Exploring the Influence of Lifestyle Behaviour and Academic Experience of Undergraduate Students in Kazakhstani Universities

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Nazarbayev University
Institutional Research Ethics Committee Minutes
For the Full Board Review
№ 4 – October 21, 2024

This letter will serve as a confirmation that **Aigerim Kenes's** research project entitled **"Exploring the Relationship between Lifestyle Behavior and Academic Experiences of Kazakhstani University Students"** has been approved under the full board category of review by the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee (NU IREC). The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the NU IREC Procedures.

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Abstract

Exploring the Influence of Lifestyle Behaviour and Academic Experience of Undergraduate Students in Kazakhstani Universities

Lifestyle plays a pivotal role in the development of an individual's life spheres, such as education, health, socialization, and career. This study focuses particularly on the influence of lifestyle behaviour on the academic experience of undergraduate students in Kazakhstan. The primary purpose of the study is to identify the direct and indirect factors that influence the academic experience of the students. Using an exploratory sequential mixed method, online surveys were conducted among 119 students, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students across two universities in Astana. The results of the study reveal that having a healthy lifestyle is important to maintain a good academic standing. It was found that students, who sleep enough, follow a nutritional diet with a high amount of fruit and vegetables, and do not smoke, tend to have better academic grades. In addition to these habits, regular physical activities and socialization have a positive influence on concentration, lecture attendance, and engagement. Whereas, lack of sleep, poor diet, drinking alcohol, smoking, and excessive technology use increase distraction level, and lead to worse academic performance. On the other hand, it was also discovered that drinking alcohol once or twice a month can be a positive predictor of good GPA, as part of socialization activities. This can be connected with the positive cultural acceptance of alcohol consumption. Based on the main results, the study highlights how crucial it is for higher education institutions to support healthy lifestyle choices to improve student academic achievement.

Keywords: lifestyle behaviour, healthy habits, Health Lifestyle Theory, academic experience, undergraduate students.

Аннотация

Изучение Связи Между Поведением, Связанным с Образом Жизни, и Академическим Опытом Студентов Казахстанских Университетов

Образ жизни играет ключевую роль в развитии различных сфер жизни человека, таких как образование, здоровье, социализация и карьера. Данное исследование сосредоточено на влиянии поведения на академический опыт студентов бакалавриата в Казахстане. Основная цель исследования — выявить прямые и косвенные факторы, влияющие на академическую успеваемость и общий академический опыт студентов. С использованием смешанных методов было проведено онлайн-анкитирование среди 119 студентов, а также интервью с 10 студентами двух университетов Астаны. Результаты исследования показали, что здоровый образ жизни имеет высокое значение для поддержания хорошей академической успеваемости. Было установлено, что студенты, которые достаточно спят, следят за питанием, потребляют много фруктов и овощей и не курят, как правило, имеют более высокие академические оценки. В дополнение к этим привычкам регулярная физическая активность и социализация положительно влияют на концентрацию, посещаемость лекций и вовлеченность. В то же время недостаток сна, плохое питание, употребление алкоголя, курение и чрезмерное использование технологий увеличивают уровень отвлеченности и приводят к ухудшению академической успеваемости. Однако также было установлено, что употребление алкоголя один или два раза в месяц, как часть социальных активностей, может быть положительным индикатором хорошей успеваемости. Это может быть связано с положительным культурным восприятием потребления алкоголя. На основе основных результатов исследование подчеркивает, как

важно для высших учебных заведений поддерживать здоровые привычки в образе жизни для улучшения академических достижений студентов.

Ключевые слова: поведение, здоровые привычки, Теория здорового образа жизни, академический опыт, студенты бакалавриата.

Аңдатпа

Қазақстандық Университет Студенттерінің Өмір Салты мен Академиялық Тәжірибесі Арасындағы Байланысты Зерттеу

Өмір салт адамның білім, денсаулық, әлеумет және мансап сияқты салаларда маңызды рөл атқарады. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы бакалавриат студенттерінің академиялық тәжірибесіне өмір салтының әсерін зерттеуге бағытталған. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты — студенттердің академиялық тәжірибесіне тікелей және жанама әсер ететін факторларды анықтау. Аралас әдісті қолдана отыра, Астана қаласындағы екі университеттің 119 студент арасында онлайн сауалнама жүргізіліп, 10 студентімен сұхбат өтті. Зерттеу нәтижелері бойынша, салауатты өмір салты академиялық жетістіктерді жету жолында маңызды рөл атқарады. Жеткілікті ұйықтайтын, дұрыс тамақтанатын, көп жеміс-жидек пен көкөніс тұтынатын және темекі шекпейтін студенттер әдетте жоғары академиялық нәтижелерге ие екені анықталды. Тұрақты физикалық белсенділік пен әлеуметтік қатынастар концентрация өсуіне, лекцияларға қатысуға және белсенділікке оң әсер етеді. Ал ұйқының жеткіліксіздігі, дұрыс тамақтанбау, алкоголь ішу, темекі шегу және технологияларды шамадан тыс пайдалану алаңдаушылық деңгейін арттырып, академиялық жетістіктерді нашарлатады. Алайда, әлеуметтік қатынастардың бөлігі ретінде алкогольді айына бір немесе екі рет ішу - жақсы академиялық нәтижелерің көрсеткіші болуы мүмкін. Бұл алкогольді тұтынудың мәдени тұрғыдан жағымды қабылдануымен байланысты болуы мүмкін. Оқу орындары студенттердің академиялық жетістіктерін арттыру үшін салауатты өмірс салтын қолдаудың маңыздылығын көрсетеді.

Кілт сөздер: мінез-құлық, сау әдеттер, Салауатты өмір салты теориясы, академиялық тәжірибе, бакалавриат студенттері.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The academic performance of undergraduate students can be influenced by many non-academic factors like everyday habits and behaviour. As university students tend to be of legal age, they have full responsibility to choose whether they follow a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle, controlling variables such as dietary habits, alcohol consumption, sleeping patterns, and sports engagement. A healthy diet and lifestyle are crucial for students' proper brain development and functionality (López-Moreno et al., 2021). Moreover, good lifestyle decisions improve psychophysical and cognitive health, which in turn helps with academic performance (Maniaci et al., 2021). Therefore, depending on their lifestyle, students may have various learning experiences that could impact their efficiency in the class, their grades, and their GPA.

Health is one of the most critical factors directly affecting people's lives in different spheres. People can endanger their health conditions by incorporating harmful habits like alcohol and cigarette consumption. High levels of drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking, and following improper diet contribute to an increase in heart disease and overall mortality rate in Kazakhstan (McKee & Chenet, 2002, as cited in Cockerham et al., 2004). In contrast, keeping a healthy lifestyle with regular physical exercises, avoidance of toxic matters, and a nutritious diet prevents early symptoms of cardiovascular diseases and skin ageing and reinforces the physical, mental, and social well-being of an individual (Hurst, 2009; Robinson, 2018; Yalıcı-Armağan & Elçin, 2023). According to Mollborn and Lawrence (2018), early-life health behaviours are crucial for understanding population health because they frequently endure throughout time. The family environment greatly influences young children's healthy lifestyle, which later develops in their adolescence within educational settings (Mollborn & Lawrence, 2018). Nevertheless, the level of influence of the environment might change as students enter universities. Consequently,

the question of the connection between lifestyle behaviour and educational environment arises: whether every individual's adoption of a healthy lifestyle encourages educational communities to acquire such habits or if health prioritisation leads to an overall change in students' academic experience.

Background Information

The general trend of a decrease in following a healthy lifestyle is observed worldwide. According to the latest statistics from the World Health Organization (2024), 31% of adults and 80% of adolescents fail to do an appropriate amount of physical activity. At the same time, the level of physical activity in Kazakhstan among children and adolescents started to diminish in 2019, showing results where 68.1% of children aged 9 years and 31% of adolescents aged 15 years do not meet physical activity recommendations (Abdrakhmanova et al., 2019). Researchers claim that this trend is caused by an increase in TV viewing, which leads to a sedentary lifestyle (Abdrakhmanova et al., 2019). This could influence the general physical and mental health of people in future as engaging in physical activity helps prevent and treat noncommunicable diseases, including diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease, which are prevalent among citizens of Kazakhstan (World Health Organization, 2024). It can also lessen anxiety and depressive symptoms, improve cognitive function, and promote overall well-being, which is essential during students' academic time and their academic experience in university.

Another global and national issue is food insecurity. The increase in popularity of processed, pre-prepared, junk food, and sugary drinks greatly influences people's dietary habits and overall food consumption, especially students. Lillis (2019) reported that approximately one-third of kids regularly eat fruits and vegetables, whereas one-fourth of them drink sugary beverages on a daily basis. Such shocking statistics caused the World Bank to suggest

Kazakhstan include taxes on sugary drinks, which is already practised in more than 65 countries around the world (World Bank, 2021). Simultaneously, a survey in one of the shopping centres in Almaty showed that the majority of teens acknowledged eating fast food once a week, while some reported eating it more frequently, nevertheless, children were unconcerned about the risks associated with fast food (Lillis, 2019). Following unbalanced dietary patterns leads to an increase in obesity levels among the population over 18 years, thereby, almost one in five adults in Kazakhstan are obese, and over one in two are overweight (World Bank, 2021). This entails various health problems that could hinder both the personal and academic life of the students falling into this age.

When it comes to unhealthy habits such as smoking and alcohol drinking, in 2022 Kazakhstan demonstrated 21.2% of smoking population, where male smokers are more prevalent (38.3%) than female smokers (6.3%) (World Health Organization, 2022). Whereas, alcohol consumption is considered moderate compared to different countries. According to World Health Organization (2024), recorded annual consumption of pure alcohol (litres) per person 15 years of age and over contributes to 4.5 litres in 2019, which is 1 litre lower than average global index 5.5 litres. Prevalence of thee habits can negatively influence physical and mental conditions, therefore, there should be policies or pattern that might help to reduce and even eliminate those habits.

Problem Statement

The statistical data above demonstrating Kazakhstanis' unhealthy lives highlights a critical problem that goes beyond personal health issues. These lifestyle decisions hinder not just one's own health but also more general social issues like economic productivity and educational accomplishment. Academic performance is significantly correlated with smoking, drinking,

exercising, and maintaining a regular diet. Individuals who engaged in these activities reported lower academic performance, while those who maintained a regular diet reported higher academic performance (So & Park, 2016). Unhealthy lifestyle choices can inhibit educational success in a number of ways. Chronic health problems might cause students to miss classes, concentrate less, and perform worse academically in terms of subject and potential research works. Additionally, these health problems may have long-term effects that restrict future prospects for education and employment.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of the research is to identify the direct and indirect influence of lifestyle habits on general academic experiences and success among bachelor students enrolled in universities in Kazakhstan. There have been few empirical studies conducted related to this topic, particularly in Kazakhstan. Some research focuses on lifestyle in the context of Kazakhstan and explains risk factors affecting non-communicable diseases, psychological distress or mortality rate (Baspakova et al., 2024; Cockerham et al., 2004; Cockerham et al., 2006; Craig & Engstrom, 2016). However, these studies are not focused on the relationship of a healthy lifestyle and academic experience. Therefore, they cannot propose possible strategies for promoting positive and impeding negative behavioural patterns among students through understanding their university experience.

In light of Kazakhstan's efforts to promote healthy lifestyles among its student population, it is imperative to investigate the relationship between healthy lifestyle choices and university experiences. As a result, in 2016, the government introduced the health care program "DENSAULYK" for the following three years. One of the main goals of the state program was to raise the public's awareness of their health-related responsibilities by fostering a healthy and

balanced diet and encouraging physical culture and sanitation (Information and legal system regulatory legal acts Republic of Kazakhstan "Adilet", 2016). Therefore, in addition to its primary purpose, the research aims to suggest activities that could improve both lifestyle behaviour and the students' academic success.

As Kazakhstan is currently trying to motivate students to lead a healthy lifestyle and engage in physical activities, it is relevant to observe changes in students' academic achievements over time to determine if there is a connection between lifestyle and academic performance among Kazakhstani students. Moreover, it is important to evaluate the efficiency of implemented policies in governmental strategies. For example, one such strategy was focused on an investment of 21 billion tenge to develop and make mass sports more affordable (Official Information Source of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022). The research topic is significant because by identifying factors that impede and deteriorate students' engagement in the classroom and grades, teachers and policymakers can introduce educational reforms to lessen its effects and improve the educational setting. Healthy lifestyle behaviour is a complex issue that needs to be addressed through education programs, public health legislation, governmental policy implementation, and community involvement.

Research questions

1. What are the health-related factors that influence students' academic life?
2. How do friends, family, and other social interactions impact students' academic experience?
3. How does technology use (social media, internet platforms, etc.) impact students' perceptions of their academic experience?

4. What obstacles do students overcome in order to continue leading healthy lives in university?
5. What changes could universities make to help students maintain healthier lifestyles?

Significance of the Study

The topic is significant because lifestyle decisions can impede the effectiveness of learning and hinder the primary purpose of higher education: sharing knowledge to train specialists. Poor diet, low level of exercise, high level of stress, and insufficient sleep can all affect memory retention and cognitive function, the development of chronic disease, and mental health deterioration, which in turn affect the academic experience of students. By recognizing these challenges, educators can implement strategies to mitigate their impacts and enhance the learning environment, whereas policymakers can introduce action plans for the promotion of healthy lifestyles at the governmental level.

Definitions of Concepts of the Study

In the context of this study, lifestyle behaviour is defined as a set of habits that are followed by an individual. According to the *American College of Lifestyle Medicine* (2019), there are six components of lifestyle medicine: food and nutritional intake, physical activity, sleep, stress management, tobacco use, and social connections (Frates, 2019, as cited in Alothman et al., 2024). Adequate physical activity, healthy eating, healthcare use, getting enough sleep, and abstaining from drugs, nicotine, and alcohol are the habits that contribute to a healthy lifestyle (Müller et al., 2022). In addition to these factors, my study considers social influences such as socialisation and technology use. Lifestyle behaviour influences stress and obesity as well, which can be used as indicators of the maintenance of healthy or unhealthy lifestyle habits. Thus, students may have a range of learning experiences based on their lifestyle, which could

affect their productivity in and out of the classroom, research engagement, their grades, and their GPA.

Including the lifestyle aspects from above and from the definition of the *American College of Lifestyle Medicine* (2019), the current study considers seven factors: the level of physical activity, dietary patterns, sleeping duration, alcohol and cigarette use, socialization, and technology use as lifestyle habits contributing to students' behaviour.

Interpretive and Theoretical Frameworks

The study analyses the experience of students: how they lead their lifestyle, what kind of habits they follow, and how their behaviour affects their academic experience, if particular factors are predominant for positive or negative experiences. As Mollborn and Lawrence (2018) mentioned, the lifestyle of the individual is greatly formed due to the family or social influence from the environment, making lifestyle behaviour socially constructed. Therefore, the research fits into a social constructivist framework, where experiences are subjective and depend on the background (Creswell, 2013). As I was an undergraduate student and had a particular habitual behaviour that influenced my overall perspective on university life and academic performance, I might include my interpretation of the subject, however, I will try to position myself as an outsider to gather credible and valid information.

To understand the concept of lifestyle behaviour, I need to clarify how students choose to follow particular habits. Therefore, the conceptual framework is based on two theories. First is behavioural theory, which describes human behaviour and habits that are formed by environmental factors and past experience (Angell, 2013). According to Angell (2013), behavioural theory aims to explain human behaviour through an analysis of the antecedents, consequences, and learned associations that an individual has acquired through prior experience.

This theory can explain how an individual's educational and social environments form habits and how habits affect the experience of students.

The second theory, "Health Lifestyle Theory," was designed by Cockerham, where he defines a healthy lifestyle through societal patterns, showing the development of individuals' choice in different circumstances regarding their behaviour. The theory focuses on the relation of lifestyles not only with individuals but also with status groups - groups of people who belong to the same social class and have comparable social status (Cockerham, 2005). Cockerham (2005) claims that individuals have to conform their lifestyles to the norms of the group in order to be considered members of that status group. Therefore, leading a healthy lifestyle is not just a question of personal preference but also a reflection of one's social group and the status stratification that goes along with it.

A more complex understanding of how lifestyle choices affect academic experience is possible through the integration of behavioural theory and health lifestyle theory. While health lifestyle theory provides a broader context by taking social group influences and status-related norms into consideration, behavioural theory provides insights into the formation and consequences of individual habits. When taken as a whole, these theories help to investigate how social settings and individual behaviours interact to influence undergraduate students' academic experiences in Kazakhstani universities. Through the identification of particular behavioural patterns and social factors that impact academic success, this integrated approach aids in the development of more focused and successful interventions and support strategies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is a research literature that has analysed healthy and unhealthy lifestyle behaviours influence on the academic performance of students at different levels. To conceptualize current research in a broader academic framework, this part reviews literature that discusses several indicators of lifestyle habits such as physical activity, food consumption, sleeping patterns, smoking, alcohol, socialization and technology use and their relation to students' academic performance and experience.

Complied Information

In their latest study, Alj and Bouayad (2024) indicated a positive correlation between lifestyle aspects such as physical exercise and sleep with academic achievement, highlighting the significance of students leading balanced lives. This study examines the complex factors that influence academic performance, using a sample size of 5,092 undergraduate students from various Moroccan universities. Primarily, authors conducted an extensive examination of various factors that may impact academic success, including demographic, academic, psychological, societal, and lifestyle aspects. Throughout the research, it was discovered that such aspects as age, gender, parental involvement, peer support, and lifestyle habits are significant predictors of students' grades. Focusing on physical activity, researchers discovered the benefits of physical exercise for mental and cognitive health, leading to a positive influence between higher GPAs and frequent physical activity (Alj & Bouayad, 2024). However, excessive exercising may interfere with study time, which can diminish the academic success of students. Similar evidence was found regarding the sleeping patterns of participants. Getting more sleep than 6–8 hours per night seems to mitigate the relationship between sleep and higher GPAs (Alj & Bouayad, 2024). Promoting wellness initiatives that encourage consistent exercise and restful sleep habits can

help students succeed academically and generally. This shows that lifestyle behaviour is crucial in predicting one's academic success, nevertheless, demographic and social factors play a considerable role as well, which shows the necessity of holistic approach to examination of aspects impacting student's academic lives.

