

Faculty Views on Internationalization in Kazakhstan

Öğretim Üyelerinin Kazakistan'daki Uluslararasılaşma Konusundaki Görüşleri

Aliya Kuzhabekova , Darkhan Bilyalov , Meray Mussabayeva 

Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Özet

Uluslararasılaşma, Kazakistan'da yükseköğretimin modernizasyonu için ana mekanizma olarak görülmektedir. Uluslararasılaşma için güçlü politika baskısına rağmen, kurumlar tarafından uluslararasılaşma girişimlerinin uygulanma süreci ve ayrıca bireysel öğretim üyelerinin, öğrencilerin ve yöneticilerin uluslararasılaşmasıyla ilgili deneyimleri üzerine yapılmış araştırma sayısı çok azdır. Bu çalışma, öğretim üyelerinin uluslararasılaşma konusundaki görüşlerini belirlemek için Bilgi Toplumunda Uluslararası Akademik Meslek (APIKS) anketinden elde edilen verileri kullanarak mevcut araştırmalardaki boşluğu doldurmaktadır. Çalışma aşağıdaki araştırma sorularını ele almaktadır: (1) Öğretim üyelerinin uluslararasılaşma konusundaki görüşleri nelerdir? (2) Farklı demografik ve mesleki özelliklere (örneğin cinsiyet, unvan, disiplin, yaş, deneyim) sahip öğretim üyeleri arasında görüşler nasıl farklılık göstermektedir? (3) Öğretim üyelerinin dil yeteneği ile uluslararasılaşma konusundaki görüşleri arasındaki ilişki nedir? (4) Bu görüşler ile öğretim üyelerinin uluslararası deneyimlere katılımı arasındaki ilişki nedir? Araştırma sorularını yanıtlamak için hem tanımlayıcı hem de çıkarımsal istatistikler kullanılmıştır. Çalışma, uluslararasılaşma girişimlerinin beyin göçü ve kültürel kimlik kaybı üzerindeki etkisinden endişe duymalarına rağmen, öğretim üyelerinin genel olarak uluslararasılaşma konusunda olumlu bir görüşe sahip olduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrencilere kıyasla kendilerine sunulan uluslararası hareketlilik ve araştırma işbirliği fırsatlarından daha az memnun görünmektedirler. Bulgular, uluslararasılaşma girişimlerinin geliştirilmesi ve uygulanması hakkında öğretim üyelerinin görüşlerinin toplanmasının yanı sıra uluslararasılaşma programlarına erişimlerinin artırılmasının önemine işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Dil yeteneği, Kazakistan, öğretim üyesi hareketliliği, SSCB sonrası, uluslararasılaşma, yükseköğretim.

Globalization has been one of the main drivers of the profound changes occurring in higher education worldwide (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009; Knight, 2006; Stromquist, 2007). One of the main responses of higher education institutions to the increasing pressures of globalization has been the process of internationalization

Abstract

Internationalization is viewed as the main mechanism for the modernization of higher education in Kazakhstan. Despite the strong policy push for internationalization, research on the process of implementation of internationalization initiatives by institutions, as well as on the experiences with the internationalization of individual faculty members, students, and administrators remains rather scarce. This paper fills the gap in existing research by using the data from the international Academic Profession in the Knowledge Society (APIKS) survey to explore faculty views on internationalization. The study addresses the following research questions: (1) What are faculty views on internationalization? (2) How do the views vary among the faculty of different demographic and professional characteristics (e.g. gender, rank, discipline, age, experience)? (3) What is the relationship between the views on internationalization and faculty language ability? (4) What is the relationship between the views and the extent of faculty engagement in international experiences? To answer the research questions, we use both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study reveals that faculty generally hold a positive view of internationalization, although remain concerned about the effect of internationalization initiatives on brain drain and loss of cultural identity. In addition, they seem to be less satisfied with the number of opportunities for international mobility and research collaboration, which are available for them as compared to students. The study points to the importance of gathering faculty input on the development and approaches to implementation of internationalization initiatives, as well as of expanding faculty access to internationalization programs.

Keywords: Faculty mobility, higher education, internationalization, Kazakhstan, language ability, post-Soviet.

(Altbach et al., 2009). Most commonly defined as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p. 2), internationalization has attracted much attention from researchers of higher education around the world (Kehm & Teichler, 2007). However, due to

İletişim / Correspondence:

Associate Prof. Aliya Kuzhabekova
 Graduate School of Education,
 Nazarbayev University, Kabanbay
 Batyr, Nursultan, 010000, Kazakhstan
 e-mail: aliya.kuzhabekova@nu.edu.kz

Yükseköğretim Dergisi / TÜBA Higher Education Research/Review (TÜBA-HER), 12(Suppl), S35–S44. © 2022 TÜBA
 Geliş tarihi / Received: Mart / March 11, 2021; Kabul tarihi / Accepted: Aralık / December 30, 2021

Bu makalenin atf künyesi / How to cite this article: Kuzhabekova, A., Bilyalov, D., & Mussabayeva, M. (2022). Faculty views on internationalization in Kazakhstan. *Yükseköğretim Dergisi*, 12(Suppl), S35–S44. doi:10.2399/yod.21.202204

ORCID ID: A. Kuzhabekova 0000-0002-9719-0220; D. Bilyalov 0000-0002-2686-8751; M. Mussabayeva 0000-0001-5115-629X



the complexity, the multifaceted nature, and the variability of its manifestations, internationalization has become “a term that means different things to different people” (Knight, 2004, p. 5). Moreover, these diverse understandings of internationalization have produced a range of various attitudes and views about its costs and benefits among various actors involved.

