

Implementation of new curriculum reform in secondary education of Kazakhstan:

Study of teachers' perspectives

Aliya Gimranova

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IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW CURRICULUM REFORM

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Abstract

The curriculum inherited from the Soviet Union was criticized for being centralized, rigid, inflexible, overloaded and knowledge-based (Yakavets, 2014; Fimyar, 2014). After the collapse of the Soviet Union curriculum change has become a major issue in education in Kazakhstan (Yakavets, 2014). As one of the responses to this issue, in 2001 the Government of Kazakhstan initiated several substantive reforms (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014). In 2016 Kazakhstan initiated a new curriculum reform in mainstream schools of the country, aiming to develop learner's personality obtaining basics of higher-order thinking skills (SESPE, 2015). The number of empirical studies about teachers' views as well as about factors affecting the implementation of the recent curriculum reform in Kazakhstan is very limited.

The purpose of this study is to examine primary school teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and factors influencing the implementation. The research questions explore how teachers implement the new primary curriculum reform; what factors support the implementation; and what factors constrain the implementation. A qualitative research method was used, within it the collective case studies were conducted to do in-depth examination of two cases: a rural and an urban mainstream school. Maximum variation purposeful sampling was used to select twelve teachers as the participants. Data were mainly collected through eighteen individual semi-structured interviews. The secondary data collection tool was document analysis.

Findings show that the teachers are experiencing many changes. Most of them are positive about them, as they see that their teaching is improved and pupils became more motivated through inquiry-based and student-centered learning. Though some factors help teachers implement the new curriculum reform (professional development, teacher collaboration, beliefs about pupils' greater learning), there are also barriers hindering the implementation such as increased workload, paperwork and lack of time. They are caused by greater lesson preparation, introduction of criteria-based assessment and complexity of the new curriculum

content. Teachers also lack the resources for implementation and face with the issues of learner diversity and big class sizes. The main difference between the rural and urban contexts is that unexpectedly, but rural teachers are more enthusiastic about recent changes compared to their urban colleagues.

Key words: curriculum reform, factors influencing the implementation, primary school, secondary education, Kazakhstan.

Тақырыбы: «Қазақстанның жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнын енгізу: мұғалімдердің көз-қарасы»

Аңдатпа

Кеңес Одағынан мұра болып қалған оқу бағдарламасы орталықтандырылған, икемсіз және шамадан тыс теориялық білім беруге бағытталғаны үшін сынға ұшырады (Yakavets, 2014; Fimyar, 2014). Кеңес Одағы ыдырағаннан кейін оқу бағдарламаны қайта қарау Қазақстандағы білім берудегі маңызды мәселеге айналды (Yakavets, 2014). Осы мәселеге жауап ретінде, 2001 жылы Қазақстан Үкіметі бірқатар түбегейлі реформалар жүргізуге бастамашылық жасады (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014). 2016 жылы Қазақстанның барлық жалпы білім беру мектептерінде кең ауқымды дағдылар негіздерін меңгеретін тұлғаның үйлесімді қалыптасуына бағытталған жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасы енгізіліп бастады (SESPE, 2015). Қазақстанда жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасы туралы мұғалімдердің көз-қарастары жөнінде және оның енгізілуіне әсер ететін факторлар жөнінде эмпирикалық зерттеулердің саны өте шектеулі.

Зерттеудің мақсаты – бастауыш мектеп мұғалімдерінің жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасы туралы көз-қарастары мен оның енгізілуіне әсер ететін факторларын зерттеу. Зерттеу сұрақтары: «1) Мұғалімдер жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасын қалай енгізуде? Қандай факторлар жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасының енгізілуіне оң ықпалын тигізеді? Қандай факторлар жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасының енгізілуіне кедергі келтіреді?» Сапалы зерттеу әдісі пайдаланылды, оның ішінде екі кейсті: ауылдық және қалалық жалпы білім беру мектептерін тереңдетіп зерттеу үшін «ұжымдық кейс-стади зерттеуі (collective case studies)» жүргізілді. Он екі мұғалімді қатысушы ретінде таңдау үшін «максималды вариациялық мақсатты іріктеу әдісі (maximum variation purposeful sampling)» пайдаланылды. Деректер негізінен он сегіз жеке

жартылай құрылымдық интервью арқылы жиналды. Деректерді жинаудың қосымша құралы – құжаттарды анализдеу болды.

Зерттеу нәтижелері мұғалімдердің көптеген өзгерістерді енгізіп жүргенін көрсетеді. Олардың көбісі аталмыш өзгерістерге оңтайлы қарауда, өйткені олар өз педагогикалық тәжірибелерінің жақсарғанын байқады. Сонымен қатар, мұғалімдер зерттеу және тұлғалық-даму (лично-ориентированный) әдістерін қолдану арқылы оқушылардың оқуға деген ынтасының көтерілгендігін байқады. Кейбір факторлардың (кәсіби даму, мұғалімдермен ынтымақтастықта әрекеттесу, оқушылардың білімі тереңдетіліп жатқанына сену) мұғалімдерге жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасын енгізуге көмектесіп жатқанына қарамастан, жалпы жұмыс көлемінің көбеюі, қағаз жұмысының көбеюі және уақыт тапшылығы сияқты бағдарламаның енгізілуін қиындататын бірқатар кедергілер бар. Олар сабаққа дайындалу жұмысының көбеюі, критериалды бағалау жүйесінің енгізілуі және оқу бағдарламасының мазмұнының күрделендірілуімен байланысты. Мұғалімдер, сонымен қатар, жаңартылған мазмұнды енгізу үшін ресурстардың тапшылығы, оқушылар деңгейлерінің әртүрлілігі және сыныптағы балалар санының тым көптігі мәселелерін кездестіріп келеді. Күтпеген нәтиже – ауылдық және қалалық контекст арасындағы негізгі айырмашылықтардың бірі ауылдық мұғалімдердің, қалалық әріптестеріне қарағанда, соңғы өзгерістерге деген ынта мен құлшыныстары жоғарылау.

Түйін сөздер: жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасы, енгізуге әсер ететін факторлар, бастауыш мектеп, орта білім, Қазақстан.

Тема: «Внедрение обновленного содержания образования в Казахстане: исследование взглядов учителей»

Аннотация

Унаследованная от Советского Союза учебная программа подвергалась критике за свою централизованность, негибкость, перегруженность и знание-центричность (Yakavets, 2014; Fimuar, 2014). После распада Советского Союза, пересмотр учебной программы стал важным вопросом в образовании в Казахстане (Yakavets, 2014). В качестве одного из решений на эту проблему, в 2001 году правительство Казахстана инициировало ряд существенных реформ (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014). В 2016 году во всех общеобразовательных школах страны началось внедрение обновленного содержания образования, направленное на развитие личности, обладающего основами навыков широкого спектра (SESPE, 2015). Количество эмпирических исследований о взглядах учителей на обновленное содержание образования и о факторах, влияющих на внедрение данной реформы в Казахстане, достаточно ограничено.

Целью этого исследования является изучение взглядов учителей начальной школы на обновленное содержание образования и факторов, влияющих на ее внедрение.

Вопросами исследования являются: «1) Как учителя внедряют обновленное содержание образования? Какие факторы способствуют внедрению обновленного содержания образования? Какие факторы препятствуют внедрению обновленного содержания образования?» Был использован качественный метод исследования, в рамках качественного метода было проведено «коллективное кейс-стади (collective case studies)» для углубленного изучения двух кейсов: сельской и городской общеобразовательной школы. Для выбора двенадцати учителей в качестве участников исследования использовался метод «целевого отбора максимальной вариации (maximum variation

purposeful sampling)». Первичным инструментом сбора данных было восемнадцать индивидуальных полуструктурированных интервью. Вторичным инструментом сбора данных был анализ документов.

Результаты исследования показывают, что учителя внедряют множество изменений. Большинство из них положительного мнения об этих изменениях, поскольку они наблюдают улучшения в своей педагогической практике. Более того, учителя также отмечают повышение мотивации учащихся, в связи с использованием исследовательского и лично-ориентированного подхода к обучению. Несмотря на то, что некоторые факторы помогают учителям внедрять обновленное содержание образования (профессиональное развитие, сотрудничество с учителями, убежденность в более глубоком обучении учащихся), существует также ряд препятствий, мешающих внедрению, такие как перегруженность, увеличение объема бумажной работы и нехватка времени. Они вызваны увеличенной работой по подготовке к урокам, внедрением критериальной системы оценивания и сложностями в содержании учебной программы. Учителя также отмечают нехватку ресурсов для внедрения обновленного содержания и сталкиваются с проблемами разноуровневости учащихся и переполненных классов. Неожиданно, но основным различием между сельским и городским контекстами является – сельские учителя более энтузиастичны к недавним изменениям по сравнению с их городскими коллегами.

Ключевые слова: обновленное содержание образования; факторы, влияющие на внедрение; начальная школа; среднее образование; Казахстан.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The curriculum inherited from the Soviet Union was criticized for being centralized, rigid, inflexible, overloaded and knowledge-based (Yakavets, 2014; Fimyar, 2014). Therefore, after the collapse of the Soviet Union curriculum change has become a major issue in education in Kazakhstan (Yakavets, 2014). Responding to this issue, the Government of Kazakhstan initiated several substantive reforms in 2001 and since then has developed policy documents that define and regulate state policy in education (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014). One of these documents is The State Programme of Education and Science Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2016- 2019 (SPESD, 2016), which is the foundation document that drives the education reform in Kazakhstan.

The participation of Kazakhstan in international schemes of student assessment - The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) – helped the Ministry of Education and Science to benchmark the quality of education in the country against other academic systems in the world. PISA results revealed that Kazakhstani schoolchildren “lack the skills of applying their academic knowledge in unfamiliar situations and real-world settings and that the influence of past traditions in the education system still abound. There is a tendency to memorise knowledge, adopt highly didactic methods of teaching and have a system of assessment geared to memorization” (McLaughlin et al., 2016, p. 14).

In addition, different international institutions and organizations started to provide Kazakhstan with financial and technical aid in order to promote neoliberal education reforms (Yakavets, 2014) and thus, a lot of international studies have been conducted to explore the situation in education of Kazakhstan. One of these studies was conducted relatively recently, in 2014 by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to OECD (2014), the previous Kazakhstani curriculum enacted before September of 2016 was

academically-narrow, consisting almost entirely of academic subjects in grades 5 to 9 and heavily theorized, and allocating little time on practical applications, making students ill-equipped to apply and use the knowledge they have learnt in real world situations. Therefore, the OECD review team (2014) suggested reforms would focus on the development of the higher-order thinking skills, become more practice based and maintain students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning, particularly engage and be accessible to academically challenged students and under-achievers (OECD, 2014).

1.2. Policy Context

Kazakhstan started the implementation of the comprehensive curriculum reform, aspects of assessment of pedagogy and teacher development. A new curriculum, new assessment system and new pedagogic approaches have been piloted in 20 innovative schools, called "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" (NIS) since 2011. In 2015, the NIS system of the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy was adopted and then piloted in 30 mainstream schools of the country, identified as "pilot schools" (McLaughlin et al., 2016). The national training centre ORLEU and the Centres of Excellence of NIS located in different regions of the country, with the support of the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, started to massively provide a national programme of professional development for teachers and school leaders (McLaughlin et al., 2016).

The national effort to upgrade the schooling curriculum led to the development of the new State Mandatory Standards for Primary and Secondary Education. Even though this study will focus on the primary education curriculum, it is worth noting that the new curriculum reform (which is often referred by the participants of my study as "*obnovlyonka*" – shortened from Russian "*obnovlennoe sodержanie obrazovaniya*", or "renewed content of education") in both primary and secondary education sectors is aimed to prepare students' functional literacy and be able to function successfully in the 21st century and develop the learner's personality obtaining basics of the following higher-order thinking skills: functional and creative use of

knowledge, critical thinking, research skills, use of ICT, and a variety of communication methods, including language skills and skill to work individually and in group (SESPE, 2015, p.13).

The new curriculum reform is directed to: improving the quality of learning and upbringing by implementing education objectives in the form of ‘*expected learning outcomes*’; implementing trilingual educational policy by creating the necessary conditions for providing educational process in Kazakh, Russian and English languages; combining academic and practical elements of education, providing learners with the fundamentals of theoretical knowledge and abilities to apply the knowledge in solving practical tasks; spiral development of subject knowledge and skills providing in-depth and complex subject content of age-related abilities; implementing the principle of integrating upbringing and learning unity via interdependence and interrelationship of educational values and the system of expected learning outcomes that define the substantive basis of every day educational process; ensuring students’ wellbeing, as well as creating supportive environment to meet learners’ special needs in getting the additional educational services; ensuring equivalence of primary education in a variety of types of secondary education institutions; supporting and developing innovative practices in educational institutions; ensuring objective evaluation of educational organizations’ operations for assuring quality in education (SESPE, 2015, p.2).

The basic values of the content of the new education standards are: patriotism and civil responsibility, respect, collaboration, work and creativity, openness and lifelong learning (SESPE, 2015, p. 13).

This new curriculum reform is to be implemented stepwise. As it was mentioned above it started its implementation in 30 pilot schools throughout Kazakhstan in September 2015. As for its dissemination in all schools of the country, the new curriculum is implemented stepwise:

- 1) in Grades 1 – since 1 September, 2016;
- 2) in Grades 2 – since 1 September, 2017;

3) in Grades 3 – since 1 September, 2018;

4) in Grades 4 – since 1 September, 2019 (SESPE, 2015);

1.3. Problem Statement

During the last few decades, many countries try to implement different curriculum reforms and thus, education reform has been a widely discussed topic all over the world: China (Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Li, Ni, Li & Tsoi, 2012; Wang, 2011), Singapore (Lam, Alviar-Martin, Adler & Sim, 2013), Hong Kong (Chan, 2010; Cheung & Wong, 2012; Morrison, 2003), USA (Porter, Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2014; Manouchehri & Goodman, 1998), UK (Ryder, 2015), Australia (Lowe & Appleton, 2014; MacDonald, 2003), South Africa (Bantwini, 2010; Jansen, 1998), Israel (Avargil, Herscovitz & Dori, 2013), Libya (Orafi & Borg, 2009), Latvia (Misco, 2010) and many other countries.

Teachers and their perspectives in the context of different reforms have been also widely studied in the international arena through examining teachers' beliefs (Underwood, 2012; Mansour, 2009, Crawley & Salyer, 1995, Milner et al., 2012; Pajares, 1992), teachers' experiences (Wang & Clarke, 2014; Ryder & Banner, 2013; Craig, 2010), teachers' perceptions (Bantwini, 2010; Donnell & Gettinger, 2015), teachers' response (Elmas, Ozturk, Irmak, & Cobern, 2014; Mellegård & Pettersen, 2016; Ryder, 2015; Song, 2015; Yin, 2013) to the reform, as well as the challenges they face in the implementation process (Flores, 2005; Li & Ni, 2012; Charalambous & Philippou, 2010).

The common finding of all of these studies is that teachers are the key to the success of reform efforts. For example, Donnell and Gettinger (2015) believe that any educational change is predominantly a teacher level phenomenon. It is evident that different factors at school and system-level affect success of any educational reform, but teachers remain the centerpiece of a transformational educational change. Similarly, other researches also reveal that teachers are crucial to the success of educational reform efforts (Fullan, 2001 as cited in Johnson, 2006; Haney, Czerniak, & Lumpe, 1996).

However, the number of empirical studies about teachers' views as well as about factors affecting the implementation of the new curriculum reform in Kazakhstan is very limited.

1.4. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine primary school teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and factors influencing its implementation.

1.5. Research Question

The research question that guides this study is the following: What are the teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and what are the factors influencing its implementation?

This overarching research question includes the following sub-questions:

- 1) How do teachers implement the new curriculum reform?
- 2) What factors support the implementation of the new curriculum reform?
- 3) What factors constrain the implementation of the new curriculum reform?

1.6. Definition of the Central Phenomenon

The central phenomenon of this study is primary school teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and the factors influencing the implementation of the new curriculum reform in Kazakhstani mainstream schools.

1.7. Significance of the study

First and foremost, this study is significant as it explores teachers' perspectives about the curriculum reform and factors influencing the implementation and thus, gives the participants an opportunity to share their views, perceptions, attitudes and experiences about the implementation of the new curriculum reform.

Next, the amount of research generally on new curricula and education reforms implementation is not extensive in Kazakhstan, especially on examining the role of teachers' perspectives in this process. Thus, the study will contribute to the literature and discussions

about the importance of teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and the factors influencing its implementation.

Another important significance of the study is its benefits to me as a novice researcher doing a qualitative research within the Master's programme. The knowledge and skills that I obtained in the process of conducting the research and writing a thesis are of a particular value for my personal and professional growth.

Finally, it is hoped that the findings of the study will contribute to understanding teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and factors that influence its implementation and develop research-informed knowledge of Kazakhstani educational professionals, including policymakers, education authorities and school leaders. This can lead to improving the reform implementation policy, the content of the new curriculum or to providing more comprehensive support to the teachers in the reform implementation process.

