

Running head: ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION

**ATTITUDES OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF THE
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN NUR-SULTAN**

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Attitudes of kindergarten teachers towards inclusion of the children with special educational needs in Nur- Sultan

has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely

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**ATTITUDES OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF THE
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN NUR-SULTAN**

Abstract

Kazakhstan, as a developing country, has an educational system moving towards inclusion as a signatory of the Salamanca Statement and recognizing the needs in the education of the students with special educational needs. In Kazakhstan, the implementation of inclusive education has made progress for the educational levels from elementary school to high and school education. However, there has not been enough attention to inclusion within the kindergarten educational environment. The number of students with special educational needs is continuing to rise. Therefore, the educational system of Kazakhstan should be ready to provide young learners access to education in an inclusive environment. Kindergarten has a vital role in the preparation of the children to enter formal schooling. This research investigated teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of the children with special needs into general kindergarten programs. The main question of this research was, 'What are Kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special needs?' Eight kindergarten teachers from different kindergartens in Nur-Sultan participated in semi-structured interviews expressing their viewpoints regarding the inclusion of children with special educational needs into the present system of preschool education. Findings showed that most of the preschool teachers expressed a generally positive attitude towards students with special educational needs. While all the teacher participants supported the idea of inclusion, none of them were positive in terms of how the inclusion was realized in their settings. Most of the participants expressed many challenges of teaching children with special needs. The study has also revealed how the environment and teacher's experience have influenced their willingness to work with children

with special needs. Furthermore, the participants addressed the gaps in the realization of inclusive education in the preschool educational system.

Keywords: kindergarten, inclusive education, teachers' attitude, preschool education,
Nur-Sultan

**НҰР СҰЛТАН ҚАЛАСЫНДАҒЫ БАЛАБАҚША МҰҒАЛІМДЕРІНІҢ
ЕРЕКШЕ БІЛІМ БЕРУ ҚАЖЕТТІЛІКТЕРІ БАР БАЛАЛАРДЫ ЖАЛПЫ
БАЛАБАҚШАҒА ЕНГІЗУГЕ КӨЗҚАРАСЫ**

Аңдатпа

Қазақстан дамушы ел ретінде Саламанка мәлімдемесіне қол қойып, ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар оқушылардың білім алу қажеттігін құптайтын білім беру жүйесі болып табылады. Қазақстанда инклюзивті білім беруді енгізу орта және жоғары білім беру саласында үлкен жетістіктерге жетті. Алайда, инклюзияның балабақшадағы білім беру жүйесіне енгізілуіне жеткілікті көңіл бөлінбеді. Ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар оқушылар саны артуда. Сондықтан, Қазақстанның білім беру жүйесі кіші жас оқушыларына инклюзивті ортада білім алуға мүмкіндік беруге дайын болуы керек. Балабақша балаларды мектепке дайындауда маңызды рөл атқарады. Бұл зерттеу жұмысында ерекше қажеттіліктері бар балаларды балабақшаның жалпы білім беретін бағдарламаларына енгізуге деген мұғалімдердің көзқарасы зерттелді. Осы зерттеудің негізгі зерттеу сұрағы мынадай болды: «Балабақша тәрбиешілерінің ерекше қажеттіліктері бар балаларды енгізуге деген көзқарасы қандай?». Әр түрлі балабақшалар ішінен сегіз балабақша тәрбиешілері жартылай құрылымды сұхбатқа қатысып, ерекше қажеттіліктері бар балаларды қазіргі уақыттағы мектепке дейінгі білім беру жүйесіне қосу туралы пікірлерін білдірді. Зерттеу нәтижелері көрсеткендей, мектепке дейінгі тәрбиешілердің көпшілігі ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар оқушыларға оң көзқараста болды. Қатысушы мұғалімдердің барлығы инклюзивті білім беру идеясын қолдағанмен, олардың ешқайсысы инклюзияның олардың жұмыс ортасында қалай жүзеге асырылғандығына оң пікірде болмады. Қатысушылардың көпшілігі ерекше қажеттіліктері бар балаларды

оқытудың көптеген қиындықтарын айтты. Бұған қоса, зерттеу қоршаған орта мен мұғалімнің тәжірибесі олардың ерекше қажеттіліктері бар балалармен жұмыс істеуге деген құлшынысына қалай әсер ететінін анықтады. Сонымен қатар, қатысушылар мектепке дейінгі білім беру жүйесінде инклюзивті білім беруді жүзеге асырудағы олқылықтарды да қарастырды.

Кілт сөздер: балабақша, инклюзивті білім беру, мұғалімдердің көзқарасы, мектепке дейінгі білім беру, Нұр-Сұлтан.

ОТНОШЕНИЕ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ ДЕТСКИХ САДОВ К ВКЛЮЧЕНИЮ ДЕТЕЙ С ОСОБЫМИ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫМИ ПОТРЕБНОСТЯМИ В ГОРОДЕ НУР- СУЛТАН

Аннотация

Казахстан как развивающаяся страна, чья образовательная система движется в направлении инклюзивного образования входит в число подписавших Саламанкскую декларацию и признает потребности в обучении учащихся с особыми образовательными потребностями. В Казахстане внедрение инклюзивного образования достигло прогресса в сфере высшего и школьного образования. Тем не менее, не было уделено достаточно внимания для инклюзивного образования в образовательной среде детского сада. Число студентов с особыми образовательными потребностями продолжает расти. Поэтому система образования Казахстана должна быть готова предоставить молодым учащимся доступ к образованию в инклюзивной среде. Детский сад играет жизненно важную роль в подготовке детей к школе. В ходе этого исследования изучалось отношение учителей к включению детей с особыми потребностями в общеобразовательные детские сады. Основным вопросом данного исследования является «Каково отношение учителей детских садов к включению детей с особыми потребностями в обычные детские сады?» Восемь воспитателей детских садов из разных учреждений приняли участие в интервью открытого характера, выражая свои взгляды на включение детей с особыми образовательными потребностями в современной системе дошкольного образования. Результаты показали, что большинство учителей дошкольных учреждений выражали в целом позитивное отношение к учащимся с особыми образовательными потребностями. Несмотря на то

что все участники интервью поддержали идею инклюзии, ни один из них не был положительным с точки зрения того, как включение было реализовано в их учебных заведениях. Большинство участников выразили множество проблем обучения детей с особыми потребностями. Исследование также показало, что окружающая среда и опыт учителя повлияли на их желание работать с детьми с особыми потребностями. Кроме того участники рассмотрели пробелы в реализации инклюзивного образования в системе дошкольного образования инклюзивного образования для учащихся.

Ключевые слова: детский сад, инклюзивное образование, отношение учителей, дошкольное образование, Нур-Султан

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ATTITUDES OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF THE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN NUR-SULTAN

Chapter 1. Introduction

This research explores the concept of kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. In this study, terminology such as special educational needs (SEN) and additional education needs will be interchangeably used. This refers to children who have some health or cognitive issues which may impact their learning process (Carpenter, 2005). One of the current educational issues that have been discussed at length between teachers, parents, society and the government is the question of including children with special educational needs into general educational organizations (Fitch, 2003). The practice of creating inclusive schools is already taking place in Nur-Sultan. However, the situation at the preschool level, such as in kindergartens lags behind that of other levels of schooling. According to research (Denivarova & Abdresheva, 2015), the early "correctional" educational organizations such as kindergartens can only provide support for a third of all children with special educational needs. One problem is that education for children with special educational needs is still conceptualized from the prism of 'correction' and 'defect' notions, which has an impact on the education intended for children who need additional educational support. Preschool children with special educational needs do not have equal access to education (Denivarova & Abdresheva, 2015). The authors mention that the approach of early correctional and pedagogical support covers only a third of all children with special needs. This study will investigate what teacher's attitudes are towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream kindergartens in Nur-Sultan. In the context of the preschool education in Kazakhstan, kindergartens are for children from two years old until seven years old.

Background of the Study

Kazakhstan, a developing country, is following the global trends in education, as this country aims to be among those most developed countries in the world. The global community and the call of modern society are driving a different vision of the educational system with inclusion becoming one of the keys of the global transformational mindset. The concept of the term 'inclusion' can be loosely described as acceptance into a whole, no matter the health problems, gender, nationality, age and any kinds of different factors that present obstacles to getting an equitable education. In 1994, inclusion was introduced as an innovative pedagogical approach at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca (UNESCO 1994) which declared that all children should study in ordinary schools. Inclusion can be perceived as a mechanism for changing biased attitudes towards children with special needs and providing them with a feeling that they belong in society. Inclusive education has different aspects, and it cannot be reduced to one meaning and definition as it is taking more thoughtful understanding when related to the different cultures and views. As the definition of the inclusion has different understandings depending on the culture and country and other factors, Göransson and Nilholm (2014) categorized the meaning of inclusion according to four categories. The first understanding of inclusive education is related to the placement of a child with special educational needs in an ordinary school. The second understanding of inclusion is connected with the individual education, through which the student with SEN is trying to achieve his/her personal, social and academic needs. The third understanding of inclusion is related to the overall individualized point of view, where inclusion is concerned to be for all children in the way of achieving their social and academic needs. The last category defined as a community where inclusion can be understood as the formulation of communities with particular features. This educational

approach has become an important issue globally. Inclusion started to be discussed since the acceptance of Salamanca Statement in 1994 and was approved and advocated for as a fundamental human right to obtain free access to education. However, the implementation and creation of an inclusive society has had an influential connection with the methods of recognition, evaluation, and execution of inclusion and also depends on past education standards and school strategies deployed for children in need of additional learning support (Kiswarday and Drlić 2015). According to the research, Ainscow (2005) interpreted inclusion as a universal phenomenon, as every country in the world has its own understanding and interpretation of this definition. At the present time, education is continuing to move from the segregation of the children with special needs to their inclusion. But how to include children with special educational needs in regular educational organizations continues to be a challenge for educational practitioners and policymakers as well.

Inclusive educational organizations strive to accommodate the needs of individual children with additional learning needs (Foremen & Arthur Kelly, 2014). Educational organizations should respond to various children's needs regardless of their strengths, challenges, culture, nationality, and social position to guarantee fairness in education without separation or segregation of the students with special educational needs (SEN) (Booth & Ainscow, 2007) Inclusive education aims at ensuring equal access, equity and equal opportunities in education for all individuals with SEN. Furthermore, inclusive education takes into account the potential of every person and also recommends a general plan for the learning process. According to the prism of inclusivity, this initiative should include the variety of students' needs and the kind of support the government and the schools can provide. The support

to the special educational needs of students should be taken as one of the first steps of the teaching-learning methodology and the curriculum.

Kazakhstan is a signatory of international agreements and policies to improve the educational system in the country, in particular the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), the UN Convention of Rights of Persons with Disability (2006), and the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1961). By the acceptance of these international policies, Kazakhstan took the responsibility to protect the rights of all citizens with different educational needs. These agreements also concern inclusive education. As a country, Kazakhstan has the same historical background as the former Soviet Union; the attitude towards children with special educational needs was one viewing them as “defect children”, and this thinking still has a strong influence even in modern days. During the Soviet period, it was the norm to separate SEN children from other children. As a result of the segregation of children with special educational needs in the Soviet period, the term defectology appeared and became common, giving a negative connotation and implying that these children are ‘defective’.

