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Adjustment Challenges Faced by Freshmen in Transition from School to University in Azerbaijan: Investigating the Role of Extracurricular Activities

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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I have read ADA's policy on plagiarism and certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis, entitled (Adjustment Challenges Faced by Freshmen in Transition from School to University in Azerbaijan: Investigating the Role of Extracurricular Activities), is all my work and does not contain any unacknowledged work.

Signed: _____

Date:_____

Wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, Huseynov Eldaniz and Ibayeva Ramziyya, and my siblings, Huseynzada Asad and Huseynov Amil, who have always given me inspiration, motivation, encouragement, strength, and love.

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Abstract

The transition from school to university is an unavoidable step for students, there is a possibility of experiencing challenges during that process. However, the role of extracurricular activities in overcoming those challenges is one of the concerning issues in education. This study aimed to explore the role of extracurricular activities during a transition process among students', instructors', and administrators' perspectives in two higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Azerbaijan. The researcher intended to explore how research participants perceived the period of transition and how they consider the role of extracurricular activities in suspending those problems. Previous research relied on quantitative research analysis only, but for this study was chosen mixed-method research. The conceptual framework of this study was based on three theories: The Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1992), an Acculturation Model by Berry (1980), and the Ecological Systems theory by Bronfenbrenner (1994). The instruments of the research for qualitative analysis were semi-structured interviews, but for quantitative was a survey with 164 student participants. Four freshmen, two instructors teaching freshmen, and two administrators dealing with extracurricular activities were the target population for interviews from two higher educational institutions (HEIs), specifically one private and a public university chosen based on a convenience sampling) in Azerbaijan. The major findings of this study showed students were experiencing transition challenges such as insomnia, anxiety, stress, etc. However, less than half of the survey participants did not consider extracurricular activities as a way of overcoming those challenges. Moreover, based on interview responses, two interpretations emerged about the role of extracurricular activities. The researcher suggests that further research is important to consider students' background in explaining those difficulties faced by students. Furthermore, students might be surveyed about what extracurricular activities they might find appealing to be engaged

in. The researcher recommends administrators develop career-based extracurricular activities by encouraging not only students but also instructors. Moreover, creating workshops and training for giving some practical knowledge about the purpose of extracurricular activities to the university administrators.

Keywords: higher education, the transition of freshmen to higher education, adjustment of freshmen, challenges of freshmen adjustment, extracurricular activities

Table of Contents

Adjustment Challenges Faced by Freshmen in Transition from School to University in

Azerbaijan: Investigating the Role of Extracurricular Activities

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

The transition from high school to university is a significant life transformational step for students. They can enhance their knowledge and get possibilities for personal growth by attending university and, therefore, increase their employment possibilities (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). The Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan summed up the admission rate of students to the university, which amounted to 44 861 entered students in 2021/2022. It shows that 70% of students consider the entrance to the university as a necessary step for their future life (Market Report Azerbaijan, 2021). Based on Azerbaijan Unemployment Rate (2021), students who graduated from the university will be able to work a full-time job and earn 84% more salary than those who are only with a high school diploma. There are other advantages that university provides different from schools such as immersive and experiential learning, which puts students into authentic settings such as practicums, hospitals, and internships.

However, an issue is raised on the matter of freshmen students' adjustment challenges from school to the university environment. Such a transition can be caused by increased academic expectations as well as new social relationships and this may lead to tension and acute stressor (Friedlander et al., 2007). Freshmen are frequently unsure of their ability to meet these standards, which leads to psychological unpreparedness (Dwyer & Cummings, 2001). My interest in this research emerged when I experienced the same problem back in my bachelor years. Taking credits for our learning, skills, which were not taught at school, caused nervousness and fright brought by

the body's stress response. During my university years, my stammering got even worse as a result of the requirements for students to express their thoughts, but it was almost noticeable at school. Moreover, other challenges such as frequent mood swings, outbursts of emotions, anxiety, and thoughts of misunderstanding by professors at the university emerged during those years. When I joined the extracurricular activity at that university "Debates", I could soften negative psychological factors. Many years already passed since I graduated with a Bachelor's degree, and I thought that there were no more challenges experienced by freshmen now. Whereas, my cousin who was compelled to leave her living place (south of Azerbaijan, Masalli) to attend a higher education institution in Baku faced another challenge such as depression, which was diagnosed by a specialist, due to the same problems experienced by me. My experience triggered my interest in students' transition problems and ways of overcoming them. Furthermore, it allowed me to assume that students might experience some challenges in a transition process at the same time extracurricular activities, in my case, helped me to soften some challenges.

1.2 Justification of the Study

There are many adjustment domains such as social, academic, cultural, psychological, and financial that freshmen typically undergo. All of these challenges to some extent affect freshmen if they will be controlled; it will help students to manage their emotional responses and be better prepared to face challenges. (Schulenberg, 2012). First-year university students as teenagers who have been acclimated to independent lifestyles are prone to feel anxious, and nervous about their independence from parents and family restraints at home (Salami, 2008). According to the "National Student Satisfaction Survey", it is disclosed that students will not be able to understand the feedback they receive (Higher Education Funding Council for England [HEFCE] 2009, 32; Krause et al. 2005), highlighting procedural elements such as the level of guidance offered and the

lack of understanding of comments, as issues of particular concern that negatively affects students' emotional control. As I remember, back in 2015, as a freshman at the university, the feedback that I was getting for the first time made me think that I was not enough intelligent or hard-working. Spending many hours studying, not having time for myself, and as a result, experiencing anxiety as a response to the stress. However, 6% of students are failing to complete their degrees, which leads to ignorance of university studies and a drop in academic results (Market Report Azerbaijan, 2021).

Based on the research conducted by Krause (2005), the university is not intended to create a challenge-free environment for students instead it intends to help them to face these challenges and be prepared to respond in a healthier way to the challenges. To soften them or even remove them completely, extracurricular activities provided by universities that can engage students in intellectual, physical, and emotional activities such as chess, debate, and skills might be helpful (Menges, 2011). However, Menges (2011) mentioned that some instructors and students are struggling in defining the notion of extracurricular activities.

1.3 Significance of the Study

In Azerbaijan, there is a scarcity of research articles focusing on freshmen students' adjustment challenges, which means students' nervousness, anxiety, stress, depression, and especially the scarcity of articles evaluating the role of extracurricular activities in overcoming those challenges. The findings of this study might positively contribute to the HEIs by giving some information about the necessity of studying the transition of students specifically from school to university. This phase plays an important role later in students' future lives. According to Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993), taking part in structured leisure or extracurricular activities may help to prevent students from negative consequences of adjustment challenges by stimulating the

development of social support communication skills, and they change them in a way that copes with stress and challenges become less dysfunctional (Eccles and Barber, 1999). Extracurricular activities such as chess, intellectual, theatre clubs, etc. enable students to easily socialize with peers and find a solution to a problem in a peaceful way (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1992). The researcher wants to understand whether extracurricular activities exist in HEI in Baku and their' effect on freshmen students' adjustment challenges. This is an important topic that needs to be explored because students are the future of the country, and healthy, self-confident students might help to build the country. In my perspective, this topic should be explored to help Azerbaijani freshmen students from or outside of Baku to be better prepared to face challenges as they transition to university life.

1.4 Research Questions

To be able to explore the freshmen students' adaptation challenges and the role of extracurricular activities in overcoming them in transition to university in two universities in Baku, the following research questions were formulated to guide the findings of the study.

1. What are the challenges experienced by freshmen in a year of transition from school to university?

2. What are the students' perceptions of the role of extracurricular activities in their adaptation to university life?

Keywords: higher education, the transition of freshmen to higher education, adjustment of freshmen, challenges of freshmen adjustment, extracurricular activities

Database: Organizational research methods, Science Direct, Google Scholar, and PubMed

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review of this research paper is divided into subsections: the importance of higher education; adjustment of first-year undergraduate students in the transition process to the university; the role of extracurricular activities in transition to university.

