



BARRIERS TO LIFELONG LEARNING AMONG MARRIED STUDENTS: CASE OF KAZAKHSTAN

BARRERAS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE PERMANENTE ENTRE ESTUDIANTES CASADOS: EL CASO DE KAZAJISTÁN

Serikkhan Zhuzeyev¹

E-mail: serik_juzeev@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6552-9584>

Zharkynbek Abikenov¹

E-mail: abikenovkz@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7950-330X>

Yessenkul Uisinbayeva¹

E-mail: esenya_84@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3939-2403>

Gaukhar Seitova¹

E-mail: gaukhar1306@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5659-1821>

Gulnara Omarova²

E-mail: gulnar-aidos@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9966-2650>

¹ Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University, Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan.

² Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

*Corresponding author

Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Zhuzeyev, S., Abikenov, Z., Uisinbayeva, Y., Seitova, G., & Omarova, G. (2026). Barriers to lifelong learning among married students: case of Kazakhstan. *Revista Conrado*, 22(112), e5751.

ABSTRACT

The study investigates family-related barriers to the lifelong learning of Kazakhstan's married students and the implications for workforce development and human resource policy. The empirical basis of the research is a survey of 100 married students at Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University. By the results, the most common factors listed were time, financial pressure, lack of family care and emotional support, stress, lack of concentration, and attendance. Respondents reported the most stress from their university and household duties ($M = 4.01$), the lack of family support ($M = 3.95$), being late for classes ($M = 3.94$), and the lack of time for private and family life ($M = 3.93$). The results of the study suggest that married learners' motivations and barriers to participate in continuing education are influenced by family workload, economic and psychological stress. From an HRM perspective, the findings are relevant for developing inclusive training, reskilling and lifelong learning policies for working adult learners with family responsibilities. It also recommends that flexible working hours, targeted aid and consideration for family responsibilities should be part of sustainable workforce development.

Keywords:

Students, Well-Being, Lifelong Learning, Family Responsibilities, Education

RESUMEN

El estudio investiga las barreras familiares para el aprendizaje permanente de los estudiantes casados de Kazajistán y sus implicaciones para el desarrollo de la fuerza laboral y la política de recursos humanos. La base empírica de la investigación es una encuesta realizada a 100 estudiantes casados de la Universidad Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda. Según los resultados, los factores más comunes mencionados fueron el tiempo, la presión financiera, la falta de atención familiar y apoyo emocional, el estrés, la falta de concentración y la asistencia. Los encuestados reportaron el mayor estrés derivado de sus obligaciones universitarias y domésticas ($M = 4,01$), la falta de apoyo familiar ($M = 3,95$), llegar tarde a clases ($M = 3,94$) y la falta de tiempo para la vida privada y familiar ($M = 3,93$). Los resultados del estudio sugieren que las motivaciones y barreras de los estudiantes casados para participar en la educación continua están influenciadas por la carga de trabajo familiar, el estrés económico y psicológico. Desde



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

la perspectiva de la gestión de recursos humanos, los hallazgos son relevantes para el desarrollo de políticas inclusivas de formación, reciclaje profesional y aprendizaje permanente para adultos trabajadores con responsabilidades familiares. Asimismo, se recomienda que la flexibilidad horaria, la ayuda específica y la consideración de las responsabilidades familiares formen parte del desarrollo sostenible de la fuerza laboral.

Palabras clave:

Estudiantes, Bienestar, Aprendizaje Permanente, Responsabilidades Familiares, Educación

INTRODUCTION

Married students represent a specific group of adult learners whose educational trajectories are closely connected with future workforce participation, professional development, and human capital formation. Their ability to continue education while fulfilling family responsibilities is relevant not only for higher education policy, but also for human resource management, since lifelong learning and reskilling increasingly depend on the capacity of individuals to combine training, work, and family roles (Mafa et al., 2024; Smadi, 2020).

From a human resource management perspective, these constraints are relevant, as they may influence individuals' ability to participate in continuous training, skill development, and future employment trajectories (Nurjonov et al., 2026).

Family life during college can take a major emotional toll on students. Many struggle with complex relationship dynamics, such as the phenomenon of "semester marriages," where students rush into temporary relationships during their time in school (Mafa et al., 2024). These brief unions often end in heartbreak, regret, and sometimes even lead to difficult situations like hidden pregnancies and abortions that can derail academic progress. The constant juggling act between family responsibilities and coursework creates intense pressure, as students try desperately to succeed in both areas while their mental health suffers.

Language barriers and academic challenges create significant obstacles for students combining education with family responsibilities in Kazakhstan (Abakirov et al., 2025). The transition to English-medium instruction (EMI) places additional demands on these students, as they have to master both course content and academic language simultaneously. Many face difficulties in understanding complex material, expanding professional vocabulary, and meeting academic writing standards while also fulfilling family obligations (Munthe et al., 2023). These constraints may limit their participation in further training and professional development, which is relevant for human resource

management because language proficiency and continuous learning are increasingly important for workforce development and employability (Tajik et al., 2022).