In Kazakhstan, the development of inclusive education has started firstly from school education, and the priority is around creating an accessible environment and inclusive classrooms. Now, the demands for the needs of special educational support for early childhood education have been increasing. It is essential to consider the readiness of kindergartens in Nur-Sultan to educate children with additional learning needs. Moreover, to determine the challenges to inclusion of early childhood education of children with special educational needs raises the question of the training of kindergarten teachers, what their attitudes are and if they are ready to provide support for SEN children.

The role of the teacher is to take responsibility for a successful implementation of the inclusive education, to identify children's needs, to help children adapt to school, to help society to view them as equally deserving as all children, and to provide any further support; a teacher provides a connection between parents, their child, and the school community (Pavri, 2004). Teachers have an essential role regarding the quality and implementation of inclusion, and the role of teachers must be considered seriously in further development of the social tolerance. The academic success of children with special educational needs mostly depends on the teachers and on their attitude towards children with special educational needs, an attitude influenced by a positive mindset, by enough knowledge and experiences for inclusive learning process and by devotion to the children (Artan & Balat, 2003). These factors are one of the crucial aspects in understanding teachers' opinions which will influence children's self-worth, and independence (Sharp, 2002). Furthermore, the kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education can be affected by different factors, which have an influence on children's learning process. These factors can be the age of the teacher, and how long teacher has been working in kindergarten, the child's specific health issue and its severity, the kind of support the teacher and the child receive from the educational organization and government, and other factors that influence the learning process (Sarı, 2007).

The early support of children with special educational needs is one of the crucial aspects in their lives as it will influence their socialization and adaptation in society (Cole, Dale, & Mills, 1991). In addition, the acceptance of the children with special educational needs in the preschool organizations will help other children and adults to learn tolerance, towards the persons with special educational needs. Time is also one of the factors related to the progress of children with special educational needs, as the earlier SEN children have access to kindergarten

and other early-year educational organizations, the better is their educational, social, emotional, behavioral and life skills development (Bailey & Wolery, 1992). Consequently, the role of inclusive education in kindergarten should not be disregarded as it is one of the first steps in a child's development.

Purpose of the Research

This study had three joint purposes one of which was to explore the current situation in inclusive preschool organizations in Nur-Sultan and to identify the barriers to the inclusion of children with special educational needs. The second purpose is to investigate inclusive kindergarten practices through the prism of the teachers to determine what knowledge kindergarten teachers possess in terms of methods and procedures for working in inclusive settings. The third purpose is to investigate kindergarten (preschool) teacher's attitudes towards the inclusion of the children with special needs in Nur-Sultan city kindergartens.

In its totality, this research explored teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of the children who need additional learning support in general kindergarten settings in Nur-Sultan and the factors that influence their attitudes.

Research Problem

To my knowledge, the situation of inclusive preschool education in Nur-Sultan has not been researched yet in Kazakhstan, and the introduction of the inclusive kindergartens has only just been given consideration according to the Akimat ("town council") of Nur-Sultan. In their internet resource, the first inclusive kindergarten only opened its doors in 2019 (Ir.kz,2019). Inclusive preschool education in Nur-Sultan is still in the process of development. Moreover, in Nur-Sultan, inclusive preschool education is not as developed as school education, and there is a wide gap between inclusive school education and inclusive preschool education. According to

the research in this field, if a child has not attended preschool, they will have problems in their future school adaptation, which may negatively impact the academic achievement of those children (Pianta, Cox, & Snow, 2007).

Research Questions

This study was aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. What are the kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special needs?
2. Do kindergarten teachers know the methods and procedures for working in inclusive settings?
3. What are the barriers to inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream kindergartens in Nur-Sultan?

Significance of the Study

The contemporary social trend of inclusive education and the project of creating an inclusive society, first of all, dictate the importance of this study that is encouraging inclusive education for children with SEN. The concerns of inclusive education should not focus on starting with a child's formal school education. The first educational experience a child often receives is in early childhood education. The importance of this study is to determine the uncertain areas of the inclusion of kindergarten children with special educational needs by investigating the attitude of teachers and researching the current situation of inclusive preschool education in Nur-Sultan. The modern notion of inclusion in the area of special education in Nur-Sultan is a relatively new issue, especially in the sphere of kindergarten education.

In summary, the main reason for conducting this study is, first of all, that this research will investigate the teachers' attitudes, as well as the influencing factors and barriers to inclusion,

which would guide the preschool education administration and the government towards developing inclusive education further in the country for early childhood environments. Also, this research reveals the problems of preschool inclusive education and raises the importance of inclusion of the children with special educational needs in their early years.

Context of the Study

As a growing city, Nur-Sultan is still in the process of developing inclusive education at different educational levels by creating a more inclusive educational environment for children with special educational needs. However, educational leaders are faced with the challenge of improving and executing effective inclusive practices that support teachers in their teaching with SEN children. The implementation of inclusive education has its debates, regarding whether it is better to have more correctional schools for children with special needs or to make an attempt to include them in the general school environment. There are five key stakeholders in these debates: children with special educational needs (SEN), their parents, the teachers, the government and the society. Parents refer to the position that not all the schools can support the needs of children with SEN, and probably a "better" place for them would be special educational organizations. The problem of creating an inclusive environment is that school principals and teachers must be involved and supportive by realizing inclusive practices in school environments where inclusive education is often not the traditional viewpoint for teachers, administrators, children or their parents. It takes some time to create a truly inclusive school as well as to train staff. Communication, the opportunity to work with other inclusive educational organizations, and experience are also required. However, working on a couple or more of these factors can help to develop more positive attitudes towards inclusion.

This research considered the conceptualization of social inclusion and viewed it through the lens of social cognitive theory (SCT). The social cognitive theory was developed by Bandura (2001). In his research, he states that a person's attitude correlates with factors such as environment and personal view. The unique feature of SCT is the emphasis on social influence and its emphasis on both the external and internal social reinforcement.

Thesis outline

This thesis represents an overview of the concept of inclusive early childhood education by recognizing international literature and research which have been carried out in this field in Nur-Sultan city. This research is presented in five chapters. Chapter I includes the introduction, Chapter II presents a review of the literature in the field of inclusive education. Chapter III describes the methodology used for this research study. It includes information on how participants were selected, the instrumentation, the data collection, and the procedures for interviewing participants. Chapter IV presents the study's findings. Chapter V presents a discussion of the findings and Chapter VI is a conclusion of the research which summarizes the findings in relation to the aim of the study and research questions.

Summary

This chapter introduced the main aspects of the research. The problem of inclusive education in the field of early years needs is a modern challenge in Kazakhstani society. As this research considers exploring teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of children with special needs, the researcher wants to highlight that in the understanding of the term inclusion, it should not be perceived only from the issue of children with SEN. Inclusive education in the early years is, first of all, providing equal rights and opportunities for children to access early childhood

organizations. This chapter presented the purpose of the research, understanding the problem, and the relevance of the study.

Chapter 2. Literature review

This chapter will present a review of the literature, providing the theoretical basis, with the objective to explore and investigate related research and ensure that this study may contribute to the research about kindergarten teachers' attitude towards inclusion in Nur-Sultan. In this chapter, the literature review focuses on the following five sections: (1) Theoretical Framework, (2) Understanding of the Inclusion, (3) Inclusion in early childhood, (4) Overview of the Studies of Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusion, (5) Teacher Role in Inclusive Education, (6) Debates about inclusion, (7) Summary.

Theoretical framework

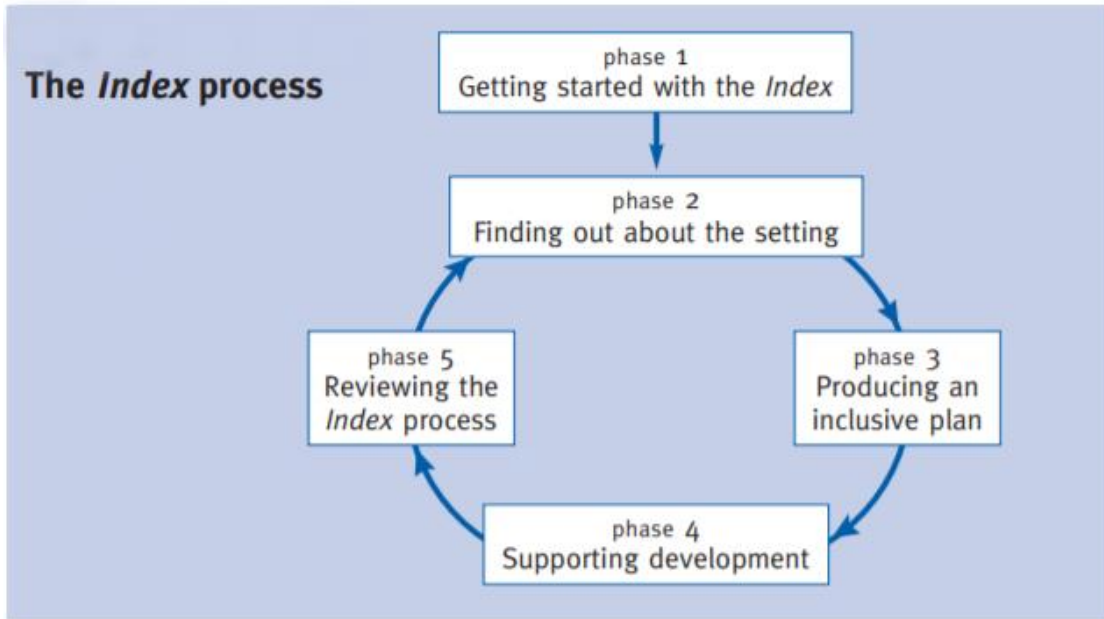
Ainscow (2007), in his article, states that teachers play a key role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. The role of the teachers should be evaluated as they are among the first people who apply inclusive education in practice. To support inclusive education, teachers need to have a positive attitude towards inclusion and to put in practice the theories that encourage the implementation of inclusive education. One of the underlying theories for practice of inclusive education was provided by Booth, Ainscow, & Kingston (2006) in their book *Index for Inclusion: Developing play, learning and participation in early years and childcare*. The theory of this book has been chosen as the lens through which to view this study, due to its philosophical underpinnings. This theory is used as guidance for this research as the following questions are explored:

1. What are Kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special needs?
2. What knowledge of methods and procedures for working in inclusive settings do kindergarten teachers have?

