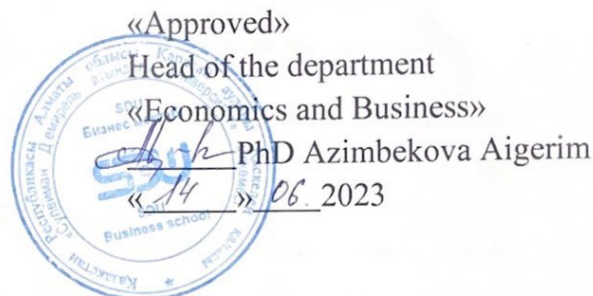


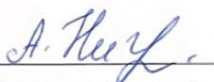
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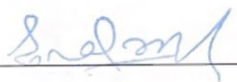
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNT - Unified National Test

ABSTRACT

The selection of a university and a profession is a significant decision that has long-lasting effects on an individual's career path and personal satisfaction. Despite its importance, little research has been conducted on the correlation between factors that influence the university and profession choices of young people in Kazakhstan and their further level of satisfaction with those choices. This knowledge gap is a barrier to the development of tailored policies and programs to support young people in their educational and career aspirations. This thesis aims to address this gap by exploring the factors that shape young people's university and profession choices in Kazakhstan and their satisfaction levels. This research is important for understanding the educational and career aspirations of the younger generation in Kazakhstan and for designing effective policies and programs to enhance their educational and career outcomes.

The quantitative data for the study was obtained through an online survey. The qualitative data was collected through interviews with students and consultation with a professional orientation specialist. The findings demonstrate that young people in Kazakhstan base their university and profession choices on various factors, including personal interests, parental expectations, perceived job opportunities and many other correlated factors. The study also reveals that satisfaction levels with university and professional choices vary among young people in Kazakhstan. Moreover, the study identifies several crucial factors that influence the satisfaction levels of young people with their university and profession choices, such as the availability of job opportunities, career growth prospects, and the level of social support received. Additionally, the study highlights the impact of sociocultural factors, such as gender, and financial matters on the university and professional choices and satisfaction levels of young people in Kazakhstan. This research contributes to the development of a more nuanced understanding of the university and professional choices of young people in Kazakhstan and provides insights into effective strategies to support their educational and career aspirations. The study highlights the need for tailored policies

and programs that consider the diverse range of factors that influence young people's university and profession choices and their satisfaction levels. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need to address socio-cultural factors that may hinder or facilitate the educational and career aspirations of young people in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: university choice, profession choice, professional employment, socio-cultural factors, job opportunities, career guidance, career growth, high school students.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify the variables that determine the future profession choice of youngsters and their level of satisfaction with it. The background of the study, the problem statement, the sub-research questions, the objectives, and the significance of the study are all topics to be covered in this chapter. This chapter also covers study constraints and limitations. Other areas that are essential for the development of the study will be discussed in the next “Review of Literature” chapter.

1.2. Background Theories

Career planning and exploration are essential for individuals to adapt to changing socioeconomic conditions. Thorough research of potential career options is critical, as personal abilities, educational background, and societal context impact each stage of this process (Koech, Bitok, Rutto, Koech, Okoth, Korir&Ngala, 2016). It is commonly acknowledged that the high school years are crucial for giving teenagers the knowledge and skills they need to successfully move from academic life to the workforce or college (Mtemeri, 2017). However, the process of choosing a course of study, career path and subsequent career path can be challenging for students and it is very important to choose the right combination of subjects leading to the right profession to ensure job satisfaction in the future.

There can be various factors that affect the future profession and higher education facility choice. The external factors can differ depending on many factors such as the gender, age, financial and family situation of the individual. In one of the studies, Sax (1994) explored factors influencing students' initial interest in scientific careers, career choices during college, and gender differences in these factors using the national sample of more than 15000 men and women. According to the findings, male and female students did not differ significantly in their interest in science

careers, but there were differences in the factors that influenced their interest. For example, female students were more likely to cite family and teacher influences as factors that contributed to their interest in science careers, while male students were more likely to cite peer influences (Sax, 1994). Female students were more likely than male students to report experiencing barriers to their interest in science careers, such as a lack of confidence, discouragement from faculty or peers, and the perception that science careers were not compatible with family or personal life goals (Sax, 1994). Moreover, men who give up their career aspirations are often driven by financial considerations, while women who give up a scientific career are more focused on the social consequences of their career choice (Sax, 1994).

Factors influencing the future choice of a professional career and educational facility differ a lot. But we can categorise them and mention some trends that are hard not to notice. The article by Ferry (2006) investigates the factors that influence the career choices of adolescents and young adults in rural Pennsylvania. The results showed that family members, especially parents, had a significant influence on the career choices of the participants. Other factors that were found to have an impact on career choice included personal interest, aptitude, job availability, salary and benefits, personal ability, education level, life context and gender (Ferry, 2006). Interestingly, Ferry's study (2006) found that gender had a greater influence on career choice for females than for males. Females were more likely to choose careers that were considered traditional for women, while males were more likely to choose careers that were traditionally male-dominated (Ferry, 2006). This assumption is also supported in the study of McQuaid and Bond (2004). The authors found that gender stereotypes do play a significant role in shaping young people's career choices as those who held more traditional views of gender roles were more likely to choose careers that were considered gender-stereotypical (McQuaid & Bond, 2004). But noteworthy, with a better understanding of their career goals, people tend to make informed career choices (Ferry, 2006) and factors such as ethnicity, academic achievement, year of study, attitude, choice of science subjects, and job characteristics will have an impact

on how students perceive their suitability for certain job positions (McQuaid & Bond, 2004).

Although a person's choice of career is influenced by various factors, including personal and cultural values, family background, career expectations, and career guidance, some individuals make career decisions by choosing the path of least resistance, such as following a career path recommended by their parents or elder siblings (Koech et al., 2016). Brown (2002) discusses the career decision-making process, which involves assessing one's abilities and skills and evaluating the work values that are important in various occupational options available. The author notes that career decisions are central to an individual's self-concept, as they involve choosing the essence of who they want to become in the future.

There can be various endless reasons for choosing a future career or educational facility. The importance of aligning an individual's values with their chosen career to achieve greater job satisfaction and success is very big (Brown, 2002). Having it mentioned, a well-known and effective strategy for bridging the gap between academic training and the practical aspects of the profession is the use of career guidance (Mtemeri, 2017). As the choice of future profession has a tremendous effect on a person's life, the goal of career guidance and counselling is to make it easier for a person to consider and assess their numerous career alternatives and make suitable decisions. Career counsellors and educators should take a holistic approach to career guidance, taking into account the individual's values and cultural context to help them make informed career decisions (Brown, 2002). If adult specialists do not help and do not properly take care of this area, some students may end up choosing programs that do not align with their interests and regret it later on.

1.3 Problem Statement

The process of choosing a university and profession is a critical decision for young people, as it often shapes their future career paths and opportunities. In his study, Ferry (2006) highlights the importance of providing young people with access

to career information and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their future careers. The author also argues that overcoming this developmental milestone is critical in the lives of teenagers, whether they are going to college or getting a job (Ferry, 2006). As the process of choosing a career is complex and influenced by various factors such as personal values, traditions, family background, career expectations, interests, globalization, role models, social support, and others, many young people face difficulties in transitioning from school to work, and career guidance is recognized as essential by parents, teachers, society, and governments (Koech et al., 2016).

Numerous research studies have indicated that students across the globe encounter challenges when it comes to deciding on a career path (Issa & Nwalo, 2008). Although families, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations have made efforts, young people still face difficulties in transitioning from school to work (Koech et al., 2016).

There have been several studies done in Kazakhstan in the area of professional choice such as Toleu et al. (2022), Sabirova et al. (2021), Nurpeisova et al. (2018), and Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova (2013). However, most of them do not consider the level of satisfaction with their choice and the reasoning for their choice of university (higher educational facility). There is a gap in research on the factors that influence career choices among Kazakhstani students and their level of satisfaction with their chosen career field. Their level of satisfaction can tell a lot about the work quality of current educational counsellors, governmental programs and the effect of other external factors that affected the decision of a young mind. In Kazakhstan, with a rapidly changing economy and job market, the factors that influence young people's choices and satisfaction with those choices are not well understood. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the factors that influence young people's university and profession choices, and how satisfied they are with their choices. By doing so, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the decision-making process of

young people in Kazakhstan and provide insights that can inform policy and educational practices.

1.4. Main Research Question

What are the factors that influence young people's choice of university and profession in Kazakhstan?

1.4.1. Sub-research questions

Sub-questions of the research:

- What is the influence of gender on the choice of profession?
- How does the availability of the education facility (study grants and scholarships) affect the future choice of university?
- What is the level of peer influence and family influence on students' career choices and university choices?
- How satisfied students are with their choice?

1.5. Research Objectives

The main goal of the study is to identify the main factors influencing the choice of profession by young people in Kazakhstan. The goal is also to explore the reasoning behind the University's choice of youngsters. The further objectives can be developed as follows:

- i. To identify the primary factors that influence the university and professional choices of young people in Kazakhstan.
- ii. To explore the role of family and peers in the decision-making process of university and profession choices among young people in Kazakhstan.
- iii. To assess the level of satisfaction among young people with their university and profession choices and determine the factors that contribute to their satisfaction.

1.6. Contributions

Highlighting several important factors, including parental influence, individual interest, perceived job chances and social status, the study provides insight into the complex decision-making process about university and career choices among young people in Kazakhstan. This knowledge complements the theoretical knowledge base and can guide further research in this area. The study also looks at how satisfaction is related to the chosen university and career and finds that satisfaction is positively correlated with several variables, including job opportunities, salary, and personal interests. This useful knowledge can guide actions and policies to influence the university and career decisions of young people in Kazakhstan, such as the need for career guidance and counselling services, as well as improving employment opportunities and working conditions.

Policymakers can create programs and services that meet the needs of young people and enhance their educational and professional achievement by understanding the factors that influence these choices and the relationship between university and career choices and satisfaction.

The results of the study could potentially be useful to employers and recruiters. Employers can create recruitment strategies that better match the needs and interests of this population by examining the elements that influence young people in Kazakhstan's decision to go to university and choose a career. In addition, companies can create a happier work environment and provide more competitive compensation packages by better understanding the relationship between education, career choice, and job satisfaction.

1.7. Limitations

Anticipated study restrictions are

1. The sample size and participant representativeness can have the potential to limit the generalizability of the findings to a larger population of young people in Kazakhstan.

2. Possible Bias from respondents

Although precautions will be taken to reduce it, social desirability bias is also a possibility. Recall bias or other self-reported biases may also have an impact on the accuracy of the results.

3. Cross-sectional study design

The study's cross-sectional design makes it impossible to draw a causal conclusion or monitor changes in satisfaction with one's choice of education and job over time.

4. The time for conducting the research was limited.

5. Financial constraints limited the research being conducted on a nationwide level.

1.7.1. Overcoming Limitations

The first step was trying to find a broad and representative sample of young Kazakhs, including those who are currently out of school or living in remote areas. This can be achieved by using stratified sampling strategies and making sure that the sample is large enough to include different points of view. Second, the survey will use confidentiality and anonymity to ensure truthful responses. In addition, to reduce memory bias and other self-reported biases, the survey will use verified and valid measures of university and career choice and satisfaction. Finally, despite the profile form of the study, attempts will be made to maintain contact with participants in follow-up studies to establish causal relationships and track changes in satisfaction with the choice of educational institution and profession over time.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to study the factors influencing the choice of university and career by young people in Kazakhstan, as well as their satisfaction with this choice. To achieve this goal, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to examine the factors influencing university and career choices among young people. This chapter presents the results of this literature review and is structured according to the research questions of the present study. Specifically, subheadings derived from the research questions include the influence of parents on university and career choices, the role of individual interest in the university and career choices, perceived job chances and social status, and the relationship between satisfaction and university and career choices. Moreover, it includes some key data from previous studies conducted in different countries to examine the situation in Kazakhstan. By examining the literature on these topics, this chapter aims to identify gaps in current research on university and career choice among young people in Kazakhstan, and how this research can help fill those gaps.

2.2. Career Choices in Kazakhstan

Identifying the factors that influence adolescents' career search is necessary to improve their pursuit of career options. The process of choosing a career is impacted by various factors that are unique to each individual, such as their abilities, level of education, and the societal context in which they live (Koech et al., 2016).

Wholesale and retail commerce is the industry that young people found to be most interesting in 2019 (365.9 thousand people) which is then followed by agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (241.9 thousand people) and education (232.7 thousand people) (Sabirova et al., 2021). The most popular occupations among teenagers from low-income homes, using PISA data from the 2018 and 2015 cycles,

were general education teachers (7%) and medical specialists (5% and 7%, respectively) (Toleu et al., 2022).

From the study that analysed various responses from individuals from different regions of Kazakhstan, 60.6% reported working in their field, while 36.6% did not work in the initially chosen field (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013). According to the study, the majority of respondents noted a decrease in the opportunity to work in their chosen field, leading to a need for job searching and sometimes changing professions due to external circumstances such as economic crisis trends. This has resulted in delayed or reduced wages, forced leaves of absence, and job loss (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013). The employment prospects issue is of great concern to future specialists, as shown by a 2011-2012 public opinion poll of students at KazNU Al-Farabi, where 47.2% identified employment prospects in their field as the most important social problem (Abdiraiymova, Verevkin&Kenzhakimova, 2011). This information highlights the importance of career counselling and how it needs further development in our country.

2.2.1. Factors influencing career choices

In the study by Sabirova et al. (2021), the challenges faced by young people in entering the labour market and its' current state were discussed. According to the survey results from this study, to the question "Why did you choose this job?", as the main reason, 37.8% of respondents answered because of liking it, 22.9% reported team, 22.3% - a high salary, 17.6% - flexible working hours, 14.7% - getting used to the job, 12.9% - no other alternatives were found.

2.2.1.1. Difference between male and female students' choices

When talking about future career choices, there can be differences based on people's gender, geographical background, socioeconomic status, personal interests and aptitudes, cultural and family expectations, educational and training opportunities, etc. For example, in the conference paper written by Kunitsyna and Durkina (2017), a study conducted in 2017 in the Far North region of Russia concerning this matter was mentioned. The study found some differences in the

professional preferences between male and female high school students. For male students, the most attractive areas of activity were industry (24%), management (24%), law enforcement (24%), and sports (38%) (Kunitsyna & Durkina, 2017). For female students, the most preferred areas of activity were law enforcement (40%), commerce (20%), social sphere (20%), culture and art (35%), medicine (25%), and sports (25%) (Kunitsyna & Durkina, 2017). The authors claim that the female part of respondents considered areas of science and education, agriculture and communications as being unattractive (Kunitsyna & Durkina, 2017). The difference can be attributed to societal norms and what kinds of occupations men and women "should" pursue. Gender stereotypes and expectations are still persistent in many cultures and usually, men would be expected to pursue jobs in science, engineering, or business, whereas women might be encouraged to pursue careers in education or healthcare. For example in another study conducted by Zhuravleva (2015) among high schoolers in Russia, the results showed that gender differences exist in the motivational factors that influence high school student's career choices. Female students tend to prioritize external factors, such as high wages, job security, and proximity to their interests, while male students prioritize prestige, material gain, and utilitarian motives (Zhuravleva, 2015). According to the author, female students also tend to favour careers that involve managing people, working in urban environments, and requiring cleanliness and ease of work, whereas male students tend to pursue professions that are highly valued, provide rapid promotion, and offer specific benefits (Zhuravleva, 2015). Of course, these tendencies do not apply to all students. Some similarities/differences were presented in order to use the data for the further development of the educational sector.

In Kazakhstan as well, similar trends can exist. According to Toleu et al.'s study from 2022, males may choose careers that are more diverse than those of females and are less concentrated in the top 10 occupations. According to the results of the three PISA cycles, male students were most likely to choose to become software and application developers and analysts, medical professionals, and

engineers in industry and production (Toleu et al., 2022). Young male representatives have a wider variety of jobs to choose from and less professional emphasis than their female counterparts (Toleu et al., 2022).