Most existing research on internationalization has focused on the national and institutional levels (Knight, 2014), as well as at the student level (Teichler, 2017). There is even more limited understanding of how faculty members view internationalization (Dewey & Duff, 2009; Friesen, 2013; Sanderson, 2008). Meanwhile, understanding the views of faculty is very important since they play a key role in internationalization (Dewey & Duff, 2009). They can resist and even compromise internationalization efforts if they view internationalization as having high costs and being associated with large negative effects. They may also serve as the main agents of internationalization, engaging in the process via their teaching, research, and service (Friesen, 2013).

The main purpose of this paper was to address the gap in the existing research on internationalization. We wanted to explore faculty attitudes towards internationalization focusing on the context of Kazakhstan.

Internationalization of Higher Education in Kazakhstan

Higher education in Kazakhstan has been undergoing the process of radical reconceptualization and modernization since the country became independent after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Internationalization has become a key mechanism of this reform process (Li & Ashirbekov, 2014). Uniquely for the context of the post-Soviet country, internationalization has been implemented in a top-down fashion, with the majority of internationalization initiatives pushed by the government rather than originating at universities (Kuzhabekova, 2020). National authorities frequently turned to best international practices when they were in search of new solutions and approaches in higher education (Azimbayeva, 2017).

For example, to address the problem of inadequate skill level and the shortage of faculty members and researchers in higher education during the early days of independence, the government instituted a competitive scholarship for study in top universities overseas (Perna, Orosz, & Jumakulov, 2015). In addition, in search of a new model of higher education, the government turned to the Bologna process in Europe becoming one of the unofficial members of the European higher education space (Tampayeva, 2015). The adoption of the Bologna

standards became the driving force for modification of the degree structure, introduction of a new system of academic hours accounting (the credit system), reforms in the system of quality assurance, and integration of the previously isolated higher educational system into the global system of postsecondary training and research (Tampayeva, 2015). The aspirations to make Kazakhstan one of the successful Asian economies in transition has motivated the government to fund the establishment of several quasi-private international universities, which became dependent on a steady influx of international or internationally trained faculty (Kuzhabekova, 2020).

International research collaboration has been viewed as one of the main instruments for strengthening research capacity in the country with incentives or straightforward expectations for international research collaboration being integrated into the parameters of state-funded research grants (Zhumakulov et al., 2019). More recently, internationalization has been identified as the main instrument facilitating the expansion of universities' autonomy and self-governance. Universities are now encouraged to engage in long-term partnerships with international partner institutions, which are expected to serve as consultants in the process of readjustment of the higher education institutions (HEIs) to independent decision-making (Bilyalov, 2016).

Internationalization has been also viewed as an important mechanism for modernization of the state in general and of higher education in particular by external development funders, such as Soros Foundation, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, DAAD, USAID, and others (Silova & Steiner-Khamsi, 2008). These agencies have also offered scholarships for study and professional development abroad, as well as grants encouraging individual and institutional collaboration between Kazakhstani HEIs/faculty and their international partners either in research or in academic reorganization (Kuzhabekova, 2020). Kazakhstani universities have actively participated in the European Union student and faculty exchange programs such as Tempus (before 2013) and Erasmus+ (starting 2014) (Perna et al., 2014). These programs facilitated academic mobility and the development of joint Masters' programs through collaboration with European partner universities (European Commission, 2018). As such from 2015 to 2020, under the Erasmus+ program, Kazakhstani individuals received funding for 3000 research proposals, 74 universities across the country participated in various partnership arrangements, by far dominating other Central Asian countries in the participation in the program (National Erasmus+ Office in Kazakhstan, n. d.).

Although HEIs themselves played a much less pronounced role in initiating internationalization activities, some universi-



ties have nevertheless recognized the profit-making potential of enrolling international students, as well as the possible benefits of engaging in funded international collaborations (Kuzhabekova, 2020). These universities have developed an aggressive strategy for attracting overseas students and externally funded grants. Some have managed to build lasting collaborations with HEIs from abroad (Kuzhabekova, 2020).

Faculty have been shown to play an important role in the country's internationalization initiatives (Jumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016). They have frequently been the initiators and the principal investigators on funded collaborative research projects. They have been responsible for introducing courses in the process of curriculum internationalization and the adoption of new standards as a result of Kazakhstan's joining in the Bologna process. They have been providing letters of recommendation for students applying for study abroad. Their active role in internationalization and educational reform, in general, has been accompanied by increased teaching, research, and service loads, while also facilitating the faculty's professional development as teachers, scholars, and administrators (Bilyalov, 2018). Despite the growing recognition of the important role of faculty internationalization in Kazakhstan, little is known about the extent and the ways in which the faculty have been affected by internationalization and their views about the pace, the costs, and the benefits of the process.

