Faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive education at one national university in Kazakhstan

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FACULTY ATTITUDES TOWARD DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT ONE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract

With a continuous increase in the number of students with disabilities all over the globe, it is crucially important to create a cohesive and supportive environment at universities. Kazakhstan has made a step forward in implementing the principles of equality by ratifying the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, allocating state grants for students with disabilities, and developing the concept of inclusive education. However, the students with disabilities are still underrepresented at universities despite the fact that Kazakhstan is experiencing the similar upward trend in the number of disabled persons. This entails discussions about faculty attitudes, assessment, and educational practices focusing on the provision of accommodations and facilities for students with disabilities. The present study therefore aims to investigate faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive education at one national university in North Kazakhstan. Eight faculty members from different departments participated in semi-structured interviews and shared their views regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into the contemporary system of Kazakhstani higher education. Findings suggest that although the faculty held a generally positive attitude towards students with various disabilities, they expressed contrasting views when it came to the inclusion of students with mental health and/or intellectual disabilities in their classes with female faculty members being more supportive than their male colleagues. The study has also shown that faculty's educational background may have influenced their willingness to provide academic accommodations for students with disabilities. In addition, the interviews disclosed insufficient awareness about regulations, normative documents on inclusive education as well as the accommodations needed for students with special needs. A deeper understanding of faculty

beliefs and perceptions will inform the ways in which the policy makers can address the issues that emerged from the study. The discussion and recommendations for further inquiry and practice are provided.

Keywords: disability-inclusive education, higher education, diversity, faculty attitude, Kazakhstan

ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ БІР МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ОҚЫТУШЫЛАРЫНЫҢ ЖОҒАРЫ БІЛІМ ЖҮЙЕСІНЕ МҮМКІНДІГІ ШЕКТЕУЛІ АЗАМАТТАРДЫ ЕНГІЗУГЕ ДЕГЕН КӨЗҚАРАСЫ

Аңдатпа

Әлемде мүмкіндігі шектеулі студенттер саны тұрақты өсіп жатқандықтан, жоғары оқу орындарында үйлесімді және қолайлы орта құру өте маңызды болып табылады. Қазақстан Мүгедектер Құқықтары туралы Біріккен Ұлттар Ұйымы Конвенциясын ратификациялау, инклюзивті білім беру тұжырымдамасын әзірлеу және ерекше қажеттіліктері бар студенттер үшін мемлекеттік гранттар бөлу арқылы теңдік қағидасын іске асыруда алға қадам жасады. Алайда, әлемнің басқа елдеріндегідей Қазақстандағы мүмкіндігі шектеулі студенттер санының өсу үрдісіне қарамастан, олардың жоғары оқу орындарында білім алу көрсеткіші әлі де төмен деңгейде. Бұл оқытушылардың мүгедектерге арналған жағдайлар мен мүмкіндіктерді қамтамасыз етуге деген көзқарасы, бағалау және оқыту әдістері туралы пікірталас тудырады. Осылайша, бұл зерттеу жұмысы Солтүстік Қазақстандағы бір ұлттық университет оқытушыларының инклюзивті білім беруге деген көзқарасын зерттеуге бағытталған. Түрлі факультеттердің сегіз оқытушылары жартылай құрылымданған сұхбатқа қатысып, Қазақстандағы жоғары білім берудің заманауи жүйесіне ерекше қажеттіліктері бар студенттерді енгізу туралы өз ойларымен бөлісті. Қорытындылар бойынша, оқытушылар мүмкіндігі шектеулі студенттерге оң көзқарас танытқанмен, психикалық және/немесе интеллектуалды мүгедектігі бар студенттерді енгізуге келгенде қарама-қарсы пікір білдірді. Әйелдер ерлерге қарағанда ондай студенттердің білім алуын көбірек қолдады. Зерттеу жұмысы көрсеткендей, оқытушылардың алған білімі олардың мүгедектігі бар студенттерге академиялық қолайлылық құралдарын беруге дайындығына әсер етуі ықтимал. Сонымен қатар,

зерттеу жұмысы оқытушылардың инклюзивті білім беруге қатысты ережелер, құжаттар, сондай-ақ ерекше қажеттіліктері бар студенттерге керекті қолайлылықтар туралы бейхабар болуы анықталды. Оқытушылардың нанымдары мен көзқарастарын тереңірек түсіну саясаткерлерді зерттеу барысында анықталған мәселелерді шешу жолдарынан хабардар етеді. Жұмыста кейінгі зерттеу және тәжірибе бойынша пікірталастар мен ұсыныстар келтіріледі.

Кілттік сөздер: ерекше қажеттіліктері бар студенттерді енгізу, жоғары білім, әртүрлілік, оқытушылардың көзқарасы, Қазақстан

ОТНОШЕНИЕ ПРЕПОДАВАТЕЛЕЙ ОДНОГО НАЦИОНАЛЬНОГО УНИВЕРСИТЕТА В КАЗАХСТАНЕ К ВКЛЮЧЕНИЮ ЛИЦ С ОГРАНИЧЕННЫМИ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЯМИ В СИСТЕМУ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

Аннотация

При постоянном росте числа учащихся с ограниченными возможностями во всем мире крайне важно создать сплоченную и поддерживающую среду в университетах. Казахстан сделал шаг вперед в реализации принципов равенства путем ратификации Конвенции Организации Объединенных Наций о правах инвалидов, выделения государственных грантов для учащихся с особыми потребностями и разработки концепции инклюзивного образования. Тем не менее, студенты с ограниченными возможностями по-прежнему недопредставлены в университетах, несмотря на то, что Казахстан испытывает аналогичную тенденцию роста числа студентов с ограниченными возможностями. Это влечет за собой дискуссию о подходах, оценках и образовательных методах преподавателей, ориентированных на предоставление приспособлений и возможностей для учащихся с ограниченными возможностями. Таким образом, настоящее исследование направлено на изучение отношения преподавателей к инклюзивному образованию в одном национальном университете Северного Казахстана. Восемь преподавателей из разных факультетов участвовали в полуструктурированных интервью и поделились своими взглядами на включение студентов с особыми нуждами в современную систему высшего образования в Казахстане. Выводы показывают, что, хотя профессорско-преподавательский состав в целом позитивно относился к учащимся с различными формами инвалидности, они высказывали противоположные взгляды, когда речь шла о включении учащихся с психическими и/или умственными заболеваниями в свои классы, причем женщины-

преподаватели были более благосклонны, чем их коллеги мужского пола. Исследование также показало, что образование преподавателей, возможно, повлияло на их готовность предоставлять академические удобства для учащихся с ограниченными возможностями. Кроме того, в ходе опросов было выявлено недостаточное информирование о нормативных актах, документах по инклюзивному образованию, а также об удобствах, необходимых для учащихся с особыми потребностями. Более глубокое понимание убеждений и восприятий преподавателей будет информировать политиков о том, как можно решить проблемы, выявленные в ходе исследования. В работе приведены обсуждение, а также рекомендации к дальнейшим исследованиям и практике.

Ключевые слова: включение студентов с особыми нуждами, высшее образование, многообразие, отношение преподавателей, Казахстан

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

It is commonly acknowledged that university is an institution that provides higher education for all people regardless of their age, gender, or abilities. This is reflected in different legislative documents both at national and international levels (UN, 2006; Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2007; SPED, 2010). They highlight that abilities do not deprive the students of an opportunity to obtain education of all levels. Doing so, they serve as a cornerstone of inclusive education in any country.

The number of students with disabilities pursuing higher education is globally increasing (Baker, Boland, & Nowik, 2012). For instance, in the United States, the number of students with disabilities increased from 6.3% in 1992-1993 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996, p.212) to 11.1% in 2011-2012 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016, p.474). Similarly, the proportion of students with disabilities in UK universities reached 11.3% in 2013-2014 compared to 3.6% 1994-1995 (Riddell, 2016, p.8). These figures entail discussions about faculty attitudes, assessment, and educational practices aimed to provide accommodations and facilities for the students with disabilities (Leyser & Greenberger, 2008). Numerous studies explored faculty attitude towards the students with physical, learning, and developmental disabilities (Abu-Hamour, 2013; Gibbons, Cihak, Mynatt, & Wilhoit, 2015). Faculty attitude is found to be influential in terms of the performance and experiences of students with disabilities at universities (Klehm, 2014). It was also revealed that students are concerned with the faculty attitudes and might disguise their disabilities (Baker, Boland, & Nowik, 2012) forfeiting thus proper accommodations.

Kazakhstan has made a step forward in implementing the principles of equality by ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which ensures “that

persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education…. without discrimination and on an equal basis with others" (UN, 2006, art.24). Several legislative documents have also been devised at a national level including the concept of inclusive education, the law on education, and the state program of education development highlighting the importance of promoting inclusive education in secondary as well as in higher education. However, the statistics have shown a low participation rate among students with disabilities in higher education institutions the total number of whom was only 304 or 0.06% of the whole student population in 2015-2016 (MNE, 2016), despite the set-aside state grants to help them financially (OECD, 2017). Although the students with disabilities receive financial aid from the state that covers tuition fee and provides a monthly stipend, they are still underrepresented in numerical terms. Perhaps, there exist other factors that impede their participation and/or retention in higher education. According to Getzel (2008), such factors as faculty awareness of students with disabilities, teaching strategies, and support services available on campus are of immense importance for the persistence of such students. Moreover, attitudes are tightly connected with actions, and negative attitudes may lead to discriminatory behavior (Hunt & Hunt, as cited in Barr, 2013). However, little is known about the attitudes and beliefs of faculty toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Kazakhstani universities. Existing literature on inclusive education in Kazakhstan seems to focus more on school and pre-school environments than higher education settings (Jadrina, 2007; Kalashnikova, Bobrova, Likhacheva, & Imanbekov, 2013; Oralbekova, Arzymbetova, Begalieva, Ospanbekova, Mussabekova, & Dauletova, 2016; Aubakirova, 2016). Nevertheless, it identified unpreparedness of professionals to teach students with disabilities and prevailing negative stereotypes about them (Denivarova & Abdresheva, 2015) and highlighted the importance of both theoretical

and practical teacher training in successful implementation of the principles of inclusive education (Zholtayeva, Stambekova, Alipbayeva, & Yerzhanova, 2013).

Because far too little attention has been paid to the issues of disability-inclusive higher education, there remains a paucity of research on faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities and it is not clear what factors influence those attitudes. Therefore, the present study is important to shed a light on the attitudinal tendencies that abound among university educators of Kazakhstan and provide a meticulous investigation of their perspectives as the faculty attitudes have an impact not only on students but also on the success of inclusive education in general.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes toward disability-inclusive education for faculty at one national university in Kazakhstan. The study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the faculty perceptions regarding students with disabilities, their capabilities to pursue degrees at universities, and faculty willingness to provide academic accommodations for such students. This qualitative study will also examine how the faculty gender, age, experience, background, or discipline influenced their responses.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the attitudes of faculty toward disability-inclusive education?
2. What are faculty beliefs with regard to providing accommodations for students with disabilities?
3. What are the factors that influence faculty attitudes toward inclusion of the students with disabilities into Kazakhstani higher education system?

The central thesis of this paper is that faculty from one national university in Kazakhstan hold generally positive attitude toward students with disabilities. However,

contrasting views were identified regarding the inclusion of students with intellectual and/or mental disabilities into the contemporary system of higher education and the provision of academic accommodations for students with disabilities in general. While gender seems to influence faculty beliefs about students with intellectual and/or mental disabilities, their educational background may have affected the way they perceived academic accommodations. The study also argues that faculty lack knowledge of disabilities, legislation, and accommodations, which will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

1.4 Significance and Contribution of the Study

The study offers some important insights into the prevailing tendency in the attitudes of the faculty of one national university toward students with disabilities in Kazakhstani higher education system. The findings of the study may be insightful for the faculty as well as the university administrators. The latter can potentially benefit from enhancing professional development among educators to better respond to the needs of the students with disabilities. The participants themselves may discover certain areas for improvement and later implement the changes in their teaching experiences.

A deeper understanding of faculty's beliefs and perceptions will inform the ways in which the policymakers can address the issues that will emerge from the study. It will potentially disclose biases and stereotypes held by faculty that might hinder the participation of the students with disabilities. Moreover, better appreciation and thorough analysis of faculty attitudes will fill the existing literature gap in Kazakhstani higher education in terms of inclusive education, which will facilitate further research on the topic.

1.5 Defining Terms

Several terms will be frequently used throughout this dissertation. It is crucially important to provide definitions for those terms because disability is a complex notion that

is defined differently by different authors and organizations and therefore could be interpreted in various ways (UIS, 2017). To avoid any possible confusion or misunderstanding and align the terms with the existing legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the following definitions were extracted from the country's laws. However, they did not cover certain terms due to the different approach to disabilities classification adopted in Kazakhstan. Those definitions, therefore, derive from the documents of United Nations and World Health Organization, the major international organizations recognized throughout the globe.

