care (Sherr et al., 2008). In Kazakhstani legislation and common law, a definition of an orphan condition is when a child has lost either one or both their parents. Orphaned children in Kazakhstan are placed either in institutions, with foster families, or relatives (Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2002). Orphans most likely lead lives of poverty, exploitation, and neglect, which may all strongly influence their psychosocial well-being and development (Ntuli et al., 2020).

Factors such as socio-economic conditions and the lack of an appropriate social support system make orphans in Kazakhstan vulnerable to specific problems. The educational experience of orphaned children depends on a few factors: quality of care in orphanages, availability of educational resources, and support from the Government and various NGOs. For example, Krupina et al. (2014) found that a great number of orphaned institutional children in Kazakhstan suffered from nutritional deficiencies and developmental delays resulting in a call for the enhancement of care practices among institutional caregivers. Furthermore, in Kazakhstani orphanages, a child nutrition condition assessment showed meal planning problems and deficiencies to treat anemia, vitamin D and iodine deficiency, zinc deficiency resulting in a delay in cognition (Kamat et al., 2017; Shapagatova et al., 2023; Turgambayeva et al., 2014). In general, Hirst et al., (2014) insisted that Kazakhstan needs to do more to improve nutrition and

boost the development of institutional orphaned children if attainment in education was to be achieved in the long term. Among the Central Asian countries, which also include Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan has the best policies for orphans to continue in higher education. For example, the Government of Kazakhstan has monitored the implementation of many initiatives to support orphaned children, especially in higher education institutions, to address psychological and social problems that directly affect academic performance (Nikolaeva et al., 2023). However, numerous programs and quotas for orphaned children are still needed to compensate for the lack of support in their former orphanages, where they studied before entering higher education institutions.

### **2.3 Social Stigma and Marginalization of Orphans in Kazakhstan**

The social stigma associated with orphanhood often leads to marginalization and stigmatization, which in turn exacerbates the problems orphans face. Like orphans in many other countries, Kazakh orphans are at high risk of being subject to violence and abuse both in institutions and in communities. This was especially evident in 1954-1964, when overpopulation forced parents to voluntarily send their children to orphanages because they did not have the means to support their families, and they believed that this was the best decision at that time (Saktaganova & Shapagatova, 2023). These factors contributed to the neglect and deterioration of the living conditions of orphaned children and increased their vulnerability to abuse and neglect both in institutions and in society (Shapagatova et al., 2023). In these circumstances, programs to improve the situation of orphans in Kazakhstan should be aimed at improving the care of orphaned children in orphanages and other institutions. Improving the emotional support skills of caregivers and also teaching them how to find ways for orphaned children to express their feelings and be a participant in their decision-making process can significantly improve

their psychosocial well-being. In addition, support in the form of finances and study materials can make it easier and significantly help them gain a high academic status and thus increase their life opportunities.

#### **2.4 Impact on Academic Performance**

Orphanages may have long-lasting impacts on the learning outcomes of the kids living there, such as a decrease in their school performance, contributing to delays in their academic growth and development. Beegle et al. (2007) contend that studies have shown that orphans usually have learning problems that emanate from emotional and psychological trauma resulting from the loss of their parents. Widder et al. (2020) established that the level of education attained during childhood is substantially reduced by challenges, especially for girls. It, therefore, underlines the importance of targeted measures towards support for orphans. Additionally, the discrepancy in learning outcomes between genders points out the importance of addressing specific issues faced by orphaned girls.

It has also been established in a study on orphans' experiences in child-headed families in South Africa that many orphans have had to drop out of school to take care of their siblings. It is further supported by Mabasa and Flotman (2022), whose study showcased the cognitive, emotional, and somatic consequences which organizational change may bring, and that similar support mechanisms may be beneficial for orphans moving through transitional stages in their education.

The lack of a constant and supportive home atmosphere exacerbates the problems of orphans in their studies. Gertler et al. (2004) found that the death of a parent significantly reduces the likelihood that a child will stay in school; orphans are twice as unlikely to graduate from school as their peers whose parents are alive (Gertler et al., 2004). Being an orphan can

lead to a decrease in motivation and a deterioration in academic performance. A study conducted in Zimbabwe found that teachers often lack the skills to support orphans in the learning process (Majoni & Majoni, 2017). This barrier is especially evident during critical educational transitions, such as primary to secondary school.

In Kazakhstan, similar trends are observed, where orphans face significant obstacles in accessing higher education. The lack of financial support and the need to work and support themselves often forces orphans to prioritize immediate economic needs over educational aspirations. This is further compounded by the limited availability of scholarships and financial aid for orphans, making it difficult for them to pursue higher education and improve their socio-economic status (Bernal et al., 2023). However, Kazakhstan has several support funds, scholarships, and quotas in higher education institutions for orphans and other vulnerable students. For instance, a program led by Sara Nazarbayev and the Minister of Education, Aslan Sarinzhypov, called "Bobek," was launched in 2014. This program provided financial support to 1,000 orphans in grades 9-11, allowing them to study in colleges and universities in Kazakhstan. Another example is Kazakhstan's quota system for children without parental care. In 2024, the quota for educational grants was 1% of the total, which means that of all allocated grants for students with different specializations, 1% is a grant for orphaned children (Univision KZ, 2024).

In addition, in the study by Nikolaeva et al. (2023), she also noted the various problems that orphaned students face before entering higher education institutions and colleges, preventing them from using their 1% of grants and additional types of support. In addition to the well-known economic motivations, there were also difficulties with initial adaptation and entry into society. Even if they have a strong motivation to get higher education, orphans cannot

receive high-quality education due to household and psychological problems (Nikolaeva et al., 2023).

## **2.5 Educational Barriers for Orphans: School and University**

There are a number of obstacles for orphans in the area of education, such as a lack of social support, financial difficulties, and inadequate educational facilities. Research has shown that orphans must combine their education with other responsibilities, such as caring for their siblings and providing a livelihood for family members, which can significantly affect school performance (Shava et al., 2016). Similarly, a study conducted by Tirka and Nan (2020) compares school performance and the behavior of orphaned teenagers in high school. According to a study conducted in Myanmar, poor care by caregivers is central to the reason why orphans are undisciplined and perform worse in school compared to children raised by their parents.

Orphans are subjected to numerous forms of discrimination and stigmatization in their lives, and most of them manifest themselves in specialized institutions, which has a strong impact on low self-esteem and unwillingness to acquire new knowledge. In a 2016 study conducted by Khoza and Mokwena, those orphaned by the death of their parents from AIDS also have psychosocial problems that result from social stigmatization with this disease (Khoza & Mokwena, 2016). It begins with episodes of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder. These conditions often persist because of absence of necessary interventions and minimal support (Cluver et al. 2011). The stigma attached to this often fuels feelings of alienation and lack of a sense of belonging, which is indeed a powerful predictor of school engagement and performance.

However, all the aforementioned factors vary depending on the individuals surrounding the children, both parents and teachers. Thus, when a child turns into an orphan and is devoid of

guidance by the parents, plus finds himself in the educational environment with teaching staff lacking the required competency to nurture and inspire the aspirations and talent of the child, it impacts his personality and ambitions. A study carried out in South Africa by Mwoma and Pillay (2015) found that because the educators themselves do not receive professional support and training to help deal with the psychosocial problems affecting orphans; thus, these children are deprived of much-needed assistance. This shortage ultimately has a destructive impact on their mental health and academic performance.

Anderson and Pomfret's (2002) research highlighted some of the educational and health issues orphans faced in Central Asia. The results found that orphans faced serious challenges in both educational institutions and healthcare services, and because of these problems, orphans suffered greatly academically. These challenges become more evident at the university level due to higher costs and greater academic demands. The greatest impediments to higher education access by orphans are limited access and information regarding scholarships and bursaries. Mabasa and Flotman (2022) discussed the cognitive, emotive, and physiological effects of organizational transition and recommended similar support mechanisms as potentially helpful when transitioning into higher education. In such a case, similar support mechanisms may be useful at the time of transition into higher education, since without sufficient financial and institutional assistance, orphans may face difficulties in paying for tuition, purchasing textbooks and other necessary materials. These expenses directly affect their learning process and the quality of student life. Even if this does not lead to expulsion, the lack of support can significantly complicate their path to success. Even if the quotas and financial assistance are available, many orphans still need help from other resources to graduate from college or

university (Fei, 2012).

In addition, the lack of mentorship and guidance presents a significant obstacle for orphans in their pursuit of higher education. Some studies conducted in Ukraine show that it was necessary for orphaned children to be mentored, as this developed social competencies and confidence, through which they were better integrated into society and adulthood (Udoenko et al., 2020). Most of the orphans needing assistance require models or mentors that can provide the necessary academic and career guidance. The lack of support for orphaned students creates problems with confidence and anxiety about their future educational and career prospects. Higher education institutions need to create a supportive program for orphaned students using mentoring, and financial assistance in the form of materials or increased monthly stipends, and mental health support.

## **2.6 Summary**

Orphans in Kazakhstan face many problems in the field of education, which are related to psychosocial, educational, and economic factors. Thus, an integrated approach, including emotional care, economic assistance, and educational intervention, is needed. In the future, research studies on these aspects should be continued in order to develop successful strategies for providing assistance to orphans in Kazakhstan and other similar contexts. Understanding the special problems of orphans and creating support services with a wide range of services can significantly improve their quality of life, allowing them to reach their full potential.

Thus, the education process of Kazakhstani orphans is fraught with complex difficulties that need to be addressed through targeted and sustained intervention efforts. Academic success and appropriate living conditions for orphans can be improved through the creation of a

stimulating school environment, economic and psychological assistance, and the use of social resources. Future policy and research initiatives should aim at creating an integrated system of services that orphans with different needs can access, so as not to hinder their full potential in terms of school achievement and personal life development.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the educational and psychosocial problems of students who are orphan residents of Kazakhstan. In connection with the further sharp growth of the population, and the increase in the proportion of youth, special attention should be given to the special needs and difficulties of parentless children. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed in this study to understand their daily life experiences the supportive strategies they applied to help improve their academic achievements.