There is a scarcity of research related to the transition from high school to university and hardly any investigation on the role of extracurricular activities in overcoming challenges during a transition. Found reviewed articles were by scholars in some other countries such as Russia, the USA, Canada, and China (Haigh and Clifford, 2011; Menges and Austin, 2001; Pekrun and Pelletier, 2001; Dyson and Renk, 2006; Sasaki and Yamasaki, 2007; Fredericks and Eccles, 2006; Srivastava, 2009)

2.2 Criteria for Inclusion and the Selection Procedure

The research articles to be examined had to meet the following criteria: (1) include an empirical inquiry, (2) have a special focus on students' adjustment challenges (3) be peer-reviewed and published in a scientific journal. I mainly focused on articles, which were published in 15 years period from today, to ensure that only recent peered reviewed articles were in this literature review. In order not to lose the chosen articles, they were stored in Google Disk, on the computer desktop files, in iCloud, and in the Mendeley for analyzing and citing purposes.

Overall, twenty-five articles were found in the database. After skimming the abstracts of the articles only fifteen remained to be included in the literature review. The excluded articles were not satisfactory because of little focus on first-year undergraduate students' adjustment challenges or were containing almost similar ideas to other articles.

2.3 The Importance of Higher Education

For a long period, higher education has emerged to educate undergraduate students with a broad variety of discipline-specific competencies as well as general skills that would enable them to live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a rapidly changing world, by Canadian researchers, Haigh and Clifford (2011). As students work toward a university degree, society expects degree-granting institutions to ensure that all university students develop discipline-specific competencies (e.g., knowledge, responsibility) as well as generic skills (e.g., communication, written, tolerance, compassion) and dispositions (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, and curiosity). Communication skills, problem-solving skills, critical thinking abilities, social skills, and intrapersonal skills are among the "non-economic" or "social" benefits of higher education, by USA researchers, Menges and Austin (2001).

However, universities compared to schools are not only enhancing students' minds but also bringing some challenges because of being a new environment, by a Russian researcher, Srivastava (2009, p. 883). a transition was described as ''a mixture of excitement and dread''. According to USA researchers, Pekrun and Pelletier (2001), many high school students drop out of universities before graduating. Making new relationships, altering current ties with parents and relatives (e.g., living apart), and developing study habits for a new academic setting are putting all pressures on freshmen students. The most prevalent cause for undergraduate students dropping out appears to be a failure to grasp these sorts of assignments. According to the studies conducted by Canadian and Chinese researchers, freshmen students exhibit significant levels of stress, anxiety, and despair (Dyson and Renk, 2006; Sasaki and Yamasaki, 2007). Later these levels of anxiety are associated with increased adjustment challenges such as a feeling of isolation, social disconnection, and worse academic progress, by USA researchers, Haigh and Clifford (2011).

2.4 Adjustment of Freshmen Students in the Transition to University

To explore the topic, I needed to identify the main adjustment areas that freshmen students experience. According to USA researchers, Menges and Austin (2011). there are five areas: academic, cultural, intellectual, social, and psychological. The domains intersect with each other, if there are stabilized other areas will be improved. In academic adjustment, students will face a new system of evaluation (grading) of their potential, more dedication is needed for accomplishing the course works, and sleepless nights might cause tension, aggressiveness, or even worse depression. The cultural adaptation, when they just step into a university, they are encountering a diverse and multicultural environment with lectures, and tutorials, which were not experienced by students at school, which can be a student isolation factor. At the university, students are frequently assigned group work compared to school because of not having enough space. By that grouping, students are learning subjects, and the way they will perceive it can change their lives both positively and negatively affecting their psychology. The social adjustment represents itself by mingling with lecturers and diverse students. Getting this contact opens the roads for future career life. All areas play a role in the mental balance of students during the shift from school to university by normalizing and controlling them students will be prevented from university drop-outs (Menges and Austin, 2011).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

I am planning to base the findings of this study on the three following studies. Firstly, the social learning theory by Bandura (1992), where it is mentioned that human motivation and action are heavily influenced by the environment. Three types of expectancies are involved in this anticipatory control mechanism (forethought): (1) situation-outcome expectancies, in which consequences are triggered by environmental events without personal action; (2) action-outcome

expectancies, in which outcomes are triggered by personal action; and (3) perceived self-efficacy, which is concerned with people's beliefs in their abilities to perform a specific action required to achieve the desired outcome. To sum up, the social learning theory of Bandura (1992) states that a new environment and possible stress and challenges brought by it have an impact on how well a student adjusts to university. However, activities that represent action-outcome expectancies by involving students with the same interest may help to overcome the challenges of a new environment (Bandura,1992).

The second theory is by Berry (1980), who suggests an acculturation model that divides individual adaption techniques into two levels. The first dimension is concerned with an individual's retention or rejection of his or her home culture. The second dimension is about accepting or rejecting the host culture. According to certain acculturation studies, the integrated acculturation technique provides the most advantageous for people assimilating to a new environment (Oetzel et al., 2007), whereas marginalization has the least favorable outcomes (Berry, 1980).

Lastly, Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Ecological Systems theory, noted that many components impact the youngster. His research extended beyond individual development to consider broader influencing elements and the environment (or ecology) of development. Ecological Systems theory has been utilized to connect psychological and educational theory to early student curriculum and practice. According to the theory, instructors and students should maintain contact with one another and collaborate for benefits to support the development of ecological systems in educational practice. Instructors should also be aware of the circumstances that their students may be facing, including social and economic elements that can lead to aggression, and anxiety.

Moreover, the youngster must be actively involved in their learning, both intellectually and socially. To support good growth, they must collaborate as a team with their peers and participate in meaningful learning and extracurricular activities (Evans, 2012).

2.6 The Role of Extracurricular Activities in Transition to University

Extracurricular activities are spaces that allow students to tie in with their peers who share similar interests and shared identities (Fredericks and Eccles, 2006). According to Canadian researchers, Fredericks and Eccles (2006) identified that school students' involvement in extracurricular activities fosters a sense of belonging and promotes healthy adjustment among students. Similar to this research, a study was done before by Sasaki and Yamasaki, Chinese researchers (2007) previous research with high school students has shown that extracurricular activities lead to expanding school identification, which positively affects academic performance. These studies mainly focused on the challenges experienced by high school students involved in extracurricular activities. Studies designed later paid attention to first-year university students' involvement. Menges (2011) highlighted that the educational context of the university is less structured compared to school and that students are forced to rely less on parents and sometimes leave apart. There are numerous reasons why extracurricular involvement leads to the better overcoming of adjustment challenges. Based on Dyson and Renk, Canadian researchers (2006), one of the potential reasons might be that students can develop their social network by being in touch with their peers. In addition, Chinese researchers, Wang and Eccles (2012) identified if students face discrimination, they can join extracurricular activities based on the targeted marginalized identities. As an instance, racial/ethnic/religious/mental minority-based student organizations may promote support for students who experience perceived discrimination (Harper and Byars, 2005; Sutton and Kimbrough, 2001).