The term *persons with special educational needs* will be used to refer to the persons who "experience constant or temporary difficulties in getting an education due to their health, need special, basic education curricula and the curricula of additional education" (Law on Education, 2007).

Within the Law on Education, the government of Kazakhstan defined *inclusive educatio*n as a "process that provides an equal access to education for all the learners taking into account the special educational needs and individual abilities" (Law on Education, 2007).

Persons with disabilities will concern "those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities", 2006).

Some of the participants used the term *invalid*, which in the Law on Social Protection of Disabled Persons (2005) is defined as "a person who has a health disorder with a persistent disorganization of the body's functions, caused by illnesses, injuries (wounds, traumas, contusions), their consequences, defects, which leads to the limitation of vital activity and the need for his or her social protection".

According to the Law on Social and Medical Pedagogical Correctional Assistance for Children with Disabilities (2002), *physical disability* refers to "persistent developmental disorders and (or) malfunction of an organ (organs), requiring long-term social, medical and correctional-pedagogical support".

Mental disability is described as "a temporary or permanent defect in the development and (or) malfunction of the human psyche, including: the consequences of sensory disturbances; speech impairment; disturbance of the emotional-volitional sphere; consequences of brain damage; mental development disorders, including mental retardation; retardation of psychological development and related specific learning difficulties" (Law on Social and Medical Pedagogical Correctional Assistance for Children with Disabilities, 2002).

According to World Health Organization, *intellectual disability* means "a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills (impaired intelligence)" ("Definition: intellectual disability", n.d.).

Finally, inclusive education is used to describe "a process that ensures equal access to education for all students, taking into account special educational needs and individual opportunities" (Law on Education, 2007).

1.6 Summary

This chapter presented the relevant background information and introduction to the study. The following chapter will discuss existing literature on faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities to obtain a comprehensive insight into the subject. Chapter 3 is concerned with the methodology used for this study while the fourth section presents the major findings of the research. Chapter 5 analyses and discusses the results of conducted interviews in relation to the reviewed literature. The last section summarizes the findings in

relation to the purpose of the study and research questions. Research implications and limitations are discussed.

Chapter 2. Literature review

This chapter aims to examine the literature on faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities, their inclusion into the higher education system, faculty knowledge on disabilities, legislation, and provision of necessary accommodations for students with disabilities.

The review of the literature yielded five prominent themes relevant to the study. First, general beliefs and attitudes toward the students with disabilities are discussed. The second section focuses on faculty awareness of the disabilities, accommodations, and legislation. Factors influencing the attitudes of the faculty are analyzed in the third section. While the fourth section explores accommodations for students with disabilities, the last section offers an insight into the impact of faculty attitudes and knowledge level.

A large body of research affirms that the success of students with disabilities in academia and the progress in disability-inclusive higher education is in no small part affected by faculty perspectives and beliefs related to students with disabilities (Baker, Boland, & Nowik, 2012; Kraska, 2003). They influence different aspects of the educational process, such as students' learning outcomes, peer relationships, and classroom interactions (Reynolds & Hitchcock, 2014). These interactions between faculty and students with disabilities affect the successful educational experience of the latter (Abu-Hamour, 2013). Negative attitudes, in turn, may serve as a barrier for students with disabilities to attend colleges and universities (Duquette, 2000). In any case, identifying these views will ultimately help to promote inclusive education.

2.1 Faculty Attitude towards Students with Special Needs

The number of students with disabilities enrolled in higher education has been increasing (Getzel, 2008; Ostrowski 2016; Sniatecki, Perry, & Snell, 2015; Wolman, Mccrink, Harris-Looby, & Rodríguez, 2004). Kazakhstani higher education institutions are

also experiencing a similar trend. Such expansion can be explained by a number of factors including promotion of inclusive education and legislation that aims to eliminate discrimination on the basis of ability, economic factors, the advancement of technology, and the emergence of support services on campuses (Leyser, Greenberger, Sharoni, & Vogel, 2011). With this surge, faculty will encounter a necessity to expand their knowledge of disabilities, devise instructional strategies to teach students with special needs, and evaluate their attitudes toward these students (Murray, Wren, & Keys, 2008).

The attitudinal tendencies that abound among academic staff at universities are seen as an essential aspect of the promotion of inclusive education (Costea-Bărluţiu & Rusu, 2015, p.573). Coupled with the growing enrollment rate of students with disabilities this fact warrants the need to explore the prevailing attitudes held by faculty toward students with disabilities across the globe. Due to a great variety of disabilities, higher education institutions, and academic majors, the studies vary depending on faculty specializations (Ashcroft & Lutfiyya, 2013; Leyser et al., 2011), and the type of disabilities that students have (Abu-Hamour, 2013; Gibbons, Cihak, Mynatt, & Wilhoit, 2015; May, 2012; Vogel, Leyser, Wyland, & Brulle, 1999). In their attempts to reveal what faculty thought and felt about including students with disabilities into the higher education system, a number of researchers have identified generally positive attitudes among educators (Bruder & Mogro-Wilson, 2010; Costea-Bărluţiu & Rusu, 2015; Kraska, 2003; Murray et al., 2008; Sniatecki, et al., 2015). For instance, 2937 students and faculty members from one university in Connecticut, USA, involved in a survey developed by Bruder and Mogro-Wilson (2010), reported to admire students with disabilities while Romanian professors expressed a positive attitude toward students with disabilities regardless of their academic ranks, gender, or previous contact with persons with disabilities (PWD) (Costea-Bărluţiu & Rusu, 2015). Moreover, the study identified a high level of availability and interest of

faculty in special training, which demonstrates their motivation to promote inclusive education at their home institution. Almost 97% of faculty (119 members) at one New York university believed that students with physical disabilities can attain academic success in higher education and compete in their institutions (Sniatecki et al, 2015). Although the number tends to slightly decline when it comes to students with learning and mental disabilities, the attitude could still be considered positive.

In contrast to positive results, much fewer studies have found negative attitudes toward students with disabilities. The reason of prevalence of positive responses might be social desirability when respondents answer in a way that is perceived to be right by society and would not harm their careers. Negative attitude, however, does take place, and it can be manifested in numerous ways. Although there is no universal indicator of the *negativeness* of someone's attitude, low expectations, negative stereotypes, or even avoidance could serve as indicators of negative attitude. According to Scope report (Aiden & McCarthy, 2014) on current attitudes toward disabled people in Britain, a large proportion of the population evaluates persons with disabilities less capable than those without disabilities. This indicates that the only thing hindering achievements for such people is a disability. Perhaps this is why 85% of British see prejudice in attitudes toward PWD. One should also bear in mind that students with disabilities themselves may perceive certain attitude differently than those who hold it. For instance, they may not like being admired by their non-disabled peers or professors (Bruder, & Mogro-Wilson, 2010).

In this light, of interest is the work of Dorsey and Guenther (2000) who investigated faculty and students' perceptions of students who stutter at two universities in Minnesota, USA. Unlike the previous studies, their research made a comparison between the attitude expressed toward the students who did stutter and those who did not to see whether the professors and the other students had perceived stuttering and typical students

differently. By adding such a control condition to their questionnaires, the researchers aimed not only to identify any differences in the attitudes toward stuttering and non-stuttering students but also to contrast the professors' responses to those of college students.

They were concerned that the faculty rated a hypothetical stuttering student more negatively on personality traits than a hypothetical average student. Moreover, the professors held a more negative attitude compared to that of students. Negative stereotypes and little exposure to stuttering students are seen as reasons for such tendency. The situation, therefore, could be improved through more extensive interaction with stuttering students. However, when talking about faculty attitudes and perceptions one should bear in mind that the faculty members themselves encounter challenges when working with students with disabilities (Lombardi & Murray, 2011). It is important to identify these hardships because by coping with them faculty will better interact with students with disabilities, which in turn might affect their participation in postsecondary education (Daniels, Panico, & Sudholt, 2011).

Existing research recognizes the importance of the attitudes exposed by faculty members toward students with disabilities. Although a vast majority of previous studies have reported generally positive attitude, negative stereotypes related to disabilities are still present. However, what we know about faculty perceptions is largely based upon quantitative studies, which is why the reviewed literature is somewhat restricted to give an insight into faculty's feelings, beliefs and underlying reasons for holding a particular view on the topic.

2.2 Faculty Knowledge and Awareness

Knowledge of disabilities and necessary accommodations for students is essential in education. In their study on faculty attitudes regarding students with learning disabilities

in a large private university in the USA, Murray et al. (2008) have found that faculty knowledge of learning disabilities had a positive correlation with what the authors called *Personal Action*, which is providing accommodations for the students. That is, the more knowledgeable the faculty is, the more accommodations they provided for their students with disabilities. This is only one aspect of faculty knowledge. Sniatecki et al. (2015) expanded the scope of faculty knowledge and included questions not directly related to the academic lives of students with disabilities. The researchers asked the faculty members from one American university about their reactions in cases of emergency. Many did not know how to deal with such situations. Since the faculty is usually regarded as leaders during emergencies, the researchers believe this issue should be addressed in order to eliminate any chances of possible harm for students with disabilities. Thus, it can be seen that faculty knowledge goes beyond the educational practices for students with disabilities and concerns their wellbeing as well.

Many scholars have investigated faculty knowledge and awareness of the legislation and institutional support for students with disabilities (Leyser & Greenberger, 2008; Sniatecki, et al., 2015; Vasek, 2005). Since higher education institutions vary considerably in their level of creating and maintaining a supportive environment, disability support services are also at different stages of development. For instance, faculty members at one private four-year institution knew little about the services available for students with disabilities at their institutions (Vasek, 2005) while the majority of faculty in a public university in New York (72.3% of respondents) were aware of where to find internal support at the institution (Sniatecki et al., 2015). Close cooperation with disability support services functioning at universities may help both faculty and students with disabilities. The former may find it beneficial to appeal to a service office to require special faculties for classes, additional information on students' medical conditions, or even the regulations

that govern academic and extracurricular activities of students with disabilities (SWD) within a university. Such services are also handy for students with disabilities themselves. They may get help in developing their self-determination and self-management skills as well as in career opportunities. Finally, disability support services are in power to raise awareness among faculty and students without disabilities by running campaigns, organizing roundtables, or conferences to share experience, which will be especially helpful for novice practitioners in the field.

Misconceptions about accommodations, services available on campus, and insufficient awareness of the legislation seem to be abundant in other studies, too (Kraska, 2003; Leyser, et al., 2011). Disability student services or support services are of immense help in understanding the needs of students with disabilities and establishing a sturdy relationship between the faculty and the office, which can only benefit the students (Dowrick, Anderson, Heyer, & Acosta, 2005). However, solely providing necessary information for faculty is not sufficient to change their attitudes; both sides should be committed to a dialogue through which they can engage best practices to help students with disabilities succeed (Jensen, McCrary, Krampe, & Cooper, 2004). Students with disabilities also emphasized the importance of cooperation by support services and the faculty as well. In her study on the experiences of Norwegian students with disabilities in higher education, Brandt (2011) investigated how the students' needs for adjustments were met by faculty and support services. Several students involved in the research questioned the effectiveness of the interaction of the two. Because of miscommunication between faculty and the advisory service, one student encountered a time constraint during the final examination. Having a disability support service is not sufficient unless it works in close cooperation with faculty, students with disabilities, and students without disabilities as well.

The lack of knowledge on different aspects of inclusion foregrounded the need to organize training for faculty members. The issue has been continuously raised by researchers (Vasek 2005; Zhang, Landmark, Reber, Hsu, Kwok, & Benz, 2010). The training can take online or face-to-face format. The form of delivery can also be diversified to reach the outcomes by incorporating different types of group sessions, presentation of materials in printed form, phone consultations, etc. (Morris, Leuenberger, & Aksamit, 1987). Close scrutiny of the literature reveals that professional development for faculty members on the matters of inclusive education is extremely important. However, research shows that not every professor is interested in enriching his or her knowledge regarding disabilities. Wolanin & Steele (2004) assume that the faculty may welcome workshops led by their colleagues instead of the office, as faculty may not always appreciate the information provided by disability support services. Kraska (2003) further suggests that the research focusing on the needs of the faculty to receive training should be conducted first. The schedules, preferences, and their needs should be considered (Leyser, et al., 2011). However, there remains a question of whether those who are willing to learn might benefit more from the courses than those who are not and if the latter would benefit at all.

Fortunately, many faculty members reported they were willing to learn more about disabilities believing that this would help them in providing accommodations for their students (Murray et al., 2008), facilitate the process of integration and cope with assignments (Leyser & Greenberger, 2008). Although the articles touch upon such important aspect as training for faculty, a systematic understanding of how this training may contribute to a change in attitude is lacking.

The effect of in-service training on faculty knowledge and attitudes was investigated by another group of researchers in the USA (Morris, et al., 1987). According to their findings, after having received the training, the faculty members increased their

level of knowledge about learning disabilities. Although their attitude did not change after the training, this fact implies that in-service training helps to maintain a positive attitude towards SWD, which is also important because the attitude of those faculty members who were not involved in the sessions deteriorated over time.