1.8. Outline of the Study

The thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 sets the context of the study by providing the problem statement of the research, policy context and leading to the purpose of the research and research questions that need to be explored within the study. It also defines the central phenomenon of the study and provides information about the significance of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and studies made in the field of curriculum reform implementation and factors affecting the implementation of the curriculum reform from the lens of the teachers. Chapter 3 describes the research design, the site and sampling selection techniques and the data collection procedures. It also provides the description of data analysis procedures along with my reflections and insights on my role as a researcher. Ethical consideration that guided me during the study is well presented at the end of the chapter. Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study and the answers to the research questions. Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the results. Finally, Chapter 6 provides the overall summary of the study,

outlining the research implications and recommendations along with the limitations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research background, problem statement, research purpose, research questions and significances of the study were introduced. This chapter presents review of the literature related to the topic. It describes literature that discusses the definition and importance of reform implementation. Then it reviews the literature describing the factors influencing the curriculum reform.

2.2. Reform implementation

Fullan and Pomfret (1977) in their research on curriculum implementation, claim that implementation is not merely a continuation of planning and adoption processes, it is an important phenomenon in its own right. More specifically, they define it as “the actual use of an innovation or what an innovation consists of in practice” (p. 336). There are five dimensions of implementation in practice: changes in a) subject matter or materials, b) organisational structure, c) role/behavior, d) knowledge and understanding, and e) value internalization – all of these dimensions are applied towards an innovative idea or development (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).

According to the authors, subject matter components, include the content of the curriculum as transmitted by a teacher to a student or as expected to be acquired by students themselves. Almost every curriculum can be categorized by its subject-matter content as the concept of subject matter is very closely associated with the notion of curriculum.

Changes in the organisational structure involve different alterations in formal arrangements and physical conditions – different approaches to students’ grouping, different arrangement of space, provision of new human resources, and of curriculum resources and materials.

The third dimension – changes in people’s role and behavior is considered as an essential aspect of organizational structure, because in education, these changes usually regard new pedagogic techniques, new ways of planning and new curriculum development roles for

teachers, new role relationships between teachers and students, teachers and heads, teachers and consultants, and etc.

The fourth dimension of implementation involves the knowledge and understanding that users have built about different components of innovation, such as its philosophy, values, assumptions, objectives, subject matter, implementation strategy, and other.

The dimension of value internalization is related to user's commitment to implement various components of innovation. The authors clarify that there should be a link between the valuing and particular aspects of other components of implementation.

Through discussing these five dimensions, Fullan and Pomfret (1977) aim to comprise different components of implementation contained in the fifteen studies that they reviewed in their research. The authors then discuss several reasons of importance to examine implementation. The first reason is related to the fact that we will not know what has changed without making an effort to conceptualize and measure it. When we plan and adopt an innovation, we tend to be concerning about monitoring its outcomes. Then there is a wrong expectation that the innovation will be implemented more or less as planned and will be reflected in the classroom as intended. In fact, the whole area of implementation is like a "black box", "where innovations entering one side somehow produce the consequences emanating from the other" (p. 337). The second reason to study implementation concerns the importance of understanding why so many educational changes fail to succeed. Here the authors try to determine some of the most problematic aspects of innovation. They believe that the main difficulty is related to the necessities in certain organizational changes that the curriculum change brings in. The third reason presented by the researchers states that if we do not focus on implementation, it may lead to disregard of the implementation, or to its confusion with other aspects of the change like adoption (decision to use an innovation). Finally, it is necessary to study implementation, because it can be difficult to interpret learning outcomes and relate them

to potential determinants of implementation without examining the implementation itself (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977)

Thus, it is important to examine implementation in order to discover whether or not any change has been taking place, as well as to understand why change occurs or fails to occur (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).

2.3. Factors influencing the implementation of the curriculum reform

According to Fullan and Pomfret (1977), there is a significant number of implementation factors due to the complexity of the phenomenon of implementation per se. However, the authors attempted to identify certain common factors deriving from various studies of curriculum implementation that they analysed. They categorized those under four broad categories, where each of them contains specific variables.

- i) Characteristics of the Innovation: (a) Explicitness (what, who, when, how) and (b) Complexity;
- ii) Strategies: (a) In-service training, (b) Resource support (time and materials), (c) Feedback mechanisms, and (d) Participation;
- iii) Characteristics of the Adopting Unit: (a) Adoption process, (b) Organizational climate, (c) Environmental support, and (d) Demographic factors;
- iv) Characteristics of Macro Sociopolitical Units: (a) Design questions, (b) Incentive system, (c) Evaluation, and (d) Political complexity (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).

Factors affecting the implementation of the reform can also be built around Ajzen's model (1991) theory of planned behavior as cited in Kennedy and Kennedy (1996). According to this model, intention statements "are more informative and predictive of likely behaviour than attitudes alone" (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996, p.354). Attitude should not be considered as the single determining factor of behaviour, it focuses on behaviour intention. Intention is partly derived from attitude, but there are two more important elements: subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Subjective norms "reflect not the individual's personal beliefs but

what the individual believes others think about the behaviour concerned” (p.355). “Others” here means individuals who might influence on a person because of their social or professional relationship. For teachers, others can be colleagues, principals, department heads, ministry officials, parents and students. Teachers who are initially keen on a reform may then be affected by a negative view of their principal, colleagues or parents.

Believing that teachers are free to implement the curriculum at their own pace is idealistic. Curriculum complementation is always accompanied by control and accountability. Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) consider the importance of behaviour control in policy implementation. They distinguish between external control factors and internal control factors.

Perceived behaviour control describes the level of control which people believe they have over a change. Behaviour control factors can be internal or external. Internal factors may consist of teachers’ skills and capacities to implement a new curriculum or the amount and clarity of information presented about it. Whereas external factors can include circumstances and environmental considerations such as over-assigned official duties, working in a traditional school structure, institutional support and cooperation. These internal and external factors make up a teacher’s perceived behavioural control. It is important to note that if teachers accept an innovation as something which is out of their control, they may not implement it, even if their attitude to it is positive (Kennedy & Kennedy,1996).

As can be seen, there are a number of factors which can affect the educational reform implementation. Some of them may support the implementation, while others may become the constraints for its successful implementation and there are numerous empirical studies that summarised them. For example, one of them describes the barriers like the difficulty in lesson preparation, insufficient content knowledge, insufficient knowledge or application of new teaching practices, poor quality textbooks, difficulties in changing roles of teachers and students, lack of support and training for teachers, lack of patience to see the permanent effects of new

pedagogies on students, students' level of readiness, time limitations and content overload (Elmas et al., 2014).

Similar findings were also found in Kazakhstan. According to Ibraimova (2017), who studied challenges met during the implementation of the integrated curriculum in Kazakhstani secondary schools, both school administrators and teachers reported having the following challenges when they implemented the integrated curriculum: (1) lack of instructional resources, (2) insufficiency of required, ongoing professional development, (3) lack of lesson preparation time, (4) challenges in multilingual teaching of core subjects, and (5) parent-student's unpreparedness. The first two barriers were found to be concerns of both school administrators and teachers, while the last three were noted by teachers only.

Meanwhile, the next part of this literature review focuses on the importance of the following factors: (a) teachers' professional development; (b) teacher collaboration; (c) the access to teaching resources; (d) teacher workload and lack of time; (e) the level of teaching experience; and (f) learner diversity and big class sizes.

2.3.1. Teachers' professional development

The most common prerequisite seen as necessary for successful implementation of the curriculum reforms is provision of teacher professional development opportunities. The importance of professional development has been studied widely (Haney, 1996; Johnson, 2006; Sargent, 2011; Roehrig & Kruse, 2005; Donnell & Gettinger, 2015; Park & Sung, 2013; Powell & Anderson, 2002). Access to high-quality training programmes is also essential to support teachers in rebuilding themselves professionally, to help them manage through the change process required by the reforms (Xu, 2009 as cited in Sargent, 2011) and to achieve successful implementation of a curricular innovation (Park & Sung, 2013).

However, some teachers may find professional training as burdensome as teachers did not have time to attend the workshops. That is why very often it is not the quantity of professional development programmes that matters, but the quality. Training courses should be designed in a

way that help teachers solve their practical problems directly and effectively (Cheung & Wong, 2011).

Verspoor (1989) as cited in Park and Sung (2013) suggests four elements for successful professional development supportive to curricular reform: “permanent and locally available in-service training, the establishment of effective systems for teacher supervision and support, adjustment of the content of teacher training to the teachers’ own level of knowledge and experience, and encouragement of teachers’ motivation and commitment” (Park & Sung, 2013, p.18). The importance of the continuity of professional development is well described in Johnson (2006), who believes that a key problem in getting professional development experiences is its duration. The studies that he reviewed argue that only sustained professional development experiences can initiate change in beliefs and teaching practices. For example, the courses which last less than 80 hours in total are not effective in stimulating change in practice (Supovitz & Turner, 2000 as cited in Johnson, 2006) or one-day workshops are not likely to influence teachers’ understanding about the new teaching strategies (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998 as cited in Johnson, 2006). Similarly, the participants of Kazakhstani study reported the professional development courses that they received were ineffective because they did not involve ongoing support and were mostly incidental (Ibraimova, 2017).

2.3.2. Teacher collaboration

Fullan (2017) believes that one of the effective ways to get teachers motivated is to build collaborative professionalism, which is defined as a culture where “the teacher with a degree of autonomy interacts with other teachers, figuring out the best things to do to get results for the particular students they are working with” (p. 9). According to the author, this will allow teachers start experiencing the success with their pupils in relatively nonthreatening environment, with the teachers, who can be helpful (Fullan, 2017).

The significance of the growth of a collaborative culture and a learning community in the schools have been also pointed out by empirical studies (Cheung & Wong, 2011; Porter,

Fusarelli, & Fusarelli, 2014; Sargent, 2011). Powell and Anderson (2002) state that in order to ensure the standards-based curriculum is turned into actual practice, a school has to design a 'community of practice', which means to build "a supportive school culture that is characterized, in part, by sustained collegial support from administrators, fellow teachers, and other educators" (p, 131). Another way of enhancing the collaboration is encouraging peer observations. 96 percent of the teachers of the study conducted in Gansu province in China participated in peer lesson observation in one semester. The study reveals that such activities allow teachers to interact, share experiences and support each other in reform implementation process (Sargent, 2011). Similarly, another researcher believes there should be mentorship between teachers, that teachers should have an opportunity to observe the classes of other teachers, and have ongoing support from district administrators (Johnson, 2006).

2.3.3. Access to teaching resources

Another factor influencing the implementation is teachers' access to teaching resources. The importance of access to resources in reform context is discussed in many international studies (Milner et al., 2012; Sargent, 2011; Orafi & Borg, 2009). This includes curriculum materials and any other teaching resources which promote the implementation of the reform, such as Internet access, special equipment, and consumable supplies. For example, Sargent (2011) believes that teachers and schools need to have access "to libraries, reference materials, computers that are connected to the internet – and the know-how and capacity to conduct Internet research" (p.50). It was also found that resources are a particular issue for teachers of science, because besides curriculum materials science teachers also need science specific equipment and consumable supplies (Johnson, 2006).

Similarly, in Kazakhstan's context, Ibraimova (2017) found that, as a result of an issue of lack of teaching and learning resources, many teachers had to buy or bring some of the instructional resources themselves, including resources for different experiments and research activities. Another Kazakhstani study also reveals a lot of issues associated with the lack of

resources. A key recommendation of the study was that it is essential to provide schools and teachers with the resources required; otherwise it may seriously affect the reform implementation, especially in rural school settings (McLaughlin et al., 2016).

One of the propositions for success of the reform, according to Fullan and Miles (1992), is admitting that “change is resource-hungry” (p. 750). The authors claim that change requires extra resources for professional development, for new space, for new materials and above all, for time, which is another major obstacle in many studies.

2.3.4. Teacher workload and lack of time

The new curriculum is usually perceived as burden and excessive work by teachers as it requires lesson planning and use of constructivist and inquiry-based approaches (Bantwini, 2010). In the study of factors affecting the implementation curriculum reform in Hong Kong, Cheung and Wong (2012) found that the biggest constraint in the reform implementation was teachers’ workload. This may lead to teacher resistance to accept the reform and hence, to the use of traditional teaching approaches, because teachers usually lack time for implementation (Misco, 2010). For example, rural teachers of China consider the student-centered teaching as more time-consuming and unpredictable than the whole-class lecturing, because the latter allows teachers to control the teaching pace and secure the cover of the required content of the textbooks within the specific timeframe that they are given (Wang, 2010). Manouchehri and Goodman (1998), who conducted an ethnographic research to study the process of evaluation and implementation of 4 standards-based curricular materials, also found that time was a serious issue for successful implementation of the curricular materials. Apart from that more than 55 teachers stayed longer hours after school to check students’ work, learn new content of the curriculum or work with parents.

2.3.5. Teaching experience

The level or amount of teachers’ experience may be another factor affecting the reform implementation. According to Elmas et al. (2014), experienced teachers are more confident with

teaching coming from their former practices. Changing their practices means risking failure for them. This can lead established teachers to resist any changes in implementation and poor use of the approaches recommended by the curriculum (Elmas et al., 2014). However, besides their own resistance, experienced teachers were seen to impose their beliefs on their colleagues. For example, in one of the schools from the sample of Johnson (2006), a novice teacher, who worked closely with a so-called “veteran teacher” (who did not want to accept standards-based instruction, experiencing a cultural barrier related to their beliefs) as a mentor, also ended up not wanting to buy into the use of the new standards.

2.3.6. Learner diversity and big class sizes

Learner diversity and big class size is another critical barrier in reform implementation. Bantwini (2010) in his study conducted in South Africa found that, while the new policy recommended having the teacher/learner ratio as of 1:40, in reality these ratios ranged from 1:50 to 1:80. Apart from that the learning abilities of the students were likely to vary in this country (Bantwini, 2010).

In Kazakhstan’s context, the problem of learner diversity was found in a study of Ibraimova (2017). The author states that many teachers observe the general discrepancy between the pupils who went to pre-school institution and those who did not. The latter category of children is usually narrow-minded, they lack good speaking and thinking skills, they struggle learning phenomenon from different perspectives and lack the ability of connecting the learning within various subject areas.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a methodology used in this study. First, I offer a description and discussion of my rationale for employing a qualitative case study design to examine teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and factors influencing the implementation. After that, I briefly describe the selection of site and participants, including entry negotiations, sampling and recruiting the participants in two schools. Next, I present the data collection methods, which included individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis. I also reflect on my role as a researcher. I then describe the way I analysed the collected data. The chapter closes with ethical considerations of the study and a brief summary of the chapter.

3.2. Research Design

In this section the research design is described with its rationale justified. I opted for a qualitative approach to study the implementation of the new curriculum reform and in particular examine factors that have an impact on the implementation. By so doing, I have collected rich and descriptive data which explore understanding about the phenomenon of my study and value participants' subjective experiences and meaning-making processes (Leavy, 2017).

Within the qualitative inquiry approach, I conducted collective case studies of primary school teachers. This research design enabled me to do in-depth examination of two cases, search for patterns within them and investigate "a phenomenon, population, or general condition" with data gathered through in-depth interviewing (Glesne, 2011, p.22). In this study examining two cases included the exploration of teachers' perspectives on curriculum implementation and factors influencing the implementation in rural and urban contexts.

3.3. Site and sample selection

This section describes the site and sampling selection procedures, including the process of recruiting the participants in two schools (urban and rural).

3.3.1. Site selection

Each case included one school and thus, I studied one rural and one urban school. The case of the rural context was studied in a village in Akmola region (Akmolinskaya oblast'). The case of the urban context was explored in Astana, a capital of Kazakhstan. As mentioned earlier, all mainstream schools of Kazakhstan started to implement the new curriculum reform in grades 1 in September 2016, so both schools had more than 13 months of implementation experience by the start of data collection.

3.3.2. Sampling

If quantitative researchers often use random sampling in order to select a large and statistically representative sample to draw generalizations, qualitative researchers do not aim to produce generalizations and thus, select their participants purposefully (Glesne, 2011). Purposeful sampling allowed me to select “information-rich cases” from which I was able to learn “a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p.273). As I was interested in studying the factors affecting the implementation of the new curriculum reform, the most important criterion was that the participants of the study had to be primary school the teachers.