2.7 Summary

In conclusion, the purpose of the literature review was to understand how this topic was reviewed by other scholars. After analyzing the reviewed articles in various countries, like Russia, the USA, Canada, and China, which have already conducted studies similar to this topic, it was seen that freshmen students in the transition from high school to university are facing many challenges of adjustment. There were many adjustment challenges such as financial, academic, and social, and one of those difficulties was a psychological adaptation, which represents a stressor that prevents from striving at the university (Parks and Phillips, 2018). So, it would be beneficial to explore HEIs in Baku to be clear whether our university's students are facing similar problems. Furthermore, as a way of overcoming challenges such as stress, anxiety, depression, etc. the involvement of students in extracurricular activities such as workshops and training for career development, chess may deal with difficulties in terms of being with students with similar interests, where they can support one another (Pekrun and Pelletier, 2001). Understanding the adjustment challenges of freshmen and finding ways of overcoming them is important for students' successful further studies. Further investigation in this area will be helpful for the Azerbaijani institutions to see the problem that freshmen students face and I shall make an attempt to identify how and what types of extracurricular activities may assist in the process of overcoming challenges in the transition from high school to university.
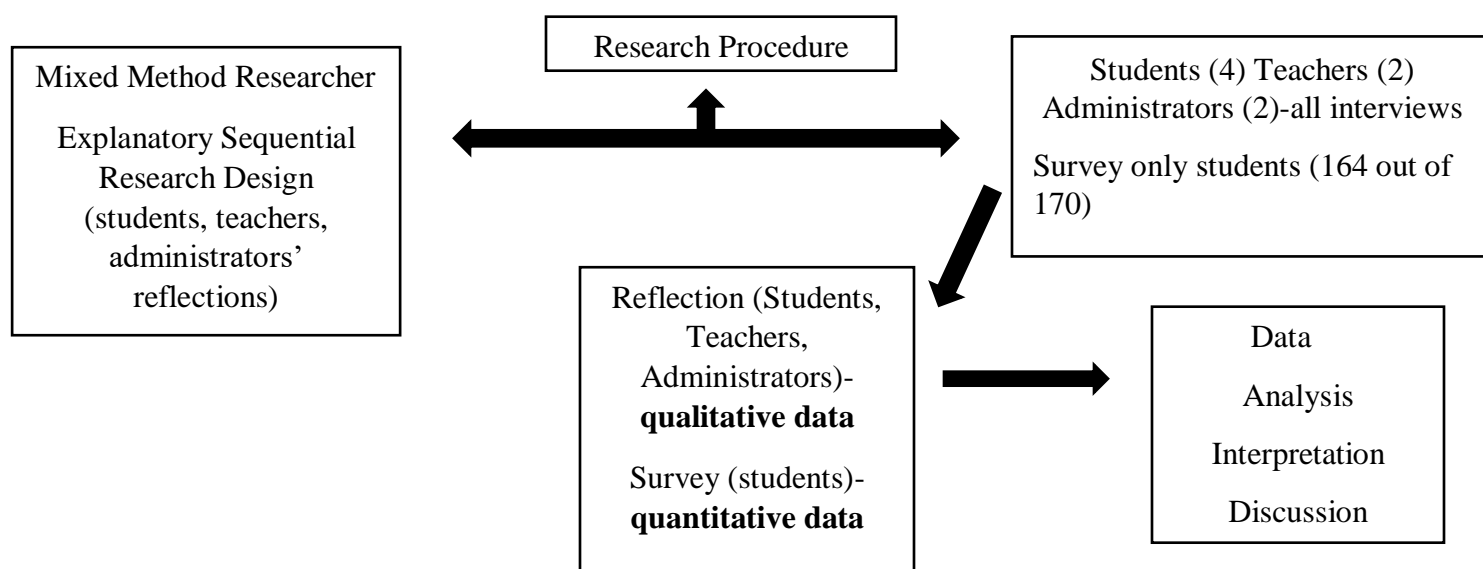
Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

For this study, a mixed-method research design was employed. According to Creswell (2007), this approach aids in the triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously and then compares whether the findings complement each other or not. Implementation of the mixed-method approach allowed the researcher to understand the problem and elaborate on the relationship between variables. The goal of this approach was to explore freshmen students' transition challenges from school to university and the role of extracurricular activities at two Azerbaijani universities in overcoming those challenges.

3.2 Location of the Study

The study was conducted at two universities for having access to the target population. In addition, there are many students from all over Azerbaijan studying at those universities because of the large variety of faculties of main majors. For ensuring the diversity of the study, was chosen one public and one private university. The universities were chosen utilizing convenience sampling, and the supervisor of the researcher assisted in this process.

3.3 Research Sample

Research Procedure

Mixed Method Researcher

Explanatory Sequential Research Design (students, teachers, administrators' reflections)

Students (4) Teachers (2) Administrators (2)-all interviews

Survey only students (164 out of 170)

Reflection (Students, Teachers, Administrators)-**qualitative data**

Survey (students)-**quantitative data**

Data

Analysis

Interpretation

Discussion

This study is an explanatory sequential research design concept data collection process. Firstly, it begins with qualitative data collection to understand participants' perceptions. While a quantitative data collection is formulated to understand participants' experiences. The sample strategies used for this study were purposive, convenience sampling for the interview, which was a non-probability method of sampling, but for the survey, which is a part of quantitative data, snowball, and convenience, which entailed a researcher utilizing her knowledge to choose a sample that was the most suitable for the study objectives. The population of this study was freshmen students, teachers, and administrators of two universities in Baku to access the targeted population. The researcher chose from each university one instructor teaching the freshmen, one administrator who was directly in contact with students and instructors, and two students to identify how all participants perceived the transition and to what extent the role of extracurricular activities was useful for helping students to overcome adjustment challenges. The researcher used a convenience sampling for being contacted administrators by a supervisor, and those administrators were in touch with students and instructors. However, teachers utilized a purposive sampling because administrators were asked to share the contact with only those instructors who were teaching freshmen. The researcher contacted some instructors who were teaching freshmen via e-mail by thoroughly explaining the research procedure. Agreed teachers suggested some students to whom the whole process equally was explained. The estimated number of survey participants was 170, participated 164 survey participants, freshmen only was used convenience and snowball sampling, the survey form by using the former sampling was sent to students by their instructors and administrators, via email regardless of their faculty, but the latter sampling was sent to 2 freshmen acquaintances, who shared with 20 peers, the only condition was to understand Azerbaijani or

English because the survey was created in those languages, but the interview was created in Azerbaijani.

3.4 Research Instrument

The data from two universities in Baku was collected through semi-structured interviews with a qualitative tool and a survey of the quantitative tool. The aim of interviews was not to get the right answers to the questions, but rather to understand the experience of people who had undergone it and what meaning they ascribed to that experience (Seidman, 2006). To conduct a semi-structured interview, an interview protocol was designed (Lodico et al., 2010). Semi-structured interviews were chosen specifically because they allowed a researcher to ask extra questions for getting more data, the order of questions might be changed, and even some questions might be deleted in the process (Lodico et al., 2010).

The researcher prepared three interview protocols for freshmen, administrators, and instructors. The pandemic condition allowed for interviews to be conducted face-to-face. However, participants were allowed to have online interviews because of the reluctance to spread the flu. The designed questions were asked in the Azerbaijani language to research participants aimed to find out what adjustment challenges students were facing in transition and to what extent extracurricular activities helped to dissolve them. Each interview lasted for about 40 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of participants to be used for transcribing purposes.

The second instrument was a survey as a part of a quantitative method for a hundred seventy students only, specifically an online survey created in the Azerbaijani language and nearby written English translations in Google forms for convenience purposes and easy distribution. Open

and close-ended questions were created which allowed getting some data on students' perceptions of the study being researched (Yin, 2018). The survey was distributed based on snowball and convenience samplings; the researcher implemented the latter sampling by asking university administrators to share the link of the survey, the former sampling was used while the researcher asked two freshmen acquaintances and they were asked to share the survey among their 18 other peers. Data received from the survey were grouped based on similarities and differences.

3.5 Data Collection

The researcher sent emails to possible participants with a thorough description of the research process, only the agreed participants were sent the consent form and the meeting days and hours were arranged accordingly.

The researcher ensured the credibility and validity of the study by triangulating data gathered from three types of participants instructors teaching freshmen, administrators who were directly dealing with students and instructors, and freshmen. Two committee members and a supervisor ensured peer-review of the collected data.

3.6 Data Analysis

As soon as the data was collected in a mixed-method study, the data analyses started (Bryman, 2012). According to Creswell (2012), the mixed-method approach revealed too much information, but not all of it was useful, so while analyzing the focus was made on the most important part of the data. In addition, several steps were taken into account such as interpreting the meaning of themes, coding the data, reading through all the data, organizing, and preparing data for analysis. During the data analysis process, the researcher used the steps mentioned below.

Interviews

The researcher began by listening to the recordings and transcribing the interviews. As the data was received in the Azerbaijani language. Then, she chose the most important themes, so the transcripts were read many times, and translated only chosen themes into English. To be as accurate as possible, the answers to the interview questions were added to the table created by the researcher. As soon as the transcripts were read several times, the responses were coded based on similarities and differences and categorized under specific categories that were revealed after transcription of the interview responses.

Survey

The survey helped to get some information from a large spectrum of students. The Google form platform for creating a survey simplified the data collection and analysis processes by preparing the excel document with all received answers from freshmen. As the data was collected in the Azerbaijani language, the coding to the English language was done to the main themes only.