Another relevant research was conducted by Rajendran and Chamundeswari (2019) that focused on 18 Indian schools from metropolitan cities, where students responded to "yes" and "no" questions, assessing different aspects of life on a 5-point rating system, such as physical activity, sleep habits, and nutritional intake. According to their study (2019), a poorer lifestyle was associated with higher levels of stress that negatively correlated with academic performance, whereas a healthy lifestyle was positively correlated with academic performance. Another variable presented in the paper was obesity, which is a consequence of a lack of physical activities and food insecurities. The authors found a positive correlation between stress level and obesity. However, compared with stress, obesity was not significantly correlated to students' academic performance. Thus, stress and obesity can be defined as indirect variables connected with academic experience in the study, so it is vital for current research to seek how these factors varies among students in Kazakhstan.

Using a sample of 373 adolescent Italian students, Maniaci et al. (2021) assessed the relationship between healthy lifestyles and academic achievement. Similarly, with previous research papers, Maniaci et al. (2021) discovered that a healthy diet, good self-esteem, and strong social support all had a positive correlation with academic performance. Whereas poor dietary habits, high-stress level, and excessive use of the Internet negatively affected academic achievement of the students. According to research concepts, less than half of the participants (43.7%) reported having healthy diets, where students consume whole grains, legumes, nuts, and

vegetables as part of a Mediterranean diet, instead of eating fast food and drinking sugary drinks (Maniaci et al., 2021). The study concluded that adopting a healthy diet improved academic achievement of students (Maniaci et al., 2021). Moreover, Maniaci et al. (2021) reported that following healthy habits is negatively correlated with Internet use and students who neglect internet use with no control (30.6%), show worse results in academic terms. In addition, excessive internet use is negatively correlated with sleeping patterns too but regarding academic performance it showed zero significance with sleep, in contrast with above mentioned researches, therefore authors claim that this is a limitation of the study denying their hypothesis and findings from literature review (Maniaci et al., 2021).

There are some results found by Al-Haifi et al., which found that lifestyle decisions and academic achievement did not correlate in a way that was statistically significant among Kuwait college students. As reported by Al-Haifi et al. (2023), there was no significant correlation found between the chosen lifestyle factors, such as breakfast consumption, overall physical activity, amount of sleep, and screen time and the indicators of academic performance, whereas there was influence of gender. The study revealed that females with a tendency to sleep more had higher grade point averages, even with low levels of physical activity, however, those results were not connected with their college GPA (Al-Haifi et al., 2023). This data is opposite to Alj and Bouayad's (2024) findings, and it should be discovered whether sleeping patterns differ between gender and how this difference affects their academic experience. Male participants had a much higher prevalence of obesity, even if they had a higher physical activity level compared to female participants (Al-Haifi et al., 2023). It is possible that calorie intake caused the observed gender variations in body mass index, which questions the dietary habits of students and whether gender plays a crucial role in following these habits. Although body mass index did not show an effect

on academic performance (Al-Haifi et al., 2023). In contrast, with other studies, it gives an overview of 'no effect' or 'no relationship' between behavioural habits and academic performance. It is important to consider what factors influenced this research to draw such a conclusion. Whether it is connected with geographical location and cultural norms or other aspects is important to consider.

Following this literature, next papers emphasize the important role that lifestyle habits, such as physical exercise, food, and sleep patterns, smoking, drinking alcohol, socializing and technology use, play in improving cognitive function and academic performance by influencing physical condition, brain function, and academic achievement.

Physical Activities

Based on the literature mentioned above, physical activity positively influences academic performance of the students (Rajendran & Chamundeswari, 2019; Alj & Bouayad, 2024). Similarly, Barbosa et al., (2020) found that long-term physical activity have more positive effect than short-term exercising, suggesting that regular physical activity is more beneficial for academic performance of the students. Moreover, being physically active is connected with a higher concentration level, entailing higher engagement in learning processes (Barbosa et al., 2020).

Engagement in physical exercises influences not only the academic grades but also cognitive function and neuroplasticity of the brain, by promoting the growth of new neurons and strengthening neural connections (De Sousa Fernandes et al., 2020). It is found that physical activity improves cognitive abilities like memory and attention, by changing the structure of the brain and increasing gray matter volume in areas related to cognitive processing (De Sousa Fernandes et al., 2020). As well as brain function, physical activity and different exercises, such

as yoga, can help to preserve mental well-being and help with stress regulation by improving mood and decreasing risks of depression and anxiety level (Mahindru et al., 2023).

Dietary Habits

Regarding dietary and nutritional habits and its influence on the academic performance of the students, Weaver et al. (2019) stated that students with food insecurity lowered the likelihood of having a GPA in the top 10% and raised the likelihood of being in the bottom 10%. Authors included the definition of "food insecurity" as "unable to obtain an adequate amount of food and sufficient nutrition (Morris, 2016, as cited in Weaver et al., 2019). Responds from 2,055 students of public university in New Jersey, USA, showed that students who experience food insecurity tend to have lower expectations for their academic performance, rate their progress overall lower, and are more likely to drop out of school or take fewer courses as a result of financial difficulties; these factors may partially account for underperformance. Similarly, Khan et al. (2022) claimed that a healthy eating and balanced diet enables people to meet their physiological needs and consuming nutritious food can lead to improved mental capacity, continued memory development, top test scores, and a stronger college presence, all of which can lead to students performing better academically overall. The authors found that students who regularly eat a nutritious breakfast with products containing calcium and fiber (milk and green salad) outperform those who have fast food or junk food from roadside vendors for breakfast (Khan et al., 2022). Therefore, healthy dietary habits are crucial for the cognitive work of students and their overall academic success.

As previous literature shows, dietary habits are crucial in predicting the academic achievement of students and result in the strongest correlation with academic success compared to other factors in my research. Weaver et al. (2019), López-Moreno et al. (2021), Maniaci et al.

(2021) concluded that students having healthier eating habits show better academic performance. It should be considered while gathering data for my research paper to see whether these research results fit the Kazakhstani context.

Sleeping Patterns

As it was discussed in Alj and Bouayad's study (2024), sufficient sleeping duration is essential for the brain function such as memory, concentration, problem-solving, and decision-making, that lead to a better information perception and academic achievements. There are several research papers that supports the pattern among academic excellence of students who get enough sleep, lack of sleep has been associated with poorer academic performance.

Csipo et al. (2021) stated that insufficient sleep is a predictor of cognitive damage, highlighting the role of the sleep in maintaining good physical and mental capabilities. Moreover, sleep deprivation decreases reaction times and attention span, which greatly increases the risk of making mistakes and hinders daily tasks, that require concentration and focus (Csipo et al., 2021).

Based on Suardiaz-Muro et al.'s paper (2023), lack of sleep negatively affects academic performance of the students, indicating that poor sleep quality during exam period contributes to decreased focus, lower self-esteem, and impaired cognitive function, which eventually lowers academic achievement. Additionally, their results showed that students who slept poorly were more likely to report problems with memory, specifically remembering things and completing tasks on tests (Suardiaz-Muro et al., 2023).

Smoking Habits

Numerous studies have repeatedly demonstrated that smoking has a detrimental influence on academic achievement. According to Alqahtani et al. (2023), students who smoke typically

have worse academic performance, with lower GPAs, more absence days, and a higher chance of receiving academic warnings. Additionally, smoking is frequently associated with a desire for social status or acceptability from others, especially in adolescence and college periods. This pattern of prioritizing social interactions over of academic performance might result in a decline in academic engagement (So & Park, 2016). Simultaneously, Ho et al. (2010) discovered that smoking can influence non-smokers as well as a consequence of a second-hand smoke, where such exposure is associated linearly with poor academic performance in non-smoking young adults. Staying next to smoking people creates passive smoking or second-hand smoke, which not only influences physical health but also contributes to diminished concentration and focus during academic activities, further affecting performance (Ho et al., 2010).

Alcohol Consumption

López-Moreno et al. (2021) describe the level of prevalence of alcohol use, eating habits, and body weight among Madrid-based bachelor's degree nursing students and whether these factors had an impact on their academic performance. The goal of this study was to identify how certain behavioural habits like alcohol consumption affect academic performance of Madrid students aged from 18 to 25. The article focuses on variables like alcohol consumption and protein intake and shows statistical significance of the factors that will be used in my research as well. Students consumed 1918 calories on average per day, with 6% coming from alcohol. Addressing Alj and Bouayad's (2024), sufficient sleep is a great determinant in good academic standing, therefore, the direct chain of influence can be noticed: alcohol negatively influences sleeping patterns, while low quality sleep entails bad academic standing. A higher rate of course failures among students was linked to this pattern of unhealthy lifestyle. Therefore, it is crucial to put awareness campaigns into action to discourage youth alcohol consumption. This study is

important for my future research as it allows me to compare Kazakhstani and Spanish university students in the same age category and make conclusions about cultural differences and its effect on formation and perception of health lifestyle. The study demonstrates the statistical significance of alcohol consumption and protein towards academic performance, that can assist in analysing the influence of these variables within Kazakhstani context.

Socialization

Undergraduate students' lifestyle choices are greatly influenced by socialization, which has an impact on their academic experience. When people are choosing specific habit, they are influenced by the social environment that surrounds them. During early-life behaviour formation, individuals are greatly influenced by the family environment, which is then developed in school settings during adolescence (Mollborn & Lawrence, 2018). Schools and universities become new social environment for the students. According to Cockerham (2005), people adopt health-related behaviours depending on the norms of their social group, making leading a healthy lifestyle a reflection of one's social standing and group identity rather than solely a personal decision. Understanding how social circle influences individual behaviors allows to predict how students' academic experiences can be shaped during university. This is supported by Alotaibi et al. (2023), where they emphasized the importance of peer interactions and friendships in stress management, enhancing focus, concentration, and academic success through teamwork. Such a strong social support among students has a positive correlation with academic performance (Maniaci et al., 2021).

Technology Use

In technological era, gadgets and electronic devices play integral role in daily life of the people, therefore, it is essential to consider it as a part of lifestyle behaviour. The internet

provides access to the wide range of academic resources, that help students during their study time, however, overuse of gadgets and social media can have different negative effects on the academic live of the student (Arisukwu et al., 2022).

According to Kuş (2025), students find it more difficult to concentrate on assignments when they are constantly interrupted by notifications. Similarly, Arisukwu et al., (2022) point out that students who are dependent on media find it difficult to concentrate and participate in class activities, which eventually impacts their academic performance High screen time is also connected to disrupted sleeping habits, which can impair cognitive function and memory retention (Kuş, 2025). Addiction to social media also effects on the development of mental stress, which impairs students' mental ability and causes a functional decline in daily activities (Shek et al., 2013, as cited in Arisukwu et al., 2022). Therefore, even if there are different benefits of the technology in academic sphere, its excessive use can be major distraction that consequently impair academic performance.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Sites

The study recruited participants from two universities located in Astana. Universities were chosen in order to provide horizontal diversity to cover non-private and autonomous universities in Kazakhstan.

Research Design

I used exploratory sequential mixed methods to collect data. This approach starts with qualitative data collection to explore the topic in depth, followed by quantitative data collection to confirm, explain, or expand upon the findings from the qualitative phase. For the quantitative part, I conducted a survey, and for the qualitative part, I interviewed participants. However, a phenomenological research design is adopted for the current study because of the exploratory character of the essence of each student's experience. Phenomenology enabled me to identify commonalities through the examination of individual experiences and highlight the main aspects of the experiences, therefore, this research approach best suits the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The study is focused on what participants experience and how they experience it, taking individual experiences separately to observe commonalities. The nature of phenomenology is descriptive, so I, as a researcher, can describe essential features of phenomena and avoid any assumptions and prejudices by bracketing myself. At the same time, the research contains explanatory parts gained through surveys to detect the main factors of lifestyle behaviour that should be discussed in the interview. By getting initial data from the survey, I discovered trends, correlations between lifestyle behaviour factors and academic experience.

Quantitative Part

A survey is suitable for the quantitative part of the data collection and evaluation as it can

cover wider groups of the population, and it shows the connection or correlation between dependent and independent variables. The online survey was sent to first to universities and later the universities themselves forwarded to the undergraduate students through their emails. 119 undergraduate students participated in the survey, answering questions about their regular habits and academic experience. Participants are females and males, holding Kazakhstani citizenship, aged 18 to 24 years, from different cities, different majors. As for surveys, random sampling was used to provide equal chances for the population to be included in the sample, normally distributed data within groups of students, and generalization of similar tendencies (Creswell, 2012). I created a survey in Google Forms. Survey consisted of 26 questions regarding demographic information, health-related habits (sleep, diet, physical activities, smoking, drinking alcohol) socialization activities, and technology use. Academic performance was measured in self-reported GPA, attendance, and task achievement and corresponded to dependent variables, whereas lifestyle habits such as sleeping duration, diet, level of physical activity, and alcohol and cigarette consumption corresponded to independent variables. By correlational survey, I defined whether there are positive, negative, or zero, direct or indirect relationships between variables. I used Jamovi software to conduct the statistical analysis. The relationship between quantitative variables and categorical variables with two levels or more than two categories was examined using the Independent Student's t-test, regression analysis, correlation matrix, and an ANOVA analysis.

Qualitative Part

After the survey completion, students were asked to contact me if they were interested in participating in the interview. The first 10 individuals were selected for interview. Demographical characteristics of the respondents were the following: age from 18 to 24 years,

students in 1st to 4th year of study in their bachelor's degree, and holding Kazakhstani citizenship. Participants were chosen using purposeful sampling. They were selected with a particular purpose based on different criteria like major, year of study, and gender. This enabled me to choose information-rich cases for in-depth examination (Patton, 2014).

According to Creswell (2013), interviews are suitable data collection tools for phenomenological studies. It covered each individual's experience in detail and allows researchers to ask additional specific questions, depending on the interviewees' answers. In addition, through interviews, I could get information that cannot be collected from literature or observation, instead, I could gather the direct perspective of the respondents on their present and past experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is challenging to observe the lifestyle behaviour of the participants on hand and constantly analyse how it affects their academic life, therefore, interviewing them let me understand their interpretation, feeling, emotions, and experience of the subject.

Before conducting interviews, I created a set of questions starting from the main and follow-up questions, ending with probes that can complete the ideas or clarify certain points. The questionnaire consisted of 15 to 20 questions, depending on the quality of the answers of the respondents more or fewer questions were asked. There were five categories for each research question that focused on main lifestyle habits and their effect on academic experience as health-related behaviour, social interactions, and technology use. By dividing lifestyle behaviour into categories, I could explore particular sub-factors like physical activity, diet, and sleeping patterns that influence the most and the least. The other two categories emphasised challenges in leading their lifestyles and strategies that they use to change or keep consistent with those habits. After the survey, respondents had a chance to request an interview by contacting me via email. Once

respondents agreed to have the interview, I sent the consent form to ensure compliance with the ethical procedures. In order to respond to the circumstances at hand, semi-structured interviews were used as they allow the researcher to ask open-ended questions and be flexible during the interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Moreover, to ensure convenience for respondents, I conducted all of the interviews online and record it simultaneously. Starting with an introductory statement and warm-up, questions flowed to broad explanations and detail-oriented ones, and ending with a closing statement, which took from 20 to 30 minutes on average. The last steps involved an interview evaluation form that had to be completed, and a transcription for the analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is an essential stage in conducting qualitative research that is defined as the process of making sense out of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Information gathered from participants should be thoroughly sorted and processed before being analysed. The first step I started with after transcription is the organization of data by reading the data in detail. According to Creswell (2013), the information should be read several times to allow the researcher to become immerse in respondents' perspectives of the matter, taking notes and highlighting key concepts. Following with focusing on the main ideas, I did coding according to Saldana's model, where raw data is divided into codes that form categories and lead to the concepts and theory (Saldana, 2016). During coding, I used descriptive, process, and emotion coding due to the nature of my study. I expected those codes to be connected with the factors from the literature I analysed before the study such as "keeping a healthy lifestyle", "doing/ not doing sport", "eating habits'', "enough sleep", "getting family support", "good academic standing", and so on. However, during the data analysis, there were factors that I did not encounter in the literature,

which were beneficial explaining the phenomenon of a healthy lifestyle based on what and how students experienced it. Repetitive codes were presented in the codebook, which helped me to draw the commonalities.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers must take into consideration the impact of their work on research participants, as they must conduct the research with a guarantee of anonymity where possible, confidentiality, and privacy (Cohen et al., 2017). Therefore, before interviewing participants, I received informed consent from the participants, with comprehensible information regarding the objectives, methods, possible dangers, and advantages of the research. Respondents were older than 18, and they agreed to the terms of the research. All students participated voluntarily, and if some questions seemed sensitive to them, they had the full right not to answer those questions, however, there were no such cases when respondents felt uncomfortable answering the questions. Before the interview, participants were notified that all data was confidential, where I removed all information that could identify the respondents, e.g., name, surname, major, university. In addition, I completed CITI Research Training required by Nazarbayev University's Institutional Research Ethics Committee's requirements with human subjects.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the survey and interviews with undergraduate students to explore the influence of lifestyle behaviour on their academic experience. It focuses on each research question to provide detailed information on the responses. Findings related to the first research question highlight the lifestyle habits influencing students' academic achievement. The parts with findings related to questions two and three discuss how social environment and technology correlate with academic performance. Data analysis regarding challenges students faced in adopting healthy habits and recommendations for following a healthy lifestyle is presented at the end of this chapter.

An anonymised survey was conducted among 118 undergraduate students from year 1 to year 4 in the two universities to observe general trends and patterns in their lifestyle behaviour. The survey contained questions regarding demographical characteristics like age, gender, employment, lifestyle habits, and academic information like the year of study, specialization, levels of distraction, concentration, exam pressure, frequency of skipping lectures, and self-reported GPA. The questionnaire focused on different lifestyle habits like physical activity level, sleeping duration, technology use, dietary habits such as fast food, sugary drinks, fruit and vegetables consumption, alcohol and tobacco use, and the level of socialisation. Students reported the frequency of particular habits from 'Never' to 'Daily.'

Ten interviews were conducted among undergraduate students of two universities in Astana. The students had different educational backgrounds, specializing in the social sciences, information technology, engineering, and medicine. Five male and five female participants were interviewed from study year 1 to study year 4. Students shared their personal experiences about following lifestyle routines within the university's walls, narrating their daily habits, discussing

challenges, overcoming solutions, and suggesting recommendations for higher educational institutions.

Findings Related to Research Question 1

It is important to identify the main factors that influence students' academic experience during their undergraduate years. According to the conceptual framework, there are seven factors that were chosen to describe lifestyle behaviour: physical activity, dietary patterns, sleeping habits, alcohol and tobacco consumption, socialization, and technology use. The following results show to what extent health-related factors influence students' academic achievement and describe the influence of a new factor that was not included originally in the conceptual framework, answering to the first research question: "What are the health-related factors that influence students' academic life?"