3. What are the barriers to inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream kindergartens in Nur-Sultan?

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion should be viewed through the index of inclusion, because without understanding the process of implementation of inclusive education in kindergarten it is not possible to know what are the barriers teachers in Nur-Sultan are facing. This particular version was adapted for use in early years and kindergarten and preschool educational organizations. The first version of the index for inclusion was primarily developed for the schools. According to the authors, the index for inclusion is a process of implementation of inclusive education in practice. The theory of the index has a direct influence on the teachers' attitude because this method for the implementation of inclusion has been developed for practitioners, teachers. The attitude of teachers is connected to the development of the inclusive culture and self-analysis and an understanding of the work setting. From the understanding of the cultural aspect of the inclusion follows other steps, primarily based on the understanding of inclusion and on the attitude towards it. The other two steps include creating inclusive policies, which would support the development of inclusive education and further inclusive practice. Inclusive culture, policy and practice create a triangle for the implementation of the inclusive education in the early childhood setting. The early years are the first step in the educational system all over the world: the central aspect of inclusion, according to the index, is primarily a collaborative work between teachers, practitioners and children, and the understanding of the educational needs of the children with special educational needs. The process of the index is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1 *The Index process*



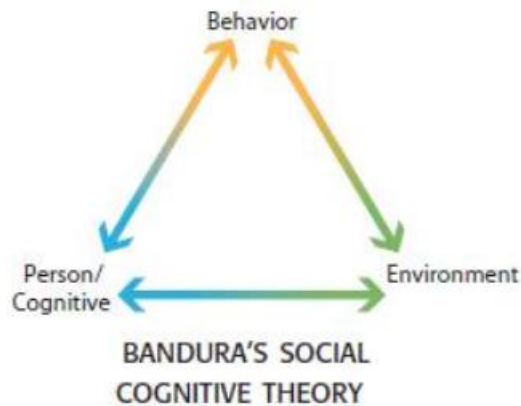
The authors also note that the sense of inclusion is aiming at eliminating the barriers in a deeper understanding and that it takes an understanding of the cultural factors such as attitude, values, beliefs and the views and actions happening in the early years setting. Essential concepts of inclusion in early years, according to the index, are barriers to play and exploration of play environment, barriers to participation, learning and play resources and support for the difference. As a first step in supporting a positive attitude towards inclusion and understanding of inclusion, Booth, Ainscow, & Kingston (2006) propose to start with an understanding of the index. The first stage includes creating a focus group which is going to work on the developing of the inclusive setting and creating inclusive cultures. This dimension encourages to create according to Booth, Ainscow, & Kingston (2006) a "secure, accepting, collaborating, stimulating community, in which everyone is valued" (page 8). The creation of the inclusive culture and values will have an impact on the teacher's attitude towards inclusion and will affect all members in the educational process, such as stakeholders, practitioners, children, management, and parents.

The index for inclusion is the main theory selected for the research question concerning barriers and implementation of the inclusive education in kindergartens in Nur-Sultan and looking on the process of inclusion in general. However, to answer the main research question, what are kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special needs, the index for inclusion does not specifically address this topic. To understand what are the teachers' attitude towards inclusion and the reasons behind this attitude, social cognitive theory will be used. Bandura (2001), in his social cognitive theory, stated that a person's behaviours are affected by individual factors as well as the external environment. This theory will help understand the research question about teachers' attitude as to whether they have a positive or negative opinion towards inclusion. The theory states that behavior of a situation is dependent on people's experience, and thoughts which are also connected to the external factors of the environment. In the Soviet period, the children with special needs were viewed as a 'defect' and the only place where they could get an education would be a special educational setting which also influenced the teachers' attitudes towards them. As Kazakhstan has endorsed all international agreements towards people with special needs, the government is moving forward with inclusion.

Bandura's social cognitive theory takes into consideration teachers' personal experience and the environment where they are working. The meaning of environment not only takes into account kindergarten setting, it is also considers if the government have enough influence to promote inclusivity in the educational system. The social cognitive theory is presented in the Figure 2, and the method is depicted in a triangle shape, as the internal factors and external factors have a direct impact on the teachers' opinion. In the research this theory is considered

because it gives a deep understanding of why teachers have a certain opinion and what are the internal and external factors that influence them.

Figure 2-*Bandura's social cognitive theory*



In conclusion, this research is guided by two theories, the index for inclusion and Bandura's social cognitive theory. The index for inclusion provides general understanding in supporting and creating an inclusive setting and considering the cultural aspects of inclusion influencing the teacher's attitude towards inclusion. The literature review would not be complete without mentioning an overview of other international research works, with the aim of understanding different points of view and of finding further understanding on the theme of the kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

Understanding of the Inclusion

The understanding of inclusive education provides general information in the context of the research. A child with special educational needs is under a powerful influence from a teacher who leads him or her to success when implementing inclusive education. Understanding the role of the teacher in inclusive education is key to the success of learning. The overview of the literature review would not be complete without understanding the meaning of inclusive education.

The global trends in education necessitate changes in the education for students with special educational needs, for which education was formerly in special educational settings. In the past few decades, the world is moving towards being more inclusive meaning SEN students attend school in mainstream settings with their peers. According to Booth & Ainscow (2002), every researcher has his own understanding of inclusion, and inclusion needs to be understood as a complex set of dimensions. The word "inclusion" originates from Latin "inclusio" which means acceptance into a whole. In their article Bendová, Čecháčková & Šádková (2014), inclusion is exclusively considered as the right given to students with special educational needs to study in the mainstream educational setting. However, inclusive education should not be perceived only under this aspect, as providing an opportunity for students with special educational needs to study in the mainstream educational setting. Inclusivity has a deeper understanding meaning education for all without considering health issues, gender, religion, language, age. Saloviita (2018) discusses that inclusive education originates from the creation of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) which aims to provide education for all students, including students with special educational needs, and providing them an opportunity to study in the mainstream education settings with the required supports.

Inclusive education, according to (Florian, 2008) is globally perceived as the concept that every person has the right to get an education, the access to education and the right to fairness. Nevertheless, there can be many thoughts about inclusion and different ways to understand educational rights and fairness. This author poses the contrast between right to education (access) and rights in education (fairness): for a child with special needs, what would be better ? Having an opportunity to study in a general educational setting or being academically successful? All around the world the meaning of inclusion can be misunderstood according to the Engelbrecht et

al. (2017) inclusive education expects that all learners are frequently being placed in general-education settings, despite the fact that they all have different needs. This author adds that inclusion is not only access to education and fairness but also recognition and participation, and the guarantee that a student would receive an education suited to his/her needs. Wilson (2000) suggests that understanding of inclusion should be connected to the sense of human rights and principles of equity. However, Thomas and Glenn (2002) believe that Wilson (2000) was unrealistic towards the understanding of the inclusion and they proposed that inclusion should be based on reflective practice and on what is better for each individual in the process of achieving their educational needs.

The understanding of inclusive education is moving forward from segregation to the acceptance of new policies and laws. Kazakhstan as a developing country is also considering the needs of people with different special educational needs. Raimbekova & Mamraimov (2016) report that the State Program of education development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 recognizes the needs of the children with special needs. They have developed modern conceptual strategies for the education of children with special needs in the development and implementation of strategies of joined education and upbringing of children with learning difficulties together with the other typically developing children. The aim of this strategy provides equal access to students with (SEN) to numerous educational programs.

Inclusion in early childhood

The results of the implementation of the State Program of education development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 reported that in 2015, 385 preschool organizations, including also early childhood organizations, created the conditions for the upbringing and education of children with special educational needs. In 2019, the number of inclusive preschool

organizations, including early childhood organizations, reached 1890 from a total of 6592 preschools and early childhood organizations. During the period of implementation of the State Program for the Development of Education and Science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2016-2019, the proportion of preschool organizations that created the conditions for the upbringing and education of children with special educational needs showed a solid increase to 20.9% from 9.1% in 2015 and bringing the total to 30%. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MoES), 2020)

In the National Standards for Preschools in Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Education (2012) defined inclusion as the creation of conditions for equal access to education for all students, taking into account special educational needs and individual opportunities. The definition of inclusive education has different dimensions, and each person has his understanding of this notion: the authors of this document tried to incorporate all the different opinions, including those from the international research, as well as the meaning of inclusive education in the context of the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to the UNESCO report by Tomini et al. (2014) in 2012 in Kazakhstan 1.33 per cent of children under eighteen years have disabilities and the number of children in Kazakhstan with disabilities is continuing to rise.

As stated in Chapter 1, Kazakhstan has signed several international declarations, in particular the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), the UN Convention of Rights of Persons with Disability (2006), and the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1961). Education for all in the context of inclusion considers preschool education as well, meaning providing access to the kindergarten for children with special needs. Therefore, the country is obligated to provide quality education for all, including students with special needs (Makoelle, 2020). While inclusive education, also including the early years, is on a positive

move there are still many hurdles to be faced. Purdue (2009) discussed the barriers towards inclusion in early childhood settings. The main difficulty for the implementation of inclusive education lies, first of all, in the core understanding of inclusion from the educational system. It is believed that children with special needs would need a different approach to learning and that their attendance in the ordinary education settings would cause challenges to all members of the educational process. The author states in the article that the difficulties children with special needs face in obtaining entry to early childhood organizations are affected by their disability rather than by a disabling education system. Another main point discussed in the article is teachers' attitudes towards including children with SEN, with teachers' attitudes varying depending on the type of disability that child has. Teacher's attitudes towards a child with SEN is dependent upon the perceived additional responsibilities for meeting the child's educational and developmental needs, and also on the understanding that in the classroom there are other children as well: the teacher is thinking how it is possible to provide for this child a special environment meeting his/her needs. The author further mentions that teachers perceive children with SEN as different which makes them think that teaching a child with special needs is a challenge and that it will take time away from the ordinary children: this leads to the point that teacher does not know how to include children in the classroom and how to teach them (Cullen, 2004). This often results in teachers leaving this child to an assistant who has less experience than a teacher, while the classroom teacher is working with the rest of the class. Another barrier that Purdue (2009) mentions is that ordinary kindergartens may deny acceptance of the child giving for reason the lack of specialized equipment, space, toys and many more factors. However, the situation can be different if the teacher has had experience in special education or has an educational background in special education (Lee, Yeung, Tracey, & Barker, 2015). In

their research (Lee et al., 2015), they state that teachers showed mild support for inclusion. Nevertheless, teachers with a special education background are more interested in inclusion than teachers without this background. Teachers with the proper training are more likely to be successful in including a child with SEN than teachers without specialized knowledge.

Early intervention for those having additional challenges can result in positive strides in child development. The earlier the specialist can provide support, the more likely the child can improve and overcome certain learning difficulties. This is why making early childhood centers inclusive is so important. All teachers play a critical role in the success of inclusive education. Their attitude makes an essential difference if the child will be included in all aspects of the learning process. Another factor is support from the school administration who need to be open and committed to developing inclusive practices within their organization. There must be a physical and social environment that is welcoming and enabling for all children.

The rationale of this research is, first of all, to provide information on the position of inclusive education in Nur-Sultan at the preschool stage. As a researcher, I evaluated that there was already research in the field of school education and higher education; however, there has not been enough attention to preschool education. The early years are playing a crucial role in the formation of successful students: the earlier we can start the intervention for children with different educational needs, the sooner these persons will be able to adapt to the educational system and have the opportunity for higher academic achievements. The problem of child readiness to school is taking one of the critical issues in our society. The problem arises when parents do not have the opportunity to teach them in early childhood settings for various reasons. The research done by Reeves et al. (2018) proved that the vulnerable population of children primarily from low-income families shows poor language skills. Primarily, low-income families

may have other problems which include ability to nurture, the psychological atmosphere in the family, and other factors that influence child development. According to the research Reeves et al. (2018), the teachers implemented the Early Talk Boost program for three years old children—this program aimed to develop language skills. The result of this program showed that children from low-income families improved their language skills, which made essential steps in school readiness. Inclusive education is not only about children with special needs; it is also children in the vulnerable populations. Another study which was using another early year's intervention program also showed good results. In the latest article, Clegg et al. (2020) a special early childhood program showed that children improved their expressive and receptive language skills. These articles illustrate that early intervention makes difference. In the field of inclusive early years education, the support of children with Autism spectrum disorder in preschool is already taking place. Brodzeller et al. (2018) presented two approaches in the successful adaptation of the child with autism in the early childhood setting. The child improved his social skills which is taking a significant part in school readiness. There is a strong correlation between early years education and academic achievements in the article Duncan et al. (2007). Their study showed that if the child already has math and reading skills, it will have a positive impact on the child's academic success

Overview of Studies on Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusion

The overview of the research on the theme of kindergarten teachers' attitude towards inclusion contains critical issues such as general overview of teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion and factors influencing teacher attitudes.