In OECD countries, females are more likely than males to select careers in health and education, while males show less interest in becoming teachers (Toleu et al., 2022). In countries with a high percentage of male instructors and high wages, males were more likely to pursue careers as teachers. While males are more likely to select ICT, engineering, or science careers, females are more likely to perceive themselves as professionals in the fields of health and education (Toleu et al., 2022). This trend will also be discussed further in section 2.4.1. Females pick lower-paying careers despite having higher professional aspirations, which contributes to gender inequity and occupational segregation (Toleu et al., 2022). Females in Kazakhstan have higher expectations for their careers than males do. But they also have fewer options considering the high possibility of socioeconomic and cultural constraints. In comparison to the 2015 results, fewer boys and girls in the PISA-2022 test chose ambitious jobs (Toleu et al., 2022). According to the results of the test, in Kazakhstan, female students typically select careers in health and education, whereas guys prefer IT and engineering. This point will be further developed in the following sections.

2.2.1.2. A study by Abdiraiymova and Serikzhanova

There was a study conducted by Abdiraiymova and Serikzhanova in 2013 on the career preferences and choices of Kazakhstan high school graduates. According to the study, over 50% of the youth in various types of educational institutions in Kazakhstan have made career choices based on the perceived level of interest and prestige associated with their chosen profession (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013). When listing the crucial factors for their future professional success and career growth, 41.5% of Kazakhstani students consider high qualifications together with work experience and professional knowledge as one of the top factors giving it the highest importance (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013). Several other factors are

at the forefront and are quite different. For example, for future development and success:

- 35.8% of students highlighted the importance of proficiency in the Kazakh language;
- 32.9% of students mentioned the importance of having connections, influential friends, and acquaintances;
- 26.8% mentioned the knowledge of foreign languages and education obtained abroad;
- 25.3% agreed on the importance of possessing good manners and being a cultured person, including respecting elders;
- 20.7% agreed on the importance of having a diploma from a prestigious and well-known domestic educational institution;
- 16.3% mentioned being a patriot of the country (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013).

As for the factors which affect the choice of future profession, the majority of students (48.9%) chose “high income” as the most important factor. Other important criteria are the prestige of the future working sphere (28.3%), the social status (24.6%), the prestige of the university and faculty (23.7%), advice from parents, relatives, friends (23.8%) and the accessibility of the higher educational institution (low pay, availability of grant places) (20.7%) (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013). The outcome can vary by the sphere of education the students choose. However, the study concluded that many students lack awareness about the professional orientation of their university education, and often have limited knowledge of the specific career paths associated with their chosen field until their final year of study.

2.2.1.3. Study by Nurpeisova, Tekeyeva, Kamunova & Tapalov

In another study done by Nurpeisova et al. (2018), the reasoning behind choosing professions was discussed. According to the authors, various factors influence these choices such as pressure from outside, internal beliefs, availability of

scholarships and competitiveness of the field. To be more specific, youngsters face pressure from parents, teachers, and the pursuit of study grants (Nurpeisova et al., 2018). External pressure can lead young people to make excuses for their career choices, and internal factors such as low self-esteem can also play a significant role. Some individuals take on professions without any talent or inclination, which can result in failure and damage to their self-esteem (Nurpeisova et al., 2018). In Kazakhstan, the pursuit of study grants has led to a disproportionate number of students choosing natural sciences over humanities, creative, and medical sciences (Nurpeisova et al., 2018). Youngsters tend to choose the speciality where there are more available study grants and not follow their true interest area to not be faced with external challenges later on. In other words, final assessments such as Unified National Test (EHT) play a crucial role in deciding the future of the young generation. According to the article, the motivation behind career choices is often intuitive, and many individuals lack the motivation to pursue their desires. Motivation, listening to one's heart, evaluating personal abilities, and seeking guidance from more experienced individuals are essential when deciding on a career path (Nurpeisova et al., 2018). According to the authors, the choice of future career can be determined by several inner motives such as morality (helping others: law, pedagogy, medicine, service), cognitive (inner interest: technical, economic, food industries), and art (creative, as well as sports specialities). There can be other motives such as an individual's aspirations, needs, and abilities (Nurpeisova et al., 2018). Young individuals frequently choose future careers for a variety of reasons, including favourable job prospects, convenient access to school, chances for career progression, prestige in the field, the possibility of high salaries, and more (Nurpeisova et al., 2018). As the factors that influence career choice are very complex and consist of various inter-crossed internal and external elements, it is quite complicated to identify the single effect of any given factor on a person's life. That is why we will try to look at the general picture and try to identify the trends and link them to their possible cause and results.

If to look at the factual data from the study of Nurpeisova et al. (2018), the answers from Kazakhstani students in a survey about their motives for choosing a future profession are as follows:

- 53% of students chose the availability of free educational grants as the main reason for studying in a particular field, while 38% of students followed their interest choice and 9% were influenced by their parents;
- Approximately 60% of students received information on professions from their school or educational courses, 24% searched for information on the Internet, and 16% learned about professions from their peers;
- Only 21% of respondents initially intended to study in their current field, with 54% of students seeing themselves in the medical field and the remaining 25% aspiring to various other professions such as acting, journalism, or architecture.
- Although 74% of students expressed dissatisfaction with their choice of profession, almost all (98%) still plan to work in the field they are currently studying.

The results of the study are quite shocking as it shows that the true interest of the person does not play a big role in a choice of profession and even if a person is not satisfied with the choice of profession, they will most probably continue working in that field. Future discussions and analyses will be made based on the results from various resources and our survey results.

2.2.1.4. Other external factors

The social status of the family has a significant impact on the educational and professional success of a teenager. Compared to their wealthier classmates, students from poorer backgrounds generally tend to perform worse academically, have lower goals, are more likely to drop out of school, and are less likely to enter a professional job (Toleu et al., 2022). According to the idea of "social reproduction", adolescents from families with high socioeconomic status (SES) have greater access to educational opportunities than adolescents from families with low SES (Toleu et al., 2022). The former have access to resources, including money, knowledge in their

field, informal relationships, and role models. PISA-2018 indicates that Kazakh teenagers from wealthy families prefer the careers of "specialist doctors", "heads (managers) in retail and wholesale trade", "general practitioners" and others (Toleu et al., 2022).

The geographical place of living of the students plays an important role too. According to PISA-2022 data, secondary school teachers, general practitioners, and software and application developers and analysts were the most popular professions among urban students (Toleu et al., 2022). Teenagers in rural areas of Kazakhstan are more likely than those in urban areas to select the most popular specialities, which may indicate that rural youth are not unaware of other career options (Toleu et al., 2022).

2.2.2. Satisfaction with career choice

According to the study by Sabirova et al. (2021), male respondents expressed more satisfaction with the workplace than female respondents. Male respondents showed a preference for the work team and satisfactory salary, while women highlighted the appeal of their work, workplace location, and flexible working hours (Sabirova et al., 2021). This difference can be caused because of the family and work-life balance in the country as women in Kazakhstan are generally expected to be more in charge of the household and raise children. This area of the study (the effect of family responsibilities distribution on women's work and satisfaction from work) needs additional comprehensive research and is out of the scope of the current study.

2.3. Comparative analysis with other countries regarding career choice

2.3.1. Study of Kenya's Case

There is a similar study conducted by J. Koech et al. that investigated the effect of various factors on the career choices of undergraduate students in public universities in Kenya. The study findings revealed that the most significant factor influencing career choice was career development, with more than 80% of participants agreeing that job security, availability, career progression, and job

satisfaction were essential factors in their decision-making process. Travel opportunities were found to have the least impact on career choice, indicating that it is not a significant factor in students' career choices (Koech et al., 2016). The study's results are in line with Berndt, Laychak, & Park's (1990) findings that peers exert a strong influence on individuals and their decisions, leading to greater similarity among friends. Family factors also played a role in career choice, with parental and sibling advice being the most influential sources of recommendations (Koech et al., 2016). In their study, J. Koech et al provided interesting data from the study of Oyamo and Amoth (2008) in which they discovered that rural Kenyan students rely more on their parents for help and guidance in making career choices compared to urban students and that parents have a greater influence on their decision-making than teachers. This factor of students' geographical background will also be analyzed in our work.

2.3.2. Study of Zimbabwe's Case

A study by J. Mtemeri in 2017 aimed to identify the factors that influenced the career choice of high school students in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. The study used a mixed approach, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The main findings of the study are as follows (Mtemeri, 2017):

1. Family influence is an important factor in students' career choices, with parents/guardians being the most influential people. Students whose parents have professional or skilled jobs are more likely to choose a similar career.
2. The school plays a decisive role in shaping the career aspirations of students. Career guidance and counselling services provided by schools are inadequate and ineffective, resulting in a lack of awareness and knowledge of various career opportunities.
3. Gender has a significant influence on career choice, with men more likely to choose careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and women more likely to choose social sciences and humanities.

4. Peers also influence career choices, with students often influenced by career aspirations and the choice of their friends.
5. There is a lack of awareness of alternative career paths, resulting in a high concentration of students in a limited range of popular occupations such as teaching, nursing and accounting.
6. Students who receive career guidance and counselling services are more likely to make informed decisions about their careers and be satisfied with their chosen career path.

Overall, the study highlights the need for effective career guidance and counselling services in schools, increased awareness of alternative career paths, and the need to address gender stereotypes and biases in career decisions. The trend can be similar to the Kazakhstani case too, which is why it is important to consider the findings following our country's current conditions.

2.3.3. Study of Nigeria's Case

In their study, Issa and Nwalo (2008) explored the factors influencing the career choices of undergraduates in Nigerian library and information science schools. The results showed that the most significant factors influencing the students' career choices were job prospects, personal interest, and parental influence. Other factors such as financial benefits, social status, and the influence of peers and teachers also had some influence (Issa & Nwalo, 2008). Issa and Nwalo (2008) also noted the need for career guidance and counselling services in Nigerian library schools, as many students seemed to lack a clear understanding of the library profession and its career prospects.

2.3.4. Conclusion

There are some similarities and differences in the comparative evaluation of job choice in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Nigeria. Families play a significant role in influencing employment prospects in all three countries, especially parents, who play a critical role in shaping their children's choices. Research also shows the influence of

peers, highlighting the importance of friends for career aspirations. However, the importance of numerous additional factors varies.

Since the general trend across countries tends to be the same in most situations, an analysis of these results can provide useful insight into the variables that may influence occupational choice in Kazakhstan. Policymakers and educators in Kazakhstan can benefit from an understanding of the importance of professional development, family impact, peer influence, and the need for effective career guidance and counselling services.

2.4. University Choices in Kazakhstan

In a sociological survey conducted by the Association of Sociologists of Kazakhstan in 2009, which involved 1000 Kazakhstani students, 84.1% of the respondents think it is important to obtain higher education (Abdirayimova, Kuchinskaya&Shaukenova, 2009). In another separate study conducted in 2013, to a similar question regarding the importance and role of higher education in determining the competitiveness of a graduate, 93.5% of respondents answered positively highlighting the importance of higher education (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013). To be more specific, 74.6% of respondents called it “extremely important”, 18.9% of respondents called it “important” and only 1 % answered “not important” and “not important at all” (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013). This shows an increasing trend in the importance of higher education in students' eyes.

2.4.1. Differences between males and females

According to the data received regarding Unified National Test results from 2022, females performed better at UNT than their male counterparts in most areas as can be seen in the table below (National Testing Center, 2023). Males tended to choose World History - Fundamentals of Law, Maths - Physics, Geography - German, and Chemistry - Physics significantly more whereas female students chose

Biology - Chemistry, Biology - Geography, Geography - English, English - World History, German Language - World History and French - World History more. We can see some differences and gender-based trends from this data.

In 2018, 2020 and 2022, male students chose a lot more IT, mining, Civil Engineering, Agroengineering, Electrical Engineering / Energy, Vehicles and data security, while female students chose the Pedagogy field, Choreography, Fashion/Design, Translation studies, Philology Psychology, Journalism/reporting, General medicine, Tourism, Restaurant business/Hotel business, International relations/Diplomacy, Food production and Turkology/Oriental Studies a lot more than their male counterparts (National Testing Center, 2023).

Table 1. UNT results from 2022

№	Combination of profile courses	Male		Female	
		% from general	Average score	% from general	Average score
2	World History - Fundamentals of Law	60.74	58.75	39.26	62.24
3	Maths, Physics	74.03	65.09	25.97	73.96
5	Chemistry - Physics	61.54	65.17	38.46	66.89
6	Biology - Chemistry	29.6	63	70.4	64.37
7	Biology - Geography	12.79	59.25	87.21	61.04
8	Geography - English	31.41	66.81	68.59	70.58
9	Geography - German	68.75	60.82	31.25	81.8
12	English - World History	12.55	72.56	87.45	72.5
14	French - World History	20	54	80	78.75

15	Kazakh language - Kazakh literature	9.12	74.19	90.88	78.06
16	Russian language - Russian literature	12.2	63.62	87.8	68.75
	Total	44.02	65.03	55.98	68.8

The same tendency was evident in 2020's UNT results too with female students scoring 69.82 and male students 64.7% in 2 chosen subjects (National Testing Center, 2023). There were still considerably higher male students who chose

- Mathematics-Physics (70.45%)
- Human/Society/Law- Geography (81.48%)
- Physics- Geography (94.44%)
- Human. Society. Law - English (77.78%)
- Physics - Biology (83.33%) (National Testing Center, 2023).

and considerably higher female students who chose

- Chemistry-Biology (74%)
- Biology-Geography (84.62%)
- English Language - World History (84.5%)
- Geography - English (74.01%)
- Kazakh language - Kazakh literature (88.12%)
- Russian language -Russian literature (89.67%)
- Human/Society/Law- Russian language (71.43%)
- Biology - Russian language (81.82%) (National Testing Center, 2023).

The tendency is similar for 2018 UNT results too with female students averaging 84.8 score and male students scoring 80.8. There were still more male students who chose Mathematics-Physics (70.74%) and more female students choosing Chemistry-Biology (74.96%), English Language - World History (85.47%) and Biology-Geography (78.33%).

Those factors can affect what higher education facility students will apply to as the UNT scores and the field of study has a big impact on students' confidence and what university they will apply for.

2.4.2. Factors influencing university choices

According to the study conducted by Abdiraiymova and Serikzhanova (2013), the main reason why Kazakhstani students study at Universities is to “gain knowledge and professional skill”s (66.2%), to “get a prestigious diploma that provides ample opportunities for social mobility” (24.3%) and to obtain a document on higher education (6.7%). The study's findings may be perceived as surprising, as over one-third of the participants indicated that they pursued higher education to obtain a diploma (Abdiraiymova & Serikzhanova, 2013). This perspective highlights a potential perception of education as a means to an end, rather than a valuable opportunity for learning and personal growth among the younger generation.

2.5. Comparative analysis with other countries regarding university choice

The difference between priorities given when choosing a university highly differs among countries. For example, in the study of Debrenne, Pogorelskaya, Pomorina and Skalaban (2019), it is found that British students are more influenced by the university's reputation, employment opportunities, and academic programs, while Russian students place more importance on academic status, location, and campus amenities and French students, on the other hand, place a higher priority on the academic reputation, the calibre of the program, and cultural variety.

2.5.1. Study of Malaysia's Case

There was an article written by Munisamy, Jaafar, & Nagaraj (2014) that investigates if undergraduate students' choice of university is influenced by a university's reputation. The study's key findings of the study suggest students' decision to attend a particular university was significantly influenced by that institution's reputation. Students who believed that the university had a good reputation were more likely to select it over alternative institutions. The survey also

discovered that other factors such as academic standing, accessibility, and cost, affected students' decision over which university to attend. However, the most influential factor was discovered to be the university's reputation for the male part of the respondents, whereas for female respondents it had relatively less importance. The study also provided the reasons behind choosing a university in various countries and categorized these factors into 4 broad categories: university reputation, financial issues, campus attributes and career prospects (Munisamy et al., 2014). The importance of the study for our case is that it shows that there can be differences based on the gender factor and this study will try to look at that for the Kazakhstani case too.

2.6. Summary

This section provided an overview of the factors that influence career and university choice in Kazakhstan and among different other countries. Numerous aspects were emphasized in the review, including the influence of parents, peer pressure, the difference between genders, one's interests, social and economic issues, and cultural standards. The results suggest that the overall trend can have some minor changes among various countries depending on external factors of the student but the general trend on choosing a future profession and affecting factors have a similar trend.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The methodology used in this study aimed at collecting data on the factors influencing the choice of university and profession by young people in Kazakhstan, as well as on their level of satisfaction with this choice. An online survey was conducted using Google Forms as a data collection tool. This is a quantitative study that seeks to provide insights into the factors that influence the decision-making process of young people in Kazakhstan when choosing their university and profession, as well as their level of satisfaction with their choices. The following paragraphs will detail the specific methods used in the survey, including the survey design, sampling procedure, data collection, and analysis.