The consequences of these changes are not limited to academic performance. English-medium instruction and the implementation of a three-language educational model may deepen existing inequalities, especially among students from rural backgrounds or those with limited access to prior language preparation. For married students and student parents, these difficulties may be reinforced by limited time resources, family obligations, and the need to navigate institutional support services.

Married students, who may be required to balance studying with domestic responsibilities and working to support relatives, may suffer from time pressures and psychological stress. These overlapping roles may negatively affect academic performance and reduce students' engagement in coursework. Time constraints can also limit access to additional learning opportunities, consultations, and independent study. As a result, married students often have to maintain academic progress under conditions of financial pressure and family-related obligations.

Kazakhstan's policy of trilingual education and the growing emphasis on global competitiveness have increased the importance of language proficiency and academic adaptability in higher education. However, these requirements may create additional barriers for students who already combine study with family responsibilities, employment, or childcare. In this context, educational support should be based on empirical evidence and should take into account the specific constraints faced by different groups of learners (Smagulov et al., 2025).

Recent research examines how digital tools can help us better understand the complex challenges that student parents face in college. By examining social, cultural, and academic patterns, researchers identified key factors that impact these students' success (Nagima et al., 2024; Ramazanov et al., 2021). These findings could help universities develop more effective support programs and create a more inclusive educational environment for students with families.

Research on student parents gained momentum in the US and other Western nations during the 1950s, as scholars began examining their unique challenges, adaptation processes, and educational barriers.

Moore & Hinkle (1971) traced the surge of married students to the post-WWII era, when universities saw a dramatic increase in enrollment among this group. While universities responded by offering practical support such as affordable housing, childcare facilities, and laundry services, the researchers argued that these solutions

overlooked crucial needs for social integration and academic support.

In an earlier study, Chambliss (1961) highlighted how married students' experiences differed markedly from those of their single peers, often leading to conflicting roles and priorities. He emphasized the importance of making higher education more accessible and engaging for this population, noting that juggling family obligations with coursework often hindered their ability to fully integrate into campus life.

Research from the 1960s offers some surprising insights that still ring true for today's married students in Kazakhstan. Aller's (1963) study found that students who were already married when starting college actually adapted quite well to university life - an observation that feels particularly relevant given how Kazakh students still struggle to balance their various commitments.

Dressel's (1965) research highlighted a concerning trend: married students tended to participate less in campus life and activities. This limited engagement runs counter to what many consider essential to the college experience. To address this, he suggested creating targeted support programs and financial aid - ideas that could help Kazakhstan better support its married student population today.

The challenges facing married students, especially women, go beyond just practical concerns. Hewer & Neubeck's (1964) study revealed how cultural attitudes and gender expectations heavily influence how people view married women pursuing education. This finding particularly resonates in Kazakhstan, where many female students find themselves torn between traditional family duties and their academic ambitions.

Research on marriage stability and family dynamics has evolved significantly since Locke & Wallace's (1959) work, which introduced shortened assessment tools that remain relevant for measuring marital satisfaction and family compatibility today.

Looking at how family life affects education, Greenberg & DeCoster's (1976) study found that factors such as student age, economic background, and whether students had children significantly impact academic success. Their work highlighted why universities need flexible support systems tailored to different student types rather than one-size-fits-all approaches.

Ford Sori et al. (2007) explored the challenges of balancing graduate studies with family life and documented the emotional toll on student parents. Their findings about

high stress levels among student parents ring true not just in Kazakhstan but globally.

Ermasova's et al. (2020) dug deeper into how relationship status affects students' ability to cope with university life. Their research showed interesting gender differences - particularly that female students were more likely to seek emotional support. This underscores the need for culturally sensitive student support services in Kazakhstan.

Kim's (2014) research on international students revealed fascinating patterns about how family ties influence decisions to study abroad. Using complex statistical modeling, Kim found that single students were more likely to remain in their host country, while those with families often faced pressure to return home - showing how family status shapes both educational and migration choices.

These findings provide crucial insights for Kazakhstan's higher education system as it works to support family students. The research consistently shows that student parents face unique challenges balancing their studies with family obligations, highlighting the need for flexible learning options, financial assistance, and emotional support that take into account cultural and gender dynamics.

Universities worldwide are recognizing that family students need specialized support to succeed academically while managing household responsibilities. This calls for innovative programs that offer schedule flexibility, enhanced support services, and recognition of cultural factors that affect student-parents' educational journeys. The challenges faced by student parents in Kazakhstan deserve closer attention, especially since their numbers continue to grow each year. Understanding the unique obstacles these students face in pursuing their education is crucial to developing effective support systems. Our research uses quantitative data to identify the specific barriers that student parents face in Kazakhstan's educational system.