According to the recent research on the theme of kindergarten teachers' attitude towards inclusion, the general finding is that most of the kindergarten teachers consider inclusive

education as a positive notion. This opinion can be confirmed in research articles such as Paulo & Cadime (2016) Also, the individual patterns of what is considered as an adequate behavior reflect the expected behavior of a culture or society; and the recognized potential to mirror that behavior. Paulo & Cadime (2016) did their research using a quantitative method, based on individual and professional variables that have an impact on the attitudes. The data for the research was obtained from a sample formed of 68 kindergarten teachers.

In the Kazakhstan context, research was done on the theme of teachers' attitude towards inclusion in the field of higher education by Shaikheslyamova, A. (2018). In her research to investigate teachers' attitude she used a qualitative design based on the interviewing of academic lecturers working in higher education. The result of her research also showed a generally positive attitude towards inclusion. However, teachers were concerned about putting inclusive education in practice. A factor depending on the teacher's attitude was the type of disability, and teachers raised their concerns about students with cognitive disorders. The researcher interviewed eight teachers in the faculty of a higher education institute.

By reviewing other literature, it is understood that teachers may also hold negative attitudes towards inclusion. This was the case in the article by Joseph (2009). The article revealed that inclusion is not that easy, especially with children with cognitive disorders. In the article by Joseph (2009) the school principal believed that children in the segregated classes had better academic achievements. Since most of administration of the school were committed to the inclusion, they hired a new school principal whose values matched theirs. The new school principal was very positive about inclusivity, and he did much work for students with special needs to study altogether with other children.

According to Nonis et al (2016), the reasons and factors that influence the negative attitudes from teachers are connected to the number of the children in the classroom, and an inadequate material base discourages teachers towards inclusive education, Other problems are worries about a student's capacity to meet academic requirements from the educational programme in a mainstream classroom environment. However, the research did find that teachers who already had experience working with children with special needs have more positive attitudes towards inclusion (Nonis et al., 2016).

Another study found differences in the teachers' attitude towards inclusion between kindergarten teachers, primary schoolteachers and higher education teachers. Hsien, Brown, and Bortoli (2009), in their research, discovered that primary and kindergarten teachers (N = 36 respondents; females = 35) have the most positive attitude towards inclusion. The reason for it lies in the stronger focus of the early years on the development of the child's social skills than on the worry about meeting academic achievements.

Teacher Role in Inclusive Education

This section discusses the teachers' role in inclusive education. At first, the idea of education for all started from schools and then influenced early childhood education and higher education. Now the implementation of inclusive education in early years education in developed countries is common practice according to Gezer & Aksoy, (2019); Diken et al. (2016); Odom and Wolery (2003); and Rakap, (2017). In their research, Gezer & Aksoy (2019), state that the roles and duties of kindergarten teachers is one of the primary factors of the successful implementation of inclusive practices. In their article, the authors have a strong conviction that teachers are the practitioners of inclusive education. Teachers need to understand how strong the impact they have in terms of inclusive education is; the authors tried to understand what teachers

think about their role in creating education for all. In their research in the preschool settings, 19 teachers who were teaching children with special needs were interviewed. The results of the study showed that the teachers have some kind of understanding of the role they are playing in inclusive education. However, not all of them are taking into account their roles and the duties expected from them by the appropriate governmental practice.

Another study indicated that teachers are more likely to trust psychologists and special education teachers than general classroom teachers because of their lack of knowledge (Knežević-Florić Olivera, Stefan, & Tančić ,2018). This recent research, in Serbia, highlights the fact that teachers are afraid to take responsibility for teaching children with special needs. The reason for it lies in their educational organization: teachers show their concerns about lack of experience with children who need additional learning support. Another aspect is the fact that the teachers feel that they are not trained and prepared to have a child with special needs in their class, and that they are more likely to refer this child to psychologist. The understanding that some of the teachers are not ready to take responsibility for teaching children with special needs is the main barrier to inclusion. These teachers underestimate their role in teaching children with special needs. The author underlines the need for teachers to accept their roles and to feel competent to work with students with special needs. Research from Turkey complements this previous research, Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) found that only 35% of the teachers who participated in their survey expressed a desire to include students with severe learning difficulties into their classrooms. These low numbers offer clear insight into the challenges of inclusion.

Debates about inclusion

This section discusses the positive and negative debates of inclusion. This paragraph aims at connecting these aspects to provide a better understanding of the teacher's attitude towards

inclusion. In modern days, the discussion on the effectiveness of inclusive education instead of special education has become topical. The ideology of creating inclusive educational organizations and of changing approaches to teaching children with SEN has transformed the education system across the world. The education of students with SEN in the inclusive educational organization implies the acceptance of a student in a mainstream environment and meeting the needs of the student; and the philosophy of creating a social environment where a student with SEN will have a sense of belonging within the social community for all students (Avramidis and Norwich 2002). The social advantages of inclusive education cannot be overlooked. A student with SEN having the opportunity to interact with different children will find help in developing social skills, making them more comfortable in social interactions. On the other side, all children will learn how to interact with students with SEN and to build a respectful and polite attitude towards them (Horrocks et al. 2008). Another decisive factor about inclusion has been researched in the article 'Outcomes for students with learning disabilities in inclusive and pull-out programs.' Results of this research indicate that inclusive and pull-out programs vary significantly. Students that were in inclusive classrooms had more advantages than children in pull-out programs. Inclusive students had earned higher grades, and additionally, they displayed improved behavior (Rea et al. 2002). Inclusion, in its global sense is aimed at helping in the adaptation of people with special needs. According to (Khudorenkod, 2011), providing equal rights for all members of the society to receive education in the global educational organizations will further make people with SEN competitive members of the society from a professional point of view and will ultimately have a positive impact on the economy.

Including each child with special needs in the educational environment and adopting flexibility in approaches to learning - these are the main goals and objectives of inclusive education. To further inclusive education, educational organizations must equip facilities accordingly, develop specialized training courses for educators, and aim at developing their intercommunication with SEN students. Inclusive education is a new alternative to special education. The idea of inclusivity and of finding a balance between equity and equality, as well as the way how inclusion is being implemented raises the voices of special education practitioners. The main issues of inclusive education are the lack of trained staff. Most educational institutions at all levels of education are not ready to implement inclusive education. Educational institutions were not created for this teaching condition. It is not only essential that the child attends a regular kindergarten or school, the kind of support he receives there is also critical: is there a teaching assistant, and is the staff trained?

A risk in inclusion is that students with SEN may be bullied by other students (De Monchy et al. 2004). Lubovskiy (2016) claimed that inclusion is a dead-end for the children with SEN. The process of inclusion of the children with SEN contradicts the underlying philosophy of pedagogy and disregards the demands on the mental activity of children with SEN. Another factor discussed is the presence in the implementation process of inclusion of people without special knowledge, and/or not properly trained. In inclusive education, these people, who do not know what to do with children with SEN are causing more problems to a child than helping him to be a part of the society. Lubovskiy (2016), states that:

a child with SEN at a general education organization misses the more significant part of the financial support and special environment which are provided by the

system of special education, but wherever he studies, he remains the object of special education.

Discussing the inclusion debate in term of yes or no to inclusion must consider the following factors. According to Carrington (2007) the realization of an inclusion program in any educational institution depends on the attitudes of teachers and on their readiness to work with children with SEN. Another factor is the style of teaching approach in the context of working with students with SEN. Inclusive education has advantages and disadvantages. Surely the idea of inclusion in providing education for all has a positive side. However, the implementation of inclusion and movement from special education to inclusion still has numerous issues in many countries. Overall, the government should provide a choice to the students with SEN whether they want to study in the inclusive classroom or in a special education setting and consider the personal preferences of the child.

Summary

To support the research, the author selected and analyzed the relevant literature in inclusive education with a focus on the different aspects of it. The literature contains contemporary articles that would enrich the understanding of the research topic and provide a differing views on the problem of inclusive education in kindergartens. The researcher categorized the literature according to the themes which included various studies and also in the literature review were included articles that contradict this topic to provide a reader an understanding of the problem from the different viewpoints.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to investigate kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in the Nur-Sultan city. The data was obtained by interviewing Russian and/or English speaking kindergarten teachers. Kazakh speakers were not for the interview as the researcher is not confident in speaking Kazakh. The researcher chose a qualitative research method as it is better suited to answering the research questions. The main goal of the research is to investigate the current situation of preschool inclusive education. The chapter is organized into sections: (a) research design and rationale, (b) research site, (c) sample and sampling procedures, (d) participants (e) data collection procedures, (f) data analysis methods, (g) ethical concerns and risks of research, (h) significance.

Research Design & Rationale

The main focus of this research was based on collecting data by interviewing on the participants' attitudes towards inclusion of children with special educational needs into the general kindergarten setting. The peculiarities of the research justify using a qualitative approach (Hatch, 2002; Creswell, 2007). A qualitative research design gives an opportunity for participants to reflect on their professional experience, share their thoughts, and raise concerns on the problem in question. The study approach is interviewing preschool teachers as a research tool, allowing one to look at the subjective opinions and thoughts of the participants (Seidman, 2013).

Research site

The research site of this study is preschool educational organizations and kindergartens. The researcher conducted research in both private kindergartens and public kindergartens in the city of Nur-Sultan. The difference between private kindergartens in a state kindergarten primarily

depends on the form of ownership. Private kindergartens are run by private individuals. Public kindergartens are managed by authorized persons. This study aims at investigating preschool teachers' attitude on the local level by recognizing teachers' attitude towards children with special educational needs. The research offers insight about the conditions of inclusive education in the field of preschool and about the kindergarten policy for children with special educational needs. The researcher interviewed 8 different representatives from 8 different kindergartens.

Sample and sampling procedures

The participants of the study are teachers from local kindergartens; the choice of the participants was done through snowball sampling.

Sampling is the method of picking a part of the population to represent the whole and make a generalization in the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The researcher planned the sampling process and determined the method of study. According to Wiersma & Jurs, (2009) snowball sampling is an adequate method when there are difficulties in reaching the participants of the study, and where the researcher is asking the contacts of the other participant as a “chain method”. This is an efficient and cost-effective way to access people who would otherwise be very difficult to find. The reason for using snowball sampling is because the researcher does not have the contacts for kindergarten teachers throughout the city and therefore researcher asked for the contacts from the nearest circle of the subjects’ associates to participate in the research. The planned number of participants was 8 kindergarten teachers. For the research, a sample was one representative from each kindergarten.

Participants

All the interview participants were women. They had different teaching experience and educational background. As a researcher, it was hard to reach for the participants. The reason for

it was that not many people wanted to participate in the interview. The researcher asked for the contacts of the participants from the principal of the kindergarten or colleagues working in this area of education who already had the contacts with kindergarten teachers.

All participants are working in the local kindergartens in the city of Nur-Sultan in the position of a teacher, and one participant was employed as both a principal of the kindergarten and a teacher.