Prior Research on Internationalization in Kazakhstan

Few recent studies have been conducted on the topic of internationalization in Kazakhstan. Most of the existing papers provide an overview of internationalization policy and initiatives (Kuzhabekova, 2020; Orosz & Perna, 2016; Tazhibayeva, 2017; Zhumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016). Several studies focused on understanding the experiences of international students (Ibragimova, 2019; Kim, 2020; Kuzhabekova, Sparks, & Temerbayeva, 2019; Mukhamejanova, 2019; Sagintayeva & Jumakulov, 2017) or international faculty (Kuzhabekova, & Lee, 2017; Lee & Kuzhabekova, 2018). Two studies explored initiatives aimed at the internationalization of curriculum (Parmenter, et al., 2017; Tazabek, 2016). In addition, several papers looked at the internationalization of research (Jumakulov, Ashirbekov, Sparks, & Sagintayeva, 2019; Kuzhabekova & Lee, 2020). The majority of these papers presented the results of the analysis of the existing scholarly literature and policy documents. Some of the papers used a qualitative, mostly interview-based approach to data collection and analysis. Very few papers used a survey approach to collect the data and analyzed the data using statistical methods. Most previous research was based on institutional case studies and small-scale qualitative data collection and analysis.

To summarize, research on internationalization in Kazakhstan continues to be in the nascent stages of development. None of the studies, which we were able to locate, had taken a careful look at local faculty members' experiences with or their views about the process of internationalization. In addition, very few previous studies used quantitative approaches to collect data from larger multi-institutional samples. Meanwhile, a better understanding of faculty perceptions of internationalization could be useful for HEI administrators and higher education policymakers. Hence, this study aimed to fill the gap in the available scholarship, as well as to obtain novel insights about existing theories by using a survey of faculty members representing a wide range of institutional types in various regions of Kazakhstan. Four research questions were posed at the start of the study:

- What are the faculty's views on the internationalization process at their institution?
- How do the views vary among the faculty based on different demographic characteristics (rank, discipline, age, experience)?
- What is the relationship between the views and faculty members' English language proficiency?
- To what extent do views differ between faculty members who engage and those who do not engage in international experiences?

Method

This study used a quantitative survey design as the main research strategy. In particular, answers to research questions were obtained from APIKS (Academic Profession in the Knowledge Society) survey. APIKS is the third major international initiative to study the academic profession after the Changing Academic Profession for 2007/08 and the Carnegie Survey of the International Academic Profession in 1992. Currently, the comparative study involves around 20 countries, including Argentina, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, USA, Taiwan, and Türkiye.

For the study of academics in Kazakhstan, our team used the standard internationally developed APIKS survey instrument, which was modified to include several additional questions pertinent to the national context. The original instrument was developed in the English language and included six sections: (1) career and professional situations, (2) teaching activities, (3) research activities, (4) external activities, (5) governance and management, as well as (6) academics in the formative career stages. The Kazakhstani version of the survey was translated



into Russian and Kazakh and was administered in both languages with the participants having a choice of which language to use.

Before administration, the Kazakhstani versions of the instrument were piloted on 30 individuals to ensure comprehensibility and consistency of the Russian and Kazakh versions of the international instrument. Cronbach's alpha reliability for the Russian-language instrument was +0.83. For the Kazakh instrument, the Cronbach's alpha was +0.87. There is general agreement that +0.75 or above indicates appropriate instrument internal consistency. The test-retest/stability reliability coefficient measured on the 30 participants was +0.84 and +0.77 for the Russian and Kazakh instrument respectively, which was again an appropriate figure.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the pilot survey was administered verbally. The participants were asked to read the questions and instructions out loud, whereas the member of the research team administering the survey took notes capturing any parts of the questionnaire, which were not properly understood or were misunderstood by the respondent. Subsequently, the phrasing of the instructions and questions was modified until proper clarity was achieved.

In selecting the sampling strategy for the survey, we took into account the characteristics and size of the total population of academics in Kazakhstan, hoping to obtain a representative sample. The population is comprised of 38,470 individuals, 64% of whom are female faculty. By educational level, 33.8% have a Master's degree, 33% are Candidates of Sciences, 6.8% - hold a Ph.D. degree, and 8.5% are Doctors of Science (Ministry of Education and Science, 2018). More than one-third of the faculty are located in Almaty, and about as many - in Nur-Sultan, South Kazakhstan, and Karaganda region combined. These individuals are also spread across public and private institutions of different levels of importance/funding (national, regional, city) - the two main types of HEIs in Kazakhstan.

To obtain a representative sample, a multistage stratified random sampling strategy was used. First, 48 higher education institutions were chosen purposefully in 17 different regions (14 regions plus the present and the former capital cities, where the greatest number of universities is located). The sample included private and public, as well as the institutions of different status including national (six out of eleven existing institutions), regional, state, and private institutions (the latter three types totaling 42 institutions). Second, we used cluster sampling, whereas in each university we obtained a list of clusters - schools, departments, and labs comprising organizational units. In each university, we randomly selected a set of such units and within each unit.