### **3.2 Research Design and Rationale**

In this study, the qualitative phenomenological methodology was applied to investigate and understand the meaning of orphan students' experiences in terms of their educational situation. The research focused on the "what"; that is, the very essence and internal meaning of the life experiences of orphaned students during university studies both at the bachelor's and master's degree levels, by tracing factors that might predict their academic and psychological outcomes. The investigated phenomenon is the educational experience of orphanage-raised students.

This phenomenological approach is best suited to answer questions of 'how', 'what', 'why', and 'to what extent', all of which are principles of qualitative research (Bannister et al., 2011). This assisted in understanding, with a lot of care, the orphan's educational experience, pin pointing major issues to recommend ways of overcoming such issues. To be more precise, the phenomenon studied here is the life experience of university students who grew up as orphans, with special attention to the impact of orphanhood on their academic and psychological outcomes.

### **3.3 Research Site**

The study was carried out in Kazakhstan's postsecondary educational establishments in the cities of Almaty and Astana, encompassing both public and private universities and colleges. These venues were selected to accommodate a diverse group of participants and to obtain a more thorough and precise comprehension of the issues encountered by orphaned students.

Given the wide range of four different educational institutions included in the study, it is expected that the data collected will reflect various aspects of the educational experience of orphaned students in Astana and Almaty. This allowed the researcher to conduct a comparative analysis and identify common and specific problems faced by orphaned students in these contexts.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures**

A targeted sampling strategy and the "snowball" method are used to select participants. This strategy allows for a targeted selection of participants with the necessary characteristics for the study (Creswell, 2014). The study included 6 students between the ages of 18 and 25, studying at the bachelor's or master's degree level. All participants are citizens of Kazakhstan, orphans who grew up without parental care, and are currently studying at a college or university or have already completed their studies.

The snowball method makes it possible to identify and attract additional participants based on the recommendations of participants already included in the study.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, allowing participants to communicate openly and comfortably about their academic performance and school experience. This type of interview is ideal because it combines flexibility and structure and allows the

researcher to adjust questions based on the participants' answers, while ensuring that the necessary information is collected (Brown and Clark, 2019). Examples of questions that were asked include:

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself?
- How would you assess your educational experience?
- What educational institutions have you attended (elementary school, high school, university)?
- Do you think your status as an orphan has affected your educational journey? If yes, how?

Using semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C) created an atmosphere of trust and openness, which is especially important when discussing sensitive and emotionally significant topics (Galletta & Cross, 2013).

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedures**

Interviews were conducted in Russian or Kazakh, depending on the participants' preferences. All interviews were recorded with participants' consent, then transcribed for analysis. Moreover, the privacy of the respondents was ensured due to the use of pseudonyms and signing of confidentiality agreements before the interview. For minimising tension, putting participants at ease, interviews were scheduled in locations and at times that were convenient for them, unless one prefers it online. An online interview setting is also considered. The data collection process included the following stages:

1. Preparation and piloting of the interview protocol.

2. Using a "snowball" sample, ask community or organization leaders to help identify potential participants.
3. Conducting preliminary interviews to test questions and methods.
4. The main stage of data collection including conducting interviews with participants at pre-arranged times and locations.
5. Ask the project participants to express their opinion on what feelings the questions aroused in them, whether any wording was unclear or uncomfortable, and whether the questions effectively reflected their experience.
6. Transcribing and translating interview recordings for further analysis.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Methods**

Data were subjected to phenomenological analysis, including coding and thematic analysis (Humble & Mozelius, 2022). This approach enables the researcher to outline key themes and patterns in the data that reflect important life experiences of participants. Precisely, the specifics of the analysis entailed transcription of interviews and their translation into English, initial coding of data, grouping codes into broader themes and subthemes, analyzing and interpreting themes both for common patterns and unique aspects of participants' experiences, and finally reviewing and refining themes so that they are representative of the research data.

The actual analysis was guided by methods suggested by Braun and Clarke (2019), such as creating detailed thematic maps and diagrams that supported the researcher in outlining data visually and exploring the relations of the various aspects of the participants' experiences, such as their academic success and social interactiveness, their emotional well-being, and even the

perception of the educational setting. These elements were studied in the context of how being orphanhood affects their educational journey and life experience.

### **3.8 Ethical Concerns and Risks of Research**

After obtaining approval from the NUGSE Ethics Committee, participants were recruited using the methods mentioned earlier. After identifying the participants, informed consent was obtained. In the informed consent form, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were told they could withdraw from participation at any given moment without any negative repercussions. Since the general topic of the research is sensitive, special attention was given to the subjects' emotional states.

Ethical considerations also involve the protection of participants' identities being revealed and assurance of privacy throughout the process. The emotional risk was minimal because of the participants had the freedom to withdraw whenever they felt uncomfortable. Protection of the rights and interests of either participant was utmost to ensure optimum well-being throughout the entire duration of the research. Confidentiality of all participants was taken into consideration while carrying out the research.

Given that this research focused on the understanding of the challenges faced by orphaned high school students and their support strategies, special relevance of the current study is important for educators, school administrators, and policy makers who are interested in shaping the educational environment in Kazakhstan. Other comparable studies confirm the central place of ethical considerations within such research when working with vulnerable populations.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter presents the research methodology that underpins this study in exploring the challenges faced by orphan students in Kazakhstan. To this end, a qualitative phenomenological approach was adopted to explore the lived experiences of orphan students since such an approach gives meaning to the emotional, economic, and educational obstacles faced by orphan students. The sample included orphan students who studied both in public and private universities for comparison in the different educational settings.

Semi-structured interviews captured individual stories and identified the key factors that affected the academic performance and emotional well-being of the students. Thematic coding shall be conducted to underscore recurring patterns and themes. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were central in the research design to protect participants' privacy and emotional well-being throughout the study.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This qualitative phenomenological study studies the educational experiences of orphan students to understand how cultural, social, and other factors have influenced their educational experience, the types of support they received during their education, and what, in their opinion, should be improved. This chapter is built on key themes and subthemes that emerged in the analysis of the interview data and presents direct quotes of the participants of this study to present the voices of the participants and support the themes.. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings.

### 4.2 Study Sample

The study involved 6 participants, aged 18 to 25 years. All participants are citizens of Kazakhstan, 3 of them are currently pursuing a master's degree at a university, and 3 of them have higher education degrees; all of them grew up without parental care except for Participant 1, who was raised by a grandparent. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1, with the names of the participants replaced with numbers to maintain anonymity.

**Table 1**

*Basic Demographic Data*

Participant No	Gender (male / female)	Age	City	Circumstances of losing parental care
1	female	23	Karaganda	Both parents passed away when she was an infant.
2	male	25	Aktau	Father passed away before birth, mother passed away when Participant 2 was in school.

3	female	25	Almaty	Grew up in an orphanage, reason unknown.
4	female	25	Almaty	Grew up in an orphanage, reason unknown.
5	male	24	Almaty	Both parents passed away, no relatives, sent to an orphanage.
6	male	22	Semey	Grew up in an orphanage, reason unknown.

Since the study explores the educational experiences of orphan students, the following table (Table 2) provides the educational trajectory of the participants from school education to current employment or education. The data shows that the participants have had varied educational experiences.

**Table 2**

*Educational Institutions (school, university) and Current Employment*

Participant №	School	University	Current employment status
1	NIS(Karaganda)	Nazarbayev University	Teacher
2	Lyceum School	Suleyman Demirel University	Financier in BIG4
3	Boarding school	College	Not currently employed
4	Boarding school	College	Not currently employed
5	Boarding Art school	KAZGAS College	Engineer
6	School of Gifted Children	Suleyman Demirel University	Entrepreneur

### 4.3 Data Analysis

The data gathered from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2019) Thematic Analysis. The themes and the subthemes that emerged from the analysis are presented in the table below. The study's research questions are also included to show the alignment between the study's objectives and the emerged themes.

**Table 3**

*Study Themes and Subthemes*

<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>
1. How did cultural, social and other factors influence their educational experience?	Educational Experience  Psychological Challenges	<i>Different stages of participants' educational journey (school, college, university); Having to change schools and adapting; Accessibility of educational resources; Initial difficulties in adaptation and socialization</i>
2. What types of support did participants receive as orphans during their educational journey?	Interaction with Government Institutions  Personal Development	<i>Shortcomings of the existing support system; Impact of the educational journey on personal growth; Development of motivation and self-improvement</i>
3. What do orphans believe they need to increase their overall well-being?	Inclusion and Accessibility  Social Support  Interaction with Government Institutions	<i>Influence of family and friends on the educational path; Experience of support from teachers and peers; Adaptation of educational institutions to participants' needs; Financial barriers and ways to overcome them; State support (benefits, scholarships, social assistance)</i>

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In the following sections, findings are presented according to the themes related to the study's three research questions.

Research Question 1: How did cultural, social, and other factors influence their educational experience?

Research Question 2: What types of support did the participants receive during their educational journey as orphans?

Research Question 3: What do orphans believe they need to increase their overall well-being?

#### **4.4 Educational Experience**

The first theme concerns the educational experience of orphaned students. Being one of the central themes of the study, this was divided into three subthemes in order to explore the various stages of their educational path, from primary to higher education, as well as adaptation and socialization, and the availability of educational resources. The division of these subthemes makes it possible to fully understand the educational path of the participants and identify key factors such as cultural, and social influencing on their success and the difficulties they faced.

##### ***4.4.1 Different Stages of the Educational Path***

The educational path of each participant in the study was unique in its own way, but they all experienced difficulties at different stages of learning. Some attended regular secondary schools, others specialized institutions, and for some, additional education and independent work played an important role. Most of the participants started their education in general

education schools, but some later transferred to specialized educational institutions such as NIS. As for higher education, admission to universities required a lot of effort, especially in terms of exam preparation and financial support for continuing education. Some participants took online courses, attended trainings and master classes, which complemented their basic knowledge. As Participant 6 shared, "I have always used online resources to fill gaps in my education."