Hence, it can be observed that faculty knowledge regarding the issues of disability-inclusive education has as much importance as their attitude. Moreover, they are found to be interrelated for possessing more information about PWD may change faculty attitudes to the better (Ibrahim and Herr, as cited in Rao, 2004). In addition, the literature suggests that knowing the peculiarities of various disabilities and their manifestations will enable faculty to adjust their curricula and make changes to their teaching strategies to better respond to the needs of SWD. They will also be well-prepared to have such students in their classrooms, which will give confidence both in communication and instruction. Finally, some students may not self-disclose fearing negative attitudes exposed by their peers or professors. The findings of the existing literature indicate that raising faculty awareness of support services is very important in this regard for they may resort to assistance in providing information about a particular student or disability to make the inclusion of those students as smooth as possible

2.3 Factors Influencing Faculty Attitudes

Several factors have found to be influential in faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities. Although they varied from study to study, type of students' disabilities, faculty knowledge about disabilities and gender appear to be the most frequently identified. Other factors include faculty's previous contact with PWD, teaching experience, academic rank, and affiliation. The following section will discuss them in detail.

Faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities vary substantially. Even the faculty within one institution may hold different views regarding students with disabilities.

This can be attributed to certain personal characteristics (Murray et al., 2008). Researchers from various institutions have investigated the correlation between faculty attitudes and their personal characteristics. Although they have come to different results, such features as gender, academic rank and discipline taught, school, and teaching experience could be highlighted. For instance, in her study on faculty perceptions of SWD at one university in the USA, Kraska (2003) tested how gender, age, teaching experience, academic unit, rank, previous contact with a person with disabilities, and information level of faculty affected their attitude toward SWD. Among all the variables, academic rank and unit were found to be most influential on faculty attitudes. Similarly, Leyser, et al. (2011) investigated how faculty attitudes, knowledge, and willingness to provide accommodations for SWD at teacher training colleges in Israel changed over ten years. The study concluded that faculty willingness to provide accommodation and their attitude was influenced by greater interaction with PWD and faculty training.

In another study conducted in American university by Zhang, et al. (2010), the researchers have found that personal beliefs had a pivotal influence on the faculty willingness to provide students with disabilities with necessary accommodation. They also indicate that these beliefs are in turn shaped by faculty knowledge of legislation and the policies of the institution.

Studies that explored gender influence on faculty attitudes were not consistent. While some did not find any statistically significant difference in the attitudes between male and female professors, some, however, did. For instance, in their study conducted at one private Midwestern university, Murray et al. (2008) revealed that female faculty members were more willing to provide accommodations and to invite disclosure. Interestingly, they had higher expectations for students' performance, too. Female faculty kept holding more a positive view than their male colleagues even after ten years in the

longitudinal study by Leyser, et al. (2011). It is pertinent to note that the review has not revealed any studies where men held more positive perceptions than women.

Academic affiliation is among the factors influencing faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities and the willingness to provide them with necessary accommodations. Murray et al. (2008) have revealed that the attitude of faculty working in the major of Education for students with learning disabilities was very positive compared to their colleagues in other departments. More positive attitudes toward provision of accommodation for SWD were also identified in the College of Education at one research university in the USA (Dallas, Sprong, & Upton, 2014). Contradictory results were found in Kraska's (2003) research in which the school of Education showed the least positive view, which could be explained by a significant amount of stress that the faculty was going through. This fact can also be understood if the peculiarities of the schools within that institution are taken into account. The other two departments (School of Business and College of Arts and Sciences) had always been more open to embracing the new ideas because the changes usually offered beneficial prospects and scientific breakthroughs. As for the faculty of the School of Education, they perceived the changes as "a loss of identity that must be re-established through difficult tasks" (p.17). In addition, the School of Education was aware of the deficit in equipment at most schools, which might have led to thinking that students with disabilities will not be able to show proficiency in utilizing technologies. Because it takes a considerable amount of time and resources to provide training of technology use, the school may have shown the least positive attitude toward inclusion of SWD and their accommodations. This, according to the researcher, cannot be said about other schools for cutting-edge technology was an integral part of their daily classes and was therefore much more available. It suggests that additional time and effort needed to include SWD into a regular classroom and resistance to change may affect

faculty willingness to provide accommodations for those students. This, along with faculty expertise in using technologies and support services is essential in promoting inclusive education in higher education institutions (HEI) (Dallas, et al., 2014).

Academic rank seems to have a correlation with faculty willingness to provide students with accommodations. Kraska (2003) has found a relationship between academic rank and attitudes toward serving students with disabilities where professors had a less positive attitude than instructors and adjunct faculty members. Similar results were later found in the study by Murray et al. (2008). Instructors were more willing than faculty holding associate degrees. Possessing such information might help administrators and support service workers to specifically select the population for professional development because as mentioned before the faculty have different levels of motivation and desire to attend a special training.

A recent research study conducted by Dallas, et al. (2014) tested years of teaching experience as a factor that influences faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities at one Midwestern research university. Though inconsistent with the previous studies, the findings demonstrate a relationship between teaching experience and faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities where more experience was linked to a more positive attitude.

Apart from faculty and school characteristics, there are factors related to students with disabilities themselves. Type of disability is one of the most frequently tested variables in determining attitudes towards the students. Researchers usually distinguish physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and mental health disabilities. A study by Sniatecki, et al. (2015) is a prominent example of this. Although generally, the faculty held the view that students with disabilities can compete academically at a college, their chances of succeeding were found to be dependent on the type of disability. As expected,

faculty perceived the students with physical disabilities more positively than those with learning disabilities, while the least positive attitude was expressed toward students with mental health disabilities. Nearly 97% of respondents (119 faculty members) believed in the success of students with physical disabilities at a college level. Those students with learning and mental health disabilities were also considered able to succeed in their studies (90.2% (112) and 82.9% (102) respectively). However, one should not forget that positive attitude does not always imply great willingness to provide accommodations, which is discussed in the next section.

The reviewed literature revealed several key factors that may influence faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities. They include faculty gender, teaching experience, personal beliefs, and academic rank as well as the school they worked in. The type of disabilities that students have appear to be the most influential among other characteristics of SWD. However, these factors seem to vary from institution to institution. This fact could be explained by its historical background, location, strategies, or technological equipment available. Despite these differences, what remains common is that these factors can either improve or worsen the attitudes of faculty toward students with disabilities as well as provision of accommodations. Therefore, it is important to examine them carefully for they influence faculty attitudes, which in turn may impact students with disabilities.

2.4 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

According to the social model of disability, sometimes it is not a physical impairment that makes a person disabled, but the society (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2013). This is where accommodation of the students' needs plays a crucial role. Absence or lack of necessary provisions makes them disabled. The faculty members are in the state of making them able to obtain higher education by equipping the students with needed

accommodations to facilitate their educational process, such as time extension, using tape recorders or other assistive technologies, task differentiation and others.

Unfortunately, not all faculty members express a positive attitude towards providing SWD with accommodations. In their study on creating a favorable atmosphere for students with disabilities enrolled in higher education, Beilke and Nina (1999) report that students with various disabilities have encountered an indifferent attitude from their professors, which led to lower motivation to study. Several researchers tried to find out what was behind their unwillingness. Time constraint was one of the reasons why faculty does not want to provide students with disabilities with necessary accommodations (Zhang, et al., 2010). In another study, those faculty members who reported a high level of resources constraint happened to be less willing to provide students with disabilities with accommodations (Murray et al., 2008). Little willingness towards accommodation provision is undoubtedly a problem, which could be solved at an institutional level by providing resources and training for faculty.

Students with disabilities may call for various adjustments and assistive technologies to realize their potential. They may as well need to take the exam in a separate room (Cai & Richdale, 2016). Though different in nature, many disabilities make students need more time to complete the tasks than their non-disabled counterparts (Cai & Richdale, 2016; Ostrowski, 2016). Some of the accommodations are considered minor as giving extra time, using assistive technology, whereas altering the format of examinations or assignments is believed to be major adjustments. Although faculty expresses willingness to provide minor accommodations, when it comes to more considerable ones, such as examination adjustments, faculty tend to be reluctant to meet the students' needs (Murray et al., 2008; Vasek, 2005). Vasek (2005) designed a survey on the provision of accommodations for students with disabilities at one American private 4-year institution.

The majority of faculty from reported unwillingness to make adjustments to the examinations. They believed altering the requirements for a specific group of students might create inequity toward the rest. The findings are consistent with other studies where some professors thought that accommodation provision of the students with disabilities may cause unfairness with respect to the students without disabilities thus imperiling academic integrity (Leyser et al., 2011; Sniateki et al.,2015).

On the contrary, the study of faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities and accommodations at two universities in the USA and Mexico showed the reverse results (Wolman, Mccrink, Harris-Looby, & Rodríguez, 2004). Despite faculty from both countries expressing willingness to provide accommodations, American faculty seemed more open to doing so. The numbers were explained by the fact that the USA has a longer history in promoting inclusive education than Mexico. Consequently, their faculty members must have had more exposure to students with disabilities, which led to a more positive attitude towards accommodations. Interestingly, faculty was more inclined to provide accommodations for students with learning disabilities than those with emotional or physical impairments. Training is especially important when it comes to students who have learning disabilities and consequently need more adjustments than their non-disabled peers. However, there is an issue of disability disclosure for learning disabilities are considered hidden so that faculty cannot always know whether a student needs additional help from them (Morris, et al., 1987).

As can be observed, faculty willingness to make accommodations for SWD may depend on different factors. Some put forward the idea of unfairness toward non-disabled students in the class while the others were simply unfamiliar with necessary accommodations and because of little awareness deprived students of assistive technologies needed for their studies. The reviewed literature suggests that faculty

knowledge on and willingness to provide SWD with appropriate accommodations is interrelated with their attitudes toward the latter. Moreover, knowing what type of accommodations is necessary for SWD, how to access them, what disability support services are available at universities may help faculty to promote inclusive culture, which will eventually change attitudes.

2.5 Impacts of the Faculty Attitudes

The positive attitude of faculty toward students with disabilities and their inclusion in the higher education system is undoubtedly one of the major factors influencing students' motivation, success, and retention. In this respect, Worley (2000) has identified four types of instructors in relation to students with disabilities: those who avoided, those who supported, those who discriminated, and those who protected them (as cited in Daniels et al., 2011). Undoubtedly, the role of faculty cannot be overstated especially given the fact that they can express such a wide variety of attitudes toward students with disabilities. It is faculty who have the most influence on the educational experiences of students with disabilities in higher education settings (Lombardi & Murray, 2011). Faculty attitudes expressed toward students with disabilities impact them in many ways. It embraces all aspects of tertiary education including transition from high school, their motivation, academic performance, retention, and finally graduation. For instance, the way students adapt to college life is affected by faculty attitudes (Norton, 1997, p.59). Adapting to a completely new academic environment per se represents a challenge for any school-leaver. For students with disabilities, however, this difficulty is further complicated by managing their accommodations (Getzel, 2008). This transition from a high school to postsecondary education environment seems especially arduous for students with autism spectrum disorder whose enrollment rate accounts for only 34.7% (Shattuck, Narendorf, Cooper, Sterzing, Wagner, & Taylor, 2012, p.1046).

Academic support in terms of adjustments, flexibility, and support helped a student with autism spectrum disorder to reduce stress significantly (Cai & Richdale, 2016). It is crucially important to maintain mental health of students. One parent from the abovementioned study reported that his child was so anxious about not aligning with the course requirements that "he was stressing out majorly, going suicidal" (p.37). This can be achieved by mutual effort of the faculty and the support services with the former being responsible for providing necessary academic adjustments. The support services complement it by serving as a bridge that connects the students with disabilities with the academic and administrative units. Thus, creating robust cooperation of different units of a university will help students with disabilities to learn about access and effective use accommodations, which might differ from those used in secondary education.

This collaboration can go beyond the scope of higher education by establishing connections with the school system, making thus an attempt to make the process of transiting less disquieting and painful (Grigal & Hart, 2012). Despite the authors aiming their attention specifically at students with intellectual disabilities, it is critical for any young person to feel as prepared as possible for a new environment.

Researchers agree with the fact that faculty perceptions have an impact on the students' academic standing (Wolman, et al., 2004; Reynolds & Hitchcock, 2014; Kraska, 2003). Faculty expectations have the power either to multiply the opportunities of studying in a higher education institution or on the contrary confine the benefits offered by postsecondary education (Grigal & Hart, 2012).