The data was collected via a survey instrument by a professional data collection company, which was hired for the task in Kazakhstan. The data collection team of the hired data collection company approached each of the faculty, researchers, and administrators within the selected organizational units and requested them to complete the survey. Trained data collectors of a specialized data collection company interviewed individual faculty using the Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method. The use of the CAPI method effectively decreases both interviewer and response error. The data was cleaned and analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

To assess the faculty views on internationalization at their institution, we used a composite latent variable operationalized by a set of questions in the survey about internationalization. The views on the internationalization scale included answers on such perceived effects on internationalization as enhanced prestige, enhanced academic quality, increased revenue, widening research networks, increased mobility of students and faculty. Faculty reacted to a series of statements about the pace of internationalization at their institution (various aspects of internationalization) and about their views on costs and benefits of internationalization on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all" to "very much". Mathematically, the scale was the average responses of faculty to the abovementioned survey statements. The scale was found to be internally consistent (Cronbach alpha coefficient=0.88). Unless mentioned otherwise, the inferential tests and correlational analyses are based on this scale.

Results

After applying the multi-stage approach to the selection of participants, 1024 individuals filled out the survey. Out of them, 73 were academic administrators that were taken out from the analysis. The findings of this study are thus based on valid survey responses from 946 full-time faculty members. The following statistics describe the demographic and professional characteristics of the faculty respondents. Twenty-seven percent of the participants were male. The median age of the participants was 43 (age ranging from 21 to 62 years old). In terms of ethnic composition, 84% of the participants were Kazakh, 10% were Russians, and 6% - representatives of other ethnicities. With respect to employment affiliation, 43% of the participants were employed at the hiring university for 10 years or less. About a third of the respondents (32%) worked at the institution for 11–20 years, 17% for 21–30 years; and the rest - for over 30 years. Most of the participants worked at the university either full-time (47% of the respondents) or more than full-time (44%). The majority of the



■ **Table 1.** Faculty views about benefits of internationalization.

Aspects	No/little extent	Neutral	Some/considerable extent
Enhanced prestige	28 3.0%	71 7.5%	847 89.5%
Enhanced academic quality	39 4.1%	101 10.7%	806 85.2%
Enhanced research networks	30 3.2%	93 9.8%	823 87.0%
Increased mobility of students	28 3.0%	96 10.1%	822 86.9%
Increased mobility of faculty	61 6.4%	125 13.2%	760 80.3%
Increased revenue	147 15.5%	224 23.7%	575 60.8%

respondents were hired on a fixed-term non-permanent contract (65%) and were junior-level faculty (63%). In terms of disciplinary specialization, 32% of the participants came from natural, biomedical, and engineering backgrounds, whereas 20% came from education, another 20% from social sciences, and 15% from humanities and art.

RQ1: What Are Faculty Views on the Internationalization Process at their Institutions?

Two groups of questions in the survey instrument collected responses pertinent to the first research question. The faculty were asked to express their views about the benefits and costs of internationalization, as well as their views about the pace of internationalization at their institution.

The results of the survey presented in ■ Table 1 summarize faculty views on the benefits of internationalization. The table clearly shows that faculty in Kazakhstan tend to have a positive view of internationalization as a process. In particular, the absolute majority of the faculty members (over 80% on average) believe that internationalization contributes to an

institution's enhanced prestige, enhanced academic quality, enhanced research networks, increased student and faculty mobility. The views were somewhat less optimistic about the ability of internationalization to contribute to increased institutional revenue. Only 60% of the faculty thought that internationalization increases revenue to some or considerable extent.

■ Table 2 presents a summary of the faculty views about the costs of internationalization. Based on the summary, many faculty members acknowledge that despite some benefits, internationalization is also associated with some costs. For example, 78% of the respondents believe that internationalization leads to weakened cultural identity. In addition, almost 70% of academics think that internationalization leads to increased brain drain.

Another set of questions in the survey asked the faculty about their views on the pace internationalization is conducted at their institution. Based on the responses summarized in ■ Table 3, most faculty have positive views of their institution's internationalization initiatives. About 85% of the participants

■ **Table 2.** Faculty views about costs of internationalization.

Aspects	No/little extent	Neutral	Some/considerable extent
Weakening cultural identity	77 8.1%	132 14.0%	737 77.9%
Increased brain gain	122 12.9%	184 19.5%	640 67.7%

Note: A five-point response scale was used in the original survey. For the purposes of this study, we collapsed the data from the responses "No" and "To a little extent" and data from the responses "To some extent" and "To a considerable extent."