Some participants noted that their educational path was largely determined not only by their personal efforts, but also by the support of their extended family or educational organizations. However, not everyone had equal opportunities; therefore, there is a difference in their responses. For instance, while Participant 1 faced financial difficulties, Participant 3 faced with the lack of necessary programs in their region, requiring them to rely on online programs. Participant 1 shared, "My university studies became possible only thanks to scholarships and financial assistance." Thus, the educational paths taken and the experience gained by the participants demonstrate the importance of access to different types of education and that educational trajectories can be different for each individual. Thus, the difference in access to quality education led to different trajectories of professional and personal development.

#### ***4.4.2 Having to Change Schools and Adapt***

Participants 3, 4, and 5 shared that they faced difficulties when changing schools. For example, all orphans released from orphanages who studied at boarding schools changed schools many times for various reasons, such as when they were moved to a different orphanage or when the orphanage closed altogether. This affected both the transition from one school to another and the adaptation to higher education, especially in the case Participant 4, who had to change her specialization and college. Among them, the most common problem was social

adaptation as the participants experienced difficulties in establishing contacts with classmates and the subsequent fear of isolation. Participant 2 shared,

When I moved to a new school, I felt like a stranger. Everyone already knew each other, but I couldn't find a common language with my classmates. For the first few months, I just kept quiet during recess and sat alone.

Participant 5 also noted: "The most difficult thing when changing schools is to find friends. Sometimes it seemed that I would never be able to become a part of a new environment." Participants 4 and 6 mentioned that they often encountered differences in academic loads and curricula. Participant 4 shared, "After transferring to another school, I realized that the program here was more difficult. I had to catch up on several subjects at once, and it was hard." Similarly, Participant 6 responded, "At the university, the requirements were higher than I expected. I needed to read more, write complex papers, and I had no experience, so at first I lagged far behind others."

The participants also mentioned psychological stress associated with constant changes and the need to adapt. For example, Participant 1 highlighted, "When I went to university in another city, I was under constant stress. It was necessary to get used to everything – life without parents, a new rhythm, studying. At some point, I thought I couldn't handle it" and Participant 3 mentioned, "I worried about every school shift because it meant that I had to get used to a new place, new people, and new rules again. Sometimes it led to sleepless nights."

The process of adaptation after changing schools or going to university may not seem so problematic or difficult for most people but the participants' experiences show these problems from a different perspective. These changes resulted in a loss of motivation caused either by

stress and lack of support from teachers or peers. Participant 2 shared, "I changed schools three times, and each time it was stressful: new teachers, new environment, new friends." Meanwhile, Participant 4 mentioned, "After going to university, I felt lost because the level of requirements was much higher than at school." Participant 5 also had a similar experience as she confirmed in her statement: "Moving to another city for the sake of studying was a difficult challenge. It took me a long time to get used to the new environment." However, for some, changing educational institutions provided new opportunities despite the considerable effort needed to adapt. They noted the positive effect of adaptation, as Participant 4 pointed out, "But it is precisely these difficulties that I think have made us strong and resilient." However, the majority agreed that the availability of adaptation programs in educational institutions could significantly facilitate the process of changing schools and universities.

#### ***4.4.3 Availability of Educational Resources***

To begin with, everyone had different experiences of orphanhood—those who had been orphaned since childhood and grew up in an orphanage where there was no Internet for free use while others who grew up with relatives and lived in affluence and were provided such an opportunity. Thus, the educational resources and opportunities for each participant were different and hence not comparable. Regardless, educational opportunities played a significant role for each participant because it directly affected their future in spite of differences in access: for some participants, government support programs became a crucial factor, while for others, education required considerable effort and independent search for opportunities. Many highlighted these key aspects of educational access: the first is financial support in the form of scholarships, grants, and government programs that helped participants get an education. The second is educational materials such as textbooks, online courses, consultations, which were

used for in-depth study of various subjects. Finally, additional opportunities such as tutors, educational centers and mentors who played an important role in preparing for exams and admission.

One of the main factors that influenced the availability of educational resources for the study participants is regional inequality. During the interview, responses were received, where their responses were noticeable depending on the place of birth. Those who studied in large cities noted the availability of more educational programs, opportunities, courses, and resources. At the same time, the participants from rural regions, like Participant 6, shared,

Because I was from Semey, I was afraid to even think about Almaty and Astana, because these are megacities and they seemed unreal to us. Many of our teachers advised us children to choose universities close to family because it is difficult to live in big cities, and it is also difficult to get a grant to these universities, and in Semey and in other little-known cities, it is easy to get a grant to study.

The participants also often talked about the lack of educational materials, specialists, and support. Participant 6 shared, "There were not enough textbooks, so I searched for information on the Internet and used free educational resources." This participant also shared:

We had computers that we could use to search for information, but even with them, I just didn't know how, where, or what to look for, even though I think that was my limit of thinking. When I was little, I couldn't think beyond my hometown of Semey.

Moreover, two participants mentioned the availability of tutors and government scholarships that made education possible. For instance, Participant 3 said, "I was able to enter the university only thanks to a government scholarship," and Participant 5 mentioned the

importance of tutors stating, “Without tutors, I would not have been able to prepare for university.” Thus, the selection of different participants with different characteristics helped to see that the availability of educational resources varied significantly among the participants, which affected their opportunities to receive quality education. Nevertheless, they all looked for alternative ways, used available technologies, and sought support whenever possible. This is evident in Participant 4’s statement:

I was helped by my friend Nastya, who graduated from our orphanage and was already studying at the College of Service and Technology. She told me how the training was going there, what skills she had learned. I loved working with hair and realized that I wanted to go there. And I'm grateful that she helped me choose my specialty.

#### **4.5 Psychological Difficulties**

Although the educational path of the participants played a key role in their lives, it was also accompanied by significant psychological difficulties affecting their ability to adapt and achieve academic success. During the interview, all the participants talked about the problems they faced. These problems affected their psychological state, as well as their educational and social experiences, so the topic was assigned to the first research question. As the participants noted, these difficulties can be caused by a number of factors: adaptation to a new environment, lack of parental support, financial assistance, as well as high levels of academic and personal stress. When coding the responses of the study participants, the following sub-topics were identified: difficulties with adaptation, fear of making new acquaintances, feeling of inadequacy, unwillingness to change schools, stress and anxiety associated with a new place, awkwardness due to their status, stress due to grades. Therefore, three sub-themes were created:

initial difficulties of adaptation and socialization, anxiety about the absence of parents, and stress caused by academic and personal difficulties.

#### ***4.5.1 Initial Difficulties of Adaptation and Socialization***

As mentioned under the second theme, which covered the importance of institutions and their support for the better adaptation and integration of orphaned children, it was also discovered that the change and the new environment and the transition to a new level of education were not only barriers to socialization but also a psychologically difficult aspect in their lives. The feeling of loneliness, fear of a new environment, and the search for ways to socialize were frequently mentioned in the interview. For example, Participant 2 shared:

When I transferred to another school, I felt lost. It seemed to me that no one wanted to communicate with me, and I stayed alone for a long time. Everyone knew each other and had fun talking to each other, but not me, but I really wanted to.

Participant 4 faced similar challenges.

It was very difficult to get used to independent life at the university. For the first few months, I felt constant tension and insecurity. Although looking at my classmates, I would not say that they felt the same as me, they seemed to have been waiting for this for a very long time and were happy about this new stage in their lives, but for me, every day seemed to be quite a difficult test. (Participant 4).

Moreover, Participant 5 noted that overcoming these difficulties helped them develop resilience and social skills: "At first it was difficult, but over time I learned to find a common

language with different people. I realized that it was a matter of time, I just had to survive the initial stage."

#### ***4.5.2 Worries about the Absence of Parents***

In addition to adaptation and socialization, many worried about orphaned students who grew up without any family ties such as support from an aunt, uncle, brother, sister, and experienced special psychological difficulties associated with a lack of emotional support. Some of them mentioned feeling lonely and being forced to become independent early. For instance, Participant 3 mentioned, "I lacked parental advice and support. Sometimes it was very difficult to deal with problems alone," which is similar to Participant 1's experience: "I've always envied those who have a family that can support them in difficult moments. Even their presence would be enough for me to feel happy."

At the same time, some participants found support in other people, for example, Participant 6 noted, "My friends became my family, and it helped me to cope with difficulties. They were my mainstay, although they probably didn't think so, I am very glad to be at the university, and in general, that I could find such friends." It is possible that the gender of the participants also influenced the answers, as the answers of Participants 1 and 3, both female, were similar. However, Participant 6, a man and was raised in an orphanage, is different; he doesn't highlight the absence of parents much.. Participant 1 also noted that it was precisely because of the lack of a fatherly role in her life that she felt she faced problems: "I understand that it may not be very pronounced, but due to the absence of a father and a male role in my life, I have problems communicating with the male sex." and also vice versa due to the absence of a

mother “I have a grandmother and she was like a mother to me, I think that's why the problem of not having a mother was probably less than the absence of a father.”

#### ***4.5.3 Stress Caused by Academic and Personal Challenges***

Academic workload, unsatisfactory grades, competition, and personal circumstances often became a source of stress for the study participants. Some of them noted that the constant academic demands exerted considerable pressure like Participant 4, "I had to study at night to keep up, and it had a big impact on my emotional state. I even prepared in advance to somehow stand out from my classmates." Similarly, Participant 2 also stated:

I was often afraid that I would not be able to cope with my studies, and this caused me panic and anxiety, and I could not sleep at night. I thought if I didn't study hard, I wouldn't be able to live well and help my brother and sister. These thoughts motivated me even more and at the same time depressed me.