In addition, faculty can affect the persistence and retention rate of students with disabilities in higher education institutions through self-awareness activities, establishing robust interaction with the faculty as well as their peers, interviews, and summer camps aiming to yield a smooth transition from school to college environment (Yuen &

Shaughnessy, 2001). Similar activities were found effective in another study Getzel (2008) who investigated the retention of students with disabilities. These services, she avers, have to be an integral part of the educational experience of the students with disabilities for they increase their independence and will assist not only in higher education but also later on during their work lives. Dorsey and Guenther (2000) point out the influence of faculty perceptions on the career opportunities of students who stutter.

Thus, the literature related to faculty perceptions leaves no doubt that the attitude educators express towards their students and the inclusion itself might contribute significantly to the success of inclusive education.

2.6 Development of Inclusive Education in the Soviet and post-Soviet Periods

Segregation of students with disabilities was a quite common phenomenon throughout the world, with the first special school for children with disabilities dating back to 1578 (Zhubakova & Baymenova, 2015). Educational settings for students with hearing and then visual impairments started to spring all over Europe since then. By the beginning of Socialist Revolution in 1917, numerous educational settings, such as help schools, shelters, and medical-educational establishments had been operating in Soviet countries for children with various disabilities including intellectual retardation (Boryakova, 2008). The revolution brought equal rights to students with disabilities, which made the state to take actions in forms of providing pensions, medical and social assistance. However, those equal rights did not entail equal opportunities for the students. They were still getting education in special “closed” settings, such as boarding schools. The goal of special education at that period was announced as “preparation to socially useful labor activity through school and labor” (Boryakova, 2008, p.10). Moreover, in its attempt to supervise special education completely, the state segregated students of those institutions from the church, charity, and more importantly, their peers and family. Because of this isolation,

people believed that there were no persons with disabilities for they were deprived of the exposure to such persons on the streets (Zhubakova & Baymenova, 2015). This ended the second period of development of the national system of special education, which admitted the possibility to educate at least some proportion of students with disabilities (Malofeyev, 2000). It is only after 1927 that three types of disabilities (hearing, visual, and intellectual) started to be distinguished under the influence of legislation, namely the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic "On institutions for deaf-mute, blind and mentally retarded children and adolescents" of 23.11.1926 (Kozyryova, 2015). This goes hand in hand with the third period, which is characterized by the creation of special programs for students with visual, hearing, and intellectual disabilities, and lasts for eight more years. Although the fourth and perhaps the most important stage peaked earlier (the beginning of the XX century-1970s) in Western Europe due to the rapid development of legislation and structural changes in the system of special education there, Soviet system realized the necessity to educate students with various disabilities only two decades after the Europeans (Malofeyev, 2000). Nevertheless, there appeared new settings to accommodate students with disabilities, the Law "On Public Education" (1974) led to the adoption of new categories of disabilities apart from the previously accepted three. Thus, the number of types of special schools rose from three to eight, which enabled to enroll 575000 students with disabilities by 1990s (Kozyryova, 2015). However, the absence of state standards for children with disabilities led to the creation of a new category of *uneducable* children with severe intellectual disabilities, who were deprived of education. The turning point in the development of inclusive education is the fifth period of the evolution of special education when special schools were seen as segregating and discriminatory, which is why started to close, and starting from 1970s new terms as *inclusion*, *integration*, and *mainstreaming* were introduced to the world

(Yarskaya-Smirnova & Loshakova, 2003). The Soviet special education system, however, embraced this new concept of integration only after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which brought changes into the educational system of a new government. Thus, it can be observed that Soviet system replicated that of European with a certain delay and was influenced by the regime and legislation that guided that development. Undoubtedly, there were both advantages and disadvantages of that system. On the bright side, because the state bore all the responsibility for children with disabilities, it relieved the financial burden from the families (Korkunov, Nigayev, Reynolds, & Lerner, as cited in Alehina, Cote, Howell, Jones, & Pierson, 2014). The state initiatives enabled to educate a large number of students with disabilities who had been previously neglected and historically underrepresented. On the other hand, children were divided into *educable* and *uneducable,* the schools experienced the shortage in specialists able to work with students with disabilities, the legislation did not govern all types of disabilities, which made it impossible for students with certain types of disabilities to go to school (Boryakova, 2008). To compare, the number of types of special schools reached 20 in Europe, while the highest index for the Soviet Union was eight (Malofeyev, 2000). Such system with its benefits and drawbacks defined in large part the further development of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. To address one of the drawbacks related to legislation, after gaining independence, Kazakhstan has created a solid basis to warrant education for all children by stating this right in the Constitution, the laws "On Education" (1999) and "On the rights of child in the Republic of Kazakhstan" (2002) and signing the "Dakar Framework of Actions" in 2000 (Jadrina, 2007). Implementation of inclusive education itself started in 2011 (Zhubakova & Baymenova, 2015). The government set an objective to increase the proportion of inclusive schools from 10% to 70% by 2020, enabling thus 50% of all children with disabilities to be educated in mainstream schools (SPED, 2010). Apparently,

until the index comes closer to 100% students with certain disabilities will be educated either at home or in special correctional schools, left from the Soviet times. The imprints of Soviet legacy can also be traced in the language use. For instance, in 1990 children with disabilities were typically labeled as children with *defects* (Boryakova, 2008). Perhaps because of this, "Defectology" still exists as a major at universities in Kazakhstan. Students can obtain a bachelor, master, and even doctoral degree in Defectology at 17 higher education institutions of Kazakhstan ("The list of HEIs in Kazakhstan", 2014). Nevertheless, it should be noted that a huge progress has been made since 1991, when Kazakhstan had to create its own national system of inclusive education. Kazakhstan managed to address the major issues of the Soviet period concerning legislation, facilities, and inclusive schools. However, even more work is yet to be done, especially in the field higher education, which seems to be disregarded both in Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Systematic introduction of inclusive practices and creating special accommodations in HEIs may help to tackle the problem of low participation rate of students with disabilities and raise awareness among practitioners.

2.7 Summary

The population of students having disabilities is ubiquitously growing in postsecondary education. With this increase in the number of enrollment, faculty members will face the necessity to work with students with various impairments and accommodate their needs. Literature relating to inclusive higher education leaves no one in any doubt that they have to be aware of the nature of disabilities, necessary adjustments, and surely legislation at institutional and national levels. Numerous educationalists have highlighted the importance of professional development programs and training for the faculty in raising their knowledge level of disabilities, legislation, and provision of accommodations for the students with disabilities (Murray et al., 2008). Literature suggests that improving faculty

awareness on the issues of disability at universities may affect their willingness to provide accommodations, their attitude toward SWD, and the experience of SWD in higher education in general.

While the reviewed literature covers institutions from a wide range of countries, the issues of disability-inclusive higher education in Kazakhstan has not been treated in much detail. Much less is known about faculty attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Kazakhstani universities, which was one of the rationales for the present study.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The chapter is concerned with the methodology used for the present study. It begins by introducing the rationale for the choice of research design and the sampling strategies employed to better expose the issue. It will then go on to the data collection procedures followed by the analysis of those data. Finally, necessary ethical considerations are discussed in order to provide a comprehensive insight into the methodological aspect of the research.

3.1 Research Design

The purpose of the study was to explore faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities at one national university in Kazakhstan. To do this, the qualitative research design was chosen for qualitative inquiries are "best at contributing to a greater understanding of perceptions, attitudes, and processes" (Glesne, 2011, p.39). It gives participants an opportunity to reflect on their experience, share thoughts, and articulate concerns on the issue in question. Such approach enables a researcher to get a rich insight of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012), which is crucial in understanding people's beliefs and viewpoints. Owing to the exploratory and interpretative nature of the present research, face-to-face interviews best suited the aims of the paper. By employing qualitative research design, I had a chance to obtain extensive data on the attitudinal tendencies among faculty members.

3.2 Research Site

The study aimed to analyze how faculty of one national university in North Kazakhstan region perceived students with disabilities and their inclusion into the current system of Kazakhstani higher education. This investigation, therefore, took the form of a case study and because the research focused on faculty beliefs and perceptions, participants themselves represented the case. According to Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls (2014),

we employ case study approach for “exploration of multiple perspectives which are rooted in a specific context” (p.66). While multiple perspectives were obtained by interviews with faculty, one national university in North Kazakhstan region served as a context for the present study.

The research involved semi-structured interviews with the faculty members from one national university in Kazakhstan. One of the research questions concerns the factors influencing faculty attitudes and perceptions. Since this university has a wide range of schools and departments, it enabled to recruit participants specializing in both hard and soft sciences. The choice of the university could also be attributed to the fact that national universities enjoy more financial support from the government and thus can accommodate a larger number of students with disabilities. With the assumption that the university faculty is therefore expected to be more familiar with teaching students with special needs and give valuable insight into the topic, the university was selected as the main site for the study.

3.3 Participants

The study aimed to explore faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive education at one national university in North Kazakhstan. Purposeful sampling was employed to select participants to obtain “illuminative” cases and have a rich insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002, p.45). Moreover, such strategy enables to select participants based on certain criteria relevant to the research questions (Mason, 2002). Because the purpose of this study was to explore faculty attitudes at one national university, the first selection criterion for participants was to have a teaching position in that particular institution. Since one of the research questions concerns the factors affecting faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive higher education the relevant literature was reviewed. It revealed that such factors as faculty gender, academic rank, and the school in

which they work have an impact on their attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities and their willingness to provide those students with necessary accommodations (Daniels, et al., 2011; Kraska, 2003; Murray et al., 2008). Therefore, in order to answer the third research question, it was important to recruit faculty from both hard sciences and soft sciences departments for they may express contrasting views on inclusive education due to the peculiarities of the disciplines. It is commonly believed that hard sciences require more intellectual workload and are, therefore, expected to be more challenging for students with certain disabilities. Faculty from social sciences, in turn, may express more positive attitude because the issues of disabilities are in scope of many social disciplines, such as education, psychology, and law. Gender was another criterion for selecting participants. To be more precise, equal number of female and male participants had to take part in the study to avoid gender imbalance and to be able to contrast attitudes of female faculty to those of males in order to identify any possible differences in their responses.

Because the initial approach to the participants was somewhat problematic owing to the restricted access to them, several gatekeepers played a decisive role in contacting potential participants. Assistance of gatekeepers could be justified by their "closer relationship with and knowledge of the participants" (Webster, Lewis, & Brown, 2014, p.90). Initially, 16 faculty members were invited to participate in the interviews. However, only eight responded positively and were then interviewed individually (see Table 1). Thus, eight participants: two male and two female faculty from each social sciences (economics, linguistics, law, psychology) and hard sciences (architecture, computer sciences, physics, mathematics) departments participated in the present research.

Table 1

Participants' characteristics

№	Pseudonym	Discipline	Gender	Age	Previous experience in teaching SWD	Years of experience
1	Participant 1	Math	Female	56	+	29
2	Participant 2	Architecture	Female	26	+	1.5
3	Participant 3	Computer Sciences	Male	30	-	7
4	Participant 4	Economics	Male	29	+	4
5	Participant 5	Psychology	Female	29	-	3
6	Participant 6	Physics	Female	35	+	8
7	Participant 7	Linguistics	Male	30	-	6
8	Participant 8	Law	Male	47	-	9

The age of participants ranged between 26 and 56, with the majority being in their thirties. All the participants except Participant 1 had a work experience of less than 10 years, which indicates that the respondents were mostly at the beginning of their careers. Following the sampling criteria, four male and four female faculty members were recruited for the study. Half of the participants have had an experience in teaching students with disabilities although in different contexts. While Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 4 have worked directly with university students with disabilities, Participant 6 has taught a schoolchild with Infantile Cerebral Palsy (ICP) during her student life. In addition, none of the participants held a Ph.D. or any equivalent degree. One was, however, in the first year of his Ph.D. program (Participant 4) and the other (Participant 7) was applying for a doctoral scholarship at the time of conducting the present research.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The study took a qualitative approach, with data being collected by means of face-to-face interviews. This method of data collection helps to see the things from the participants' viewpoint, as Patton puts it, "We interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories" (Patton, 2002, p. 341). Because each participant represented different departments and age groups the researcher developed open-ended semi-structured interviews that would enable to respond "to the emerging worldview of the respondent and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.111). Flexibility in questions was especially important when asking participants to reflect on their feelings and personal experience. Thus, knowing that some questions could evoke hurtful memories or be irrelevant in certain cases, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews that allowed obtaining unique stories and viewpoints of the participants.

As outlined by Creswell (2014), data collection for the study started by the site and participants' selection. Next, I decided upon the data needed to investigate the topic. Along with selecting appropriate instruments and materials to collect those data, the field issues and ethical considerations were scrutinized. After having received an approval from NUGSE research ethics committee, I proceeded to collect data for the present study.

To facilitate the process of the participants' recruitment I contacted professors and friends from the university who acted as gatekeepers for the study. Being insiders, they were able to locate faculty who met the selection criteria, who then received an introductory letter outlining the purpose of the research, its significance along with the benefits it may bring. Possible risks related to the research, confidentiality issues and duration of the interviews were also mentioned. The faculty was informed that their participation was solely voluntary and they had a right to withdraw at any stage of the research. The data collection commenced in January and lasted for two months.