3.7 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness was ensured by triangulation which showed the ways of reaching a certain conclusion. In addition, to ensure trustworthiness the member checking, which was the summary of participants' words (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), was implemented; it let participants correct their mistakes said during the interview and proved that the researcher presented information as it was obtained. Copies of the transcribed data were shared with participants, so they were able to read them and make changes if necessary, to maintain the validity.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

During the data collection process, the rights and anonymity of participants were protected (Cresswell, 2012). Participants were notified of what would happen to the data after the research.

As Wiles (2012) mentions the participants should have the right to refuse participation and based on that, all gathered data should be deleted. To avoid the seeping of the data: transcripts, the consent form, and audio recordings, everything was kept in a confidential place (Bowen, 2009). To assure the anonymity of participants, their names were coded and not be revealed to anyone.

3.9 Limitations

One of the limitations of the study methodology was the impossibility of generalizing the findings because it was conducted in only two universities and interviewed just a few participants due to the limited time. Another was the use of convenience sampling made findings biased because the researcher did not know exactly why some people accepted but others did not. The use of a survey was a limitation because a researcher was not able to investigate or clarify participants' responses to online qualitative survey questions, which might lead to data that is cryptic or confusing to the researcher.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this research was to explore the freshmen students' psychological adaptation in transition to university in two universities in Baku. The second aim of this study was to investigate the role of extracurricular activities provided at higher education institutions (HEIs) in this process. This study was guided by two main and three sub research questions:

1. What are the challenges experienced by freshmen in a year of transition from school to university?

2. What are the students' perceptions of the role of extracurricular activities in their adaptation to university life?

Before conducting interviews and a survey with mostly open-ended questions, I had several assumptions that proved to be wrong. I expected that research participants might have been aware of extracurricular activities, but actually, most of them were not. I also expected instructors to be willing by encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities. Yet, I did not notice any involvement of instructors in dealing with the psychological challenges of freshmen.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis Result/Interviews' Findings

The below-mentioned questions' responses were the summaries from conducted interviews using systematic coding. The participants were two instructors teaching freshmen students with experience (the first one-two years, the second-twelve years), the participants (females), and two administrators dealing with freshmen and extracurricular activities with experience (the first one-seven years, the second one-five years), the participants (females) and four freshmen (participants,

two males, and two female genders). I used content analysis to analyze the data collected. After reading the transcripts several times, they were coded into categories.

4.3 Research question 1/ interview responses: What are the challenges experienced by freshmen in a year of transition from school to university?

The purpose of the first research question, which was included in interviews with two instructors, administrators, and four freshmen, was to reveal probable psychological challenges experienced by freshmen. All participants defined it as feeling depressed, trying to control feelings, hatred experience, and stress. In almost all interviews the responses were similar to one another, as an example responses from freshmen, instructors, and administrators at higher education institutions, clearly answered this question by saying, these are the coded summaries of participants in brief:

Two Administrators	Two Instructors	Four Students
"bəzən olur ki tələbələr mövzulara biganə alimlərin təzyiqinə görə. O da özü ilə yeni məsuliyyətlərə görə stressin yaranmasına səbəb olur"	*"…mənim fikrimcə o həm çətindir - fərqli mühit, yeni insanlarla tanış olmaq, dərslərindəki akademik vəziyyət, həm də maraqlıdı- universitet mühitində daha geniş əlaqələr/yaşayışları ilə ünsiyyət/müxtəlif tədbirlərdə iştirak etmək. Amma maraqı bəzi tələbər görmürlər*	*"Məktəbdən universitetə keçid məni şoka saldı, yeni mühit məni qorxutdu."* *Müəllimlərin tez-tez dəyişməsinə uyğunlaşmaq çətin idi, stressli"* *"Əzbərdən yazıya keçid düşüncələri ifadə etməkdə çətinlik çəkirdi..."*

(…… Sometimes happens that students are indifferent to the topics due to the pressure of academics. So, it causes stress due to new responsibilities ")	*yorgunluğa, narahatliqa görə"* ("In my opinion, it is both difficult - a different environment, meeting new people, the academic pressure, but also interesting - to have a wider connection/life with the university environment / to participate in various events. But some students do not see the interest due to fatigue and anxiety")	*"Müəllimlərlə ünsiyyət qurmaq çətindir. Bəzən hər şeyi boğmaqdan qorxuram. yuxusuz gecələr"* ("The transition from school to university shocked me, the new environment scared me, and I was stressed out. It was difficult to adapt to the frequent changes of teachers" "The transition from memorization to writing was difficult to express ..." " It was difficult to communicate with teachers. Sometimes I'm afraid to suffocate everything. Sleepless night")

A period of transition from school to university brings psychological difficulties to freshmen. It had a negative influence on students' feelings and attitudes toward their everyday life.

4.4 Research question 2/ interview responses: What are the students' perceptions of the role of extracurricular activities in their adaptation to university life?

The second question with sub-questions aimed to identify whether the students were aware of extracurricular activities provided by universities. Moreover, how two administrators of the universities comprehended their roles of them and how they work of implementing them for dealing with freshmen' psychological challenges. Analyses of the responses received from four students' interviews revealed that only one student was not aware of them, the rest did know information about them even were participants. By saying the following expressions:

Three students' responses
"....Universitetdə voleybol, basketbol kimi bir çox dərsdənkənar tədbirlər var və debatlar da keçirilir. *...sosial layihələr, TQT, intellektual klub, amma faydasız görünür* *...Düşünürəm ki, bu mövzuda dərsdənkənar tədbirlər universitet üçün mühüm rol oynayır. Cəmiyyətin sosial-iqtisadi həyatının yenidən qurulması şəraitində yeni tip şəxsiyyətin tərbiyəsində sinifdənkənar tədbirlərin rolu artır. Bu iş təşəbbüskarlıq, aktivlik, yaradıcılıq, özünü inkişaf etdirmək, özünütərbiyə etmək kimi şəxsiyyət xüsusiyyətlərinə töhfə verir...".* ("….there are a lot of extracurricular activities at the university such as volleyball, basketball, and debates are also held **…social projects, SYO, the intellectual club, but they seem useless** …I think that extracurricular activities on the subject play an important role for the university. In the context of the reconstruction of the social and economic life of society,

the role of extracurricular activities in the education of a new type of personality is growing. This work contributes to personality traits such as initiative, activity, creativity, self-development, self-education….")

The one student from the interview who was not aware of them responded with some of the subsequent words mentioned below:

"İlk dəfə eşitdi. Fikirləşirdim ki, onlar ancaq Amerika filmlərindədir.Mənasız qəlir"

("Heard for the first time. I thought they are only in American movies. Seems there are useless")

Interviews taken from two instructors and two administrators from two different universities revealed two contradictory interpretations that participants knew about extracurricular activities, but they could not deliver their understanding to students that extracurricular activities should promote to students and what the ways of encouraging students to take part in them were or they did not consider the purpose of extracurricular activities being important. This evaluation was based on the responses provided below:

Two administrators	Two instructors
"Universitet tələbələrə musiqi, rəqs, komediya, intellektual dərnəklər və s. kimi müxtəlif dərnəklər təqdim edir **Məqsəd**: *tələbələri əyləndirmək, onların fəal olmasına kömək etmək*	*"...dərsdənkənar fəaliyyətlər yalnız akademik uğur qazananlar üçün daha yaxşıdır, sosial ünsiyyət bacarıqlarının inkişafı/yeni dünya tələblərinin öhdəsindən gəlmək üçün onları inkişaf etdirmək daha yaxşı olardı. Üstəlik,*

|	
Tələbələri necə cəlb etmək olar: bəlkə də onları ilk dəfə iştirak etməyə məcbur edin."	*tələbələrin maraqlarına əsaslanmayanlar nəzərə alınmalıdır* *Fəal tələbələr həm fərd kimi, həm də bilik səviyyələrinə görə özlərini inkişaf etdirir və başqa yeni mühitlərə uyğunlaşmaqda çətinlik çəkmirlər. Digər tələbələr, ümumiyyətlə, kiminsə təsiri altında onlara qoşulur və fəal iştirak etmirlər ki, bu da onların özlərini mühitdən ayrı saxlamaq istədiklərinin göstəricisidir."*
("The university provides the student with various clubs, such as music, dance, comedy, intellectual clubs, and others **Purpose:** to entertain students, to help them stay active **How to attract students:** maybe make them oblige to participate for the first time.")	("…extracurricular activities are better only for those who are academically successful, the development of social communication skills/it would be better to develop them in the way to cope with the new world demands**.** **Moreover, they are not based on** students' interests and should be taken into account Active students develop themselves both as individuals and according to their level of knowledge and have no difficulty adapting to other new environments. Other students generally join them under the influence of

	someone and do not actively participate, which is an indication that they want to keep themselves apart from the environment.")