The purpose of this study is to identify the specific academic, social, family-related, and psycho-emotional barriers faced by married students in Kazakhstan and to discuss their implications for inclusive education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and HR-related support policies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Authors of the article employed a quantitative research method to examine the barriers faced by married adult students in combining education, family responsibilities, and future workforce participation. The research focused on factors that may affect academic engagement, psycho-emotional well-being, time management, and the capacity for continuous learning and professional development.

The empirical data were collected from 100 married students at Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University. Respondents represented different academic programs and years of study. Participation was voluntary, but all participants had to combine higher education with family responsibilities.

Before participation, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. No personally identifiable information was collected or used in the analysis.

In the context of this study, married students are considered as adult learners whose educational trajectories are relevant for human capital formation, employability, and workforce development.

Data were collected through the use of a structured questionnaire that consisted of 29 items across four groups of indicators: academic difficulties, social difficulties, family-related difficulties, and difficulties that influence study, time use, and psycho-emotional state (Table 1) The five-point Likert scale ranged from 1, meaning “strongly disagree”, to 5, meaning “strongly agree”.

The survey data were processed using JASP statistical software. Descriptive statistics were calculated to identify the most pronounced barriers experienced by respondents. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine associations between different groups of difficulties, including academic performance, family responsibilities, time constraints, financial pressure, and psychological stress. The results were interpreted from the perspective of inclusive education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and HR-related support policies.

Table 1: A dedicated survey framework measuring the academic, social, family and general difficulties of family students.

No	Variable/ Construct	Item
	Academic Difficulties	AD1: I cannot get good grades like other students.
		AD2: I lack effective study skills.
		AD3: The course load is too heavy.
		AD4: I don't have time to prepare for lessons at home.
		AD5: I often arrive late to classes.
		AD6: The university does not provide special conditions for married students.
		AD7: Due to academic tasks, I often spend time outside the home.
	Social Difficulties	SD8: I cannot interact freely with other students at university.
		SD9: I don't have time to deal with personal matters.
		SD10: I have to perform multiple tasks simultaneously.
		SD11: During class, I worry about matters at home.
		SD12: My family responsibilities are often neglected.
	Family Difficulties	FD13: I do not receive sufficient financial support from my spouse (or family).
		FD14: I do not receive support from in-laws or parents.
		FD15: I don't have time to cook at home.
		FD16: I often arrive late to classes.
		FD17: I have little time to spend with my child(ren).
		FD18: Child-rearing responsibilities at home are entirely on me.
		FD19: There is little understanding from relatives.

		ID20: The quality of my work at home and at university has decreased.
		ID21: Financial difficulties have affected the quality of my studies.
		ID22: Lack of support from my spouse holds me back.
		ID23: My academic performance has worsened.
		ID24: I feel guilty for not spending enough time with my child.
		ID25: I have no free time at all.
		ID26: I feel inferior compared to other students.
		ID27: Stress due to university and household responsibilities occurs frequently.
		ID28: There are interruptions in my class attendance.
		ID29: It is difficult for me to concentrate in class.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey results show that married students experience a combination of academic, social, family-related, and psycho-emotional difficulties that may affect their educational engagement and capacity for further professional development. Since continuing education is an important component of human capital formation, these barriers are relevant not only for higher education institutions but also for HR-related policies aimed at supporting lifelong learning and workforce development.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of family student responses to academic difficulties (AD1-AD7).

Descriptive Statistics							
	AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7
Valid	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.730	3.770	3.850	3.600	3.940	3.640	3.660
Std. Deviation	1.213	1.238	1.132	1.025	1.043	1.177	1.130
Minimum	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for academic difficulties, that shows that average scores ranging from 3.60 to 3.94 across measures. What really stands out is that lateness to class seems to be a major issue, scoring the highest at 3.94 (AD5). On the flip side, fewer students reported struggling with homework preparation, with AD4 scoring the lowest at 3.60. The findings are relevant from a lifelong learning perspective, where the same attendance, workload and study skills issues may also affect participation in vocational training, reskilling and career development programs.

The spread in responses wasn't too extreme, with standard deviations ranging from 1.025 to 1.238. This tells us that, while students' experiences varied, most responses clustered relatively closely around these averages. These findings suggest that while family students do face academic hurdles, the impact varies from student to student - some might be really struggling while others are managing just fine.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of family student responses to social difficulties (SD8-SD12).