However, Participant 5 made the following comment:

I've learned how to manage my time and give myself a break, otherwise I just wouldn't be able to stand it. I was able to praise myself for the little things and accept everything as it is, most of these thoughts came from the fact that everything was focused on academic achievements.

An interesting difference between these three responses could be because an interesting difference between these three answers may be that participants 4 and 5 grew up in an orphanage, while participant 2 has a brother and sister with whom he lived, but his brother went to work in another city.

In addition to psychological difficulties, the availability of support from both the state and social connections had a significant impact on the educational path of the participants. The next section examines the types of support participants received during their studies.

#### ***4.5.4 Interaction with Government Agencies***

Interaction with government agencies significantly affects the educational and social opportunities of the participants. Government support, the availability of social benefits, and the effectiveness of the care system play a crucial role in their integration into society. The study participants experienced both support and bureaucratic obstacles in their path, and these are presented in the following sub-themes: 1) government support (allowances, scholarships, social benefits) and the types of assistance available to participants; 2) disadvantages of the existing support system creating barriers and problems; and 3) examples of interaction with government agencies.

#### ***4.5.5 Government Support (Allowances, Scholarships, Social Benefits)***

Government assistance was an important factor in the lives of the participants, as they were one of the main financial supports. Many received various benefits, scholarships, and social benefits that helped them cope with financial difficulties. Many of the answers were about the fact that the benefits from the state were insignificant and it was not particularly possible to survive without additional work. For example, "If we talk about the scholarship, it covered part of the costs, but it was not enough to fully provide for my needs," shared Participant 3. There was also a slightly similar opinion about benefits, where participants mentioned not knowing how to find out details of financial support available to them. "No one came to orphanages and gave career guidance, we found work and talked about support programs where we could

participate, but not other cities” (Participant 6). While sometimes they received information about possibilities, there was very little guidance about how to apply for them: “Representatives of colleges came to us and told us about the possibilities of studying at colleges.”

#### ***4.5.6 Experience of Applying to Social and Educational Authorities***

The participants had different experiences when interacting with government agencies: some received timely assistance, while others faced refusals and difficulties. Participant 1 shared,

They helped me apply for benefits at the university, but I had to go through many instances. I was also given a discount on the hostel, but only after I applied. If I hadn't applied, would they have given it to me?

Participant 2 recommended that getting to know others in similar situations and receiving some orientation would have been helpful:

Meeting students with similar backgrounds is important to me because it helps me understand that I am not alone. However, when the university received my data and learned that I was an orphan, they did not offer any introductory program, although I would not have minded participating in one.”

He also mentioned the lack of proper information related to additional expenses: “If I hadn't applied or asked, they would have continued to charge me money, which is not entirely correct, since the state allocated places and freed me from additional expenses.” Participant 4 added: “When I applied for financial support, they didn't explain to me what documents I needed, and I had to redo the application several times.” Despite the difficulties in accessing government support, many participants persevered and sought support. Next, let's look at how the educational path has contributed to their personal development.

## 4.6 Personal Development

The personal development of the study participants is also closely related to their educational path, overcoming difficulties and interacting with society. This topic belongs to the second research question. Personality formation is influenced not only by academic experience, but also by social, financial, and psychological factors. Based on the analysis, three key sub-themes were identified: the impact of the educational trajectory on personality formation, motivation and self-development, as well as plans and prospects for the future.

### *4.6.1 Influence of the Educational Path on Personality Development*

The educational process plays a key role in development, helping participants gain self-confidence, develop critical thinking, and socialize. During the study, participants noted that educational institutions, their environment, and past difficulties had a significant impact on their sense of self. "When I started studying at the university, I realized how important it is to be able to adapt. I had to learn how to make decisions quickly and find a way out of difficult situations," mentioned Participant 2. Similarly, "Education gave me not only knowledge, but also the ability to defend my rights, make plans and work on myself," pointed out Participant 5.

Some participants emphasized that the difficulties they faced strengthened their character: "All these difficulties are a kind of school of life. They made me stronger, helped me develop patience and confidence" (Participant 4). However, not everyone's educational experience has been exceptionally positive: "At school, I often felt insecure because I did not receive the necessary support. It was only later, at university, that I was able to overcome this fear" (Participant 6).

#### ***4.6.2 Motivation Formation and Self-development***

Motivation and self-development are important aspects of the participants' personal growth. Many noted that their desire for knowledge and professional development was caused by both internal ambitions and external circumstances. "I realized that no one would do my job for me. That's why I started looking for ways to improve myself – I attended additional courses, and participated in volunteer projects," shared Participant 1. Similarly, "I was helped by the stories of other people who went through a similar path. I found inspiration in their experience and realized that I could achieve more too," stated Participant 3.

Some participants found motivation in the need to overcome social and economic barriers: "I knew that I had to be doubly diligent to achieve the same things as others. This kept me moving forward" (Participant 6). However, despite the high level of motivation, the participants also faced difficulties in finding opportunities for self-development: "It was not easy to find high-quality educational courses, especially if there were not enough finances. Sometimes I had to study on my own using free materials" (Participant 5).

#### ***4.6.3 Future Plans and Prospects***

Despite all the difficulties, most of the participants have clear plans for the future and strive for further professional and personal development. They view education as a tool to achieve their goals and strive to use the knowledge they gain in their careers and lives. For instance, Participant 4 shared, "My goal is to gain international experience and develop my management skills. I'm already working on this through internships" while Participant 2 was motivated to help others in similar situations: "I want to start my own project and help people who face the same difficulties as me." However, not everyone has clear plans, such as Participant 3: "I have not yet fully decided what I want to do. But one thing I know for sure is

that I want to keep learning and developing." Moreover, some participants noted that their plans largely depend on economic factors and the availability of support: "I would like to continue my studies abroad, but I'm not sure yet if I can afford it financially" (Participant 5). In addition to academic and personal growth, participants emphasized the importance of inclusion, social support, and improving the conditions of educational institutions. These aspects become key in discussing their ideas about well-being.

#### **4.7 Inclusion and Accessibility**

The study found that there are also various obstacles to improving orphans overall well-being, and the first of them is inclusivity and accessibility. While educational institutions have succeeded in removing physical barriers and meeting the needs of students with special needs by providing ramps, special toilets for students in wheelchairs, or affordable technology for the visually impaired, the financial barriers of the participants in this study were often ignored. This was mentioned in the responses of the participants, who noted how inaccessible government support programs are. This subsequently influenced their educational experience. During the analysis, three sub-themes were identified: 1) adaptation of educational institutions to the needs of participants, 2) financial barriers and ways to overcome them, and 3) availability of government support programs. Each of these subtopics is described in the following sections.

##### ***4.7.1 Adapting Educational Institutions to the Participants' Needs***

Educational institutions are the foundation of inclusive learning, creating conditions for equal access and participation. Half of the participants noted a positive experience of adaptation, including access to additional courses, mentoring programs, and individual consultations. For example, "At the university, we had special mentors who helped with our adaptation. It was

very supportive. They watched us and were really worried about our well-being and tried to support us," stated Participant 3. Similarly, Participant 5 shared, "Many teachers who knew my status provided access to individual classes, which greatly helped in mastering the material. I was very grateful and studied harder." However, Participant 2 encountered the limitations of inclusive programs: "Although formally inclusion exists, in practice, teachers are not always ready to take into account our peculiarities. Many teachers knew that such cases could happen, but they simply did not understand in practice and did not do anything special." Participant 4 shared. This was also shared by another participant 2: "I often felt excluded because there were no support mechanisms."

#### ***4.7.2 Financial Barriers and Ways to Overcome Them***

Financial difficulties are one of the most significant and most frequently mentioned problems that the participants faced. The main challenges included a lack of funds to pay for tuition, accommodation, and related expenses, as they simply did not have anyone to support them financially. For instance, Participant 1 mentioned,

I had to combine my studies and work, otherwise I would not have been able to cover all the expenses. When others applied their strength only to study, I had to put twice as much effort into paying expenses and also getting good grades.

Although Participant 1 had an older brother, unlike others, he still felt burdened by financial difficulties and did not rely much on his brother. Participant 6 also shared a similar experience:

There were times when it was very difficult financially. I had to take out loans to pay my expenses because the scholarships weren't enough. Now I understand that maybe I

shouldn't have worried so much, but I also understand that I was younger then and I didn't have any support to entrust my financial expenses to. I relied only on myself.

Some participants found strategies to overcome these barriers. For example, Participant 5 shared: "For those who studied well, our university awarded a grant among the best students, of course, I couldn't help but participate. I applied for several grants, and it greatly eased my financial situation." While Participant 3 worked to earn extra money: "Additional earnings through teaching online courses helped me cope with expenses."

#### ***4.7.3 Availability of Government Support Programs***

Despite the importance of financial assistance from the State, participants also noted a number of systemic barriers that make it difficult to access these resources. Some participants noted that they had encountered bureaucratic difficulties. "They helped me apply for a scholarship, but I had to spend a lot of time collecting documents," said Participant 4. Moreover, another Participant mentioned this experience:

During the admission process, when I was just starting to look for a specialization and admission routes, and especially those that did not require expenses. I only found out about financial assistance by accident, no one had ever explained that such programs existed before.

Other participants, like Participant 1, noted the lack of flexibility of existing programs: "I couldn't use the programs because I didn't meet their conditions. They always had very difficult conditions or incomprehensible and very expensive ones, so in most cases they refused us, I still don't know the reason."

## 4.8 Social Support

In addition to formal government support programs, participants emphasized the key role of social connections — friends, mentors, and teachers — in shaping their personal growth and resilience. In this study, special attention was paid to the kind of support the participants received at different stages of their lives and how it influenced their adaptation and integration into society. Social support can be provided through family, friends, educational institutions, government organizations, and community initiatives. During the analysis, three key sub-themes were identified: Support from family and friends, the role of educational institutions in social integration, state and public support. These aspects were mentioned many times, and the analysis of these subtopics allow for a better understanding of the types of support that have been most effective and the gaps that remain in the social assistance system.