**Table 3.** Faculty views about the pace of internationalization at their institution.

Statement	Strongly disagree/disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree/agree
Your institution has a clear strategy for internationalization	51 5.4%	93 9.8%	802 84.8%
Your institution provides various international exchange programs for students	42 4.4%	96 10.1%	808 85.4%
Your institution provides various opportunities/funding for visiting international scholars	121 12.8%	161 17.0%	664 70.2%
Your institution encourages the recruitment of faculty members from foreign countries	92 9.7%	164 17.3%	690 72.9%
Your institution encourages faculty members to publish internationally	123 13.0%	128 13.5%	695 73.5%
Your institution provides various opportunities/funding for faculty members to undertake research abroad	201 21.2%	188 19.9%	557 58.9%
Your institution provides various opportunities/funding for visiting international students	145 15.3%	196 20.7%	605 64.0%
Your institution provides various opportunities/funding for faculty members to attend international conferences abroad	225 23.8%	163 17.2%	558 59.0%

felt that their institution had a clear internationalization strategy and provided opportunities for students' participation in exchange programs. The respondents were in a strong, but somewhat weaker agreement with the statements that their institutions provided funding for short-term visiting or long-term contracted international faculty, as well as encouraged its faculty members to publish abroad. Only slightly above 50% of the faculty agreed that their institutions provided funding for research and conference presentations abroad and that institutions were not particularly keen on supporting international students.

RQ2: How Do the Views Vary among the Faculty Based on Different Demographic Characteristics (Rank, Discipline, Age, Experience)?

To explore whether faculty varied in their views about internationalization depending on a set of demographic characteristics we used either a *t*-test or a test of significance of the correlation,

depending on the scale of the corresponding independent variable. In particular, we looked at the influence of such variables as rank, age, experience, and disciplinary specialization. The results of the tests are summarized in Table 4. Based on the results, it is clear that there was no difference between groups of faculty members based on the selected characteristics.

RQ3: What Is the Relationship between the Views and Faculty's English Language Proficiency?

One of the hypotheses that we pursued in the study is that better knowledge of the English language is associated with more favorable views of internationalization. Only about 38% of the participants indicated that they were fluent in English or fluent enough for professional communication (Table 5). The majority of the participants could hardly speak English or did not have any skills in the language at all. We assessed the statistical significance of the difference between the fluent and

Table 4. Faculty backgrounds and positive views on internationalization.

Variable	Results
1. Rank	Junior faculty look similarly at internationalization ($M=4.40$) as senior ($M=4.32$), $p=0.07$, $t(652)=-1.80$
2. Age	No association between age and favorable internationalization scale, $r=-0.44$, $n=946$, $p=.172$
3. Discipline	Non-STEM faculty look similarly at internationalization ($M=4.40$) as STEM ($M=4.31$), $p=0.086$, $t(737)=-1.72$
4. Experience in academia	No meaningful association between experience and favorable internationalization scale, $r=-0.74$, $n=946$, $p=.023$



■ **Table 5.** English language proficiency of the participants.

English language proficiency	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Fluent	145	15.3	15.3
Fluent enough for professional communication, reading special literature	219	23.2	38.5
Hardly can speak and understand	377	39.9	78.3
Do not speak and understand	205	21.7	100.0
Total	946	100.0	

non-fluent speakers of English using a *t*-test. Fluent speakers look more favorably at internationalization ($M=4.50$) compared with those, who speak less fluently ($M=4.35$), $p=0.008$, $t(241)=-2.66$ albeit with a small effect size (Cohen’s $D= 0.218$).

RQ4: To What Extent Do Views Differ between Faculty Who Engage and Those Who Do Not Engage in International Experiences?

Another hypothesis that we pursued in the study is that having some international experiences is associated with more favorable views of internationalization. Only about 48% of the participants indicated that they engaged in some form of collaboration with international colleagues (■ Table 6). We assessed the statistical significance of the difference between those who had international experiences and those who did not have any using the *t*-test. However, we found no significant difference between those who engaged and did not engage actively in internationalization. There was no difference in the attitude towards internationalization between those who engaged with foreign colleagues and those who did not ($M_{engaged}=4.39$, $M_{unengaged}=4.33$, $p=0.323$, $t(728)=0.99$).

Discussion

Several important findings emerge from the study. First, at the face value, faculty in Kazakhstan seem to have positive views of internationalization in general and internationalization efforts

in their institutions in particular. The absence of association between the perception of internationalization and age, experience, and discipline, is consistent with the finding that the majority of faculty view internationalization positively.

If the uniformly positive views of the faculty accurately reflect the reality of internationalization in Kazakhstani institutions, then this may point to the positive effects that the process has on opportunities for international mobility created by international mobility, internationalization of the curriculum, and research collaboration. Most institutions might truly be actively pursuing various internationalization initiatives and faculty members seem to be satisfied with the pace of their implementation.

However, the lack of variation in faculty perceptions could be the consequence of the faculty members’ minor role in institutional decision-making and educational policy. Until recently, as a legacy of the Soviet-era centralized decision-making in all spheres of life (Burkhanov, 2018), higher education policy and organizational decision-making remain largely top-down (Bilyalov, 2016). The views of faculty are rarely considered, and the academic staff is rarely consulted when internationalization policies are adopted and when university administration decides to take a particular course of action in that direction (Sarinzhipov, 2013). We believe that as a result of little engagement in organizational governance, lack of opportunities to be heard and engaged in deciding the direc-

■ **Table 6.** Engagement in internationalization experiences.