	SD8	SD9	SD10	SD11	SD12
Valid	100	100	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.870	3.930	3.610	3.920	3.770
Std. Deviation	1.169	1.121	1.205	1.061	1.188
Minimum	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000

Table 3 summarizes the indicators of social difficulties. The highest mean values were recorded for lack of time for personal matters (SD9, $M = 3.93$) and concern about home-related matters during classes (SD11, $M = 3.92$). These results indicate that social and family roles continue to affect respondents during the learning process and may reduce concentration, engagement, and participation in the educational environment.

In HRM terms, such findings point to the relevance of work–life balance and role conflict. Individuals who combine learning with family responsibilities may require more flexible institutional arrangements if they are to participate effectively in continuous education and future workplace training.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of family student responses to family difficulties (FD13-FD19).

Descriptive Statistics							
	FD13	FD14	FD15	FD16	FD17	FD18	FD19
Valid	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.730	3.880	3.650	3.900	3.770	3.790	3.950
Std. Deviation	1.118	1.057	1.192	1.096	1.145	1.094	0.989
Minimum	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000

Table 4 shows that family-related difficulties were also pronounced. The highest mean was recorded for lack of understanding from relatives (FD19, $M = 3.95$), followed by lateness to classes connected with family duties (FD16, $M = 3.90$) and insufficient support from parents or in-laws (FD14, $M = 3.88$). These results indicate that family support is an important condition for educational continuity among married learners.

The findings are relevant for HR-related support policies because family responsibilities and insufficient informal support may become barriers to professional development, especially for employees who need to combine work, training, and caregiving responsibilities.

Day-to-day tasks are also a major struggle. Many students reported not having enough time for basic chores like cleaning and laundry (3.90), while others felt overwhelmed by childcare responsibilities (3.88). The feeling of carrying the entire burden of raising a child alone scored 3.79, showing just how challenging it can be to balance parenting with studies.

Interestingly, finding time to cook at home seemed to be less of an issue, though still significant, with a score of 3.65. While students' responses were fairly consistent (ranging from 0.989 to 1.192), it's clear that individual experiences differ.

Looking at the bigger picture, these findings show that juggling family responsibilities and limited family support takes a serious toll on students' academic performance and emotional well-being.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics on the impact of various difficulties on family students (ID20-ID29).

Descriptive Statistics										
	ID20	ID21	ID22	ID23	ID24	ID25	ID26	ID27	ID28	ID29
Valid	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.650	3.750	3.830	3.800	3.720	3.700	3.830	4.010	3.710	3.820
Std. Deviation	1.258	1.132	1.074	1.163	1.207	1.235	1.146	1.124	1.076	1.077
Minimum	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Maximum	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000

Looking at Table 5, we can see how students with families struggle to balance their academic and home lives. Most notably, students strongly agreed that they frequently experience stress from juggling university and household responsibilities (ID27, mean = 4.01). This finding really highlights the emotional toll of being both a student and a parent. These

results show that the barriers faced by married students are not limited to formal academic difficulties. They include stress, reduced concentration, financial pressure, and insufficient support. In the context of HRM, these indicators correspond to issues of employee well-being, role overload, and sustainable participation in training and development.

The data also reveals other significant challenges. Students reported difficulty concentrating on their studies (ID29, 3.82), noted how their education suffers when they lack spousal support (ID22, 3.83), and emphasized that financial struggles impact their academic performance (ID26, 3.83). These results paint a clear picture: emotional well-being, money issues, and family support play crucial roles in these students' academic success.

The consistency in responses (standard deviations between 1.07 and 1.25) suggests these challenges are common experiences among student parents. Based on these findings, universities should consider implementing more flexible learning options, offering counseling services, and providing financial assistance programs to better support students with families. To examine the relationships between the academic difficulty indicators, Pearson's correlation analysis was performed, and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Correlation between academic difficulty indicators (Pearson's Correlation).

Pearson's Correlations								
Variable		AD1	AD2	AD3	AD4	AD5	AD6	AD7
1. AD1	Pearson's r	—						
	p-value	—						
2. AD2	Pearson's r	0.207	—					
	p-value	0.039	—					
3. AD3	Pearson's r	-0.184	-0.111	—				
	p-value	0.066	0.270	—				
4. AD4	Pearson's r	-0.071	0.142	-0.070	—			
	p-value	0.480	0.160	0.491	—			
5. AD5	Pearson's r	0.003	0.138	-0.136	0.233	—		
	p-value	0.976	0.171	0.177	0.020	—		
6. AD6	Pearson's r	0.073	-0.092	0.005	0.005	0.032	—	
	p-value	0.472	0.362	0.964	0.960	0.755	—	
7. AD7	Pearson's r	-0.038	0.009	0.007	-0.058	0.051	0.074	—
	p-value	0.706	0.933	0.944	0.569	0.614	0.463	—

Our correlation analysis revealed interesting connections among the different academic challenges students face. Most notably, we found a significant link between students receiving poor grades and struggling with basic learning skills ($r = 0.207$, $p = 0.039$). This makes intuitive sense - when students haven't developed effective study strategies, it naturally shows up in their grades.