Every interview was scheduled beforehand and each participant was interviewed individually at the venue and in the language most convenient for them. The duration of the interviews varied from 24 to 56 minutes. The researcher asked for permission to audio record the interviews and take notes to refer to them later when coding and analyzing the findings. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher thanked the participants for their immense contribution to the study. In a few days, they received the transcription to ensure validity, eliminate any misconceptions and ask for clarifications.

3.5 Instruments and Materials

As an instrument of data collection, the researcher devised two interview protocols in English and Russian (see Appendices A and B) that contained demographic information, such as participants' gender, age, department, the position of participants as well as the day and duration of the interview. It, therefore, included demographic questions on the participants' gender, age, years of experience, and their professional background. Such questions were also important because it was the first time I ever met the participants, and as a researcher, I tried to design a smooth transition to the main questions, focused on faculty attitudes and beliefs about persons with disabilities and their inclusion into the system of higher education.

In order to audio record the conversations, I used my mobile phone. Member checking took place after the interviews to enable the participants to complement or specify certain points. In addition, it increased the trust between the participants and the researcher, which is crucially important in conducting interviews.

3.6 Data Analysis

Careful examination of the data collected identified around 20 categories with regard to faculty attitude toward persons with disabilities, special facilities, and disability-inclusive education at the university. They emerged from a line-by-line coding that was

employed to avoid predefined themes and eliminate bias (see Appendices C and D). It thus let the data speak. The researcher then grouped the categories into bigger themes that enabled to show how these patterns might alter with different participants, time periods, and settings (Glesne, 2001, p.187).

In a qualitative study, data collection and analysis happen at the same time (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, I was analyzing the data from the very first interview because I had read other researchers' works and was able to see the concurrence or controversy with the previous research done in the field. Moreover, as the interviews proceeded, I could see the major overlapping aspects of the participants' responses, which assisted in thematic coding. By exploring the data through multiple reading, the themes and categories were analyzed in a more extensive way.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

As a researcher, I followed the ethical standards throughout the study. First, I did not commence data collection unless I got an approval from Nazarbayev University. Since disability is considered a sensitive topic, the participants were told that they did not have to reveal the names or any other details that could identify the students with disabilities to preserve anonymity. The names of the participants and the institution remained confidential throughout the study. The participants' names were substituted with codes, and the name of the institution was not revealed at any stage of the research. All the interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants and stored electronically on the phone and the laptop protected with a password. The interview notes, consent forms, and other hard-copy documents were kept in a securely locked drawer. The recordings will be deleted upon the thesis completion. Only the researcher and the research supervisor have an access to the data.

All the potential risks and inconveniences that might arise from the participation were explained both orally and in a written form in the informed consent (see Appendices E and F). It is essential that the participants comprehend the purpose, duration, and methods of the research, their role and contribution in it, the costs and benefits associated with their involvement in the study. Therefore, I ensured that the language in the consent form did not cause any confusion or ambiguity and was used at an appropriate reading level of the participants.

Participation in the study was solely voluntary and free from any form of coercion. The participants were given sufficient time to decide whether to be interviewed. They were also at liberty to choose a setting for they might feel discomfort or pressure when surrounded by their colleagues or students who might overhear the conversation within the university. Following the rules of the informed consent, every participant was informed that he or she had a right to withdraw at any point of the research or to refuse to answer specific questions during the interviews without penalty. Finally, no incentives were provided for the participation in order to exclude the elements of influence from the researcher.

3.8 Summary

The chapter presents the methodology opted for the research and provides a rationale for the choice. Since the topic under scrutiny aims to explore faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities, the qualitative research design was employed to answer the research questions and thus achieve the objectives of the study. Data for this study were collected using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. To do this, purposive sampling was taken as a basis when choosing participants. Eight faculty members from different departments were promoted to take part in the study. They were interviewed individually at the preferred location to avoid any discomfort pertaining to the presence of their colleagues

and students at their workplaces. Ethical considerations were carefully examined and followed by the researcher throughout the whole period of research. The informed consent was devised in accordance with the standards. Hence, the chosen approach coupled with a careful use of textbooks helped me conduct a sound and significant research. Although there exist certain limitations related to the sample size and the self-reported nature of the interviews, the chosen design best served to the needs of the research.

Chapter 4. Findings

The findings are derived from the interview responses of eight faculty members from eight different departments at one national university in Kazakhstan. Analysis of the data collected has identified three major themes related to faculty beliefs and perceptions of students with disabilities, their willingness to provide students with special accommodations, and the information they possess in terms of teaching students with disabilities, special facilities, legislation, or issues of inclusive education at their institution. This chapter aims to present the description and interpretation of these categories and is therefore divided into three sections. The first section dwells on the faculty attitudes toward persons with disabilities and their inclusion into the system of higher education. Faculty views regarding provision of accommodations for students with special needs are discussed in the second section while the last section focuses on faculty awareness of disability-inclusive education and effective strategies for teaching students with disabilities. Associated subthemes and participants' quotes are provided to enhance understanding of the issue in question.

4.1 Faculty Attitudes toward Disability-Inclusive Education

This section gives an insight into faculty perceptions and beliefs pertaining to persons with various disabilities, their inclusion into the contemporary system of higher education in Kazakhstan, and the willingness to and challenges of teaching students with disabilities in higher education institutions. Overall, all the participants regardless of their gender, age, experience, or discipline agreed with the importance and necessity to provide study opportunities for students with disabilities in HEIs. However, their opinions on the procedures, principles, and challenges of promoting disability-inclusive education varied substantially. For instance, some faculty believed it was essential to adapt one's teaching strategies to meet students' needs, the others put forward the idea of equal treatment with

no inclinations from the standards. The subthemes below will provide a deeper analysis of such differences in faculty judgments.

4.1.1 Faculty attitudes toward persons with disabilities. To understand how faculty perceives disability-inclusive education it is critical to investigate their attitude toward persons with disabilities in general. Therefore, the participants were asked to elaborate on their previous contact with PWD. Overall, the participants felt a wide range of emotions from fear to pity depending on the type of disability. As a rule, they were somewhat afraid to be around persons with mental health conditions and pitied those with obvious physical disabilities.

Faculty's feeling sad or sorry for PWD can be attributed to restricted facilities that do not meet various needs of the latter: "Errr I don't know I start pitying them because they can't move around, overall restricted, they always need help" (Participant 2). It seems that the participants feel sorry not only because PWD somehow differ from them, but also because they have to ask for help. Perhaps, if there were special facilities in the buildings or on the street, PWD would not attract attention and consequently, the others would not see them as disabled. This goes hand in hand with the social model of disability, which claims that it is not a disability that makes a person handicapped, but society that fails to accommodate his or her needs (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2013). It is not surprising that every participant mentioned the lack of appropriate facilities as issues of inclusivity in Kazakhstan have recently received pervasive attention from both the government and society. However, this induced divergent sentiments in the participants. While Participant 2 admitted having felt pity vis-a-vis persons with disabilities, Participant 5, on the other hand, was quite adamant to say that "pity is not the best manifestation of empathy". She noted that demonstration of pity makes people with disabilities feel separated and even more excluded. Putting herself in the position of PWD she continued, "I would not like

professors to pity me. . . . I would like to be treated like any other student in the class". Despite opposing views on pity, both participants reported being afraid of persons with intellectual or mental disabilities both in childhood and in adult life. This was explained by the unexpected behavior of people with such conditions:

> To be honest, I am afraid of them because I don't know maybe at some point they will hurt me errr they are errrr inadequate we can say to some extent, they can be inadequate and you never know how to respond to their questions, errr what if you just stand like that, answer and will be punched in the head for no reason, it happens. (Participant 2)

The response raises an important issue of little awareness of how to interact with PWD. Sometimes it may cause discomfort and confusion as in the case of Participant 5: "I met people with strabismus, I consider it as some sort of deviation because sometimes you feel discomfort around them for you want to focus on their sight, but you can't focus on a definite eye roughly speaking". However, there are situations when it goes beyond simple confusion and causes fear, as with Participant 2. She thinks that "wrong" answers may somehow cause inadequate behavior of a person with an intellectual or mental disorder and thus, put her in danger. Such fear of getting hurt or somehow offended by people with mental conditions may influence faculty attitude toward disability-inclusive education. They may feel reluctant to have such students in the class; they may as well face difficulties in communication. Hence, necessity in raising awareness among faculty members is undeniable and will be explored in a greater depth later in the chapter.

4.1.1.1 The influence of participants' background on their attitudes toward PWD.

The interviews revealed that participants' personal experience and background may influence their attitudes toward PWD. For instance, Participant 1 transformed her pity into respect after she had gone through a serious illness. In the face of tough times, she herself underwent hardships and challenges that people with disabilities encounter on a daily basis. Therefore, she was convinced that persons with disabilities were brave and deserved

to be treated in a more respectful way for their courage. As the participant puts it, “I think that, on the contrary, we should envy them, their willpower. . . .I respect that they struggle. . .they don’t complain, and it is great”. After having withstood a severe malady, the participant must have understood how challenging it is to live with a disability both physically and emotionally, which must have shifted her previous paradigms. Therefore, she no longer pitied PWD, but she felt a great deal of respect toward their bravery and optimism.

From the responses, one can grasp the general perception that oftentimes pity implies superiority and is therefore regarded as something more negative than positive. Perhaps this is the reason why all the participants who reported to feel pity toward PWD hesitated to answer the question “What do you feel when you meet PWD?” It seems they realized that by feeling sorry for people with disabilities they made the latter feel somewhat unfortunate. Therefore, long pauses after the questions related to participants’ feelings toward PWD took place quite often.

Nevertheless, there were participants who held an opposite view. For instance, Participant 3, who reflected on the influence of Soviet legacy on our mentality reproved that tendency to believe that different means worse. To support his argument, he provided an example of Nick Vujicic, a famous writer and motivational speaker, who managed to overcome the hardships related to his body conditions. Similarly, Participant 6 referred to Stephen Hawking and his enormous contribution to science, concluding that “diagnosis does not determine one’s intelligence”. Analysis of the participants’ responses revealed that their attitude toward PWD had little to do with the gender or disciplines they taught, but more with their education. To illustrate, Participants 3 who obtained western education and 6 who is now getting a master’s degree from another western institution, were the ones who reported expressing equal attitude with no emphasis on disabilities, which echoes with

the responses of Participant 5, who had worked in a campus of a foreign university. Not only did they put forward the idea of equal treatment, but also raised an important question of employment. Participant 6, for instance, was concerned about the absence of the link between student and employer. She then highlighted the need to inform the employers saying, "This particular graduate with this or that diploma, with whatever disability is capable to do this kind of job". This way, she believes PWD will be more eager to obtain higher education because for now, they are reluctant to do so owing to the low demand in the labor market. Perhaps, this concern was articulated because the participant was getting a degree in business administration, which largely deals with employment. Participants 3 and Participant 5 shared similar perspectives on the employability of PWD. They both agreed that it is better to focus on one's capabilities than disabilities. Thus, findings suggest that those faculty members who obtained their degree from or worked for western universities were more concerned with the issues of equity and employment. As discussed in Chapter 2, inclusive practices and principles in the Western world have been developing from 1970s while the Soviet system lagged more than 20 years behind in promoting equal opportunities for PWD. Thus, a longer history of inclusivity may have given the participants more exposure to such fair and non-discriminatory attitude, which was then reflected in their own responses.

Hence, although no negative judgments toward PWD were identified from data analysis, the participants felt differently when interacting with PWD. While some felt pity or confusion around PWD, the others believed that they should be treated as any other person with no emphasis on their abilities. These differences seem to relate to personal experience or exposure to an inclusive culture that participants gained through getting education in the West, where inclusivity is part and parcel of everyday life. Findings

suggest that raising faculty awareness of the needs of PWD may cultivate tolerance and induce them to promote genuine equity at their workplace.

4.1.2 Faculty attitudes toward inclusion of PWD into higher education. All the participants expressed a generally positive attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities (SWD) into a classroom along with their non-disabled peers. However, specific questions on the opportunities for SWD to specialize in particular disciplines split the participants into two groups, with one believing in students' success in any specialty, and the other holding "realistic" view. Moreover, the data suggest that study opportunities for students with intellectual or mental disabilities are perceived differently by male and female faculty members. While female participants accepted the idea of inclusive education for students with intellectual or mental disabilities, male faculty members believed it was problematic or even impossible for students with such disabilities to pursue higher education because it requires certain level of intellectual work that such students cannot demonstrate. Participants also suggested there should be either another form of education or special universities for them. As it can be seen, although the participants supported the idea of disability-inclusive higher education, their responses demonstrate that it can only be available under certain conditions. Inclusion thus appears to be hindered due to medical diagnoses of the students.

