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Alumni's Intention-to-Engage Analysis: Quantitative Approach in Kazakhstani University

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Abstract. This study aims to explore graduates' willingness to participate in and contribute to their alma mater in the Kazakhstani context. Rather than focusing on the activities graduates engage in, such as volunteering and donations, this research seeks to understand graduates' time and desire to participate in various activities, events, and communications. By understanding the average maximum potential of graduates and the categories of activities they are willing to participate in, this research will provide insights for better engaging graduates in the future. The study utilized a quantitative research design, collecting data through a questionnaire adapted from the literature review. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, revealing average lower levels of intention to engage in alumni activities among graduates. The analysis also explored the interaction between graduation year and work position, suggesting that respondents tend to have higher work positions as time passes since graduation. However, no significant differences regarding interest in alumni activities were found between work positions or years after graduation.

Keywords: alumni, alumni engagement, alumni communication, graduate involvement, interaction between graduates.

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Introduction

This research aims to explore the potential of graduates, through the lens of their own willingness to participate and make contributions for the university they studied in Kazakhstani context. We found a sufficient amount of literature where studies were conducted within the framework of the activities that graduates actually engage in, including their volunteer work, donations, and involvement in various events. However, we decided to approach it from a different perspective, specifically to determine how much time graduates are willing to dedicate to participating in activities, their desire to participate in events, make donations, and engage in communication.

This paper held under the quantitative research paradigm in local Kazakhstani university. The researchers were interested in the maximum limit of graduate participation, and characteristics of graduates who are willing to participate at most. In other words, at this stage of the study, researchers need to understand the average maximum potential of graduates and in which categories of activities they are willing to participate. The results of this study will enable us to compare graduates' desires to actively participate with their actual participation in the alumni association in the future.

Research Subject

This study explores the willingness of graduates from a Kazakhstani university to participate in and contribute to their alma mater, focusing on their time and desire to engage in various activities, events, and communications.

Research Objectives. The study's main objective is to demonstrate the potential and willingness of graduates to engage with their university. By examining the maximum potential participation and preferred activities, the study aims to provide insights for better alumni engagement.

Research Tasks

- **Identify Factors Influencing Engagement:** Understand reasons for low alumni involvement, focusing on the lack of university facilities.
- **Measure Willingness:** Determine the time and desire graduates have for participating in university activities.
- **Analyze Patterns:** Examine the relationship between graduation year, job position, and willingness to engage.
- **Provide Recommendations:** Offer insights for enhancing alumni engagement based on findings.

Methods

The study used a quantitative research design, collecting data through a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, Two-way ANOVA, and Test of Between-Subjects effects were employed to analyze the data and test hypotheses.

Research run under the Positivist Approach: ensures precise and accurate results.

Hypotheses

H 1: Positive relationship between years since graduation and alumni engagement intent.

H 2: Positive relationship between job position and alumni engagement intent.

H 3: Relationship between school faculty and alumni engagement intent.

Significance of the Study

This research provides a fresh perspective on alumni engagement by focusing on graduates' potential willingness rather than actual involvement. The findings will help universities improve alumni relations, increase contributions, and strengthen community among graduates.

Literature review

The literature review in our study began by creating a comprehensive definition for the two main subjects of investigation: graduates and alumni engagement. Alumni refers to individuals who have completed their undergraduate degree from the institution being studied. To be included in the research, alumni should have graduated at least one year before the study took place. This helped to ensure that alumni have had an opportunity to demonstrate engagement with their alma mater [1]. When it comes to alumni engagement studies, several variables can have an impact. Here are a few key variables that influence alumni engagement: Communication, Networking opportunities, Relevance of programming, Alumni satisfaction during their educational experience [2].

It's important to note that these variables may vary based on the unique characteristics of each alumni population and the specific goals of the institution or organization. Understanding and addressing these variables can help enhance alumni engagement and foster a lifelong connection between alumni and their alma mater.

The literature review in our study began by creating a comprehensive definition for the two main subjects of investigation: graduates and alumni engagement. Alumni refers to individuals who have completed their undergraduate degree from the institution being studied. To be included in the research, alumni should have graduated at least one year before the study took place. This helped to ensure that alumni have had an opportunity to demonstrate engagement with their alma mater [1].

Research suggests that recent graduates are generally more engaged with their alma mater compared to those who graduated several years ago. Recent graduates often feel a stronger connection to their university and are more likely to participate in alumni events, volunteer opportunities, and mentorship programs. They may still be in the early stages of their careers and have a fresh memory of their university experience, which motivates them to maintain

active involvement [3]. On the other hand, as time passes since graduation, alumni may become less engaged due to competing personal and professional priorities. They may also feel that their connection to the university has weakened over time. However, some studies suggest that engagement can resurface later in life, especially when alumni experience major life events or milestones, such as career changes, promotions, or starting a family [2].