Students shared their personal experiences regarding lifestyle behaviour and academic performance. Throughout the interview, they highlighted various factors that predominantly influence their mental and physical state, subsequently shaping their academic success. Key influences mentioned by students included employment, sleeping patterns, smoking habits, and social interactions, all of which played a crucial role in determining their GPA and overall academic achievement. While answering the questions, participants mostly described the negative effects of the factors that were mentioned above.

Employment

Students who have full-time employment and additional projects revealed that it has a significant adverse effect on their overall academic experience. Respondent 2 said that "after work, I struggle with lower focus and concentration on my studies". Furthermore, Respondent 3 expressed that working on a non-curricular project distracted from academic priorities, resulting

in a lower GPA. Similarly, Respondent 6 claimed that “having two jobs and studying last semester led to my academic decline.” This demonstrates that balancing between work and studies hinders the ability to concentrate and focus on learning effectively, preserving a high academic standing.

Table 1

Correlations (r) Between Employment, Skipping Classes, Concentration on Lectures, and cGPA (n=115)

	cGPA	Skipping classes	Employment
Skipping classes	-0.291***	-	
Employment	0.019	0.202*	-
Concentration on lectures	-0.237**	0.392***	-0.022

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

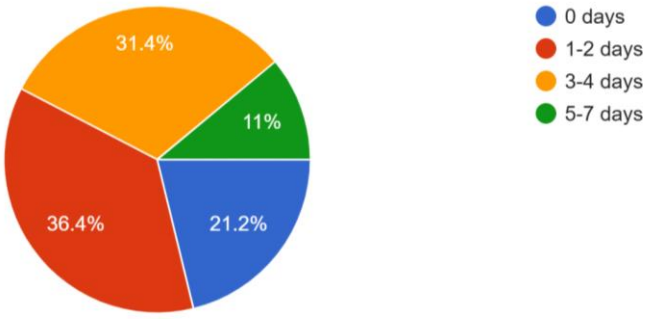
According to the correlation matrix from Table 1, which examines factors like employment, skipping classes, concentration on lectures, and cGPA (cumulative GPA), students who miss more classes typically perform worse academically, as seen by the weak negative correlation between skipping classes and cGPA ($r = -0.291$, $p = 0.001$) and concentration on lectures and cGPA ($r=-0.237$, $p=0.01$). Furthermore, a medium level positive correlation exists between skipping classes and being less attentive during lectures ($r = 0.392$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that students who miss classes regularly find it difficult to maintain concentration and academic involvement. However, employment does not directly correlate with cGPA ($r = 0.019$, $p = 0.842$), but it is positively correlated with skipping classes ($r = 0.202$, $p = 0.029$), meaning that students working part-time or full-time are more likely to skip lectures. These results suggest that employment is indirectly related to academic performance since working students are more likely to skip classes, which impairs their concentration and general academic standing.

Physical Activities

Several students emphasised the importance of the presence of physical activity in their daily lives. According to the responses of the interviewees, engagement in different physical activities positively influences not only their academic performance but also their overall physical condition. Respondent 3 stated that "physical activity keeps me energised throughout the day and makes me more productive." Additionally, Respondents 1 and 8 noticed that physical workouts have cognitive benefits for their brain function and concentration ability in the classes: "on days when I exercise in the morning, I feel more focused and alert in my lectures," (Respondent 1) and "physical exercise supports my brain and reduces headaches, improving academic focus." (Respondent 8).

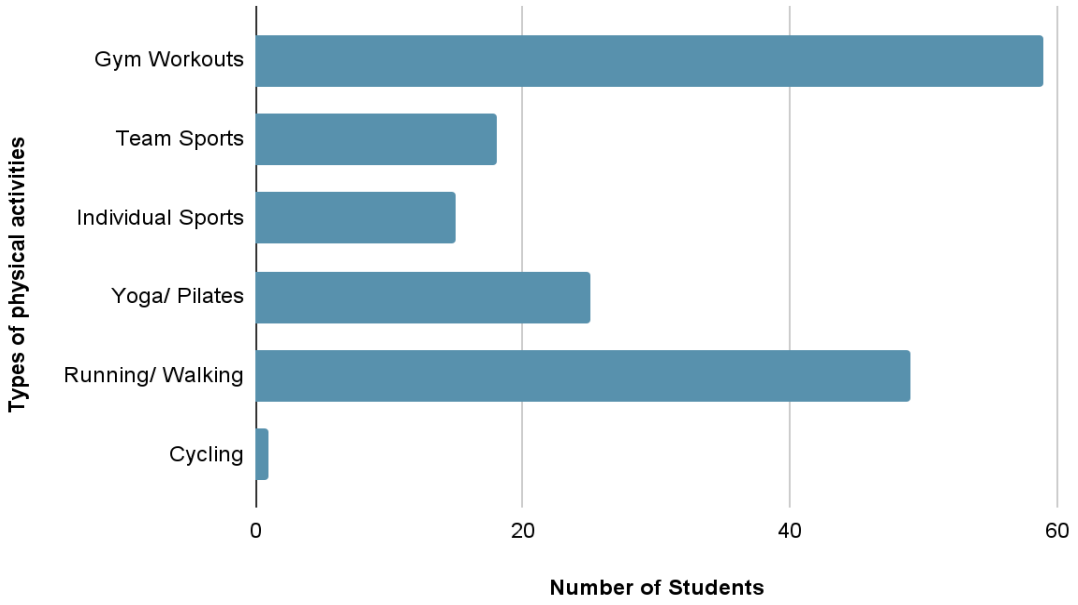
Figure 1

Distribution of Weekly Physical Exercise Frequency Among Students (n=118)



Note: This figure shows the student engagement in physical activity during the week for at least 30 minutes.

Figure 2
Types of Regular Physical Activity Among Students (n=109)



Note: This figure shows the types of physical activity that students participate in regularly. Students choose multiple options that are suitable for them.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the students' engagement in physical activities regularly. From Figure 1, it is seen that 78.8% of all respondents (93 students) engage in physical activities at least once a week. The majority of individuals engage in physical activity 1-2 days a week (36.4%) and 3-4 days a week (31.4%), indicating that a considerable number of students include moderate physical activity in their daily routines. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of students' preferred sports, where the most prevalent types of physical activities they engage in regularly are gym workouts and running or walking, indicating the preference for an accessible type of activity. Most students prefer yoga or pilates and team sports such as football, basketball, and volleyball. The lowest participation rates are found in cycling and individual sports, suggesting that students might favour simpler physical routines that do not require specific equipment.

Considering the answers from the interview, physical activity plays a crucial role in maintaining a positive academic experience, contributing to enhanced concentration levels in classes. However, quantitative data does not show a direct correlation between physical activity and academic performance. When broadening the lifestyle habits of the students, physical activity is positively correlated with fruit and vegetable intake, which shows an indirect effect on academic performance due to the positive influence of fruit and vegetable consumption on the GPA of the students.

Table 2
Independent Samples T-Test on Fruit and Vegetable Intake and cGPA

		Statistic	df	p
cGPA	Welch's t	-2.46	14.5	0.014

Note: $H_o\ \mu_{Eat\ rarely} < \mu_{Eat\ often}$

Table 2 shows a statistically significant difference in cGPA between students who regularly eat fruits and vegetables and those who eat them rarely (Welch's t = -2.46, df = 14.5, p = 0.014). The null hypothesis is rejected since $p < 0.05$, therefore, students who eat more fruits and vegetables typically have higher GPAs than those who eat them less frequently.

Table 3
Linear Regression Between Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Frequency of Physical Activity

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	3.440	0.186	18.51	<.001
Physical exercise:				
2-0	0.467	0.234	2.00	0.048
4-0	0.949	0.242	3.92	<.001
6-0	1.022	0.318	3.21	0.002

Note: Physical exercise frequency is indicated as follows: 0 is no physical engagement, 2 is physical engagement for 1-2 days, 4 is physical engagement for 3-4 days, and 6 is physical engagement for 5-7 days.

Table 3 demonstrates a statistically significant positive correlation between fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity across all sport engagement frequencies. Students

who exercise more frequently also tend to eat more fruit and vegetables ($\beta = 0.949$, $p < 0.001$). These results imply that regular exercise may indirectly improve academic performance through improved nutrition, hence strengthening the association between a healthy lifestyle and academic achievement, since fruit and vegetable intake has a considerable impact on cGPA.

Alcohol and Tobacco Use

Most of the respondents do not have bad habits such as drinking alcohol or smoking. However, the ones that mentioned having these habits stated that such habits seem to reduce stress levels for a short time, negatively impacting their health and overall well-being in the long run. Respondent 8 shared that academic workload combined with smoking leads to health problems that repeatedly occur:

> I noticed that even though smoking helped me relax for a few minutes, I was feeling more anxious overall. My heart rate would spike, and sometimes I felt dizzy or lightheaded, especially after coding marathons for a long time. I also started getting headaches more frequently.

This experience highlights the contradiction of unhealthy coping strategies, where stress and anxiety levels arise continuously, causing physical discomfort.

It was found that alcohol or tobacco consumption habits are connected to the social groups' students interact with at universities. Bad habits are mirrored in their environment to integrate into the social circle or due to the influence of peers who exhibit such behaviours. However, it could have a negative impact on class attendance and exam preparation. As Respondent 3 stated, "going out for some drinks with friends sometimes made me miss quizzes or study less before exams," indicating that prioritising certain negative habits can lead to reduced time for studies, missed lectures, and assignments.

Table 4

Correlation (r) Matrix Between Alcohol and Tobacco Use, Concentration on Lectures, and Skipping Classes

	Concentration on lectures	Skipping classes	Alcohol
Skipping classes	0.392***	-	
Alcohol	0.211*	0.186*	-
Tobacco	0.248**	0.251**	0.594***

**** p< .001, ** p< .01, *p< .05.*

According to Table 4, alcohol and tobacco use negatively influence the academic achievement of the students based on several factors. Alcohol use is a low positively correlated with skipping classes ($r = 0.186$, $p = 0.045$) and low concentration ($r = 0.211$, $p = 0.022$), showing that students who consume alcohol can miss lectures and struggle to concentrate on the subjects, even if the correlation is weak. Similarly, there is a positive statistical significance of tobacco use with both skipping classes ($r = 0.251$, $p = 0.006$) and lower concentration ($r = 0.248$, $p = 0.007$), which also highlights the negative effects of tobacco consumption. Additionally, the medium-level correlation between alcohol and tobacco use ($r = 0.594$, $p < 0.001$) implies that students who follow one of these behaviours are likely to also adopt the other one.

Despite the negative effect of alcohol consumption on the concentration and attendance of the students, Table 5 illustrates the positive relationships between low (less than one a month) and moderate alcohol intake (1-2 times a month) and cGPA ($\beta = 0.195$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.516$, $p < 0.001$), which suggests that students who occasionally drink alcohol are less likely to experience academic challenges. However, as alcohol consumption increases, the relationship becomes non-significant. At the same time, smoking any type of tobacco with any frequency has a strong

negative correlation directly with the cGPA of the students compared to those who do not smoke at all.

Table 5
Linear Regression Between cGPA, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use Frequency

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	2.754	0.0138	19.892	<.001
Alcohol:				
1-0	0.195	0.126	1.555	0.123
2-0	0.516	0.14	3.642	<.001
3-0	0.148	0.225	0.658	0.511
4-0	-0.009	0.520	-0.017	0.986
Tobacco:				
Do not smoke-Smoke	-0.383	0.131	-2.919	0.004

Note: Alcohol use frequency is indicated as follows: 0 is never drinking, 1 is drinking less than once a month, 2 is drinking 1-3 times a month, 3 is drinking 1-2 times a week, and 4 is drinking 1-2 times a week.

Dietary Patterns

Dietary habits are another essential factor contributing to the academic experience of undergraduate students as a part of their lifestyle routine. Many respondents described their food preferences, pointing out the importance of nutritious meals for their overall healthy physical state. According to Respondents 2 and 3, they limited sugar and sugary drinks consumption as they lower their energy level and make them feel tired during classes, lowering their concentration level:

> I avoid sugary drinks during lunch and generally try not to drink them because I feel drained and super sleepy during lectures if I have one, then. Also, I lose my focus because of sleepiness. Of course I feel energized in the beginning but after a few hours this energy just disappears. (Respondent 2)

Consuming healthy food that contains vitamins and minerals is a priority for most of the students, however, they noted that sometimes they eat quick snacks or fast food due to busy schedules or exam periods. Respondents 1, 2, 5, and 7 also declared that a busy schedule is the reason for skipping meals. For example, Respondent 7 said, “My biggest challenge is balancing a healthy diet with a hectic schedule. I rely on quick meals, often skipping breakfast,” which indicates a problem of time management due to the high workload. When it comes to fast food, Respondent 1 discovered that after eating fast food, he feels heaviness, which negatively influences his capability to study later: “After eating fast food, I feel heavy and struggle to study the next day.” In addition, some participants mentioned that social groups influence their dietary habits both positively and negatively. Respondent 1 said, “My friends encourage me to replace sweets with fruits,” which shows the adoption of healthy dietary habits, which leads to better nutritional snacks. Respondent 2 suggested that some negative habits like late night eating and unhealthy food cravings appear due to peer influence: “Sometimes I eat very late at night with others,” “eating at night can be the reason for poor sleeping,” and “forced to eat because others are eating,” where such habits can negatively influence general physical state and sleeping patterns in the case of Respondent 2.

Table 6

Correlation (r) Matrix Between cGPA, Concentration on Lectures and Dietary Habits

	cGPA	Fruits and vegetables	Fast food
Fruits and vegetables	0.274**	-	
Fast food	-0.120	-0.090	-
Sugary drinks	-0.239**	-0.260**	0.426***

**** p< .001, ** p< .01, *p< .05.*

In quantitative data, dietary habits are framed through the following factors: fruit and vegetable consumption, fast food consumption, and sugary drinks frequency. Table 6 shows correlations between defined food habits with cGPA and concentration level to explain the individual experience of interviewees and understand how certain factors can impact academic achievement overall.

It was found that consumption of fruit and vegetables and sugary drinks has a strong correlation with cGPA, showing a direct influence on academic performance. The fruit and vegetables consumption level has a positive correlation with cGPA ($r = 0.274$, $p = 0.003$), suggesting students who consume more fruits and vegetables tend to have higher GPAs. This reveals that the preference for nutritional food rich in vitamins positively affects the academic success of the respondents. Whereas, sugary drinks consumption has a negative correlation with cGPA ($r = -0.239$, $p = 0.009$), indicating that students who tend to drink sugary drinks perform worse than the ones who do not drink or drink less of the drinks. This might explain the energy drop, which lowers focus levels during the lectures, as described by Respondent 3.

Another medium-level correlation is drawn between sugary drinks, fast food consumption, and fruit and vegetable consumption. It is illustrated that students who drink more sugary drinks tend to eat fewer fruits and vegetables, suggesting an inverse relationship between the factors. This supports the positive influence of fruit and vegetable intake and the negative effect of sugary drinks on the academic experience. At the same time, fast food consumption has a medium positive correlation with sugary drinks ($r = 0.426$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that students who eat more fast food drink, more sugary drinks. This appears to support Respondent 1's claim about the inability to study effectively after fast food consumption.

Sleeping Patterns

All students declared that sleeping tendencies were the most considerable estimators of their cognitive function and overall physical condition. According to the interviews, the majority of undergraduate students face difficulties with managing healthy sleep, particularly sleep deprivation, which affects their productivity level and well-being. As a result, only one out of ten respondents stated that she prioritizes sleep over academic responsibilities, emphasizing the common practice of neglecting sleep due to educational demands.

Participants mentioned various reasons for irregular sleeping habits, where the most common causes were late-night studying, social media distraction, and procrastination over their duties. Respondents 2 and 6 pointed out the problem of all-nighters, where students study the whole night to complete assignments or prepare for the exam: “All-nighters are bad, but students do them because they think they have to,” (Respondent 2) and “students leave their tasks to the deadline having all-nighters.” (Respondent 6). At the same time, Respondent 5 said, “Procrastination and social media distract me... I can just scroll instead of sleeping,” discovering that poor sleep can caused by distraction by technology and social media.

The effects of such unhealthy sleeping habits were revealed by several respondents, indicating a negative influence on students’ academic experience and cognitive function. According to Respondent 3, continuous inadequate sleep resulted in health problems and grades falling: “During one semester, I slept only 4–5 hours for two months, and it affected my GPA and health.” Additionally, he stated, “I’m feeling too tired even after getting up late... insufficient sleep reflects in my mood,” suggesting that sleep deprivation negatively influences body and brain functioning. Similarly, Respondent 7 highlighted that “during exams, I sometimes pull all-nighters, but I regret it because I can’t retain information well the next day,” emphasizing the

reduction of memory retention after improper sleeping patterns. Moreover, half of the students claimed that their focus and concentration levels suffer when they do not sleep enough. Respondent 1 said that he could not concentrate on studying, whereas Respondents 3,5, and 7 highlighted that their concentration level decreased during the lecture and they got distracted by different things after poor sleep. As Respondent 2 said, "It is hard to focus during the exam due to poor sleep," indicating that irregular sleep also hinders exam performance.

Table 7

Paired Samples T-Test on Sleep, Distraction by Technology and Academic Factors

			statistic	df	p
Sleep	Concentration on lectures	Student's t	-2.539	116	0.012
	Skipping classes	Student's t	7.033	116	<.001
	Exam pressure	Student's t	-2.523	116	0.013
	Distraction by technology	Student's t	22.013	117	<.001
	cGPA	Student's t	-0.670	117	0.504

Note: H_o $Measure_1$ - $Measure_2 \neq 0$

Table 7 shows a paired samples t-test that examined the relationship between sleep and academic indicators to compare students' sleep habits with their reported academic experiences. The results of the test support interviewees' claim by showing a significant correlation between sleep and important academic factors such as distraction by technology ($p < 0.001$), exam pressure ($p = 0.013$), skipping classes ($p < 0.001$), and concentration on lectures ($p = 0.012$). Concentration in lectures shows an inverse relationship with sleep quality, indicating that better sleep leads to better concentration in classes. Similarly, better sleep leads to a lower exam pressure level among undergraduate students. Meanwhile, the skipping classes indicator shows a direct relationship, suggesting that more frequent absences from class are considerably associated with poor sleep. Moreover, students with inadequate sleeping duration may be more

easily distracted by devices, which can further hinder their ability to study, as seen from the t = 22.013 index.

Nevertheless, the test did not indicate any statistical significance between sleep and cGPA ($t_{(n)} = 0.67$, $p = 0.504$), suggesting that sleeping duration differed based on academic grades. Considering that the academic experience indicators mentioned above influence students' cGPA, it can be stated that sleep has an indirect impact on it as well. Therefore, proper sleep can improve learning involvement through increasing concentration, attendance, distraction, and exam pressure levels, which, in a broader perspective, can contribute to overall academic performance.