The qualitative part included the online interview with 7 University students who have already chosen their future career field. The general format and goal of the questions were the same as the online survey. However the goal here was to understand in depth how the career decision was made, what factors influenced the choice and what additional feedback they can give regarding this matter. Moreover, there was a consultation with the professional orientation specialist to get a general picture of the educational system in Kazakhstan. Getting feedback from professionals who have worked with thousands of school students to help them with their future university and career choices greatly opened up the area and developed the analysis of this sphere in depth.

3.2. Research Design

This research aims to analyze the factors influencing career choices among undergraduate students in Kazakhstan. A mixed-methods approach will be employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The study will consist of two main phases: an online survey and in-depth interviews.

The purpose of the both survey and interviews was to gather information on the variables that influence young people's decision to attend college and pursue a career in Kazakhstan as well as their happiness with their choice.

There were 19 questions in the poll, including multiple-choice, open-ended, and Likert scale questions. The objectives of the questions were to gather demographic data about the participants as well as information about their reasons for selecting a university and career. Before being made available to the general public, the survey was pre-tested by a group of students to confirm its readability and comprehension.

The poll was disseminated to students at various Kazakhstani schools and colleges as well as online through the telegram channel of the Kazakhstan National Testing Center. The factors that most strongly influence young people's choice of university and profession in Kazakhstan, as well as their satisfaction with their choice, were identified through descriptive statistics and inferential statistical analysis, including correlation and regression. The findings were analyzed to reveal how young people in Kazakhstan choose their future jobs and what considerations are most important to them.

Regarding the interview part, there were main 3 warm-up questions, 8 main questions and 2 closing questions that were asked by all the interviewees (presented in Appendix A). Because each interviewee presented a unique case, there were some follow-up questions where clarification was needed. The results were examined to facilitate the understanding of how young students in Kazakhstan make decisions about their future careers and what they think about the educational system in the country.

3.3. Participants of the Study

Students from Kazakhstani high schools and universities who agreed to participate in an online survey regarding their college and career preferences made up the study's participants. A total of 3226 responses were collected from participants from various schools and universities in Kazakhstan. Young participants had to be at

least 16 years old and enrolled in a high school or university in Kazakhstan to qualify for inclusion. People who graduated or work and have various backgrounds were also able to participate in the survey to get a broader picture of the situation in the country. Before participating in the survey, participants had to give their informed consent. To preserve the participants' privacy, the poll was performed anonymously and their private information was kept confidential. The participants received no rewards for completing the survey.

Regarding the interview, a diverse sample of undergraduate students from universities across Kazakhstan were recruited for this study. The sample includes students from various disciplines and academic backgrounds to ensure a comprehensive understanding of career choices. Participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique to ensure representation from different regions and demographic backgrounds. All names, other information regarding the participants, and their place of study will stay confidential.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure and Tools

3.4.1. Online Survey

A Google Forms-powered online survey with a quantitative study design was employed in this investigation as it enables researchers to alter the design, add their branding, and modify the questions to suit their particular requirements. Since Google Forms is a cloud-based application, respondents can complete the survey on their smartphones, tablets, or desktop computers. Additionally, it has built-in data analysis capabilities that make it simple to evaluate and examine the responses.

The survey questionnaire consisted of a total of 19 questions, including multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, and Likert scale questions. The survey was divided into 3 sections:

- (1) demographic information
- (2.1) factors influencing the Choice of University and Profession
- (2.2) Satisfaction with the choice of university and profession
- (3) additional thoughts and feedback.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the survey, a pilot test was carried out with a limited sample of students to assess its validity and reliability. The survey's questions and response options underwent some minor revisions in response to the input we received. Questions on the Likert Scale assess the importance of various factors such as career development, family influence, peer influence, job prospects, personal interests, financial gain, and teacher influence. The survey also includes open-ended questions so that participants can provide details and additional factors that may influence their career choice.

The survey was distributed through university channels and social media platforms, ensuring broad coverage and diverse participation. In particular, the survey was distributed to potential participants through two channels:

- direct coverage of students from 76, 77 and 201 schools in Astana
- the telegram channel of the Kazakhstan National Testing Center.

The survey was open for two weeks, during which respondents were free to complete it as they wished.

3.4.1. In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of respondents to obtain qualitative data and explore in more detail their career decision-making process. Interviews were held in a semi-structured format to allow flexibility and explore specific aspects. The interviews focused on understanding the participants' personal experiences, the influencing factors and the role of career counselling services in their decision-making. Interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed for analysis.

3.5. Data analysis

For collecting the survey data, the built-in Google Forms data analysis tools were utilised for the data analysis. The collected data was exported to Google Sheets. To find patterns, trends, and correlations between variables, a descriptive analysis of the data was carried out. It was analyzed using cross tables, frequency distributions, and charts. The frequency distribution tables made it possible to calculate how many

respondents responded to each question by selecting a certain option. Cross-tabulations have been used to investigate connections between various factors, such as the connection between gender and professional preference. Finally, data has been visualized and made easier to grasp using charts like bar charts and pie charts.

Qualitative interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in participants' stories. The results of quantitative and qualitative analyzes were then combined to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing career choice for undergraduate students in Kazakhstan.

The examination of the data brought to light several interesting discoveries. These consisted of the primary factors that impact the decision-making process of Kazakhstani youth regarding their enrollment in university and selection of a career path, the extent of their contentment with their choices, and the gender-based disparities in their career preferences. To aid young individuals in making informed decisions about their forthcoming education and professional trajectory, policymakers, educators, and parents were provided with suggestions grounded in the results of the data analysis.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical factors were taken into account when performing this study to protect participants' privacy. For the survey, each participant provided informed consent through an online survey platform before the collection of data. They were made aware of the study's objectives, their right to withdraw at any moment and the anonymity of their answers. No identifiable information, such as names or contact information, was gathered for the poll. All information is kept private and only the research team can access it. The study complied with the ethical principles and rules established by the National Testing Center of Kazakhstan. The research team also ensured that the survey questions did not cause any harm to the participants and were appropriate for their age and educational level.

Ethical principles were followed and informed consent was obtained from all the interviewees and the professional orientation specialist too. Their confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured.

3.7. Limitations

The study has a few limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results. Firstly, the limited sample size may not be representative of the entire population of young people in Kazakhstan. Secondly, the survey and interviews relied on self-reported data, which could be subject to biases or inaccuracies. Additionally, the survey and interviews were conducted online, which may have excluded individuals who do not have access to the Internet or prefer not to participate in online surveys. Moreover, the survey questions were limited in scope and may not have captured all relevant factors that influence young people's decisions regarding university and career choices. Finally, since this was a cross-sectional study, it is not possible to establish a causal relationship between the variables examined in the study. Despite these limitations, the findings of the study provide valuable insights into the factors that influence young people's decisions regarding university and career choices in Kazakhstan.

3.8 Summary

The methodology of this study involved an online survey conducted using Google Forms, which collected 3226 responses from students in schools and universities in Kazakhstan and 7 interviews with undergraduate students. The participants can choose not to answer any of the questions of the survey or the interview if they feel like it. Everything is voluntary. The content was focused on factors influencing young people's decisions to attend university and pursue a career, as well as their level of satisfaction with their choice. The data were analyzed using various statistical techniques, and the findings were used to provide recommendations for policymakers, educators, and parents to assist young people in making informed decisions about their education and career paths. Ethical considerations were taken

into account throughout the study, such as obtaining informed consent and ensuring participant confidentiality. However, the study had some limitations, such as the lack of representation from certain regions of Kazakhstan and the possibility of response bias. Overall, this study provides insights into the factors influencing young people's education and career choices in Kazakhstan.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Online Survey

4.1.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

1. The majority of participants (79.1%) were people between the ages of 18-24..
17.7% of respondents were under 18 years old,
1.5% were between 25-34,
0.8% were between 35-44,
0.6% were between 45-55,
0.2% were 55+,
and 0.5% were between 22-25 years old.

To sum up, 96.8% of respondents were youngsters aged below 24.

Ваш возраст:
3,226 responses

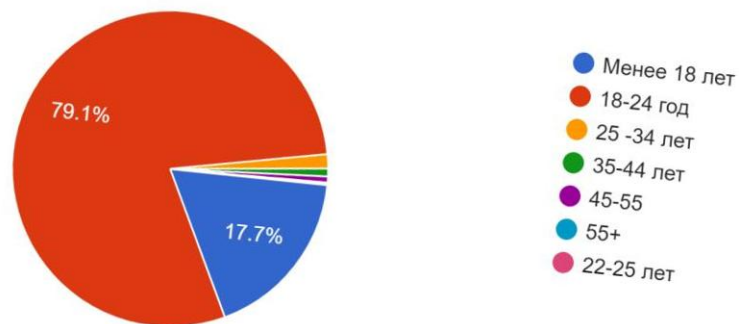


Figure 1. Age distribution of the participants

2. 66.2% of the respondents are female whereas 32.2% of the participants are male. The rest chose not to mention it.
3. The highest academic level of the respondents is as follows:
 - 47.4 % of the respondents have a bachelor's degree
 - 15.9% of the respondents have completed some University degree (in the process of acquiring a degree)
 - 29.8% have graduated high school (can be in the process of graduating)
 - 2.4% are college/technical college graduates

- 2.5% have a Masters degree and 0.8% have a doctoral degree or higher.

Ваш высший академический уровень
3,226 responses



Figure 2. The highest academic level of the participants

- 59.1% of respondents are university students with no work experience;
27.1% of respondents are university students with work experience;
10.1% are school students;
1% are workers in organizations/firms;
0.7% are self-employed
0.7% are unemployed
0.6% are teachers.

Ваш статус:
3,226 responses

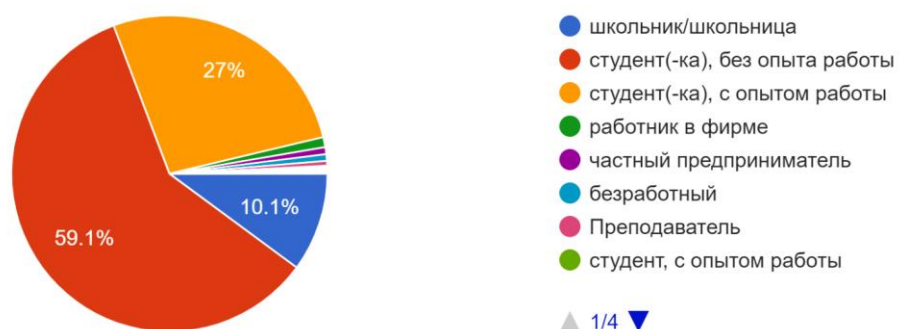


Figure 3. The job status of the participants

4.1.2. Results of the Quantitative Part of the Study

1. Have you chosen your (future) profession?

86.7% of the respondents answered “Yes”

11.8% answered “No” and the rest (1.5%) answered that they are trying to figure it out, searching for it or that it is hard to decide.

2. If you selected "Yes", how satisfied are you with your choice?

42.4% answered “Very satisfied”

30.5% answered “Somewhat/partially satisfied”

20.3% answered “Neutral”

3.5% answered “Somewhat dissatisfied”

and 1.7% answered “Very dissatisfied”. The rest are not sure and chose not to answer.



Figure 4. Satisfaction with the career choice

3. If you are not satisfied with your choice of profession, what factors influenced your choice? (select all that apply)

27.4% - The expectation/ demand of the family

25.3% - Lack of information or awareness about different career options

20.1% - Lack of confidence in your abilities or interests

20% - Limited job availability in desired areas

15.7% - Social or cultural norms

15.6% - Limited access to educational opportunities

13.3% - Lack of guidance or mentorship

7.2% - Influence of peers or friends

Other personally added answers included “financial constraints” and “the need to learn the English Language”, “availability of scholarships”.

4. Have you chosen your higher education institution?

91% answered - “Yes”.

7.9% answered - “No”.

3.1% are not sure or in the process of deciding.

5. If you answered “Yes” to the previous question, what factors influenced your choice of university? (select all that apply)

57.2% - Quality of education

46.5% - The reputation of the university

39.5% - Location of the university

37.4% - Personal interests and passions

32.6% - Availability of scholarship

30.5% - Job opportunities after graduation

27.9% - Family and friends' recommendations

Some self-written additional notes from respondents states: “no corruption, the dormitory price is lower than the monthly stipend”, “it was chosen for me”, “availability of my study area”, “randomly ended up here”, “academic mobility” and “passing the minimum requirement from the exam”.

6. How satisfied are you with your choice of university?

40.8% - “Very satisfied”

30% - “Somewhat/partially satisfied”

21.9% - “Neutral”

4.3% - “Somewhat dissatisfied”

2% - “Very dissatisfied”

7. *If you haven't chosen a university yet, what factors are currently influencing your decision? (select all that apply)*

61.4% - Quality of education

40.6% - Personal interests and passions

38.5% - Reputation of the university

35% - Job opportunities after graduation

34.4% - Location of the university

29.7% - Availability of scholarship

14.4% - Family and friends' recommendations

Self-written additional notes from respondents include “financial constraints”, “discipline and social environment”, “popularity of the University”, “cost of education” and “academic mobility”.

8. *Assess the influence of these factors on your choice of profession.*

5 - very important

4 - important

3 - medium influence

2 - weak influence

1 - no effect

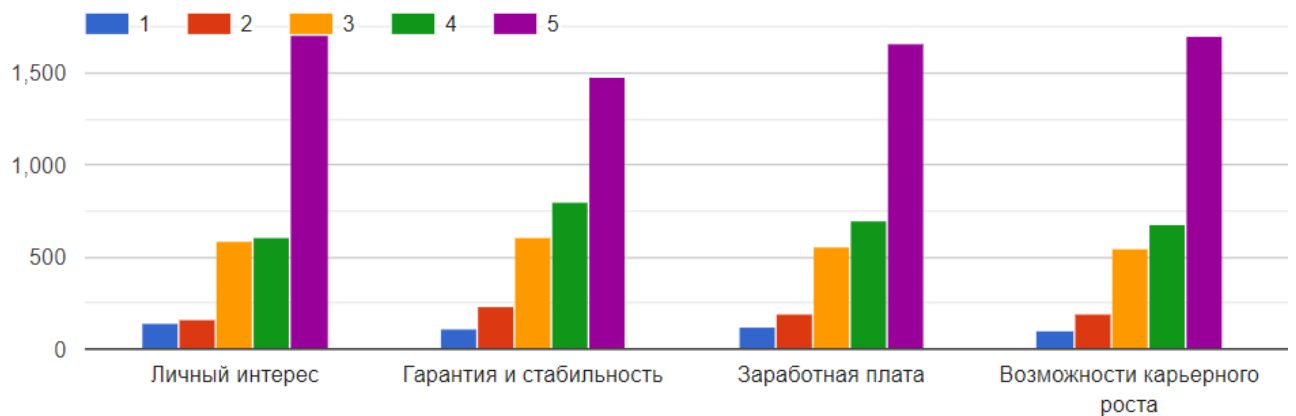
The ranking system looked at the general score obtained by each choice. The calculation system works based on the score (5/4/3/2) multiplied by the number of people that chose it. The most important factors when deciding on a future profession in descending order of importance are found to be:

Table 2. Importance of the various factors on career choice

Categories	Overall Score
------------	---------------

Career opportunities after graduation	13241
Personal interest	13140
Wage level	13134
Warranty and stability	12864
The balance between work and personal life	12742
The availability of vacancies in the field	12696
Required skills and qualifications	12433
Social status and prestige	12172
Location and road	11380
Family expectations and traditions	10141
Gender norms or stereotypes	9066
The influence of peers and friends	8873

The illustration is given in Figure 5 below.