The participants were unanimous in affirming that Kazakhstani universities including the university they worked at were not ready to enroll students with disabilities due to several factors, including lack of special facilities and equipment to meet students' needs and the low level of faculty knowledge in the field of inclusive education and teaching practices. All the participants accentuated that lack of university facilities hinders students from participation in higher education, but only few noticed another issue that supervenes from that deficit. Because of inability to do tasks, SWD will need to constantly

resort to the help of their group mates or other people at the university to move around or even find the right classroom or building. The latter can be especially challenging for some students. For instance, this is how Participant 2 reflects on the experiences of a deaf and mute student from her department: “He had some questions, say he doesn’t understand some things, how to get somewhere, yes, his group mates helped him”. Therefore, special facilities, such as wall signs, or a specially assigned sign language translator would be of great help to students with similar conditions. External assistance is also required when it comes to doing homework. As Participant 5 mentioned: “Say in order to understand the material a blind person has to reread it, digest and write, maybe his brother or sister or some group mates will help him”. This suggests that success of a SWD at university is rather complex and calls for a mutual effort of students, family, peers, faculty, and the university leadership as well.

It should be noted here that the majority of participants hesitated when it came to terminology. It seemed that they did not know what word or phrase to use in order not to hurt anyone’s feelings. However, Participant 8, despite he specializes in law, kept calling a student with a disability *disabled girl* or simply *invalid* putting thus her abilities before her personality. Utilization of the term *down* as a description instead of saying a student with Down syndrome leads to thinking that the participant defines a student by his or her medical conditions. The same could be said about Participant 1 who seemed to get tired of repeating students with disabilities every time she referred to them and switched to a shorter term invalid, which obviously sounds rude and may insult a person with disabilities. Notably, both participants have had their education in the Soviet period, when people had an extremely limited exposure to PWD because the latter were separated from society in remote establishments such as boarding schools. This fact may have influenced their perception of such students as “aliens” different from the rest and their language use

as well. Seeing a person behind those syndromes, diseases, and impairments is one of the most important aspects of disability-inclusive education, and therefore, needs to be addressed continuously.

4.1.2.1 Teaching students with intellectual or mental disabilities. All the participants agreed that teaching students with intellectual or mental disabilities were more challenging for both faculty and students themselves. However, not every participant felt the same when it came to including these students in the classroom. Male part of the participants generally believed that students with mental or intellectual disabilities cannot pursue higher education at a mainstream university with some thinking it was impossible (Participant 3 and 8) and the others labeling it as problematic (Participant 4 and 8). What was common is that male faculty members considered students with intellectual or mental disabilities should be involved in different kinds of activities taking into account their abilities. For instance, Participant 3 suggests that these students could learn to achieve the possible highest level of education in order to find "of course not a high-paid job... .but work as a cashier in some stores". Participant 8 believes students with intellectual or mental disabilities can obtain higher education only in special institutions designed to accommodate such students only. It is worth noting that this refers to students with intellectual or mental disabilities only. With regard to students with hearing or visual impairments, 3 out of 4 participants (except for Participant 8) were keen to teach such students. This suggests that male participants believe that we should include only those students who are capable to complete their program. Since visual and hearing impairments usually do not inhibit students' intellectual development, they seem to be considered "capable" to obtain higher education. Participant 8, in turn, argued that he had not possessed enough competences in special education and that students with disabilities other than obvious physical ones should be taught in a separate university. Although his

male colleagues agreed that teaching students with visual and hearing impairments required additional expertise and knowledge, they were eager to adapt to the needs of students even if it meant an extra amount of work. The difference in opinions on the matter may have differed because Participant 8 was the only male participant that did not speak English, and was therefore deprived of an opportunity to familiarize himself with progressive scientific literature in the language. To quote his own words: "If we read the materials in English, our attitude will change completely because their [western] attitudes do differ from ours".

Their female counterparts, on the other hand, held an opposite view. According to them, appropriate teaching strategies and techniques complemented with necessary facilities can potentially help students with intellectual or mental disabilities obtain higher education. As we can see, the attitude towards these students has little to do with the participants' specialties but more with a gender. It could be assumed that female faculty members are more emotionally attached to students and willing to try to teach them whereas male professors are guided more by logic than emotions.

Nonetheless, all the participants agreed with the importance and influence of the faculty attitude on the achievements of SWD. They said there was a positive correlation between the attitude and success of SWD. The negative attitude, on the contrary, leads to demoralization devastation and even unwillingness to live (Participant 6).

4.2 Faculty Perceptions toward Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The section explores faculty beliefs pertaining to various accommodations for students with disabilities that are necessary for them to cope with their higher education studies. It also compares how faculty members provide or would provide SWD with physical and/or academic accommodations. All the participants, regardless of their experience, age, and departments agreed on the fact that most universities do not equip

students with physical facilities. However, they shared contrasting views about academic accommodations appealing to different reasons, which will be discussed further in the section.

4.2.1 Faculty concerns regarding physical accommodations for SWD. Many stated there were no lifts, ramps, special washrooms, desks, handles, books, and materials for students with disabilities. Moreover, even before starting a university program, the entry exam, known as Unified National Test (UNT), does not take into account the diverse population of school-leavers. Participant 8 recalled his experience when a promising enrollee, who was in a wheelchair was taking the exam at the university. She needed a special adjustable desk so that she could place her arms and hands in the right posture during the test. Unfortunately, because university failed to provide her with necessary accommodation at the UNT, she was not able to succeed in the test and more importantly, was severely depressed afterward. As it can be seen, providing facilities for students with special needs may as well affect their psychological health, not to mention their physical well-being.

Another important issue identified through interviews was unpreparedness of dormitories to admit students with disabilities. To be specific, according to Participant 2, they do not provide facilities that would meet even their basic needs, such as special bathrooms. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate SWD in the dormitories. Participant 3 saw only one solution to the existing problem:

> If they [SWD] get lucky and have wealthy parents, they will send them abroad where all of this is taken into account, but if a person was born in a middle-class family, the only chance for him is to win a scholarship to study overseas.

Surely, special facilities require a considerable amount of budget. Interestingly, to the question “Who should bear such financial burden?”, the majority answered that the government is responsible for providing accommodations for students with disabilities,

helping everyone to get higher education, hiring professionals in the field of special education, and even creating a new university for those having intellectual and mental disabilities. In general, the participants seem to rely heavily on the governmental support. Participant 6, for instance, believed that the government should go even further and assist in the employment procedures following the graduation. She argues that so far there is no link between the graduates and the employers, which hinders successful transition to the labor market for the former, especially when it comes to students with disabilities most of whom think "Okay, I will graduate, but who is going to hire me? If you don't have connections, everybody thinks that diploma will just lie, and nobody will need it, and the money is wasted" (Participant 6). Thus, according to Participant 6, the government, as a powerful institute, has a capacity to change these well-established stereotypes regarding SWD and their employability. Similarly, when listing the factors of Nick Vujicic's success, the Participant 3 placed opportunities of his country on the same level as parental love. Such tendency to shift responsibility for one's education to the government prevails in the responses. This may be the echoes of the Soviet times for as discussed in Chapter 2, the government acted as the main source of funding. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny the importance of a country's prosperity in the system of higher education, and the case of Kazakhstan is not an exception.

Interesting findings were noted with regard to physical accommodations for people with disabilities in general. The analysis of the interviews has revealed that the participants were more concerned about public facilities rather than university accommodations. They mentioned the lack or absence of necessary accommodations on the streets, in public transport, and even government agencies. It seemed that they wanted to show the importance of such facilities in quotidian life, not only at university. After all, students

have to commute, appeal to public services, or participate in other extracurricular activities. In her attempt to raise this problem, Participant 1 said:

> All the stores, schools, different settlements, offices that we created, we created them for ourselves, namely for two legs, two arms, two eyes, for those who can speak, who can reach out and open the doors, but why don't we create such conveniences for invalids?

To some extent, the participant opposed PWD with *us* referring to physically healthy people. In addition, she preferred using the word *invalid* instead of more ethical terms. Her language use thus highlights an apparent segregation between people with and without disabilities. Perhaps, such disparity is so conspicuous because of the abovementioned ill accommodation. It is not society that is adapting to PWD, but PWD who are adapting to society. This makes people with disabilities resort to the help of others even for simple tasks. As a rule, PWD then feel reluctant to leave their houses. Consequently, little exposure to people with disabilities gives them an image of, as Participant 1 commented, "aliens in a wheelchair". It can thus be assumed that providing facilities for PWD may break this vicious circle, change the attitudes and help to finally transfer from integration to inclusion.

All the participants were unanimous in their opinion that physical facilities are still not in place, which may deprive SWD of participation in higher education. Moreover, students face obstacles outside the university as well. Even if the situation changes within institutions, the participation rate among SWD is likely to remain low unless concrete measures are taken with regard to facilities in other public establishments.

4.2.2 Faculty attitudes toward provision of academic accommodations for SWD.

While there was no dispute concerning the importance and necessity of physical facilities for students with disabilities, the participants fell into two groups when it came to academic accommodations. The first group, which included the two most mature participants (Participant 1 and Participant 8) were convinced that providing academic

accommodations for students with disabilities would diminish their abilities. They were therefore against task differentiation or exam alterations. Moreover, the participants did not express any desire to change their teaching strategies. Participant 1 even refused to give time extension for SWD. As she said:

> Time should be common, it means that we already admit that he is "miserable" and that he cannot adapt, we shouldn't at all, we shouldn't segregate, we shouldn't the only thing we should make a good entrance for "wheelchair men" so that they could come in. (Participant 1)

The participant's response indicates that she does not want SWD to stand out from the rest of the group because of these accommodations. She believes providing those facilities accentuate that he or she is "not like us" and may, therefore, hurt students' feelings. In contrast to this, Participant 8 said he would consider giving extra time for SWD; however, it would only be applicable to students without any intellectual or mental conditions. Therefore, for students with physical disabilities, even the smallest changes in the exam procedures were non-negotiable. To quote his words,

> If he is able to get education despite he has a disability, if he wants to get education, it is he who wants to get education on an equal basis, to socialize, let him do so, I mean it is not right to emphasize his disability.

The two participants represented two genders and two different departments. Given that the participants were the only ones to have obtained higher education in the Soviet period, it may be assumed that common historical background, not their gender or academic unit, influenced their attitude toward academic accommodations. Because students used to be *equalized* at that period, different conditions for different types of students may have been unacceptable. This, in turn, may have shaped the way the participants regarded academic accommodations for SWD. Interviews with senior faculty members have also revealed that they were not familiar with academic accommodations per se, which is why the definition of the term and examples were needed. However, even after the clarifications, they both insisted on the negative influence of special conditions for

SWD believing that this would only highlight their inability to do tasks on a par with their classmates. Nevertheless, the participants were very much concerned about basic facilities, such as ramps, desks, or handles perhaps because they only taught students with ICP and tended to consider physical accommodations rather than academic ones. Therefore, the answers boiled down to providing special equipment to facilitate students' commuting, taking books from the library, or moving in the classroom. Again, this could be attributed to the fact that a very small number of students with disabilities are studying at university as reported by the participants. Because of the lack of experience in the interaction with SWD, faculty members may have responded thinking only of the students they taught, who were having exclusively physical disabilities.

On the contrary, the second group, which happened to represent the younger generation of faculty members have had more experience in teaching or interacting with students with various disabilities. They appear to be more willing to support their students with necessary academic accommodations, such as giving breaks, extending deadlines, or differentiating tasks, and even helping with further employment. Studying in post-Soviet period, when Kazakhstan had addressed the previous drawbacks of the Soviet system, the younger participants must have been exposed to a greater amount of information on PWD as well as social campaigns promoting equity. They must have witnessed that very wave of inclusion that stroke Europe much earlier. Such acknowledgment of diversity seems to play a significant role in faculty beliefs toward academic accommodations for SWD.

According to the responses, younger educators were more likely to extend the deadlines for students who may face certain difficulties in doing their homework or preparing class projects. Among all possible academic accommodations, this was the most frequently mentioned and marked as important. Admitting that time pressure could be hard

for any student, Participant 5 thinks it is necessary to allow SWD later submissions. As she puts it,

> I would give pampering in terms of deadlines, say to deaf and mute or blind students I would give more time so that he or she could simply be helped by people from the outside, to prepare necessary materials that need to be handed in.

Such "pampering" was argued by Participant 3, who believed that SWD may start "using their status" and "play on sympathy" to get regular deadline extensions. Instead, he would prepare them for the life after university:

> They should take responsibility, later at workplaces, nobody will give them a slack because he is invalid or had no time to do tasks because we must get them ready to face real life, but they should understand that we do care for them, too.

To show this care, the participant offers other academic accommodations that would help students succeed in their studies. For instance, deaf and mute students would take advantage from his lecturers for they would be accompanied with subtitles to enable students to sit in a classroom and enjoy all the benefits of higher education to the same extent as their non-disabled peers. Probably, for the same reason, he would not only record audio lectures for students with visual impairments but also devote his time for extra classes for such students to catch up on the materials. Perhaps influenced by his educational background in one of the UK university that admitted SWD, the participant was very considerate in assuming that students may understand more things in silence, and therefore proposed to dedicate special days and hours to receive such students and answer their questions that they may not have asked during the lessons.