The participants were recruited on a voluntary basis which meant that a teacher could participate in the study only if they expressed their willingness to do that. In order to develop many perspectives (Creswell, 2014) and to search for common patterns across a range of variation (Glesne, 2011), maximum variation sampling was used. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), maximum variation sampling also helps “ensure strength and richness to the data, their applicability and interpretation” (p.115). This purposeful sampling strategy enabled me to include the primary school ‘classroom teachers’ (*uchitelya nachal'nyh klassov*) and ‘subject teachers’ (*uchitelya-predmetniki*) of different mediums of instruction (Kazakh or Russian). Classroom teachers are the core teachers in primary schools of Kazakhstan and they normally teach majority of subjects in Grades 1 to 4: First Language (Kazakh or Russian depending on the language of instruction of the class), Literacy, Mathematics, Natural Science,

Knowledge of the world, Music and Handicraft. In some cases, they also teach such subjects as Self-cognition and Physical Education. Subject teachers teach additional subjects that classroom teacher does not have teaching qualifications such as Second Language (Russian for Kazakh classes, Kazakh for Russian classes) and English. Maximum variation sampling also allowed me to select the classroom and subject teachers of different age groups, different years of experience and with different language of instruction, because I was interested in getting data from both experienced and non-experienced teachers, of both Kazakh and Russian grades.

As a result, I had the following number of participants and interviews:

Rural school:

- 1) 2 classroom teachers and 2 interviews with each of them;
- 2) 2 subject teachers and 1 interview with each of them;

Urban school

- 1) 4 classroom teachers and 2 interviews with each of them;
- 2) 4 subject teachers and 1 interview with each of them;

The detailed explanation on the participants is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Before recruiting the participants, I went through entry negotiation process. I was concerned about getting access to the schools, because it was my first experience of approaching the gatekeepers as an individual researcher. According to Glesne (2011), a gatekeeper is “the person who must give their consent before you may enter a research setting, and with whom you must negotiate the conditions of access” (p.57) and getting gatekeeper’s support and trust may take time (Creswell, 2014). Having read the literature on research, I realised how important it was to negotiate my access to the schools with the respective gatekeepers.

3.4. Recruiting participants in a rural school

The first school that I entered was a rural school. I knew a person who used to work in that school; she introduced me to the principal and vice-principal of the school. They read my introductory letter issued by NUGSE administration (see Appendix A) and I explained them the

nature and the purpose of my research. As a result, they granted me their approval to collect the data from their teachers. It is a small ungraded school (*malokomplektnaya shkola*) with 90 students and 18 teachers in total. Therefore, the teacher-student ratio of the school is 1:5. The language of instruction of the school is Kazakh.

The school had only one class in each of four primary Grades (Grade 1-4), so there were only four primary classroom teachers. Thus, two out of these four teachers have implemented the new curriculum reform as one of them teaches in Grade 1 and another one in Grade 2. The subjects that they teach include: Kazakh Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Natural Science, Knowledge of the world, Music, Handicraft, Self-cognition and Physical Education. Among the primary school ‘subject teachers’ implementing the new primary curriculum reform, there were: one teacher of Russian language and one teacher of English language.

I explained the potential participants the purpose, method, ethical norms and rules that I would be following and told them about their rights as participants. Then I clarified that all the information they would share would be confidential. This is described in more details in ‘Ethical considerations’. Finally, I explained the teachers what benefits their responses may bring to the research, to the pedagogical community of Kazakhstan and outside. I distributed the consent forms (see Appendix B) in a language convenient for them. All necessary documentation was translated from English into Russian and Kazakh beforehand. All of those teachers expressed their interest to participate in my study. As a result, I recruited four participants in the rural school (see Table 1).

Table 1. *The profiles of the participants from the rural school*

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Language of instruction</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Dinara	Classroom teacher	Kazakh	2
Nazira	Classroom teacher	Kazakh	1
Altyn	Russian language	Kazakh	1 & 2
Asem	English language	Kazakh	1 & 2

Note. Only pseudonyms are used

3.5. Recruiting participants in an urban school

The process of negotiation with an urban school was very different from the rural one. First of all, because I had no acquaintances in any mainstream schools of Astana. I was interested in conducting my study in a ‘mixed school’¹ (*smeshannaya shkola*). Two out of ten mixed schools of Astana agreed to accept me if I come with an official letter from Nazarbayev University about my research. I approached one of them with the introductory letter and the consent forms (see Appendices A and B). The vice principal of the school read them and granted me the permission to conduct the study in their school.

It is a big school with over 2,000 students, although an estimated capacity of the school is 1500 students, whereas the number of teachers is a bit more than 100 teachers. Therefore, the teacher:student ratio of the school is 1:20, leading to double-shifted classes and overcrowded classes. For example, every primary classroom teacher works on double-shifted schedule and with about 30-35 children in each Grade.

I was allowed to approach every teacher individually. As with the rural school, I explained the teachers my role and all the research related information: the nature and the purpose of the research, research method, and ethics. I distributed the informed consent letter and tried to give them as much time as they needed to take a decision. Unexpectedly, but the teachers did not require a lot of time, they were agreeing immediately. Appreciating the fact that a research participant needs to have sufficient time to make their final decision to take part in the study (according to the research ethics principles), I valued teachers ‘prompt agreement and enthusiasm to help me with my study and data collection. Thus, there were no difficulties with recruiting participants in the urban school too. The only concern that the teachers had was to find time for being interviewed, because as mentioned earlier, the school have double-shift schedule

¹ A school with Kazakh and Russian Grades, i.e. with the teachers of both Kazakh and Russian language of instruction.

and thus, primary teachers work 8 am to 6 pm every day. They stated that they could dedicate me their time only when the classes would be cancelled or on Saturdays.

As the urban school was much bigger than the rural one, I decided to get more data from it. However, in order to be able to compare the data from two settings meaningfully and credibly, I had to keep the number of participants proportionally equal. That is why the number of urban participants was twice more than their rural colleagues. So, I recruited four classroom teachers in urban school, two of them were from Russian-medium Grades and the other two from Kazakh-medium Grades. There were a teacher of Grade 1 and a teacher of Grade 2 in both Russian and Kazakh Grades. The subjects that they teach include: Kazakh/Russian Language 1, Literacy, Mathematics, Natural Science, Knowledge of the world, Music, Handicraft, Self-cognition and Physical Education. As for ‘subject teachers’, I recruited: one teacher of Russian language for Kazakh Grades, one teacher of Kazakh language for Russian Grades, and two teachers of English language-one teacher in Kazakh Grades and another one in Russian Grades. As a result, I recruited eight participants in the rural school (see Table 2).

Table 2. *The profiles of the participants from the urban school*

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Language of instruction</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Mariya	Classroom teacher	Russian grades	2
Dana	Classroom teacher	Russian grades	1
Ainura	Classroom teacher	Kazakh grades	2
Saltanat	Classroom teacher	Kazakh grades	1
Madina	Russian language	Kazakh grades	2
Leila	Kazakh language	Russian grades	1
Gulmira	English language	Kazakh grades	1 & 2
Aiman	English language	Russian grades	1 & 2

Note. Only pseudonyms are used

In total there were twelve participants from both schools.

3.6. Data Collection

All research projects initiated under Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education (NUGSE) involving data collection from human subjects must be approved by the NUGSE Research Committee (NUGSE, 2017). Therefore, before studying the participants I had received my Ethical Review approval from NUGSE. After that I got my thesis Supervisor's approval on these methodological considerations and on supplementary documents. The fieldwork of my study lasted from December 2017 to February 2018. This included entry negotiations with gatekeepers and selecting participants. The actual data collection started on 11 December, 2017.

I mainly collected data through individual interviews with teachers. The secondary data collection tool was document analysis. The interviews were audio recorded with the prior consent of the participant, as I needed to get a nearly complete record of the responses and allow myself to be focused on the course of the interview (Glesne, 2011). When I identified which documents could be useful to analyse at schools, I was asking permission to use them from the appropriate individuals in charge of the materials as suggested by Creswell (2014). After getting permission, I made sure that I "examine the documents for accuracy, completeness, and usefulness in answering the research questions in the study" (Creswell, 2014, p.223).

3.6.1. Interviews

Interview is a powerful and flexible tool for data collection, which enables to get data through different channels: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. It is considered as flexible, because although it can be controlled in terms of its order, it still gives some space for spontaneity where the researcher can deepen into some issues which can contribute to the results of the study (Cohen et al., 2011). Therefore, interviews enabled me to gather teachers' deep reflections about the new curriculum reform.

Among different types of interviews, the semi-structured interviews were identified as suitable for this study as they allowed me to establish certain questions before the interviews, but to add or replace them during the interviews depending on the course of an interview (Glesne,

2011). This gave me some flexibility to ask the questions that I found suitable to the particular interview context or change the sequence and wording of some questions, depending on participant's personality, her responses and the general flow of the interview.

I can rely on and make conclusions only from the data that the participants gave me through their responses. In fact, the data can differ from the reality. I cannot guarantee that it provides teachers' real thoughts, feelings or practices. Nevertheless, I believe there is triangulation of the data, because I interviewed different individuals of different categories in different period of time. I think I thereby increased the validity of my study.

All interviews were held in quiet and private rooms of the schools, in mutually convenient time. Each interview lasted no more than 60 minutes. They were conducted in Kazakh or Russian languages whichever was chosen by the participant as the convenient one. I have very good level of Kazakh and Russian, so no translators or interpreters were needed for interview sessions and for the transcription of data.

Glesne (2011) suggests making sure that the necessary level of trust is built with participants and the researcher, before starting to ask questions about a topic, as this allows them to be open and expansive. That is why it was very important for me to make sure that I was not perceived as an expert or authority who was expected to talk, but as a learner who was ready to listen. This also enabled the participants to feel encouraged "to be as forthcoming as they can be" (Glesne, 2011, p.60). On the one hand, it was not always possible to gain participants' trust through one interview. That is why I think that some of the subject teachers were not able to be as open and expansive as the classroom teachers could be, who were interviewed two times. On the other hand, I noticed that during the second rounds of interviews some of the classroom teachers were becoming less enthusiastic and were giving shorter answers as if they were tired of being interviewed again. This could also be driven by their fatigue from the workload and by lack of time.

I started from the experience questions since they are usually the easiest ones for

participants to respond to and are good places to get them talking comfortably (Patton, 2002 as cited in Glesne, 2011). I avoided asking dichotomous yes/no questions, as they could lead to short responses and leading questions, as they could give certain directions in which the interviewers want their respondents to answer (Glesne, 2011). The questions were open-ended in order to ensure that no constraints or limitations were given to the responses. An open-ended response to a question enabled interviewees to create the options for responding (Creswell, 2014). Follow-up questions were asked where necessary, in order to get deeper reflections of the interviewees on the factors affecting the implementation. At the end of each interview I expressed my appreciation and gratitude to the participants.

The difference between the content of interviews with classroom teachers and subject teachers was that the former participants were asked more in-depth questions, which obviously requested more expanded and detailed responses. In addition, since classroom teachers teach 7-9 subjects, consequently they had more information to share and to compare. The interviews with subject teachers represented the data on those language subjects, which were beyond the scope of classroom teachers' subjects.

I conducted two interview sessions with each classroom teacher, constituting four interview sessions with classroom teachers in rural school and eight interview sessions in urban school. In total there were twelve interview sessions with classroom teachers. I conducted one interview session with each subject teacher in each school, constituting two interviews with subject teachers in rural school and four in urban school accordingly. In total there were six individual interviews with the subject teachers (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Number of interviews within the schools and the teachers*

<u>School</u>	<u>Classroom teachers</u>	<u>Subject teachers</u>	<u>Total</u>
Rural	4	2	6
Urban	8	4	12
Total	12	6	18

Note. Classroom teacher-2 interviews with each
Subject teacher-1 interview with each

3.6.2. Document Analysis.

Another valuable source of information in qualitative study can be documents, because they help a researcher understand the central phenomenon in the study and represent a good source for text (word) data for a qualitative study (Creswell, 2014). I considered the following documents as sources of information: State Educational Standard on Primary school education, textbooks, teacher guides, assessment handbooks, grade journals, pupil's record books and pupils' formative and summative assessment works. Documents were sometimes helpful for triangulating what the participants told me during the interviews.

3.7. Data analysis

I transferred all 18 interview files and my notes from the document analysis on my laptop. Interviews were transcribed verbatim as I believed that verbatim transcription would allow me to get back to data and reflect on and analyse it as much as I needed. Probably that is why data transcription was more time-consuming and challenging than I had expected. I transcribed the data and reflected on the transcriptions as soon after the interview as possible, because this enabled me to gain the idea of how I was progressing as a researcher, what needed to be improved, what had been learned so far, and what needed to be explored on following sessions of interviews (Glesne, 2011).

I kept all the transcribed data into two main categories: (a) data from the urban school, and (b) data from the rural school. Each category was subdivided into two data sets with data from the classroom teachers and the data from the subject teachers. I coded data manually by dividing the transcribed texts into segments and identifying the themes for each code. Then I made a list of codes under each transcript and framed them into several categories against my research questions and the literature review. I combined the categories of all transcripts using different colours and analysed these categories for my findings.

3.8. Researcher Role

The way I was perceived in rural and urban schools was very different from each other. In rural school I felt many eyes on me even when walking through the corridor, because it is a small school in a small village where everybody knows each other, so the school community immediately noticed a stranger in their village. Whereas in an urban school, I think I was noticed only by the primary school staff. Since it was a big school with a separate block for primary school, I spent most of my time in that block only and thus, I was not overviewed by other teachers of the school. In addition to that I visited the school only when the classes were cancelled or during Saturdays.

I admit that I felt more comfortable and more welcomed to conduct my study in the rural school rather than in the urban. I think there were a lot of factors that affected on it. One of them is time. The number of hours that rural teachers teach a day was 5-6 hours in average, whereas in urban school this number was twice more, because they had children coming to the second shift after the lunch. And although I did not bother teachers during their classes and conducted my interviews when they had classes cancelled or on Saturdays, they seemed to be exhausted. I felt like most of them wanted to answer my questions very promptly and go back to their work (e.g. to do the planning of lessons for the following week, to work on providing feedback in students' record books for their parents, etc.). However, I tried to involve them into the interviews in a way that would interest them to provide well thought, full responses. After a few questions the teachers were becoming more involved into the interview and I could notice their increased interest in the flow of the discussion, but not all the teachers. Whereas in rural school most teachers took their time to respond to the questions, by reflecting, recalling and choosing the right words to provide their responses.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

As part of Ethical Review requirement, I first have completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Program (CITI Program), which:

...is dedicated to promoting the public's trust in the research enterprise by providing high quality, peer-reviewed, web-based educational courses in research, ethics, regulatory oversight, responsible conduct of research, research administration, and other topics pertinent to the interests of member organizations and individual learners ("CITI Program Mission Statement", n.d.).

This training is part of the evidence that I am fully aware of ethical regulations of the research.

I then got my ethics application reviewed and granted approval by the NUGSE Ethics Committee. According to the ethics guidelines, I followed all the ethics principles in my study. Participants were selected voluntarily and were informed on the purpose of the research, their role and the researcher's role in it, as well as their rights in the study such as the right to confidentiality and anonymity, the right to withdraw from the study at any time they wished and the right to omit any questions that he/she may not wish to answer. All of this information was clearly stated and explained in the informed consent form, which is a very important document that "protects and respects the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research" (Cohen et al., 2011, p.77). I also informed the participants that I was not going to inspect their knowledge or skills, that there was no right or wrong answer. I also made sure that my interviews did not bother their agenda.

According to the definition provided under CITI program, "Risk is the probability of harm or injury (physical, psychological, social, or economic) occurring as the result of participation in a research study" ("Research Ethics and Compliance Training", n.d.). I tried to conduct the research in a way that minimized any potential risks in relation to the participants.

One of the biggest potential risks is associated with identifying participants' identities and/or the school, where the participants work, especially in the rural school, because it is located in a small village. That is why I do not indicate even a name of the village, I only write that this school is located in Akmola region (*Akmolinskaya oblast*) and name it as the rural school. I ensure anonymity by using pseudonyms and do not show descriptive characteristics (Glesne, 2011) to ensure confidentiality. I presented the data collected in a way that do not

embarrass or harm the participants. The content of individual interviews and documents analysis were not shared with the school administrators and other officials.

However, I must admit that there is still a small possibility of the risk of participants being identified at school level, especially in the rural context, because it is a small rural school where I interviewed only four primary teachers, because there were no other teachers who have been implementing the new curriculum reform. I also treated the participants with respect and gratitude for expressing their interest to participate in my study.

The access to all hard and soft copies of the data, including contact details of the participants were with me and the Supervisor only. A computer was used for sorting, referencing, coding, storing and displaying data. The computer was protected through password access in order to further assure confidentiality (Glesne, 2011). As suggested by Glesne (2011), I will remove all hard and soft copies of the data after the study is completed.

3.10. Chapter summary

This chapter presented the research approach and methodology of the study. I used qualitative case studies in order to explore teachers' views about the new curriculum reform in Kazakhstan and the factors that support and constrain its implementation.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I present the findings of my research about the implementation of the new curriculum reform in the two schools of Kazakhstan with a particular focus on teachers' perspectives about it and on factors affecting the implementation. Data were generated from the individual interviews with a sample of primary teachers from the school in Astana and another school in a village of Akmola region (*Akmolinskaya oblast'*).

This chapter is presented according to the following themes: (1) Implementation of the new curriculum reform; (2) Factors supporting the implementation of the new curriculum reform; (3) Factors constraining the implementation of the new curriculum reform; and (4) Summary of the chapter.