Do you collaborate with international colleagues?	Frequency	Valid percent
Yes	350	47.9
No	380	52.1
Total	730	100.0
Missing	216	
Total	946	



tions of internationalization, and absence of any feedback gathering mechanisms within the decision-making system at universities, many faculty members might uncritically adopt the view of those in power, including the view of the benefits and costs of internationalization.

As mentioned in the introductory part of the paper, internationalization is centrally considered as the main instrument of higher education modernization and many internationalization activities are pushed to universities from the government, which is also responsible for providing a policy rationale about its advantages and disadvantages (Jumakulov et al., 2019; Kuzhabekova, 2020). In addition, the main responsibility for the implementation of government directives falls on the university administration, and internationalization initiatives are carried on in a centralized fashion at the institutional level (Li & Ashirbekov, 2014). The uniform view of the faculty members in our study could be just a symptom of their lack of agency and limited influence over institutional decisions about internationalization.

If the uniform views on the pace of internationalization are the result of lacking faculty engagement, the finding is problematic. Internationalization can be costly and can be wasteful for institutions if its benefits are not fully capitalized upon in the process of teaching, research, and advising, which are within the realm of the direct responsibility of faculty members. The faculty members' concerns that internationalization may contribute to the loss of cultural identity and increased brain drain are also consistent with the official views about the negative side-effects of internationalization (Tazhibayeva, 2017). For example, the fears that students sent abroad on government scholarships might not return to Kazakhstan or might return with significantly modified national identities are some of the key concerns expressed by critics of such government scholarships (Bokayev, Torebekova, & Davletbayeva, 2020). Moreover, there are growing concerns of brain drain in the country as more young citizens decide to immigrate and/or pursue higher education abroad. This issue is especially poignant in regions bordering Russia (Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, 2019). The fact that faculty are concerned about the loss of intellectual capital and cultural identity is important. University faculty members are among the best-educated individuals in the country, who are empowered to inculcate cultural values in the next generation of Kazakhstanis. University administrators and policymakers in Kazakhstan should take a greater effort to investigate the reasons for these concerns, as well as faculty ideas on how the problems aggravated by internationalization could be addressed.

The only difference in views among faculty emerges under the influence of such a factor as the knowledge of the English

language. Those fluent in English have more positive views on internationalization, potentially because they benefit more from it. For example, they are more likely to receive fellowships for professional development abroad, grants for collaborative research, as well as are more likely to be involved in university teams responsible for managing partnerships with universities abroad, thus benefitting in terms of exposure to best international practices.

An important finding from the survey is that faculty seem to be less satisfied with the availability of funding for short-term and conference trips abroad. This possibly happens because: (1) internationalization policy in Kazakhstan focuses predominantly on students (Jumakulov et al., 2019), (2) institutionally funded mobility programs benefit predominantly students and are used for marketing purposes (Kuzhabekova, 2020). We find this finding highly problematic. Faculty are the main targets of internationalization-driven modernization. For example, interaction with international experts and professional development trips abroad could be prescribed within the frames of reforms aimed at improvement of the quality of teaching or transfer to credit-hour technology (Nessipbayeva, 2014). Similarly, faculty are expected to engage in international research collaborations within the government's initiatives to enhance university research capacity (Jumakulov et al., 2019). Meanwhile, while being viewed as the main implementors of internationalization initiatives, faculty have few opportunities to benefit from internationalization themselves. This could explain why faculty members, who have limited knowledge of English, have less positive view of internationalization. They might be excluded from whatever limited opportunities are available. An important practical implication of this finding is that universities and governments should stimulate better access of faculty to international programs via subsidized language training and expansion of mobility programs and international research collaboration funding.

Conclusion

Several important implications arise from the findings of the study. First, more funding should be provided for faculty mobility programs, as well as for faculty language training, so that more faculty could benefit from the mobility. Second, the voice of faculty members should be included in internationalization policy development, and they should be provided with opportunities to express both positive and negative views, as well as suggestions for changes in the course of actions. Third, given the faculty concerns about the brain drain and the loss of cultural identity, as well as the state's interest in lowering the rate of brain drain from the country, especially among the



younger generation, faculty can be encouraged to engage in critical conversations about internationalization with their students. This is something, which may be difficult to achieve in a post-Soviet state, where critical thinking was undermined by years of centralized decision-making and ideological control (Burkhanov, 2018). Recent initiatives aimed at the expansion of university autonomy might create a window of opportunity for both greater involvement of faculty in the determination of internationalization policies, as well as in critical reflection and conversations about societal impacts of internationalization (Bilyalov, 2016).