For HRM-oriented interpretation, these results suggest that support for adult learners should include not only access to education, but also mechanisms that strengthen learning skills, time management, and the ability to combine training with family and work-related roles. We also found that students who frequently arrived late to class were the same ones who didn't have enough time to complete their homework ($r = 0.233$, $p = 0.020$). This suggests these students might be dealing with broader time management challenges that affect multiple aspects of their academic life.

While we looked at several other potential relationships between academic difficulties, none showed strong correlations that were statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Overall, our findings highlight how certain academic challenges tend to cluster together, particularly around time management, learning skills, and classroom performance. This suggests we need comprehensive solutions that address these interconnected issues, rather than treating each problem in isolation. The correlations between the indicators of social difficulties are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Correlation between social difficulties indicators (Pearson's Correlation).

Pearson's Correlations						
Variable		SD8	SD9	SD10	SD11	SD12
1. SD8	Pearson's r	—				
	p-value	—				
2. SD9	Pearson's r	0.039	—			
	p-value	0.698	—			
3. SD10	Pearson's r	0.057	-0.110	—		
	p-value	0.574	0.276	—		
4. SD11	Pearson's r	0.122	0.089	0.015	—	
	p-value	0.227	0.380	0.883	—	
5. SD12	Pearson's r	-0.087	-0.005	0.071	0.170	—
	p-value	0.388	0.964	0.484	0.092	—

Our analysis of students' social difficulties revealed some interesting patterns. Looking at the correlations between different social challenges (SD8-SD12), we found only weak connections. For instance, while there was a slight positive relationship between students' difficulty communicating with peers (SD8) and managing household responsibilities during class time (SD11), with $r = 0.122$, $p = 0.227$, this was not statistically significant.

Similarly, we observed a weak negative correlation between students who struggle to ask individual questions (SD9) and their ability to multitask (SD10), though this, too, fell short of statistical significance ($r = -0.110$, $p = 0.276$).

What's particularly striking is how independently these social challenges seem to operate. Students with families appear to experience these difficulties in unique ways, with each person responding differently to various social pressures. This highlights how crucial it is for universities to offer personalized support and remain flexible in accommodating students' individual circumstances. Table 8 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients for the family difficulty indicators.

Table 8. Correlation between indicators of family difficulties (Pearson's Correlation).

Pearson's Correlations								
Variable		FD13	FD14	FD15	FD16	FD17	FD18	FD19
1. FD13	Pearson's r	—						
	p-value	—						
2. FD14	Pearson's r	-0.028	—					
	p-value	0.784	—					
3. FD15	Pearson's r	-0.155	0.014	—				
	p-value	0.124	0.887	—				
4. FD16	Pearson's r	0.093	0.190	0.035	—			
	p-value	0.357	0.058	0.731	—			
5. FD17	Pearson's r	-0.025	0.010	0.051	0.094	—		
	p-value	0.802	0.919	0.611	0.351	—		
6. FD18		0.044	-0.022	0.168	0.109	0.034	—	
		0.664	0.828	0.096	0.282	0.740	—	
7. FD19		0.097	-0.064	-0.118	-0.042	-0.082	0.196	—
		0.335	0.528	0.243	0.679	0.419	0.051	—

Our analysis of family-related challenges revealed some interesting but weak connections between different variables. While we found some correlations between family difficulties (FD13-FD19), most weren't strong enough to draw firm conclusions.

Take the link between lack of parental support and tardiness to class, for instance. Though we found a slight positive correlation ($r = 0.190$, $p = 0.058$), it fell short of statistical significance. Similarly, the relationship between single-parenting responsibilities and feeling misunderstood by family members was weak ($r = 0.196$, $p = 0.051$), suggesting a possible trend that warrants further research to confirm.

The other relationships we looked at were even weaker, with correlation values below 0.2 and p-values over 0.1. This tells us that family challenges don't necessarily go hand in hand - students experience and cope with these issues in their own unique ways. Some might struggle with financial pressure, while others deal with emotional support issues; these difficulties can affect their academic performance differently.

Understanding these varied experiences is crucial for universities to develop better support systems for students juggling family responsibilities with their studies. The relationships between the indicators affecting personal life, time use, and psycho-emotional state are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. Pearson correlation coefficients between difficulties affecting the personal life, time, and psycho-emotional state of a family student.