As for measurement, alumni engagement can be calculated using various metrics and variables. Some studies suggest using separate metrics that summarize engagement activities. D. Allenby in his study introduces a simple metric called "Percentage of Engaged Alumni" (PEA). PEA is calculated by dividing the number of engaged alumni (those who have participated in activities, made donations, or shown support) by the total number of alumni. This metric provides an overall view of alumni engagement and allows institutions to track progress over time. The author emphasizes the importance of collecting accurate data and tailoring engagement strategies based on alumni interests and preferences. By regularly monitoring PEA and analyzing the results, institutions can identify areas for improvement and develop targeted initiatives to enhance alumni engagement [4].

If earlier studies focused predominantly on alumni engagement from a financial perspective, specifically alumni donations and contributions as the primary indicator of their active involvement, more recent research has divided engagement into multiple categories. These studies analyze the impact of each category individually as well as in combination.

One of the research projects uses a framework that shows the 4 main categories of alumni engagement, and the main measurements of variables of each category: Philanthropic engagement, Volunteer engagement, Experiential engagement, Communication engagement [5].

The primary focus of the study was alumni engagement, and the literature search was based on establishing measures that could effectively and accurately assess engagement. Here are a few common ways to calculate alumni engagement: Event Attendance, Volunteer Participation, Communication and Interaction, Career Support, Giving and Donations, Alumni Surveys [4]. There was found studies about alumni engagement and satisfaction, and their subsequent involvement in volunteerism and philanthropy. It was observed that alumni who reported higher levels of engagement and satisfaction were more likely to actively participate in volunteering activities and contribute financially to their alma mater. This study also found that alumni who had positive experiences during their time at the institution were more likely to become engaged and satisfied alumni [6].

In other studies, observed in literature, the positive influence of alumni engagement on the reputation and resources of the institutions take place. For instance, recent Indian study highlights the benefits for the alumni, such as access to career opportunities, professional development, and a sense of belonging to the alma mater. The authors conclude that a strong alumni network can contribute to the overall success of higher education institutions by fostering a culture of collaboration, learning, and support [7].

Several variables can have an impact on alumni engagement. First one is communication: Effective communication plays a vital role in engaging alumni. Variables such as the frequency

and quality of communication, the channels used (e.g., email, social media), and the relevance and personalization of content all influence alumni engagement. Inclusion and diversity also can influence on alumni engagement. Creating an inclusive environment that values and embraces diversity can lead to higher levels of alumni engagement. When alumni feel that their backgrounds and perspectives are celebrated, they are more likely to engage with their alma mater [8].

Encouraging alumni to give back to their alma mater, whether through monetary donations or volunteering, can significantly impact engagement [9]. Variables such as the effectiveness of fundraising campaigns, the clarity of the impact of donations, and recognition of alumni contributions can influence engagement in this regard. One of the studies demonstrated that young alumni attendance at events leads to giving, the higher education administrator and development officer should remain confident that this will lead to continued giving in the future as the young alumni donor ages [3].

Methods

This study employed a positivist approach and utilized a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between three factors and alumni engagement. The quantitative research design was selected for this study as it enables precise and accurate results that are easily understandable.

Data for this study was collected through a questionnaire adapted from existing literature. The study focused specifically on graduates from a Kazakhstani university, assessing their willingness to engage in the alumni association after their graduation. The total population for this study consisted of 7,116 graduates. To achieve a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error within $\pm 5\%$, a minimum of 365 responses was deemed necessary. Out of 528(7.4%) respondents, only 488(6.8%) were considered due to incomplete answers in some questionnaires.

The study also examined the respondents' profiles in terms of their graduation year, school faculty, and work position, as these variables served as moderators in the research [10]. Inferential statistics were used to test the proposed hypotheses. The study employed various methods to analyze the relationship between variables, including descriptive statistics, Two-way ANOVA, and the Test of Between-Subjects effects [11].

Research question:

What are alumni characteristics for willingness to actively engage in alumni association in young Kazakhstani university?