### *4.8.1 Support from Family and Friends*

Almost all participants noted that they have had the most support from their relatives, friends, and acquaintances, and the influence from these people influenced their motivation to gain more knowledge. Family and friends seemed to have played the most important role in the process of adaptation and integration. During the interview, it was shown that having a reliable support system can significantly mitigate the stress associated with educational and social challenges. "When I went to university, I was scared, but my friends helped me adapt. We prepared for exams together, discussed lectures, and this made the process easier," shared Participant 5. However, not all participants had access to such support.

Some participants noted that their families were the main sources of moral and material support: Participant 2 mentioned, "Also, since my older brother was working, he transferred

some of the money and told me not to worry and to study more. But for my part, I paid for such expenses anyway.” However, for Participant 1, family was not the main source of support: "I couldn't count on the help of my parents, that is, my grandmother, because she was struggling to make ends meet on her own. So I had to rely on myself and look for other ways." Thus, the presence of support from family and friends directly influenced the level of adaptation of the participants, reducing stress and contributing to their integration into society.

#### ***4.8.2 Role of Educational Institutions in Social Integration***

Educational institutions can also become a bridge and help in the process of social integration. However, during the study, participants noted both positive and negative aspects of this process. The positive aspects included help from teachers and the opportunity to make new friends facilitated the process of socialization:

At the university, I found a community where people supported each other. It made me feel like I was part of something bigger. The professors at the university treated me as usual, although everyone knew that I was an orphan, and in general I did not hide it, but with the help of the professor's attitude towards me, many began to accept me easily and treat me as well, which helped me a lot and I was lucky that I could communicate like everyone else. (Participant 6)

Moreover, Participant 2 shared, "The teachers at my school were always ready to help, and it created a sense of security." However, two participants said the opposite and that they faced difficulties due to lack of support: Participant 4 shared, "I felt that the school did not take into account my individual needs. No one explained to me how to deal with difficulties. Everyone was on their own, let's say neutrally or even not caring", and a similar comment was

shared by Participant 5, "After moving to a new school, I experienced a lot of stress. I needed more support, but it wasn't there."

#### ***4.8.3 Government and Public Support***

Financial support from the state had a significant impact on the educational path of the participants, but its availability and sufficiency varied greatly. While many participants in this study shared the importance of these programs, the effectiveness of such programs remains ambiguous. Some participants noted that government assistance programs proved useful: "I received a scholarship that allowed me to focus on my studies rather than looking for a part-time job" shared Participant 3 and Participant 6 shared, "Programs for students from low-income families really helped me adapt." Others pointed out the shortcomings of the system:

There is government support, but it is not always available. Sometimes you have to wait a long time or prove that you really need help. And it's been dragging on for so long that I want to give up on the process, but the desire to get at least some help is needed.

(Participant 1)

Moreover, Participant 4 mentioned, "There's not enough information support – many people don't even know what programs are available. It's as if the state is sitting silent until you go and ask for opportunities and help yourself."

The study showed that having support from family, friends, educational institutions, and the state can significantly facilitate the adaptation process to higher education. However, gaps remain due to a lack of information, unavailability of some programs, and individual differences in the level of support.

#### **4.9 Interaction with Government Agencies: Disadvantages of the Support System**

This aspect was partially considered in the second research question concerning various types of state aid. However, it is this sub-topic that is directly related to the third research question, which justifies its inclusion in this section.

Despite existing government support programs, many of the study participants faced bureaucratic difficulties, lack of information, and low awareness. They either did not know about the existence of such programs, or had difficulty getting help. “I spent months applying for the benefits, but in the end I was rejected due to a formal error in the documents. It was extremely disappointing,” shared Participant 2.

Another respondent from Semey, who sought a grant, noted: “The support system needs to be improved — there is a lack of transparency and accessibility of information”. At the same time, Participant 5 said: “The allowance helped me pay for my housing, but the registration process turned out to be difficult and tedious.”

Thus, the results of the study show that improving the well-being of orphans requires a comprehensive approach: removing bureaucratic obstacles, expanding financial support and improving adaptation programs in educational institutions.

#### **4.10 Summary**

In this chapter, the findings of the study were presented in accordance with the themes and subthemes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data. Findings provided an insight into the life experience of six participants who grew up as orphans, particularly their educational trajectories, adaptation and socialization and the problems associated with them, accessibility to educational resources, role of governmental and social support, psychological challenges, and personality development. Findings revealed not only problems faced by the

participants but also ways in which these problems have been overcome by them in order to continue their education. Additionally, improvements to support systems have been described in order to emphasize increased support during the adaptation process, increased accessibility to economic aid, and organized psychological and social support in institutions of higher education.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This study examines the educational experience of orphaned children in Kazakhstan and identifies the factors contributing to or barriers to their academic achievements. Earlier in previous chapters, we discussed the main goals, a literature review, a detailed methodology, and the revealed results of a semi-structured interview. Therefore, this discussion will analyze all these chapters, with the main focus on comparing the answers received and the overall findings with the initial review of the literature and the theoretical framework. This will help to better understand the conditions affecting the educational experience of orphaned students and develop practical recommendations for schools and educational authorities.

### **5.1 Life Experience of Students who Grew up as Orphans**

This study, based on semi-structured interviews with six participants presented in Chapter 4, examines the experience of orphaned children's educational experiences. Based on the results presented in the previous chapter, this section aims to interpret and discuss them in the light of the research questions posed and the chosen theoretical framework. It is divided into three sections dealing with the main issues: (1) barriers to education, which include problems of lack of resources and difficulties with adaptation; (2) the role of support; and (3) recommendations offering solutions to improve the academic performance of orphaned children in school. The organization follows the stories of the participants, comparing the findings with the literature and through the theoretical framework of this study.

The study of the educational experience of orphaned children in Kazakhstan in this study is based on the theory of ecological systems by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and the theory of attachment by Bowlby (1969), discussed in Chapter 2. These theories provide an opportunity to study how different levels of the environment and the processes of relationships affect the academic trajectories of orphaned students. The Bronfenbrenner model emphasizes the

interaction of systems - microsystems (orphanages, teachers), mesosystems (transition from school to university), exosystems (government support services), and macrosystems (attitudes and policies of society in Kazakhstan) - in shaping the educational experience of participants. Many studies emphasize the importance of these systems and their role in the development of orphans (Guo et al., 2012; Groark et al., 2005; Davidson & McEwen, 2012). For example, the findings of Chapter 4 show how limited access to resources and the transition period at school reflect problems at these environmental levels, which in Kazakhstan are exacerbated by regional inequalities and bureaucratic processes.

Bowlby's attachment theory supports this theory by emphasizing stable, trusting relationships as requirements for successful emotion and learning, especially for orphans who lack attachment to their parents. The results obtained in Chapter 4 confirm this: participants such as participant 5 describe how friendship helps to cope with loneliness, and participant 1 describes the lack of parental guidance as a constant emotional void. This is confirmed by the results of previous studies by Anderson and Pomfret (2002) conducted with children from Central Asia, which revealed a link between a lack of mentoring and a decrease in the average score of orphans. Collectively, these theories form the basis of the study's analysis, linking structural factors such as financial assistance and institutional care with individual factors such as resilience and motivation, which are expressed in participants' stories. Consequently, the results of this study confirm the theoretical assumptions about the impact of support and structural barriers on their academic experience. In addition, it highlights the lack and need to develop comprehensive programs such as enhanced mentoring and maximum assistance, taking into account the individual characteristics of Kazakhstani orphans. Thus, this dual concept helps to understand how the external world and internal needs in relationships interact with each other, influencing school performance and integration into social life.

### **5.3 Barriers in Education: Exploring the Obstacles**

Each student who is an orphan in Kazakhstan has his own unique educational path: the study participants graduated from both private universities and colleges, as well as leading universities in the country, which allowed us to examine their experience from different perspectives. The analysis revealed serious and multifaceted difficulties faced by orphaned children in the learning process. Frequent school changes and transitions from one stage of education to another create problems with adaptation, which are aggravated by the instability of the environment and lack of moral support. For example, orphans often face a situation where teachers, unaware of their vulnerability, do not pay enough attention to their individual learning needs, which increases the feeling of isolation and makes it difficult to adapt to a new educational environment, or, on the contrary, pay excessive attention to highlighting and showing them as special individual students. These interactions fall within what Bronfenbrenner (1979) identifies as the microsystem—the immediate environments, such as classrooms and relationships with teachers, that have a direct influence on a child’s development. When these microsystem interactions lack sensitivity or consistency, they disrupt the child’s ability to build a stable educational experience. Furthermore, repeated transitions between schools, combined with insufficient teacher awareness, illustrate a breakdown in the mesosystem—the connections between different microsystems, such as schools and boarding institutions. Without coordination across these systems, orphans struggle to establish the supportive networks that are essential for resilience and academic continuity. As mentioned in the study by Magjoni and Magjoni Magjoni (2017), who spoke about poor teacher training for vulnerable children and students, which leads to the creation of new barriers for them, this was confirmed in the responses of participants that teachers focused on their status. Some participants noted that teachers often singled them out among others, using them as an example demonstrating that

academic success is possible even without parental support. Such public coverage exerted excessive psychological pressure on students, increasing their sense of difference from others and increasing emotional stress. Instead of contributing to motivation, these moments reminded them of their orphan status, further impeding their ability to feel included and supported in a classroom setting. This is especially noticeable with frequent shifts in classes, when the lack of familiar social connections in the classroom or support from the staff of orphanages disrupts the continuity of the educational process. Such microsystem factors, as Bronfenbrenner emphasizes, directly affect the ability of orphans to form a stable educational trajectory, which is confirmed by Hough and Kaczmarek (2011), who associate orphanhood with instability and learning delays. At the mesosystem level, these problems are compounded by poor coordination between schools and universities, and at the macro level by insufficient government support.