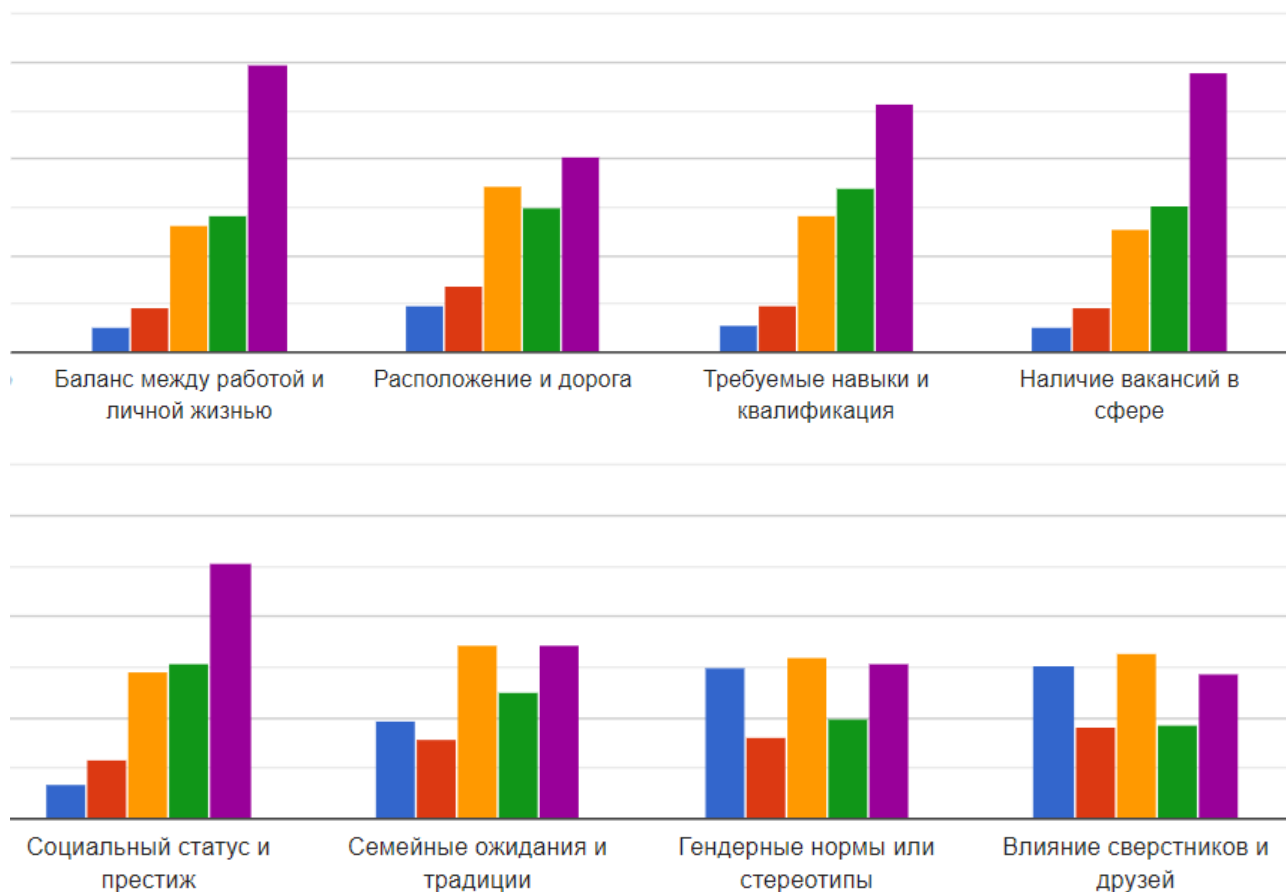


Figure 5. Influence of various factors on choice of the profession

9. *Assess the impact of these factors on your choice of university.*

- 5 - very important
- 4 - important
- 3 - medium influence
- 2 - weak influence
- 1 - no effect

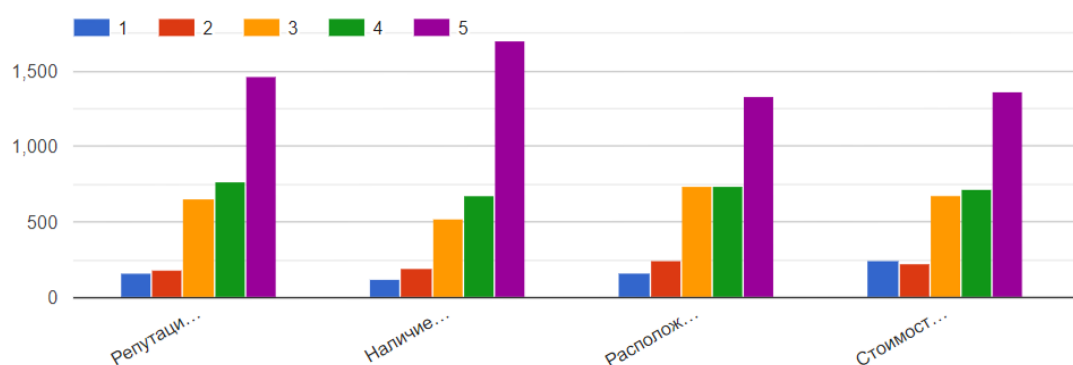
The ranking system looked at the general score obtained by each choice. The calculation system works based on the score (5/4/3/2) multiplied by the number of people that chose it. The most important factors when deciding on the university in descending order of importance are found to be:

Table 3. Importance of the various factors on university choice

Categories	Overall Score
------------	---------------

Availability of desired programs/specialties	13174
Career prospects and employment opportunities after graduation	13162
Quality of teachers and academic resources	13147
University reputation and rating	12682
Personal interests and hobbies	12672
Location and accessibility	12332
The cost and possibilities of financial assistance	12161
Campus culture and social environment	11984
Diversity and Inclusion	11934
Quality of facilities and infrastructure	11764
Entry requirements and eligibility criteria	11578
University/College Size	11106
Opinions and recommendations from family and friends	10584

Illustration of the information are given in Figure 6 below.



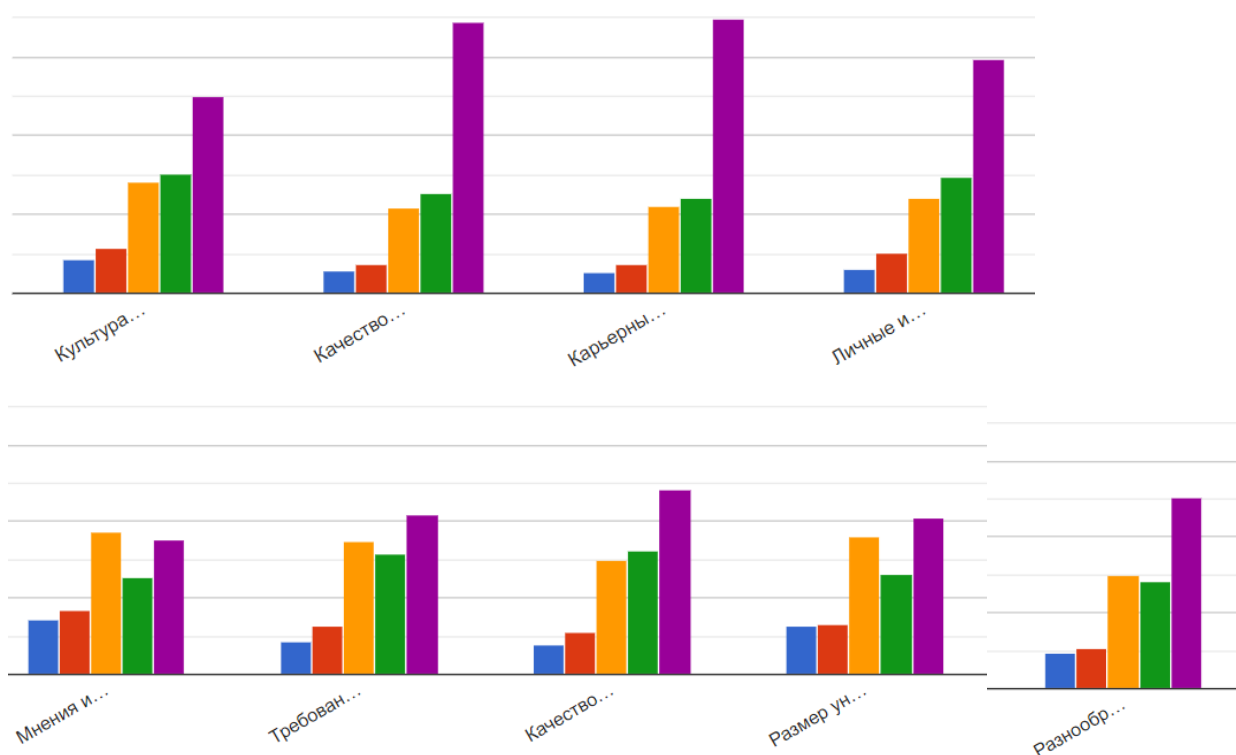


Figure 6. Influence of various factors on the Choice of the University

10. What is the main factor for future professional success and career growth in Kazakhstan?

35.3% - Big work experience and professional knowledge

31.1% - High qualifications (education in prestigious, well-known universities or abroad)

9.8% - knowledge of foreign languages (English, Chinese, etc.)

9.3% - Kazakh language

6.7% - good upbringing (one must be a cultured person, respect elders, etc.)

5.3% - connections, influential friends and acquaintances

1% - Russian language

Some personal notes from respondents include “high competence”, “personal qualities and interest in the success and career growth”, “financial literacy” and others. Some respondents couldn’t choose one and wrote “All factors”.

11. How important the higher education for future career and success?

25.4% - Very important

37.4% - Important

26.2% - Neutral, does not matter

4.7% - Not so important

5.4% - Not important at all

Some personal notes from a respondent include:

- In most cases important but there are exceptions
- It is desirable to have a higher education, but this is not entirely important because even a higher education does not guarantee success in a career
- Partially important, it's better when you study what you need for your speciality. And you can always upgrade your education
- Higher education does not imply erudition and experience, the latter is much more important
- It's not the same for everybody

12. What would it be if you could change one thing about your university and profession choice? (open-ended)

Most of the responses left the answer blank or included answers such as “I do not know”, “I am not sure”, “Nothing” etc. Other mostly repeated responses included:

- Increasing monthly stipend quantity/other financial help types
- Less expensive higher education cost
- More study grants
- Universities should with good infrastructure and be equipped with modern technologies
- More professional personnel
- Free dormitory/help with the place of living during studies / new dormitory with better conditions (near to the university)
- Better quality of education
- More profession types
- Changing university building/ tech. equipment availability
- More real-life practices, and internships.

- Change in Unified National Testing system/ eliminating UNT
- Location of the University
- Lecture room/length and class schedule
- More language learning opportunities (English)
- Detailed explanations for applicants about grants and opportunities
- No bullying
- Transferring opportunities between countries
- No corruption
- Less workload.

13. In your opinion, what factors should young people consider when choosing a university and profession in Kazakhstan? (open-ended)

Most of the responses left the answer blank or included answers such as “I do not know”, “I am not sure”, “Nothing” etc. Other mostly repeated responses included (in descending order):

- Listening to your inner self, desires and passion
- Quality of education/ teachers/ university
- Relevance/up-to-dateness/demand of the profession
- Ratings, Reputation, the prestige of university and profession
- Scholarship/ stipend/ financial matters
- Carefully analyse each university, reading reviews, and family advice
- Location
- Perspectives after finishing education
- Convenience
- The infrastructure of the study place/ good dormitory
- Education abroad opportunities
- Student life
- Better professional orientation and career counselling
- Choose a university where there is a lot of real-world practice

- Additional courses and education
- Future wage/salary

14. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions? (open-ended)

Although most of the responses left the answer blank or answered “No”, “I do not know”, “I am not sure”, or “Nothing” etc., here are some of the most stated topics:

- “Universities must keep up with the current time demands”
- “The level of education in the country needs to be developed”
- “The pervasive issue of corruption in our nation has been identified as a root cause of many of its challenges. However, the mere assertion of this problem does not necessarily translate to tangible solutions. The desire for a comfortable standard of living in our country is understandable, but it requires a comprehensive and sustained effort to address the underlying systemic issues. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to engage in a multi-faceted approach that involves not only denouncing corruption but also implementing effective policies, promoting accountability, and fostering a culture of transparency and ethical behaviour in all sectors of society”.
- “Certainly, it would be beneficial for educators to prioritize education over appearance, and instead focus on promoting fields such as cinema and acting.”
- “It is often more difficult for women to achieve academic and professional success due to existing stereotypes of discriminating women. This becomes a significant obstacle to the development of Kazakhstan as a whole, this is also the reason why women are afraid to indicate their gender even in such questionnaires or somewhere else.”
- “I am not satisfied with the quality of the Unified National Testing system”
- “It is necessary to reduce the price of universities because the average salary of Kazakhstanis does not match the prices of universities”

- “We should normalize taking a gap year after graduating from school. It would help to better understand yourself”
- “The education system is far from perfect”
- “For professional success in Kazakhstan without connections, you need a lot of time, perseverance and work.”
- “Checking universities for corruption (I read reviews and found out bad things about entering, exams, etc. in our universities)”
- “Getting higher education should be more affordable”
- “I chose the speciality of teacher of geography (pedagogy), but I don't want to work in this field in the future”
- “If there were many teachers who speak English fluently and have a high quality of education”
- “I would like to go on excursions to educational institutions in September, and not at the end of the school year. To hold open days not only for graduating classes but also for 7th and 8th grades.”
- “Implementation of proper repair of educational institutions, discipline and organization of events at the university”
- “Accessibility and information about universities and specialities are important. I understand that there is an open day, seminars and so on. But I would like that there were seminars in schools where real specialists from different fields could honestly talk about their experience and profession. What will be the requirements for these professions in the future? Also to let students honestly talk about their universities. Taking into account the pros and cons, as well as the difficulties of choosing them. People from rural areas cannot visit and learn about universities. I wish this could be resolved. Just inform people in terms of grants more. Although I understand that it depends on the person. There is a

need for more psychologists and student counsellors at schools. Many children suffer from an overabundance of stress. I would like to see such specialists represented in all schools, from urban to rural areas. After all, for many of whom UNT is the meaning of life, although this is not the right way of thinking. Therefore, you need a mentor in terms of profession and morale. Thank you very much for this survey.”

- “More information about professions and how is training, practice”
- “Checking Universities for Corruption, there should be no bribery”
- “I chose the speciality of a geography teacher (ped) but I don’t want to work in this field in the future”
- “I wish there were free and quality English courses”
- “Open state competence courses to improve the qualifications and skills of students. Free state language courses, primarily the Kazakh language.”
- “I think that some universities and dormitories are in need of renovation and new technologies. If he talks about the dining room: high-quality and not expensive products are important.”
- “For applicants, we need to make more promotions (true) and provide a full tour of the universities”
- “I would like the university to be refurbished the way the students would like it to be.”
- “In Kazakhstan, there is not enough career guidance or special centres where you can learn more about professions. I chose a profession after graduating from the 11th grade and now I think it is wrong to give a choice to 16-17-year-old teenagers. It is better to make an extra year of studying about various jobs and internships that the guys like.”

4.1.2. Results of the Qualitative Part of the Study

All of the students that were interviewed mentioned that they like what they study and also like the chosen higher educational facility. The students study various fields in different cities in Kazakhstan. They all have unique paths and all mentioned that the most important thing while choosing a university or a major is personal interest and not paying big attention to what other people think about the chosen field. All students answered that the university has provided them with a lot of opportunities and it is in the hand of the students to use them (the transcribed interview is given in Appendix B).

For example, about the level of satisfaction, interviewee 1 (I1) stated:

“It has been 2 years since I entered university. During this time, the University has already provided us with so many opportunities whether it is participation in the various forums, conferences, academic mobility to Europe/Turkey and etc. I am totally satisfied with my choice.”

I2 stated:

“I am very satisfied with my choice. Very Satisfied.”

I3 stated:

“In the beginning, there were some difficulties when I transferred from a different university. But I have never regretted my career and university choice as I really like this field and have an active student life.”

I4 stated:

“I am very satisfied with my choice of university. We have a lot of practice and I like it. Because I am an active student, the university gives me a lot of chances to get experience such as my recent trip to Astana city.”

I5 stated:

“I'm really happy with the university and job I picked. The university has taught me a lot about construction and given me chances to do things for real. The teachers are smart and helpful, and I got to meet people in the industry and learn more outside of class. I feel good about my future because what I'm learning matches what I want to do with my career.”

And so on. All the students were satisfied with their choices. All the students are activists in their field and are passionate about getting an education at their university. That can be one of the reasons why 100% of students showed gave feedback.