Research sub-questions:

1. There is a significant and positive relationship between years passed after graduation and alumni intentness to engage
2. There is a significant and positive relationship between the graduate's work position and alumni intentness to engage
3. There is a significant and relationship between school faculty and alumni intentness to engage

Results

Table 1

The profile of the respondents in terms of the year after graduation, school faculty, job position and engagement points

| Variable | Category | Number | Percentage |
|----------|------------|--------|------------|
| Year | 1 | 191 | 39.1% |
| | 2 | 6 | 1.2% |
| | 3 | 43 | 8.8% |
| | 4 | 45 | 9.2% |
| | 5 | 59 | 12.1% |
| | 6 | 47 | 9.6% |
| | 7 | 46 | 9.4% |
| | 8 | 23 | 4.7% |
| | 9 | 28 | 5.7% |
| Position | Head | 86 | 17.6% |
| | Intern | 29 | 5.9% |
| | Junior | 90 | 18.4% |
| | Middle | 191 | 39.1% |
| | Supervisor | 92 | 18.9% |
| Faculty | F1 | 127 | 26.0% |
| | F2 | 24 | 4.9% |
| | F3 | 12 | 2.5% |
| | F4 | 52 | 10.7% |
| | F5 | 2 | 0.4% |
| | F6 | 39 | 8.0% |
| | F7 | 114 | 23.4% |
| | | | 24.2% |

Table 1 provides a detailed profile of the respondents categorized by the number of years after graduation, school faculty, job position, and engagement points.

- **Year after Graduation:** The majority of respondents graduated 1 year ago (39.1%), followed by those who graduated 5 years ago (12.1%). The least number of respondents graduated 2 years ago (1.2%).

- **Job Position:** Most respondents hold a Middle-level position (39.1%), with Junior-level positions being the second most common (18.4%). Interns comprise the smallest group (5.9%).

- **School Faculty:** Respondents are spread across various faculties, with the highest representation from Faculty 1 (26.0%) and Faculty 8 (24.2%). Faculty 5 has the least representation (0.4%).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for variables Engagement and School Faculty

Variables: Engagement * School Faculty

| Faculty | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error of Mean |
|---------|------|-----|----------------|--------------------|
| F1 | .82 | 127 | 1.405 | .125 |
| F2 | .88 | 24 | 1.424 | .291 |
| F3 | 1.17 | 12 | 1.850 | .534 |
| F4 | 1.08 | 52 | 1.595 | .221 |
| F5 | .00 | 2 | .000 | .000 |
| F6 | .49 | 39 | 1.121 | .179 |
| F7 | .75 | 114 | 1.380 | .129 |
| F8 | .66 | 118 | 1.416 | .130 |
| Total | .77 | 488 | 1.414 | .064 |

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the constructs measuring alumni engagement and school faculty by looking into the mean and standard deviation for each variable. This study used a 7-point scale, where respondent showed from 7 type of different activities for engagement in alumni association. With 0 denoting “No any intention to engage” and 7 denoting “willing to engage in all activities”. The higher mean score presented by two school faculties “Faculty 3” with mean 1.17 (SD=1.85) and “Faculty 4” with mean 1.08 (SD=1.595). This showed that for the two faculties with higher intention to engage this engagement level reaches 1 activity at most. All other faculties tent to present lower average levels of graduate’s intentness, several of them could be approximately zero.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics for variables Engagement and Year

Variables: Engagement * Year

| Year | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error of Mean |
|------|------|-----|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | .68 | 191 | 1.436 | .104 |
| 2 | 2.50 | 6 | 3.017 | 1.232 |
| 3 | .79 | 43 | 1.283 | .196 |
| 4 | .49 | 45 | .843 | .126 |
| 5 | .97 | 59 | 1.508 | .196 |
| 6 | .70 | 47 | 1.082 | .158 |
| 7 | .85 | 46 | 1.398 | .206 |
| 8 | .65 | 23 | 1.434 | .299 |

| | | | | |
|-------|------|-----|-------|------|
| 9 | 1.21 | 28 | 1.771 | .335 |
| Total | .77 | 488 | 1.414 | .064 |

Table 3 presents a summary of means, standard deviations, standard error of the means and number of respondents for the intention to engage and graduation year variables. Among the different graduation years, those who had graduated two years prior had the highest mean score of 2.50, indicating a higher average intention to engage. This aligns with previous research that suggests recent graduates are generally more engaged and willing to participate [1] and even more willing to engage. Overall, the composite mean score of 0.77 (SD=1.414) indicates that, on average, graduates have a relatively lower intention to engage and typically prefer to participate in one activity at most or not at all.

The next part of results is based on univariate analysis of the variances (UNIANOVA), which evaluates whether either of the two independent variables or their interaction are statistically significant with regards to the dependent variable.