4.2. Implementation of the new curriculum reform

As mentioned earlier, the new curriculum reform is implemented stepwise:

1. in Grades 1 – since 1 September, 2016;
2. in Grades 2 – since 1 September, 2017;
3. in Grades 3 – since 1 September, 2018;
4. in Grades 4 – since 1 September, 2019 (SESPE, 2015);

Therefore, it has been implemented in the two schools which included in this study since September 2016 in Grades 1 and since September 2017 in Grades 2. A great deal of changes has been introduced to the curriculum content, to assessment and to pedagogy since then.

Ten out of twelve teachers of the both urban and rural schools who participated in this study are mainly positive about the new curriculum reform. These teachers differ from each other in a lot of characteristics: age, work experience (varying from 4 months to 30 years), implementation experience, language of instruction and contextual environments in which they work (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Information about the participants of the study*

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Work experience</u>	<u>New curriculum reform implementation experience (since)</u>
Mariya	CT*	Urban	16 years	September 2016
Ainura	CT	Urban	27 years	September 2016
Dana	CT	Urban	15 years	September 2017
Laura	CT	Urban	5 years	September 2016
Dinara	CT	Rural	10 years	September 2016
Nazira	CT	Rural	4 months	September 2017
Aiman	EL**	Urban	5 years	September 2016
Gulmira	EL	Urban	1 year	September 2017
Asem	EL	Rural	1.5 year	September 2017
Madina	RL***	Urban	11 years	September 2016
Altyn	RL	Rural	12 years	September 2016
Indira	KL****	Urban	30 years	September 2017

Note. Only pseudonyms are used.

*Classroom teacher

**English language

***Russian language

****Kazakh language

Thus, there were only two teachers who were mostly reluctant to accept the reform, one teacher in each school: an urban classroom teacher, Dana and a rural Russian language teacher, Altyn. Dana's work experience is 15 years, Altyn's work experience is less for 3 years. However, Altyn used to work as a librarian for about 10 years as her first specialization is a librarian, which means that in general her work experience is about 22 years. Altyn does not seem to be committed to teaching in general. She admitted that working in the library was quieter and thus, less stressful. She chose to become a teacher mainly because she believes it is always easier to find a job for a teacher, rather than a librarian, especially in a village. On the contrary, Dana admitted that she loves teaching, especially primary grade learners and that she chose this profession deliberately many years ago. The only common feature that I could find in both teachers is their support of the Soviet education system, which may be one (but not the

only) of the reasons for their reluctance to accept the new curriculum content, assessment and pedagogy. For example, Altyn acknowledged: “I support Soviet education system more, because we used to explain a topic thoroughly at that time. Now it is very different”.

All other teachers of the rural school seem to be very positive and supportive about the new curriculum reform. Surprisingly, but they seem to be much more enthusiastic about the recent changes and innovations compared to their colleagues from the urban school. They say that they are very pleased to take part in such an innovative reform and that they are convinced it will lead to great changes in current young learners’ mindset. They are also delighted about the fact that there is more attention to the teachers’ capacity building now and that it became more interesting to teach now rather it used to be before.

4.2.1. Changes in the curriculum content

The interviewed teachers reported that it was difficult for them to change their beliefs about the previous curriculum, because they got used to it and it was convenient and not as complicated as the new one. On the other hand, they are very pleased that they started to implement the new curriculum, because it totally transformed their understanding and vision about what a curriculum should be like, what topics it has to include and what it has to develop in pupils. As a rural classroom teacher says: “New content of the curriculum changed my perspectives about education. Only now I can see the drawbacks of the previous content of education. It was inconvenient and monotonous” (R_CT_Nazira).

Overall, teachers report that the new curriculum content has close connection with everyday life, it is more practical, it is focused on developing pupils’ understanding than drilling, it develops four language skills, including speaking skills and that it has cross-curricular links. An urban classroom teacher shares: “Main difference of the new curriculum from the previous one is that a child touches and observes everything on practice now. This helps him/her memorize new knowledge. There is more practice, rather than theory now” (U_CT_Ainura).

According to the study participants, the most practical subjects now are Natural Science, Knowledge of the World and Math. Teachers report a lot about interesting activities they conduct at these subjects.

Classroom and subject teachers also report that there had been too much focus on beautiful handwriting, teaching literate writing (writing without mistakes), grammar and on meaningless drilling in language subjects before. For example, an urban teacher asserts:

During the traditional curriculum we were specifically teaching pupils calligraphic writing. Then we were asking them to read their writing aloud, but until now we did not realize that all these activities had no positive effect on child's development. A child could write and read, but either he understood his writing or reading was not important (U_CT_Ainura).

From the findings above, we can see that there are considerable changes in the new curriculum content, such as focus on application of knowledge, developing pupils' understanding, developing language and speaking skills as well as introducing cross-curricular links.

4.2.2. Changes in the assessment

Changes in the assessment system also included many aspects including the implementation of the criteria-based assessment. Teachers also call the new assessment model as a "non-grading assessment system" (*bezotmetochnaya sistema otsenivaniya*), because they do not use the usual marks (2, 3, 4 or 5) which they used to apply during the previous five-point scale assessment model. According to the participants of the study, teachers apply the following novel features instead of marks now: 1) provide formative feedback² to pupils and parents based on pupils' daily performance and on formative assessment results, 2) allocate scores based on

² Teachers provide feedback to pupils and their parents in pupils' copybooks or Record books (*dnevniki*) now instead of allocating marks as they used to do. Feedback can consist of short words as: 'excellent, very good, good, bad or very bad', as well as the sentences describing what is good or what areas should be improved. Feedback can be given against pupils' daily performance or formative assessment results. In order to write feedback in pupils' record books, both urban and rural classroom teachers gather pupils' record books on Fridays and complete them with their feedback on Saturdays.

students' results in summative assessment ³, and 3) allow pupils to do self and peer assessment. Generally, teachers see a lot of benefits of introducing the new assessment model.

Formative feedback instead of grades. First and foremost, teachers realize that giving formative feedback instead of grade allocation is less stressful for primary grade learners. Feedback is usually perceived as if a pupil can still do something to improve his work or performance, allows them to take a step back and revising the topic, because teachers try to write about areas for improvement, whereas a grade can be accepted as a final judgment. As a rural teacher of English asserts:

Children like praising... they wait for compliments. When we write feedback indicating areas to improve, they process it and bring an improved work next time. When we give only positive feedback, they are more than happy; they are ready to move mountains. I think if we had simply allocated them grades instead of feedback, they would have had negative psychological impact on them (R_EL_Asem).

The teachers of the two schools observed that the pupils were getting adapted to formative assessment, and they do not regard it as an assessment. An urban classroom teacher describes the way she assesses formatively as follows:

I conduct formative assessment in the beginning of each lesson for 5 minutes. I may ask some pupils orally and distribute cards with short tasks to others... Children are not scared at all. They know it is just a formative assessment (U_CT_Mariya).

Interestingly, the participants did not mention about assessment for learning, i.e. how formative assessment is used for diagnostic purposes, which is one of the main purposes of formative assessment. The participants also reported that parents had a lot of questions and concerns about the formative and the summative assessments, which is why the schools have conducted a lot of explanatory meetings for parents.

³ There are two types of summative assessment introduced within the criteria-based assessment model: Summative Assessment for Unit (SAU) and Summative Assessment for Term (SAT). SAU is conducted at the end of a unit and takes 20 minutes of a lesson. SAT is conducted at the end of a term and takes 40 minutes of a lesson.

Summative assessment. The next novel feature of the new assessment model is changes in summative assessment. Teachers consider this type of assessment as very fair, because summative assessment results are deduced through scores and descriptors, not through teacher's subjective opinion expressed in a grade. All participants of the study are pleased with the introduction of 'score-based assessment' (*otsenivaniye po ballam*) as they think that an opportunity to conduct fair assessment is really motivating for children. As a rural classroom teacher shares:

Every summative assessment has its scores and descriptors, which are available for pupils and their parents. As a result everybody can see how good the task was completed. Pupils do not get offended if they get a low score, because they understand that it is not a teacher's subjective grade, they realize that their assessment depends on the number of scores they get (R_CT_Dinara).

However, teachers have a lot of concerns about the summative assessment due to different reasons, such as lack of proper understanding of the way to conduct it, difficulties of the content of some summative tasks, and lack of time to complete them in 20 minutes as required by the Standard.

Self and peer assessment. The next change introduced with the current assessment system is pupils' self and peer assessment. The participants report that they give pupils descriptors or criteria based on which pupils assess their own or their peer's work or performance. Teachers admit that pupils enjoy assessing themselves and their peers very much, which increases pupils' motivation to learning. Some teachers also believe that self and peer-assessment develop some level of responsibility in pupils. For example, a rural classroom teacher asserts:

Pupils see how well they did the task through self-assessment too. For example, before pupils used to complete a task, submit it to a teacher and that was it. It was a teacher's full responsibility to allocate a grade to this child, whereas now pupils take part of this responsibility on themselves through self-assessment (R_CT_Dinara).

According to the findings above, there are a lot of changes introduced by the new assessment system, such as introduction of formative feedback, summative assessment and self and peer assessment.

4.2.3. Changes in the pedagogy

On the one hand, teachers admit that they still have a lot to learn about new pedagogic approaches and that there are a lot of factors which hinder use of some of the methods described in the new curriculum reform (which predominantly relate to experiential and action learning) or learned from the training courses. On the other hand, all of them acknowledge that there is already a huge difference between their traditional and new lessons, because the new curriculum reform along with the professional development programs affects their pedagogic views considerably.

First and foremost, a lot of teachers report that there is a considerable change in teacher-pupil interaction and their respective roles at the lesson as there is a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered learning. There are a lot of strong statements that teachers make on this point; one of them is the following:

If before teachers were explaining everything by extensive writing on the board and if it was the teachers who were mostly speaking and pupils were just listeners, now it changed considerably. Now teachers only guide the pupils, facilitate the learning, while pupils do a lot of things on their own (R_CT_Nazira).

Teachers assert that giving pupils such independence by acting as a facilitator enhances pupils' motivation and teaches them to be self-dependent. They also affirm that pupils enjoy when the lessons are held as inquiry, when they do more practical life activities and when teachers use new teaching methods and IT technologies. As one classroom teacher states: "They (pupils) have spark in eyes when they attend current lessons" (U_CT_Mariya). Another example of using new methods is described by a rural teacher of English: "Before the teachers used to teach in the same way lesson by lesson. Implementation of the new curriculum reform requires from teachers

applying new approaches every lesson. This makes the teachers grow professionally”

(R_EL_Asem).

Teachers have clearly faced with a lot of changes in their teaching, such as shifting from teacher-centered to learner-centered approach and using a lot of new teaching methods.

4.2.4. Summary of the section

To sum up, the discussed changes in curriculum content, in assessment and in pedagogy give us a general picture of the new curriculum reform process from the teachers’ perspectives. Most teachers of both urban and rural schools have quite positive and supportive attitude towards the novel features of the new curriculum reform. However, when comparing teachers’ perspectives within the two schools, it was found that rural teachers seem to be much more enthusiastic about the recent changes and innovations compared to their colleagues from the urban school. Generally, all participants of the study, only two teachers (one from each school) were found to be reluctant to accept the new reform.

The findings also show that the goals of the new State Educational Standard described in the Introduction chapter are being achieved gradually. Teachers of the study report that the new curriculum reform has changed students’ roles from passive listeners to active participants of the learning process, as well as teachers’ roles who now act as a “facilitator” of the learning process by creating learner-centered environment. This is being achieved with the help of new teaching approaches and new curriculum content, such as shift to application of knowledge in solving practical tasks, development of four language skills and introducing cross-curricular links.

The findings also represent that the criteria-based assessment model has been implemented in two schools, which is another important strand introduced by the new curriculum reform. However, it is worth noting that there seems to be some misunderstanding and concerns about the new forms of assessment among the teachers and parents. These findings may help policymakers to be aware of the ways teachers are practically implementing the new curriculum reform and what ways can still be improved.

4.3. Factors supporting the implementation of the new curriculum reform

The study findings demonstrate the following three major factors which support the implementation of the new curriculum reform by teachers of the two schools: (a) Professional development programs; (b) Teacher collaboration; and (c) Teachers' beliefs about greater pupils' learning. They are described in detail below.

4.3.1. Professional development programs

Professional development programs offered to the teachers play very important role in helping with implementation of the reform. The teachers in this study shared a lot of positive feedback about the different training courses which they had attended under the new curriculum reform, except a few teachers who were not satisfied with the content of some of the trainings. They supported their statements by pointing that some training did not meet teachers' needs, neither that the techniques learned at the trainings could be applied by teachers in their contextual environment.

Most teachers noted that educational authorities had not been interested in teachers' professional development before as much as they are now. As a rural classroom teacher commented:

One of the biggest opportunities that we have had since the beginning of the new curriculum reform implementation, is that there is so much focus on teacher capacity building now. We are trained more frequently now, than we used to be before (R_CT_Dinara).

Moreover, they see that the format of trainings changed dramatically as they became more practical and engaging and they really help teachers: 1) get understanding about innovative features introduced by the new curriculum reform, 2) learn about new pedagogic approaches, and 3) meet teachers from other schools.

Among these trainings, the Level Courses delivered by National Training Centre Orleu, courses of Centres of Excellence of NIS and other courses organized by Nazarbayev Intellectual

Schools on the new curriculum content, on criteria-based assessment model, on new pedagogic approaches were mentioned by the participants.

Getting understanding about innovative features and learning new methods. According to the teachers who attended Orleu Level Courses, these courses were the best compared to all other trainings and workshops that they have ever participated in. As the urban classroom teacher claimed: “Level courses are the best. We gained more independence after them. We learned to develop our lessons, to become the authors of our lessons, because the courses equipped us with new methods for lesson development” (U_CT_Dana). The teacher of Russian language from the rural school said: “In 2014 I already knew what to expect from the new curriculum reform, because the Level courses prepared me to it. They gave me basic understanding about the new curriculum reform” (R_RL_Altyn).

The participants commented positively about the other courses as well, because they introduced new concepts and new teaching technologies, such as shift to learner-centered learning, organising inquiry-based learning, developing critical thinking, organizing group works, collecting feedback from pupils and etc., which are to be used under the new curriculum reform. The classroom teacher from the rural school stressed the importance of the courses:

I am grateful for all courses that I have attended so far. All of them were very useful.

They taught us a lot of methods and concepts, which were very new for us and which we need to know to implement the new curriculum reform (R_CT_Dinara).

Meet teachers from other schools. Another advantage of any training is that they gather a lot of teachers from different schools into one place. This gives teachers an opportunity to meet and communicate with their colleagues from other schools. All participants of the study affirmed that any chance to meet other teachers was of particular value for them, because they appreciate any opportunity of sharing experience, discussing the challenges and establishing informal professional learning communities, which consequently leads to building collaboration within the schools. As the teacher from the urban school stated: “We try to not miss the trainings, because we know that there will be a chance to meet with colleagues from other schools and

exchange our knowledge and experience” (U_CT_Dana). An opportunity of meeting teachers from other schools help the teachers implement the new curriculum reform, because they introduce the new knowledge and experience that they get from their colleagues to their lessons, share lesson plans with each other and keep in touch with each even after the trainings. This will be analysed in greater details in the next section 4.2.2 Teacher Collaboration.

However, there is an issue with the insufficient number of trainings as there are still a lot of teachers who have not received any training since the beginning of reform initiation. As an example, in the urban school only 10 out of 30 primary classroom teachers received training on the new curriculum reform. Hence, the non-trained teachers find the new curriculum reform much harder than their colleagues who attended at least one training. As one teacher explained: “I completed the Level courses, so it was easier for me to understand a lot of innovative aspects. Meanwhile the teachers who have not attended any trainings really struggle to implement the new curriculum reform” (U_CT_Dana).

As can be seen, most of the teachers report that professional development training supports them in the new curriculum reform implementation, because most of them really help teachers grow professionally, build understanding about the new curriculum reform, learn about new teaching technologies and build communications with other teachers. Teachers are always willing to attend any training, but there is insufficient number of trainings, which consequently leaves a lot of teachers being non-trained.

4.3.2. Teacher collaboration

The next factor promoting the implementation of the new curriculum reform is enhanced teacher collaboration. All participants of the study from the two schools reported that there is strong collaboration of teachers within and between the schools now. The collaboration takes many forms: sharing experiences through in-school events, peer lesson observations, and online communication.

In-school events. In-school events aimed at supporting teachers in the implementation process takes such forms as sharing experience or reports at staff meetings, delivery of training sessions and master classes by trained teachers, organizing in-school teacher discussions, encouraging constant consultations between Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers, and sharing curricular resources between teachers. For example, an urban classroom teacher of Grade 1 says:

When there is something which is not clear for us, we consult with Grade 2 teachers who always welcome us. They help us get rid of some concerns that we may have about the new curriculum reform, by clarifying some new concepts, sharing their past experience in implementing certain novel features of the new curriculum reform. I am glad that we can rely on these teachers at least...(U_CT_Dana).