The claim that the lack of psychological support in schools and universities further complicates the situation (Nikolaeva et al., 2023) coincides with the responses of some participants, and some, on the contrary, have the opposite opinion. Participants who argued and supported the value and importance of psychological support said that for some participants, this is perhaps the most important problem. Anxiety, stress related to adaptation, assessments, and thoughts about the future, as well as financial instability, have a significant impact on orphans' emotional state and academic motivation. For example, the need to combine study with part-time work due to a lack of funds distracts from educational goals, which is confirmed by Escueta and others (2014), who note the connection of emotional trauma with poor academic performance. Some participants noted that despite the formal opportunity to seek help from specialists, such as a school psychologist, they faced significant social barriers. This is due to a common stereotype among peers, according to which contacting a psychologist is associated with mental instability or weakness (Khoza & Mokwena, 2016; Cluver et al., 2011). Such a

social context in the school environment limited access to professional help, increased the isolation and psychological discomfort of the participants.

The psychological difficulties faced by orphaned children in the learning process find parallels in studies conducted in similar institutional settings. For example, Oslon et al. (2023) found that high levels of anxiety and stress caused by uncertainty about the future and lack of social support significantly limit the ability of orphaned children to adapt to educational requirements (Oslon et al., 2023; Auger et al., 2005). These conclusions are consistent with the results of the present study, in which financial instability and lack of systemic psychological assistance increase participants' emotional stress. The authors emphasize that weak self-regulation and emotional intelligence skills hinder academic progress, which is especially important for orphaned children in Kazakhstan during the transition between educational levels.

Financial barriers continue to be one of the main obstacles to quality education, especially for students from socially vulnerable groups. For example, a study published in the *Journal of Research in International Education* highlights that limited financial resources are becoming a constant source of stress for students. This stress, in turn, negatively affects both mental health and student academic performance (Rogers, Gillett-Swan, & Chatterjee, 2021).

Similar findings are contained in a report prepared by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). The document notes that 59% of college students in the United States have considered dropping out due to the high financial burden and lack of sufficient support. This highlights the scale of the problem, especially in the context of rising tuition and living costs (National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators [NASFAA], 2023). These studies fully confirm the statements of almost all of our participants. After reaching the age of 18 and starting an independent life, when it is necessary to pay for

housing, food and other basic needs on their own, as well as look for work, many are faced with constant financial stress. Thoughts about the lack of money displaced academic motivation and kept them away from the active learning process, making it difficult to focus on developing and acquiring new knowledge.

Despite the fact that some of our participants were provided with housing by the state, the feeling of anxiety did not disappear. They still felt insecure about the future and worried about their safety and stability. This coincides with the conclusions presented in the TimelyCare report, which highlights that housing instability is a serious risk factor. Students who do not have a permanent and secure place of residence show lower academic results, are more likely to suffer from anxiety disorders and depression compared to those who live in stable conditions (TimelyCare, 2023).

Studies such as those by Anderson and Pomfret (2002) highlight the fact that insufficient funding disproportionately reduces the quality of education for orphans, and procedural difficulties and low awareness of available programs, which were also noted by Mwoma and Pillay (2015), again put them at a disadvantage and in a difficult position. Thus, barriers to education for orphaned children in Kazakhstan are a complex interweaving of structural, social, and psychological factors that require careful study and concrete action.

#### **5.4 The Role of Support in the Educational Path**

Teachers and peer support significantly increase the academic motivation, academic performance, and attendance of orphaned adolescents, as Ssewamala et al. (2018) found using the example of Ugandan adolescents orphaned by AIDS. Support is the key to the adaptation and successful education of orphaned children, but its availability and effectiveness vary. In a microsystem, supportive and empathetic relationships with peers and teachers significantly

contribute to adaptation. The study participants noted in the interviews that the support of friends and teachers, expressed in honest attitude and equal treatment, helped overcome feelings of loneliness and strengthened self-confidence. The same conclusion is reached in a study conducted by Lerkkanen et al. (2016), which notes that good interpersonal relationships are of paramount importance for improving the school life of orphaned children. From the point of view of Bowlby's attachment theory (1969), these types of relationships are a substitute for lost parental care, which leads to emotional stability.

At the mesosystem level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), mentoring and career guidance consultations from educational institutions have also had a significant impact. For example, teachers' help in choosing a university or motivation to enroll in leading universities in the country helped some participants realize their potential (Udovenko et al., 2020). However, this support was not systematic and depended on individual initiative, which indicates shortcomings in institutional coordination. At the macro level, government programs, including scholarships and quotas, have become a vital resource enabling orphans to continue their education, as evidenced by the work of Fei (2012), which highlights the need for external support to successfully complete their studies.

However, insufficient awareness of such programs and their bureaucratic complexity reduce their effectiveness, leaving many participants without the necessary assistance. At the same time, personal resilience, reinforced by experience in overcoming difficulties, has become an internal success factor for some orphans, which corresponds to the concept of Mabasa and Flotman (2022). Thus, support - social, institutional, or personal - is an essential element for reducing educational barriers, but if it is fragmented, it's not as effective, this underscores the need for a more structured approach.

### **5.5 Recommendations: Solutions to Improve Academic Performance of Orphans in School**

To overcome the identified barriers and improve the academic performance of orphaned children in Kazakhstan, an integrated approach combining systemic and practical measures is needed. At the macro-system level (Leonard, 2011), it is necessary to simplify the bureaucratic processes of access to government scholarships and quotas, as well as raise awareness of government opportunities in order to eliminate financial obstacles. To make them more accessible, awareness needs to be raised. The introduction of financial literacy programs proposed by Ssewamala et al. (2014) based on the Ugandan experience could equip orphans with resource management skills, reduce stress, and allow them to focus on their studies. Such programs should be accompanied by accessible information about existing capabilities to address the gaps identified by Mwoma and Pillay (2015). At the microsystem and mesosystem levels (Eriksson et al., 2018), educational institutions should implement structured mentoring and adaptation programs. Regular consultations with teachers acting as permanent mentors could replace the lack of parental support, which is consistent with Bowlby's theory (1969), and coordination between schools and universities could facilitate the transition between levels of education. Participants noted that organizing meetings and events for vulnerable students at the university, such as orphans, could help them integrate, strengthen their sense of belonging, and create strong bonds (Cluver et al., 2011). Psychological help should also not be ignored: providing free psychological counseling in schools and universities can alleviate stress and burnout by increasing academic motivation, as Bernal et al. (2023) emphasize. All these measures, based on the theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979), require an active approach to creating a supportive environment at all levels. To assess such measures and their impact on the career development of orphans, long-term studies can be conducted, which may be useful for developing a targeted educational policy in Kazakhstan.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The present study demonstrates the complex interaction of systemic, social, and psychological factors shaping the educational experience of orphaned children in Kazakhstan. While some participants managed to overcome barriers and successfully adapt, others faced insufficient support, which limited their chances of getting a good education and ultimately a stable career. The analysis of the data obtained through the prism of Bronfenbrenner's theory and Bowlby's theory of attachment fully emphasizes the need for comprehensive interventions aimed at eliminating financial, social, and psychological barriers.

Future research may explore the long-term effects of orphans' educational experiences and the effectiveness of existing support programs. These data will contribute to the development of more effective strategies and recommendations for Kazakhstan's education policies that address orphans.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to study the educational experience of orphans in Kazakhstan and identify key factors influencing their academic achievements. The previous chapters reviewed existing research, described the methodology, and presented the main findings, identifying social, economic, and other problems and recommendations based on interviews with participants. This chapter summarizes the conclusions drawn from the findings, acknowledges limitations, and offers recommendations for schools, universities and educational policy. The chapter ends with a discussion of practical implications and possible implications to the identified problems.

The research aimed to answer the following key questions:

1. How did the orphan status affect the participants' educational journey?
2. What barriers did orphans encounter (social, economic, psychological) and which one did they find the most difficult to overcome?
3. What measures can improve the educational experience of orphans?

Based on the findings of this research, several conclusions can be drawn. The findings related to the first research question about the impact of their orphan status on education were echoed in the findings related to the second question on barriers and challenges encountered as they made their way through society to enter a higher educational institution. The participants recounted their past experiences and, in spite of the availability of resources, support from mentors, the level of knowledge gained in secondary school, the development of confidence, and other additional skills necessary for adulthood, they faced many barriers.

A majority of problems were related to social, economic, and psychological factors, especially at the beginning of their studies. For example, in terms of social difficulties, those participants with past experiences in academically demanding and formal environments like selective schools reported easier transitions into the university setting. Conversely, participants who didn't receive this preparatory training reported very difficult transition experiences, with added stress and difficulties in adjusting. Also, two participants were helped by adult acquaintances and mentors in orphanages when choosing a university, directing them to the necessary resources and admission methods, which, according to them, provided significant support. However, it is notable that when asked how the participants accessed information related to admission and grant opportunities, they replied: "I didn't know where to look."

Moreover, economic and psychological barriers had the greatest impact on the educational path of the participants, as their removal could significantly improve their educational experience. Each of them mentioned that information about the process of admission and receiving scholarships for orphans in higher education institutions is poorly developed. Only one participant noted that his school often held career guidance meetings with university representatives, mostly from large cities such as Almaty and Astana. These findings suggest that additional types of support, such as access to Internet resources, admission assistance, career guidance, and counseling on choosing a specialty, are provided primarily in selective schools that stand out for their achievements, authority, and other factors.

Consequently, existing or insufficiently developed economic and social measures to support orphans are manifested in their educational path in the form of various stressful factors, such as stress due to lack of financial literacy (since after the age of 18 they are fully responsible for their financial situation), stress during adaptation, stress caused by an unstable financial situation, and stress associated with academic achievement. This, in turn, leads to psychological

problems, which is confirmed by Escueta et al. (2014), which show that emotional trauma in orphans often leads to a decrease in academic achievement.