Findings Related to Research Question 2

Second research question focuses on how do friends, family, and other social interactions impact students' academic experience. The theoretical framework used for this study – Health Lifestyle Theory – suggests that habitual behaviour is formed due to the social groups that individuals are surrounded by in their daily lives. This part demonstrates the results regarding the influence of social surroundings, such as family, friends, and faculty, on students' academic life.

According to respondents, social environments such as friends and family have a considerable impact on their lifestyle and learning experience. There are several positive effects of social environment support and the adoption of friends' positive habits. Seven out of ten respondents stated that studying together with peers increased their motivation to study, improved their academic performance, and helped to understand common subjects better. Respondent 3 repetitively mentioned that "friends helped me integrate into university life and gave advice on managing my time and courses," indicating that friends' help facilitated his educational processes. Similarly, as Respondents 2 and 9 stated, their friends became a

motivation for them to study harder and complete assignments more effectively: “try to study more, not to miss deadlines,” and “during difficult courses, we share notes and motivate each other to keep going… my groupmates push me to study harder.”. Also, Respondents 1, 2, and 4 noted that they understood complex topics better during shared study time with friends or study groups, making the exam preparation more productive.

Another crucial factor in enhancing academic success was social support, not only from friends but also from family members. As Respondent 6 claimed, her friends were encouraging her to obtain higher grades, still, if it did not happen, they were helping her to cope with academic challenges, which improves both general wellbeing and academic achievement. Similarly, she shared that “(family) they support what I do and don’t add extra responsibilities at home,” helping her focus more on her academic routine. However, Respondent 5 declared the opposite opinion, saying that “family duties take time out of my schedule, so I can’t always focus on my studies.”

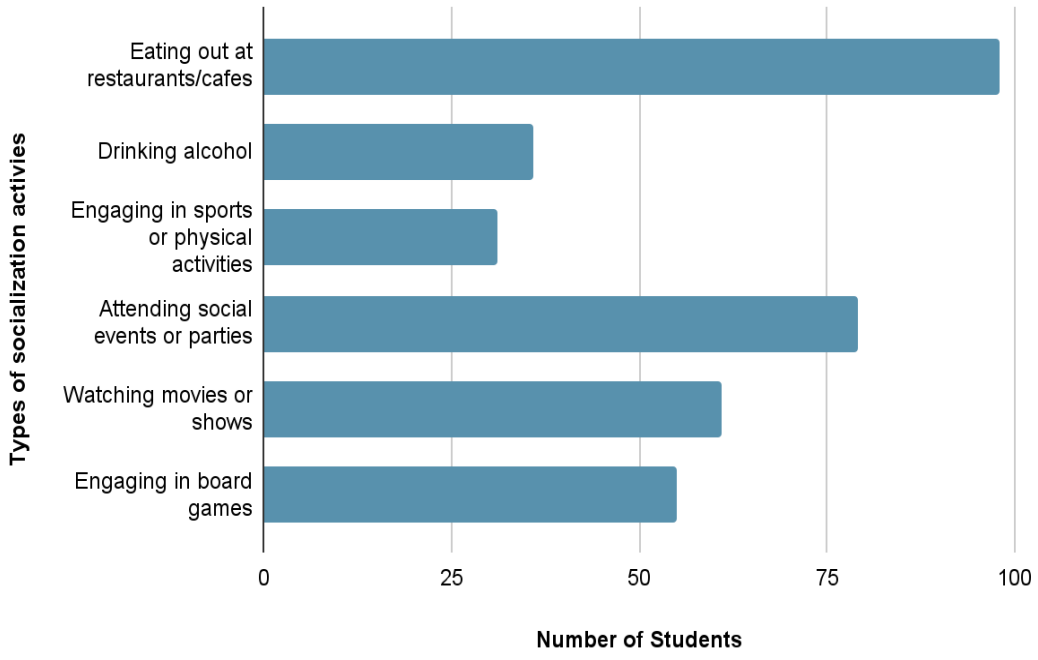
When it comes to the negative influence of the social environment students highlighted adapting to friends’ negative habits and peer pressure. Some of them pointed out that the competitive environment among one major negatively impacts their mental and physical state. For example, Respondent 8 said, “Software engineering is competitive, and sometimes I feel like I have to sacrifice my health just to keep up; that can be stressful.” At the same time, Respondent 5 discussed that her stress level increases as she blames herself for not studying as her peers: “my classmates stay up late in study rooms, which makes me anxious about not doing the same.” Additionally, students tend to choose ‘all-nighters’ due to social influence from people around them, which is supported by Respondent 9’s statement: ‘People stay up all night working on

projects, drinking energy drinks, and skipping sleep. It's easy to fall into that mindset because everyone around me does it."

Table 8
Paired Samples T-Test on Socialization and Lifestyle Habits

			statistic	df	p
Socialization	Sugary drinks	Student's t	4.32	115	<.001
	Fast food	Student's t	8.39	116	<.001
	Tobacco	Student's t	18.69	116	<.001
	Alcohol	Student's t	24.76	116	<.001
	Sleep	Student's t	6.01	116	<.001
	Physical exercise	Student's t	6.59	116	<.001

Figure 3
Distribution of the Activities During Socializing with Friends and Peers



The analysis of quantitative data revealed that socialization greatly influences the lifestyle choices of the students. 75% of respondents indicated that their social surroundings have 'positive' or 'very positive' effects on their lifestyle. Table 8 illustrates paired samples t-test results of socialization impact on several lifestyle habits such as sugary drink consumption, fast

food consumption, alcohol and tobacco use, sleep, and physical exercise levels. According to the table, socialization has a considerable effect on those factors. This also supports interviewees' social experience, where they adapt to their friends' positive and negative habits. Additionally, Figure 3 shows that the most popular type of social engagement is related to dietary habits, supporting Table 8's results, where higher socialization is linked to increased sugary drinks and fast food consumption.

Table 9

One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) on Socialization and cGPA with Tukey Post Hoc Test

		F	df1	df2	p	
cGPA		4.90	4	7.54	0.030	
Tukey Post-Hoc – cGPA						
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Mean difference	-	-0.405	-0.978	-0.626	-0.7222
	p-value	-	0.831	0.078	0.432	0.294
2	Mean difference		-	-0.573	-0.222	-0.3176
	p-value		-	0.016	0.630	0.313
3	Mean difference			-	0.351	0.2555
	p-value			-	0.077	0.386
4	Mean difference				-	-0.0959
	p-value				-	0.917
5	Mean difference					-
	p-value					-

Note: Socialization levels are indicated as following frequencies: 1 is never, 2 is rarely, 3 is once a week, 4 is a few times a week, 5 is daily.

Considering the academic performance of the students, Table 9 shows a one-way ANOVA analysis of the socialization effect on cGPA. There is a statistical significance (p=0.030) between two factors, indicating that higher socialization leads to better academic grades. In order to analyse its impact on different socialization levels, Tukey post-hoc analysis was conducted. It shows that students in Socialization Group 3 (who meet with friends once a week) have considerably better performance than students in Group 2 (who meet with friends rarely), this frequency positively correlates academic success. It suggests that students with

moderate levels of socializing tend to perform better academically, for example study-time together as mentioned by interviewees.

Findings Related to Research Question 3

Research question 3 is about how technology use (social media, internet platforms, etc.) impacts students' perceptions of their academic experience. Therefore, this section presents the results connected to research question 3, which examines the impact of technology use, including social media and internet platforms, on the students' perception of the academic experience.

During the interviews, students mentioned several effects of social media in their daily lives. Respondent 9 said, "My phone was making me sick after the whole day of scrolling Tiktok feed." Similarly, Respondent 5 noted that "Procrastination and social media distract me... I can just scroll instead of sleeping," indicating that social media negatively affects the general well-being of the students, increasing the distraction level. Additionally, it lowers concentration level as a consequence of lack of sleep, as Respondent 3 said: "I cannot concentrate very well, and I always get distracted by my phone or social media."

Table 10

Correlation (r) Matrix Between Distraction by Technology and Academic Factors

	cGPA	Concentration on lectures	Exam pressure	Skipping classes
Concentration on lectures	-0.237**	-		
Exam pressure	-0.207**	0.343***	-	
Skipping classes	-0.291***	0.392***	0.112	-
Distraction by technology	0.101	-0.254**	-0.122	-0.178

**** p< .001, ** p< .01, *p< .05.*

According to the survey results, 88% of the students use their devices for academic purposes. 16.9% of them are always distracted, 41.5% are often distracted, and 33.9% are sometimes distracted, which indicates a high distraction level among students during study time, lectures, or other academic activities. This is supported by the analysis in Table 10, where distraction by technology has a statistically significant relationship with concentration on lectures ($p=0.006$), suggesting that more distraction entails less concentration during classes. There were no other significant correlations between distraction by technology and academic factors; however, it has an indirect effect on cGPA through concentration level due to the negative correlation with concentration on cGPA.

Findings Related to Research Question 4

Research question 4: What obstacles do students overcome in order to continue leading healthy lives in university?

Students may face different challenges while trying to maintain healthy habits in their regular schedule. The reasons that cause these challenges vary from irregular schedules to social environment influence. The following responses describe how students overcome similar challenges in order to keep healthy lifestyle.

According to respondents, there are various challenges that students face in following a healthy lifestyle during their undergraduate studies. For example, some students tend to skip meals or workouts and even sleep due to an unfixed schedule and high academic workload. In order to deal with these obstacles, Respondent 3 said that it was helpful to create a special system with better planning: “after my lowest GPA semester, I implemented a system with to-do lists and schedules, leading to my highest GPA semester,” which improved his academic performance as well.

Students who declared sleep deficiency due to socialization with friends and peers adopted a new approach that allowed them not to sacrifice sleeping time. Respondent 5 mentioned that "friends encourage early hangouts so we can go to bed earlier", as well as Respondent 6 saying, "we used to meet with friends after 9 pm, however, now we prioritize our sleep, so we usually meet up at 4-5 pm and go home till 12 am to have a full sleep." Choosing earlier times for meetings enabled respondents to adopt proper sleeping habits.

Another obstacle that some of the students could overcome is unhealthy eating habits. Firstly, as mentioned in the previous part, Respondent 1 highlighted the positive influence of his social environment on reducing the consumption of sweets when his friends motivated him to eat fruits instead of sweets. Furthermore, Respondent 9 described balancing healthy eating with a busy schedule, saying:

> I usually understand what days are incredibly busy, therefore, I cook meals for several days. It is like meal preparation. I know that I have food, so I would not go and buy some fast food or sandwiches, like it was before. So mainly I bought food just because I did not have one cooked.

Cooking in advance for several days solved the issue of the respondent eating pre-prepared food or fast food in favour of healthy meals.

Findings Related to Research Question 5

Undergraduate students highlighted the importance of a healthy lifestyle within the university's walls. They suggested several recommendations that would facilitate the integration of a healthy lifestyle and maintain a better academic experience, which covers dietary habits, physical activity, and general well-being. This section presents the results answering the last

research question “What changes could universities make to help students maintain healthier lifestyles?”

Firstly, several students complained about the food options in canteens and cafes around the campus. Respondent 1 declared, “I couldn’t say that canteen is very healthy because they use suspicious ingredients”, similarly, Respondent 3 noted “most of the canteen food is greasy and lacks vegetables,” emphasizing that students do not consider canteen food healthy and nutritious enough. Additionally, Respondent 2 said that cafes around the university mainly serve fast food, such as sandwiches, wraps, and a lot of carbohydrates, with little to no diversity. According to Respondent 10, food should be both nutritious and affordable so that students would choose healthy food over fast food: “Healthy food is often expensive, while fast food is cheap and convenient. If the university made nutritious meals more affordable and available, students would be more likely to make healthier choices.” Therefore, one of the recommendations for improving the lifestyle of the students is to increase the quality of food in canteens and cafes with accessible prices.

The second suggestion would be to introduce physical education as a mandatory subject in the curriculum. Respondent 3 mentioned that “many students don’t do any physical activity because it’s not mandatory,” indicating a possible reason for low physical activity and sedentary lifestyle among undergraduate students. In order to increase the level of physical activity, Respondent 1 proposed “introducing some kind of sports course or making it mandatory” too. As respondents said, understanding that such a subject is integrated into the curriculum would make sports more prevalent among students. Nevertheless, Respondent 3 pointed out that assessments should weigh a lot when motivating them to complete the bare minimum of physical activity.

Students highlighted the importance of the offices and departments that work closely with students, as they appear to be the most contacted administrative bodies. Therefore, respondents recommended providing healthy lifestyle importance sessions that would cover necessary basic information for undergraduates about dietary patterns or stress management, for example. Respondent 9 highlighted the importance of presenting such sessions during orientation week for freshmen students, who are usually more likely to fall into negative habits:

> Advising centres could describe the simple need to control your diet. We have kitchens in our dormitory, but not all students prepare food for themselves because they do not know how to plan their meals. It will take only about maybe 30 to 40 minutes to prepare food, where you definitely know what you're eating, and you will control the carbohydrates, protein, etc.

Furthermore, Respondent 9 suggested providing stress management sessions for the students, where they would learn about coping mechanisms, how to identify stress, and simply understand the reasons behind stress. According to Respondent 9:

> Many students, especially in high-pressure fields like software engineering, do not realize how much their habits impact their mental performance. Many students think smoking helps them deal with stress, but they do not realise it increases anxiety over time. If universities provided alternatives like relaxation spaces, guided meditation sessions, or even nicotine patches for students who want to quit, it could help.

This approach would decrease the number of smoking students and increase mental well-being and concentration levels.

Another recommendation is to enhance and expand the university's psychological and well-being centre services by increasing the counselling sessions and well-being workshops.

Respondents highlighted the usefulness of these specialists in soothing anxiety and stress levels caused by academic workload. According to Respondent 5, “Well-being workshops and yoga classes offered by the university are cool, but they were limited in time range,” suggesting increasing the number of such sessions and classes. Moreover, Respondent 9 proposed that making mental support more accessible would help students to share their challenges: “A lot of students suffer in silence because they think they have to ‘just deal with it.’ Universities should have more accessible mental health support, like free counselling sessions or peer support groups.”, highlighting the necessity of university support through counselling centres.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of the results described in the previous chapter, and its interpretation in regards to the research questions and research purpose in comparison with existing literature. The purpose of the study is to identify direct and indirect behavioural habits that influence the academic experience of students in Kazakhstan universities, where habits are framed around a healthy lifestyle. This is important because it can lead to proposed strategies to promote healthy habits, increase proactive positions relating to health among young adults, and improve the academic achievement of undergraduate students.

This chapter highlights what are the health-related factors that influence academic performance and to what extent socialization and technology affect undergraduate students' academic performance, interpreting the results concerning the Healthy Lifestyle Theory, and positioning this theoretical framework within a historical and cultural context. It also examines how students can overcome the challenges that they face by following a healthy lifestyle. The chapter concludes with student recommendations on how colleges may promote their well-being and assist in overcoming these obstacles.

The data analysis in the previous chapter showed that lifestyle habits that students follow during their undergraduate studies have an influence on their academic experience to some extent. These lifestyle habits were indicated as physical activity level, dietary habits, sleeping patterns, alcohol and tobacco use, socialization, technology use, and employment. Not all of the eight factors directly influence the grades and GPA of the students because some of them influence only attendance, concentration, and distraction levels, which also contribute to the academic experience in this context. It was found that some of the factors are interrelated, which

show the importance of a persistently healthy lifestyle in the long term. This aligns with research objectives in discovering direct and indirect factors influencing students' academic achievement.

1. Physical Activity

There are several research studies that observed a positive relationship not only between physical activity and academic performance, but also positive influence of the physical exercise on physical and mental condition, general well-being, and brain function (Rajendran & Chamundeswari, 2019; Barbosa et al., 2020; De Sousa Fernandes et al., 2020; Mahindru et al., 2023; Alj & Bouayad, 2024). Results show that maintaining regular physical activity positively influences brain function, concentration and energy levels, and overall well-being of the undergraduate students.

2. Dietary Habits

This research used different categories to analyse the influence of dietary habits on the academic experience of the students. It focused on diet type, number of meals, fast food, fruit and vegetables, and sugary drink consumption. Most students declared that their dietary habits should be improved, as some tend to skip meals and eat junk food. A well-balanced diet not only satisfies people's physiological needs but can also improve cognitive function, memory development, test performance, and class participation, contributing to overall academic success (Khan et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to eat food with high nutritional composition. In this research, the most significant factors directly influencing the GPA of the students are fruit and vegetable consumption and sugary drink consumption. Fruit and vegetable intake positively correlates with students' academic performance, meaning that students who eat more fruit and vegetables show better results in terms of GPA. This is consistent with studies that show eating

vegetables and food with high fibre improves the academic achievement of students (Maniaci et al., 2021).

Regarding sugary drink consumption, respondents stated the importance of cutting sugar intake to improve their diets and avoid an energy drop after consumption. This research highlights the negative influence of sugary drinks on the students' academic experience. As Anjum et al. (2018) stated, frequent use of sugar-sweetened beverages puts the brain at serious risk for neurochemical imbalances, oxidative stress, sleep disorders, and possible cognitive impairments in both adults and children. Similarly, my research also indicates a negative relationship between sugary drinks and academic performance, entailing those students who drink more sweet beverages tend to show lower GPAs. In addition, the energy drop, sleepiness, and concentration loss described by the respondents are also explained by the consumption of sugary drinks, as they rapidly increase glucose in the blood and then crash, leading to fatigue and decreased alertness (Anjum et al., 2018).

3. Sleeping Patterns

One of the most essential observations in data analysis is the importance of high-quality sleep. Respondents indicated that their general physical condition, emotional state, and brain function are highly dependent on sleeping habits. Csipo et al. (2021) highlighted that a lack of sleep reduces vigilance, reaction times, and attention span, consequently increasing the possibility of making mistakes and impairing daily activities that require focus and attention. Similarly, interviewees highlighted that insufficient sleep, especially long-term, leads to a decrease in concentration, information perception, and retention. However, most students sacrifice their sleep to study harder, finish their assignments, or prepare for midterm or final exams, neglecting sleep needs. This study shows that poor sleeping patterns negatively influence

the academic experience of the students by decreasing their focus level at the lecture and increasing academic pressure and distraction level by gadgets. However, it does not directly influence GPA and academic performance. This is in contrast to Alj and Bouayad's (2024) research, which suggested that 6-8 hours of sleep determines a higher GPA. Nevertheless, my research supports the findings of Suardiaz-Muro et al. (2023), where they stated that lack of sleep impairs academic experience, not always directly through GPA, but by lowering concentration, self-esteem, and cognitive function of the students.