As can be seen, the second group was eager to provide necessary academic accommodations for SWD. This may be explained by a frequent contact with PWD, which led to a more tolerant attitude. However, the responses indicate that provision of academic accommodations would depend on the types of disabilities. For instance, Participant 2 found it unethical to ask students in a wheelchair to go to a construction site and take

measurements. Instead, she would give them a readymade drawing so that they could work under easier conditions. Thus, the participants' idea of task facilitation was caused by ethical considerations. The other participants, however, did not share the same thought on the matter. Participant 1, for instance, was assured that distinguishing SWD in front of the class would be equivalent to insulting them while Participant 3 believed it was unfair towards their non-disabled peers who would complain against such special treatment. According to the participant, different tasks would contradict the very idea of inclusive education, which aims to give equal opportunities to everyone. One should bear in mind that the participants spoke of hypothetical situations. The only faculty who shared his real experience in providing academic accommodations for SWD was Participant 4. When working with students with visual impairments he had to pick only those materials that were accessible for blind students, which obviously shrank the number of available resources. Along with this, he tried not to overload students with written work focusing mainly on their presentation skills. In addition, the participant initiated group works both encouraging classroom interaction and adapting his teaching practices to the diverse student population. The latter is very important for providing academic accommodations goes hand in hand with changes in one's teaching methodology. This was emphasized by Participant 2 who highlighted pedagogical tact, ethics, and skills in working with students with special needs. Admitting that she does not possess enough competences in special education, she then adds:

> I would probably familiarize myself with pedagogy, how to conduct classes for such students, I would consider methodology and cases. Then, of course, we have to take into account psychological factor, that there are peculiarities, how to treat them, how to talk to them, how to lead classes, this is very important, and I guess motivate them. I mean spend more time with such students rather than the others because…students with disabilities may have some complexes or difficulties with understanding in general.

As it can be seen, the participants had different perspectives on how to support SWD. While some prioritized psychological compound of inclusion, the others accentuated the role of flexibility. Their willingness to provide SWD with academic accommodations seems to be linked to participants' educational background and not to their experience or disciplines taught. However, despite the different characteristics, all the participants agreed that it is possible to find ways to teach students with various disabilities as long as there is a desire to do so from both the faculty and students themselves.

4.3 Faculty Awareness of the Issues of Inclusive Education

The lack of knowledge in the practices of inclusive education both at their home university and nationwide was repeatedly reported by the participants. Little awareness was also manifested in the participants' responses. To illustrate, Participant 5 firmly believed there were no SWD at her university while Participant 2 and 4 reported having deaf and mute and blind students graduated from university. Given that this happened while Participant 5 was working at the university, the finding suggests that the issues of disability-inclusive education are not illuminated or discussed within the university. Surely, Participant 5 may not have seen SWD from other departments. However, there should be interactive sessions across the university to discuss the current state of inclusive education as well as its future directions. This would encourage knowledge exchange, which in turn, can benefit both faculty and certainly SWD.

Contrary to the assumption that little awareness necessitates the introduction of special training, not all the participants felt it was necessary. To the question "Is there a need to raise awareness on the principles or medical aspects of inclusive education among faculty members?" Participant 8 responded that it was needed for those faculty members who wanted to teach SWD because otherwise, it was not "profitable", however, the participant did not specify whether the profit referred to students, university, or the faculty.

While willingness was the main factor for Participant 8, experience played a dominant role in deciding who gets to teach SWD according to Participant 6. She made a point that only experienced teachers should be allowed to work with SWD. It seems that knowledge and expertise in disability-inclusive education can only complement the existing experience of a teacher. Of interest is the fact that the participant puts these two competencies working with students in general and working with SWD in this exact order. First, faculty should be able to teach a mainstream group and only then engage in courses on inclusivity to add to that knowledge. It should be noted here that the participant had a 3-year experience in tutoring a student with ICP and knew firsthand how arduous it can get at times. What remains unclear is who will teach SWD if senior faculty members refuse to do so and their younger counterparts are not allowed.

Nevertheless, the majority of participants felt necessity in raising awareness not only of the faculty but general public on the whole. According to Participant 5, such campaigns should convey a message that persons with disabilities are entitled to the same benefits and opportunities as physically and mentally healthy people. This task to inform the population about inclusivity should not rest solely on the shoulders of universities: "It should be discussed within universities or schools, it should be discussed everywhere, I mean in hard copies, it should be written in the laws, what rights or benefits they have". The fact the participant thinks there is no law on the rights of PWD although Kazakhstan has enacted both international and state documents regulating their rights, illustrates that existing information may not reach the practitioners. Raising faculty awareness is therefore essential to promote inclusive culture. Particular attention is devoted to social media in informing the population. However, Participant 1 believes the social media is not concerned about PWD as it did in Soviet times. There used to be more social campaign regarding equal treatment, something that she called "upbringing of society". Because we

are not exposed to such information or even PWD on the streets, today people react to them as “aliens in a wheelchair”.

Most participants regardless of the departments they belonged to raised a concern about the lack of training for faculty members. Such sessions would benefit them in many ways from learning to communicate with SWD to changing the teaching strategies to meet the students’ needs. The findings suggest that several participants were even afraid to unintentionally harm students by saying or doing something wrong. As one of them reflected on one student she had to once teach: “I didn’t know how to talk to him, maybe I said something redundant, perhaps he will perceive it in a wrong way, get offended, harm himself or the others, I don’t know how to work with such kids”. Obviously, the participant could get a lot from the courses in terms of communication strategies. They may seem negligible in a bigger context of inclusivity in higher education. However, being responsive and sensitive even to the mood of SWD may help to build the right tone, communication and consequently to conduct a good lesson. This was well-illustrated by Participant 3:

> Their mornings can start very badly, right? He wakes up and thinks for example that everybody can walk, why I can’t? Everybody has a couple, why I don’t? And here if he is in a bad mood, a teacher should react, he should find out the reason….he should talk to him, ask what happened, say “let me help you”. We should understand that….such people are more inclined to mood swings.

Along with psychological training, it is crucially important to enrich faculty’s knowledge of inclusive teaching strategies and techniques. Being morally prepared may not be sufficient when it comes to actual teaching in a classroom. In this regard, knowledge sharing may help to master teaching SWD. To do this, Participant 4 proposed to organize sessions of “pedagogical excellence”, during which invited professionals could come and share their experience.

It is remarkable that participants had a quite precise conception of how these training sessions should be organized. Participant 5 recommends starting with "moral preparation" of students and faculty, which includes roundtables and reading special literature on the topic. If the proposal of Participant 5 is quite understandable for she specializes in psychology, interesting was the response of Participant 3, who taught computer sciences. The discipline thus seem to play a negligible role in faculty preferences regarding special training. Participant 3 paid attention to a psychological aspect of teacher-student interaction, with the former being equated with a second parent:

> Not only should we raise awareness among faculty members, but also there is a need to raise the level of knowledge itself, I mean a teacher is a psychologist, he should understand that he works with a different contingent…. he should be the kind of person to whom this particular student should come and tell, to see a friend in him, not an overseer; on the other hand, this very student, he should respect and be afraid of him, this teacher, because if he doesn't cope with his studies, the teacher will put an F and there will be no pampering.

Interestingly, the more eager was the participant to learn about disabilities, legislation, teaching SWD the stronger they believed that special training should be obligatory. However, many participants suggested the courses were relatively short, ongoing so that any faculty member can join at any time, voluntarily. The voluntary basis for such courses raises a question. Who will teach a SWD if no one wants to take the courses? What if at the end there are not any faculty members who know how to work with SWD?

4.4 Summary

The interviews revealed two important flaws in pedagogical specialties taught at Kazakhstani universities. Because "Special education" discipline is not included in the curriculum of pedagogical faculties, the graduates like Participant 2, are not aware of its strategies, principles, and practices. Consequently, those faculty members who faced students with disabilities had to use a case-by-case approach, without prior knowledge and therefore learned as they proceeded. On the bright side, such method may have benefited

SWD because faculty members would be unbiased and eager to learn from the students themselves. However, in most situations, faculty members would simply refuse to teach such students referring to the absence of special qualifications. For Participant 8 this was even the reason not to admit students with intellectual disabilities to a mainstream university because professors are not prepared to teach such students and that he himself did not possess knowledge in this field. He was also afraid that if faculty members fail to understand them (SWD) psychologically, students may get hurt. Noticeably, Participant 8 was not alone in his fear of doing harm to SWD. Participant 3 felt that if we did not adjust curriculum to the needs of a student with intellectual or mental disabilities if we "torture him by offering a program that he will never be able to adopt", he will get worse. Perhaps, knowing essentials of special education, such as medical characteristics, legislation, facilities, and accommodations, would have influenced the participants' way of thinking and they would no longer be afraid to include students with intellectual or mental disabilities in a regular classroom. It may also help to avoid confusion, discomfort and achieve better academic results.

Second, government standards do not enable universities to include special education in a curriculum of pedagogical specialties. Moreover, because of this, the faculty has their hands tied. They cannot skip the themes that are set by the ministry of education.

What emerges from the abovementioned two facts is that disability-inclusive higher education seemed to be perceived as a goal itself but not as a natural phenomenon as in any higher education institution. To illustrate, participants 6 and 8 noted that the universities are struggling with other important issues, such as the lack of materials in the Kazakh language, poor facilities, and transition to a 12-year schooling, which puts promoting disability-inclusive education in a position of second-tier problems. Disability-inclusive education was seen as a separate direction that cannot be developed along with other

ongoing issues. The hope that “Perhaps it will be in the future” expressed by Participant 8 illustrates that disability-inclusive education in Kazakhstani universities is still in its infancy. Perhaps this is the reason why accommodations are evaluated as pampering, students in wheelchairs as “aliens”, and regulating all of the issues are assigned to students’ “second parents”, faculty.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive higher education at one national university in Kazakhstan. Overall, eight faculty members from different departments were interviewed. The analysis of those interviews revealed that all the participants were unanimous in their belief that disability-inclusive education should be promoted at all universities. They also shared a common value pertaining to the issues of access and equity emphasizing that higher education must be accessible for all regarding a person's abilities. In addition, participants held a positive attitude toward provision of physical accommodations for students with disabilities and expressed a strong interest in special training for faculty on disability-inclusive education. However, participants' responses to more specific questions differed according to their characteristics, such as gender, age, and background. For instance, gender seemed to determine whether a participant believed in the success of students with intellectual or mental disabilities in higher education, with women being more supportive of such students. As for educational background, the eldest faculty members, whose education peaked at the Soviet times, tended to refuse to provide academic accommodations for SWD, believing it would only highlight their disabilities. This section analyzes these findings in light of previous studies, identifies major implications and gives recommendations for further research.

5.1 Faculty Attitude towards Students with Disabilities

Most of the literature on faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities demonstrate that educators tend to regard students with physical disabilities more favorably rather than those with learning or mental disabilities. For instance, the study conducted by Sniatecki, et al. (2015) in the United States, identified the most positive attitude towards students with physical disabilities and the most negative attitude towards

students with mental health disabilities. Such tendency goes beyond general attitude and is kept in participants' further responses regarding the success of SWD in college and their academic competitiveness. The researchers thus came to conclusion that students with mental health disabilities may encounter difficulties in interpersonal communication with their professors and therefore need additional support.

My findings are consistent with those of prior literature with regard to changes in attitudes based on disability type. It should be mentioned that the participants tended to combine students with mental disabilities with those of having intellectual or learning disabilities. With this in mind, students with physical disabilities were exposed to generally positive attitudes from both male and female faculty while students with mental and/or intellectual conditions could only expect it from female professors. These attitudinal tendencies are seen in their responses to possibilities of SWD to obtain higher education. Despite three out of four female participants taught hard subjects, they were more supportive with regard to the idea of including students with mental and/or intellectual disabilities into the contemporary system of Kazakhstani higher education and believed that with the appropriate methodology and sound approach it was possible for such students to pursue education at university. On the contrary, although their male colleagues taught mainly soft subjects, having students with intellectual and/or mental disabilities in their classes was seen unrealistic for them. According to their responses, such students should either be taught in a separate university with specially trained educators or choose another type of educational settlement aligned with their capabilities. Hence, the present study extends previous findings on negative attitudes toward certain types of disabilities in relation to gender.