### **6.1 Limitations of the Study**

Despite the significance of the findings obtained, this study has a number of limitations that must be taken into account when interpreting the conclusions.

Firstly, the study included a limited number of participants — three individual interviews were conducted with students who study at colleges and universities. Although all participants represent successful examples of admission to high-quality educational institutions, such a sample composition may limit the completeness of the picture. In particular, the study does not represent the voices of students who have faced serious difficulties in adapting, interruptions or interruptions in their educational path, as well as students studying in less prestigious or rural educational institutions.

In addition, it is important to take into account the factor of social desirability in the responses of the participants. Some respondents may have consciously or unconsciously avoided criticizing orphanages, educational institutions, or specific specialists, feeling emotional stress or a desire to remain loyal to their experiences. This is especially true for topics related to traumatic experiences, stigmatization, or feelings of lack of support. Thus, certain aspects could have been softened or omitted, which limits the depth and completeness of the analysis.

### **6.2 Practical Significance of the Results**

Based on the results of the study, key areas for improving educational support for orphans have been identified. The primary measure is the introduction of mentoring programs in which experienced students help orphans adapt to the learning process. Organizing meetings aimed at clarifying academic and social aspects of university life will provide the necessary basic knowledge that is in demand among this category of students.

Simplifying access to financial assistance requires optimizing the procedures for applying for scholarships and establishing advisory centers that provide timely clarifications. Systematic psychological support is also an important area, involving the operation of free counseling centers in educational institutions. A key aspect is the rejection of the stigmatizing approach: the study participants noted that existing programs were perceived as designed for "special" students, which reduced their level of trust.

The expansion of information support includes conducting educational campaigns on scholarships and grants, covering not only large cities but also rural regions. Additionally, it is necessary to introduce career guidance measures explaining the available educational opportunities in various universities, cities, and countries. The development of a flexible educational environment requires the introduction of individual educational plans that take into account the adaptive difficulties of orphans. These measures are aimed at creating conditions conducive to the academic and social integration of this group of students.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

After completing this research, I realized that the topic of education for orphaned students remains relevant and requires further study in Kazakhstan, where this topic has been largely ignored.

Besides developing important skills such as finding and selecting relevant information, planning, data analysis, and applying research methods to solve practical problems in education, working on this study has helped me feel more confident in discussing education for vulnerable students and methodology with experts in the field.

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## Appendix A: AI Declaration Form



### Thesis Title: **Orphaned Students: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Their Educational Experience**

#### 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 and ChatGPT to rephrase, restructure sentences, find synonyms, and assist with the literature.

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 AI appropriate use.

Name : Altynay Jumasheva

Signature  \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Consent Letters**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

#### **Orphan Students: A Phenomenological Study of Their Educational Experience**

**DESCRIPTION:** You are invited to participate in a study titled “Orphaned Students: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Their Educational Experience” The purpose of this study is to understand how cultural, social, and other factors influenced the educational experience of orphans who are now adults. What types of support they received during their educational journey, and what they believe is necessary to improve the educational experience of orphans.

You are asked to participate in a face-to-face interview or online, which, with your consent, will be recorded digitally and used for research purposes.

**TIME OF PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in this study will take between 30 to 45 minutes.

#### **RISKS AND BENEFITS:**

**Benefits:** Expected benefits include the opportunity for self-reflection and the expression of your own opinion about your educational journey. Participants will also be able to share their suggestions on improving educational conditions for orphans, which could be useful for the development of future educational programs.

**Risks:** There may be some risks in participating in this study.. Firstly, it may be emotional or stressful. It is possible that you may experience painful memories related to talking about your past (loss of parents, childhood difficulties, etc.). Additionally, you may find it difficult to trust the interviewer or you may not want to share very personal stories due to embarrassment or fear of being misunderstood.

Your decision to participate or not participate in this study will in no way affect your current position, education, or relationships with your educational institution.

**PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:** If you have read this form and decided to participate in this study, you should understand that your participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your consent or terminate your participation at any time without providing an explanation, penalty, or loss of any rights or benefits. You can also choose not to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. The results of the study may be presented or published for scientific or professional purposes, but your personal information will remain confidential.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Questions: If you have any questions, comments, or complaints regarding this study, you can contact the researcher directly.

My email: [altynay.jumasheva@nu.edu.kz](mailto:altynay.jumasheva@nu.edu.kz), +7076962660

My professor's mail: [Janet Helmer](#)

**Independent Contact:** If you are not satisfied with the conduct of this study or have any complaints or questions, you may contact the Research Committee of the Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University by sending an email to [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz).

Please sign this form if you agree to participate in the study:

- I have carefully read the information provided.
- I have been given complete information about the goals and procedures of the study.
- I understand how the collected data will be used and that access to any confidential information will be limited to the researcher.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without providing a reason
- With full awareness of all the above, I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
- I agree for this interview to be audio recorded

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ФОРМА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

Опыт обучения студентов, выросших сиротами: феноменологическое исследование

**ОПИСАНИЕ:** Вам предлагается принять участие в исследовании «Опыт обучения студентов, выросших сиротами: феноменологическое исследование».

Цель данного исследования — понять, как культурные, социальные и другие факторы влияют на образовательный опыт детей-сирот, какие виды поддержки они получают в процессе обучения, а также определить, что, по их мнению, необходимо для улучшения их общего благосостояния. Вам будет предложено пройти интервью лицом к лицу, которое, с вашего согласия, будет записано в цифровой форме и использовано в исследовательских целях.

**ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ:** Ваше участие в данном исследовании потребует от 30 до 45 минут.

### РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА:

**Риски:** Нет явных рисков, связанных с этим исследованием, за исключением возможного дискомфорта при обсуждении личных или эмоциональных тем.

**Преимущества:** Ожидаемые преимущества включают возможность саморефлексии и выражения собственного мнения о процессе обучения. Также участники смогут высказать свои предложения по улучшению образовательных условий для детей-сирот, что может быть полезным для разработки будущих образовательных программ.

Ваше решение участвовать или не участвовать в этом исследовании никоим образом не повлияет на ваше текущее положение, обучение или отношения с образовательными учреждениями.

**ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКОВ:** Если вы прочитали данную форму и решили принять участие в исследовании, вы должны понимать, что ваше участие является полностью добровольным. У вас есть право отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любой момент без объяснения причин, штрафных санкций или потери каких-либо прав или льгот. Вы также можете отказаться отвечать на любые вопросы, которые вызывают у вас дискомфорт. Результаты исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в научных или профессиональных целях, но ваша личная информация останется конфиденциальной.

### КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

**Вопросы:** Если у вас возникнут вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, вы можете связаться с исследователем напрямую.

Моя почта: [Altynay Jumasheva](mailto:Altynay.Jumasheva), +7076962660

Почта моего профессора: [Janet Helmer](mailto:Janet.Helmer)

**Независимые контакты:** Если вас не удовлетворяет проведение данного исследования или у вас возникли какие-либо жалобы или вопросы, вы можете обратиться в Комитет по исследованиям Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета, отправив письмо на электронный адрес: [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz).

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если вы согласны участвовать в исследовании

- Я внимательно изучил(а) представленную информацию.
- Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования.
- Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь.
- Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин.
- С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен(на) принять участие в исследовании по собственной воле.

Подпись участника: \_\_\_\_\_

Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

Подпись исследователя: \_\_\_\_\_

Дата: \_

## МӘЛІМЕТТІК КЕЛІСІМ ФОРМАСЫ

Жетім өскен студенттердің білім алу тәжірибесі: феноменологиялық зерттеу

**СИПАТТАМА:** Сізді «Жетім өскен студенттердің білім алу тәжірибесі:

**феноменологиялық зерттеу»** атты зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамыз. Зерттеудің мақсаты – мәдени-әлеуметтік және басқа да факторлардың жетім өскен студенттердің білім алу тәжірибесіне қалай әсер ететінін, олардың оқу барысында қандай қолдау алғанын және әл-ауқатын жақсарту үшін не қажет деп санайтынын анықтау. Сізге жеке сұхбатқа қатысу ұсынылады, ол сіздің келісіміңіз бойынша цифрлық түрде жазылып, зерттеу мақсатында қолданылады.

**ҚАТЫСУ УАҚЫТЫ:** Сіздің осы зерттеуге қатысуыңыз шамамен 30-45 минутты алады.

**ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫНА ҚАТЫСУДЫҢ ҚАУІПТЕРІ МЕН АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ:**

**Қауіптер:** Бұл зерттеумен байланысты ерекше қауіп-қатерлер жоқ, тек жеке немесе эмоционалдық тақырыптарды талқылау барысында аздаған қолайсыздық болуы мүмкін.

**Артықшылығы:** күтілетін артықшылықтар – өзіңіздің білім алу тәжірибеңізге шолу жасау және өз пікіріңізді білдіру мүмкіндігі. Сондай-ақ, қатысушылар жетім балалардың білім беру жағдайларын жақсартуға арналған ұсыныстарын айтуға мүмкіндік алады, бұл болашақ білім беру бағдарламаларын әзірлеуге пайдалы болуы мүмкін.

Бұл зерттеуге қатысу немесе қатыспау туралы шешіміңіз сіздің қазіргі жағдайыңызға, білім алу немесе білім беру мекемелерімен қарым-қатынасыңызға ешқандай әсер етпейді.

**ҚАТЫСУШЫЛАРДЫҢ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ:** Егер сіз осы нысанды оқып шығып, зерттеуге қатысуға шешім қабылдасаңыз, онда сіздің қатысуыңыз толығымен ерікті екенін түсінуіңіз керек. Кез келген уақытта келісіміңізді кері қайтарып алуға немесе қатысуды тоқтатуға құқығыңыз бар, бұл үшін себептерді түсіндірудің, қандай да бір айыппұл төлеудің немесе құқықтарыңыз бен жеңілдіктеріңізден айырылудың қажеті жоқ. Сондай-ақ, сізді ыңғайсыз жағдайға кез келген сұраққа жауап беруден бас тартуға құқығыңыз бар. Зерттеу нәтижелері ғылыми немесе кәсіби мақсатта ұсынылуы немесе жариялануы мүмкін, бірақ сіздің жеке ақпаратыңыз құпия сақталады.

**БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:**

**Сұрақтарыңыз:** Егер сізде осы зерттеу бойынша сұрақтар, ескертулер немесе шағымдар болса, зерттеушіге тікелей хабарласа аласыз.

Менің эл.поштам: Altynay.jumasheva@nu.edu.kz, +7076962660

Менің жетекшімнің эл. поштасы: Janet.Helmer@nu.edu.kz

**Тәуелсіз байланыс:** Егер сіз осы зерттеудің жүргізілуіне қанағаттанбасаңыз немесе қандай да бір шағымдарыңыз немесе сұрақтарыңыз болса, Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары Білім Мектебінің Зерттеу комитетіне gse\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz электронды поштасына хат жіберу арқылы хабарласа аласыз.

Егер сіз зерттеуге қатысуға келіссеңіз, осы нысанды толтырыңыз және қол қойыңыз:

- Мен берілген ақпаратты мұқият оқып шықтым.
- Зерттеудің мақсаты мен процедуралары туралы толық ақпарат берілді.
- Жиналған деректердің қалай қолданылатынын және кез келген құпия ақпаратқа тек зерттеушінің қол жеткізе алатынын түсінемін.
- Зерттеуге қатысудан кез келген уақытта себепсіз бас тартуға құқылы екенімді түсінемін.
- Жоғарыда айтылғандардың бәрін толық түсіне отырып, зерттеуге өз еркіммен қатысуға келісемін.

Қатысушының қолы: \_\_\_\_\_

Күні: \_\_\_\_\_

Зерттеушінің қолы: \_\_\_\_\_

Күні:

## Appendix C: Interview Protocol

### *Orphaned Students: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Their Educational Experience*

#### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Date of the interview:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Start time of the interview:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**End time of the interview:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Place of the interview:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Introduction to a participant**

Good afternoon! You are invited to take part in a study titled "*Orphans: A Phenomenological Study of Their Educational Experience.*"

The purpose of this interview is to understand how cultural, social, and other factors have influenced the educational experience of orphans, what types of support they received during their educational journey, and what they believe is necessary to improve their overall well-being.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the interview at any time without any consequences for you.

If you agree to participate in this study, please read and sign the consent form. (Explain the purpose of the consent form, give the participant time to review it, and sign).

#### **Starting the interview**

Do you agree to have the interview recorded digitally? (Turn on the recording device after the participant's consent).

#### **General information questions**

1. Could you briefly introduce yourself?
2. How would you evaluate your educational experience?
3. What educational institutions have you attended (elementary school, high school, university)?
4. Do you think your status as an orphan has influenced your educational journey? If so, how?

#### **General research questions**

##### **Cultural, social, and other factors**

5. What cultural and social factors do you consider the most significant for your educational experience?
6. What was the role of your guardians, social workers, or other individuals who supported you during your education?

#### **Support during education**

7. What types of support did you receive from school/university or external organizations during your education?
8. Did you have mentors, supervisors, or other individuals who supported you? What role did they play?
9. What resources or programs were the most beneficial for you?

### **Necessary conditions for improving well-being**

10. In your opinion, what was missing in your educational experience?
11. What types of support do you think could improve your overall well-being and educational achievements?
12. What changes would you suggest in the educational system to better support orphans?

### **Concluding questions**

I have asked all my questions. Would you like to add anything to what has already been said? Is there any aspect I didn't ask about but you would like to discuss? Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

**ПРОТОКОЛ ИНТЕРВЬЮ****Дата интервью:** \_\_\_\_\_**Время начала интервью:** \_\_\_\_\_**Время окончания интервью:** \_\_\_\_\_**Место интервью:** \_\_\_\_\_**Участник:** \_\_\_\_\_**Интервьюер:** \_\_\_\_\_**Объяснение участнику**

Добрый день! Приглашаем вас принять участие в исследовании «Дети-сироты: феноменологическое исследование их образовательного опыта».

Цель данного интервью — понять, как культурные, социальные и другие факторы повлияли на образовательный опыт детей-сирот, какие виды поддержки они получали в процессе обучения, а также что, по их мнению, необходимо для улучшения их общего благосостояния. Ваше участие является добровольным. Вы можете отказаться отвечать на любые вопросы или прекратить интервью в любой момент без каких-либо последствий для вас. Если вы согласны принять участие в данном исследовании, пожалуйста, прочитайте и подпишите форму согласия. (Объясните суть формы согласия, дайте участнику время на ознакомление и подпись).

**Начало интервью**

Согласны ли вы с тем, что интервью будет записано на цифровое устройство? (Включить диктофон после согласия участника).

**Общая информация**

1. Не могли бы вы кратко рассказать о себе?
2. Как вы оцениваете свой образовательный опыт?
3. В каких учебных заведениях вы обучались (начальная школа, средняя школа, университет)?
4. Считаете ли вы, что ваш статус сироты повлиял на ваше образовательное путешествие? Если да, то каким образом?

**Основные вопросы исследования****Культурные, социальные и другие факторы**

5. Какие культурные и социальные факторы вы считаете наиболее значимыми для вашего образовательного опыта?
6. Какова была роль ваших опекунов, социальных работников или других лиц, поддерживавших вас в процессе обучения?

**Поддержка во время обучения**

7. Какие виды поддержки вы получали от школы/университета или внешних организаций в процессе вашего обучения?
8. Были ли у вас наставники, кураторы или другие лица, которые поддерживали вас?

Какую роль они сыграли?

9. Какие ресурсы или программы оказались наиболее полезными?

**Необходимые условия для повышения благосостояния**

10. Чего, по вашему мнению, не хватало в вашем образовательном опыте?

11. Какие формы поддержки, на ваш взгляд, могли бы улучшить ваше общее благосостояние и образовательные достижения?

12. Какие изменения в образовательной системе вы бы предложили для поддержки детей-сирот?

**Заключительные вопросы**

13. Я задала все свои вопросы. Хотели бы вы добавить что-то к тому, что уже сказали?

Есть ли какой-либо аспект, о котором я не спросила, но который вы хотели бы обсудить?

Есть ли вопросы, которые вы хотели бы задать мне?

*Жетім студенттер: олардың білім алу тәжірибесінің феноменологиялық зерттеуі*

## СҰХБАТ ПРОТОКОЛЫ

Сұхбат күні: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Сұхбаттың басталу уақыты: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Сұхбаттың аяқталу уақыты: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Сұхбат өткізілетін мекеме: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Мүшесі: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Интервьюер: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Қатысушыға түсінік беру**

Қайырлы күн! Сізді «Жетім балалар: олардың білім алу тәжірибесінің феноменологиялық зерттеуі» тақырыбындағы зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамыз. Бұл сұхбаттың мақсаты – мәдени, әлеуметтік және басқа да факторлардың жетім балалардың білім алу тәжірибесіне қалай әсер еткенін, олардың білім алу жолында қандай қолдау түрлерін алғанын, сондай-ақ жалпы әл-ауқатын жақсарту үшін не қажет деп санайтынын түсіну. Сіздің қатысуыңыз ерікті түрде жүзеге асады, және сіз кез келген уақытта сұрақтарға жауап беруден бас тарта аласыз немесе сұхбаттан бас тарта аласыз, бұл сізге ешқандай салдар тудырмайды. Егер сіз осы зерттеуге қатысуға келіссеңіз, келісім беру формасын оқып, қол қойыңыз. (Келісім беру формасының мәнін түсіндіріңіз, қатысушыға оқып, қол қоюға уақыт беріңіз).

### **Сұхбат бастау**

Сұхбаттың цифрлық құрылғыға жазылуына келісесіз бе? (Қатысушының келісімінен кейін жазу құрылғысын қосыңыз).

### **Жалпы ақпарат**

- 1 Өзіңізді қысқаша таныстырып өтесіз бе?
- 2 Білім алу тәжірибеңізді қалай бағалайсыз?
- 3 Қандай білім беру мекемелерінде оқыдыңыз (бастауыш мектеп, орта мектеп, университет)?
- 4 Жетім мәртебеңіз білім алу жолыңызға әсер етті деп санайсыз ба? Егер иә болса, қандай түрде?

### **Зерттеудің негізгі сұрақтары**

#### **Мәдени, әлеуметтік және басқа факторлар**

5. Білім алу тәжірибеңіз үшін ең маңызды мәдени және әлеуметтік факторлар деп қандай факторларды санайсыз?
6. Білім алу үдерісінде қамқоршыларыңыздың, әлеуметтік қызметкерлердің немесе сізге қолдау көрсеткен басқа адамдардың рөлі қандай болды?

#### **Оқу кезінде қолдау көрсету**

7. Оқу барысында мектептен/университеттен немесе сыртқы ұйымдардан қандай қолдау түрлерін алдыңыз?
8. Сізге қолдау көрсеткен менторлар, кураторлар немесе басқа адамдар болды ма? Олар қандай рөл атқарды?
9. Қандай ресурстар немесе бағдарламалар сізге ең пайдалы болды?

**Жалпы әл-ауқатты жақсарту үшін қажетті жағдайлар**

10. Білім алу тәжірибеңізде не жетіспеді деп санайсыз?
11. Жалпы әл-ауқатыңызды және білім беру жетістіктеріңізді жақсарту үшін қандай қолдау түрлері қажет деп ойлайсыз?
12. Жетім балаларға қолдау көрсету үшін білім беру жүйесінде қандай өзгерістер енгізер едіңіз?

**Қорытынды сұрақтар**

16. Мен барлық сұрақтар қойдым. Айтылғандарға қосарларыңыз бар ма? Мен сұрамаған, бірақ талқылағыңыз келетін кез келген аспект бар ма? Маған қоятын сұрақтарыңыз бар ма?