The main reason why students chose their field and university are

I1: “For every 11th-grade student it is very important to choose the right career path and then the higher education facility to get that degree. That path is full of responsibilities. For my university degree, we take the art test and cannot choose 4 universities to apply to as other students. That is why we have to make a decision after vigorous analysis and a lot of thinking. About my future career, from the 9th grade I studied at the media school and felt like I have abilities in this field. In 11th grade, I made the clear decision to apply to this field. When it comes to choosing the university, I started to examine all the universities that teach this field such as Suleyman Demirel University, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University and many others. Then I looked at the worldwide rating of the universities. There is a website called “Atameken” in which for several years straight Eurasian University took the leading position in my field. The next importance is the professionalism and experience of Professors. By looking at the various Departments within my major I found out that the Professors who teach us courses are well-known specialists who have achieved a lot in the past. All the other teaching staff had a broad experience in their field too. By analysing all the advantages and disadvantages of various universities, I came to the conclusion that Gumilyov Eurasian National University would be the best choice for me. ”

I2: “First thing is the reputation of the university and what past graduates have achieved. Second, is the quality of education. Third is campus life. I am a member of one university club and to be honest, I really sad that I will graduate so soon. I will probably apply here for the master's degree. ”

I3: “I wanted to be in a place that is far from my parents and relatives as I wanted to become an independent person and live free from any other external factors. Then I looked at the quality of education and campus life. ”

I4: “I think tourism is the profession of the future. Even if Kazakhstan's tourism is not that developed, looking at the other countries, we can see that it can greatly contribute to the economic development of the state. The University where I study has a great reputation and gives a lot of opportunities to the students. ”

I5: “I chose my university and profession based on factors like the curriculum, faculty expertise, industry connections, and practical training opportunities. I sought a comprehensive construction program that offered both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience. It's important to consider factors such as career relevance, internships, university resources, personal development support, and institutional reputation when making these decisions.”

I6: “The institution's faculty competence, linkages to industry, and availability of practical training were the key elements that affected my decision to choose a specific university and profession. For me, having access to experienced instructors and business experts who could aid me in my study was crucial. I also took into account Kazakhstan's demand for IT specialists as well as job possibilities.”

I7: “It is one of the best universities in our country and the location is very good too. I just chose this university because of its good reputation and am happy with my choice. About the profession, I knew I would choose this field from the very beginning when I was a kid. I just naturally loved this sphere. ”

As you can see, every student had different factors that affected their choice. But mostly, for their future career, students chose what they like to study. For the university choice, they relied on the UNT results scores and the likelihood of getting accepted to certain universities. The prestige and the reputation of the university played a big role in choosing too. The results are closely related to the results of the survey.

Most of the students would not choose a different degree or university if they would go back in time. Only I1 and I4 answered that they possibly would.

I1:

“Question #4:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #4:

Yes, if I had an opportunity, I would have chosen a different profession. On my first try at UNT, as a field for me, I have chosen art and got 34 points out of a possible 35. On my second try, I have chosen Kazakh language literature (as a former Kazakh language Olympiad participant) and got 108 points. It was my second option to become a Kazakh language and literature teacher.

Question #5:

So if you could change something now, you would like to be a teacher?

Answer #5:

Yes. Because the year I applied to journalism and took an art/creativity exam, there were only 197 grants available and the number of applicants was approximately 2000. So the chance of acceptance was only 10%. And I won that grant.

I4:

Question #5:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #5:

I feel limited to the place where I was born as I chose the university which is near my living area. I know that students in Almaty, for example, get even more opportunities such as going to famous hotels, practising there and etc. I think I would have chosen the university in a different place. I think not being able to leave my comfort zone was the main reason why I stayed in my current place.

During the interview, it was found that students heavily on the UNT score. The importance of getting the state grant is immense and most students are ready to choose the field they are not passionate about for winning the scholarship.

I1:

Question #10:

There are a lot of people in the country who apply to certain degrees only because of the availability of scholarships and not following their true desired major. Some choose a sphere to get the state scholarship but then change their major afterwards. What do you think about it?

Answer #10:

Maybe it is the right choice for some people. When the country is giving grants in specific areas, why not use it to your benefit especially if you are financially constrained? Nowadays, I do not think that having a diploma greatly affects your life. For example in my case, I can get the diploma from the University and then work in a different field. When after-school students choose to study at university and get the state scholarship, they get a monthly stipend, a dormitory place and other opportunities given to them by the university. It is a 4-year opportunity to develop yourself. Nowadays it is even possible to get a Master's Degree that is not related to your Bachelor's Degree. So the state grant is a big opportunity in life. It would be a mistake to not appreciate it.

Some additional comments from the students about education in Kazakhstan included the following lines:

I2:

Question #9:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #9:

I think yes. Sometimes parents may not support the child's choice and in other cases, there are just too few state grants and students choose to pursue a different field just because of that. Some school students take too much time deciding where they want to go in the final year and still are not sure till the very end which can affect negatively their application process. I think various tests can help to identify what you can pursue in the future and proper career guidance is really important. Personally, I went to the psychologist, to the career guidance specialist in order to be sure of my choice. The most important thing is to not care about what other people think about your choice and stick to the decision of your heart. Students tend to also think about future career opportunities. I think every profession is needed and every student can find a job in the interested field.

I3:

Question #10:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #10:

I think there are some problems. First of all, it is hard to study in a lot of universities nowadays. Secondly, the opinion of parents highly affects the students. Nextly, when a lot of students cannot get the desired score on UNT, they tend to choose the undesired field or undesired university. A lot of problems arise from it.

As future advice for younger school students, it was stated:

I1:

Question #13:

What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?

Answer #13:

It is a very responsible period for a young mind. If a person knows exactly what he/she wants, follow your heart and study what you like. If you do not know what you want to study, choose the field in which you will get the state grant. But of course, it is better to choose the sphere you love. Also pay attention to the universities in big cities such as Almaty, and Astana and look at the rating of the facility. Look at the previous score of the grant holders. Make the first two university options risky ones and the next two safe ones.

Question #14:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #14:

While being a student for 2 years I realised that every university gives opportunities. It is really the attitude and work of the student that matters the most at the end. After graduating from university, it is really the perseverance of the student that decides his/her future. So there is really no big need in paying great attention to the university's prestige, it helps but not as much as your own attitude.

I2:

Question #11:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #11:

If you ever realise that after 4 years of education, the field is not yours, do not be afraid to change it. You have all your life ahead of you. It is never too late to study. Have faith in yourself and your dreams.

I3:

Question #12:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #12:

Listen to yourself, and your inner thoughts. Of course, what your parents and friends think is important. They want the best for us. But do not be afraid to choose who you truly want to be. Prioritize your studies. When choosing the university, first look at the quality of the education and only after that the campus life.

I4 opened up a serious topic about the changes in UNT in the middle of the academic year and how it affected her decision. The fact that the requirements for students' desired careers changed in January made her choose a different path.

I4:

Question #8:

Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?

Answer #8:

In the beginning, I really wanted to study the world economy. But after UNT in January, the required two subjects changed for this degree. After that, I knew that there is tourism in my chosen subjects and decided to study that instead. It was a hard decision to make. The fact that I have to go to study "world economy" in big cities like Astana and Almaty also affected my decision.

I4 also mentioned the importance of marketing and providing all the necessary information to students (I4: "In this internet era, students look at online information to decide where to study. Usually, universities that do marketing a lot tend to get the most students who are willing to apply and study there. So marketing is very important. Some universities even though they have bit opportunities, do not advertise it a lot. Universities should provide students with broad descriptions of the program and list all the advantages of studying there. There is clearly a lack of information. ").

4.2. Consultation with the professional orientation specialist

The consultation was made online with Marat Alibekovich, a professional orientation specialist who has been working at the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and guiding students for almost 10 years now. The topic of the research was explained to the specialist and it was requested to give unbiased feedback about the current education sector in the country and what challenges students face while making such major decisions in life. According to him, the following factors have the strongest influence on the choice of a profession and a university for Kazakh students:

1. **Parental Influence:** Parental expectations and opinions can play an important role in career and university choices.
2. **Personal interests and abilities:** The interests, passions and abilities of the student are significant factors in choosing a profession and university.
3. **Economic factors:** Financial aspects also influence the choice of profession and university. Students may take into account the cost of education, the availability of scholarships, and the possibility of obtaining financial support when making a decision.
4. **Environmental influences:** The social environment, including friends, relatives and society, can also influence students' choices. The opinion and advice of others can influence the decision to choose a profession and university.

The specialist also states that social and economic conditions play an important role in the choice of profession and university. They can have a significant impact on student decision-making. Here are some ways in which these conditions affect the choice:

1. **Employment Opportunities:** Students usually evaluate job prospects in their chosen profession. They take into account socio-economic factors such as the demand for certain occupations, unemployment rates and the stability of the labour market. Students tend to choose a profession that provides good employment opportunities and career prospects.
2. **Salary:** Salary level is also an important factor in choosing a profession. Students evaluate potential earnings and financial prospects in their chosen

field. Professions related to high-tech industries, engineering, finance, or medicine may offer higher salaries and financial stability.

3. **Educational Resources and Accessibility:** Socioeconomic conditions can influence the availability of educational resources and universities. Students may face restrictions in accessing quality education due to financial problems or limited access to universities in certain regions. Economically weak families may find it difficult to choose a university based on tuition and living expenses.
4. **Social recognition and prestige:** The social recognition and prestige associated with certain professions can influence students' choices. Some professions, such as medicine, law, business and science, may have a high status and respect in society. Students may strive to choose a profession that will provide them with social recognition and prestige.
5. **Influence of culture and society:** Cultural and social expectations can also play a role in the choice of profession and university. The norms and values in society, as the expectations of parents and the community can put pressure on students when choosing a profession. For example, in some cultures, certain professions may be preferred or socially acceptable.

Social and economic conditions may vary from region to region and depend on the individual circumstances of students. However, they have a significant impact on the choice of profession and university, as students tend to make decisions that take into account employment opportunities, financial stability and social recognition.

According to the specialist, students may face various difficulties in the process of choosing a profession and university. Some of them include

1. **Lack of Information:** One of the main challenges for students is the lack of information about available professions and universities. It is not always easy to evaluate all the possibilities and understand which path is most suitable for their interests and skills.
2. **Uncertainty and doubt:** Students may experience uncertainty and doubt about their interests and abilities. They may find it difficult to identify their true

passions and understand which professions and universities are best suited to achieve their goals.

3. Peer pressure: The influence of parents, friends, or social expectations can also create difficulties for students. They may face pressure to choose a certain profession or enter a certain university, which is not always in line with their own desires and goals.
4. Financial Constraints: The cost of education and financial constraints can be significant factors that students face when choosing a career and university. Some students may limit their choice due to high tuition costs, the cost of living in another city or country, and the lack of financial support available.

There is also a close relationship between the choice of profession and the level of student satisfaction. When students choose a career that matches their interests, values, and abilities, they often experience greater job satisfaction and career paths.

According to the specialist, there are several changes in the educational system of Kazakhstan that may affect the choice of profession and university of Kazakhstani schoolchildren. They are

1. Early Career Orientation: Expanding opportunities for career guidance and exposure to specializations can help students make more informed decisions about their career choices. Providing information about different professions, learning opportunities and labour market requirements can help students identify their interests and abilities.
2. Development of experiential learning: Incorporating practical aspects and work experience into curricula can help students gain an understanding of the real requirements and opportunities of their chosen professions. The organization of internships, master classes and practical classes can help students better understand their interests and abilities in various fields.
3. Career Counseling Support: Strengthening the role of career counselling and guidance can help students get information and guidance on career and

university choices. Career consultants can provide one-to-one advice, providing information on various careers, educational requirements, and career prospects.

4. **Developing links with employers and universities:** Strengthening links between schools, universities and employers can help students gain an understanding of the specific requirements of the labour market and what skills and knowledge are in demand. Interaction with representatives of various professions and educational institutions can help students make more informed decisions about their choice of profession and university.
5. **Financial Aid and Scholarships:** Providing financial aid and scholarships to talented and motivated students can make higher education more accessible. This can help students choose universities and specialties based on their interests and potential, and not just on the basis of financial capabilities.

Moreover, the specialist stated that at the moment, in Kazakhstan, the following trends can be distinguished in the choice of professions and universities among students:

“Engineering majors: The growing popularity of technology and digital innovation is leading to an increase in student interest in engineering majors. Programming, engineering, information technology and related fields attract students who see them as opportunities for career growth and development.

Medical majors: The healthcare field remains attractive to students and the choice of medical majors remains popular. Medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and other medical professions attract students who want to help people and work in the field of health.

Economics and Business: Students also show interest in economics and business. Finance, Marketing, Management and Entrepreneurship attract students who are looking to develop their management skills and be able to lead a successful career in business.

Humanities and Social Sciences: Some students show an interest in the humanities and social sciences. Psychology, political science, journalism, law and

other humanities continue to attract students who are interested in the analysis of social processes, interpersonal relationships and other aspects of social life.

International Programs and Education: There is a growing interest among students in educational programs abroad and international educational opportunities. Many students seek education at prestigious universities abroad, which opens up wide prospects for career growth and international experience”.

The specialist also states that it is important to note that trends in the choice of professions and universities can change over time under the influence of economic, technological and social changes. Media and the Internet provide schoolchildren with wide access to information about various professions and universities. They can read job descriptions, educational requirements, career opportunities and salary expectations. This also allows them to better understand their interests and opportunities when choosing a profession and university.

To the question “What does the success in the chosen profession depends on?”, the specialist replied: “

Passion and Interest: Success in a profession is usually associated with a deep passion and interest in the chosen field. When a person is genuinely passionate about their job, they are usually more motivated and willing to put in the extra effort to succeed.

Competence and Skills: Having the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies in your field is a key success factor. This can be obtained through education, training, practical experience and continuous self-education.

Hard work and perseverance: Success requires hard work and a willingness to overcome challenges. Successful professionals usually show perseverance, self-discipline, and a willingness to invest time and effort in developing their skills and achieving their goals.

Adapting to change: In today's rapidly changing world, it is important to be flexible and able to adapt to new conditions. Successful professionals often have the skills to adapt, innovate, and work in a dynamic environment.

Good Interpersonal Skills: The ability to communicate effectively, work in a team, and establish and maintain good relationships with clients and colleagues is an important success factor in many professions.

Network connections: Connections and professional contacts can also play an important role in success. Establishing and maintaining useful connections can provide access to new opportunities, information and support.

Continuous learning and self-development: Successful professionals strive for continuous learning and self-development. They stay up to date with the latest trends, technologies and methodologies in their industry to be competitive and efficient.

Adequate goals and planning: Success in the profession requires clear goals and good planning. Successful professionals define their goals, develop strategies to achieve them and evaluate their progress regularly.

It is important to note that each profession has its own specific requirements and success factors. However, these common factors can form the basis for a successful career in any field.”

4.3. Summary

Thus, this study aimed to examine the factors that influence the decision of young people in Kazakhstan to go to university and pursue a career, as well as their level of satisfaction with their choice. The study found that the most significant factors influencing young people's decisions were personal interests and job prospects, while parental pressure/friends' influence and the social status of the acquired profession were less influential. In addition, the study identified some additional reasons behind this choice. Despite some limitations, such as the self-reporting nature of the data, the study provides valuable information for policymakers, educators and parents to help young people make informed decisions about their future education and career.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Summary of findings

The main factor for future success and career growth in Kazakhstan was found to be big work experience and professional knowledge (35.4%), high qualifications (education in prestigious, well-known universities or abroad) (31.1%) and knowledge of foreign languages (English, Chinese, etc.) (9.8%). Respondents of the survey mentioned the knowledge of the Kazakh language (9.3%), good upbringing (one must be a cultured person, respect elders, etc.) (6.7%) and connections, influential friends/acquaintances as important factors next in line (5.3%).

Most of the respondents (62.8%) think that higher education is important for future career prospects while 26.2% take the neutral position and 10.1% do not think it has high importance.

The findings of this study highlight that there is a complex reasoning behind every choice regarding career and future educational facility which include factors such as personal interests, parental expectations, perceived job opportunities, sociocultural factors and many more. The factors differ and every student presents a unique background that resulted in making a particular choice. The most important factors when deciding on the future profession were found to be career opportunities after graduation, personal interest and wage level. Family expectations/traditions, gender norms/stereotypes and the influence of peers and friends were found to have the least influence on future career choices.

Additionally, the study found that overall satisfaction levels with university and profession choices were high both among survey and interview participants, with the majority reporting that they were satisfied with their choices. To be more specific, 86.7% of respondents have chosen the future profession and 72.9% of these people are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their choice. However, 20.3% of the respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 5.2% are dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied. Although the reasons behind this dissatisfaction can be various, the main reason why respondents were dissatisfied was the expectation/

demand of the family (27.4%), the lack of information or awareness about different career options (25.3%), the lack of confidence in their abilities or interests (20.1%) and limited job availability in desired areas (20%).