4/5. Drinking Alcohol and Smoking

When it comes to "bad habits" such as smoking and drinking alcohol, the results revealed some interesting points. While smoking has a medium effect on skipping classes and lack of concentration, decreasing academic performance, low and moderate levels of alcohol consumption can positively influence students' GPA. As results show, drinking once or twice a month can be helpful to keep successful academic performance. Additionally, the study found that employment or other additional working projects, a new factor that has not been indicated in the initial factors, adversely affect overall students' academic experience, specifically if it is a full-time engagement.

According to the data analysis, drinking alcohol and smoking are interrelated, suggesting that students are likely to adopt both of these behaviours if they engage in one of them. Both of the factors have a medium-level correlation with the students' academic experience. Factors negatively influence concentration level and class attendance to a small extent. Alqahtani et al. (2023) claimed that students who smoke performed worse academically, as indicated by their GPA, number of absence days, and academic warnings.

The results of my study show that the majority of students aged 18-24 prefer not to smoke. This might show the decrease in smoking needs among young adults aged 18-24 in the universities of Astana. Such a trend has been observed in Western countries. For example, in the United States, the smoking rate among Generation Z adults aged 18–24 dropped to 5.4% in 2020 compared to 35% in the early 2000s (Pierce et al., 2023). Young people under 25 in the United Kingdom showed a similar pattern, decreasing the smoking level from 26% in 2011 to 10% in 2023 (Pierce et al., 2023). According to the World Health Organization (2017), Kazakhstan is implementing various policies such as cigarette tax, smoke-free laws, high-level media campaign, which are aimed at reducing the smoking population, within 15 years should decrease smoking among the population by 47%.

The decline in traditional cigarette smoking in these countries was followed by an increase in the use of e-cigarettes and vaping. In contrast, this study reveals that Kazakhstani students in the two universities where the research was undertaken show a low smoking rate of any nicotine-containing substances, including vape and hookah. This can be explained by the parental influence and cultural differences between Western and Eastern countries. In many Eastern societies, including Kazakhstan, strong parental control frequently prohibits smoking among young people. Similarly, Susanto et al. (2020) found that parents from Eastern families (in the example of Indonesia) implement specific regulations restricting children from smoking and enforcing disciplinary actions for violations of smoking rules up to children's late adolescents. Such cultural norms and low tolerance to smoking of young people shape their lifestyle behaviour and may lead to a decline in smoking patterns among students aged 18-24 in Kazakhstan.

Talking about alcohol consumption habits, there are contradictory results regarding its influence on undergraduate students. As mentioned above, drinking alcohol has a negative relationship with concentration level and lecture attendance of students, similar to the smoking effect. Nevertheless, the study demonstrates that there is a slight opposite influence of alcohol consumption on the GPA of the students. López-Moreno et al. (2021) stated that students who tend to drink alcohol are more likely to show lower grades on examinations, leading to a lower GPA due to brain function impairment compared to ones who do not drink alcohol. Unlike their observation, it was found that rare and occasional alcohol consumption, up to once or twice a month, has a positive influence on the academic performance of the students. This is also connected with the fact that drinking alcohol is one of the activities students engage in during their free time as a part of socialization with friends and peers. In support of this observation, Dunbar (2022), discovered that alcohol is important to social interactions, helping people bond, collaborate, and build a sense of belonging. There are negative effects of heavy alcohol abuse on cognitive functions, nevertheless, when people drink alcohol, endorphins, the hormones of pleasure and pain relief, are released into the brain, which decreases stress level for a short time (Dunbar, 2022). Increased social bonding and decreased stress levels can positively affect the academic performance of the students.

It is also essential to consider the historical background of alcohol use in Soviet times. According to Waters and Thom (2007), Kazakhstan, as a former country of the Soviet Union, retains a culture of occasional heavy (binge) alcohol consumption as a national drinking style. Therefore, alcohol continues to play a significant role in social interactions, celebrations, and hospitality customs. Despite the health risks, many people in Kazakhstan believe that drinking is

socially acceptable, therefore, it normalizes alcohol use within social settings, shaping peer interaction and improving communication between them (Waters & Thom, 2007).

6. Social Interaction

Another important finding is that social interaction is one of the main factors that build or break the habits among the peers, as students discussed the habit adoption from their friends. This coincides with the Health Lifestyle Theory, where Cockerham (2005) highlights that people adopt the habits due to their collective nature, where individuals try to maintain the lifestyle behaviour from the corresponding social group (e.g., university students). The adoption of positive or negative habits is personal, however, the study shows that social relationships positively influence the academic lives of students through cooperative study time.

Social interaction plays an integral role in building lifestyle habits and studying in university among undergraduate students in Astana. Cockerham's (2005) Health Lifestyle Theory helps explain how social structures like peers, family, faculty, or university staff can influence an individual's decisions in the learning process. According to this theoretical framework, lifestyles are collective social phenomena influenced by status groups such as social or educational background. Therefore, people choose certain lifestyles to fit into particular social groupings (Cockerham, 2005). In this case, the status group is university students, as they share similar challenges, face similar educational conditions, and even live in similar housing (dormitories), consequently, students should follow similar patterns and habits in order to align with collective behaviour. Describing lifestyle and habitual choices, the results of this research align with the theoretical framework, as a significant part of the respondents try to follow lifestyles similar to their peers. Social groups significantly shape students' healthy lifestyles by influencing their sleep habits, dietary patterns, and level of physical activity. However, these

choices might be both positive and negative. For example, positive habit adoption is going to the gym, whereas negative habit adoption is delaying sleeping hours or eating out at night.

The historical background is also a determinant in the modern perception of the healthy lifestyle in Kazakhstan. Soviet ideology left passive health behaviour, where people did not actively participate in health-promoting behaviours and instead depended solely on the government for healthcare, resulting in less personal health initiatives (Cockerham, 2005). Such historical heritage can be reflected in the modern behaviour of students in Astana universities. For example, negative habit adoption such as pulling all-nighters, ignoring healthy sleep, or neglecting nutritious food choices while being with peers. Therefore, these continued tendencies may suggest that lifestyle choices are still influenced by the legacy of the passive health approach, when self-care was neither prioritized nor incentivized.

Social groups considerably influence students' behaviour in terms of healthy lifestyles. Simultaneously, the research expands this framework to academic habits among students, showing that academic habits are also formed by the social surroundings. The results demonstrate that peer influence has a direct positive relationship with study engagement, motivation, and learning approaches. Social interaction improves the academic performance of the students, which is why students who occasionally meet with their friends have higher GPAs. Students who try to study collectively with other students in study groups, organized peer learning, and cooperative academic activities show higher academic achievement. Moreover, students highlighted that their social surroundings increased academic motivation by assisting each other in coursework discussions, assignment solutions, exam preparation, and efficient time management. This supports the Alotaibi et al.'s (2023) research observations, which highlighted that friendship helps in stress management, leading to improved focus and concentration on

academic tasks, facilitating idea exchange, fostering better understanding of course materials, and improving academic results through collaboration.

During the study, the main social group was determined as peers and friends. In contrast, family, faculty, and administrative staff were not a predominant factor in shaping academic experience of the students in Astana universities. This might be connected with the reliance on similar status groups and proximity, as mentioned in Cockerham's (2005) theory. Students can learn more effectively, become more motivated, and develop better study habits by creating a supportive peer environment. This improves their academic performance and general well-being.

7. Technology and Media

Technology use did not show a direct relationship with academic achievements, however, this study revealed that excessive use of social media can decrease concentration level during lectures. Based on the study results, use of technology is significant in students' academic lives due to the high necessity of engagement through the gadgets in the academic framework. It means that a vast proportion of the students are using their phones, laptops, and tablets as a learning tool during their studies.

At the same time, my research shows that technology usage and digital media exposure increase the distraction level, leading to low focus during the learning process. Similarly, it is revealed that the drop in concentration level among students appears due to interruption by frequent notifications and multitasking (Kuş, 2025). Furthermore, Kuş (2025) discussed the negative influence of the high screen time on the sleeping patterns, resulting in poor sleep, which impairs memory retention and cognitive function.

This is also observed among students in this study, where they sacrifice their sleeping time for screen time, which can cause sleep deficiency. Besides this negative effect of distraction

level rise and low sleeping quality, neither the survey nor the interviews showed additional effects on the academic success of students. The purpose of technology use, whether educational or recreational, defines its effect on the academic performance of the students. That is why there are both positive and negative effects of smartphones and social media influence on students. Rational use of gadgets and social media can facilitate learning through academic discussions and access to educational resources, whereas excessive usage shows negative influence on students (Kuş, 2025).

8. Employment

Employment appeared as an additional factor that builds lifestyle behaviour. Initially, this factor was not included in the lifestyle behaviour, however, during the study, it showed a negative influence on some of the academic experience factors like class attendance and concentration level. Students who are occupied in either part-time or full-time jobs are more likely to skip lectures, which is a moderate determinant of the GPA, meaning that skipping lectures leads to lower GPA. This is connected with the fact that employed students have a clash of their working and studying schedules and cannot adjust to urgent circumstances that may appear during their studies (Summer et al., 2023). Such observation is also found in Hongjun et al.'s (2024), saying that even a part-time job with less than 15 hours of work a week has a negative effect on academic performance, whereas a schedule with more than 20 hours a week entails worse GPA and class engagement.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

This section outlines the practical implications of the study based on the responses regarding challenges and recommendations in maintaining healthy lifestyles for university administration and policymakers. Key obstacles, like difficulty in time management and

prioritizing social involvement over personal plans, helps us to understand how to prevent such occasions through the introduction of the updated regulations. These regulations should be constructed based on the needs of the students, which would interplay between fostering a healthy lifestyle and improving academic experience. These recommendations include improvement of the food quality and increasing the accessibility of healthy food, incorporation of mandatory physical education classes into the curriculum to increase general activity level, and facilitate support services, such as stress management workshops, counselling sessions, and peer support groups.

Overcoming Challenges in Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle plays an essential role in sustaining a good academic experience among undergraduate students. However, students at Astana universities described facing different obstacles that prevent them from following a healthy lifestyle and maintaining general well-being. These challenges are connected with breaking adequate sleeping habits, disregarding nutritional food, and neglecting physical activities. Using time management strategies is one of the most effective ways of handling most of those lifestyle challenges. The majority of the students noted that prioritizing academic responsibilities and healthy habits together is achieved through creating established routines, using to-do lists, and organizing their schedules. For instance, an effective schedule optimized time distribution for various academic and health-related activities, where the student was able to improve his academic standing and integrate physical activities, meal preparation, and high-quality sleep in his regular routine. Established schedule allows students to perform better academically, not compromising their health due to lack of sleep from all-nighters or poor dieting habits.

Another strategy for mitigating challenges in health maintenance is balancing social interactions with well-being through adjusting social habits. Although socializing with friends is important for general health and academic achievements, late-night gatherings can lead to poor sleep and low concentration levels among young people. Therefore, students altered their socialization routines from ordinary late meetings to early-evening meetings. This helps to maintain social activity without compromising their sleep schedule, where students collectively encourage one another to put their healthy habits higher than unhealthy behaviours that negatively influence both health and academic life.

Student Suggestions for the Universities

The final research question in this study is connected to the perspective of the students on the improvement of the health lifestyle within the university, where they suggested ideas on how university administration can help students maintain a healthy lifestyle. Several key recommendations include quality assurance of infrastructure, modification of the academic curriculum, and expansion of student services.

One of the main issues brought up was the quality and the price of the food in campus canteens and cafes. The nutritional content of canteen meals was criticized by many students, emphasizing a lack of fibre, an excess of oil and fat, and the quality of the ingredients. At the same time, healthier food options were often overpriced, limiting students' choices. In order to solve this problem, students recommended that university administration could increase the variety and quality of healthy food options, encouraging students to choose a balanced diet, which would improve their overall physical condition. This can prevent food insecurity among undergraduate students, which considerably hinders their academic success, by causing fatigue,

difficulties concentrating, reduced psychological well-being, and impaired cognitive function due to the lack of nutrients (Weaver et al., 2019).

Including physical education classes in the academic curriculum was another important suggestion to increase the level of physical activity among young people. Students realized that they keep a sedentary lifestyle, even though there are sports facilities in the university. Therefore, graded classes in physical education as a part of an academic program would increase the efforts of the students to pass the threshold of the standard physical activity. Moreover, students predicted that it could shift from Soviet passive health behaviour by encouraging a health-conscious culture at the university.

The final key recommendation for the administrative staff of the university is to expand mental health support and well-being initiatives since students emphasized the considerable effects of stress, unhealthy habits, and low awareness of health options on their academic experience. This indicated the necessity of the introduction of mental health workshops on stress management, creation of peer support groups and rise of individual counselling sessions by university well-being or psychological support services. By improving these services and establishing comprehensive wellness programs, universities can foster a supportive academic environment where students are assisted by accessible support and guidance.

These recommendations emphasize the need for a holistic approach to students' academic experience and lifestyle behaviour, which focuses on development of health-related habit construction, an increase in awareness of active health behaviour, and building a supportive academic environment for the students.

Summary of Discussion Chapter

This study examined the role of lifestyle habits of universities in Astana and their impact on students' academic experience. The results mostly align with existing global research, which highlights the importance of healthy behavioural habits such as eating healthy, sleeping enough, exercising moderately, socializing, and neglecting smoking in leading a successful academic and social life. However, specific cultural factors unique to Kazakhstan, such as cultural acceptance of alcohol or a passive health attitude formed in the USSR, have a contrasting pattern on students compared to international studies. These factors lead to students normalizing alcohol consumption in social settings and taking a less proactive approach toward their health, which requires more context-specific policies for the effective implementation of healthy lifestyle strategies. This is proposed by students as integration of physical education in the curriculum, increasing food quality and supply in canteens, and expanding student support services.

This study examined the influence of lifestyle behaviour on academic experience of undergraduate students in Astana universities and found that lifestyle factors have direct and indirect influence on academic performance through concentration levels, exam pressure levels and lecture attendance. The key results revealed that eating nutritional food, having enough sleep, and spending time with social surroundings are significant in building a successful academic experience. When it comes to dietary habits, consuming more fruits and vegetables increases the academic performance of the students, whereas drinking sugary drinks negatively affects grades and concentration level among students. Furthermore, neglecting the appropriate amount of sleep negatively influences the brain function of the students, which consequently leads to mood swings, lack of alertness, and fatigue. Similarly, physical activity influences the

general physical and mental state of the students, but does not demonstrate a direct relationship with GPA.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The main purpose of the research was to identify direct and indirect factors that affect the academic experience of the undergraduate students of some universities in Astana. Discovering these factors enables us to understand how university administration needs to respond to several issues connected with the well-being of its students and their academic performance.

The research focused on seven lifestyle factors such as physical activities, diet, sleeping habits, alcohol and cigarette use, socialization, and technology. Answering to the research question 1 regarding the influence of the health-related habits on academic experience of the students, it was found that maintaining a healthy lifestyle, where a student gets enough sleep, engages in moderate physical activity, and follows a nutritious diet by limiting sugary drinks and increasing fruit and vegetable intake, positively influences academic factors such as GPA and concentration level among undergraduates. Conversely, smoking has a considerable negative effect on academic achievement. Surprisingly, it was found that low and moderate levels of alcohol consumption once or twice a month can have a slight positive effect on the academic standing of the students. According to the theoretical concept, this can be connected with the historical context of Kazakhstan, where alcohol consumption was socially accepted during the USSR times. In addition, research question 2 focused on the influence of the socialization on academic experience, therefore the study pointed out the importance of socialization during academic endeavours. This supports Health Lifestyle Theory presented by Cockerham (2005), where he highlights the collective nature of humans in choosing lifestyle. This study shows that the social environment around the student significantly affects the adoption of the habits, either positive or negative ones, where students repeat the lifestyle behaviour of their friends and peers. Technology also plays an important role in building lifestyle behaviour as it has become an

integral part of our lives. Social media and gadgets decrease the concentration level of the students during the lectures, by increasing the distraction from smartphones, which answers to research question 3 regarding the influence of technology use on undergraduate students' academic experiences. Moreover, the study found out that another factor that influences the academic experience of the students is employment, which decreases lecture attendance and can negatively influence on academic performance.

Generally, students in the two universities of Astana have a tendency to make attempts in following a healthy lifestyle even though facing challenges such as difficulties with time management, lack of physical activities, or limited choice in healthy food. These challenges are useful in building strategies to address students' needs. This is how, the research provides the suggestions and proposals gathered from the university students that can help create practical implications and policies on the structural level of the university or the education system in the country and answers research question 4 and 5, which are about overcoming challenges in following healthy lifestyle and recommendation for the universities to facilitate students' healthy lifestyle and academic experience respectively. Increasing the quality of food on campus, by offering more healthy and affordable options of meals, increasing the physical activity level by establishing mandatory physical education classes, and expanding mental health services would reflect a holistic approach to a student's health, well-being, and academic success on the administrative or governmental level. Moreover, such promotion of a healthy lifestyle can change a passive health attitude, formed in the USSR, to an active health attitude, enabling students to balance healthy lifestyle and academic life.

Limitations

One of the main limitations of the study is gathering self-reported data on academic indicators such as GPA and class attendance. This caused the potential for response bias, as students could be inaccurate about these indicators.

As the study is connected with lifestyle and habits, it is crucial to monitor the data throughout a specific period and track any fluctuations in behaviour. However, this study has a cross-sectional nature, meaning that the data were collected at one point in time, which does not account for changes over a long-term period.

In addition, the study could overlook some significant variables or potential factors such as socioeconomic status, pre-existing health conditions, or gender, that might restrict the analysis in understanding the influences on students' health and their academic experience.

Recommendations

Based on the current results and limitations, there are several recommendations in improving the direction of the research in the future. Firstly, include the employment factor as one of the lifestyle factors to see how the job occupation influences, depending on the academic track of the students, whether it is beneficial to work in the same field as the students' major, for academic success in particular subjects. Secondly, future research could be designed as a longitudinal study, choosing a focus group to analyse the long-term effects of healthy habits on the academic achievements of the students. Thirdly, if the study was limited to a specific university, it would be beneficial to request official academic records for GPA and attendance from the institution directly, and possibly include such factors as academic probation or misconduct to understand academic experience in a full range. However, this action might entail

risks with the anonymity of the data, therefore, it is important not to disclose any personal information that might identify the person.

Reflection

Primarily, I focused on this topic due to the personal experience during undergraduate studies. Following specific lifestyle and focusing on particular habits allowed me to have good academic standing, therefore, I was interested whether there is a tendency of leading healthy lifestyle among students and how it reflects on their academic achievements.