4.5 Quantitative Descriptive Data/Survey Findings

The online survey questionnaire was created by using mostly open-ended questions and was implemented because of expanding the scope of the study. It was responded only by a hundred sixty-four respondents out of a hundred seventy. The respondents are freshmen or students who passed that transition and could share their experiences. They are primarily university students having different ages, mostly between the ages 17-18 (n=150 (92%)), and gender (male=23 (14%), female=141 (86%)) studying at the target universities in Baku, Azerbaijan. The following chart is for gender and the figure below is for ages.
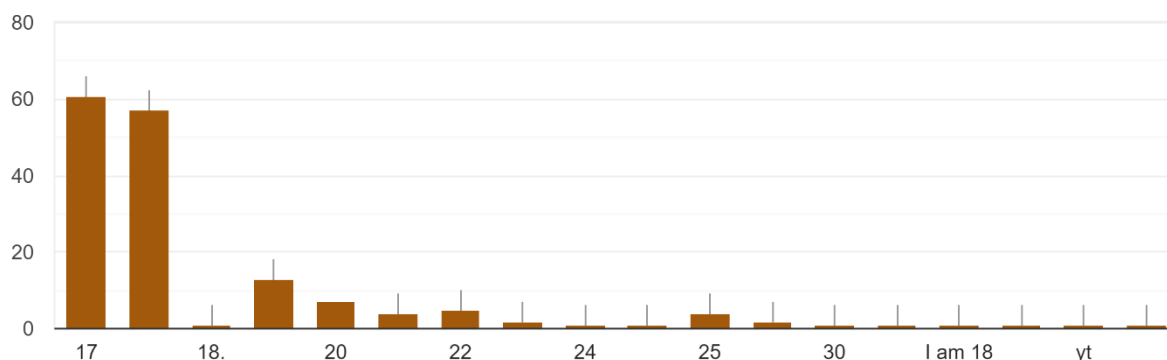
Gender/ Cins
164 ответа
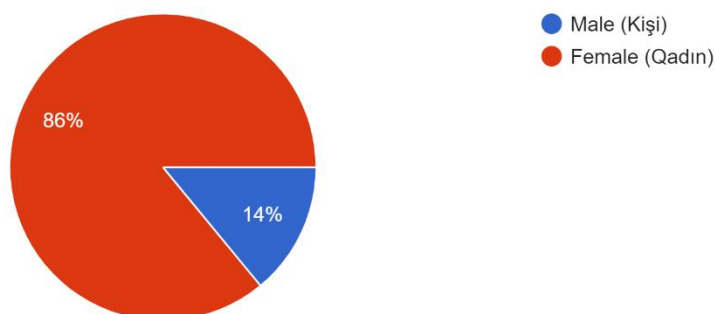
Figure 4.1 Gender Descriptive analysis

How old are you? Neçə yaşınız var?

164 ответа

Figure 4.2 Descriptive Analysis for age

Questions Descriptive Analysis

This part of the study indicated the selected variable for this study. To answer the following open-ended research question: As a freshman do you experience any adjustment challenges? What are they? Birinci kurs tələbəsi olaraq hər hansısa problem yaşayırsınız? Hansı?

The responses were divided into parts, those who were experiencing and those who were not. The below-mentioned table revealed that 104 participants (104 female students: 100 of them at the age 17/18; 2 female students at the age of 20 and 2 other females at the age of 22) were experiencing problems brought by academic overload, future career thoughts, exam pressures, difficulties with group adjustments, and forming a relationship with instructors such as nervousness. sleeplessness, stress, anxiety, fatigue, and others. Moreover, of 164 students, 60 (23 males at the age of 17/18; 5 females at the age of 24; 4 at the age of 25; one at the age of 30, and 27 females of the age of 17/18) of them responded as they did not experience any challenges in a year of transition by

saying "no; nothing; did not experience…". The results showed that male participants did not experience any challenges in a year of transition compared to female students.

Experienced adjustment challenges **104 participants out of 164** 100 of them at the age of 17/18 2 female students at the age of 20 2 females at the age of 22	Factors that lead to adjustment challenges mentioned by participants	Did not experience **60 participants out of 164** 23 males at the age of 17/18 5 females at the age of 24 4 at the age of 25 one at the age of 30 27 females of the age of 17/18
Stress Annoyance Concentration loss Anxiety Insomnia Fatigue Loneliness Demotivation Being nervous Stammer	Lesson overload Unknown future/future care Diverse university expectation Lots of exams Different methods of teaching Difficulties of students to student's adaptation Difficulties of students to teachers' adaptation Time management difficulties No time to relax Self-confidence's lost	No Did not experience Nothing

Figure 4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Experiencing Challenges

The second question variable was: What causes adjustment challenges in a transition process? You can choose one option or add yours. Keçid prosesində uyğunlaşma çətinliklərinə nə səbəb olur? Siz bir variant seçə və ya öz seçiminizi əlavə edə bilərsiniz.The results based on students' choices showed that pressure of academics-40% (66 female students at the age of 17/18), homesickness for regional students-2% (2 female students at the age of 22 and a female student at the age of 30), exam stress-41% (68 students: 23 males at the 17/18; 5 females at the age of 24; 2 females at the age of 20; 4 females at the age of 25; 34 females at the age of 17/18), experiencing discriminatory treatment-0%, uncertain future-10% (16 females at the age of 17/18), health

problems-1% (female students at the age of 17/18), deprived normal learning conditions-1% (female students at the age of 17/18), strenuous relationships within university members-1% (female students at the age of 17/18), others/No-6% (10 female students at the age of 17/18). Based on the data from the figure, it was clear that the perception of the majority of female students was the pressure of academics and exam stress. While all 23 male participants chose the exam stress as the main factor of any challenges that emerged in the transition process from school to the university.
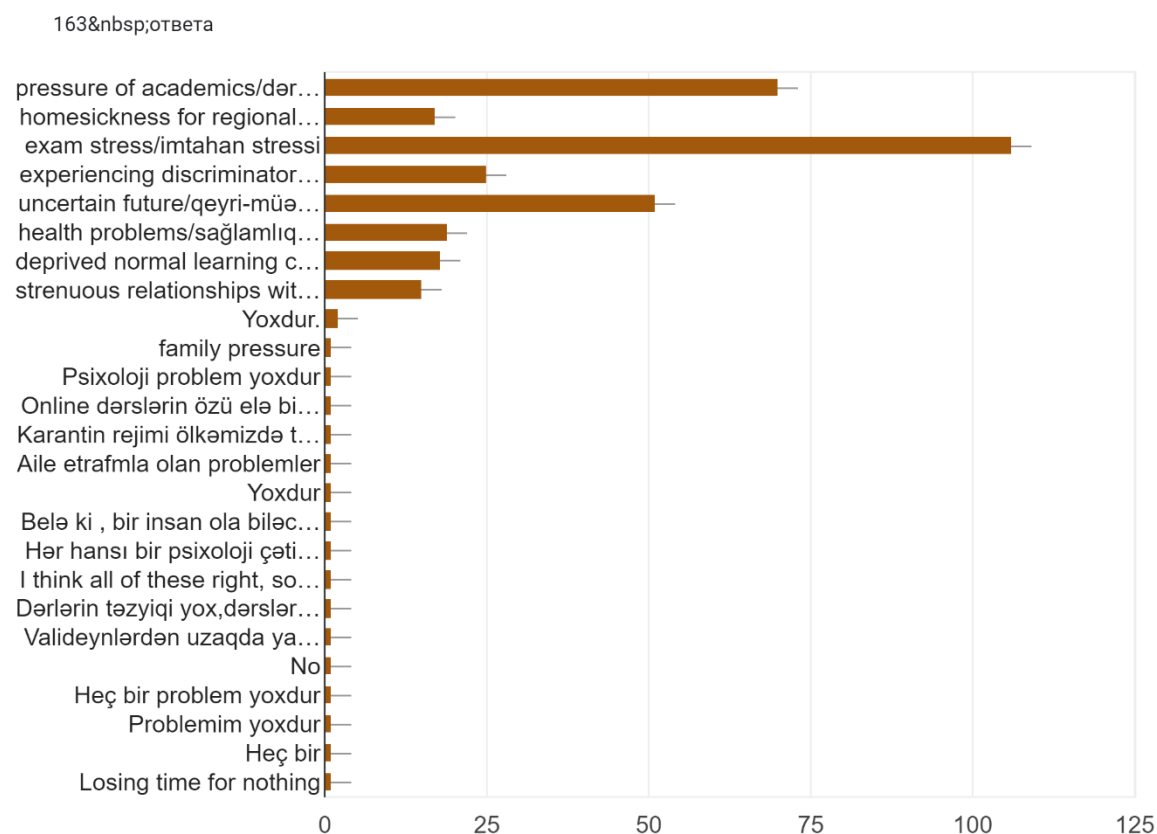
Figure 4.4 Descriptive Analysis of Causes of Adjustment Challenges