91% of respondents have chosen a higher educational facility (as most of the respondents are university students) and only 70.8% of respondents are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their university choice. The main factors that influenced the decision of respondents who already chose higher educational facilities were the quality of education (57.2%), the reputation of the university (46.5%) and the location of the facility (39.5%). Interestingly, the personal interests and passions factor comes after these factors earning 37.4% of the votes. The least influential factors when choosing a university were found to be family and friends' recommendations (27.9%). The main factors that influence the decision of respondents who are in the process of choosing a higher educational facility are again the quality of education (64.1%), personal interests and passions (40.6%) and the reputation of the university (38.5%). Family and friends' recommendations factor are again the least influential factor too (14.4%).

It was found that the most important factors that affect future university choice are the “Availability of desired programs/specialities”, “Career prospects and employment opportunities after graduation” and “Quality of teachers and academic resources”. The least influence was found to be in “Entry requirements and eligibility criteria”, “University/College Size” and “Opinions and recommendations from family and friends”. However, on the question of what would they change about the university and profession choice, the most mentioned topic was increasing monthly stipend quantity/other financial help types, the less expensive higher education cost, more study grants and improved communication and relationship between teachers and students/ more professional personnel. A lot of respondents further mentioned that there is a need for improving dormitory conditions in Kazakhstan and /or helping with the place of living during studies and improving the quality of education. Providing more profession types and improving the infrastructure of the educational

facility and providing students with the needed technical assistance were also mentioned quite often. As future advice for the next generation of students, most participants mentioned always staying true to themselves and choose to fields that they really like.

5.2. Factors influencing university and profession choices

By looking at various articles and sources, and by looking at the results from our study, the list of factors that can affect the choice of the future educational facility was gathered. If to categorise these factors, we can divide them and categorize them into several broad categories. The result can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Factors that can influence the choice of future educational facility

Academic Factors: - Quality of academic programs - Availability of desired majors or fields of study - Faculty reputation and expertise - Research opportunities - Academic support services - Admission requirements and difficulty	Location and Environment Factors: - Proximity to family and friends - Availability of housing and transportation - Climate and weather - Social and cultural opportunities - Safety and Security
Financial Factors: - Cost of tuition and fees (personal financial constraints) - Availability of financial aid and scholarships - Cost of living in the area - Potential for future earning and career advancement - Student employment opportunities	Institutional Factors: - Reputation and prestige of the university, ranking - Campus Culture and Community - Diversity and inclusivity of the student body - Campus resources and facilities - Student engagement and extracurricular activities
Personal Factors: - Individual interests, goals, preferences and values - Learning style and preferences - Personality and fit with the	Family and surroundings: - Family background and expectations - Parental influence or pressure - Peer pressure or influence from

campus culture - Career Aspirations and Plans - Lack of information about different universities and their programs - Past academic performance and test scores	friends or family members
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These categories are not exhaustive and may vary depending on the context and individual circumstances of the prospective student. However, they can provide a useful framework for understanding and analyzing the factors that influence university choice.

The same thing was done for the factors affecting the choice of future profession. Although a person's own choice and main interest are the key components in choosing the future profession, there are various external factors affecting the decision. They can also be categorized into several broad categories. The result can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Factors that can influence the choice of future profession

Personal Factors: - Individual interests, hobbies, and passions - Values and beliefs - Personality traits and aptitudes - Work style preferences - Goals and aspirations - Work-life balance - Location and commute - Lack of information or awareness about various career options - Lack of confidence in their abilities or interests	Education and Training Factors: - Educational background and qualifications - Training and certification requirements - Availability of training programs and opportunities - Skill development and acquisition - Lack of guidance or mentorship - Limited access to educational opportunities
Employment Market Factors: - Demand for the profession in the job market - Salary and earning potential - Job security and career growth	Social and Cultural Factors: - Family and community expectations and traditions/ cultural norms - Influence and/or pressure of

opportunities - Availability of jobs in desired location or industry - Competition and saturation in the job market	family, friends, and mentors - Societal and cultural attitudes towards certain professions - Perceived status and prestige of the profession - Professional networks and associations
Economic and Political Factors: - Economic trends and conditions - Government policies and regulations affecting the profession - Technological advancements and innovations impacting the profession - Globalization and international trade affecting job opportunities	Financial factors: - Salary and financial benefits

These categories are not exhaustive and may vary depending on the context and individual circumstances of the person making the career choice. However, they can also provide a useful framework for understanding and analyzing the factors that influence career choice. These factors can vary depending on the individual and their specific circumstances.

5.2.1. Parental Expectations

Family expectations and traditions, gender norms/stereotypes and the influence of peers/friends turned out to have the least influence on Kazakhstani students when deciding about their future career (Question 8). However, most dissatisfied students tend to give family expectations as the main reason for their dissatisfaction with both their career and university choices.

5.2.2. Personal Interests

One of the most important factors when deciding on a future profession was found to be personal interest (Question 8). Personal interest and listening to your inner self was found to be the most influential factor again in Question 14 when

choosing a future career and educational facility. All the interviewees also mentioned the importance of choosing the career that a person truly likes and not listening to other people's opinions if it is not what you really want to do with your life.

5.2.4. Socio-cultural factors

By analyzing various external sources, it was found that gender-related biases have an effect on the choice of future careers and related spheres. Garrahy's (2001) study examined the gender-related beliefs and behaviours of three third-grade teachers and concluded that teachers' beliefs influenced their expectations of student behaviour, the types of activities they encouraged students to engage in, and the feedback they provided to male and female students. The author concluded that teachers' gender-related beliefs and behaviours can have a significant impact on students and calls for more research in this area (Garrahy, 2001).

However, in our study, we could not find any factual effect of the gender-related biases between the male and female participants. The study didn't collect information on what field the participants are choosing. However, it was found from the literature review section that male students and female students tend to incline towards particular fields and this trend was prominent across several years. The causal correlation between why male students' and female students' future career choices differ a lot was not found. This study area needs further research.

It was mentioned several times on the open-ended questions and can be seen on the rated questions that respondents generally think it is better to listen to your inner passion and desires when choosing a profession or higher educational facility. External effects from friends and parents had the least influence on their decision and people who are not satisfied with their results mentioned that it is mostly because of the lack of confidence in their abilities or interests and the expectation/ demand of the family.

The factor that has a big influence on the university choice was also found to be the availability of study grants and financial assistance. Interviewees stated that usually, Kazakhstani students tend to choose one particular sphere even if they are not

passionate about it because of the availability of state grants. Scholarships and monthly stipends from the government greatly affect future career and university choices. Respondents wrote about the big need to increase the monthly stipend and in decreasing the cost of higher education as it does not align with the monthly salary of the average citizen in Kazakhstan.

5.3. Revisiting the research questions

- *What are the factors that influence young people's choice of university and profession in Kazakhstan??*

For the career choice: (ranking from most influential to least)

1. Personal interest
2. Career opportunities after graduation
3. Wage level
4. The balance between work and personal life
5. Warranty and stability
6. The availability of vacancies in the field
7. Required skills and qualifications
8. Social Status and prestige
9. Location and road
10. Family expectations and traditions
11. Gender norms or stereotypes
12. The influence of peers and friends

For the university choice (ranking from most influential to least):

1. Quality of education
2. Personal interests and passions
3. The reputation of the university
4. Job opportunities after graduation
5. Location of the university
6. Availability of scholarship

7. Family and friends' recommendations

Sub-questions of the research:

- *What is the level of peer influence and family influence on students' career choices and university choices?*

Peer influence has some effect but mainly respondents considered it as the least influential factor. Family influence also has the least influence on the respondents and people who are not satisfied with their choice generally mentioned that the reason for it is the influence of family and other external pressure.

- *What is the influence of gender on the choice of profession?*

Some respondents mentioned that there are gender-based stereotypes that can affect negatively the female population's life/restricted freedom. The study could identify some trends and similarities which are prominent between the two genders as the inclinations towards a particular subject or field. These differences were also found in several other countries such as Russia. The reasons and causal effect of this topic is out of the main scope of research and needs future further investigation.

- *How does the availability of the education facility (study grants and scholarships) affect the future choice of university?*

It has a big effect on the student's choice. It was found that most students are inclined to choose the safest option where there is a higher chance of getting scholarships although they are not quite excited about this field. Some students from the survey proposed the idea of changing the UNT format and further developing the education system of the country as they are not satisfied with how the student counselling system work. There is a need in providing more information regarding the educational opportunities, universities, campus life and other details that could be beneficial in choosing a career and university.

- *How satisfied students are with their choice?*

Generally, most of the students are satisfied with their career and university choices. However, the reasons why people were not satisfied with their choice can be eliminated with the help of developing career counselling, working with parents in eliminating the pressure that comes from family and explaining to them about the educational opportunities, increasing the confidence in students by developing the psychological help at schools. The number of dissatisfied students who are willingly choosing the university and profession that they do not like can be decreased and the quality of education can be increased by taking these important factors into account. The career counselling specialist also mentioned the importance of career counselling for students.

5.4. Contributions to the Field

In contrast to previous literature, an intriguing and unexpected finding from this study is that recommendations from family and friends had the least impact on future career choices. This challenges the conventional wisdom that social media and personal connections play a significant role in shaping career decisions. Instead, the study highlights the importance of factors such as career opportunities, personal interests and salary levels in young people's career choices in Kazakhstan.

This study also makes several significant contributions to the field of education and career development in the context of Kazakhstan. It The study provides insights into the factors influencing young people's choices of university and profession in Kazakhstan. It also highlights the importance of parental expectations and their influence on young people's university and professional choices. It underscores the need for greater attention to the role of personal interests and passions in career decision-making. The findings suggest that young people are more likely to be satisfied with their university and professional choices when they align with their interests and passions. Therefore, career guidance and counselling initiatives should help young people explore their interests and passions and encourage them to pursue careers that align with their strengths and talents.

The study also emphasizes the importance of perceived job opportunities in career decision-making. The findings suggest that young people are more likely to choose professions that offer better job prospects and stability. Therefore, it is important to provide young people with accurate information about the job market and career opportunities to make informed decisions.

Finally, this study contributes to the growing body of research on the satisfaction levels of young people with their university and profession choices in Kazakhstan. The findings suggest that young people are generally satisfied with their choices, but their satisfaction levels vary depending on several factors such as the quality of education, job prospects, and personal interests. Therefore, universities and employers should pay attention to these factors to enhance young people's satisfaction levels and improve their overall well-being. The findings of this study can inform the development of effective career guidance and counselling initiatives that support young people's career aspirations and well-being.

5.5. Suggestions for future research

There is still a big need for further research in this area and several aspects should be considered more. The research findings emphasize the importance of conducting more in-depth investigations into the intricate factors that shape career and educational decisions among Kazakhstani youth. Scholars are encouraged to expand their research efforts by focusing on specific demographic groups, including students from diverse regions and socioeconomic backgrounds. Such studies would enable the identification of distinctive factors that influence the decision-making process within these groups. Moreover, exploring the long-term career outcomes and paths of students based on their choices of university and profession would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the decision-making process and its impact on their future. If to be more specific, the following areas of research need to be further investigated:

1. Gender differences: this study did not specifically explore gender differences in the factors influencing university and profession choices and satisfaction levels. Therefore, future research could examine whether there are gender-based differences in these factors.
2. Comparison across regions should be investigated. This study focused on young people living in the city of Astana (less than 40%) and in another part of Kazakhstan. However, Kazakhstan is a vast country with diverse regions. Future choices and satisfaction levels vary across regions. Because the UNT scores from big cities are higher than those from rural areas (National Testing Center, 2023), there definitely should be differences and various reasons behind those results.
3. There is a need for longitudinal studies too. This study collected data at a specific point in time, which limits its ability to make causal inferences. Therefore, future research could employ a longitudinal design to examine changes in young people's choices and satisfaction levels over time.
4. The role of social media in young people's choices and satisfaction levels. As technology is developing every year and its effect is increasing on your daily life too, future research could explore whether social media influences young people's choices of university and profession and their satisfaction levels.

5.6. Recommendations for policy and practice

Based on the data obtained, it can be recommended that universities in Kazakhstan focus on improving the quality of education, as it has been identified as one of the most influential factors in both a career and when choosing a university. This can be achieved through ongoing professional development programs for teachers, providing access to modern academic resources, and promoting student-centred learning environments. In addition, universities should consider expanding the range of programs and specialities offered to meet the requirements and interests of

students, since personal interests and hobbies have also been identified as important factors in choosing a university.

Another important recommendation for universities is to improve communication and relationships between faculty and students. This can be achieved by creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment, implementing mentoring programs and encouraging open and constructive feedback channels. In addition, providing financial support, such as increasing monthly stipends or providing tuition subsidies, can mitigate some of the financial concerns expressed by students and contribute to their overall satisfaction with their chosen college.

Drawing on the results of the investigation, it is recommended that the government and academic institutions collaborate to improve the quality of career guidance and support for young people in Kazakhstan. Further steps can be suggested based on the previous works from various countries and the findings of this study:

1. Developing career counselling

The government should invest in training and supporting career counsellors to ensure that they have the skills and resources to provide effective guidance to students.

2. Increased access to information

Academic institutions should collaborate with professionals to create more opportunities for students to interact with professionals in their desired fields. This can be done through internships, mentoring programs, and career fairs, among other initiatives. Moreover, the full information regarding the universities, majors, scholarships, campus life and all the important information needs to be easily accessible online. It can be a good idea to open a special website designed for high school students where they can find all the helpful information and can contact successful graduates of the universities and take their advice for the future.

3. Encourage mentorship

Since mentor advice and mentorship from peers were found to be a big demand area for youngsters in Kazakhstan, more efforts should be made to encourage more mentorship opportunities for students. This could include setting up mentorship

programs between professionals and students, as well as encouraging students to seek out and connect with potential mentors on their own.

4. Involve parents and families

In case students are not satisfied with their choice, parents/family expectations and advice were found to be influential factors, so efforts should be made to involve them more in the career guidance process. This could include organizing workshops for parents on how to support their children's career aspirations and involving them in career fairs and other career guidance events.

To give young people greater chances in the workforce, it is important to raise educational standards, create programs for vocational training, and fortify social partnerships between businesses, the government, and educational institutions (Sabirova et al., 2021). Implementing all the above-mentioned recommendations can help to improve the quality of career guidance and support for young people in Kazakhstan, leading to more informed and satisfying career choices. We suggest that policymakers and academic institutions work together to ensure that these recommendations are effectively implemented, and continue to evaluate and adapt these strategies over time to ensure their ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of the study shed light on the factors influencing career and university choices among Kazakh youth and offer valuable recommendations for universities and academics. By following these guidelines, universities can better support students in their decision-making process and provide a supportive learning environment that ultimately contributes to overall student satisfaction and success. Additional research in this area should continue to explore the multifaceted nature of career and university choice given the diverse experiences and aspirations of young people in Kazakhstan.

6.1. Limitations of the study

Despite the valuable results of this study, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The conclusions are based on a specific sample of respondents, which may not fully reflect the diversity of Kazakhstan's youth population. Therefore, generalizing the results to all young people should be done with caution. Moreover, the study relies on data provided by the researchers themselves, which is subject to potential confounders such as social desirability bias or recall bias. Participants' responses may have been influenced by their desire to present themselves in a favourable light or their ability to accurately recall and articulate their decision-making processes. Another limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the study, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships between identified factors and decision outcomes. Longitudinal study designs would be useful for examining the stability and change of decision-making patterns over time.

Recognizing these limitations, future research should address these gaps in order to increase the validity and generalizability of the results of studying factors influencing young people's careers and university choices in Kazakhstan.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix A. Interview Protocol example

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INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Aim of the Interview: Understand in depth the reasoning behind choosing a future career and university among Kazakhstani students

General Research Question of the Interview:

1. What factors affected the career choice?
2. What factors affected the University choice?
3. How satisfied are you with your choice?

SECTION A: INTERVIEW BACKGROUND (NOTES TO INTERVIEWEE)

This section is about general information about the process up to the start of the interview process. For example, the researcher might want to explain the process of how the interview has been arranged or how the respondent was informed about the general framework of the interview, evidence about whether the interview has been conducted or not (maybe an audio recording), how the researcher ensured ethical standards of the interview is written.

SECTION B GENERAL INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Interviewer (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee Title	
Interviewee Contact Details (email or mobile)	
Other Demographic Information about the Interviewee	
Date of the Interview	
Place of the Interview taken	
Time of the Interview	from to
Duration (in minutes)	

SECTION C INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part 1:Initiation “Warm-up questions”

- 1) Question 1: Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

- 2) Question 2: What inspired you to pursue your current profession, and how did you choose your university or education path?
- 3) Question 3: Can you describe your decision-making process when choosing a university and profession?