During the study, it was both engaging and challenging to test the various factors and explore how they correlate with academic outcomes. The most complex part was combining all the factors and integrating them within the scope of the research. Many of the findings were interrelated and influenced each other, making it difficult to draw a unified conclusion based solely on the most significant results. All of the findings appeared to be essential for a deeper understanding of the topic. Also, data collection took more time than I was expecting, which delayed the data analysis to several weeks later. Nevertheless, the study progressed effectively, and the analysis provided valuable insights on the topic.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is not only about physical conditions, but it also reflects on the general academic experience of the students, including both educational and social factors. The study demonstrated the importance of a holistic approach in supporting students by discovering the relationship between lifestyle behaviour and academic success. By addressing the challenges students encounter in attempts to balance their health and educational needs, universities can create an environment where students develop academically, socially, and personally.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Completed AI Declaration Form

Exploring the Influence of Lifestyle Behaviour and Academic Experience of Undergraduate Students in Kazakhstani Universities

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 Quillbot for rephrasing sentences from my personal previous works, Scribbr for referencing and citation, but with editing by myself, and ChatGPT for arranging and structuring ideas in logical way.

I also declare that I

☒ am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),

☒ have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,

☒ am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,

☒ have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work, and

☒ acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed NUGSE's guidelines regarding appropriate AI use.

Name: Aigerim Kenes Signature: 

Date: 28.04.2025

Appendix B: Online Survey Questions

Demographic Information

1. **What is your age?**
    - 18
    - 19
    - 20
    - 21
    - 22
    - 23
    - 24 or older
2. **What is your gender?**
    - Male
    - Female
3. **What is your field of study?**
    - Arts
    - Humanities
    - Social Sciences
    - Natural Sciences
    - Engineering and Technology
    - Medicine
    - IT
    - Other (please specify)
4. **What year of study are you in?**
    - 1st year
    - 2nd year
    - 3rd year
    - 4th year
    - 5th year or more
5. **Are you currently employed while studying?**
    - Yes, part-time
    - Yes, full-time
    - No

Physical Activity

6. **On average, how many days per week do you engage in physical exercise for at least 30 minutes?**
    - 0 days
    - 1-2 days
    - 3-4 days
    - 5-7 days
7. **What type of physical activities do you participate in regularly?** (Select all that apply)
    - Gym workouts
    - Team sports (e.g., football, volleyball)
    - Individual sports (e.g., martial arts, swimming)
    - Yoga/Pilates
    - Running

- Walking
- Other (please specify)

Dietary Patterns

8. **How many meals do you typically eat in a day?**
    - One
    - Two
    - Three
    - More than three
9. **Do you follow any specific dietary plan or restriction?** (Select all that apply)
    - Vegetarian
    - Vegan
    - Pescatarian (only fish)
    - Gluten-free
    - Low-carb
    - High-protein
    - Mediterranean
    - None
10. **How often do you consume fruits and vegetables?**
    - Daily
    - A few times a week
    - Once a week
    - Rarely
    - Never
11. **How often do you eat fast food?**
    - Daily
    - A few times a week
    - Once a week
    - Rarely
    - Never
12. **How often do you consume sugary drinks (sodas, energy drinks, etc.)?**
    - Daily
    - A few times a week
    - Once a week
    - Rarely
    - Never

Sleep Patterns

13. **On average, how many hours of sleep do you get each night?**
    - Less than 5 hours
    - 5-6 hours
    - 6-7 hours
    - 7-8 hours
    - More than 8 hours

Alcohol and Tobacco Use

14. **How often do you consume alcoholic beverages?**
    - I do not consume alcoholic beverages
    - Less than once a month

- 1-3 times a month
- 1-2 times a week
- 3 or more times a week

15. **Do you smoke or use tobacco products?**
    - Yes, I smoke regularly (daily)
    - Yes, I smoke occasionally (a few times a week)
    - Yes, I use other tobacco products (e.g., vape, hookah) regularly
    - Yes, I use other tobacco products occasionally
    - No, I do not smoke or use tobacco products

Social Connections

16. **How often do you socialize with friends or peers outside of class?**
    - Daily
    - A few times a week
    - Once a week
    - Rarely
    - Never

17. **What activities do you typically engage in when socializing?** (Select all that apply)
    - Eating out at restaurants
    - Drinking alcohol
    - Engaging in sports or physical activities
    - Attending social events or parties
    - Watching movies or shows
    - Engaging in board games
    - Talking/communicating
    - Other (please specify)

18. **How do you feel your social interactions influence your lifestyle choices?**
    - Very positively
    - Positively
    - No impact
    - Negatively
    - Very negatively

19. **Do you have friends who actively promote healthy habits (e.g., exercise, healthy eating)?**
    - Yes, many
    - Yes, a few
    - No, not really
    - No, none

Technology Use

20. **On average, how many hours per day do you spend on electronic devices (smartphone, computer, tablet)?**
    - Less than 1 hour
    - 1-3 hours
    - 4-6 hours
    - 7-9 hours
    - 10 hours or more

21. **How often do you find yourself distracted by technology while studying or doing academic work?**
    - Never
    - Rarely
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Always
22. **How often do you use technology for academic purposes?**
    - Daily
    - A few times a week
    - Once a week
    - Rarely
    - Never

Academic Experience

23. **What is your current cumulative GPA (cGPA)?**
    - 1.00-1.99
    - 2.00-2.49
    - 2.50-2.99
    - 3.00-3.49
    - 3.50-4.0
24. **How often do you find it difficult to concentrate during lectures or study sessions?**
    - Always
    - Often
    - Sometimes
    - Rarely
    - Never
25. **How often do you skip classes?**
    - Always
    - Often
    - Sometimes
    - Rarely
    - Never
26. **Do you feel pressure during exam period?**
    - Always
    - Often
    - Sometimes
    - Rarely
    - Never

Демографическая информация

1. **Сколько вам лет?**
    - 18
    - 19
    - 20
    - 21
    - 22
    - 23

- 24 года и старше

2. **Какой у вас пол?**
   - Мужской
   - Женский
3. **В какой области вы учитесь?**
   - Искусство
   - Гуманитарные науки
   - Социальные науки
   - Естественные науки
   - Инженерия и технологии
   - Медицина
   - Информационные технологии (IT)
   - Другое (пожалуйста, укажите)
4. **На каком курсе вы учитесь?**
   - 1 курс
   - 2 курс
   - 3 курс
   - 4 курс
   - 5 курс или более
5. **В настоящее время вы работаете во время учёбы?**
   - Да, неполный рабочий день
   - Да, полный рабочий день
   - Нет

Физическая активность

6. **В среднем, сколько дней в неделю вы занимаетесь физическими упражнениями не менее 30 минут?**
   - 0 дней
   - 1-2 дня
   - 3-4 дня
   - 5-7 дней
7. **Какие виды физической активности вы практикуете?** (Выберите все подходящие варианты)
   - Тренировки в спортзале
   - Командные виды спорта (например, футбол, волейбол)
   - Индивидуальные виды спорта (например, боевые искусства, плавание)
   - Йога/Пилатес
   - Бег
   - Другое (пожалуйста, укажите)

Пищевые привычки

8. **Сколько приемов пищи вы обычно употребляете за день?**
   - Один
   - Два
   - Три
   - Более трёх
9. **Соблюдаете ли вы какую-либо конкретную диету или ограничения?** (Выберите все подходящие варианты)

- Вегетарианская
- Веганская
- Пескатарианская (только рыба)
- Безглютеновая
- Низкоуглеводная
- Высокобелковая
- Средиземноморская
- Никаких

10. **Как часто вы употребляете фрукты и овощи?**
    - Каждый день
    - Несколько раз в неделю
    - Один раз в неделю
    - Редко
    - Никогда
11. **Как часто вы едите фаст-фуд?**
    - Каждый день
    - Несколько раз в неделю
    - Один раз в неделю
    - Редко
    - Никогда
12. **Как часто вы употребляете сладкие напитки (газировки, энергетики и т.д.)?**
    - Каждый день
    - Несколько раз в неделю
    - Один раз в неделю
    - Редко
    - Никогда

Паттерны сна

13. **В среднем, сколько часов вы спите каждую ночь?**
    - Менее 5 часов
    - 5-6 часов
    - 6-7 часов
    - 7-8 часов
    - Более 8 часов

Употребление алкоголя и табака

14. **Как часто вы употребляете алкогольные напитки?**
    - Я не употребляю алкоголь
    - Реже одного раза в месяц
    - 1-3 раза в месяц
    - 1-2 раза в неделю
    - 3 раза и более в неделю
15. **Курите ли вы или используете табачные изделия?**
    - Да, я курю регулярно (ежедневно)
    - Да, я курю время от времени (несколько раз в неделю)
    - Да, я использую другие табачные изделия (например, вейп, кальян) регулярно
    - Да, я использую другие табачные изделия время от времени

- Нет, я не курю и не использую табачные изделия

Социальные связи

16. **Как часто вы общаетесь с друзьями или сверстниками вне учебных занятий?**
    - Каждый день
    - Несколько раз в неделю
    - Один раз в неделю
    - Редко
    - Никогда
17. **Какие виды деятельности вы обычно делаете во время общения?** (Выберите все подходящие варианты)
    - Ужин в ресторанах
    - Употребление алкоголя
    - Занятия спортом или физической активностью
    - Посещение социальных мероприятий или вечеринок
    - Просмотр фильмов или шоу
    - Игры в настольные игры
    - Другое (пожалуйста, укажите)
18. **Как вы считаете, как ваше общество влияет на ваши жизненные привычки?**
    - Очень положительно
    - Положительно
    - Без влияния
    - Отрицательно
    - Очень отрицательно
19. **Есть ли у вас друзья, которые активно поддерживают здоровые привычки (например, физические упражнения, здоровое питание)?**
    - Да, много
    - Да, несколько
    - Нет, не совсем
    - Нет, вообще нет

Использование технологий

20. **В среднем, сколько часов в день вы проводите за электронными устройствами (смартфон, компьютер, планшет)?**
    - Менее 1 часа
    - 1-3 часа
    - 4-6 часов
    - 7-9 часов
    - 10 часов и более
21. **Как часто вас отвлекает техника во время учёбы или выполнения академических заданий?**
    - Никогда
    - Редко
    - Иногда
    - Часто
    - Всегда
22. **Как часто вы используете технологии для учебных целей?**
    - Каждый день

- Несколько раз в неделю
- Один раз в неделю
- Редко
- Никогда

Академический опыт

23. **Какой у вас текущий средний балл (cGPA)?**
    - 1.00-1.99
    - 2.00-2.49
    - 2.50-2.99
    - 3.00-3.49
    - 3.50-4.0
24. **Как часто вам трудно сосредоточиться во время лекций или учёбы?**
    - Всегда
    - Часто
    - Иногда
    - Редко
    - Никогда
25. **Как часто вы пропускаете занятия?**
    - Всегда
    - Часто
    - Иногда
    - Редко
    - Никогда
26. **Чувствуете ли вы давление во время экзаменационного периода?**
    - Всегда
    - Часто
    - Иногда
    - Редко
    - Никогда

Демографиялық ақпарат

1. **Сіздің жасыңыз нещеде?**
    - 18
    - 19
    - 20
    - 21
    - 22
    - 23
    - 24 жастан жоғары
2. **Сіздің жынысыңыз қандай?**
    - Ер
    - Әйел
3. **Сіз қай салада оқып жүрсіз?**
    - Өнер
    - Гуманитарлық ғылымдар
    - Әлеуметтік ғылымдар
    - Табиғи ғылымдар

- Инженерия және технология
- Медицина
- Ақпараттық технологиялар (IT)
- Басқа (көрсетіңіз)

4. **Сіз қай курста оқып жүрсіз?**
   - 1 курс
   - 2 курс
   - 3 курс
   - 4 курс
   - 5 курс немесе одан жоғары
5. **Сіз қазіргі уақытта оқу кезінде жұмыс істейсіз бе?**
   - Иә, жарты күн
   - Иә, толық күн
   - Жоқ

Физикалық белсенділік

6. **Сіз аптасына қанша күн 30 минуттан кем емес физикалық жаттығулармен айналысасыз (орта есеппен алғанда) ?**
   - 0 күн
   - 1-2 күн
   - 3-4 күн
   - 5-7 күн
7. **Сіз қандай физикалық белсенділіктермен айналысасыз?** (Барлық сәйкес нұсқаларды таңдаңыз)
   - Спорт залында жаттығу
   - Командалық спорт түрлері (мысалы, футбол, волейбол)
   - Жеке спорт түрлері (мысалы, жауынгерлік өнер, жүзу)
   - Йога/Пилатес
   - Жүгіру
   - Басқа (көрсетіңіз)

Тамақтану әдеттері

8. **Сіз күніне қанша тамақ ішесіз?**
   - Бір
   - Екі
   - Үш
   - Үштен көп
9. **Сіз арнайы диетаны немесе шектеулерді ұстанасыз ба?** (Барлық сәйкес нұсқаларды таңдаңыз)
   - Вегетариандық
   - Вегандық
   - Пескатариандық (тек балық)
   - Глютенсіз
   - Аз көмірсутекті
   - Жоғары белокты
   - Жерорта теңізі
   - Жоқ
10. **Сіз қаншалықты жиі жемістер мен көкөністерді тұтынасыз?**

- Күнделікті
- Аптада бірнеше рет
- Аптада бір рет
- Сирек
- Ешқашан

11. **Сіз қаншалықты жиі фаст-фуд жейсіз?**
    - Күнделікті
    - Аптада бірнеше рет
    - Аптада бір рет
    - Сирек
    - Ешқашан
12. **Сіз қаншалықты жиі тәтті сусындар (газдалған сусындар, энергетикалық сусындар және т.б.) ішесіз?**
    - Күнделікті
    - Аптада бірнеше рет
    - Аптада бір рет
    - Сирек
    - Ешқашан

Ұйқы режимі

13. **Сіз орташа алғанда, түнде қанша сағат ұйықтайсыз?**
    - 5 сағаттан аз
    - 5-6 сағат
    - 6-7 сағат
    - 7-8 сағат
    - 8 сағаттан көп

Алкоголь мен темекі өнімдерін пайдалану

14. **Сіз қаншалықты жиі алкогольді сусындарды тұтынасыз?**
    - Мен алкогольді сусындарды пайдаланбаймын
    - Айына бір реттен сирек
    - Айына 1-3 рет
    - Аптада 1-2 рет
    - Аптада 3 рет және одан көп
15. **Сіз темекі шегесіз бе немесе темекі өнімдерін пайдаланасыз ба?**
    - Иә, мен күнделікті шегемін
    - Иә, мен аптасына бірнеше рет шегемін
    - Иә, мен басқа темекі өнімдерін (мысалы, вейп, кальян) күнделікті пайдаланамын
    - Иә, мен басқа темекі өнімдерін аптасына бірнеше рет пайдаланамын
    - Жоқ, мен темекі шекпеймін және темекі өнімдерін пайдаланбаймын

Әлеуметтік байланыстар

16. **Сіз сабақтан тыс уақытта достарыңызбен қаншалықты жиі кездесесіз?**
    - Күнделікті
    - Аптада бірнеше рет
    - Аптада бір рет
    - Сирек
    - Ешқашан

17. **Сіз достарыңызбен кездескенде қандай іс-әрекеттермен айналысасыз?** (Барлық сәйкес нұсқаларды таңдаңыз)
    - Ресторандарда тамақтану
    - Алкогольді сусындар ішу
    - Спортпен немесе физикалық белсенділіктермен айналысу
    - Әлеуметтік шараларға немесе кештерге қатысу
    - Фильмдер немесе шоу қарау
    - Настольные ойындар ойнау
    - Басқа (көрсетіңіз)
18. **Әлеуметтік ортаңыз сіздің өмір салтыңызға қалай әсер етеді деп ойлайсыз?**
    - Өте оң
    - Оң
    - Әсері жоқ
    - Теріс
    - Өте теріс
19. **Сізде денсаулықты сақтау әдеттерін (мысалы, спорт, дұрыс тамақтану) белсенді түрде қолдайтын достарыңыз бар ма?**
    - Иә, көп
    - Иә, бірнеше
    - Жоқ, онша емес
    - Жоқ, мүлдем жоқ

Технологияны пайдалану

20. **Сіз орташа алғанда, электронды құрылғыларда (смартфон, компьютер, планшет) күніне қанша сағат өткізесіз?**
    - 1 сағаттан аз
    - 1-3 сағат
    - 4-6 сағат
    - 7-9 сағат
    - 10 сағат және одан көп
21. **Сіз оқып жатқанда немесе академиялық жұмыстарды орындағанда техниканың сізді қаншалықты жиі алаңдататынын сезесіз?**
    - Ешқашан
    - Сирек
    - Кейде
    - Жиі
    - Әрдайым
22. **Сіз технологияны академиялық мақсаттар үшін қаншалықты жиі пайдаланасыз?**
    - Күнделікті
    - Аптада бірнеше рет
    - Аптада бір рет
    - Сирек
    - Ешқашан

Академиялық тәжірибе

23. **Сіздің ағымдағы орташа баллыңыз (cGPA) қандай?**
    - 1.00-1.99

- 2.00-2.49
- 2.50-2.99
- 3.00-3.49
- 3.50-4.0

24. **Сіз дәрістер кезінде қаншалықты концентрация қиындықтарын сезесіз?**
    - Әрдайым
    - Жиі
    - Кейде
    - Сирек
    - Ешқашан
25. **Сіз қаншалықты жиі сабақтарды өткізіп кетесіз?**
    - Әрдайым
    - Жиі
    - Кейде
    - Сирек
    - Ешқашан
26. **Емтихан кезенінде қаншалықты қысым сезесіз ?**
    - Әрдайым
    - Жиі
    - Кейде
    - Сирек
    - Ешқашан

Appendix C: Interview Questions

What is your lifestyle routine?

- Are there any habits you try to focus on more? What makes you prioritize those?
- How do your lifestyle habits, like diet, sleep, or exercise, affect your academic performance?
- How insufficient sleep, lack of nutritious food, and other unhealthy habits might influence your academic performance?

How do your friends, family, or other people around you influence your lifestyle choices at university?

- In what ways do the people around you affect your daily habits or choices, like eating and exercising?
- In what ways do the people around you affect your academic experience?
- Can you think of a time when your social interactions helped you in university life?
- Can you think of a time when your social interactions hindered your student experience?

Can you describe a time when you decided to change a lifestyle habit, such as your diet, sleep, or exercise routine?

- What motivated you to make this change?
- How did you manage to stick to the new habit?
- What challenges, if any, did you face while making this change?
- How did this change affect your academic life, if at all?

What challenges, if any, do you face in keeping up with healthy habits while studying?

- How does the university environment, if at all, contribute to or help with these challenges?
- Do you feel supported by the university in managing challenges, such as through resources like health services, counseling, or gym facilities?