By extrapolating the data to the group of teachers working in kindergartens at present, we can see that these are mainly people with a short experience of working with preschool children: about 30% have minimal professional experience (from one to three years), the same - a short experience (from four to six years). Approximately 10% of teachers have sufficient experience working with children (seven to fourteen years), and other employees have solid professional experience (31 years working with children).

Thus, among teachers in this study working in groups with inclusive education and upbringing, teachers with minimal or little professional experience prevails (see Table 1)

Table 1

Participants

Coded Name	Teaching Experience	Type of Early Childhood Facility
T1	4 years	Public kindergarten
T2	3 years	Public kindergarten
T3	2 years	Public kindergarten
T4	5 years	Public kindergarten
T5	11 years	Public kindergarten

T6	2 years	Public kindergarten
T7	31 years	Public kindergarten
T8	3 years	Private kindergarten

Data collection procedures

As this study is based on a qualitative approach, the data was collected through face to-face interviews. This method of data collection is used in order to understand opinion and beliefs of the participants, where according to Patton, “We interview to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind, to gather their stories” (Patton, 2002, p. 341). There was flexibility in questions because it helped to create a dialog between interviewer and participant, so the researcher would have a deeper understanding of the situation. By recognizing and choosing appropriate instruments and materials to collect that data, the field issues and ethical considerations were acknowledged.

Upon receiving approval from NUGSE research ethics committee, the I began collecting data for the present study. In recruiting participants, I highlighted the importance of the research and provided a cover letter from the university. I also shared with my participants and the principals about possible risks related to the research, and the confidentiality of the participants was explained prior to starting the interview. The participation in the interview was completely voluntary and they had a right to withdraw at any stage of the research. The data collection started in December and lasted two months. Every interview was scheduled before hand and each participant was interviewed individually at a preferred location. The duration of the interviews was 20-40 minutes. Before the interview, the researcher asked the participant to sign a consent form and then researcher asked for permission to tape the interviews and to take notes

for later reference when coding and analyzing the findings. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher thanked the participants for their immense contribution to the study. After a few days, they received the transcription to ensure validity, eliminate any misconceptions and ask for clarifications.

Data analysis methods

The study described kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special educational needs. As an instrument for the data collection, the researcher devised interview protocols in English and/or Russian (see Appendices A and B). In order to audio record the conversations, a mobile phone was used. As an example of developing interview questions, I took as a reference the research conducted by Shaikheslyamova in her work named "Faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive education at one national university in Kazakhstan". While the participants were answering the questions, I recorded the answer, and to made further notes regarding the interview. In the way of analyzing received data, I have followed the steps that were advised in the article LeCompte (2000). In that article, the process of collecting data was portrait as puzzle pieces, where every part of the research should be connected. After collecting the data, I listened to the recordings multiple times and coded common words and phrases that were repeated in the interviews by the interview participants. I have made copies of the recorded interviews. I have categorized my participants on the category of teaching experience and then looked at the similarities and differences in their responses. In the process of analyzing data, I was doing an interview transcript (see Appendix C) with teachers' answers and finding key points in their responses and comparing them with other interviews of other teachers. After coding the data, there was created distinct common themes and codes which can be seen in Appendix D.

Ethical concerns and risks of research

Consideration of ethical issues is an essential part to be considered in conducting this research. As a researcher, I thoroughly understand the importance of ethics, because this research is including human subjects and I understand my duty to do everything in my control to ensure that the teachers and principals who participated in this study were protected from ethical risks. Those factors include physical, psychological harm, emotional harm or discomfort. I understand the value to recognize the rights and concerns of the participants of the research. As this research includes human beings as a resource of information, the researcher must consider participants' confidentiality and avoid causing any harm to them. According to Torrance (2010), the ethical aspects of the research must be considered by the researcher, and the researcher must provide all the conditions to the participants to feel secure that their confidentiality will be kept. Inclusion of children with special educational needs is a sensitive topic, especially in preschool education. As a researcher, I made efforts to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. In terms of conducting my research, I made sure that participation in the research was entirely voluntarily and that the participants were told they could stop the interview whenever they wanted to. Before doing the interview, I sent to the participant's an interview consent form with information for the participant in terms of confidentiality. At the beginning of the interview, I made sure that the personal information about the participants was kept as confidential information that would not be revealed in the research. As for my interview procedure, I told participants of the approximate time the interview would take, and I requested permission to record the interview to enable further analysis and coding. The voice records of my participants are kept on a password-protected USB-drive. The USB-drive is kept in a folder in my house, and it has been kept as confidential information that nobody except me will have access to.

Summary

In the methodology, the chapter has presented the information on how the research was conducted. The researcher followed all the given instructions from NUGSE and research ethics while conducting the interviews. In this chapter, given information on the research design, the procedure of how information from the participants was received during the semi-structured interview. The researcher had a chance to ask an additional questions for better understanding teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

Chapter 4. Findings

The findings in this chapter contain the analysis derived from the interview responses of the eight participants of the study. The interview participants are kindergarten teachers who work in the local kindergartens in Nur-Sultan. Each interviewed participant represents one kindergarten in the city. Analysis of the data collected has identified four major themes related to kindergarten teachers' attitude towards children with special needs, their willingness to work in inclusive classrooms, kindergarten teachers' thoughts about inclusive policy in Kazakhstan, difficulties faced by teachers when teaching to children with special educational needs, and suggestions from teachers on how to make early years education inclusive.

This chapter is divided into three sections to present the analysis of these findings. The first section answers the question of what the teacher's attitude is towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs. In this section, the researcher provides general views towards inclusive education in the kindergarten. The second section provides information on the challenges that teachers deal with while teaching in an inclusive classroom. This section contains general thoughts of the kindergarten teachers from the perspective of how they see their job while working with children with special needs. The third section provides the ideas of the kindergarten teachers in terms of what kind of support they need for successful implementation of inclusive education. The aim of this research is, first of all, to discuss the barriers in preschool educational organisations towards inclusion and teachers' attitude towards inclusion.

Research questions for the study are the followings:

What are kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special needs?

Do kindergarten teachers know the methods and procedures for working in inclusive settings?

What are the barriers to inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream kindergartens in Nur-Sultan?

Teachers' attitude towards inclusion.

This section provides information about kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward teaching children with special educational needs, their thoughts about inclusive education in preschool organisations in Nur-Sultan and the willingness and challenges of teaching children with special needs in kindergarten.

The content of the responses of the participants in the interview revealed that they correctly understand the essence and philosophy of inclusion, emphasising various aspects of this pedagogy. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 point to the central aspect - joint communication and education in the same class for children with different individual characteristics and health conditions. Participants 4 and 5 focused on individual approaches to special children, which in turn may develop empathy in children who do not have problems with health and communication. Participants 7 and 8 emphasised the social movement of inclusion, namely the equality of educational opportunities for different children and, therefore, the humanisation of society, its readiness for a tolerant attitude towards different people. Attention shall be paid to the answer of the participant 4, reflecting an attitude of teachers towards inclusion (obviously, this refers to the fact that some teachers are not ready to work in inclusive classes).

T4:

Inclusive education involves teaching children with different needs together. It develops a feeling of empathy. But a lot depends on the attitude of teachers

To understand how teachers perceive inclusive education, it is essential to investigate their attitude toward children with disabilities in general. In the interview, teachers were asked how do they feel when they speak with and help people with disabilities. The emotional attitude of participants working with preschool children has different levels. Teachers with professional experience from two to five years (participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 7) are characterised by a benevolent attitude in the gradation from a “neutral/normal” or “even attitude” to love and positivity. Participants with sufficiently long experience have a deliberate focus on helping children with special needs. However, Participant 8, also with sufficient experience, has a feeling of pity, which in the semantic interpretation, corresponds to compassion, sympathy. Participant 7 with the most significant professional experience (31 years) answered the question “fine”, which can be interpreted as the same attitude to children regardless of whether they have any disabilities. Thus, having different depths of feelings and emotions for children with special needs, all participants have a humane or kind attitude to SEN children. Teachers expressed a more worrying attitude towards children with mental problems; some of them pointed out that they do not have experience working with these children. The researcher also talked with a teacher that also has the position of the principal of a kindergarten at the same time, exploring the additional question was about the actions that the principal was going to take if there was an aggressive child in the class.

T4:

If a child has uncontrolled aggressive behavior towards children and staff, there is a strong possibility that they would ask the parents of that child to leave the kindergarten.

Teachers with many years of teaching experience have the opinion that inclusive education is more like a ‘fashion trend’ that has not been given enough thought or planning.

T7:

Inclusive education, in my opinion, is more like a fashion trend, many countries right now want to change their educational system. However, children have different needs, and not all students would be happy in the inclusive classroom. The implementation of this new policy was very fast without proper planning and preparation of the educational system.

‘Fashion trends’ signify that the government was too rushed to implement the policy of inclusive education without considering the facilities, resources and the training of teachers. The content of the responses of the interviewees showed that the mandate of inclusive education in Kazakhstan currently has several problematic issues. The answers of the participants can be discussed according to three main ideas. The first issue is the lack of practical and theoretical knowledge among current and future teachers, and insufficient knowledge of the specifics of inclusion (participants 1, 2, 6, 7).

T7:

The problem is the preparation of the staff. Future teachers are not ready for inclusive education.

The second issue is the insufficient funding and insufficient resource base for inclusive education in kindergartens (participants 4, 5).

T4:

For the successful development of inclusive education, the government should provide more financial support. I think that SEN educational organizations are better equipped than inclusive classrooms and maybe that’s why some of the parents decide to educate their children in special educational organizations. The other thing is the motivation of inclusive education teachers. They have way more problems than non-inclusive classroom teachers. Not many teachers are happy to teach in the inclusive classroom because it is much more responsibility and by the end of the day they have a headache, and they feel that their extra pay for this job is not enough. If the government would better financially motivate teachers, that would be very good for all.

The third issue is the lack of readiness of parents for the joint education of children with different levels of educational needs (participants 5, 8).

T8:

Kazakhstan keeps up to date, we are ready to accept children with special needs, but the resource base of the kindergarten is insufficient. Parents are not adequately prepared for their child to study with a disabled person. Some would say that a special child might start showing their healthy children some bad behavior or the parents do not want their children to see the abnormality as it is perceived as something that is not good for a healthy mentality.

Almost all teachers mentioned that there is a lack of knowledge in the educational organizations in terms of inclusion. Teachers who were studying in universities were not prepared to work with children with special needs. Education in teacher-training universities is behind modern demands and trends in education, especially when it comes to inclusive education. It was also mentioned that not many teachers are ready to take responsibilities to work with children with special educational needs. They may be positive about it, but at the same time, they have fears. Besides, it takes much more effort and knowledge. There was also the opinion that teachers who are working in inclusive classrooms are not getting enough financial support. That is the reason why not so many teachers are willing to teach in the inclusive classroom. However, the lack of financial incentive is the only problem issue. According to the Bandura social cognitive theory, the aspects that influence a person's attitude are personal factors and those of the environment. By analysing all the teachers' answers regarding the inclusion of children with special needs into the general kindergarten setting, about 80% feel this is a right way forward. Why they are positive about inclusivity can be further viewed through Bandura's theory. Firstly, it is the influence of the environment and the fact that the government promotes inclusive education and raises awareness that education should be provided for everyone. The positive attitude of teachers towards inclusive education according to the theory of Bandura is

also explained not only by external factors. Of course, the State has a crucial influence on teachers, but also the social side of the issue should not be neglected. In the media and also in popular networks, in one way or another, problems of people with disabilities are raised. There is now a more humane attitude towards people with disabilities in society. It is also worth considering as an external factor that Bandura described not only the state of the media and social networks that affect the attitude of people with special needs but also the general concepts of humanity and understanding that are given at the stage of teacher training. Of course, universities give a general concept of humanism and psychology, but university education is not yet fully oriented towards providing inclusive education from a practical point of view. It was noted that respondents who had a more neutral attitude to inclusive education received their education in Soviet times. This explains their attitude because, in Soviet times, the concept of inclusion was not yet familiar. During the Soviet Union, the concept of defectology had its defining concept for people with educational difficulties. Also, two teachers who expressed a more neutral attitude towards inclusive education, which, according to Bandura's theory, were an environmental factor, expressed the following justification why inclusion is not for everyone.