Yazar Katkıları / Author Contributions: AK: Fikir, tasarım, danışmanlık / denetleme, kaynak taraması, makalenin yazılması, eleştirel inceleme; DB: Danışmanlık / denetleme, kaynak taraması, makalenin yazılması, eleştirel inceleme; MM: Danışmanlık / denetleme, veri analizi, kaynak taraması, makalenin yazılması, eleştirel inceleme. / *AK: Project idea, conceiving and designing research, study monitoring, literature search, writing manuscript, critical reading and final check of the manuscript; DB: Study monitoring, literature search, writing manuscript, critical reading and final check of the manuscript; MM: Study monitoring, data analysis, literature search, writing manuscript, critical reading and final check of the manuscript.*

Fon Desteği / Funding: Bu çalışma herhangi bir resmi, ticari ya da kar amacı gütmeyen organizasyondan fon desteği almamıştır. / *This work did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.*

Etik Standartlara Uygunluk / Compliance with Ethical Standards: Makalede tanımlanan proje için Nazarbayev Üniversitesi Etik Kurulundan onay alınmıştır. Tanımlanan bu makalede araştırma ve yayın etiğine bağlı kalındığını, Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Kanunu'na ve fikir ve sanat eserleri için geçerli telif hakları düzenlemelerine uyulduğunu ve herhangi bir çıkar çakışması bulunmadığını belirtmiştir. / *The project described in this paper received ethics approval of Nazarbayev University' Institutional Review Board. The authors stated that the standards regarding research and publication ethics, the Personal Data Protection Law and the copyright regulations applicable to intellectual and artistic works are complied with and there is no conflict of interest.*

References

- Altbach, P. G., Reisberg, L., & Rumbley, L. E. (2009). *Trends in global higher education: Tracking an academic revolution. A report prepared for the World Conference in Higher Education 2009, UNESCO*. Retrieved from http://www.cep.edu.rs/public/Altbach,_Reisberg,_Rumbley_Tracking_an_Academic_Revolution,_UNESCO_2009.pdf (November 9, 2022).
- Azimbayeva, G. (2017). Comparing post-Soviet changes in higher education governance in Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan. *Cogent Education*, 4(1), 1–18.
- Bilyalov, D. (2016). University governance reforms in Kazakhstan. *International Higher Education*, 2016(85), 28–30.
- Bilyalov, D. (2018). Organizational socialization and job satisfaction of faculty at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan. *European Education*, 50(3), 229–248.
- Bokayev, B., Torebekova, Z., & Davletbayeva, Z. (2020). Preventing brain drain: Kazakhstan's Presidential "Bolashak" scholarship and government regulations of intellectual migration. *Public Policy and Administration*, 19(3), 25–35.
- Burkhanov, A. (2018). Policy-making styles in Central Asia: The Soviet legacy and new institutions. In M. Howlett, & J. Tosun (Eds.), *Policy styles and policymaking* (pp. 222–241). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting (2019). *Emigration from Kazakhstan as an outflow of human capital*. Retrieved from <https://cabar.asia/en/emigration-from-kazakhstan-as-an-outflow-of-human-capital> (November 9, 2022).
- European Commission, (2018). *Erasmus+ program*. Retrieved from <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/def6a811-f4ee-11e7-be11-01aa75ed71a1/language-ru> (November 9, 2022).
- Ibragimova, B. (2019). *Factors influencing international students' motivation to study in Kazakhstan*. Doctoral dissertation, Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.
- Jumakulov, Z., & Ashirbekov, A. (2016). Higher education internationalization: Insights from Kazakhstan. *Hungarian Educational Research Journal*, 6(1), 37–57.
- Jumakulov, Z., Ashirbekov, A., Sparks, J., & Sagintayeva, A. (2019). Internationalizing research in Kazakhstan higher education: A case study of Kazakhstan's state program of industrial innovative development 2015 to 2019. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 23(2), 234–247.
- Kehm, B. M., & Teichler, U. (2007). Research on internationalization in higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3–4), 260–273.
- Kim, T. (2020). *Academic and Sociocultural Adjustment Experiences of International Students Studying in Kazakhstan*. Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.
- Knight, J. (2003). Updated definition of internationalization. *International Higher Education*, (33), 2–3.
- Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8(1), 5–31.
- Knight, J. (2006). *Internationalization of higher education: New directions, new challenges: 2005 IAU global survey report*. International Association of Universities (IAU).
- Knight, J. (2014). Is internationalization of higher education having an identity crisis? In A. Maldonado-Maldonado, & R. M. Bassett (Eds.), *The forefront of international higher education: A festschrift in honor of Philip G. Altbach* (pp. 75–87). Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Kuzhabekova, A. (2020). Internationalization as a mechanism of higher education modernization in Kazakhstan. In J. Thondhlana, E. C. Garwe, H. de Wit, J. Gacel-Ávila, F. Huang, & W. Tamrat (Eds.), *The Bloomsbury handbook of internationalization of higher education in the global South* (pp. 100–114). New York, NY, USA: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc.
- Kuzhabekova, A., & Lee, J. (2017). Relocation decision of international faculty in Kazakhstan. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 22(5), 414–433.
- Kuzhabekova, A., & Lee, J. (2020). International faculty engagement in local research capacity building: Factors affecting knowledge-sharing between international and local faculty in Kazakhstan. *European Education*, 52(4), 297–311.