What changes do you think universities could make to help students maintain healthier lifestyles?

- Do you think there is a need for maintaining a healthy lifestyle at the university level?
- In what way might the university support a healthy lifestyle?

What specific changes would make it easier for students to balance staying healthy with their studies?

1. Каков ваш образ жизни?
2. Есть ли привычки, на которых вы стараетесь сосредоточиться больше? Что заставляет вас придавать им особое значение?
3. Как ваши привычки, такие как диета, сон или физическая активность, влияют на вашу академическую успеваемость?
4. Как недостаток сна, отсутствие питательной пищи и другие нездоровые привычки могут повлиять на вашу успеваемость?
5. Как ваши друзья, семья или другие люди вокруг вас влияют на ваш выбор в образе жизни в университете?
6. Каким образом люди вокруг вас влияют на ваши повседневные привычки или выбор, например, в питании и физических упражнениях?
7. Каким образом люди вокруг вас влияют на ваш академический опыт?

8. Можете ли вы вспомнить случай, когда ваши социальные взаимодействия помогли вам в университетской жизни?
Можете ли вы вспомнить случай, когда ваши социальные взаимодействия мешали вашему студенческому опыту?
9. Можете ли вы описать случай, когда вы решили изменить привычку в образе жизни, например, свою диету, режим сна или физическую активность?
10. Что побудило вас внести эти изменения?
11. Как вам удалось придерживаться новой привычки?
12. С какими трудностями, если они были, вы столкнулись при внесении этих изменений?
13. Как это изменение повлияло на вашу академическую жизнь, если это имело место?
14. С какими трудностями вы сталкиваетесь при поддержании здоровых привычек во время учебы?
15. Как университетская среда, если вообще влияет, помогает или создает дополнительные сложности в этом вопросе?
16. Чувствуете ли вы поддержку со стороны университета в управлении этими сложностями, например, через ресурсы, такие как медицинские услуги, консультации или спортивные залы?
17. Какие изменения, на ваш взгляд, университеты могли бы внести, чтобы помочь студентам поддерживать более здоровый образ жизни?
18. Считаете ли вы, что поддержание здорового образа жизни важно на уровне университета?
19. Каким образом университет может поддерживать здоровый образ жизни студентов?
20. Какие конкретные изменения могли бы упростить для студентов баланс между здоровым образом жизни и учебой?

1. Сіздің өмір салтыңыз қандай?
2. Сіз көбірек назар аударуға тырысатын әдеттер бар ма? Сізді осы әдеттерді басымдық етуге не мәжбүрлейді?
3. Сіздің әдеттеріңіз, мысалы, диета, ұйқы немесе жаттығулар, академиялық үлгеріміңізге қалай әсер етеді?
4. Ұйқының жетіспеушілігі, пайдалы тағамның болмауы және басқа да зиянды әдеттер сіздің академиялық үлгеріміңізге қалай әсер етуі мүмкін?
5. Достарыңыз, отбасыңыз немесе айналаңыздағы басқа адамдар университетте сіздің өмір салтыңызға қалай әсер етеді?
6. Айналаңыздағы адамдар сіздің күнделікті әдеттеріңізге немесе таңдауларыңызға, мысалы, тамақтану және жаттығу жасауға қалай әсер етеді?
7. Айналаңыздағы адамдар сіздің академиялық тәжірибеңізге қалай әсер етеді?
8. Сізге әлеуметтік қарым-қатынастар университеттегі өмірде көмектескен жағдайды еске түсіре аласыз ба?
Әлеуметтік қарым-қатынастар сіздің студенттік тәжірибеңізге кедергі келтірген жағдайды еске түсіре аласыз ба?
9. Сіз диетаңызды, ұйқы режиміңізді немесе жаттығу кестеңізді өзгертуге шешім қабылдаған кезіңізді сипаттай аласыз ба?
10. Сізді бұл өзгерістерді жасауға не ынталандырды?
11. Жаңа әдетті ұстану сізге қалай сәтті болды?
12. Бұл өзгерістерді енгізген кезде қандай қиындықтарға тап болдыңыз?

13. Бұл өзгеріс сіздің академиялық өміріңізге қалай әсер етті?
14. Оқуыңыз кезінде денсаулықты сақтауға байланысты қандай қиындықтармен бетпе-бет келесіз?
15. Университет ортасы осы қиындықтарды шешуге қалай әсер етеді немесе көмектеседі ме?
16. Сіз университет тарапынан медициналық қызметтер, кеңес беру немесе спорт залдары сияқты ресурстар арқылы қиындықтарды басқаруда қолдау сезінесіз бе?
17. Университеттер студенттерге салауатты өмір салтын ұстануға көмектесу үшін қандай өзгерістер енгізе алады деп ойлайсыз?
18. Университет деңгейінде салауатты өмір салтын сақтау қажеттілігін сезінесіз бе?
19. Университет студенттердің салауатты өмір салтын қолдауы үшін не істей алады?
20. Денсаулықты сақтау мен оқу арасындағы тепе-теңдікті жеңілдету үшін қандай нақты өзгерістер енгізу керек деп ойлайсыз?

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form for the Online Survey

Introduction. You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "Exploring the Relationship between Lifestyle Behaviour and Academic Experiences of Kazakhstani University Students."

Procedures. The purpose of the research is to identify the direct and indirect influence of lifestyle behaviour on general academic experiences and success among bachelor students enrolled in universities in Kazakhstan. Lifestyle behaviour will include such factors as the level of physical activity, dietary patterns, sleeping duration, alcohol and cigarette use, socialization, and technology use.

Quantitative data will be collected via a survey to measure the correlation between lifestyle habits and academic performance. The survey will be sent to participants via email from the institution. The survey will include questions about students' self-reported GPA, attendance, and lifestyle behaviors (such as sleep duration, physical activity, and diet). The survey will take approximately 10-16 minutes to complete.

Risks. The potential risks of participating in this study are:

- Anonymity issue. While every effort will be made to ensure participants' confidentiality, complete anonymity can be difficult to guarantee due to the nature of the research. The responses will be anonymous since the researcher will not collect any identifiable information from students.
- Emotional Discomfort. Some participants may feel uncomfortable discussing personal topics such as their lifestyle habits (e.g., diet, physical activity, alcohol consumption, sleep patterns) or academic challenges.
- Legal Concerns (Alcohol Consumption): Participants who are under the legal drinking age (21) may feel uneasy about disclosing their alcohol consumption. However, they will be informed that all data is anonymized.

Benefits. There are no direct benefits to the participants of the study. Anticipated indirect benefits from this study for current or future students might be improved programs or policies by the universities or the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Kazakhstan. By recognizing challenges with lifestyle behavior, e.g., poor diet, insufficient sleep, and low level of exercise, educators can implement strategies to mitigate their impacts and enhance the learning environment, whereas policymakers can introduce action plans for the promotion of healthy lifestyles on the governmental level. University administration can introduce an updated curriculum on healthy lifestyle importance and promote it through student organizations and faculty members. In addition, participants might improve their lifestyle habits.

Compensation. No tangible compensation will be provided. A copy of the research results will be freely available and accessible at the NU library depository. Alternatively, you may request a summary of the results from the researcher upon the completion of the study.

Confidentiality & Privacy. Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent possible. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Data will be stored securely on a password-protected file in a password-protected laptop, and only the researcher will have access. All personally identifying information, including lifestyle choices and university affiliation, will be kept anonymous. No identifiable data will be collected that is related to the identity of participants, like name, surname, or email, will be collected. After 3 years, the data will be deleted from the computer based on NU IREC guidelines.

Voluntary Nature of the Study. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and if agreement to participation is given, it can be withdrawn at any time without prejudice. However, if you had completed the survey, your data would not be able to be deleted since the researcher has no way of identifying a specific person's data.

Points of Contact. It is understood that should any questions or comments arise regarding this project, or a research related injury is received, the Principal Investigator, Aigerim Kenes, +7 771 666 87 50, aigerim.kenes@nu.edu.kz should be contacted. Any other questions or concerns may be addressed to the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee, resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Statement of Consent.

By clicking "I agree" below you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understood this consent form, and agree to participate in this research study.

- I Agree
- I Disagree

Форма информированного согласия для интернет-опросов

Описание: Вас приглашают принять участие в исследовании под названием «Исследование взаимосвязи между образом жизни и академическим опытом студентов казахстанских университетов».

Процедуры. Цель исследования – выявить прямое и косвенное влияние образа жизни на общий академический опыт и успеваемость среди студентов бакалавриата, обучающихся в университетах Казахстана. Образ жизни включает такие факторы, как уровень физической активности, режим питания, продолжительность сна, употребление алкоголя и сигарет, общение и использование технологий.

Количественные данные будут собираться с помощью опроса, чтобы оценить корреляцию между привычками образа жизни и академической успеваемостью. Опрос будет отправлен участникам по электронной почте через их учебные заведения. Вопросы будут касаться самооценки среднего балла успеваемости (GPA), посещаемости и привычек в отношении образа жизни (например, продолжительность сна, физическая активность, диета). Опрос займет приблизительно 10-16 минут.

Риски. Возможные риски участия в этом исследовании включают:

- **Проблема анонимности.** Хотя будут предприняты все усилия для обеспечения конфиденциальности участников, полная анонимность может быть трудно гарантирована из-за характера исследования. Например, в редких случаях могут быть обнаружены такие данные, как университет участника.
- **Эмоциональный дискомфорт.** Некоторые участники могут испытывать дискомфорт при обсуждении личных тем, таких как их привычки (например, диета, физическая активность, употребление алкоголя, режим сна) или академические проблемы.
- **Юридические вопросы (употребление алкоголя).** Участники, не достигшие законного возраста для употребления алкоголя (21 год), могут чувствовать себя некомфортно, раскрывая информацию об употреблении алкоголя. Однако им будет сообщено, что все данные будут анонимными.

Преимущества. Ожидаемые выгоды от этого исследования включают потенциальные преимущества для университетов, науки и политиков Казахстана. Признавая проблемы, связанные с образом жизни, такие как плохое питание, недостаток сна, низкий уровень физической активности, преподаватели смогут реализовать стратегии для смягчения их воздействия и улучшения учебной среды. Политики смогут разработать планы действий для продвижения здорового образа жизни на государственном уровне. Университетская администрация сможет внедрить обновленную учебную программу о важности здорового образа жизни и продвигать её через студенческие организации и преподавательский состав. Кроме того, участники могут улучшить свои привычки после получения итоговых результатов исследования.

Компенсация. Материальной компенсации не предусмотрено. Копия результатов исследования будет доступна после завершения исследования. В случае личной заинтересованности респондентов в результатах исследования они могут связаться со мной по

электронной почте, чтобы получить итоговые результаты без личной информации, которая могла бы раскрыть личность участников.

Конфиденциальность и защита данных. Вся информация, полученная в ходе этого исследования, будет храниться в конфиденциальности в максимально возможной степени. Все разумные меры будут приняты для защиты ваших персональных данных, однако полная конфиденциальность не может быть гарантирована. Данные будут храниться на защищённом паролем ноутбуке, доступ к которому будет иметь только исследователь. Вся личная информация, включая выборы образа жизни и принадлежность к университету, останется анонимной, хотя в определённых обстоятельствах можно будет определить респондентов. Собранные данные не будут запрашивать информацию, такую как имя, фамилия или электронная почта, и через 3 года данные будут удалены с устройства для предотвращения утечки.

Права участников. Участие в этом исследовании строго добровольное, и при согласии на участие можно в любой момент отказаться без каких-либо последствий.

Контактные данные. Если возникнут вопросы или комментарии, касающиеся данного проекта, или если будет получена травма, связанная с исследованием, необходимо обратиться к основному исследователю Айгерим Кенес: +7 771 666 87 50, aigerim.kenes@nu.edu.kz. Любые другие вопросы можно направить в Комитет по этике исследований Назарбаев Университета: resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Заявление о согласии.
Нажимая «Я согласен», вы подтверждаете, что вам не менее 18 лет, вы прочитали и поняли эту форму согласия и соглашаетесь принять участие в этом исследовании.

- Я согласен
- Я не согласен

Интернет-сауалнамаларға арналған зерттеу жұмысы келісімінің ақпараттық формасы

Сипаттама. Сізді «Қазақстандық университет студенттерінің өмір салты мен академиялық тәжірибесі арасындағы байланысты зерттеу» атты зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамыз.

Процедуралар. Зерттеудің мақсаты – Қазақстан университеттерінде оқитын бакалавриат студенттерінің өмір салтының жалпы академиялық тәжірибесі мен жетістігіне тікелей және жанама әсерін анықтау. Өмір салтына келесі факторлар кіреді: физикалық белсенділік деңгейі, тамақтану тәртібі, ұйқы ұзақтығы, алкоголь және темекі пайдалану, әлеуметтік байланыс және технологияны қолдану.

Сандық деректерді жинау сауалнама арқылы жүзеге асырылады, оның көмегімен өмір салты әдеттері мен академиялық жетістік арасындағы байланысты бағалау мүмкіндігі болады. Сауалнама қатысушыларға оқу орындарының электрондық поштасы арқылы жіберіледі. Сауалнама студенттердің GPA (орташа балл), қатысуы және өмір салты әдеттері (мысалы, ұйқы ұзақтығы, физикалық белсенділік, диета) туралы сұрақтарды қамтиды. Сауалнаманы толтыру шамамен 10-16 минутты алады.

Қауіп-қатерлер. Бұл зерттеуге қатысудың ықтимал тәуекелдері мыналарды қамтиды:

- **Анонимділік мәселесі**. Қатысушылардың құпиялылығы қамтамасыз етіледі, дегенмен зерттеудің сипатына байланысты толық анонимділікті қамтамасыз ету қиын болуы мүмкін. Мысалы, сирек жағдайларда қатысушының университеті сияқты мәліметтер анықталуы мүмкін.
- **Эмоционалдық қолайсыздық.** Кейбір қатысушылар өмір салты (мысалы, диета, физикалық белсенділік, алкоголь пайдалану, ұйқы тәртібі) немесе академиялық мәселелер туралы жеке тақырыптарды талқылау кезінде қолайсыздық сезінуі мүмкін.
- **Құқықтық мәселелер (алкогольді пайдалану).** Заңды ішімдік ішу жасына жетпеген (21 жас) қатысушылар алкоголь пайдалану туралы ақпарат беруге ыңғайсыздық сезінуі мүмкін. Дегенмен, барлық мәліметтер анонимді түрде өңделеді.

Артықшылықтар. Бұл зерттеуден күтілетін артықшылықтар университеттерге, ғылымға және Қазақстанның саясаткерлеріне пайда әкелуі мүмкін. Өмір салтына байланысты мәселелерді (мысалы, дұрыс тамақтанбау, жеткіліксіз ұйқы, төмен физикалық белсенділік) анықтай отырып, оқытушылар олардың әсерін азайту және оқу ортасын жақсарту стратегияларын енгізе алады. Саясаткерлер үкімет деңгейінде салауатты өмір салтын насихаттау үшін іс-қимыл жоспарларын әзірлей алады. Университет әкімшілігі салауатты өмір салтының маңыздылығы туралы жаңартылған оқу бағдарламаларын енгізіп, оны студенттік ұйымдар мен оқытушылар арқылы насихаттай алады. Сонымен қатар, қатысушылар зерттеу нәтижелерімен танысқаннан кейін өздерінің өмір салты әдеттерін жақсарта алады.

Өтемақы. Ешқандай материалдық өтемақы қарастырылмаған. Зерттеу нәтижелерінің көшірмесі зерттеу аяқталғаннан кейін қолжетімді болады. Егер респонденттер зерттеу нәтижелеріне жеке қызығушылық танытса, олар менімен электрондық пошта арқылы байланысып, қатысушылардың жеке басын анықтайтын ақпаратсыз қорытынды нәтижелерді ала алады.

Құпиялылық және жеке мәліметтерді қорғау. Бұл зерттеу барысында алынған кез келген ақпарат барынша құпия сақталады. Жеке мәліметтеріңізді зерттеу жазбаларында құпия түрде сақтау үшін барлық орынды шаралар қабылданады, бірақ толық құпиялылыққа кепілдік берілмейді. Деректер парольмен қорғалған ноутбукте қауіпсіз сақталады және оларға тек зерттеуші ғана қол жеткізе алады. Барлық жеке мәліметтер, соның ішінде өмір салты мен университеттік байланыстар, анонимді болып қалады. Жиналған деректер аты-жөнді немесе электрондық поштаны қамтымайды және 3 жылдан кейін құрылғыдан жойылады.

Қатысушы құқықтары. Бұл зерттеуге қатысу толығымен ерікті түрде жүзеге асырылады, егер келісім берілсе, оны кез келген уақытта кері қайтарып алуға болады, бұл үшін ешқандай негіздер көрсетудің қажеті жоқ.

Байланыс ақпараттары. Егер осы жобаға қатысты қандай да бір сұрақтар немесе пікірлер туындаса немесе зерттеу барысында жарақат алынса, негізгі зерттеуші Айгерим Кенеске хабарласуға болады: +7 771 666 87 50, aigerim.kenes@nu.edu.kz. Басқа сұрақтар немесе пікірлер Назарбаев Университетінің Институционалдық зерттеу этикасы комитетіне жіберілуі мүмкін: resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Келісім мәлімдемесі.
«Мен келісемін» батырмасын басу арқылы сіз кемінде 18 жаста екеніңізді, осы келісім нысанын оқып, түсінгеніңізді және осы зерттеуге қатысуға келісім беріп отырғаныңызды растайсыз.

- Мен келісемін
- Мен келіспеймін

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form for the Interview

Introduction. You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "Exploring the Relationship between Lifestyle Behaviour and Academic Experiences of Kazakhstani University Students."

Procedures. The purpose of the research is to identify the direct and indirect influence of lifestyle behaviour on general academic experiences and success among bachelor students enrolled in universities in Kazakhstan. Lifestyle behaviour will include such factors as the level of physical activity, dietary patterns, sleeping duration, alcohol and cigarette use, socialization, and technology use.

For the qualitative part of the research the data will be collected via individual interviews. Initially, participants will fill out an online survey sent to participants via email from their institutions. In the survey form, you indicated that you were willing to participate in an interview. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face or online, recorded based on participants' preference and consent, and later transcribed for analysis. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to share personal experiences, challenges, and strategies related to lifestyle and academic performance. The interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes. The audio of the interview will be recorded for further transcription and analysis.

Permission for audio recording. This study involves the audio recording of your interview with the researcher only for research purposes. Neither your name nor other identifying information will be associated with the audio or the transcript. Participants will be given a pseudonym to provide confidentiality. Only the researcher will be able to listen (view) to the recordings. The tapes will be transcribed, and data will be erased after three years from the data gathering date.