First of all, based on an external factor, not all kindergartens have an accessible environment for children with special needs. General kindergartens are not well equipped to meet the SEN of students because according to the participants, general kindergartens do not have a sufficient resource base. Many special playgrounds and equipment for children with special needs are available only in specialised institutions. That is why a participant expressed the opinion that by allowing a child with special needs to go to a regular kindergarten, on the one hand, we deprive that child of narrower focused help and specialists who know their problem, and most importantly the experience of the staff. Other teacher participants also provide

examples of why inclusive education is very good but may not be suitable for everyone. First of all, the individuality of the child should be taken into account, as a teacher with extensive experience says. She gave a personal example from practice.

T7:

I had an extremely aggressive child in the group whose communication skills with other children were not good. This child posed a potential danger to other children with his aggression; his integration into the class was unsuccessful. The administration of the kindergarten reluctantly decided to transfer this child to individual training and committed the child to visits from a psychologist. I see that the inclusion of this child in the class was not inclusion at all, first of all, this child occupied a lot of class time and energy when much less time was devoted to other children. So is this really inclusion, this is torture. When a child suffers and does not understand what is happening because of their behaviour, the other children and the teacher suffer.

This is not inclusive education, according to this teacher. Inclusion, in her opinion, is the provision of equal learning opportunities, but in this case, it was not possible to implement. This opinion about inclusive education was based on two factors: the environment and personal factors. The teachers also expressed the issues of environment and personal factors with a “positive” attitude towards inclusive education. This attitude was shared by mostly young teachers, although they also expressed some concerns. As indicated earlier, teachers are not against working with SEN children, but they do not know how to best meet their needs. Also, among younger teachers, it was suggested that if they do not know how to teach a child with SEN, children with special needs should be educated in a special institution. This section has described the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education.

Attitudes were further analysed using Bandura’s cognitive-social theory to understand why teachers have a positive or negative attitude towards the inclusion of children with special needs in ordinary kindergartens. While teachers also understand the benefits of inclusion, they

felt the main advantage of teaching SEN children in classes for young children as the most harmonious way to develop personal qualities in all children such as “empathy”, “tolerance is raised”, “children learn to help other children”. It is equally useful to all children in the aspect of the formation of humanity and communication skills. Although only one participant indicated communication as an advantage of co-education of children, however, it is understandable that the education of all children in empathy, tolerance, and desire to help is very effective for positive communication between children.

Nur-Sultan teachers’ attitude towards the policy of inclusive education

The policy of inclusive education in Kazakhstan, according to most teachers, is in the development process and needs continued work.

T7:

Kazakhstan is in a hurry to keep up with world trends in education. Inclusive education should be introduced gradually after the introduction of a particular subject as inclusive education in higher education, namely to give more specialised knowledge that someday children with special needs can come to their classrooms. The best scenario for introducing inclusive education would be to train employees first of all.

The opinion of the participants on the implementation of the policy of inclusive education in Kazakhstan has a negative and positive opinion. Most of the teachers recognise that inclusive education will have a positive impact on children with special educational needs, and many teachers agreed that learning together with children who need extra support would positively impact on the society. However, teachers pointed out that the actual implementing of inclusion is fraught with many issues. The topic of lack of qualified teachers with specialized knowledge and insufficient readiness of preschool education to work in an inclusive environment is

mentioned throughout the interviews (participant 1, 4). While Participant 5 points out the need for equal rights for all children, thereby implying the importance of inclusive education.

T5:

For sure, we need inclusive education. I believe that all children should have the right to education.

While others express doubt as to how well this can be done. Participant 6 believes that there should also be an alternative to inclusive education.

T6:

There must be an alternative. Not all special children can be in inclusive classes. In some cases, special education can give more benefit than inclusive education

However, the inclusion supporters prevail among the study participants, although the problem of an insufficient number of teachers with specialized knowledge and skills is recognized.

It was also mentioned that there is a shortage in the faculty specifically for preschool education. According to one of the teacher participants, people are working in kindergartens who have not studied or trained in this sector of education

T7:

There are some cases when people without education or people who studied in specialities that are not related to education at all, can work as a teacher. Now in the city of Nur Sultan, such a trend in the selection of staff is changing for the better

The issue of providing quality inclusive education is based on thorough training of professional teachers who will be ready to help the child with special needs. There is also an opinion that the introduction of inclusive education was done at the right time.

T1:

The number of children with special needs is now growing. Most often, young teachers have to study at their workplace rather than at a desk at the university. Difficulties arise, namely how to find an approach to SEN child, how to organise a safe environment for children and the educational process.

According to almost all the research participants, these practical skills are lacking. Young teachers, as well as their senior colleagues, believe that inclusive education should be started from early childhood facilities as this will help to develop a society in a more sophisticated environment. These comments answer the second question posed. Do kindergarten teachers have a lack of knowledge of methods and procedures for working in inclusive settings? All of the participants responded positively to the idea that they need more knowledge on teaching children with SEN. All participants wanted additional knowledge on the development of inclusive education from a practical and theoretical point of view.

The barriers to inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream kindergartens in Nur-Sultan

This section provides the ideas of kindergarten teachers participants in this research in terms of what kind of support they need for successful implementation of inclusive education. Furthermore, the purpose of this section is to answer the research question: What are the barriers to inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream kindergartens in Nur-Sultan?

In addition to the need for equipment in some of the classes and sufficient funding, the teachers also touched the topic of support from the parents. According to one young teacher, parents often do not want to recognize that the child has specific difficulties in learning. These difficulties can seriously affect the child's education at school, and some parents refuse to take

measures to solve social or behavioural difficulties or others, considering that the child is still young. The teacher gave an example that she has a child in the group who has some undiagnosed problems.

T3:

There is a boy in my class, and I believe he has autism. He is different. I can see that in the way he is playing with other children. I have asked parents to visit a specialist, but they had a very negative reaction. They said that I just do not understand their child and we do not want to claim that our first and beloved child is sick. He will outgrow this behaviour; he will be fine.

Parents were advised to visit a doctor and a psychologist, however, the parents did not follow this advice and did not want to admit that the child may have problems. Time plays a dominant factor in solving given problems, and due to a misunderstanding of parents, valuable time becomes lost forever. A child without the support of teachers and parents will not be able to meet their full potential.

One of the participants also expressed the opinion that the number of teaching materials for native speakers of the Kazakh language is practically absent. To provide quality education in the area of inclusion for higher education institutions, many textbooks and teaching materials should be translated into Kazakh. According to the opinion of this teacher, Kazakh-speaking teachers suffer from a lack of teaching materials, since most modern teaching materials are written either in Russian or in English.

Teachers also expressed their opinion that children with learning difficulties need a separate tutor.

T2:

Who will work with this child individually? I cannot fully be with them because I have other children. The need for a tutor is explained by the fact that groups can have up to 30 children, and if there is one child with special needs, the teacher may simply not have time to help this child at a critical moment.

This question, as many teachers consider, should be decided at the government level, in terms of what kind of rotation should be provided if a child with special needs is present in the group.

Summary

Conducting these interviews helped answer the research questions. First of all, these interviews helped understand the attitude of kindergarten teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in general kindergartens. Despite mostly a positive attitude, some aspects need to be worked on to improve the system of early years of inclusive education. The successful development of early year inclusive education should begin with teachers, as teachers are the driving force behind the development of inclusion in the early years. According to the teachers who participated in the interview, special attention shall be paid to the education of kindergarten teachers, to open more faculties that are focused on teaching early childhood education. Education for kindergarten workers is often undervalued compared with school and, especially, higher education.

It shall not be forgotten that the early year's teachers and parents are the primary people who help the child to cope with difficulties. A professional attitude is everything, and, in the opinion of experienced teachers, very often there are not enough specialists who have received theoretical knowledge in this area of teaching. Besides, there is a considerable difference in the professional training of Kazakh and Russian speaking teachers. It is also necessary to take into account equipment and financing.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The presented study attempted to achieve three research goals:

1. To study the real situation in inclusive preschool organizations of the city of Nur-Sultan at present.
2. To study the practice of inclusive preschool education by clarifying the views on the problems of teachers of preschool organizations themselves.
3. To study the opinion of children's educators on the process of introducing inclusion in kindergartens.

Results

An analysis of the information received from the participants revealed the following results. Teachers with only teacher-training education, work in inclusive classes (seven out of eight teachers). Overall, almost all participants, regardless of their age, or working experience, recognized the significance and necessity of inclusive education and the importance of providing educational opportunities for children with special educational needs. At the same time, they all noted the lack of specialized knowledge that would allow them to work effectively with special children. Therefore, they are not fully familiar with methodological support and didactic skills. Similar to the research of Olivera , Stefan , & Tančić (2018), they have also reported that teachers have a lack of knowledge, which makes them feel insecure about themselves. We can conclude that the teaching process in relation to special children is implemented without sufficient efficiency and professionalism, which was also mentioned in the article Lubovski (2016). The author writes that non-specialists are working for creating inclusion but they do not know what they are doing. Teachers felt there was a lack of special equipment and a lack of proper financial incentives for their work.

Furthermore, teachers, in their practice, tend to face the unwillingness of some of the parents in Nur-Sultan to accept children with special needs in the ordinary children's class, where their healthy child goes. This fact indicates a certain lack of humanity among a certain parents.

This seems to present an important fact noted by some educators regarding the specific nature of inclusivity. Some teachers have doubts over whether it is correct to have special children in the class with the rest of the children. They are alarmed by the possible display of poor behavior on the part of children with special needs. The opinion was expressed that, perhaps, it is more correct for many children with special needs to study in specialized educational organizations and not be a "psychological burden on ordinary children".

At the same time, all teachers pointed out that inclusive education has great benefits for the successful socialization of special children who do not pose any danger to other children. They also noted the benefits of inclusion to enhance the level of morality and humanity in Kazakhstani society.

Interpretation of the results according to the social cognitive theory

The results are interpreted based on the social cognitive theory of Bandura (2001). The results of the interview show a notable correlation of the main terms of the theory with the content of the results obtained on the data of preschool inclusion in the city of Nur-Sultan. First of all, this refers to the personal factors of teachers, who, by virtue of their pedagogical education, consciously understand the need for a humane attitude to special children. This internally forces them to a socially-expected and accepted response.