- Kuzhabekova, A., Sparks, J., & Temerbayeva, A. (2019). Returning from study abroad and transitioning as a scholar: Stories of foreign PhD holders from Kazakhstan. *Research in Comparative and International Education, 14*(3), 412–430.
- Lee, J., & Kuzhabekova, A. (2018). Reverse flow in academic mobility from core to periphery: Motivations of international faculty working in Kazakhstan. *Higher Education, 76*(2), 369–386.
- Li, A., & Ashirbekov, A. (2014). Institutional engagement in the internationalization of higher education: Perspectives from Kazakhstan. *International Higher Education, 2014*(78), 17–19.
- Ministry of Education and Science (2018). *Realization of the principles of the Bologna process in the Republic of Kazakhstan*. [Article in Kazakh]. Astana: Center for the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility. Retrieved from https://enic-kazakhstan.edu.kz/uploads/additional_files_items/28/file_en/analiticheskiy-otchet-final-14-12-2018-1.pdf?cache=1556191390 (November 9, 2022).
- Mukhamejanova, D. (2019). International students in Kazakhstan. *International Journal of Comparative Education and Development, 21*(3), 146–163.
- National Erasmus+ Office in Kazakhstan (n. d.). Retrieved from <https://erasmusplus.kz/index.php/en/erasmus/erasmus-in-kazakhstan/cbhe> (November 9, 2022).
- Nessipbayeva, O. (2014). Kazakhstan in the European Educational System. *Proceedings of Bulgarian Comparative Education Society, 2014*(4), 411–417.
- Parmenter, L., Sparks, J., Li, A., Kerimkulova, S., Ashirbekov, A., & Jumakulov, Z. (2017). Internationalizing the curriculum in Kazakhstan: Perceptions, rationales and challenges. In De Wit, H., Gacel-Avila, J., Jones, E., & Jooste, N. (Eds.). *The globalization of internationalization: Emerging voices and perspectives* (pp. 206–217). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Perna, L. W., Orosz, K., Gopaul, B., Jumakulov, Z., Ashirbekov, A., & Kishkentayeva, M. (2014). Promoting human capital development: A typology of international scholarship programs in higher education. *Educational Researcher, 43*(2), 63–73.
- Perna, L. W., Orosz, K., & Jumakulov, Z. (2015). Understanding the human capital benefits of a government-funded international scholarship program: An exploration of Kazakhstan's Bolashak program. *International Journal of Educational Development, 40*, 85–97.
- Sagintayeva, A., & Jumakulov, Z. (2017). Kazakhstan: Kazakhstan's Bolashak scholarship program. In De Wit, H., Gacel-Avila, J., Jones, E., & Jooste, N. (Eds.). *Understanding Higher Education Internationalization* (pp. 143–146). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Sarinzhapov, A. (2013). *Opportunities for faculty to influence academic matters at Kazakh National University and Eurasian National University*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA.
- Silova, I., & Steiner-Khamsi, G. (Eds.). (2008). *How NGOs react: Globalization and education reform in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Mongolia*. Boulder, CO: Kumarian Press.
- Stromquist, N. P. (2007). Internationalization as a response to globalization: Radical shifts in university environments. *Higher Education, 53*(1), 81–105.
- Tampayeva, G. Y. (2015). Importing education: Europeanisation and the Bologna Process in Europe's backyard – The case of Kazakhstan. *European Educational Research Journal, 14*(1), 74–85.
- Tazabek, S. (2016). Internationalizing curriculum for innovation: Opportunities and challenges for entrepreneurial universities in Kazakhstan. *Proceedings of the Eurasian Higher Education Leaders Forum, 2016*, 24–27.
- Tazhibayeva, A. (2017). *Internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan: State policies and institutional practices*. Nazarbayev University School of Sciences and Humanities, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.
- Teichler, U. (2017). Internationalization trends in higher education and the changing role of international student mobility. *Journal of International Mobility, 217*(1), 177–216.

Bu makale Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 Unported (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) Lisansı standartlarında; kaynak olarak gösterilmesi koşuluyla, ticari kullanım amacı ve içerik değişikliği dışında kalan tüm kullanım (çevrimiçi bağlantı verme, kopyalama, baskı alma, herhangi bir fiziksel ortamda çoğaltma ve dağıtma vb.) haklarıyla açık erişim olarak yayımlanmaktadır. / This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 Unported (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) License, which permits non-commercial reuse, distribution and reproduction in any medium, without any changing, provided the original work is properly cited.

Yayıncı Notu: Yayıncı kuruluş olarak Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi (TÜBA) bu makalede ortaya konan görüşlere katılmak zorunda değildir; olası ticari ürün, marka ya da kuruluşlarla ilgili ifadelerin içerikte bulunması yayıncının onayladığı ve güvence verdiği anlamına gelmez. Yayıncının bilimsel ve yasal sorumlulukları yazar(lar)ına aittir. TÜBA, yayınlanan haritalar ve yazarların kurumsal bağlantıları ile ilgili yargı yetkisine ilişkin iddialar konusunda tarafsızdır. / **Publisher's Note:** The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the publisher, nor does any mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA). Scientific and legal responsibilities of published manuscript belong to their author(s). TÜBA remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.