Table 4

Test of between subject effects

Dependent Variable: Engagement

| Source | | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Intercept | Hypothesis | 41.622 | 1 | 41.622 | 24.040 | <.001 |
| | Error | 155.117 | 89.594 | 1.731a | | |
| Year after graduation | Hypothesis | 34.302 | 16 | 2.144 | .846 | .631 |
| | Error | 234.050 | 92.404 | 2.533b | | |
| Position | Hypothesis | 5.821 | 5 | 1.164 | .488 | .785 |
| | Error | 300.368 | 125.817 | 2.387c | | |
| Year after graduation * Position | Hypothesis | 148.190 | 50 | 2.964 | 1.629 | .006 |
| | Error | 756.800 | 416 | 1.819d | | |

- a. .326 MS (Position) + .110 MS (Year* Position) + .564 MS (Error)
- b. .624 MS (Year * Position) + .376 MS (Error)
- c. .496 MS (Year * Position) + .504 MS (Error)
- d. MS (Error)

The results presented in the Table 4 indicate that there is a significant interaction effect (p-value=0.006) between the variables of "year after graduation" and "work position". This suggests that as more time passes since graduation, participants tend to have higher work positions. However, when examining the mean interest in work position separately for different work positions and years after graduation, there was no statistically significant difference observed.

Table 5

Test of between subject effects

Dependent Variable: Engagement

| Source | | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------|-------|
| Intercept | Hypothesis Error | 44.140 61.678 | 1 23.790 | 44.140 2.593a | 17.025 | <.001 |
| Faculty | Hypothesis Error | 9.586 134.453 | 7 81.686 | 1.369 1.646b | .832 | .564 |
| Position | Hypothesis Error | 21.545 188.649 | 5 111.440 | 4.309 1.693c | 2.545 | .032 |
| Faculty * Position | Hypothesis Error | 31.026 900.736 | 22 453 | 1.410 1.988d | .709 | .832 |

- a. .274 MS (Position) + .054 MS (Faculty * Position) + .672 MS (Error)
 b. .592 MS (Faculty * Position) + .408 MS (Error)
 c. .511 MS (Faculty * Position) + .489 MS (Error)
 d. MS (Error)

In Table 5 A 2(Work position: from intern to head) and 2(School faculty: Faculty 1 to 8) between subjects ANOVA was conducted to study respondents' willingness to engage. The results presented in the table indicate that there is no statistical evidence for interaction effect between variables of work position and school faculty (p-value=0.832) with regards to respondents' willingness to engage. Main effect of the "work position" variable is statistical significance (p-value=0.032) when others variables are held constant. This mean that different positions could have different engagement levels compared to shell faculty groups.

Table 6

Dummy variable test results

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | .529 | .101 | | 5.241 | <.001 |
| Supervisor | .384 | .177 | .106 | 2.171 | .030 |
| Intern | -.253 | .278 | -.042 | -.910 | .363 |
| Junior | .505 | .178 | .139 | 2.830 | .005 |
| Head | .541 | .181 | .146 | 2.987 | .003 |

a. Dependent Variable: Engagement

Table 6 shows the fact that the expected difference in the graduate's willingness to engage is statistically significant for the head, junior and supervisor positions (p-value are 0.003, 0.005 and 0.03 respectively), holding other independent variables constant. The higher position, the higher b-coefficient, which shows increase in engagement points for graduates.

Conclusions and recommendations

The purpose of this paper was to examine the intention of graduates to engage in alumni activities after graduation. The study utilized a quantitative research design and collected data through a questionnaire adapted from the literature review. The population for the study consisted of graduates from a Kazakhstani university, with a total of 7116 potential respondents.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and assess the levels of alumni engagement based on variables such as graduation year, school faculty, and work position. The results from descriptive statistics indicated that on average, graduates had a lower intention to engage in alumni activities, with some faculties showing higher levels of engagement than others. The study also found that recent graduates showed higher levels of intention to engage compared to those who had been graduate early.

The analysis also examined the interaction between the variables of graduation year and work position. It was identified that there was a significant effect of this interaction, indicating that as more time passes since graduation, respondents tend to have higher work positions. However, there were no significant differences in mean interest in alumni activities between different work positions or years after graduation when examined separately.

Overall, this study provides insights into the intention to engage in alumni activities among graduates, highlighting the importance of considering factors like graduation year and work position in understanding alumni engagement.

The main recommendation could be based on targeting high-level professionals. Universities should focus on engaging alumni who hold higher positions in their careers. These individuals have a larger potential to contribute to the university in terms of financial resources, mentorship opportunities, and professional networking. Identify and nurture alumni who show potential for future success in their respective fields. By establishing relationships with these individuals early on, universities can foster a sense of loyalty and engagement that may lead to significant contributions in the future. Conduct periodic surveys or research studies to assess alumni engagement levels and identify areas for improvement. This will help institutions stay updated with the changing needs and preferences of their alumni community.