Peer lesson observations. The participants from the urban school also observed the positive effect of the peer lesson observations. According to them, the teachers who did not have much experience with implementation of the new curriculum reform attend the lessons of their experienced colleagues who had attended trainings to understand the novel features or when they want to get practical knowledge on teaching within the new curriculum reform. However, the teachers from rural schools did not mention about the lesson observation during the interviews.

Online communication. With the help of the progress in information technologies the teachers now have an opportunity to communicate with each other online. According to all participants of the study, use of 'WhatsApp' application facilitates teacher collaboration considerably, especially when communicating with teachers from other schools. Some of the participants reported that WhatsApp chats had become a kind of learning community for them, because they share a lot of useful information and support each other there. These teachers are very grateful for the professional development programs, because one of the ways the collaboration is built - as a result of the trainings. A rural teacher acknowledged it by describing a way she became a part of such network:

We (the trainees) keep in touch with each other even after the training... We created a WhatsApp chat and constantly consult and share ideas with each other there... There is

strong teacher collaboration and teacher network built now, which enhances the implementation of the new curriculum reform (R_CT_Dinara).

To sum up, teachers claimed that as a result of improved collaboration within and between the schools, teachers become less selfish and stop competing with each other; they learn to respect and listen to each other; they learn to give constructive feedback rather than critique. In general, they learn to work with each other in collaboration, which help them implement the new curriculum reform.

4.3.3. Teachers' beliefs about greater pupils' learning

The next factor which facilitates implementation of the new curriculum reform is teachers' beliefs that pupils are benefiting from the novel features of the reform. Almost all of the participants of the study report that the new curriculum reform enables pupils to: 1) develop inquiry skills, 2) express their ideas freely and develop problem-solving skills, and 3) become more collaborative.

Develop inquiry skills. Some teachers of the both urban and rural schools commented that the new curriculum reform helped pupils develop good inquiry skills. According to the interviewees, during the old curriculum it was a teacher or a textbook that were the main sources of information, whereas since the implementation of the new curriculum reform neither a teacher, nor a textbook has provided full information about a new topic or unit, because pupils have been expected to make efforts to find it on their own. As a teacher of Kazakh language from the urban school stated: "Before a strong pupil used to be the ones who studied hard, revised a lot, now this is not enough. Today a strong pupil is also the one who searches a lot" (U_KL_Indira).

In addition to that, allowing pupils to do independent search without relying only on teachers' words transformed some teachers' beliefs about their pupils' abilities. As one classroom teacher acknowledges:

We were not used to believe in our pupils, we thought we knew more, because we were elder and smarter, but in fact when we started giving pupils more freedom, especially in

information search, pupils were giving us responses which were much more expanded than we had expected, some of them were new and useful for teachers too. We had undervalued our pupils before, underestimated their abilities, we had not allowed them to unfold (U_CT_Mariya).

Pupils express their ideas freely and develop problem-solving skills. Another positive effect of the new curriculum reform is related to pupils' ability to communicate their ideas freely which is mentioned by the majority of the participants. For example: "Pupils feel more comfortable at the lesson now. They are not afraid of expressing their ideas" (U_CT_Laura). The same classroom teacher also believed that through learning to express the ideas in freely, pupils also learn to develop problem-solving skills:

Kazakh people are generally quite closed, who do not express their ideas freely. We (Kazakhs) usually follow and limit with what we are told to do by elder people, whereas the new curriculum reform teaches pupils to communicate their perspectives freely and solve the problems that they may face with in their lives.

An opportunity to develop problem-solving skill given with this reform was also noted by another classroom teacher, who believed that: "Through the new curriculum reform we teach pupils to ensure they will find a way in any situations, and that they will not be afraid of challenges and will know how to solve problems" (U_CT_Mariya).

Become more collaborative. The next beneficial effect on student's learning observed by the teachers concerns the development of collaborative skills in pupils. Most of the urban and rural classroom teachers as well as an urban Kazakh language teacher noted that pupils became more open to each other, they enjoy working in pairs or in groups collaboratively, they learned to listen to and respect each other's opinion, and generally they became more supportive to each other. As one teacher commented it:

Children are becoming friendlier... If before, every pupil was more selfish and thought only about his advantages, now there is more cooperation between them. There is no division into small groups, they like sharing with each other. Pupils are becoming more open to communication and cooperation in response to the new curriculum reform (U_CT_Mariya).

It is worth mentioning that the findings about pupils' greater learning and development are very much correlated with the basic values of the content of new primary education standards, which basically consist of: patriotism and civil responsibility, respect, collaboration, work and creativity, openness and lifelong learning (SESPE, 2015, p. 13).

4.3.4. Summary of the section

To sum up, this category described the three major factors which supported the implementation of the new curriculum reform within the teachers' perspectives. Interestingly, regardless urban and rural area, the teachers report similar findings. Although we cannot generalise because of having only two schools in a sample, they are still essential to consider. If the teachers state that these factors are helpful, the policymakers and school administrations may benefit from providing more opportunities for professional development and teacher collaboration as well as enhance teachers' beliefs that the new curriculum reform is better for pupils. Teachers themselves may also continue being proactive and support each other.

4.4. Factors constraining the implementation of the new curriculum reform

In order to lay the foundation to understand the implementation and to enhance it, it may not be enough to know only the factors which promote the implementation of the new curriculum reform, it is also important to learn about the factors that constrain the implementation. This study found the following of them: (a) Increased workload, paperwork and lack of time; (b) Complexities of new curriculum content; (c) Learner diversity and big class sizes; (d) Lack of teaching resources; and (e) Teaching experience.

4.4.1. Increased workload, paperwork and lack of time

The most prominent hindering factors for all participants of the study are the increase of their workload, increase of paperwork and thus, lack of time to deal with them. These factors are mainly driven by greater preparation to a lesson and use of new assessment system (conducting formative and summative assessments).

Greater preparation to a lesson. As there are a lot of aspects of the new curriculum reform that the teachers are not familiar with, they now spend more time to study the content of the new curriculum, assessment and pedagogic approaches. Teachers report that now they have to plan every stage of a lesson, which they consider as a good practice, but at the same time it causes huge workload and takes a lot of their time. Apart from that, a lot of teachers in both urban and rural schools noted that there was an issue of shortage of tasks and exercises in current textbooks, which enforced teachers to search relevant tasks and exercises. As an urban classroom teacher noted:

Teachers have to find a lot of information on their own. Preparing for one lesson is taking huge time now, because current textbooks do not have the tasks followed by texts. For example, in “Literacy” there is lack of tasks for copying the text. Children should practice writing from the printed text (U_CT_Dana).

As a result, the teacher wastes a lot of time to find these tasks or type them herself, to print and then cut them for each pupil.

Formative and summative assessment. The issue of increased workload arising from introduction of formative and summative assessment was noted by all rural and urban teachers. According to the interviews with the urban teachers, they conduct formative assessment at every lesson of each subject, allocating 5-10 minutes on that. Their colleagues from the rural school agreed to conduct only two formative assessments a week per each subject. This agreement was made within their internal staff meeting, based on the flexibility given by the policy makers to conduct the formative assessment as many times as teachers need. However, minimizing formative assessment tasks till twice a week does not help teachers decrease their workload and paperwork, because they have to conduct it for each subject. I tried to count this number with one teacher and here is what I got: 8 subjects multiplied by 2 formative assessments are equal to: $8 \times 2 = 16$ formative assessments with one pupil. Then if we multiply 16 by 14 pupils (the average number of pupils in a rural class), we get: $16 \times 14 = 224$ formative assessments printed, checked

and graded per week. This number is more than twice bigger in the urban school, because as I mentioned, urban teachers conduct formative assessment every lesson and because they have about 30 pupils in a class. Graded formative assessments are then collected in special folders – pupils’ portfolios. Keeping portfolios is another burdening paperwork for teachers, because attaching this extensive number of formative assessments into child’s portfolio requires a lot of time and energy.

The results of the formative assessments should also be reflected in pupils’ record books. As mentioned in previous sections, teachers write formative feedback in pupils’ record books, instead of grades now. As an urban classroom teacher explains:

We have the new record books now, which have a special space to comment on what a child needs to improve or why we praise him. It is great that we now give feedback in this form, but at the same time it is very difficult to write feedback to every pupil. It is additional workload for a teacher (U_CT_Mariya).

Apart from formative assessment routine, conducting summative assessments (SAU and SAT) imposes additional workload on teachers. Classroom teachers conduct approximately three SAUs and one SAT every term in each subject, which means they have to prepare four summative assessments per subject, conduct them, grade them against the descriptors, and then put into the pupils’ portfolios. As a result, rural classroom teachers stated that they usually allocate 3-4 hours a day for paperwork after classes. This time does not include the time that they spend giving extra classes for lagging pupils, or for completion of summative assessment tasks as pupils are not always able to finish them in 20 minutes of the lesson.

Urban classroom teachers cannot afford to spend extra hours with struggling pupils, because they already work two shifts with 30 pupils in every class, but they work late night at home and on Saturdays at school in order to prepare for the lessons and write feedback to pupils. As an urban teacher claimed: “We wish we could devote a few hours for lagging pupils after classes or we could better prepare to the lessons, but we do not have time for that” (U_CT_Dana).

Although both urban and rural classroom teachers reported about increased workload, when comparing the results of the study within the two contexts, I found that urban teachers seem to be more overloaded than the rural ones. Possible reasons for that will be presented and discussed later in the thesis.

4.4.2. Complexities of the new curriculum content

All teachers affirmed that generally, the content of the new curriculum was more difficult compared to the previous. It is related to such factors as: introduction of complex topics, moving the topics from higher grades to grades 1 and 2, and to the inconsistency of the content in some subjects.

As an example of complex topics, some teachers reported that some topics seemed to be difficult even for parents, because according to the participants, parents do not always feel capable to help their children with explaining the topics or with homeworks. According to a rural classroom teacher, rural parents even question whether the new curriculum suits the academic level of rural children: “Parents ask me whether new curriculum content suits their children’s academic level. They believe that the new curriculum content is more appropriate for urban pupils, because urban children are more prepared to the school” (R_CT_Dinara).

However, urban teachers do not find the new curriculum content easy either. An urban classroom teacher Dana thinks that the new curriculum content neglects pupils’ age physiology in many subjects. For example, she believes that studying the history of Saks and Tomyris in “Knowledge of the world” Grade 1 is too early, because pupils are too young to get real understanding about the Saks and Tomirys, they do not realize the importance of having such ancestors. As a result, pupils have memorized learning, rather than deep understanding of some topics. Another example of arduous topic in ‘Knowledge of the world’ Grade 1 is studying magnet and electricity, which used to be a topic of Grade 6 before, according to another classroom teacher.

One of the most difficult subjects is Math in Grade 1, as a lot of classroom teachers shared their challenging experiences with teaching current Math and already noticed their consequences. For example, an urban teacher was convinced that now pupils have mechanical drilling in Math, rather than semantic memorization:

First, we learn to write the numbers for a week. The next week we start studying ‘two-part numbers’ (*dvusostavnye cifry*) ... The third week we already have to start studying ‘expressions with brackets’ ... The content of Math curriculum became too complex.

Pupils drill everything mechanically, without semantic memorization (U_CT_Dana). Another urban classroom teacher noticed inconsistency of some topics in Math: “There are ‘leaps’ in Math textbooks and subject programmes. For example, we study the topic “Increase to several units” (*Uvelichit’ na neskol’ko edinic*), but then there is a task to a completely different topic in the textbook” (U_RL_Mariya).

4.4.3. Lack of teaching resources

Another barrier of the implementation of the new curriculum reform is related to the issue of shortage of teaching resources, which mainly involves curricular materials, papers and IT resources.

Lack of curricular materials. Although a few teachers reported taking advantage of having some of the new curricular materials, the majority still feel shortage of. Some of the urban and rural classroom teachers reported on deficit of curricular materials, such as course plans (long-, mid-, and short-term plans), assessment materials in some subjects (formative and summative assessment tasks) and teacher guides in Grade 2. Deficit of these resources constrain teaching against the new requirements. For example, many teachers pointed out the value of the teacher guides (*metodicheskie posobiya*), because they are one of the tools that help teachers build understanding about the novel features of the new curriculum content and pedagogy and develop lesson plans. However, both urban and rural teachers of Grade 2 declared that they had not been provided with teacher guides when they had moved to Grade 2. As one teacher explained: “We were provided with Grade 1 teacher guides last year, but we have not received

any teacher guides for Grade 2 this year. It really causes a lot of difficulties for us”

(R_CT_Dinara).

Lack of papers. Lack of papers was another notable barrier mentioned by all participants of the study. Teachers consume a great deal of A4 papers when they print assessment works for pupils, especially for formative assessments, and they are very pained that they have to buy papers, especially because their salaries are not high. Besides that, rural teachers are forced to travel to the district centre, because there is no Stationery shop in their village. The vice-principal of this school stated that the school was not able to provide the teachers with the papers, because the *rayono* (district centre) did not provide the school with them either.

Lack of IT resources. When referring to IT resources, teachers usually commented about: access to computers, interactive boards, resource-based websites such as Bilimland⁴, iMektep⁵ and SMK⁶ (Systemic Methodical Complex) and access to the internet. The problem of the lack of access to IT resources concerns all key stakeholders of the learning process: the teachers, the pupils and their parents. As mentioned in previous sections, according to one of the requirements of the new curriculum reform, pupils have to develop inquiry skills and a lot of teachers already notice this progress in their pupils, however, there are still some pupils who cannot access internet because of lack of access to it at home. Rural pupils can access the internet only through their parents’ cell phones (though not all parents may have them), but the speed of the internet connection in the rural area is very low. In the urban school the situation is expected to be better, but in reality, it is not. According to one classroom teacher, there are pupils from low-income families, who have poor living conditions:

We have a contingent of pupils with low SES. They live in houses which are going to be pulled down. Of course, they have neither computers, nor internet back home. This

⁴ <https://bilimland.kz/kk>

⁵ <https://imektep.kz/kz>

⁶ <http://www.smk.edu.kz>

curriculum reform does not take into account the contextual factors of its users (U_CT_Dana).

Apart from that the teachers do not have the internet connection in their classrooms either in both urban and rural contexts. Teachers use their cell phones to connect to the internet in the class. As another teacher of urban school described:

We do not have internet in our block; we use cell phones for internet when we want to show something on the interactive board... As for searching related to preparation to the lesson, we usually do this at home. We have internet in a Computer Science classroom, but there are 15 computer, whereas the number of teachers is 100 (U_CT_Ainura).

The situation in the rural school is almost the same. Rural teachers say that lack of internet connection sometimes hinders using interactive board. As for the subject teachers, they do not have even the interactive board, because they were not installed to classroom teachers only.

Resource-based websites Bilimland and iMektep were described as a source of interesting video resources. They seem to be more common for teachers compared to SMK. Some teachers reported about uselessness of the materials uploaded on SMK, others on the contrary describe SMK as a valuable collection of lesson plans, didactic materials, audio and video resources. There are also the teachers who have never used this platform, because they could not or have not tried to register in it, though it is worth noting that all three platforms require registration. In any case teachers appreciate existence of these three platforms at least, because some of the materials there, are very helpful sometimes.

4.4.4. Learner diversity and big class sizes

Another critical constraint of the new reform implementation is the learner diversity and big class sizes with these learners.

Learner diversity. A lot of teachers were convinced that the developers of the new curriculum content had not taken into account learner diversity of mainstream school pupils, who do not go through any selection process as the ones conducted in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS), or in lyceums and gymnasiums, though the latter two types of schools implement

the same new curriculum reform. All pupils of both schools were enrolled according to their residential address, which means a school has to accept every applicant if he/she lives in the area devoted to the school. Lack of school autonomy in selecting pupils results into having three categories of children in primary grades. An urban classroom teacher claimed:

In NIS⁷ there are highly selected pupils, whereas we have three levels of pupils, those who: 1) attended pre-school education institutions, 2) studied at home with parents, 3) were not prepared to a school at all (U_CT_Ainura).

This leads to having different learning abilities and academic preparedness of children, whereas the requirements of the new curriculum reform are the same for everybody. That is why almost all classroom teachers were assured that the new curriculum reform was very efficient for fast and strong learners, but very hard for lagging and struggling learners.

Apart from that, two teachers reported having one pupil with special needs in their classes. Both teachers reassured that the new curriculum content was not achievable by children with special needs at all. In addition, these children require much energy and time at the lesson, whereas teachers cannot afford working with them individually, either they do not seem to be confident to teach them against their special needs. Another example of learner diversity involves teaching migrant children. A rural teacher of Russian said that she had a lot of migrant children who had moved from China in her Grades 1 and 2, who really struggled studying Russian, because they had never learned it:

I have about 60% of migrants in Grade 1 and 50% in Grade 2. Their academic performance is generally good, but their level of Russian is too low, whereas the academic standards prescribed by the new curriculum content are the same for everybody (R_RL_Altyn).