Part 2: Main Questions

- 1) Question 1: What were the main factors that influenced your decision to choose a particular university and profession? (In your opinion, what are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a profession or university?)
- 2) Question 2: How satisfied are you with your choice of university and profession? Why?
- 3) Question 3: In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)
- 4) Question 4: How much influence did your family and friends have on your decision to choose a university and profession?
- 5) Question 5: How much importance did you place on job opportunities after graduation when choosing a profession?
- 6) Question 6: Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?
- 7) Question 7: How do you think the job market in Kazakhstan is currently, and how do you think it will change in the future?
- 8) Question 8: Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Part 3: Closing Questions

- 1) Question 1: What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?
- 2) Question 2: Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Appendix B. Transcribed Interview Conversations

Interviewee 1:

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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewer (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee Title	
Interviewee Contact Details (email or mobile)	
Other Demographic Information about the Interviewee	
Date of the Interview	
Place of the Interview taken	Online Zoom
Time of the Interview	from to
Duration (in minutes)	28:40

Question #1:

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

Answer #1:

My name is _____. I study at _____ majoring in “Journalism and Political Science”.

Question #2:

What were the main factors that influenced your decision to choose a particular university and profession? (In your opinion, what are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a profession or university?)

Answer #2:

For every 11th-grade student it is very important to choose the right career path and then the higher education facility to get that degree. That path is full of responsibilities. For my university degree, we take the art test and cannot choose 4 universities to apply to as other students. That is why we have to make a decision after vigorous analysis and a lot of thinking. About my future career, from the 9th grade I studied at the media school and felt like I have abilities in this field. In 11th grade, I made the clear decision to apply to this field. When it comes to choosing the university, I started to examine all the universities that teach this field such as Suleyman Demirel University, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University and many others. Then I looked at the worldwide rating of the universities. There is a website called “Atameken” in which for several years straight Eurasian University took the leading position in my field. The next importance is the professionalism and experience of Professors. By looking at the various Departments within my major I found out that the Professors who teach us courses are well-known specialists who have achieved a lot in the past. All the other teaching staff had a broad experience in their field too. By analysing all the advantages and

disadvantages of various universities, I came to the conclusion that Gumilyov Eurasian National University would be the best choice for me.

Question #3:

How satisfied are you with your choice of university and profession? Why?

Answer #3:

It has been 2 years since I entered university. During this time, the University has already provided us with so many opportunities whether it is participation in the various forums, conferences, academic mobility to Europe/Turkey and etc. I am totally satisfied with my choice.

Question #4:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #4:

Yes, if I had an opportunity, I would have chosen a different profession. On my first try at UNT, as a field for me, I have chosen art and got 34 points out of a possible 35. On my second try, I have chosen Kazakh language literature (as a former Kazakh language Olympiad participant) and got 108 points. It was my second option to become a Kazakh language and literature teacher.

Question #5:

So if you could change something now, you would like to be a teacher?

Answer #5:

Yes. Because of the year, I applied to journalism and took an art/creativity exam, there were only 197 grants available and the number of applicants was approximately 2000. So the chance of acceptance was only 10%. And now I won that grant.

Question #6:

Have you ever thought of going back to school? Maybe for studying some disciplines more or for doing the things that you had no chance of doing in the past. For example, IT specialists now are in higher demand now and maybe due to some economic changes, you would have decided to do things differently in the past.

Answer #6:

Yes, IT is always in demand. But I think that if you are a true specialist in your own field, you can make money anywhere. But if I had a chance to go back to school time, I graduated from school with a red diploma but I was mostly keen on studying humanitarian sciences such as history, and languages. I would have paid more attention to natural sciences such as physics, chemistry and etc.

Question #7:

How much influence did your family and friends have on your decision to choose a university and profession?

Answer #7:

My friends didn't have any effect on my future university or career choice. My parents gave me full freedom and explained that it is my life and I can make any decision I want. "So study the field you like" - they said.

Question #8:

Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?

Answer #8:

It was a hard time deciding between Astana IT University and Eurasian University as students can graduate from IT university in only 3 years and the location in EXPO is great too. But nonetheless, I chose Eurasian University and it happened in that way that I send my documents on the last day of the application period.

Question #9:

How do you think the job market in Kazakhstan is currently, and how do you think it will change in the future?

Answer #9:

I think it is stable. The number of people who are physically able to work is a lot but the number of people who are physically able to work but do not work is enough too. If the number of able-bodied people would be low, it can really affect the economy of the country. But now I think everything is stable.

Question #10:

There are a lot of people in the country who apply to certain degrees only because of the availability of scholarships and not following their true desired major. Some choose a sphere to get the state scholarship but then change their major afterwards. What do you think about it?

Answer #10:

Maybe it is the right choice for some people. When the country is giving grants in specific areas, why not use it to your benefit especially if you are financially constrained? Nowadays, I do not think that having a diploma greatly affects your life. For example in my case, I can get the diploma from the University and then work in a different field. When after-school students choose to study at university and get the state scholarship, they get a monthly stipend, a dormitory place and other opportunities given to them by the university. It is a 4-year opportunity to develop yourself. Nowadays it is even possible to get a Master's Degree that is not related to your Bachelor's Degree. So the state grant is a big opportunity in life. It would be a mistake to not appreciate it.

Question #11:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #11:

Yes, there are. According to some sources, there are 634000 students and many universities. Some universities provide degrees in which they are incompetent. They do not have the necessary teaching staff, technical equipment or any related opportunities. It needs to be changed.

Question #12:

How this problem can be solved?

Answer #12:

Universities need to specialize in certain fields and become the best in them instead of offering many unrelated majors with no real quality. If it specialises in the tech sphere, there is no need in opening other unrelated fields such as pedagogy or others. Small/private universities should have a narrow focus when it comes to teaching. But of course, big national universities can afford in teaching various fields, so I do not mind that.

Question #13:

What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?

Answer #13:

It is a very responsible period for a young mind. If a person knows exactly what he/she wants, follow your heart and study what you like. If you do not know what you want to study, choose the field in which you will get the state grant. But of course, it is better to choose the sphere you love. Also pay attention to the universities in big cities such as Almaty, and Astana and look at the rating of the facility. Look at the previous score of the grant holders. Make the first two university options risky ones and the next two safe ones.

Question #14:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #14:

While being a student for 2 years I realised that every university gives opportunities. It is really the attitude and work of the student that matters the most at the end. After graduating from university, it is really the perseverance of the student that decides his/her future. So there is really no big need in paying great attention to the university's prestige, it helps but not as much as your own attitude.

Interviewee 2:

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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewer (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee Title	
Interviewee Contact Details (email or mobile)	
Other Demographic Information about the Interviewee	
Date of the Interview	
Place of the Interview taken	Online Zoom
Time of the Interview	from to
Duration (in minutes)	15:12

Question #1:

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

Answer #1:

My name is _____. I study at _____ majoring in journalism.

Question #2:

What inspired you to pursue your current profession, and how did you choose your university or education path?

Answer #2:

I consider journalism as having some sort of power. It can redirect people's way of thinking and affects their world view and I like being able to do that. The Eurasian National University has one of the best journalism faculties in the country and the location of the facility is great too. I have checked the word ranking, professional status and history of the university. All these factors affected my decision as I really want to succeed in my career not just to get the diploma.

Question #3:

What were the main factors that influenced your decision to choose a particular university and profession? (In your opinion, what are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a profession or university?)

Answer #3:

First thing is the reputation of the university and what past graduates have achieved. Second, is the quality of education. Third is campus life. I am a member of one university club and to be honest, I really sad that I will graduate so soon. I will probably apply here for the master's degree.

Question #4:

How satisfied are you with your choice of university and profession? Why?

Answer #4:

I am very satisfied with my choice. Very Satisfied.

Question #5:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #5:

I wanted to apply to the universities in Almaty in the past. But after coming to this university, no, I have never regretted my choice. Regarding career choice, I think every student faces this phase where everything is new and you just want to go back to school. But after some time, I got used to the new environment and now love the new opportunities that come with it.

Question #6:

How much influence did your family and friends have on your decision to choose a university and profession?

Answer #6:

My family really supported my choice and now they see that I am changing for the better. My friends did not want me to go here but I made the decision and am happy for the outcome.

Question #7:

Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?

Answer #7:

No, I have never faced any major challenges because, from the very beginning, I knew what I would study and where I would study.

Question #8:

How do you think the job market in Kazakhstan is currently, and how do you think it will change in the future?

Answer #8:

I think everything depends on the student itself and the university's job is to guide those students. A lot of my friends here are already working and our university supports students. For example, there is a program where students may not come to classes if they work in their field. I think it is really important.

Question #9:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #9:

I think yes. Sometimes parents may not support the child's choice and in other cases, there are just too few state grants and students choose to pursue a different field just because of that. Some school students take too much time deciding where they want to go in the final year and still are not sure till the very end which can affect negatively their application process. I think various tests can help to identify what you can pursue in the future and proper career guidance is really important. Personally, I went to the psychologist, to the career guidance specialist in order to be sure of my choice. The most important thing is to not care about what other people think about your choice and stick to the decision of your heart. Students tend to also think about future career opportunities. I think every profession is needed and every student can find a job in the interested field.

Question #10:

What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?

Answer #10:

Listen to your heart and desires. Do not be afraid to change your choice if you feel like it. Everything depends on the person itself.

Question #11:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #11:

If you ever realise that after 4 years of education, the field is not yours, do not be afraid to change it. You have all your life ahead of you. It is never too late to study. Have faith in yourself and your dreams.

Interviewee 3:

	SULEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL
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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewer (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee Title	
Date of the Interview	
Place of the Interview taken	Online Zoom
Time of the Interview	from to
Duration (in minutes)	14:19

Question #1:

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

Answer #1:

My name is _____. I study at _____ majoring in Kazakh language and Literature.

Question #2:

What inspired you to pursue your current profession, and how did you choose your university and education path?

Answer #2:

I never thought I would choose this profession. However, since my childhood, I loved reading Kazakh literature books. Then I came to the realisation that this field would suit me. About the university, it is considered to be one of the best universities in Kazakhstan and its location in a city that I have never been to also attracted me. Also, I had some friends here and some of the people I know also commented positively about this university. Then I won a state grant to this place and accepted it.

Question #3:

What were the main factors that influenced your decision to choose a particular university and profession? (In your opinion, what are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a profession or university?)

Answer #3:

I wanted to be in a place that is far from my parents and relatives as I wanted to become an independent person and live free from any other external factors. Then I looked at the quality of education and campus life.

Question #4:

How satisfied are you with your choice of university and profession? Why?

Answer #4:

In the beginning there were some difficulties when I transferred from a different university. But I have never regretted my career and university choice as I really like this field and have an active student life.

Question #5:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #5:

Yes, I would have changed my major. But it is not because I don't like my current profession. It is more because of my other interests. But on second thought, maybe I would not change it as I like my profession. If I would go back in time, maybe I would have chosen journalism. But I do not think I would choose something that is very far from my current choice.

Question #6:

How much influence did your family and friends have on your decision to choose a university and profession?

Answer #6:

My parents supported my decision to study at this current university. There was no disagreement, I chose to study here and to transfer. But my friends from my previous university didn't want me to transfer. I didn't pay much attention to my friend's opinions as I have a lot of friends from various fields.

Question #7:

Did future job prospects or the reputation of the university have any influence on your career choice?

Answer #7:

No, not at all. I wanted to study the sphere that I like at university that I like. Nonetheless, by choosing this career as a teacher, I knew that I would also be in demand as being a teacher is a quite prestigious job.

Question #8:

Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?

Answer #8:

Not that much. But it was hard to choose between various universities. But now I like the place where I study. I like my profession and think I made the right choice.

Question #9:

How do you think the job market in Kazakhstan is currently, and how do you think it will change in the future?

Answer #9:

I think it is generally good. However, there is the possibility that some professions will not be needed in the future. But I believe that there would always be a place for various professions for quite some time in the future.

Question #10:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #10:

I think there are some problems. First of all, it is hard to study in a lot of universities nowadays. Secondly, the opinion of parents highly affects the students. Next, when a lot of students cannot get the desired score on UNT, they tend to choose the undesired field or undesired university. A lot of problems arise from it.

Question #11:

What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?

Answer #11:

The most important thing is choosing the right profession, choosing a future university is the second in line. So it is important to choose the career that a person likes and then pay attention to what educational facility can give the best education in that area. It is important to know yourself and dig down inside. If you are not sure what you want to do in future, it is okay to take a gap year.

Question #12:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #12:

Listen to yourself, and your inner thoughts. Of course, what your parents and friends think is important. They want the best for us. But do not be afraid to choose who you truly want to be. Prioritize your studies. When choosing the university, first look at the quality of the education and only after that the campus life.

Interviewee 4:

	SULEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL
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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewer (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee Title	
Interviewee Contact Details (email or mobile)	
Other Demographic Information about the Interviewee	
Date of the Interview	
Place of the Interview taken	Online Zoom
Time of the Interview	from to
Duration (in minutes)	9:07+6:47

Question #1:

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

Answer #1:

My name is _____. I study at _____ majoring in the tourism field.

Question #2:

What inspired you to pursue your current profession, and how did you choose your university and education path?

Answer #2:

My major is very interesting. At school, I really like geography and English which are the prerequisites for choosing this major. Then I looked at the list of majors in these classes and saw that tourism is one of them. When I got 124 at UNT, I was sure that I will be able to get the state grant if I choose this major.

Question #3:

What were the main factors that influenced your decision to choose a particular university and profession? (In your opinion, what are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a profession or university?)

Answer #3:

I think tourism is the profession of the future. Even if Kazakhstan's tourism is not that developed, looking at the other countries, we can see that it can greatly contribute to the economic development of the state. The University where I study has a great reputation and gives a lot of opportunities to the students.

Question #4:

How satisfied are you with your choice of university and profession? Why?

Answer #4:

I am very satisfied with my choice of university. We have a lot of practice and I like it. Because I am an active student, the university gives me a lot of chances to get experience such as my recent trip to Astana city.

Question #5:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #5:

I feel limited to the place where I was born as I chose the university which is near my living area. I know that students in Almaty, for example, get even more opportunities such as going to famous hotels, practising there and etc. I think I would have chosen the university in a different place. I think not being able to leave my comfort zone was the main reason why I stayed in my current place.

Question #6:

How much influence did your family and friends have on your decision to choose a university and profession?

Answer #6:

My parents didn't want me to leave and go to study in far places. Especially because I am a young girl. They influenced my decision to 70% and my friend didn't influence my decision at all.

Question #7:

Did future job prospects or the reputation of the university have any influence on your career choice?

Answer #7:

No, not at all. I didn't look at career opportunities. Maybe I would get my Master's degree afterwards. But I think it is important to consider this factor, especially in these fast-changing times.

Question #8:

Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?

Answer #8:

In the beginning, I really wanted to study the world economy. But after UNT in January, the required two subjects changed for this degree. After that, I knew that there is tourism in my chosen subjects and decided to study that instead. It was a hard decision to make. The fact that I have to go to study "world economy" in big cities like Astana and Almaty also affected my decision.

Question #9:

How do you think the job market in Kazakhstan is currently, and how do you think it will change in the future?

Answer #9:

There is a lot that needs to be done in our country. We have to make ready goods and sell them instead of relying on fossil fuels. The rate of unemployment is pretty high too although people are not being able to find a job.

Question #10:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #10:

In this internet era, students look at online information to decide where to study. Usually, universities that do marketing a lot tend to get the most students who are willing to apply and study there. So marketing is very important. Some universities even though they have bit opportunities, do not advertise it a lot. Universities should provide students with broad descriptions of the program and list all the advantages of studying there. There is clearly a lack of information.

Question #11:

What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?

Answer #11:

Do what you want the most. It is a chance that is given only once in a lifetime. So spend this time doing what you really like. Also, prepare for the exams from the early stage. Starting to get ready in the 11th grade may be a little late.

Question #12:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #12:

For a career, look at future job prospects. When choosing a university, it is very important to choose it in the right location and consider your health factor too.

Interviewee 5:

	SULEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL
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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewer (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee Title	
Interviewee Contact Details (email or mobile)	
Other Demographic Information about the Interviewee	
Date of the Interview	
Place of the Interview taken	Online Zoom
Time of the Interview	from to
Duration (in minutes)	10:45

Question #1:

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

Answer #1:

My name is _____. I study at _____ majoring in the construction field.

Question #2:

What inspired you to pursue your current profession, and how did you choose your university and education path?