The third variable question was: What do you know about extracurricular activities provided by your university? Universitetinizin dərsdənkənar fəaliyyətləri haqqında nə bilirsiniz?

The responses were divided into parts those who were aware and those who were not aware. Based on the responses, it was evaluated that 64 (10 males at the age of 17/18; 4 females at the age of 25; 5 females at the age of 24; 45 females at the age of 17/18) of the participants were aware of extracurricular activities by saying that their universities provide some such as intellectual, music, volleyball, basketball, debate, dance, language clubs, and others. However, 100 (13 males at the age of 17/18; 2 females at the age of 20; 2 females at the age of 22; a female at the age of 30; 82 females at the age of 17/18) participants responded as if they were not aware of them. Based on the results of students' responses, only 34% (n=55) of students at the age of 17/18 were aware of extracurricular activities.
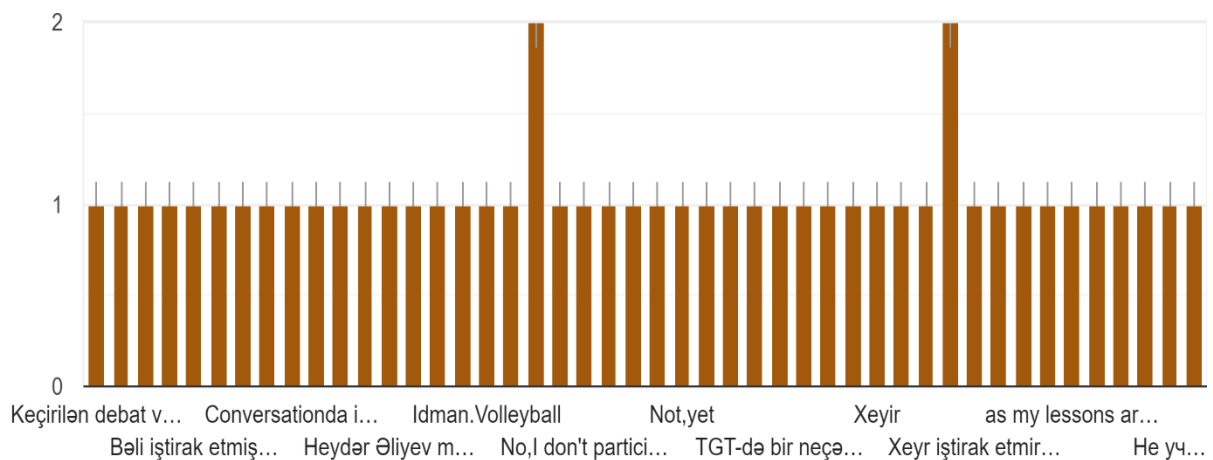
Those who were aware of extracurricular activities	Types of extracurricular activities mentioned by participants	Those who were not aware of extracurricular activities
64 participants out of 164 10 males at the age of 17/18; 4 females at the age of 25; 5 females at the age of 24; 45 females at the age of 17/18	Volleyball Basketball Football Debate club Intellectual club Excursions Domino Conversation clubs Student teams of SYO (TGT)	**100 participants out of 164** 13 males at the age of 17/18; 1 females at the age of 20; 2 females at the age of 22; a female at the age of 30; 82 females at the age of 17/18

Figure 4.5 Descriptive Analysis of Extracurricular Activities Awareness

The fourth variable question was a short open-ended response: Have you participated or are you participating in extracurricular activities? In which of them? Siz dərsdənkənar tədbirlərdə iştirak etmisiniz və ya iştirak edirsiniz? Onlardan hansında? By this question, I wanted to find an answer to my first and third research sub-questions.

Based on the results similar to the previous question's responses only 64 (10 males at the age of 17/18; 4 females at the age of 25; 5 females at the age of 24; 45 females at the age of 17/18) students participated especially in language/conversation clubs, sports clubs such as basketball, volleyball, SYO, and debate clubs. While 100 (13 males at the age of 17/18; 2 females at the age of 20; 2 females at the age of 22; a female at the age of 30; 82 females at the age of 17/18) students have not participated and are not aware of extracurricular activities.

Figure 4.6 Descriptive Analysis of Participation in Extracurricular Activities

The fifth variable question was: What do you think about the role of extracurricular activities in overcoming adjustment challenges experienced by you? Are they effective? Do you recommend it? Yaşadığınız uyğunlaşma problemlərinin aradan qaldırılmasında dərsdənkənar tədbirlərin rolu haqqında nə düşünürsünüz? Only effektivdirmi? tövsiyə edirsiniz? The results based on students' perception were that involvement and presence at the university are increased/universitetdə iştirak artır-have chosen 10% (17 females: 2 females at the age of 20; 15 females at the age of 17/18) of survey participants; university dropout rate is reduced/universiteti tərk etmə nisbəti azalır-have chosen 5% (10 females: a female at the age of 30; 4 females at the age of 25; 5 females at the age of 24) females at the age of 22) of survey participants; acquiring new skills/yeni bacarıqlar əldə etmək-have chosen 40% (65 students: 5 males at the age of 17/18; 60 females at the age of 17/18) of survey participants; boost of academic performance/akademik performansın artırılması-have chosen 20% (35 females at the age of 17/18) of survey participants; expansion of social skills/sosial bacarıqların genişləndirilməsi-have chosen 10% (17 females at the age of 17/18) of survey participants ; improved time management/təkmilləşdirilmiş vaxt idarəçiliyi-have chosen 3% (2 females at the age of 17/18) of survey participants, wasting time/əlavə vaxt itkisi-have chosen 12% (18 male students at the age of 17/18) of survey participants. Based on the results received from this survey questions, it was summed up that university dropout decrease was chosen by female students at the age of 24;25;30 showed these students graduated from the university. However, the 18 male students at the age of 17/18 out of 23 responded as the extracurricular activities were useless, and a waste of time ones. While the majority of females at the age of 17/18 responded that extracurricular activities help gain new skills and boost academic performance. The below figure is for descriptive analysis of the role of extracurricular activities.

164 ответа
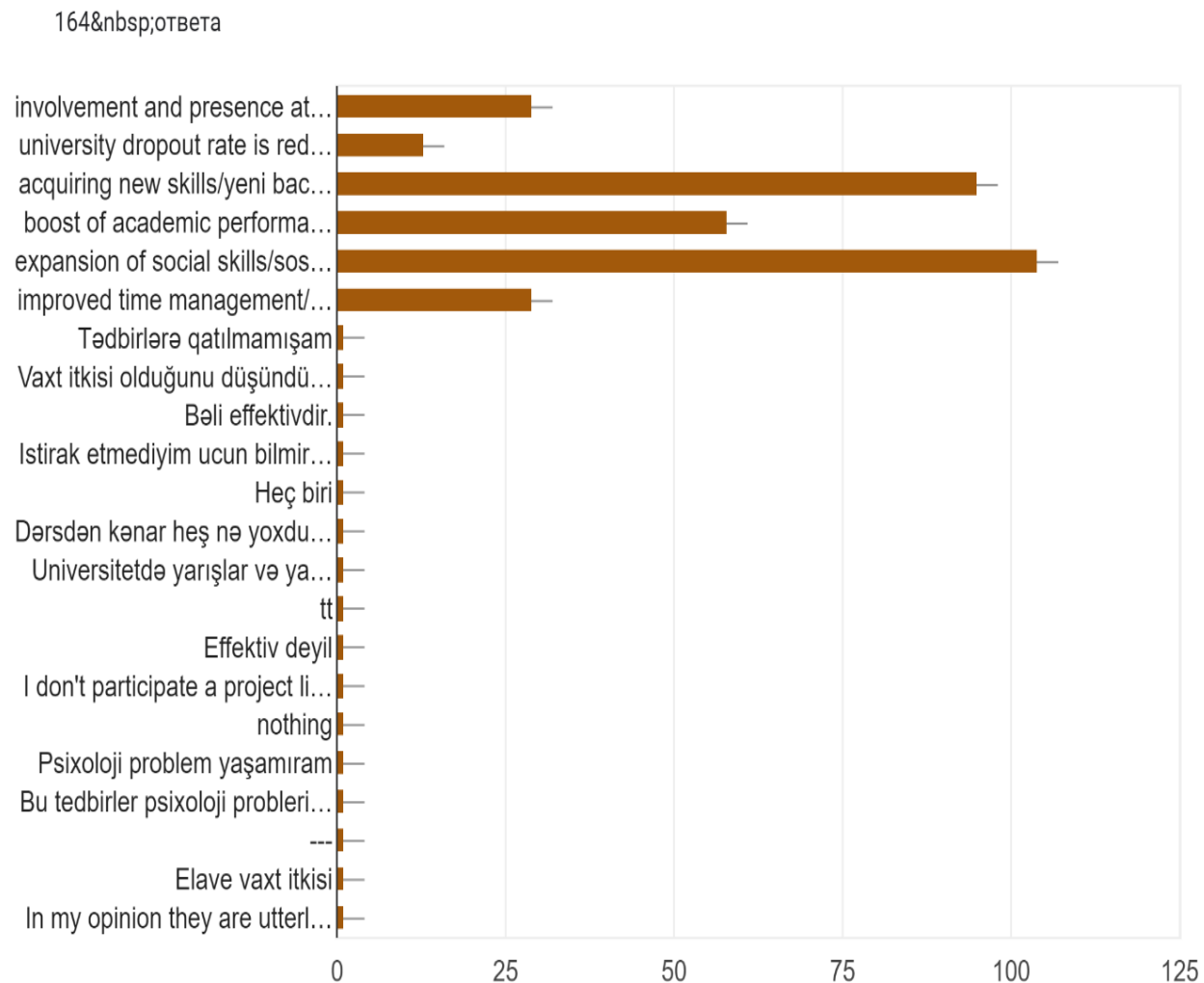
Figure 4.7 Descriptive Analysis of the Role of Extracurricular Activities

4.6 Comparison of Study's Instruments Results

Three students' interview responses are correlated with the ones received from a hundred and four survey participants out of 164. They all referred to some challenges faced in a transition process such as difficulties in understanding other students coming from various backgrounds,

instructors having unique ways of teaching, lesson and exam overload, and future care. Everything was a triggering factor to stress, insomnia, anxiety, loneliness, fatigue, demotivation, etc. Another similarity between the interview and the survey was the responses to awareness of extracurricular activities. Two out of three student interview participants and just 64 out of 164 the survey participants were aware of extracurricular activities by sharing that there are debates, intellectual clubs, sports, and conversation clubs that enhance social skills, increase self-confidence, reduce stress, and other challenges. Furthermore, one student from an interview and 100 students from a survey responded identically that they have not heard of them or are not aware of them because have not participated.

The responses received from interviews of administrators and instructors do not allow for comparison survey results because the survey was shared only with students. However, as 100 students from the survey were not aware of extracurricular activities, an assumption based on administrators' and instructors' interviews could be made. So, university staff was aware of them, but they did not create ways for students to participate in them. Moreover, based on a survey's responses some students considered extracurricular activities as a waste of their time is coincide with two instructors' interview responses that it would be better to design some workshops and training for students' professional development.

4.7 Summary

In summary, the findings of this study have shown that participating students even though mostly being aware of the extracurricular activities were not truly understanding their needs of them; the same can be addressed to two instructors. The majority of the participants including administrators and instructors comprehended that students experiencing adjustment challenges in the adaptation period to university. However, based on the responses received from the instructors

and administrators' interview second research question, two interpretations of mine were revealed. They were aware of its existence, but they could not deliver their understanding or they were not interested in its purpose.

Chapter 5 Discussion and Implications

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

Evidence from this research proves that transition from school to university is one of the concerning issues for freshmen, which leads to adjustment challenges. Students participating in extracurricular activities know their use of them in socializing with peers, developing confidence, acquiring new skills that might be useful for their future careers, and boosting academic performance. Extracurricular activities are provided in the explored universities, but some students and instructors are not properly aware of the purpose, so activities are not presented to students in a way to lure them.

5.2 Discussion in Relationship to the Literature on the Role of Extracurricular Activities in the Transition

The reviewed literature suggests that transition from school to university causes adjustment problems (Menges & Austin, 2011). Many factors can lead to it from academic, cultural, and intellectual to social domain difficulties. According to this study's findings responses obtained from interviews and a survey, confirmed that students mostly suffering from difficulties in their studies, examination pressures, and being isolated from peers and instructors, in favor of the same ideas were instructors and administrators.

Supporting the social learning theory by Bandura (1992) claims that stress and difficulties brought by a new environment affect the students' adaptation, interview student participants and 104 students from the survey illustrates that they did not expect that university would be so different from school. Moreover, the survey participants responded that the university environment was completely different from school, with students coming from various backgrounds, unique

ways of instructors' teaching, and attitudes toward adults. The responses of some students received from the interview and a survey revealed that felt isolated from their peers, and it was the reason why students found it difficult to create a relationship with instructors.

The environment effect was added by Berry (1980), who suggested an acculturation model, where marginalization that students might face at the university would deprive them of adaptation. Moreover, as mentioned by Bronfenbrenner (1994), in Ecological Systems theory, warm students and instructors' relationships lead to the release of stress and anxiety. These ideas were inconsistent with the responses received from both research instruments because it was not created such a question that might lead to these aspects.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) stated, that it is not enough to pay attention to academics only to overcome adjustment difficulties; it is necessary to be socially engaged. Wang and Eccles (2012) claim that extracurricular activities play an important role in overcoming discrimination that students face. Moreover, Sasaki and Yamasaki (2007) identified by their research that those activities lead to academic improvement. Furthermore, Dyson and Renk (2006) emphasized students' health by being in touch with their peers. The analysis of the finding supported the above-mentioned claims, two students from an interview and 64 students from a survey who took part in extracurricular activities, as well instructors and administrators who were aware of them, claimed the same that involvement and presence at the university were increased, the university dropout rate was reduced, academic performance was boosted and they could acquire new skills.

5.3 Limitations and Gaps in the Research

There are several limitations of this study. The first is a small sample size of interview participants. I could interview only two instructors, four freshmen, and two administrators from two universities.

Moreover, I used convenience sampling, which probably obliged some instructors to participate in this study.

In addition, while interviewing, some participants were responding in Azerbaijani languages, so it took time to translate the data into English. Then I spent time analyzing texts and then coding them.

Another limitation emerged by utilizing a survey from one side was beneficial by allowing to involve of many students' responses. At the same time, it had a drawback of the impossibility of clarifying incomplete short answers.

Lastly, I tried to be as objective as I could during the entire process. However, I acknowledged that I might have been biased while analyzing and interpreting the data because of a lack of experience.

5.4 Significance of the Research

In particular, there is not a single study to date that has explored the adjustment challenges of freshmen in the transition process and especially what the role of extracurricular activities is in Azerbaijan. This research provided a foundation for the topic of the transition of students from school to university in Azerbaijan. A further study needs to be conducted by using a large scale of participants. Moreover, trying to investigate the universities apart from Baku to see whether the problem is experienced by other regional students. Such a study may provide sufficient

information about adjustment challenges in a transition and assist in finding the strategies that would ameliorate them.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Summary and Recommendations

As a student who passed through a transition from school to university, I have noticed that the majority of research participants experienced adjustment challenges. Responses received from interviews and a survey proved that students feel the transition period is a challenging one. Every student can continue entering a university by experiencing a year of difficulties and then adapting, but by attracting students to extracurricular activities they can quicken the university adaptation period. The research aimed to help freshmen to overcome the adjustment challenges. To do so, administrations and instructors of universities should find ways of attracting students to extracurricular activities.

Although the transition is not a new concept in Azerbaijan, university administration and instructors should recognize its existence and the harmful consequences it has on freshmen. However, it is necessary to start by raising awareness of teachers, so they can employ teaching methods of attracting students to these activities. I think it is very hard to praise any activity without participating in it even once. Based on the analyses of the collected data, I think it would be beneficial to advance extracurricular activities in a way that will benefit not only learners but firstly teachers so that they can share real experiences with their learners. Extracurricular activities provided by universities should consist of not only basic activities such as different types of sports or chess, and theatre clubs but also clubs enhancing leadership, and technological skills. Moreover, career-oriented clubs/training will attract more students because it will affect their career decision and preference. Even, teachers could benefit from training by strengthening their chosen career, and through learning something from those training/ workshops they can modify their teaching by adding something new. Furthermore, travel opportunities for students and teachers can be

presented as a term studying or volunteering abroad or inside in companies covering a sphere necessary for the chosen faculty by students or teachers. For advancing language competencies, the Direct Method, the audio-lingual method (Larsen-Freeman, 1986) may be implemented by providing an environment for students to communicate with native speakers. Implementing experiential learning developed by Nunan (2004) as an extracurricular activity, where students focus on a process rather than a product. It is necessary for the future by pushing you to enjoy the process will affect the quality of the ending product.

By investing in professional development training along with usual extracurricular activities, university administrations may support freshmen by helping them to cope with adjustment challenges that emerged during the transition. Moreover, training by inviting experienced people in students' field of studying might increase their awareness to participate.

Researchers in the following years might work on the limitations of this research and create a more diverse investigation by targeting a large population sample.

Appendixes

Informed Consent Form

Date:

Name of Participant:

Study Name: Adjustment Challenges Faced by Freshmen in Transition from School to University in Azerbaijan: Investigating the Role of Extracurricular Activities

 Researcher: Aytan Huseynzada, ahuseynzada13797@ada.edu.az

Purpose of the Research: To explore freshmen students' adaptation challenges in the transition to university and understand the role of extracurricular activities.

Participants' responsibilities: The participants will be asked to participate in an in-depth interview by answering the questions asked by the researcher, which will last around 30 minutes.

Research Benefits: The researcher believes that if students experience any adjustment challenges, administrators and instructors by advancing extracurricular activities and attracting students to them might help to overcome challenges.

Withdrawal from the Study: You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to participate or do not respond to a specific question, it will have no effect on your relationship with the researcher or ADA University, and all information will be discarded.

Confidentiality: The interviews will be recorded by the researcher only with your agreement. Your identity will be protected, and all responses will be kept anonymous. Research data will only be accessible by the researcher.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research, please feel free to contact Aytan Huseynzada by e-mail (ahuseynzada13797@ada.edu.az).

Legal Rights and Signatures: I, (fill in your name here), agree to participate in (insert study name here) conducted by (Aytan). I have understood the purpose of this project and want to participate. By signing below, I indicate my agreement.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Participant

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Principal Investigator, (fill in your name here), agree to allow video and/or [digital images or photographs] in which I appear to be used in teaching, scientific presentations, and/or publications with the understanding that I will not be identified by name. I am aware that I may withdraw this consent at any time without penalty.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Participant

Instructors' Protocol

Good day. Let me introduce myself. My name is... I am a Master's student at ADA University at a faculty of MATL. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. The goal of this research is to explore the adjustment challenges faced by freshmen in transition from school to university in Azerbaijan: Investigating the role of extracurricular activities. Please understand you have the opportunity to remove yourself from this study at any time. Are you comfortable with me recording your responses for my review later? Yes _____ or No _____

Before the interview, two consent forms had been sent to you (one to sign and return and one to keep). This interview will last approximately 40 minutes and will be a semi-structured interview. Do you have any questions before we begin? If there are no questions, we can start the interview.

1. Introduce yourself, please.

2. How long have you been teaching and working with freshmen?

3. What are your responsibilities as a faculty? In addition to teaching, are you responsible for any other duties, if yes, what are they? - Is it research, community service, or anything else?

4. Students experience a transition from high school to university. How do you understand students' transition? Do you think that a transition affects students' adjustment to the university? What do you think, are the adjustment challenges experienced by freshmen students in a year of transition from school to university?

5. What do you know about extracurricular activities? What are their roles in overcoming students' psychological challenges? Are they helpful?

6. Have you observed any changes between students' who actively participate in extracurricular activities and those who do not? What are they? Please, elaborate.

7. Is there anything that I have not covered that you think is relevant to add?

Thank you very much for talking with me. Your responses are greatly appreciated. I will call/email you once your interview is transcribed so you can read it over.

Administrator's Protocol

Good day. Let me introduce myself. My name is... I am a Master's student at ADA University at a faculty of MATL. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. The goal of this research is to explore the adjustment challenges faced by freshmen in transition from school to university in Azerbaijan: Investigating the role of extracurricular activities. Please understand you have the opportunity to remove yourself from this study at any time. Are you comfortable with me recording your responses for my review later? Yes _____ or No _____

Before the interview, two consent forms had been sent to you (one to sign and return and one to keep). This interview will last approximately 40 minutes and will be a semi-structured interview. Do you have any questions before we begin? If there are no questions, we can start the interview.

1. Introduce yourself.

2. How long have you worked as an administrator/director/manager/ dean?

3. What are your responsibilities as an administrator/director/manager/dean? -Are there administrative responsibilities, research, supervising, or teaching as well?

4. Freshmen experience a new feeling when entering a university. It can be called a transition. What do you think if there are any adjustment challenges experienced by freshmen? What are they? Please, elaborate.

5. Your university provides extracurricular activities. What do you think about their purpose of them? Are they useful for freshmen? Do they help to overcome challenges? How?

6. If extracurricular activities are helpful, what difficulties do you find in implementing them and attracting students to take part in them?

 7. Is there anything that I have not covered that you think is relevant to add?

Thank you very much for talking with me. Your responses are greatly appreciated. I will call/email you once your interview is transcribed so you can read it over.

Students' Protocol

Good day. Let me introduce myself. My name is... I am a Master's student at ADA University at a faculty of MATL. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. The goal of this research is to explore the adjustment challenges faced by freshmen in transition from school to university in Azerbaijan: Investigating the role of extracurricular activities. Please understand you have the opportunity to remove yourself from this study at any time. Are you comfortable with me recording your responses for my review later? Yes _____ or No _____

This interview will last approximately 40 minutes and will be a semi-structured interview. Do you have any questions before we begin? If there are no questions, we can start the interview.

1. As a freshman do you experience any adjustment challenges? What are they?

2. What causes adjustment challenges?

3. Does your university provide a supportive environment through extracurricular activities for students to cope with adjustment challenges in the transition process to university? (if yes) What types of extracurricular activities are available?

4. What do you know about extracurricular activities provided by your university?

5. Have you participated or are you participating in extracurricular activities? In which of them?

6. What do you think about the role of extracurricular activities in overcoming adjustment challenges experienced by you? Are they effective? Do you recommend it?

7. Is there anything that I have not covered that you think is relevant to add?

Thank you very much for talking with me. Your responses are greatly appreciated. I will call/email you once your interview is transcribed so you can read it over.

Students' Survey

https://forms.gle/HRL5cir42v1qQvUk7

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