Big class sizes. Another critical comment made only by the urban classroom teachers regards the number of pupils in the classroom. This problem does not bother the rural school, because they have about 15 pupils in a class, whereas this number is twice bigger in the urban

⁷ The teacher is making a comparison with NIS pupils, because it is NIS's experience that has been translated to the mainstream schools within this reform

school. Teachers reported that organising pair or group works with 30 children hinder getting the benefits from the activities. They suggest having 25 pupils in class would be ideal. In fact, the issue of overcrowded classes and schools with double-shifts is very common to Astana. There are some schools which work even in three shifts (Malakshinova, 2018).

4.4.5. Teaching experience

The next factor which can impede the implementation is teachers' teaching experience. Both experienced and novice teachers as well as vice-principals stated that experienced teachers found it more difficult to adapt to the new curriculum reform, because of having entrenched views and beliefs stemming from their extensive experience of delivering the previous curriculum. For example, an experienced teacher of the urban school admitted that she and her two colleagues with the experience of more than 25 years had been very resistant in the beginning of implementation, because they had questioned the relevance of the new curriculum reform and mistrusted the new teaching approaches.

Young and novice teachers are assured that the new curriculum reform affects them much faster and that they are less scared to implement it: "For such a young teacher as myself, this curriculum reform is fabulous. I like it very much, because it is new and meets modern teachers' and pupils' needs. However, experienced teachers do struggle adapting to it" (R_EL_Asem).

4.4.6. Summary of the section

Thus, in this category I analysed the major factors which constrain the implementation of the new curriculum reform from teachers' perspectives. Similar to the supporting factors, regardless of the urban and rural context, the teachers experience similar challenges during the implementation, complaining about the complexity of the new content, learner diversity and lack of teaching resources, which lead to increased teacher workload and lack of time to cope with it. The amount of teaching experience was also a barrier for some experienced teachers.

The only factor which differs within the two schools is teacher workload, which was in greater amount among the urban teachers. This is also related to the problem of big class sizes,

found in the urban school only. These findings cannot be generalized either, but are still important to count as they show the policymakers what to take into account when revising the standards of education and new curriculum content to minimise or ideally remove some of these factors. They may also be helpful for school administration in identifying the steps to be done to ensure better implementation and to support teachers in this process. Taking into account that the teachers are reform implementers themselves, and school administrators are expected to take on more independent leadership, these findings may also help them in raising awareness of these issues and solving them collectively.

4.5. Summary of the chapter

Overall, in this chapter I examined and interpreted the data from my study of teachers' perspectives about the implementation of the new curriculum reform and factors affecting its implementation in two schools. Most teachers hold quite positive beliefs about the new curriculum reform. Teachers' statements about their experiences demonstrate that they implement a lot of changes in the curriculum content, assessment and pedagogy. Findings also show that there is no major difference in different teachers' reporting about the factors which support and factors which constrain the implementation. This allows us to conclude that there should be improvement made in relation to curriculum content, provision of resources and professional development to enable teachers to cope with their workload, learner diversity, big class sizes and reluctance to accept the new curriculum reform. Apart from these factors, the reluctance can also be caused by teachers' teaching experience, which may also be considered by the policy makers.

The main discrepancy between the two contexts is that unusually, but rural teachers are more positive about this reform compared to their colleagues from the urban school, which may be caused due to bigger overload of the latter sample of teachers. Another difference is related to the issue of big class sizes, which was also noted in the urban school only.

As we will see in the next chapter, the findings of this study are correlated with a great deal of other studies conducted on similar topics.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the findings of my research, through analyzing them in relation to the literature review and research questions. The chapter consists of four sections. The first section describes general information about the teachers' perspectives of implementation of new curriculum reform in both schools. The second section presents the factors supporting the implementation of the new curriculum reform. The third section discusses the factors constraining the implementation of new curriculum reform. The last section provides a summary of the chapter.

5.2. Implementation of the new curriculum reform

The biggest majority of teachers of both urban and rural schools who participated in this study describe their positive attitude to the new reform and its novel features. They reported about certain changes that they noticed in their belief system, behavior and practices. Similarly, the study of Dello-Iacovo (2009) also presents some 'shining examples' of reform implementation, where individual schools accepted it with enthusiasm.

However, two teachers were very critical about the new curriculum reform. One of the possible reasons of their negative attitude towards the new reform can be related to the fact that they feel more comfortable with pre-reform approaches, whereas research shows that: "Teachers who were more comfortable with pre-reform approaches tended to be more critical of the reform, exhibited more intense concerns about their capacity to manage the reform, and were more worried about its consequences on student learning" (Charalambous & Philippou, 2010, p. 14).

An unexpected finding here was that rural classroom teachers looked much more passionate and enthusiastic about the curricular innovations compared to the teachers from the urban school. They were very excited about being part of such an innovative reform as well as the opportunities that it has been bringing to their professional lives. Although urban teachers experience the same opportunities and also see the benefits that the new curriculum reform

brings to them and their pupils, they do not seem to be enjoying the recent changes as much as their colleagues from the rural school. I think one of the possible reasons for that can be related to the fact that urban teachers are more overloaded, as they teach double-shifts and have 30 pupils in each class. So, they work with about 60 children from 8 am to 6 pm every day, whereas rural classroom teachers finish their work by 2-3 pm and have no more than 15 pupils in a class. Therefore, urban teachers simply looked more exhausted and thus, less willing to adapt to the new curriculum reform. The bigger commitment of the rural teachers to implement different components of innovation can be also related to the “value internalization”, which is one of the dimensions of implementation in practice determined by Fullan and Pomfret (1977) in the Literature review chapter. The rural teachers may be more positive, because they value, accept or agree with particular aspects of other components of implementation, including the philosophy, aims, and objectives of the curriculum (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977)

5.2.1. Changes in the curriculum content

According to the analysis made, the main positive novel features of the new curriculum reform are related to the following: the new curriculum content has close connection with everyday life, it is more practical, it is focused on developing pupils’ understanding than drilling, it develops four language skills, including speaking skills and that it has cross-curricular links. For example, teachers start realizing that the previous curriculum used to give pupils a lot of unnecessary information, which pupils might never need to apply in their lives; or that ensuring a pupil understands a text he is reading or writing is more important than simple expressive reading or calligraphic writing of it. Overall, teachers find the content of the new curriculum more interesting, efficient and useful compared to the previous curriculum, which they say affects their practices too. McLaughlin et al. (2016) also found teachers’ positive attitude to the curriculum in their study of Kazakhstani schoolteachers’, school principals’ and other stakeholders’ attitudes and perspectives towards the implementation of novel features of the primary education curriculum. They found that generally, teachers implementing the new

curriculum reform showed a more positive attitude toward curriculum content compared to their colleagues working with the traditional curriculum. The authors also concluded that perceptions and practices of many teachers and head teachers changed significantly since the introduction of the new curriculum reform (McLaughlin et al., 2016).

5.2.2. Changes in the assessment

The new criteria-based assessment model enables teachers to reconsider their beliefs about student assessment. Teachers find formative feedback more motivating and less stressful for pupils than allocating a habitual grade. The study did not reveal directly, but it became obvious from the interview data that teachers misinterpret the purpose and the functions of formative assessment. They perceive it as a quick assessment taken in a form of short tasks, tests, brief oral interrogation about the past topic, using stickers with ‘smiles’ (instead of grades) or asking pupils to write feedback about their understanding on stickers. The teachers seem to have limited understanding of formative assessment. Similar findings were noted by a study of McLaughlin et al. (2016) who found that formative assessment is understood in its own right in pilot schools of the country and teachers do not have confident understanding of formative assessment, which is probably acceptable as it is less than 2 years since the beginning of reform implementation.

The other two types of assessment: summative and self/peer assessment are also reported to be motivating and building self-dependent skills in pupils. Summative assessment is particularly valued for allowing fair assessment, which excludes the use of teachers’ subjective opinion. This became possible because teachers now allocate scores based on clear assessment descriptors and rubrics. The reliability and fairness of summative assessments are also highlighted in the study of So and Lee (2011).

Rubrics and descriptors are also used in pupils’ peer and self-assessment. Pupils like assessing themselves and their peers, while teachers notice that this assessment helps enhancing pupils’ motivation to learning and develops responsibility.

5.2.3. Changes in the pedagogy

Nearly all the teachers who participated in this study claim that there is still a lot to learn about the pedagogic approaches required for modern lessons, but they also admit that they have already learned a lot of new teaching methods and have used them at their lessons actively. The main sources of knowledge about new teaching approaches are mostly the curricular materials and teacher trainings. They state that they conduct the current lessons as inquiry-based, practical, student-centered, by applying relevant teaching methods. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) claim that changes in individuals' role and behavior takes a vital part in any organizational structure, as in education, these changes are usually related to the new pedagogic techniques, new ways of planning and new curriculum development roles for teachers, new role relationships between teachers and students, teachers and heads, and etc.

Similarly, Dello-Iacovo (2009) state that many teachers tried to adjust their teaching practices, by using more discovery and participatory teaching approaches to encourage pupils to develop independent thinking and creative thinking skills. Another study explored that teachers' knowledge of pedagogy was enhanced as a result of coherence between professional development and teachers' goals for learning, which hence led to integration of changes into their teaching and assessment practices (Li et al., 2012).

5.3. Factors supporting the implementation of the new curriculum reform

The analysis in the Findings reveals that there are three major factors which support the implementation of the new curriculum reform in both schools. I discuss each of them in this section, through my analysis made in relation to the literature review and research questions.

5.3.1. Teachers' professional development

The importance of providing professional development opportunities to teachers implementing innovations and reform is discussed in many studies (Cheung & Wong, 2012; McLaughlin et al., 2016; Avargil et al., 2013; Charalambous & Philippou, 2010). Educators, researchers and policymakers agree in unison that building school capacity by providing

professional development opportunities is crucial in educational reform (Donnell & Gettinger, 2015). For example, Avargil et al. (2013) found that, one of the factors that helped decrease teachers' resistance to accepting the reform was the intensive professional development programs that they passed through. These findings were echoed in my research too. The most prominent factor facilitating the reform implementation is professional development programs. Almost all participants find the current training courses incredibly useful, because they allow teachers to get understanding about innovative features, learn about new pedagogic approaches, and meet teachers from other schools. Only a few teachers were not satisfied with the quality of trainings as some of them did not meet teachers' needs or contextual realities. When, in fact research suggests that an effective professional development that promotes implementation of reform should be: "(a) continuous and ongoing, (b) differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers, and (c) relevant or applicable to teachers' own classroom settings" (Donnell & Gettinger, 2015, p.50).

Apart from that there are the teachers who have not been trained at all, but still teach within the new curriculum reform. Apparently, the non-trained teachers find the new curriculum reform much harder compared to their counterparts.

5.3.2. Teacher collaboration

The next factor enhancing the implementation of the new curriculum reform is enhanced collaboration of teachers within and between the schools. The collaborative activities mostly included sharing experiences through in-school events, lesson observations, and communication through online chats. Teachers value any forms of collaboration, which was also found by McLaughlin et al. (2016). According to their study, the teachers were engaging in different forms of collaboration, including joint planning, lesson observations and training session. And although collaborating was very new and unusual for teachers in some cases, they still talked of it being valued. International research shows that "collaboration needs to be a priority in schools in times of rapid and radical societal changes, given the related need for teacher support, affirmation, and

empowerment” (Kutsyuruba, 2011, p.556). The literature reviewed by Misco (2010) establishes that collaborative colleagues at school promote implementation of the reform through providing an impetus and generative push.

One of the most common types of collaboration reported by the interviewees of this study is communicating through WhatsApp chat. I notice teachers’ positive emotions when they talk about these chats. I think it is because teachers feel very comfortable communicating with lots of other teachers in such an informal, but beneficial way. They use it as a learning platform, where they ask questions and support, share news and knowledge with each other. According to Defise (2013), teachers can benefit from using ICT to share with their reflections and solutions to the issues. The author states that a virtual platform can provide real support for teachers.

5.3.3. Teachers’ beliefs about greater pupils’ learning

It was also found that teachers’ beliefs about greater pupils’ learning enhances better implementation of the new curriculum reform, because teachers become very motivated when they see the direct effect of new curriculum reform on pupils’ progress. The major effects that the teachers have noticed so far are that pupils learn to develop inquiry skills, communicate their perspectives freely, develop problem-solving skills and be more cooperative with peers. I found the same ideas by Berlin and Jensen (1989) who state that teacher change depends on their beliefs about student learning. In other words, teachers must be convinced that the new way is beneficial for them and that it will lead to greater student learning (as cited in Powell & Anderson, 2002).

5.4. Factors constraining the implementation of the new curriculum reform

As mentioned earlier in the Findings, there are also some factors which constrain implementation of the new curriculum reform. I discuss each of them in this section, by analysing them in relation to the literature review and research questions.

5.4.1. Increased workload, paperwork and lack of time

Greater preparation to a lesson and use of new assessment system increases teacher workload and creates more paperwork to the teachers. Greater lesson preparation and use of new assessment forms are considered as a negative change in this particular context, as the teachers lack the teaching resources needed and time to prepare to the lesson against the new standards and requirements. Ibraimova (2017) found similar findings in Kazakhstan's pilot schools, where teaching under the new curriculum reform also requires considerable lesson preparation and planning, compared to regular classes which teachers used to hold before. Besides the fact that many teachers of her study reported having difficulties with lesson planning, they also reported not having time for it, because current lesson planning requires thorough work, sufficient timing and considerable effort. The participants of another Kazakhstan's research also report experiencing the increased workload, which are also caused by more lesson planning time due to the need to search for additional resources and develop materials (McLaughlin et al., 2016). The same issue was also found in Latvia, where teachers lack time to plan for implementation and are generally underpaid and overworked as Kazakhstan's teachers are (Misco, 2010).

In addition, the findings also show that teachers work longer hours after school. Rural teachers usually stay 3-4 hours after classes every day, while urban teachers happen to work late night at home and on Saturdays. Education authorities should not overlook the issue of shortage of time, because teachers who work in non-supportive and isolated environments may use the time demand "as a rationale to either shy away from using the materials or to argue against the value and practicality of the programs" (p. 36, Manouchehri & Goodman, 1998).

The comparison of the findings within the two schools shows that urban teachers are more overloaded than their colleagues from the rural school. One of the possible reasons for that can be related to the bigger number of working hours and bigger class sizes in the urban school. As a solution to the issues of increased workload and shortage of time to complete it, urban teachers suggest assigning a tutor or a teaching assistant to each classroom teacher, who would be doing all paperwork. They believe that this would allow the teachers to better focus on lesson

delivery and thus, would positively affect the quality of lessons. However, Cheung and Wong (2012) in their study conducted in Hong-Kong found that although school principals hired more teaching assistants to create more time to teachers and reduce their workload, the biggest hindering factor was still teacher workload.

5.4.2. Complexities of the new curriculum content

The third significant issue inhibiting the implementation was associated with teachers' concerns about the level of complexity of the new curriculum content. Nearly, all the teachers cited that now the content of the curriculum is more difficult than it was in the previous curriculum. They link it to the introduction of complex topics, moving the topics from higher grades and to the inconsistency of the content in some subjects. The findings also reveal that rural parents doubt the adequacy of the new curriculum content for their children, as rural children are usually less prepared to the schools compared to their counterparts. McLaughlin et al. (2016) support this view, but in their study, it was the rural teachers who believe that the new curriculum is more difficult for their pupils, compared to the urban children.

The issue with the complex content of the curriculum is related to what Fullan and Pomfret (1977) call as subject matter component as this dimension measures the content of the curriculum acquired by students themselves or through their teachers, the sequencing in which the content should be acquired or transmitted and the medium of transmission. Thus, the decisions of curriculum design and development are usually taken around questions as what subject matter to include, in what order, and through what medium (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).

5.4.3. Lack of teaching resources

Although the situation with the resource provision varied within two schools and even within the Grades 1 and 2, these are the main challenges that the teachers face with in relation to access to resources: late or no provision of curricular materials, no provision of resources for printing, lack of computers, lack of interactive boards and no internet connection. Provision of human resources, of teaching resources and materials are identified as changes in alterations in

the organisational structure (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). There is a lot of empirical studies underlining the importance of providing teachers with resources. For example, Sargent (2011) examined the access to key resources for successful implementation of the reforms in the rural context of China and found that only less than quarter of teachers reported having ample access to teaching supplies and only 26 percent of teachers reported having ample access to reference materials (Sargent, 2011). The deficit of appropriate teaching materials was also noted by Underwood (2012) in his review of Asian studies (Hong Kong, Japan, Philippines) and by Milner et al. (2012) who found that “in general elementary teachers saw the benefit of making science relevant to their students and meeting state and national standards, but there were many perceived impediments to teaching science such as lack of time, resources, and materials” (p. 127).

However, the most common inhibiting factor mentioned by all the participants was lack of internet connection and the hindering consequences that it leads to are inability of teachers and pupils to access the internet for teaching and learning purposes and poor use of interactive board. Access to the internet has also been noted as a limited resource in a study of Sargent (2011). 92 percent of principals of his study reported that the school had computers, however, only 49 percent reported that the computers had internet connection. Lack of access to the internet cuts “the power of computers for providing teachers and students in rural primary and junior middle schools access to information and reference materials to support inquiry learning and other goals of education” (Sargent, 2011, p. 70).

5.4.4. Learner diversity and big class sizes

Learner diversity and big class sizes were determined as other barriers of implementation. Teachers complained that because mainstream schools were not allowed to conduct a selection of enrolling pupils, there was huge difference in pupils' learning abilities, resulting to pupils of higher ability, pupils of middle ability, pupils of lower ability and pupils with special needs. This became a serious issue since the implementation of the new curriculum, because as mentioned

earlier, the content of the new curriculum is more demanding compared to the old curriculum. The number of pupils in the urban classroom goes up to 30 children, which also constrains covering the demanding content and conducting activities prescribed by the new curriculum reform. The same factor was identified by Cheung and Wong (2012) as the one which hinders successful implementation of the curriculum reform. The researchers point out that teaching smaller class sizes would assist teachers to cope with the increasing learner diversity in a classroom. Moreover, smaller class sizes would enhance more interaction with pupils (Cheung & Wong, 2012).

5.4.5. Teaching experience

Last but not least, the study demonstrates that the implementation of the new curriculum reform also depends on teachers' work experience. The findings of this study demonstrated that teachers with the experience of up to 25 years were more reluctant to accept the new curriculum reform compared to their younger colleagues (0-5 years of experience), who were on the contrary quite enthusiastic about the novel features introduced through the new curriculum reform. Similar tendency is found by Hargreaves (2005) as cited in Donnell and Gettinger (2015), who claims that different teachers interpreted curricular change in different ways, depending on their years of experience. Early career stage teachers (5 or less years of experience) were more open to changes compared to their colleagues with more experience. It was related to the fact that younger teachers were trained to cope with innovations at their recent pre-service trainings. They were also taught to look at teaching innovations positively, rather than viewing it as a negative process. Meanwhile, late-career stage teachers (over 20 years of experience) were more likely to be resistant toward changes and to mistrust or criticize new teaching practices. Hargreaves (2005) found that the longer late-career teachers had been teaching students in a certain way, the more negatively they viewed new practices. Mid-career stage teachers (6-20 years of experience) had mixed perceptions of educational changes. On the one hand, they were better in coping with change because they had enough competence and

confidence which they gained through teaching experience. On the other hand, they were concerned about innovations that required them to get new knowledge and skills (Donnell & Gettinger, 2015).

5.5. Summary of the chapter

This discussion aimed to condense and analyse the main findings of the study within the research questions and corresponding literature. As we learned, most teachers have positive response to the new curriculum reform. They have been implementing many changes since the beginning of implementation of the new curriculum reform, which are mostly caused by the introduction of the new curriculum content, assessment and pedagogy.

Though findings demonstrate that there are some factors which help teachers implement the new curriculum reform, such as professional development courses, enhanced teacher collaboration and teachers' beliefs about pupils' greater learning, there are also the barriers which hinder the implementation. The biggest constraints were identified as increased workload, paperwork and lack of time. The participants struggle to cope with the enhanced routine and paperwork caused by the greater lesson preparation, introduction of criteria-based assessment and the complexity of the new content of the curriculum. Apart from the deficit of time, a lot of teachers also lack the knowledge and skills as well as the resources to manage their increased workload. Additionally, the amount of work experience impedes experienced teacher to adapt to the new curriculum innovations.

The difference between the findings in the rural and urban contexts was related to teachers' overall enthusiasm about the reform implementation. Rural classroom teachers appeared to be more pleased and more enthusiastic about the main changes implemented by the new curriculum reform. This can be related to the fact that urban teachers are more overloaded, as they work in double-shifted schedule and teach 30 pupils under each shift. Rural classroom teachers' workload is two times less; they finish work by 2-3 pm, while the number of pupils in rural classes does not exceed 15 children.

It has implications on teachers' practice, policy implementation and the further research. While policymakers may recognize that teachers play important role in the reform implementation, they should also worry about teachers' thoughts and opinions; they should listen to their voices, if they aim to achieve successful implementation. The implications of the study will be discussed in greater details in the Conclusion chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

This chapter summarizes the results of this study. The purpose of the research was to examine the primary school teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and factors influencing the implementation. More specifically the research focused on studying how the teachers implement the new curriculum reform, what factors support and what factors constrain the implementation. This final chapter consists of three sections. The first section provides the overall overview of the findings according to the three research questions. The second section shows implications of the study and suggests the recommendations. The third section provides limitations and suggestions for future research.

6.2. Revisiting research questions

6.2.1. How do teachers implement the new curriculum reform?

Most teachers have quite positive and supportive views about the new curriculum reform. They experience many changes in the curriculum content, assessment and their pedagogy. They admit that their lessons and generally their teaching practice have improved considerably, as they observe pupils' enhanced motivation to learn. Pupils' roles changed from passive listeners to active learners, while teachers became facilitators of the learning process. This shows creation of learner-centered environment, which is achieved through the use new teaching approaches and new content of the curriculum, such as shift to application of knowledge in solving practical tasks, development of four language skills and introducing cross-curricular links.

The findings also demonstrate teachers' experience in application of the new assessment model – a criteria-based assessment. There seems to be overall misunderstanding and increased concerns about the new forms of assessment.

The main difference between the two cases provides an unexpected finding. The rural classroom teachers expressed greater enthusiasm about and pleasure from implementing the novel features of the new curriculum reform. This may be caused by the fact that the urban

teachers appear to be more overloaded, as they work for double-shifts and have about 30 pupils in each shift. The workload of the rural classroom teachers' is two times less; they finish work by 2-3 pm, while the number of pupils in rural classes is no more than 15 children. There is no discrepancy found between the classroom and subject teachers' attitude towards the new curriculum reform and their experiences in implementing the new curriculum content, using new assessment modes and pedagogy.

6.2.2. What factors support the implementation of the new curriculum reform?

The research found three major factors which support the implementation of the new curriculum reform according to the teachers' perspectives. They include: professional development programmes, teacher collaboration and beliefs about greater pupils' learning. It is these factors that allow teachers observe the positive effects of the new curriculum reform as well as the opportunities that it brings. Comparing the two contexts, it can be seen that regardless urban and rural area, the teachers report similar findings.

6.2.3. What factors constrain the implementation of the new curriculum reform?

Similarly, to the supporting factors, regardless urban and rural context, the teachers mostly experience the same constraints since the beginning of the reform implementation, which includes the complexity of the new content, learner diversity and lack of teaching resources, which lead to increased teacher workload and lack of time to cope with it. The amount of teaching experience was also a barrier for some experienced teachers.

The only difference within the two cases is found in a greater amount of urban teachers' workload and less amount of time to cope with it. Some of the possible reasons for that are discussed under the summary of the Research Question 1 above.

6.3. Research implications and recommendations

Given the topicality of the research topic in Kazakhstan as it concerns one of the major curriculum reforms implemented since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the research findings have contributed to the body of knowledge and understanding of the implementation of the new

curriculum reform, and particularly of primary school teachers' perspectives about it and factors that influence its implementation. Although, the study is subject to several limitations described in the next section, the research presents several implications on and recommendations for educational policy makers and schools.

6.3.1. Implications and recommendations to policymakers

While policymakers may recognize that teachers play important role in the reform implementation, they should also assess the gap between the intended and the current situation. They may benefit from using the findings of this study to facilitate implementation of the new curriculum reform. One of the findings under the first research question shows that most teachers lack profound understanding of the nature and purpose of the new forms of assessment. Policymakers may help teachers improve their understanding about the criteria-based assessment model by organising professional development courses focused on this particular aspect of the new curriculum reform or by issuing more and better quality assessment guides and handbooks, involving clear implementation guidelines and instructions on the new assessment modes and pre-prepared formative and summative assessment works. Teachers may also advantage from the supply of other teaching resources such as teacher guides in Grade 2 and lesson plans.

Under the factors promoting the implementation, the teachers mostly highlighted the significance of professional development and improved teacher collaboration. Provision of bigger number of efficient professional development training in various areas and of support for collaboration (e.g. establishing learning communities, encouraging sharing on online platforms, organising seminars within schools etc.) may help teachers cope with increased workload, complexity of the content of the new curriculum reform, the learner diversity and big class sizes. However, the policymakers may also need to make a considerable revision of the content of the new curriculum reform in order to make it more appropriate to the academic level of mainstream pupils.

Last but not least, the policymakers may benefit from allocating more resources to the schools, as their deficit really hinders teachers successfully implement the new curriculum reform. Provision of additional human resources: teachers, teaching assistants and so on, may help teachers decrease their workload and paperwork. The teachers from the urban school may particularly advantage from that, as it may allow them to work in single-shifted schedule (to teach to one grade only) and with smaller number of pupils in a class. Similarly, equipping the schools with sufficient number of IT resources, such as computers, interactive boards and internet connection may also positively affect on teachers' adoption of the new curriculum reform.

6.3.2. Implications and recommendations to schools

School administrators may also enhance the implementation of the new curriculum reform by providing space, opportunities and other means to allow teachers to build the knowledge and understanding of the aspects of the new curriculum reform. One of the ways of doing it is to create a supportive atmosphere where teachers are not afraid of raising the issues as they are aware that they may receive necessary help or may solve them collectively. In other words, school leaders should continue providing opportunities for building strong collaborative culture within the school and with neighboring schools. For example, schools may establish small and sustainable professional learning communities. This may encourage teachers to be more involved into joint-planning, sharing and consulting with each other through regular meetings or online chats. Schools may also consider continuing organising in-school seminars, workshops and master classes as they were found to be very helpful.

Alternatively, schools may introduce mentorship practices, where Grade 2 teachers or trained teachers would be mentoring Grade 1 or non-trained teachers respectively. However, it is very important to introduce the abovementioned practices making sure it will not be burdensome for teachers. School administrators should help reduce teacher workload, not increase.

Finally, schools and teachers may also continue being proactive and support each other in the implementation process. As Fullan (2017) says:

One thing I say to principals and teachers and district people is, your job is not to implement government policy. It's to exploit government policy for local priorities, to be less on the receiving end and more on the initiation end. So, it's a proactive solution (p.10).

6.3.3. Implications and recommendations to pre-service teacher training institutions

Pedagogic universities and colleges may consider revising their curricula against the requirements set for the teachers under the new Standards of Education. This may contribute significantly to the preparation of the young teachers to the current school needs.

6.4. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

The research presented in this study is subject to several limitations, which are discussed in parallel with respective suggestions for further research in this section. The first limitation concerns a sample of the twelve participants and only from the two schools of Kazakhstan. Consequently, the findings of the study cannot be generalised to all schools of the country. Further research may use a bigger sample and other research sites as the teachers' perspectives and experiences about the implementation of the new curriculum reform may vary in different schools and in different regions of the country, depending on various contextual factors beyond the scope of this study.

While there are many other stakeholders of the process, like policymakers, school administration, students and parents, the study reveals only teachers' perspectives as the key implementers of any reform. For the future research, examining the views of other stakeholders with regards their perceptions, attitudes or experiences towards the implementation of the new curriculum reform may also be beneficial in establishing a clearer and broader image of the reform implementation and thus, may allow taking better informed decisions.

The third limitation is a time constraint. Data collection lasted for one and a half month, which is a relatively short period of time for extensive and quality data collection. In addition, the urban teachers seemed to be busier and less enthusiastic about taking part in the research (although, all the teachers were recruited on a voluntarily basis only), this could potentially affect their responses, as some of them seemed to be less expanded and less thoroughly thought. On the other hand, the data collection was conducted only after 13 months of implementation, so it could be too early for teachers to reflect on their perspectives on the new curriculum reform, as well as for me as a researcher to examine the central phenomenon of the study. Conducting a longitudinal study may allow a more in-depth investigation. Moreover, teachers' views, opinions and perceptions may change as the implementation process unfolds.

The next limitation is connected with the data collection instruments. This study is limited with the data gathered from the interviews and document analysis, while conducting surveys would allow examining bigger number of teachers and lesson observations would allow examining teacher behaviours and practices in the classroom. Therefore, using mixed method approach with methods of data collection such as survey questionnaires and lesson observations would allow triangulation of the reported interview data, as teacher behaviours are not always consistent with their beliefs (Pajares, 1992). Fullan and Pomfret (1977) also believe that we should be cautious about relying on "reported use" as a measure of implementation of a given innovation as "it may not represent the possession of the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the curriculum behaviorally" (p. 339). The authors add that the problem with this measure is not about teachers deliberately being dishonest with the researcher, but that it may only reflect their attitude of acceptance.

Finally, this study did not find significant discrepancies in teachers' views and in the affecting factors within the two schools. Thus, future studies may investigate the differences between the experience of the new curriculum reform implementation in urban and rural

mainstream schools in Kazakhstan. Similarly, it may be valuable to study the implementation of the new curriculum reform within the different subjects.

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Appendix A**Introductory letter from NUGSE****Астана қаласы**

_____ атындағы

№ ____ орта мектебінің директоры

Құрметті _____

Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебі Қазақстан Республикасының білім беру саласына пайдасы және ықпалы зор дүниежүзілік үздік үлгілерге сай білім беру мен ғылыми зерттеу жүргізуді мақсат етеді. Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебінде жүзеге асырылатын магистратура мен докторантура бағдарламалары бойынша білім алатын студенттер болашақта Қазақстан Республикасы білім беру мекемелерінде жұмыс істеп, мектепке дейінгі, орта және жоғары білім беру салаларында жоғары деңгейде үлес қосатын болады.

Біз осы хат арқылы сізден Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебінің магистратура студенті Гимранова Алия Абдолкереевна өзінің «Қазақстанның жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнын енгізу: мұғалімдердің көз-қарасы» тақырыбы бойынша Астана қаласы _____ атындағы № ____ орта мектебінде ғылыми зерттеу жұмысына келісім беруіңізді сұраймын. Аталған магистратура студенті мәлімет жинау жұмысын 2018 жылдың 10-31 қаңтар аралығында жүргізеді.

Біз аталған студенттің өз зерттеу жұмысын жоғары деңгейде өткізетініне және осы зерттеу Қазақстан Республикасының білім беру саласының одан арғы дамуына үлесін

тигізетініне сенеміз. Жоғарыда аталған ғылыми зерттеу жұмысын жүзеге асыру алдында Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебінің комиссиясының шешімімен бекітіледі.

Болашақта біздің арамыздағы ынтымақтастық күшейе беретініне үміттенемін.

Құрметпен,

Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебі деканының орынбасары

Jason Sparks

Appendix B**CONSENT FORM**

I, _____, agree to take part in a study on exploring primary school teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum reform and factors influencing its implementation in Kazakhstan.

I understand that, as a participant in the study, I will be interviewed one time if I am a subject teacher and two times if I am a classroom teacher in a place convenient for me. I understand that the interview(s) will be conducted in time and place convenient for me. I understand that an interview will last no longer than sixty minutes and will be tape-recorded. I understand that interview questions will be directed to study.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: I understand that there are no potential risks associated with this study since I will not be asked any sensitive questions and I will not be identified by my name in the study, nor will my school be identified. However, I understand that there will be possibility I might be identified by people who work closely with me due to the small number of participants. I understand that the data will not be available to the administration of my school and will not be used to evaluate my performance as part of any school or system evaluation.

I understand that I will have access to all raw data collected about me. I also understand that all the data collected during the study will be secured in a locked file and that only principal researcher and her supervisor will have access to the primary data. I understand that all data will be destroyed once the researcher has successfully completed all requirements of her Master's program.

I understand that while I may not benefit directly from the study, the information gained may assist both researchers and educational professionals to better understand teachers' perspectives on the implementation of new curriculum reform and factors influencing its implementation in Kazakhstan and beyond. I understand that if I wish a summary of the findings of the study will be sent to me, and that I could obtain a copy of the thesis in full.

PARTICIPANT’S RIGHTS: I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time I wish. I understand that no evaluative judgment will be made about me if I choose to withdraw from the study.

I also understand that I will be free to raise questions or concerns with the principal researcher or her supervisor throughout the study, and that I may refuse to answer any of the questions during the interview.

I understand that the researcher will record the interview to ensure that no data will be lost. I understand that the results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

I understand that if I have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, I may contact:

- the principal researcher of this study: Aliya Gimranova, aliya.gimranova@nu.edu.kz, phone number: +77015364689.

- the Master’s Thesis Supervisor for this work: Duishon Shamatov, duishonkul.shamatov@nu.edu.kz, phone + 7 7172 709364;

- the NUGSE Research Committee if I wish to speak to someone independent of the research team at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz, +7 7172 709359.

I have read and understood the conditions under which I will participate in this study and give my consent to be a participant.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

ФОРМА СОГЛАСИЯ

Я, _____, даю свое согласие на участие в исследовании по изучению взглядов учителей на обновленное содержание образования и факторов, влияющих на ее внедрение в Казахстане.

Я понимаю, что в качестве участника исследования, я приму участие в одном индивидуальном интервью, если я учитель-предметник и в двух индивидуальных интервью, если я учитель начальных классов. Я понимаю, что интервью будет/будут проводиться в удобное для меня время и место. Я понимаю, что интервью будет длиться не более шестидесяти минут и будет записано на диктофон.

РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА: Я понимаю, что потенциальных рисков, связанных с этим исследованием, нет, так как мне не будут заданы деликатные вопросы и моя личность, как и название школы, не будут раскрыты. Тем не менее, я понимаю, что есть вероятность определения моей личности людьми, которые работают со мной из-за маленького количества участников. Я понимаю, что у администрации моей школы доступа к данным не будет и, что эти данные не будут использоваться для оценки моей деятельности, в качестве школьной оценки или оценки системы.

Я понимаю, что у меня будет доступ ко всем необработанным данным обо мне. Я также понимаю, что все данные, собранные во время исследования, будут защищены в заблокированном файле и, что только главный исследователь и ее научный руководитель будут иметь доступ к первичным данным. Я понимаю, что все данные будут уничтожены после того, как исследователь успешно выполнит все требования своей магистерской программы.

Я понимаю, что, даже если для меня никакой непосредственной выгоды от исследования не будет, полученная информация может помочь как исследователям, так и специалистам в области образования лучше понять влияние убеждений и практики учителей на внедрение обновленного содержания образования начальной школы в

Казахстане и за ее пределами. Я понимаю, что, если пожелаю, я могу получить краткое изложение результатов исследования и копию магистерской работы в полном объеме.

ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКОВ: Я понимаю, что мое участие является добровольным и что у меня есть право отозвать свое согласие и прекратить участие в исследовании в любое время. Я понимаю, что мой отказ от участия в исследовании не станет причиной вынесения какого-либо оценочного суждения обо мне.

Я также понимаю, что я могу задавать вопросы или выражать свою обеспокоенность главному исследователю или ее руководителю на протяжении всего исследования и что я вправе не отвечать на какие-либо вопросы интервью.

Я понимаю, что исследователь будет записывать интервью на диктофон, в целях обеспечения сохранности данных. Я понимаю, что результаты данного исследования могут быть использованы исключительно в научных целях.

КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

Я понимаю, что если у меня возникнут вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, процедуры его проведения, рисков и преимуществ, я могу связаться с:

- главным исследователем данной магистерской работы, Алией Гимрановой, по телефону: +77015364689 или, отправив письмо на электронный адрес aliya.gimranova@nu.edu.kz;

- научным руководителем магистерского исследования, Дуйшоном Шаматовым, по телефону: +7 7172709364 или, отправив письмо на электронный адрес duishonkul.shamatov@nu.edu.kz;

- Комитетом исследований Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета для обращения к лицу, независимому от команды исследователей, по телефону +7 7172709359 или, отправив письмо на электронный адрес gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Я прочитал(-а) и понял(-а) условия, при которых буду участвовать в данном исследовании и согласен(-на) принять в нем участие.

Подпись: _____ **Дата:** _____

КЕЛІСІМ ФОРМАСЫ

Мен, _____, бастауыш мектеп мұғалімдерінің жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасы туралы көз-қарастары мен оның енгізілуіне әсер ететін факторларын зерттеуге бағытталған зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісімімді беремін.

Зерттеудің қатысушысы ретінде мен пән мұғалімі болсам, бір жеке интервьюге; бастауыш сынып мұғалімі болсам, екі жеке интервьюге қатысатынымды түсінемін. Мен интервьюдің өзіме ыңғайлы уақытта және ыңғайлы жерде өткізілетін түсінемін. Мен интервьюдің ұзақтығы алпыс минуттан аспайтынын және оның диктофонға жазылатынын түсінемін.

ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫНА ҚАТЫСУДЫҢ ҚАУПІ МЕН

АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ: Маған шетін сұрақтар қойылмайтындықтан, сондай-ақ менің және мектептің аты еш жерде көрсетілмейтіндіктен мен аталмыш зерттеуге қатысудың әлеуетті қаупінің жоғын түсінемін. Дегенмен, зерттеу қатысушыларының саны аз болғандықтан, менімен бірге жұмыс істейтін адамдардың жеке басымды анықтау ықтималдығы барын түсінемін. Мен мектеп әкімшілігінде деректерге қол жеткізу мүмкіншілігінің жоқтығын және бұл деректер мектептік бағалау немесе жүйені бағалау ретінде менің қызметімді бағалау үшін пайдаланылмайтындығын түсінемін.

Мен өзім туралы барлық өңделмеген деректер маған қолжетімді болатындығын түсінемін. Зерттеу барысында жиналған барлық деректер бұғатталған файл арқылы қорғалатынын және бастапқы деректер негізгі зерттеуші мен оның ғылыми жетекшісіне ғана қолжетімді болатындығын түсінемін. Зерттеуші магистрлік бағдарламасының барлық талаптарын сәтті орындағаннан кейін, барлық деректер жойылатынын түсінемін.

Зерттеудің маған тікелей пайдасы болмаса да, алынған ақпарат зерттеушілер мен білім саласының мамандарына Қазақстандағы және шетелдегі мұғалімдердің сенім-нанымдары мен тәжірибелерінің жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасын енгізуге тигізетін

ықпалы жөніндегі түсінікті жақсартуға көмектесе алатынын түсінемін. Мен зерттеу нәтижелерінің қорытындысын және де қаласам, магистр жұмысының толық көшірмесін ала алатындығымды түсінемін.

ҚАТЫСУШЫ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ: Мен зерттеуге қатысушылығым ерікті екенін және кез-келген уақытта зерттеу жұмысына қатысу туралы келісімді кері қайтарып, оған қатысудан бас тартуыма құқығым барын түсінемін. Зерттеуге қатысудан бас тартқаным мен туралы пайымды пікір шығаруға себеп болмайтынын түсінемін.

Сонымен қатар мен зерттеу жұмысы бойы негізгі зерттеушіге немесе оның жетекшісіне сұрақ қоюға немесе ескертпелер білдіруге болатынын және қандай да бір интервью сұрақтарына жауап беруден бас тартуға құқығым барын түсінемін.

Деректердің сақталуын қамтамасыз ету үшін зерттеуші интервьюді диктофонға жазып отыратынын түсінемін. Мен зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері ғылыми-зерттеу мақсаттарында ғана қолдана алатындығын түсінемін.

БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ: Мен жүргізіліп отырған зерттеу жұмысы, оның тәртібі, қаупі мен артықшылықтары туралы сұрақтарым немесе шағымым болса, келесі тұлғалармен байланаса алатынымды түсінемін:

- негізгі зерттеуші, Гимранова Алиямен, +77015364689 телефоны немесе aliya.gimranova@nu.edu.kz электрондық поштасы арқылы;

- магистрлік зерттеудің ғылыми жетекшісі, Шаматов Дүйшөнмен, + 7 7172 709364 телефоны немесе duishonkul.shamatov@nu.edu.kz электрондық поштасы арқылы;

- зерттеу тобынан дербес тұлғамен байланысу үшін Назарбаев университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебінің Зерттеу комитетімен +7 7172 70 93 59 телефоны немесе gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz электрондық поштасы арқылы.

Мен аталмыш зерттеуге қатысу шарттарын оқып, түсіндім. Мен зерттеуге қатысуға келісемін.

Қолы: _____

Күні: _____

Appendix C**Interview protocol (for classroom teachers)**

Thesis title: Implementation of new curriculum reform in secondary education of Kazakhstan: Study of teachers' perspectives

Date: _____

Time: _____

Participant's name: _____

Instructions before the interview:

[After introducing myself, I remind the participant about (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the measures assuring the confidentiality of the interviewee (the name of the participant and other people mentioned in his/her stories will not be revealed), and (c) the duration for the interview.]

[Turn on the tape recorder.]

Interview questions:

- How long have you been working as a teacher? How did you become a teacher?
- What were your perspectives on education and curriculum prior to the implementation of the new curriculum reform?
- What were your practices (teaching practices) prior to the implementation of new curriculum reform?
- What do you think the goals of the new curriculum reform are?
- What do you think about the content of the new curriculum?
- What are the differences of this curriculum from the previous curriculum? What are the curricular materials like?
- How does this new curriculum reform change your beliefs and practices?
- What were your expectations from the new curriculum reform? Were your expectations met?

If yes, in what ways, and if not, why not?

- How did you build your understanding about the new curriculum reform? How did you learn about its components?
- What were the factors that supported the implementation of the new curriculum reform?
- What were the factors that constrained the implementation of the new curriculum reform?
- What opportunities have you had since the beginning of its implementation? How do you think they affected your perspectives?

Appendix D**Interview protocol (for subject teachers)**

Thesis title: Implementation of new curriculum reform in secondary education of Kazakhstan: Study of teachers' perspectives

Date: _____

Time: _____

Participant's name: _____

Instructions before the interview:

[After introducing myself, I remind the participant about (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the measures assuring the confidentiality of the interviewee (the name of the participant and other people mentioned in his/her stories will not be revealed), and (c) the duration for the interview.]

[Turn on the tape recorder.]

Interview questions:

- How long have you been working as a teacher? How did you become a teacher?
- What were your perspectives on education and curriculum prior to the implementation of new curriculum reform?
 - What were your practices (teaching practices) prior to the implementation of new curriculum reform?
 - What do you think about the content of the new primary curriculum?
 - What are the differences of this curriculum from the previous curriculum? What are the curricular materials like?
 - How did you build your understanding about the new curriculum reform? How did you learn about its components?
 - What were the factors that supported the implementation of the new curriculum reform?

- What were the factors that constrained the implementation of the new curriculum reform?
- What opportunities have you had since the beginning of its implementation? How do you think they affected your perspectives?

Протокол интервью**(для учителей начальных классов)**

Название исследовательской работы: Внедрение обновленного содержания образования в Казахстане: исследование взглядов учителей

Дата: _____

Время: _____

Имя участника: _____

Инструкции до начала интервью:

[После представления себя, напомнить участнику о (а) цели исследования, (б) мерах, обеспечивающих конфиденциальность участника (имя участника и других людей, упомянутых в его/ее ответах, не будут раскрыты) и (в) продолжительности интервью.]

[Включить диктофон.]

Вопросы интервью:

- Как долго Вы работаете учителем? Как Вы стали учителем?
 - Каковы были Ваши взгляды на образование и учебную программу до внедрения обновленного содержания образования?
 - Какова была Ваша практика (практика преподавания) до внедрения обновленного содержания образования?
 - Как Вы думаете каковы цели внедрения обновленного содержания образования?
 - Что Вы думаете о содержании обновленной учебной программы начальной школы?
 - Чем отличается эта учебная программа от предыдущей? Каковы дополнительные учебные ресурсы?
 - Как обновленное содержание образования изменило ваши убеждения и практику?
 - Каковы были Ваши ожидания от обновленного содержания образования?
- Соответствовало ли оно Вашим ожиданиям? Если да, то, каким образом? Если нет, то почему нет?

- Как Вы сформировали свое понимание об обновленном содержании образования? Как Вы изучили ее компоненты?
- Какие факторы способствовали внедрению обновленного содержания образования?
- Какие факторы препятствовали внедрению обновленного содержания образования?
- Какие возможности у Вас появились с начала внедрения обновленного содержания образования? Как вы думаете они повлияли на Ваши взгляды на обучение?

Протокол интервью
(для учителей-предметников)

Название исследовательской работы: Внедрение обновленного содержания образования в Казахстане: исследование взглядов учителей

Дата: _____

Время: _____

Имя участника: _____

Инструкции до начала интервью:

[После представления себя, напомнить участнику о (а) цели исследования, (б) мерах, обеспечивающих конфиденциальность участника (имя участника и других людей, упомянутых в его/ее ответах, не будут раскрыты) и (в) продолжительности интервью.]

[Включить диктофон.]

Вопросы интервью:

- Как долго Вы работаете учителем? Как Вы стали учителем?
- Каковы были Ваши взгляды на образование и учебную программу до внедрения обновленного содержания образования?
- Какова была Ваша практика (практика преподавания) до внедрения обновленного содержания образования?
- Что Вы думаете о содержании обновленной учебной программы начальной школы?
- Чем отличается эта учебная программа от предыдущей? Каковы дополнительные учебные ресурсы?
- Как Вы сформировали свое понимание об обновленном содержании образования? Как Вы изучили ее компоненты?
- Какие факторы способствовали внедрению обновленного содержания образования?
- Какие факторы препятствовали внедрению обновленного содержания образования?

- Какие возможности у Вас появились с начала внедрения обновленного содержания образования? Как вы думаете они повлияли на Ваши взгляды на обучение?

Интервью протоколы
(бастауыш сынып мұғалімі үшін)

Ғылыми жұмысының атауы: Қазақстанның жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнын енгізу: мұғалімдердің көз-қарасы

Күні: _____

Уақыты: _____

Қатысушының аты-жөні: _____

Интервью бастамас бұрын:

[Өзімді таныстырғаннан кейін қатысушыға келесі ақпаратты есіне саламын: а) зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты, (ә) қатысушы жөніндегі ақпараттың құпиялылығын қамтамасыз ететін шаралар (қатысушы мен оның жауаптарында аталған адамдардың аттары жарияланбайтыны жөнінде) және (б) интервьюдің ұзақтығы.]

[Диктофонды қосу.]

Интервью сұрақтары:

- Мұғалім болып жұмыс істеп жүргеніңізге қанша уақыт болды? Бұл мамандыққа қалай келдіңіз?
- Жаңартылған білім беру мазмұны енгізілгенге дейін білім беру және білім беру бағдарламасы жөнінде көз-қарасыңыз қандай болды?
- Жаңартылған білім беру мазмұны енгізілгенге дейін сіздің тәжірибеңіз (оқыту тәжірибесі) қандай болды?
- Жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнын енгізудің мақсаттары неде деп ойлайсыз?
- Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасының мазмұны жөнінде пікіріңіз қандай?
- Бұл оқу бағдарламасының алдыңғы оқу бағдарламасынан айырмашылығы неде? Қосымша оқу ресурстары қандай?
- Жаңартылған білім беру мазмұны сіздің сенім-нанымдарыңыз бен тәжірибеңізді қалай өзгертті?

- Сіз жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнынан не күттіңіз? Ол сіздің күткеніңізге сай келді ме? Сай келсе, қалайша? Сай келмесе, неліктен жоқ?
- Сіз жаңартылған білім беру мазмұны туралы түсінігіңізді қалай қалыптастырдыңыз? Сіз оның компоненттерін қалай зерттедіңіз?
- Қандай факторлар жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнының енгізілуіне оң ықпалын тигізді?
- Қандай факторлар жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнының енгізілуіне кедергі келтірді?
- Жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнының енгізілуінен бері сіз үшін қандай мүмкіндіктер пайда болды? Сіздің ойыңызша, олар сіздің оқуға деген көзқарасыңызға қалай әсер етті?

Интервью протоколы**(пән мұғалімдері үшін)**

Ғылыми жұмысының атауы: Қазақстанның жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнын енгізу: мұғалімдердің көз-қарасы

Күні: _____

Уақыты: _____

Қатысушының аты-жөні: _____

Интервью бастамас бұрын:

[Өзімді таныстырғаннан кейін қатысушыға келесі ақпаратты есіне саламын: а) зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты, (ә) қатысушы жөніндегі ақпараттың құпиялылығын қамтамасыз ететін шаралар (қатысушы мен оның жауаптарында аталған адамдардың аттары жарияланбайтыны жөнінде) және (б) интервьюдің ұзақтығы.]

[Диктофонды қосу.]

Интервью сұрақтары:

- Мұғалім болып жұмыс істеп жүргеніңізге қанша уақыт болды? Бұл мамандыққа қалай келдіңіз?
- Жаңартылған білім беру мазмұны енгізілгенге дейін білім беру және білім беру бағдарламасы жөнінде көз-қарасыңыз қандай болды?
- Жаңартылған білім беру мазмұны енгізілгенге дейін сіздің тәжірибеңіз (оқыту тәжірибесі) қандай болды?
- Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасының мазмұны жөнінде пікіріңіз қандай?
- Бұл оқу бағдарламасының алдыңғы оқу бағдарламасынан айырмашылығы неде? Қосымша оқу ресурстары қандай?
- Сай келсе, қалайша? Сай келмесе, неліктен жоқ?
- Сіз жаңартылған білім беру мазмұны туралы түсінігіңізді қалай қалыптастырдыңыз? Сіз оның компоненттерін қалай зерттедіңіз?

- Қандай факторлар жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнының енгізілуіне оң ықпалын тигізді?
- Қандай факторлар жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнының енгізілуіне кедергі келтірді?
- Жаңартылған білім беру мазмұнының енгізілуінен бері сіз үшін қандай мүмкіндіктер пайда болды? Сіздің ойыңызша, олар сіздің оқуға деген көзқарасыңызға қалай әсер етті?