Risks. The potential risks of participating in this study are:

- Anonymity issue. While every effort will be made to ensure participants' confidentiality, complete anonymity can be difficult to guarantee due to the nature of the research. Although, as a researcher, I will take every measure to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, information like students' university could still possibly be traced back in rare cases.
- Emotional Discomfort. Some participants may feel uncomfortable discussing personal topics such as their lifestyle habits (e.g., diet, physical activity, alcohol consumption, sleep patterns) or academic challenges.
- Legal Concerns (Alcohol Consumption): Participants who are under the legal drinking age (21) may feel uneasy about disclosing their alcohol consumption. However, they will be informed that all data is anonymized, and they are free to skip any questions that make them uncomfortable.

Benefits. There are no direct benefits to the participants of the study. Anticipated benefits from this study may include indirect benefits to university students and institutions in improving programs and policies for student life. By recognizing challenges with lifestyle behavior, e.g., poor diet, insufficient sleep, and low level of exercise, educators can implement strategies to mitigate their impacts and enhance the learning environment, whereas policymakers can introduce action plans for the promotion of healthy lifestyles on the governmental level. University administration can introduce an updated curriculum on healthy lifestyle importance and promote it through student organizations and faculty members. In addition, participants might become more conscious about their lifestyle habits.

Compensation. No tangible compensation will be provided. A copy of the research results will be freely available and accessible at the NU library depository following the completion of the study, or you may request the results of the study from the researcher by indicating during the interview.

Confidentiality & Privacy. Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent possible. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Data will be stored securely on a password-protected file in a password-protected laptop, and only the researcher will have access. All personally identifying information, including lifestyle choices and university affiliation, will be kept anonymous. However, there is a slight possibility that, in certain circumstances, it could be possible to trace the information back to the university. In order to minimize the risks, participants will be given pseudonyms. Interviews will be transcribed and analyzed with pseudonyms, and after 3 years data will be deleted following NU IREC principles.

Voluntary Nature of the Study. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and if a participation agreement is given, it can be withdrawn at any time without prejudice. All the collected data will be deleted if a participant wants to withdraw.

Points of Contact. It is understood that should any questions or comments arise regarding this project or a research-related injury is received, the Principal Investigator, Aigerim Kenes, +7 771 666 87 50, aigerim.kenes@nu.edu.kz should be contacted. Any other questions or concerns may be addressed to the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee, resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Statement of Consent.

I,_____,

Give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

The researchers clearly explained to me the background information and objectives of the study and what my participation in this study involves.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I can at any time and without giving any reasons, withdraw my consent, and this will not have any negative consequences for myself.

I understand that the information collected during this study will be treated confidentially.

By signing this form, I confirm my participation in the research. I have familiarized myself with the information above and allowed the researcher to audio record me as part of this research.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher:

Signature_____ Date:_____

Информированное согласие на участие в интервью

Описание. Вас приглашают принять участие в исследовании под названием «Изучение связи между поведением, связанным с образом жизни, и академическим опытом студентов казахстанских университетов».

Процедуры. Целью исследования является выявление прямого и косвенного влияния поведения, связанного с образом жизни, на общий академический опыт и успех среди студентов бакалавриата, обучающихся в университетах Казахстана. Под поведением, связанным с образом жизни, понимаются такие факторы, как уровень физической активности, режим питания, продолжительность сна, употребление алкоголя и сигарет, социальное взаимодействие и использование технологий.

Для качественной части исследования в качестве инструмента сбора данных будет использовано углубленное интервью. Изначально участники заполнят онлайн-опрос, отправленный по электронной почте из их учебных заведений. В этом же письме будет содержаться приглашение на последующее интервью. Как только будет набрано необходимое количество участников, я отправлю им личное письмо с деталями интервью, включая согласованное время и продолжительность интервью. Интервью будут проводиться онлайн, записываться с согласия участников и позже расшифровываться для анализа. Участники получат возможность поделиться своим личным опытом, трудностями и стратегиями, связанными с их образом жизни и академической успеваемостью. Интервью займет примерно 30-40 минут через платформу Google Meet. Аудиозапись интервью будет записана для последующей транскрипции и анализа.

Разрешение на аудиозапись. Данное исследование включает аудиозапись вашего интервью с исследователем исключительно в исследовательских целях. Ваше имя и другая идентифицирующая информация не будут связаны с аудиозаписью или расшифровкой. Участникам будут присвоены псевдонимы для обеспечения конфиденциальности. Только исследователь сможет прослушивать записи. Аудиозаписи будут расшифрованы, а данные удалены через три года после даты сбора данных.

Риски. Возможные риски участия в этом исследовании включают:

- **Анонимность**. Хотя будут предприняты все усилия для обеспечения конфиденциальности участников, полная анонимность может быть затруднена из-за характера исследования. Информация, такая как университет участников, в редких случаях может быть установлена.
- **Эмоциональный дискомфорт.** Некоторым участникам может быть неудобно обсуждать такие личные темы, как их привычки (например, диета, физическая активность, употребление алкоголя, режим сна) или академические трудности.
- **Правовые вопросы (употребление алкоголя)**. Участники, не достигшие законного возраста для употребления алкоголя (21 год), могут чувствовать себя неловко, рассказывая о своем потреблении алкоголя. Тем не менее, они будут проинформированы о том, что все данные будут анонимизированы, и они могут пропустить любые вопросы, вызывающие дискомфорт.

Преимущества. Ожидаемые преимущества от этого исследования включают пользу для университетов, науки и политиков Казахстана. Осознав проблемы, связанные с образом жизни (например, плохое питание, недостаточный сон, низкий уровень физической активности), преподаватели смогут внедрять стратегии, чтобы смягчить их воздействие и улучшить учебную среду, а политики смогут разработать программы для пропаганды здорового образа жизни на государственном уровне. Администрация университетов

может пересмотреть учебные программы, связанные с важностью здорового образа жизни, и продвигать их через студенческие организации и преподавателей. Участники могут улучшить свои привычки после ознакомления с итоговыми результатами исследования.

Компенсация. Никакой материальной компенсации не предусмотрено. Копия результатов исследования будет доступна по завершении исследования. В случае личной заинтересованности респондентов в результатах исследования, они могут связаться со мной по электронной почте, чтобы получить финальные результаты без какой-либо личной информации, которая могла бы раскрыть личность участников.

Конфиденциальность и приватность. Любая информация, полученная в ходе исследования, будет конфиденциальной в максимально возможной степени. Все усилия будут направлены на сохранение ваших личных данных в конфиденциальности, однако полная конфиденциальность не может быть гарантирована. Данные будут храниться на защищенном паролем ноутбуке, доступ к которому будет только у исследователя. Вся персональная информация, включая привычки участников и принадлежность к университету, будет анонимной, хотя в определенных случаях возможно установление личности участников. Для минимизации рисков участникам будут присвоены псевдонимы. Интервью будут расшифрованы, а через 3 года удалены с устройства, чтобы предотвратить утечку данных.

Права участников. Участие в данном исследовании является строго добровольным, и даже после согласия на участие, вы можете в любой момент отказаться от участия без каких-либо негативных последствий.

Контактная информация. В случае возникновения вопросов или комментариев по этому проекту, или если получена травма, связанная с исследованием, вы можете связаться с основным исследователем, Айгерим Кенес, +7 771 666 87 50, aigerim.kenes@nu.edu.kz. Любые другие вопросы или комментарии могут быть направлены в Институциональный комитет по этике исследований Назарбаев Университета по адресу resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Заявление о согласии.

Я,_____
,

даю свое добровольное согласие на участие в этом исследовании.

Исследователь четко объяснил мне основную информацию и цели исследования, а также, что включает мое участие.

Я понимаю, что мое участие в этом исследовании является добровольным. В любое время я могу отозвать свое согласие, не указывая причин, и это не повлечет за собой никаких негативных последствий для меня.

Я понимаю, что информация, собранная в ходе исследования, будет храниться конфиденциально.

Подписывая эту форму, я подтверждаю своё участие в исследовании. Я ознакомился(ась) с приведённой выше информацией и даю разрешение исследователю на аудиозапись моего участия в рамках данного исследования.

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Исследователь:

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Сұхбатқа қатысу үшін келісім формасы

Сипаттама. Сізді «Қазақстандық университет студенттерінің өмір салты мен академиялық тәжірибесі арасындағы байланысты зерттеу» бағытталған зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға шақырылып отырсыз.

Процедуралар. Зерттеудің мақсаты – Қазақстан университеттерінде оқитын бакалавриат студенттерінің өмір салтының жалпы академиялық тәжірибесі мен жетістігіне тікелей және жанама әсерін анықтау. Өмір салтына байланысты келесі факторлар зерттеледі: физикалық белсенділік деңгейі, тамақтану тәртібі, ұйқы ұзақтығы, алкоголь және темекі пайдалану, әлеуметтік байланыс және технологияны қолдану.

Зерттеудің сапалық бөлігі үшін деректерді жинау құралы ретінде сұхбат қолданылады. Алғашқы кезеңде қатысушылар өз оқу орындарынан электрондық пошта арқылы жіберілген онлайн сауалнаманы толтырады. Сол хатта сұхбатқа қатысуға шақыру да болады. Қажетті қатысушылар саны жиналғаннан кейін, мен әр қатысушыға жеке хат жіберіп, сұхбаттың уақыты мен ұзақтығы туралы мәлімет беремін. Сұхбаттар онлайн түрде өткізіліп, қатысушылардың келісімімен жазылып, кейін талдау үшін мәтінге айналдырылады. Қатысушылар өмір салты мен академиялық жетістіктеріне қатысты жеке тәжірибелері, қиындықтары мен стратегияларымен бөлісу мүмкіндігіне ие болады. Сұхбат шамамен 30-40 минутқа созылады Google Meet платформасында өтеді. Сұхбаттың аудиожазбасы кейіннен транскрипциялау және талдау үшін жазылады.

Аудиожазбаға рұқсат. Сізбен жүргізілген сұхбат зерттеу мақсатында аудиоға жазылады. Сіздің атыңыз және басқа да сәйкестендіретін ақпарат аудиожазба немесе транскриптпен байланысты болмайды. Қатысушыларға құпиялылықты қамтамасыз ету үшін лақап аттар беріледі. Жазбаларды тек зерттеуші тыңдай алады. Жазбалар транскрипцияланып, мәліметтер деректерді жинау күнінен бастап үш жыл өткен соң жойылады.

Қауіп-қатерлер. Бұл зерттеуге қатысудың ықтимал тәуекелдері мыналарды қамтиды:

- **Анонимділік мәселесі.** Қатысушылардың құпиялылығы қамтамасыз етіледі, дегенмен зерттеудің сипатына байланысты толық анонимділікті қамтамасыз ету қиын болуы мүмкін. Мысалы, қатысушылардың университеті сияқты мәліметтер сирек жағдайларда анықталуы мүмкін.
- **Эмоционалдық қолайсыздық.** Кейбір қатысушылар өмір салтына (мысалы, диета, физикалық белсенділік, алкогольді пайдалану, ұйқы тәртібі) немесе академиялық қиындықтарына қатысты жеке тақырыптарды талқылау кезінде қолайсыздық сезінуі мүмкін.
- **Құқықтық мәселелер (алкогольді пайдалану).** Заңды ішімдік ішу жасына жетпеген (21 жас) қатысушылар алкоголь пайдалану туралы ақпарат беруге ыңғайсыздық сезінуі мүмкін. Дегенмен, барлық мәліметтер анонимді түрде өңделеді және олар қолайсыздық тудыратын сұрақтарды өткізіп жіберуге құқылы.

Артықшылықтар. Бұл зерттеуден күтілетін артықшылықтарға университеттерге, ғылымға және Қазақстанның саясаткерлеріне пайда әкелуі жатады. Өмір салтына байланысты мәселелерді (мысалы, дұрыс тамақтанбау, жеткіліксіз ұйқы, төмен физикалық белсенділік) анықтай отырып, оқытушылар олардың әсерін азайту және оқу ортасын жақсарту стратегияларын енгізе алады, ал саясаткерлер үкімет деңгейінде салауатты өмір салтын насихаттау үшін іс-қимыл жоспарларын әзірлей алады. Университет әкімшілігі салауатты өмір салтының маңыздылығы туралы жаңартылған оқу бағдарламаларын енгізіп, оны студенттік ұйымдар мен оқытушылар арқылы насихаттай алады. Сонымен

қатар, қатысушылар зерттеу нәтижелерімен танысқаннан кейін өздерінің өмір салты әдеттерін жақсарта алады.

Өтемақы. Ешқандай материалдық өтемақы қарастырылмаған. Зерттеу нәтижелерінің көшірмесі зерттеу аяқталғаннан кейін қолжетімді болады. Егер респонденттер зерттеу нәтижелеріне жеке қызығушылық танытса, олар менімен электрондық пошта арқылы байланысып, қатысушылардың жеке басын анықтайтын ақпаратсыз қорытынды нәтижелерді ала алады.

Құпиялылық және жеке мәліметтерді қорғау. Бұл зерттеу барысында алынған кез келген ақпарат барынша құпия сақталады. Жеке мәліметтеріңізді зерттеу жазбаларында құпия түрде сақтау үшін барлық орынды шаралар қабылданады, бірақ толық құпиялылыққа кепілдік берілмейді. Деректер парольмен қорғалған ноутбукте қауіпсіз сақталады және оларға тек зерттеуші ғана қол жеткізе алады. Барлық жеке мәліметтер, соның ішінде өмір салты мен университеттік байланыстар, анонимді болып қалады, бірақ кейбір жағдайларда респонденттерді анықтау мүмкіндігі туындауы мүмкін. Қауіптерді барынша азайту үшін қатысушыларға бүркеншік есімдер беріледі. Сұхбаттар жазылғаннан кейін 3 жыл өткен соң құрылғыдан жойылады, бұл деректердің таралуын болдырмау үшін жасалады.

Қатысушы құқықтары. Бұл зерттеуге қатысу толығымен ерікті түрде жүзеге асырылады, егер келісім берілсе, оны кез келген уақытта кері қайтарып алуға болады, бұл үшін ешқандай негіздер көрсетудің қажеті жоқ, және бұл өзіме ешқандай жағымсыз салдар тудырмайды.

Байланыс ақпараттары. Егер осы жобаға қатысты қандай да бір сұрақтар немесе пікірлер туындаса немесе зерттеу барысында жарақат алынса, негізгі зерттеуші Айгерим Кенеске хабарласуға болады, +7 771 666 87 50, aigerim.kenes@nu.edu.kz. Басқа сұрақтар немесе пікірлер Назарбаев Университетінің Институционалдық зерттеу этикасы комитетіне жіберілуі мүмкін: resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Келісім мәлімдемесі.

Мен,

_____,

осы зерттеуге қатысуға өз еркіммен келісім беремін. Зерттеуші маған зерттеу туралы негізгі ақпарат пен оның мақсаттарын, сондай-ақ менің осы зерттеуге қатысуымның мәнін нақты түсіндірді.

Мен бұл зерттеуге қатысу ерікті екенін түсінемін. Кез келген уақытта және себептерін түсіндірместен өз келісімімді кері қайтарып аламын, және бұл мен үшін ешқандай жағымсыз салдарға әкелмейді.

Мен осы зерттеу барысында жиналған ақпараттың құпия түрде сақталатынын түсінемін.

Осы мәлімдеге қол қою арқылы мен зерттеуге қатысатынымды растаймын. Мен жоғарыда көрсетілген ақпаратпен таныстым және осы зерттеу аясында зерттеушіге менің қатысуымның аудиожазбасын жасауға рұқсат беремін.

Қолы: _____ Күні: _____

Зерттеуші:

Қолы: _____ Күні: _____

Appendix F: Sample of Coding Analyis

Category		Code	Respondent	Academic Experience	Respondent
Health-related habits	*Physical Activity*	Benefits of physical activities	3: "Physical activity keeps me energized and helps recharge my batteries" 5: "Sitting in front of a laptop for 6–7 hours a day is bad for your back and body therefore i do pilates twice a week"	Cognitive benefits of physical activity	1: "Physical exercise supports my brain and reduces headaches, improving academic focus." 8: On days when I exercise in the morning, I feel more focused and alert in my lectures. If I skip workouts or eat junk food, I feel sluggish, and it shows in my performance."
	Dietary Habits	Social dining preference	2: "I don't like having meals alone" 2: "lunch usually with friends"	Unbalanced and irregular dining	1: "If I didn't Continue stay my diet. I usually have problems with Academic part"
		Efforts to reduce sugar intake	2: "stopped eating sugar for 2 months" 3: "I avoid sugary drinks because I feel drained and super sleepy after few hours"		
		Missing brekfast	1: "during exam period i skip my breakfasts"; 2: "miss my breakfast due to not fixed schedule" 5: "Skipping breakfast is common because it's an achievement to wake up on time." 7: "My biggest challenge is balancing a healthy diet with a hectic schedule. I rely on quick meals, often skipping breakfast."		
		Unhealthy cravings	1: "After eating fast food, I feel heavy and struggle to study the next day" 2: "sometimes eat at very late night with others"		
	Sleeping Patterns	Irregular sleep patterns	2: "go to sleep approximately at 1:00 or 2:00 a.m." 3: " I'm feeling too tired even after getting up late" 3: "insufficient sleep reflects uh in my in my mood"	Sleep deprivation	2: "students leave their tasks to the deadline having all-nighter" 3: "During one semester, I slept only 4–5 hours for two months, and it affected my GPA and health" 5: "Procrastination and social media distract me... I can just scroll instead of sleeping." 6: "All-nighters are bad, but students do them because they think they have to" 7: "During exams, I sometimes

					pull all-nighters, but I regret it because I can’t retain information well the next day." 7: I learned that sleep deprivation actually reduces memory retention and problem-solving skills
		Physical health problems:	1: "i have headaches and problems with my blood pressure"	Lack of concentration and focus	1: " I couldn't just concentrate on the studying" 2: "hard to focus during the exam due to poor sleep" 3: I canno't concentrate very good and I always get distracted by phone by social media" 5: "I’m distracted during lectures and often need to multitask to focus." 7: Sleep deprivation is a huge issue. I often get 5-6 hours of sleep, which affects my concentration
				Prioritizing sleep	5: "If I’m not done with my assignment, I stay up till 2 or 3 a.m., but I wake up earlier to finish."
	Bad Habits			Smoking long term effect	8: "I noticed that even though smoking helped me relax for a few minutes, I was feeling more anxious overall. My heart rate would spike, and sometimes I felt dizzy or lightheaded, especially after coding marathons with little sleep. I also started getting headaches more frequently.