Pearson's Correlations											
Variable		ID20	ID21	ID22	ID23	ID24	ID25	ID26	ID27	ID28	ID29
1. ID20	Pearson's r	—									
	p-value	—									
2. ID21	Pearson's r	0.208	—								
	p-value	0.038	—								
3. ID22	Pearson's r	-0.074	-0.202	—							
	p-value	0.462	0.044	—							
4. ID23	Pearson's r	-0.179	-0.176	0.070	—						
	p-value	0.074	0.079	0.492	—						
5. ID24	Pearson's r	-0.105	-0.059	0.002	0.003	—					
	p-value	0.298	0.559	0.985	0.977	—					
6. ID25		0.029	0.112	-0.107	-0.204	0.058	—				
		0.773	0.267	0.287	0.042	0.565	—				
7. ID26		3.501×10 ⁻⁴	0.014	0.124	0.247	-0.144	-0.136	—			
		0.997	0.893	0.219	0.013	0.152	0.176	—			
8. ID27		-0.169	-0.141	-0.116	-0.053	0.039	0.104	-0.061	—		
		0.093	0.162	0.251	0.604	0.698	0.303	0.544	—		
9. ID28		-0.046	0.081	-0.113	-0.063	-0.048	-0.195	0.123	0.069	—	
		0.650	0.424	0.263	0.534	0.638	0.051	0.221	0.493	—	
10. ID29		-0.211	-0.162	0.157	-0.005	-0.164	0.088	0.130	0.068	0.068	—
		0.035	0.108	0.119	0.962	0.104	0.383	0.196	0.500	0.502	—

Our analysis of the relationship between the personal impact indicators (ID20-ID29) revealed interesting patterns using Pearson's correlation.

These findings indicate that financial pressure and concentration problems are associated with lower perceived effectiveness in both educational and domestic roles. From an HRM perspective, this supports the need to consider financial strain, psychological stress, and family workload when designing inclusive training, employee development, and well-being policies (Popandopulo et al., 2025). First, we spotted a weak but meaningful connection between students' declining performance at home/university (ID20) and how financial stress affects their academics (ID21). When money gets tight, it seems to ripple through both home and school life.

Interestingly, we found that students with less supportive spouses (ID22) were actually more likely to have financial troubles affecting their studies (ID21). This suggests that money problems might be straining these relationships.

We also noticed that as students' overall quality of work slips (ID20), they have a harder time staying focused in class (ID29). It's like a snowball effect - when one area starts suffering, others tend to follow.

While we found these key connections, most other relationships between factors were pretty weak and didn't reach statistical significance. Still, this paints a picture of how deeply interconnected student parents' personal challenges are, with social and psychological factors playing important roles.

These findings highlight how different aspects of life can impact student parents' ability to balance education and family. It's clear that schools need to think carefully about how to better support these students emotionally and psychologically.

To provide an integrated visual representation of the relationships between the different groups of difficulties, a correlation heat map was constructed, as shown in Figure 1.