Answer #2:

I chose a career in construction because I'm passionate about creating impactful structures. Witnessing architectural designs come to life and contribute to society fascinated me. The construction industry in Kazakhstan is thriving, providing numerous opportunities for professional growth and contributing to infrastructure development.

When selecting my university and education path, I considered the pros and cons of every field. The reputation and accreditation of the university were crucial factors for me. I aimed to enrol in a reputable institution known for offering quality construction programs and more practical experiences.

Question #3:

What were the main factors that influenced your decision to choose a particular university and profession? (In your opinion, what are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a profession or university?)

Answer #3:

I chose my university and profession based on factors like the curriculum, faculty expertise, industry connections, and practical training opportunities. I sought a comprehensive construction program that offered both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience. It's important to consider factors such as career relevance, internships, university resources, personal development support, and institutional reputation when making these decisions.

Question #4:

How satisfied are you with your choice of university and profession? Why?

Answer #4:

I'm really happy with the university and job I picked. The university has taught me a lot about construction and given me chances to do things for real. The teachers are smart and helpful, and I got to meet people in the industry and learn more outside of class. I feel good about my future because what I'm learning matches what I want to do with my career.

Question #5:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #5:

Looking back, I wouldn't have picked another university or job. I thought a lot about choosing a construction field and going to this university. The program taught me what I needed to be good at construction. Sometimes it was hard, but I learned from those times and it made me sure about what I want to do.

Right now, I haven't thought about changing my job or going back to school. But I'm willing to keep learning and get better at my job by taking more classes or getting higher degrees later on.

Question #6:

How much influence did your family and friends have on your decision to choose a university and profession?

Answer #6:

My family and friends had a big influence on my choices. They supported and encouraged me to follow my dream job and go to the university I wanted. We talked a lot about it, and their experiences and advice helped me make a good decision.

Question #7:

Did future job prospects or the reputation of the university have any influence on your career choice?

Answer #7:

Yes, future job prospects and the reputation of the university did influence my career choice. Considering the growing construction industry in Kazakhstan, I wanted to ensure that my chosen profession had promising job prospects and opportunities for career advancement. The reputation of the university played a crucial role in this regard, as a well-established and respected institution can enhance the employability and marketability of its graduates.

Question #8:

Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?

Answer #8:

I think like any other student in high school, it was hard for me to my future career. I think it is just time that we need to live off and experience in order to see the outcome later on. The journey is more important than the destination itself. That is why still to this day, with every step I take, I try to analyse myself more.

Question #9:

How do you think the job market in Kazakhstan is currently, and how do you think it will change in the future?

Answer #9:

I do not know about others, but if to talk about my field, currently, the job market in Kazakhstan's construction sector is showing positive signs. The government's focus on infrastructure development and urbanization projects has created a demand for skilled professionals in the construction industry. However, there are still challenges such as skill gaps, limited specialization options, and regional disparities in job opportunities. Looking ahead, I believe the job market will continue to expand as Kazakhstan strives for economic diversification and sustainable development.

Question #10:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #10:

The lack of specialized programs and career routes in Kazakhstan is one particular difficulty when selecting a profession or university. There are basic construction programs, however, it may be difficult for students looking to specialize on a particular area of the industry, such as green building or architectural preservation. For people looking for work outside of big cities like Nur-Sultan and Almaty, regional differences in job possibilities can also be a factor.

Question #11:

What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?

Answer #11:

I would advise anyone looking to find the best career or college to do extensive study and think carefully about their interests, skills, and long-term professional aspirations. When selecting a university, take into account elements including the program's curriculum, faculty specialization, linkages to industry, accessibility to resources, and internship opportunities. To learn more about the atmosphere and support systems of the institution, visit the campuses if you can, go to university fairs or open houses, and talk to existing students. Keeping an eye on emerging trends and technical developments in the profession of choice is also beneficial. Long-term job chances can be improved by choosing a profession that supports developing industries or sustainable practices.

Question #12:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #12:

I made my decision based on various factors and after careful consideration of various factors. I would like for future university students to do that too as it is very important and directly shapes your future.

Interviewee 6:

	SULEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL
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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewer (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee Title	
Interviewee Contact Details (email or mobile)	
Other Demographic Information about the Interviewee	
Date of the Interview	
Place of the Interview taken	Online Zoom
Time of the Interview	from to
Duration (in minutes)	12:39

Question #1:

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

Answer #1:

My name is _____. I study at _____ majoring in IT technologies.

Question #2:

What inspired you to pursue your current profession, and how did you choose your university and education path?

Answer #2:

My love with technology and my aptitude for problem-solving motivated me to pursue a career in the information technology industry. The prestige of the university in the field of information technology, the calibre of its curriculum, and the opportunity for internships and practical experience all played a role in my decision regarding my university and educational route.

Question #3:

What were the main factors that influenced your decision to choose a particular university and profession? (In your opinion, what are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a profession or university?)

Answer #3:

The institution's faculty competence, linkages to industry, and availability of practical training were the key elements that affected my decision to choose a specific university and profession. For me, having access to experienced instructors and business experts who could aid me in my study was crucial. I also took into account Kazakhstan's demand for IT specialists as well as job possibilities.

Question #4:

How satisfied are you with your choice of university and profession? Why?

Answer #4:

I'm quite happy with the university and career decisions I made. Through its well-created curriculum and hands-on learning opportunities, the university has given me a solid foundation in information technology. I have faith in my abilities and knowledge, and I am enthusiastic about the potential career chances in the IT sector.

Question #5:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #5:

I wouldn't have picked a different university or career in hindsight. My aspirations for high-quality education and practical training have been met by the university. Because I am satisfied with the direction I have taken, I have not thought about changing my profession or returning to school.

Question #6:

How much influence did your family and friends have on your decision to choose a university and profession?

Answer #6:

My decision to attend a university and pursue a career was heavily influenced by my family and friends. They provided me with the confidence to pursue my passion for IT because of their encouragement and support. They also offered their perspectives and experiences, which assisted me in coming to a well-informed decision.

Question #7:

Did future job prospects or the reputation of the university have any influence on your career choice?

Answer #7:

The likelihood of employment in the future and the university's standing did have an impact on my career decision. I checked the university's reputation in the IT sector to be sure there would be plenty of career prospects for graduates. This thought gave me hope that I may have a successful career. Moreover, IT specialists are always in demand nowadays.

Question #8:

Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?

Answer #8:

I've had to overcome difficulties connected to my choice of university and career, such as the rigorous coursework and the requirement to constantly upgrade my abilities in order to keep up with the quickly evolving IT sector. However, these difficulties have also provided me with chances for development and have improved my resilience and adaptability.

Question #9:

How do you think the job market in Kazakhstan is currently, and how do you think it will change in the future?

Answer #9:

Currently, Kazakhstan has a promising job market for IT specialists. The need for qualified IT personnel is increasing, and future growth of the sector is predicted. In order to be competitive in the shifting employment market, it is crucial to keep up with new technology and to keep learning.

Question #10:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #10:

Choosing a career or university in Kazakhstan may provide some unique difficulties, such as the lack of resources and opportunities compared to more industrialized nations. However, there are also special benefits, like the chance to support the nation's expanding IT sector and the tight-knit professional community.

Question #11:

What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?

Answer #11:

I would advise you to listen to your heart and follow your dreams. I have several friends who chose a field that they are not passionate about and now struggling with their choices. It is never late to start doing what you like, so take responsibility for your action and do what you love doing.

Question #12:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #12:

In my experience, choosing a university and profession in the IT sector in Kazakhstan has been a rewarding journey and I have already landed my first internship in a good company. For anyone who has no idea what to do in the future, I would advise going to IT as it is a broad sphere and anyone can find what they like here.

Interviewee 7:

	SULEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL
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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewer (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee (Name and Surname)	
Interviewee Title	
Date of the Interview	
Place of the Interview taken	Online Zoom
Time of the Interview	from to
Duration (in minutes)	12:39

Question #1:

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

Answer #1:

My name is _____. I study at _____ majoring in biology and medicine.

Question #2:

What inspired you to pursue your current profession, and how did you choose your university and education path?

Answer #2:

My mother is a doctor and she inspired me the most to choose this field. I want to help people to live healthier lives and I think this profession is quite prestigious and will always be on demand.

Question #3:

What were the main factors that influenced your decision to choose a particular university and profession? (In your opinion, what are some of the most important factors to consider when choosing a profession or university?)

Answer #3:

It is one of the best universities in our country and the location is very good too. I just chose this university because of its good reputation and am happy with my choice. About the profession, I knew I would choose this field from the very beginning when I was a kid. I just naturally loved this sphere.

Question #4:

How satisfied are you with your choice of university and profession? Why?

Answer #4:

I'm quite happy with the university and career decisions I made. The university's structured curriculum and active learning opportunities in hospitals and research labs have given me a strong foundation in biology and medicine. My love for the field has been shaped and encouraged by the committed faculty members.

Question #5:

In hindsight, would you have chosen a different university or profession? Why or why not? (Have you ever considered changing your profession or going back to school? If so, what factors influenced your decision?)

Answer #5:

In terms of academic excellence, hands-on learning chances, and research opportunities, the university I chose has lived up to my expectations. I haven't thought about switching careers or going back to school since I'm happy and dedicated to the route I've chosen.

Question #6:

How much influence did your family and friends have on your decision to choose a university and profession?

Answer #6:

Growing up I looked at my mum and wanted to be like her so I think the environment I grew up in really facilitated my choice. Yes, the decision to attend a university and pursue a career was heavily influenced by my family. Their encouragement and support were important in helping me gain confidence and pursue my interest in biology and medicine. Their knowledge and firsthand accounts of adjacent fields also gave me a wider perspective.

Question #7:

Did future job prospects or the reputation of the university have any influence on your career choice?

Answer #7:

I just know that I will find a good job in this field. So I have never worried about it nor thought a lot.

Question #8:

Have you faced any challenges or difficulties related to your choice of university or profession? If so, can you describe them?

Answer #8:

The hard workload, the stress of exams and assessments, and the emotional strain of handling delicate medical cases are just a few of the obstacles and difficulties I have had to deal with as a result of my decision to attend university and pursue a career in medicine. Nevertheless, these difficulties have improved my resilience, my capacity for problem-solving, and my comprehension of the medical industry.

Question #9:

How do you think the job market in Kazakhstan is currently, and how do you think it will change in the future?

Answer #9:

Kazakhstan's medical job market is now solid and offers several exciting chances. There are numerous employment available in hospitals, clinics, research institutions, and public health organizations thanks to the healthcare sector's ongoing growth and evolution. I think the job market will keep growing as long as the nation's healthcare infrastructure is still being developed.

Question #10:

Are there any specific challenges or considerations that you think are unique to choosing a profession or university in Kazakhstan?

Answer #10:

There can be but I am not sure. I do not know much about it.

Question #11:

What advice would you give to someone who is trying to choose the right profession or university?

Answer #11:

My advice to someone trying to choose the best career or university would be to do a comprehensive study and take into account factors such as the university's reputation and accreditation, opportunities, and the likelihood of career growth and job prospects in the future. Getting in touch with industry experts, going to career fairs, and asking mentors for advice are all helpful ways to obtain knowledge and come to a well-informed decision.

Question #12:

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in choosing a university and profession?

Answer #12:

Choosing to be a doctor requires a student to study really hard. But I think it will be worth it in the end. Good things take time, remember that and do not be fully by the influence of bloggers and various celebrities. Not everything that shines is good.

Appendix C. Informed Consent Form

	SULEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL
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Title of Study: How young people choose University and Profession in Kazakhstan:
factors influencing their Choice and Satisfaction with this Choice

Researcher: [Your Name]

You are invited to participate in a research interview about choosing the right profession and university among adults in Kazakhstan. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the experiences and opinions of adults in Kazakhstan regarding this topic.

Procedures:

The interview will involve a one-on-one conversation with the researcher, which will be recorded for later analysis. The interview will last approximately 10-20 minutes and will take place at a location and time that is convenient for you. You will be asked a series of questions related to your experiences and opinions about choosing the right profession and university in Kazakhstan. You are free to decline to answer any questions or to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no significant risks associated with participating in this study. The benefit of participating is that your opinions and experiences will help contribute to a better understanding of the topic, which may in turn inform future policies and practices related to education and career development in Kazakhstan.

Confidentiality:

Your participation in this study will be kept confidential to the fullest extent possible. All recordings and transcripts of the interview will be kept secure and will only be accessible to the researcher and any authorized personnel. Your name or any other identifying information will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from this study.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty or prejudice.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, or if you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at [Your Contact Information]. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the [Institutional Review Board] at [IRB Contact Information].

Consent:

By agreeing to participate in this study, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided in this consent form and that you freely and voluntarily agree to participate in the study under the conditions described.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D. Online Survey Questionnaire

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ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

Introductory Page:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. The purpose of this study is to understand the factors that influence the choice of university and profession among young people in Kazakhstan and their level of satisfaction with this choice. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary and all responses are anonymous. Please read the following statements and indicate your agreement by clicking on the checkbox.

Consent Page:

1. I understand that participation in this survey is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time.
2. I understand that my responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.
3. I agree to participate in this survey.

Survey Questions:

1. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Prefer not to say
2. What is your age?
 - Less than 18
 - 18-24 years old
 - 25-34 years old
 - 35-44 years old
 - 45-54 years old
 - 55+
3. Your highest academic level
 - High school graduate
 - College/Technical school graduate
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - PhD or higher
4. Your job status
 - School student
 - University student with work experience
 - University student with no work experience
 - An employee in a company
 - Self-employed
 - Unemployed
 - Other
5. Your marital status
 - Single
 - Married
 - Divorced

- Other
6. Have you chosen your future profession?
- Yes
 - No
7. How satisfied are you with your choice of profession?
- Very satisfied
 - Somewhat satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied
8. If you are not satisfied with your choice of profession, what factors influenced your choice? (select all that apply)
- The expectation/ demand of the family
 - Social or cultural norms
 - Lack of information or awareness about different career options
 - Lack of guidance or mentorship
 - Limited access to educational opportunities
 - Influence of peers or friends
 - Lack of confidence in your abilities or interests
 - Limited job availability in desired areas.
 - Other (please specify)
9. Have you chosen your university?
- Yes
 - No
10. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, what factors influenced your choice of university? (Select all that apply)
- Location of the university
 - Quality of education
 - The reputation of the university
 - Availability of scholarship
 - Family and friends' recommendations
 - Personal interests and passions
 - Job opportunities after graduation
 - Other (please specify)
11. How satisfied are you with your choice of university?
- Very satisfied
 - Somewhat satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied
12. If you haven't chosen a university yet, what factors are currently influencing your decision? (select all that apply)

- Location of the university
- Quality of education
- The reputation of the university
- Availability of scholarship
- Family and friends' recommendations
- Personal interests and passions
- Job opportunities after graduation
- Other (please specify)

13. Assess the influence of these factors on your choice of profession?

- 5 - very important
- 4 - important
- 3 - medium influence
- 2 - weak influence
- 1 - no effect
- Personal interest
- Warranty and stability
- Wage
- Career Opportunities
- The balance between work and personal life
- Location and road
- Required skills and qualifications
- Availability of vacancies in the field
- Social Status and prestige
- Family expectations and traditions
- Gender norms or stereotypes
- The influence of peers and friends

14. Assess the impact of these factors on your choice of university.

- 5 - very important
- 4 - important
- 3 - medium influence
- 2 - weak influence
- 1 - no effect
- University reputation and rating
- Availability of desired programs/specialities
- Location and accessibility
- The cost and possibilities of financial assistance
- Campus Culture and social environment
- Quality of teachers and academic resources
- Career Prospects and employment opportunities after Graduation
- Personal interests and hobbies
- Opinions and recommendations from family and friends
- Entry requirements and eligibility criteria
- Quality of facilities and infrastructure
- University/College Size
- Diversity and Inclusion

15. What is the main factor for future professional success and career growth in Kazakhstan:

- High qualifications (education in prestigious, well-known universities or abroad)

- Big work experience and professional knowledge
- Kazakh language
- Russian language
- connections, influential friends and acquaintances -
- knowledge of foreign languages (English, Chinese, etc.)
- good upbringing (one must be a cultured person, respect elders, etc.)

16. How important is higher education for future career and success?

- Very important
- Important
- Neutral, does not matter
- Not so important
- Not important at all

17. What would it be if you could change one thing about your university and profession choice? (open-ended)

18. In your opinion, what factors should young people consider when choosing a university and profession in Kazakhstan? (open-ended)

19. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions? (open-ended)