The second theoretical position of Bandura's theory regarding the influence of the environment on a person corresponded with the real state of affairs in Nur-Sultan's preschool

institutions. So, teachers of preschool inclusion, on the one hand, experience the influence of government policy on the social status of special children, and on the other hand, they encounter many difficulties in their professional practice. Among them they noted: lack of educational and methodological support, lack of experience in resolving situations that arise in the communication with children with special needs and without them, the negative reaction of some parents, and the lack of moral and material incentives for their work. Therefore, the contrast between these two points is a factor that reduces the effectiveness of preschool inclusion for the participants in the learning process. Concerning the third aspect, when comparing the principle of Bandura about the role of behavioral factors, it can be argued that in inclusive classes there is a mutual influence of children and teachers on each other. However, some teachers note certain negativity in this interaction. The fact is that some special children sometimes show aggression in the class. Unfortunately, this fact can get fixated in the behavioral reactions of children without special needs. As a result, there is a desire of some teachers to turn over the training of special children to specialized children's institutions which supports the research findings of Rakap, S., & Kaczmarek, L. (2010).

Summary

In the discussion, chapter author presented the interpretation of the results according to the social cognitive theory and other literature on this topic. It was expected that teachers would show a socially desirable attitude towards inclusion by analyzing the teachers' responses through Bandura's theory. The researcher revealed the challenges of kindergarten teachers when they are working with SEN students.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

Study summary

The main goal of the study is focused on the investigation and analysis of the real situation of preschool inclusion in the city of Nur- Sultan through the eyes of teachers. An interview with inclusive educators revealed many aspects of the attitude of educators towards inclusion of children with special needs in children's groups.

The second direction of the study was to find out the level of knowledge of preschool inclusion teachers. An important research point is the determination of barriers in the field of preschool inclusion from the educators' perspective. The theoretical and methodological foundations of the research are the views of reputable scientists working in this field. Kazakhstan researchers Raimbekova & Mamraimov (2016) studied the content of educational policy in Kazakhstan and strategies for ensuring equal access for SEN children to education. Only those teachers who directly work with preschool children in inclusive classes in the city of Nur Sultan participated in the interview. A study of the opinions of these teachers on the role of educators in inclusive education confirms the findings of Ainscow (2007). In the monograph *Index for Inclusion* by Ainscow, & Kingston (2006), the authors propose a theory of a 5-phase index for inclusion, which could contribute to obtaining interesting data. However, this did not happen due to the fact that Kazakhstan system of inclusive education does not currently provide data for analysis since it is in its initial stage and it is too early to talk about a fully functioning system of inclusive education in the country.

The social cognitive theory of Bandura (2001) approached the interpretation of the interview results quite well. A certain part of the opinions of the interviewees correlated with the

thesis of Bandura (2001) on the effect on the human behavior of the sum of individual factors and the environment.

The questions for interviews with educators were largely compiled based on the research of Shaikheslyamova (2018) with a correlation to preschool inclusive education system.

Particular attention shall be paid to a certain level of cautious attitude of interviewees to inclusive education. This is confirmed in a study by Nonis et al (2016). In this work, the authors identified the causes and factors affecting the negative attitude towards inclusion from teachers. This is, first of all, a large number of children in an inclusive class, insufficient facilities and resources to stimulate teachers' work in an inclusive children's group.

Nur-Sultan Interviewees pointed to a common factor, that the author of the master's work can emphasize: the poor preparation for practical work in an inclusive environment in Kazakhstani colleges and higher educational institutions. It also sets a limitation in the effectiveness of inclusive education.

An analysis of the opinions of the interviewees on the role of teachers in the quality of inclusive education and socialization of special children coincides with the opinion of Gezer & Aksoy (2019). Teachers should be aware of their strong influence on children, in which SEN children and ordinary children are simultaneously trained and socialized. In the answers of the Nur-Sultan's educators, the idea could be traced pointing to the fact that a certain part of SEN children should study in specialized institutions. This is consistent with the content of the works by Knežević-Florić Olivera, Stefan, & Tančić (2018), which revealed some concern among teachers about the lack of sufficient experience in responding to deviant behaviour of children with SEN. So, educators in Nur-Sultan are not quite ready to take responsibility for educating children with special needs. Consequently, the main results of the study on the theme "Attitudes

of kindergarten teachers towards inclusion of the children with special educational needs in Nur-Sultan” are combined with many conclusions presented in local and international specialized literature.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results provide the opportunity to highlight problem areas in preschool inclusion. It is very important for further improving and moving forward the process of introducing inclusive education in the Kazakhstani system of early years education. Based on the findings obtained, new research questions can be formulated:

1. Is Kazakhstan education system ready for the introduction of inclusive education in preschool institutions?
2. Is the parent community ready to for the co-education of SEN children in the same class?

Study of these problem areas shall be carried out in the form of an extensive longitudinal social and pedagogical study throughout the republic. The research field of such a project should include preschool, school and specialized institutions in all areas of the republic. This will help to identify common problems, identify the specifics of social adaptation of special children at all educational levels, and also suggest measures for systemic optimization of inclusion in Kazakhstan.

- In the teaching environment, it is important to increase the level of teachers' competence and the amount of methodological assistance for the correct work in inclusive classes; for management it is important to know the areas for further improvement of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. For Kazakhstani society, it is necessary to create conditions to develop tolerance for special educational needs children.

The relevance of the socio-pedagogical foundations of inclusive education allows us to make several recommendations for students of pedagogical specialties and pedagogical educational management.

The process of introducing inclusive education in the system of Kazakhstani education is at the initial stage. For this reason, it is extremely important to conduct a wide range of studies in the field of inclusion according to a variety of parameters such as improving teachers', the influence of age-related factors on the learning process, the choice of the most effective forms of communication skills, etc.

Educational management should be aware of the need for specialized training of qualified teachers even at the educational level in teacher-training secondary special and higher educational institutions. In particular, it is necessary to increase the admission of students in specialties oriented to work in inclusive education (psychologists, teachers, etc.). For the formation of professional skills and competencies, it is necessary to organize students final internships in specialized children's institutions and inclusive classes.

Policy

For policy-makers in the field of inclusive education, following recommendations:

- Forming a system of stimulating factors for all participants in inclusive education in Kazakhstan;
- Determining the optimal ratio of teachers to children in classes, to maximize the effectiveness of inclusive education;
- Thinking over a system of measures to organize a methodological support for participants in inclusive pedagogy (advanced training courses, regular release of updated

methodological recommendations, a publication of a thematic magazine, increase in the entire range of methodological support in the Kazakh language);

- Creating a scientific research program for the study of inclusive education with the involvement of biomedical scientists, social psychologists, physiologists, etc.

Strengths and limitations of the research

The research on the theme: Attitudes of kindergarten teachers towards inclusion of children with special educational needs in Nur-Sultan has both strengths and limits.

Strengths include the novelty and relevance of the research problem, as well as the practical focus on the system of inclusive preschool education in the city of Nur Sultan. Strength of the research also lies in the fact that a semi-structured interview was conducted among teachers directly working in inclusive preschool classes. Their opinions were analyzed and interpreted in this work, which allowed us to draw certain conclusions and recommendations.

The limitations of work include a small number of interview participants, as well as a relatively narrow range of problem areas of preschool inclusion in Nur-Sultan. Only Russian-speaking teachers are included in the sample of participants, which limits the range of possible opinions. Another limiting factor is the availability of socially approved answers given by teachers. This somewhat reduces the level of reliability of the received information.

Final Reflections

As a result of an intensive study of the problems of inclusive education, the author came to a deeper understanding of the opportunities and prospects of preschool inclusion.

Currently, there is limited experience in organizing inclusive classes in kindergartens in the capital city, as well as objective difficulties with insufficient methodological support and a small number of specialists. All this gives reason to state the following:

- it is most reasonable to keep specialized educational institutions in the education system while testing preschool inclusion;

- parents and children should have the right to freedom of choice of the most convenient educational institution for them;

- the presence of certain problems in preschool inclusion is currently associated with some organizational lack of knowledge inclusive classes began to be opened in the absence of specialists with knowledge and skills in this field;

- informal communication with interview participants gives reason to argue that inclusive educators require not only financial stimulation, but also consistent psychological support. The fact is that work in inclusive classes is accompanied by great intellectual and emotional stress. This leads to active psychological burnout.

The author believes that inclusive education in Kazakhstan should be further developed taking into account not only international experience but also with an understanding of some features of Kazakhstan's educational system, as well as the attitude of society and the teachers' community to this idea. In the case of the implementation of thoughtful measures of progressive methodological, financial and moral incentives in this area, many parameters of Kazakhstan's education as a whole will improve. Among them: raising the human development index of Kazakhstan's society, the high level of functioning of the entire educational system in Kazakhstan, the correlation of teaching practice and teaching science, the training of highly qualified specialists, etc.

The time spent by the author on immersion in the problem of preschool inclusion has largely changed the attitude towards children with special needs, their parents and teachers and affirmed my desire to prove myself in the work in the field of inclusive education. This area requires that a teacher constantly updates his/her professional knowledge, and most importantly - compassion and kindness.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Attitudes of kindergarten teachers towards inclusion of the children with special educational needs in Nur-Sultan

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Gender:

Years of experience:

Position of interviewee:

Education

Duration:

Notes for the interviewer:

-Description of the research

-Signing the consent form

-Testing a phone recorder

Questions:

1. Could you please briefly describe your experience and professional qualifications?
2. For how long you have been teaching in kindergarten?
3. Can you please describe your understanding of Inclusive education?

4. What is your opinion of Inclusive education of this initiative?
5. Have you ever had an experience of teaching students with special educational needs?
If yes,
6. What types of disability did the student(s) have?
7. How do you feel when you see/talk to/help the persons with disabilities?
8. What current situation of preschool education? Is disability-inclusive Preschool education developed enough to enroll the students with special needs?
9. How do you think kindergartens can promote inclusive education?
10. Kazakhstan has an inclusive education policy do you feel this should be enacted from early childhood? Why or Why not?
11. What benefits are there by including children with special educational needs in early childhood classes?
12. What do you think of the challenges in enrolling SEN students in kindergartens?
13. Would you like to acquire more knowledge on teaching the students with disabilities?
14. What are the challenges to teach in an inclusive early childhood classroom? What supports are needed?
15. Is there anything else you would to add?

Thank you for your participation in my research.

Appendix B

Протокол интервью

Отношение воспитателей детских садов к включению детей с особыми образовательными потребностями в городе Нур-Султан

Время интервью:

Дата:

Место:

Интервьюер:

Пол:

Годы опыта:

Должность собеседника:

Образование

Продолжительность:

Примечания для интервьюера:

-Описание исследования

-Подписание формы согласия

-Проверка телефонного рекордера

Вопросы:

1. Не могли бы вы кратко описать свой опыт и профессиональную квалификацию?
2. Как долго вы преподаете в детском саду?
3. Можете ли вы описать ваше понимание что такое инклюзивное образование?

4. Каково ваше мнение об инклюзивном образовании и этой инициативы включении детей с особыми потребностями?
 5. Был ли у вас опыт обучения студентов с особыми образовательными потребностями?
Если да,
 6. Какие виды инвалидности были у студента (ов)?
 7. Как вы себя чувствуете, когда вы видите / говорите / помогаете людям с ограниченными возможностями?
 8. Какова нынешняя ситуация с дошкольным образованием? Достаточно ли развито дошкольное образование с учетом инвалидности, чтобы обучать учащихся с особыми потребностями?
 9. Как, по вашему мнению, детские сады могут способствовать инклюзивному образованию?
 10. В Казахстане действует политика инклюзивного образования. Считаете ли вы, что ее следует принимать с раннего детства? Почему или почему нет?
 11. Какие преимущества дает включение детей с особыми образовательными потребностями в классы для детей младшего возраста?
 12. Что вы думаете о трудностях при зачислении учащихся с особыми образовательными потребностями в детские сады?
 13. Хотели бы вы получить больше знаний по обучению студентов с инвалидностью?
 14. С какими проблемами сталкивается преподаватель когда обучая детей младшего возраста в инклюзивном классе? Какая поддержка нужна?
 15. Есть ли что-то еще, что вы хотели бы добавить?
- Спасибо за ваше участие в моем исследовании.