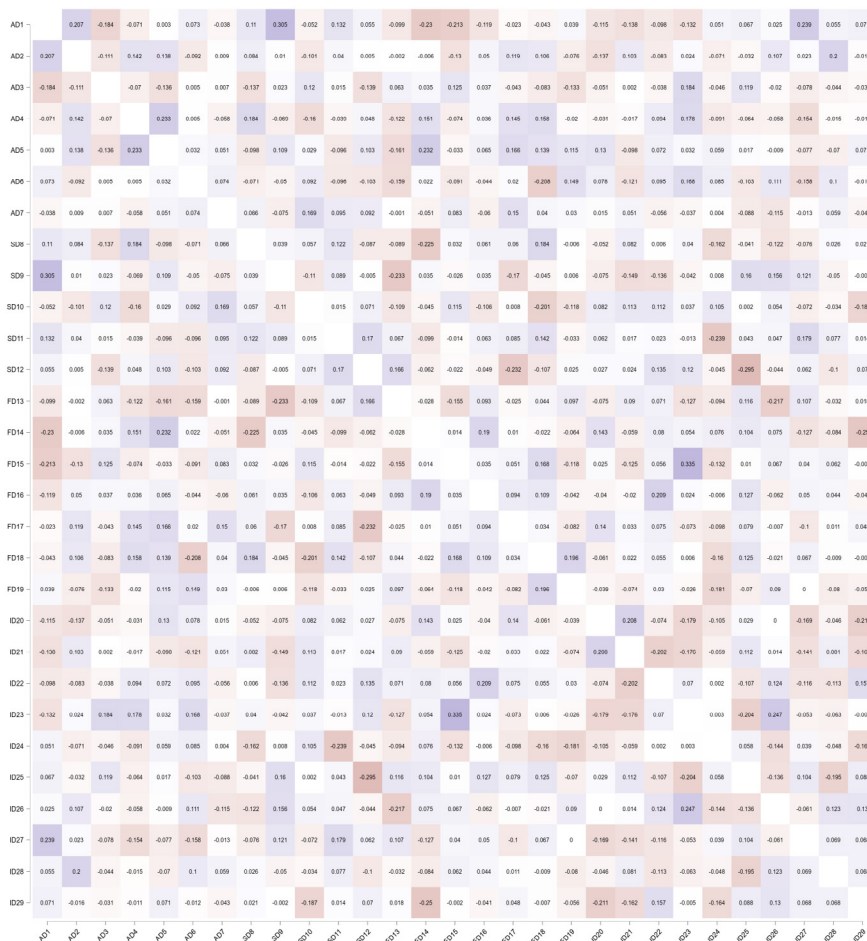


Figure 1. Correlation heat map of the relationship between student difficulties.

As shown in Figure 1, the correlation heat map illustrates how different challenges faced by married students are connected across academic, social, family-related, and psycho-emotional domains. The colors show us exactly how these factors relate, whether positively or negatively.

The data revealed some interesting patterns. For instance, students who struggle to match their peers' grades often also have trouble with reading effectively (correlation of 0.207). This makes sense - these academic challenges tend to go hand in hand.

When it comes to family life, there's a clear link between students who lack parental support and those who end up shouldering all child-raising responsibilities themselves (correlation of 0.196). This suggests that many student parents are doing it all on their own, with little help from family.

The emotional impact is clear, too. Students who have trouble focusing in class often see their work quality slip both at home and school (correlation of -0.211). It's a reminder that emotional well-being plays a huge role in academic performance.

Overall, the heat map shows that academic challenges rarely exist in isolation. There's a complex web connecting students' classroom performance, social lives, family responsibilities, and emotional health. This tells us that universities need to think holistically about supporting student parents, considering all aspects of their lives - not just academics.

Our research at Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University revealed that students face interconnected challenges across academic, social, family, and integration aspects of their university experience. When we looked at the relationships between these different areas, some interesting patterns emerged.

Regarding academic challenges, we found that students who struggled to match their peers' grades also tended to feel they lacked effective study skills ($r = 0.207$, $p < 0.05$). This makes sense - without strong learning strategies, it's naturally harder to perform well academically.

While we did not find strong statistical connections in the social domain, there was a hint that students under social pressure often also carried heavy family responsibilities ($r = 0.170$). This suggests these students might be experiencing emotional strain from trying to balance multiple demands.

Looking at family-related difficulties, students who reported less parental support were more likely to have attendance issues ($r = 0.190$, $p = 0.058$). We also noticed that students juggling childcare responsibilities frequently felt misunderstood by their families ($r = 0.196$, $p = 0.051$), underscoring the importance of family understanding and support.

Finally, we found that students' financial situations directly impacted their academic performance. Those reporting money problems also tended to see a drop in the quality of their work both at home and university ($r = 0.208$, $p =$

0.038). This shows how financial stress can ripple through all aspects of a student's life. Our findings revealed an interesting pattern - students who reported having no free time actually showed slightly better academic performance. This unexpected connection ($r = -0.204$, $p = 0.042$) hints at the intense juggling act many students face between their studies and home life.

Looking at the bigger picture, we found that helping students with families adapt to college life isn't just about academics. It's equally about understanding their social lives, emotional well-being, and family dynamics. These insights make a strong case for universities to step up their support game - whether that's through flexible class schedules, counseling services, or financial aid programs. By addressing these real-world challenges, we can help student parents succeed in their studies while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

CONCLUSIONS

Our research at Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University explored the challenges students face when using digital learning methods, with a focus on creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Using the JASP program for surveys and statistical analysis, we uncovered key factors that impact students' academic performance, emotional well-being, social connections, and family responsibilities.

The findings revealed four main challenges affecting students: academic, social, family, and integration difficulties. On the academic front, students struggled with information overload, ineffective study strategies, and time management. Social barriers made it harder for students to adapt to university life and build meaningful relationships. For students with families, financial struggles, household duties, and limited family support, these factors significantly impacted their daily lives and motivation to study.

From a human resource management perspective, the results are important for discussions on lifelong learning, workforce development and employee well-being" Furthermore, the focus on married learners suggests that educational participation is one of the strongest predictors of future employability and human capital formation" While further or professional education might technically be available, if family obligations, cost of study and psychological pressures are not considered; access becomes problematic"

Thus, there is a need for flexible and inclusive supports such as flexible working hours, counselling services, financial supports, time-management training and family friendly institutional policies" Further, research findings point to the importance of such HR policies for higher

education as well as for employees and potential employees who want to combine work and family commitments with study”

Overall, these findings suggest extending support to married learners within wider labor force development systems for inclusive lifelong learning, creating stronger human capital, and improving the well-being of individuals with family responsibilities by reducing the barriers they face.

This research has been funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Grant AP26101317. The influence of cultural values on the formation of gender roles of the inhabitants of the southern regions of Kazakhstan: traditional and innovative approaches.

REFERENCES

- Abakirov, A., Aushakhmanova, B., Asipova, N., Raimkulova, A., & Tkacheva, S. (2025). Integrating multicultural and learner-centred approaches into continuous technological education: Insights from higher education in Central Asia. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 12, Article 101975. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101975>
- Aller's, F. D. (1963). Some factors in marital adjustment and academic achievement of married students. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 41(7), 609–614. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-4918.1963.tb02355.x>
- Chambliss, R. (1961). Married students at a state university. *Journal of Educational Sociology*, 34(9), 409–416. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2264519>
- Dressel, F. B. (1965). Logic, research and the married college student. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 43(4), 920–924. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-4918.1965.tb02849.x>
- Ermasova, N., Ermasova, E., & Rekhter, N. (2020). Stress and coping of Russian students: Do gender and marital status make a difference? *Educational Studies*, 47(4), 427–443. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2020.1865139>
- Ford Sori, C., Wetchler, J. L., Ray, R. E., & Niedner, D. M. (2007). The impact of marriage and family therapy graduate training programs on married students and their families. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 33(2), 259–268. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926189608251038>
- Greenberg, R., & DeCoster, D. A. (1976). Assessing the needs of married students and their families. *NASPA Journal*, 13(3), 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1976.11071592>
- Hewer, V. H., & Neubeck, G. (1964). Attitudes of college students toward employment among married women. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 42(6), 587–592. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-4918.1964.tb04707.x>
- Kim, S. (2014). The influence of social relationships on international students' intentions to remain abroad: Multi-group analysis by marital status. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 26(14). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2014.963137>
- Locke, H. J., & Wallace, K. M. (1959). Short marital-adjustment and prediction tests: Their reliability and validity. *Marriage and Family Living*, 21(3), 251–255. <https://doi.org/10.2307/348022>
- Mafa, I., Simango, T., Chigangaidze, R. K., & Mudehwe, E. (2024). Semester marriages and the unintended psycho-social challenges within institutions of higher learning: Implications for social work practice. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 20(2), 30–45. <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.20.2.02>
- Moore, M., & Hinkle, J. E. (1971). A new program for married students. *NASPA Journal*, 9(2), 160–165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1971.11071336>
- Munthe, E., & Westergård, E. (2023). Parents', teachers', and students' roles in parent-teacher conferences: A systematic review and meta-synthesis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 136, Article 104355. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104355>
- Nagima, S., Zhanbyrbayeva, A. N., & Argynbaeva, Z. Z. (2024). Socio-economic determinants of educational inequality in Kazakhstan: Quantitative and qualitative analysis. *Central Asian Economic Review*, 4, 84–97. <https://doi.org/10.52821/2789-4401-2024-4-84-97>
- Nurjonov, A., Masharipov, F., Kushekkaliyev, A., Salikzhanov, R., Petrova, O., Balgabekova, R., Raklova, Y., & Tagibova, A. (2026). Development of management competencies in students: Experimental study. *Journal of Advanced Pharmacy Education and Research*, 16(1), 191–200. <https://doi.org/10.51847/IEY7AL-gvmX>
- Popandopulo, A., Kudysheva, A., Kudarova, N., Matayev, B., & Antikeyeva, S. (2025). Effectiveness of an author's program for psychopedagogical support in the development of metacognitive abilities. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 14(2), 1183–1195. <http://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v14i2.30526>
- Ramazanov, D., Togaiybayeva, A., Suguraliyeva, A., Zhubatyrova, B., Biissova, G., & Bukhaeva, A. (2021). Evaluation of pre-service teachers' views on their ability to use instructional technologies. *World Journal on Educational Technology: Current Issues*, 13(3), 428–436. <https://doi.org/10.18844/wjet.v13i3.5951>
- Smadi, E. Y. (2020). The reality of married female students in the bachelor's degree at the World Islamic Science & Education University W.I.S.E., Jordan. *Modern Applied Science*, 14(3), 56. <https://doi.org/10.5539/MAS.V14N3P56>
- Smagulov, M., Yesdaulet, Y., & Adilova, S. (2025). Developing future specialists' competencies through a digital reflective learning model at the university. *Journal of Advanced Pharmacy Education and Research*, 15(4), 142–148. <https://doi.org/10.51847/Jv6ekmRXsz>

Tajik, M. A., Akhmetova, G., Fillipova, L., Shamatov, D., & Zhunussova, G. (2022). Students' struggles with EMI in Kazakhstani universities. *Obrazovanie i Nauka*, 24(8), 95–115. https://www.edscience.ru/jour/article/view/2891?locale=en_US