The contribution of the authors.

Smolyakova E. conceptualized the research and supervised the project, collected the data. Contributed to the writing and editing of the article, managed the literature review, contributed to the writing of the introduction and background sections, and assisted in the final editing of the article. Participated in writing the results and discussion sections.

Syrlybay A. assisted with data analysis, conducted statistical tests, provided resources for the tests, and contributed to the writing the results.

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Түлектердің қатысуын талдау: қазақстандық университет үлгісіндегі сандық әдіс

Андатпа. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты түлектердің Қазақстан университеттеріндегі Түлектер қауымдастығының дамуына қатысуға және үлес қосуға дайындығын зерттеу болып табылады. Осы салада жүргізілген зерттеулердің көпшілігі түлектер іс жүзінде қатысқан нақты әрекеттерге бағытталған. Мысалы, волонтерлік жұмыс немесе ақшалай қайырымдылық сияқты, алайда бұл зерттеу түлектердің әртүрлі іс-шараларға, Түлектер қауымдастығының іс-шараларына және университетпен қарым-қатынасқа қатысуға қанша уақыт, мүмкіндіктер мен тілектер бар екенін түсінуге тырысады.

Бұған дейін біз 2023 жылдың қараша айында жүргізген сапалы талдауда түлектердің қауымдастықтардағы белсенділігінің төмендеу себептерінің бірі түлектер мен университет арасындағы байланыста инфрақұрылымның жетіспеушілігі болуы мүмкін екендігі анықталды. Зерттеу алдыңғы талдаудың логикалық жалғасы болып табылады, бірақ бұл сандық талдауға негізделген. Деректерді жинау гипотезаны тестілеу шеңберінде зерттелген әдебиеттер негізінде жасалған сауалнама арқылы жүзеге асырылды. Деректерді талдау үшін түлектердің үш сипаттамасы қолданылды: университетті бітіргеннен кейінгі жылдар саны, факультет және қазіргі лауазым. Талдау көрсеткендей, орта есеппен түлектер өз университеттерінің қауымдастығын дамытуға қатысуға дайын емес. Зерттеу барысында бітірген жылы мен түлек лауазымы арасындағы байланыс анықталды, атап айтқанда, бітіргеннен кейінгі жылдар санының артуымен респонденттер жоғары лауазымдық позицияларға ие болады. Сондай-ақ, жоғары лауазымды түлектер Түлектер қауымдастығының дамуына қатысуға дайын екендігі анықталды. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу аясында факультеттің түлектің қауымдастықтарды дамытуға үлес қосуға және қатысуға деген ұмтылысына әсері анықталған жоқ.

Түйін сөздер: бітірушілер қауымдастығы, бітірушілердің қатысуы, түлектермен байланысы, бітірушілердің қатысуы, түлектермен қарым-қатынасы.

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**Анализ вовлеченности выпускников: количественный метод на примере
Казахстанского университета**

Аннотация. Цель данного исследования заключается в изучении готовности выпускников принимать участие и вносить вклад в развитие ассоциации выпускников в университетах Казахстана.

Большинство изученных исследований в данной сфере были сосредоточены на конкретных действиях, в которых выпускники фактически принимали участие. Например, таких, как волонтерская работа или денежные пожертвования, однако данное исследование стремится понять, сколько времени, возможностей и желания имеют выпускники для участия в различных мероприятиях, событиях ассоциации выпускников и коммуникации с университетом. Ранее в проведенном нами качественном анализе в ноябре 2023 года было выявлено, что одной из причин низкой активности выпускников в ассоциациях может быть нехватка инфраструктуры в связи между выпускниками и университетом. Данное исследование является логическим продолжением, но уже основано на количественном анализе. Сбор данных осуществлялся с помощью анкеты, созданной на основе изученной литературы в рамках тестирования гипотезы. Для анализа данных использовались три характеристики выпускников: количество лет после выпуска из университета, факультет и текущая должность.

Анализ показал, что в среднем у выпускников наблюдается низкая готовность принимать участие в развитии ассоциации своего университета. В рамках исследования была определена взаимосвязь между годом выпуска и должностью выпускника, а именно то, что с увеличением количества лет после выпуска респонденты имеют тенденцию занимать более высокие должностные позиции. Также было определено, что выпускники с более высокими должностями больше готовы принимать участие в развитии ассоциации выпускников. Дополнительно, в рамках исследования не было выявлено влияния факультета на желание выпускника вносить вклад и принимать участие в развитии ассоциаций.

Ключевые слова: ассоциация выпускников, вовлеченность выпускников, коммуникация выпускников, участие выпускников, взаимосвязь между выпускниками.

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