Appendix C

Transcript	Axial coding	Thematic coding
<p>Teacher 1</p> <p>1. Could you please briefly describe your experience and professional qualifications?</p> <p><i>I came to the kindergarten in February 2015, and firstly I applied as a teacher of English language, later on, I started to work as a teacher in the kindergarten. After that, I have worked as a Methodist, but I decided to be a kindergarten teacher. I like it very much, and I love it as my children.</i></p> <p>1. What is your education?</p> <p><i>I have two higher education; the first one is the English language, and six months ago, I gained a major as an early years teacher.</i></p> <p>2. For how long you have been teaching in kindergarten?</p> <p><i>Four years</i></p> <p>3. Can you please describe your understanding of Inclusive education?</p> <p><i>Well, Inclusive education... I far I as know is a recent initiative to have inclusive education in the kindergartens. So need to have healthy children studying with special children. By the meaning of special children</i></p>	<p>Positive emotions</p> <p>Professional education</p> <p>4 years' experience</p> <p>Hesitation Inclusive=disability</p>	<p>Attitudes</p> <p>Attitudes</p> <p>Attitudes</p> <p>Inclusion</p>

<p><i>are children with mental disabilities or communication difficulties</i></p> <p>4. What is your opinion of Inclusive education of this initiative?</p> <p><i>I think that we are not ready for it yet. I have just come here, and this is my second group, I didn't know that I am going to have special child. At the beginning, it was very difficult for me. It was very difficult for a child as well as moving from one younger classroom to my group, everything was new for him and unusual, for this child was very difficult to change the place. In the younger group, this boy stayed in the classroom as he moved to my classroom, we started to go the other lessons such as P.E., music. So you know first I take my 28 children, and then I come back to him to take him separately. I had to carry him he weights 20 kg. My other children, they are 3-4 years old, but he is five years old but his development on the level of 2 years old child. However we made it, so right now he is attending the lessons, so I don't need to carry him. But I don't have experience working with children with special needs. I think if the government decided to introduce</i></p>	<p>KZ is not ready in inclusion</p> <p>Extra stress/negative attitudes</p>	<p>Inclusion</p> <p>Attitudes</p>
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<p><i>inclusive education into the educational system, they should have train teachers. They should include inclusive programs in the college, and it should have a more practical approach on how to make it possible to teach healthy children with disabled. Sometimes I feel lack of knowledge working with these children.</i></p> <p>5. Have you ever had an experience of teaching students with special educational needs?</p> <p>If yes,</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Introducing 'Special education' discipline</p>	<p>Inclusion</p>
<p>6. What types of disability did the student(s) have?</p> <p><i>I think that this child has autism. Because when I just started to work with him, I started to look for the information. He has sound sensitivity and other things.</i></p>	<p>Lack of knowledge</p>	<p>Environment</p>
<p>7. How do you feel when you see/talk to/help persons with disabilities?</p> <p><i>I love him so much. I feel myself very proud that I have this child in my group; he is the smallest in my group. For myself, I see that I am overcoming the barrier.</i></p>	<p>Positive emotions</p>	<p>Attitudes</p>
<p>8. What current situation of preschool education? Is disability-inclusive Preschool education developed enough to enroll the students with special needs?</p> <p><i>So you see that I have gained the general knowledge in</i></p>		

<p><i>psychology; however, in my university, we have not been taught how to teach children with special needs with other children. We need more practical knowledge.</i></p> <p>9. How do you think kindergartens can promote inclusive education?</p>	<p>Lack of knowledge</p>	<p>Environment</p>
<p><i>I think kindergartens need special equipment for these children. Kindergartens need to create according to the needs of the special student environment. But one teacher is not able to do this alone. A child with special needs he needs a separate person who would help him may be a trainer or somebody who is already trained to work with this child. We have a speech therapist, but for the whole kindergarten, he is only one specialist, for these children they need individual support of the specialists.</i></p>	<p>Accommodations</p>	<p>Environment</p>
<p>10. Kazakhstan has an inclusive education policy do you feel this should be enacted from early childhood? Why or Why not?</p> <p><i>From the one side it is not so scary, even I am a person without working experience with these children getting use to it. Have you noticed this child can seat and stand up. We are desperately needing the specialist who would help these children to develop.</i></p>	<p>Lack of the specialist</p>	<p>Environment</p>
	<p>Lack of knowledge Lack of the specialist</p>	<p>Environment</p>

<p>11. . What benefits are thereby including children with special educational needs in early childhood classes?</p> <p><i>Well, it is first of all the influence of the society. The segregated child would not learn something new from the peers, and included child have more motivation to gain new skills. I think other healthy children would have a more tolerant attitude to special children. I can give an example that other children when they see a person with a disability would be overreacting whether my children would be fine because they know that they have in their group child with special needs.</i></p>	<p>Benefits of inclusive education</p>	<p>Inclusion</p>
<p>12. What do you think of the challenges in enrolling SEN students in kindergartens?</p> <p><i>I think that our kindergarten is not ready to enroll a student on the wheelchair, for example. Many kindergartens don't have special accommodations such as space, ramps.</i></p>	<p>Accommodations</p>	<p>Environment</p>
<p>13. Would you like to acquire more knowledge on teaching the students with disabilities?</p> <p><i>Yes, with pleasure</i></p>	<p>Positive emotion</p>	<p>Attitudes</p>
<p>14. What are the challenges to teach in an inclusive early childhood classroom? What are the supports needed?</p>		

Appendix D

Coding and themes

ATTITUDES	ENVIRONMENT	INCLUSION
Positive attitude/ Negative attitude	Special equipment	Positive influence of inclusive education
Teacher's experience and personal thoughts	Space in the classrooms	Unreadiness of young teachers
Feeling proud when working with special needs children	Kindergarten building structure	Desire to have a training in the field of special education
Misunderstanding from the parents	Lack of the special literature for Kazakh teachers	Government support
Problems with children's communication	Accommodations	Teacher have lack of knowledge how to work with SEN child
Teachers asking for psychological support	Teachers' education	Universities should prepare future teachers
Teachers asking for special education teachers support	Low salary	Lack of specialists in the kindergarten
Teacher is afraid to take responsibility to have child with special needs	Government have not prepared inclusive environment	Rush in implementing inclusive education in Kazakhstan
Teacher is not willing to have aggressive child in her class	Lack of teaching methods with SEN students	Inclusive education is a 'fashion trend'
Teacher complains about not	Poor material base of the	Gaps in the policy of

giving enough attention to child with special needs or to the rest of the group	kindergarten	inclusive education
Feeling sorry to the children with special needs		

Appendix E

Informed consent form

Attitudes of kindergarten teachers towards inclusion of the children with special educational needs in Nur-Sultan

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a research study on teachers attitudes towards inclusion of the early years children with special educational needs in Nur-Sultan. The purpose of the study is to interview the teachers who are working in the local kindergartens in Nur-Sultan and comprehensively outline the modern situation in the field of inclusive education of children with additional educational needs in kindergartens in Nur-Sultan. If you are making decision to participate in the research, you will be asked to take part in a face-to-face interview lasting from 20 to 40 minutes. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded on the researcher's mobile phone. Your name and any other personal details that can identify your personality will not be revealed. The name of the kindergarten will also be anonymised and used for research purposes only. The audio recording would be stored electronically on the phone and laptop and are password protected. The interview notes, consent forms, and other hard-copy documents would be in a securely locked drawer in a folder. The audio recordings will be deleted after the final thesis submission. The access to the data material would be only to the researcher and the research supervisor. In case if you do not give your consent to be recorded, the researcher will only take notes.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your overall participation will take no more than 40 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: This research does not entail any physical, social, psychological,

or financial harm. The data will not be revealed to your principal or colleagues. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your working position. In order to eliminate the possible pressure, the interviews will be held at a place convenient for you.

During the interview, you may have to recall your experiences teaching children with special educational needs. Your participation would help in the recognition of the teachers' attitude and what are the influencing aspects and barriers to inclusion which would guide preschool education administration and the government to develop inclusive education further in country. Also, this research aims to reveal the problems of preschool inclusive education.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is solely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions concerning your privacy and interview procedures please contact the researcher by email: meruyert.bukayeva@nu.edu.kz or irec@nu.edu.kz

Signature: _____ Date:

Appendix F

Форма информированного согласия

Отношение воспитателей детских садов к включению детей с особыми образовательными потребностями в Нур-Султан в общие детские сады

ОПИСАНИЕ: Вас приглашают принять участие в исследовании по изучению отношения учителей к включению детей младшего возраста с особыми образовательными потребностями в общие детские сады города Нур-Султан. Цель исследования - опросить учителей, работающих в местных детских садах в Нур-Султане с целью выявления их отношения к детям с особенными образовательными потребностями, и подробно рассказать о современной ситуации в сфере инклюзивного образования детей с дополнительными образовательными потребностями в детских садах в Нур-Султане. Если вы принимаете решение об участии в исследовании, вас попросят принять участие в личном собеседовании продолжительностью от 20 до 40 минут. С вашего разрешения, интервью будет записано на мобильный телефон исследователя. Ваше имя и любые другие личные данные, которые могут идентифицировать вашу личность, не будут разглашены. Название детского сада также будет анонимным и будет использоваться только в исследовательских целях. Аудиозапись будет храниться в электронном виде на телефоне и ноутбуке и защищено паролем. Записи об интервью, формы согласия и другие печатные документы будут находиться в надежно запечатанном ящике в папке. Аудиозаписи будут удалены после окончательного представления диссертации. Доступ к данным материала будет только для исследователя и научного руководителя. Если вы не дадите свое согласие на запись, исследователь будет делать только пометки в блокноте.

ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ: Ваше общее участие займет не более 40 минут.

РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА: Это исследование не влечет за собой никаких физических, социальных, психологических или финансового ущерба. Данные не будут переданы вашему директору или коллегам. Ваше решение об участии в этом исследовании не повлияет на ваше рабочее положение. С целью избежания возможного давления, интервью будут проходить в удобном для вас месте.

Во время интервью вам, возможно, придется вспомнить свой опыт обучения детей с особыми образовательными потребностями. Ваше участие поможет в признании позиции учителей и влияющих аспектов и препятствий для инклюзии, которые будут направлять администрацию дошкольного образования и правительство для дальнейшего развития инклюзивного образования в стране. Также целью данного исследования является выявление проблем дошкольного инклюзивного образования.

ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКА: Если вы прочитали эту форму и решили принять участие в этом проекте, пожалуйста, поймите, что ваше участие является исключительно добровольным. У вас есть право отказаться отвечать на конкретные вопросы, и вы имеете право отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время. Если у вас есть какие-либо вопросы относительно вашей конфиденциальности и процедур собеседования, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с исследователем по электронной почте:

meruyert.bukayeva@nu.edu.kz или irec@nu.edu.kz

Дата подписания: