

Dear NUGSERIE community,

This 2023/24 winter has been shifting and lurching from a sunny, freezing, white and bright diamond landscape to the sombre, fragmented quilt of murky greys and browns within one day. The horses depicted in this Winter edition picture seem to have embraced this year's unpredictable winter, as nothing seems to faze them except for the curious onlookers who disrupt their tranquil slumber during a frizzy and cloudy day in the West Kazakhstan steppes. When I took this picture, I admired their silence and the deep, questionable gaze at me, the only cause of their silence disruption.

Being adaptable to the changes and challenges is common to two articles and two editorials of this winter edition. The first article, *Stress Management among Female Educational Managers and Administrators in Higher Education in Kazakhstan* by Elizabeth Chinedu, depicts the challenges women encounter in higher education, and ways of dealing with these challenges. This qualitative study at a university in Astana amplifies the voices of women in higher education who experience high-stress levels due to multitasking, fear of public scrutiny, and issues with students juggling their family responsibilities. We, both as chief editors, know what it feels like to work at Kazakhstani universities, often needing to prioritize tasks the Ministry requests with tight deadlines, and this is besides our own teaching, research, and management responsibilities. The study describes how these challenges impact women's work output and how they overcome or adapt to the challenges they experience.

The second article by Ayim Ussenova, *Ability Grouping in Kazakhstani EFL Secondary School Classes*, problematizes the neglect of students' abilities when dividing students into smaller English class groups. This qualitative study raises the issue of teaching and learning different skills, the social issues behind the allocation in the same ability groups as equality, fairness, and conflict between teachers for working in high-ability groups, and highlights teachers' ability to adapt their teaching, classroom management in resolving these problems.

The editorial penned by Adam Ishimgaliyev on *The Phenomenon of Multilingual Education* and the editorial *'I am lost': Mainstream School Teachers and CLIL* by Aiza Bazylkanova, Gullala Jumamuratova, and Mariya Shorman further discuss the issues of language teaching, and portray the educational landscape of Kazakhstan, shedding light on the challenges schools face and the adaptive measures teachers undertake within this context.

Collectively, the works featured in this issue offer valuable insights for practitioners and researchers who may position themselves as insiders in the educational landscape of Kazakhstan, encompassing discussions on reforms and the varied experiences and responses to these changes. We believe that these narrations and discussions will contribute to further research and collaboration to improve education practices.

As editors, the journal management team and our editorial review board worked collaboratively to provide you with insightful reading. Our dedication lies in contributing to scholarly discourse while supporting emerging scholars on their academic journey.

Sincerely,

Chief Editors

Zhadyra Makhmetova

Elmira Zhumabayeva