5.2 Faculty Willingness to Provide Accommodations for SWD

The question about the provision of academic accommodations for SWD split the faculty from the present study into two groups. It seems the older the faculty, the less willing they are to accommodate SWD with necessary adjustments. The difference found between younger and elder faculty members may account for exposure to SWD and their background which seem to be interrelated. The student life of senior faculty passed in Soviet times, when inclusive education was not developed enough to enable SWD to enroll in mainstream institutions. Chances are they did not have classmates with disabilities as they got older. This is where educational and historical background connects to exposure. Coupled with the communism philosophy that tended to equalize society even in terms of accommodations, this may have influenced how these faculty members see inclusive education in today's reality. As a result, two of the eldest participants were least willing to provide academic accommodations for SWD. It is apparent from their responses that changing conditions for a particular group of students would be equal to diminishing their abilities and admitting that they are not capable to perform tasks. They believed everything should be equal: tasks, rooms, and even the conditions. Therefore, they refused to adjust examinations or regular assignments for their students. It should be noted, however, that the responses only apply to students with obvious physical disabilities. One reason for such cut down could be a limited exposure to students with intellectual or mental disabilities. The other lies in the fact that some participants did not believe in the success of students with such disabilities in higher education and therefore did not consider them as their hypothetical students. Existing literature on faculty willingness to provide academic accommodations for SWD explained differences in attitude not in relation to the age of faculty, but to the nature of the very accommodations. To be specific, faculty members were more eager to provide minor accommodations rather than major ones for students

with learning disabilities at American universities (Murray et al., 2008; Vogel, et al., 1999). There was a case when a university even questioned the realness of a diagnosis and refused to acknowledge that a student did have a disability (Jensen, et al., 2004). Obviously, the students did not receive accommodations he or she requested. As can be seen, participants from the present study did not distinguish between the types of accommodations, neither were they skeptical about the verity of reported disabilities. No matter whether it was assignments reduction or task differentiation, senior faculty members were unwilling to provide such accommodation for SWD. While their main argument was that it would only remind students of their disability, their American colleagues refused to make changes in the academic program either because it could jeopardize the quality of education or because they wanted to assert the right of the institution to recognize learning disabilities. Hence, the findings of the present study are partially consistent with the literature in a way that not all the faculty members are supportive of the provision of academic accommodations owing to certain factors. The findings of the present research extend those of the prior literature by identifying the educational background of participants as a determinant factor in their willingness to accommodate SWD academically. They are unique in a way that they look at the influence of the Soviet times. Analyzing the development of inclusive education at that period helped to identify different perspectives of the participants through the lenses of Soviet legacy, which turned out to be influential through decades.

While senior faculty members refused to alter examinations for SWD referring to the issues of equality and attitudes, some of their younger colleagues appealed to unfairness toward other students in the class who may speak out against such “special treatment”. Similar results were found by Sniateki et al. (2015) and Leyser et al. (2011), who investigated faculty attitudes toward college students with disabilities. In their studies,

participants from American and Israeli universities were concerned about the fairness of such adjustments toward students without any disabilities. As in the present study, the faculty felt somewhat uncertain. On one hand, they understood that students with disabilities might face difficulties in completing the tasks. On the other hand, since everyone had equal study opportunities, no one should get easier conditions. The findings of the current study are therefore corroborated by the data from the existing research.

5.3 Faculty Knowledge and Awareness about Disability-Inclusive Education Practices

The vast majority of participants strongly believed that faculty awareness on the issues of disability-inclusive education should be raised ubiquitously. Although they had different perspectives on how to do this, they all agreed to the fact that it is crucially important for a faculty member to be aware of the legislation, teaching and communication strategies, and even characteristic of various disabilities. However, as in the study conducted by Costea-Bărluțiu & Rusu, 2015, fewer expressed a willingness to take part in such courses. The reasons could be a heavy workload and other responsibilities apart from teaching. Faculty may also think that they will not teach SWD and therefore do not need to spend time on getting knowledge they may never use.

Several studies show the practical effectiveness of a faculty training program on inclusive education practices. Of interest is the study conducted by Moriña and Carballo (2017) at one university in Spain, which aimed to design and then evaluate a program for raising faculty awareness on the needs of SWD. The results indicate that not only did faculty raise their awareness on regulations that governed inclusive education at their institution, but they also learned how to modify their curriculum and syllabi to adjust them to the needs of SWD. Moreover, upon completion, the faculty reported having felt more confident, flexible and committed. Participation in such courses made them reevaluate their teaching practices, which in turn led to positive changes that benefitted both SWD

and their non-disabled classmates. Because no participant of the present study reported having special training courses at their home university, they could only predict what they would gain from participation in such sessions. Therefore, my data present no evidence to support the findings of Moriña and Carballo (2017). However, the faculty respondents from my research assumed they would become not only better professionals able to tear down the negative attitudes of people, but also better people by cultivating such traits of character as responsiveness and tolerance. Additionally, the participants believed they would learn how to communicate effectively with SWD, which seems to be one of the areas that needed improvement. Although the present study did not aim to evaluate the outcomes of faculty training programs, the literature suggests they contribute to the improvement of faculty attitudes, communication strategies, and responsiveness to the needs of SWD (Moriña & Carballo, 2017; Davies, Schelly, & Spooner, 2013; Murray, Lombardi, & Wren, 2011) just as envisioned by participants of the present study.

5.4 Limitations

The study has several limitations, which have to be acknowledged. First, the participants were drawn from one university in Kazakhstan. In addition, only eight faculty members were interviewed for this research. Due to a small sample, this study is unable to encompass the situation in the entire country. Further investigation in other institutions is recommended to have more comprehensive data. Another limitation of the current study is that the findings rely solely on the self-report interviews with the faculty. Therefore, the views and practices of the interviewees cannot be verified. It implies that some faculty may have given socially desirable or more politically correct answers.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to explore the attitudes toward disability-inclusive education for faculty at one national university in Kazakhstan. The following questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What are the attitudes of faculty toward disability-inclusive education?
2. What are faculty beliefs with regard to providing accommodations for students with disabilities?
3. What are the factors that influence faculty attitudes toward inclusion of the students with disabilities into Kazakhstani higher education system?

This chapter answers these questions by summarizing the key findings and provides implications for main stakeholders as well as recommendations and directions for future research.

Analysis of the interviews revealed that although all faculty members had a positive attitude toward SWD, they had different opinions about inclusion of students with intellectual and/or mental disabilities into the classroom with female faculty being more supportive than their male colleagues. Most faculty expressed willingness to provide academic accommodations for SWD regardless of their gender. However, two senior faculty members believed it was unfair toward the rest of the group and were therefore against special accommodations. As for the factors, this study has not found any difference across disciplines while type of disability, participants' gender and educational background seem to be most influential in faculty attitudes and willingness.

There was no attempt in this study to identify the challenges encountered by faculty while teaching SWD, which merits more research. Literature review shows that researchers seem to be more concerned about the experiences of SWD, which is why the faculty voices may remain unheard. Conducting surveys or interviews among faculty will

provide input about their needs, interests, and preferences regarding inclusive education. They may also require certain services or additional information to provide accommodations. By addressing the hardships that educators go through on a daily basis, universities may find areas to be improved, enhance teaching, and consequently further develop disability-inclusive higher education.

In addition, exploring faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive education at other higher education institutions would be an interesting avenue for future research. Such investigation would expand the current literature on Kazakhstani higher education system, which is relatively restricted. Moreover, studies in other educational establishments would help to obtain abundant and more comprehensive data that would be of great importance for policymakers and institutions themselves in addressing the issues of inclusivity.

The study informs the policy makers of faculty's of necessity to raise awareness about disabilities, legislation and inclusive education in general. University leadership can benefit from providing training for faculty, which will contribute to promoting inclusive culture at the institution. Faculty may find it beneficial to reflect on their own teaching strategies and appreciate their enormous influence on educational experience of students with disabilities. By understanding this, faculty may want to introduce changes in their practice to better respond to students' needs of which they may have been unaware before. High awareness of disability issues, more positive and tolerant attitude may contribute to the increase in the number of students with disabilities enrolling higher education institutions. The latter will thus have more study opportunities and consequently, more perspectives for the future. Finally, the study will contribute to the expansion of research field on disability-inclusive higher education in Kazakhstan.

As the number of students with disabilities enrolling in higher education is growing and transforming student cohorts, universities can no longer adhere to traditional ways of

teaching and apply the same teaching methods to different students. The changing landscape of higher education thus urges universities to rethink their strategies, regulations, and perhaps policies. They also need more “carers” and fewer “avoiders” among the faculty for disability-inclusive education is not a direction on the agenda for the years to come; it is already happening and calling for actions. It is a university that has the power to change attitudes, raise awareness, create a favorable environment that will embrace diversity and truly promote education for all.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive education at one national university in Kazakhstan

Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Gender:
Rank:
Years of experience:
Position of interviewee:
Academic affiliation:
Duration:
-Description of the research
-Signing the consent form
-Testing a phone recorder

Questions:

1. Could you please briefly tell about yourself?
2. What subject do you teach?
   For how long?
3. Have you ever had an experience of teaching students with disabilities?
   If yes,
   What kinds of disability did the student(s) have?
4. Have you had a previous contact with persons with disabilities outside the university?
   If yes,
   How do you feel when you see/talk to/help the persons with disabilities?
5. What do you think about disability-inclusive education?
6. What is your view regarding the current situation at universities? Is disability-inclusive higher education developed enough to enroll the students with special needs?
7. How do you think universities can promote inclusive education?
8. What do you think of the challenges that the students with physical/mental/intellectual disabilities face?
   Can these disabilities deprive the students from getting higher education?
   In what way?
9. Do you think the students with disabilities can perform well in their studies?
   What about your subject? Is it more or less difficult for the students with disabilities to learn it?
   Why?
10. To what extent do you think the faculty attitude may affect the performance of the students with disabilities?
11. With what accommodations have you provided/would you provide the students with disabilities?
    Do you think it is fair towards the other students in the class?

12. Do you believe that accommodating the students with disabilities will help them better cope with the challenges they face?
    How?
13. Do you feel there is a necessity to raise awareness among the faculty about the disability-inclusive education?
How could this be achieved?
14. Are you personally willing to acquire more knowledge on teaching the students with disabilities?
How do you think it will influence your professional life?
15. If there were professional development sessions on the disability-inclusive education, would you take part in them?
Thank you for participation in the interview.

Appendix B

Протокол Интервью

Отношение преподавателей одного национального университета в Казахстане к включению лиц с ограниченными возможностями в систему высшего образования

Время интервью:
Дата:
Время:
Интервьюер:
Участник:
Пол:
Должность:
Опыт работы:
Степень:
Академическое направление (предмет):
Продолжительность:

Вопросы

1. Расскажите пожалуйста немного о себе

2. Какой предмет вы ведете?
   Как долго?

3. Есть ли у вас опыт преподавания студентам с особыми нуждами?
   Если да,
   Какие расстройства были у студентов?

4. Вступали ли вы когда-либо в контакт с людьми с ограниченными возможностями вне университета?
   Если да,
   Что вы чувствуете, когда видите/говорите/помогаете людям с ограниченными возможностями?

5. Что вы думаете об инклюзивном образовании?

6. Каково ваше мнение касательно текущей ситуации в университетах? Готовы ли вузы принять студентов с особыми нуждами?

7. Как по вашему можно развить инклюзивное образование?

8. С какими трудностями сталкиваются/могут столкнуться студенты с физическими/ментальными/интеллектуальными расстройствами? Могут ли эти расстройства помешать студентам получить высшее образование? Каким образом?

9. Могут ли по вашему студенты с ограниченными возможностями преуспевать в учебе? А по вашему предмету? Он дается легче или сложнее таким студентам? Почему?

10. Как вы думаете, влияет ли отношение преподавателей к студентам с ограниченными возможностями на успехи последних?

11. Какие условия вы бы создали/создавали для обучения студентов с ограниченными возможностями? (выделять дополнительное время, класс, записывать аудио для незрячих студентов, использовать визуальные материалы для глухонемых и т.д.

12. Поможет ли это студентам справиться с трудностями? Каким образом?

13. Считаете ли вы, что есть необходимость повышать осведомленность/информированность среди преподавателей об инклюзивном образовании? (включая законы, вузовские нормативно-правовые документы, внутренние правила, медицинские показания и т.д.) Как этого можно достичь?

14. Хотели бы вы обогатить свои знания в сфере обучения студентов с ограниченными возможностями? Как по вашему это повлияет на вашу профессиональную жизнь?

15. Если бы проводились специальные курсы по инклюзивному образованию для преподавателей, приняли бы вы участие?

Спасибо за участие в интервью!

Appendix C

Coding Sample

Time stamp	Person speaking	Transcript	Axial coding	Thematic coding
22:33	И:	Если бы у вас были такие студенты, и опять же если они будут у вас, какие вы готовы создать для них условия? Можете даже по категориям разбить		
22:43	У:	Допустим, если бы был бы слепой студент, я бы ему записывал бы аудиолекции сам, то есть я бы организовал сайт, да какой-нибудь, допустим если бы мой университет не имел… ну не может такое делать, я бы… я бы записывал бы аудиолекции, чтобы он бы как бы… слушал, потому что у них очень развит слух хорошо и как бы он бы получал бы информацию от моих уст, я бы ему объяснял, то есть я бы с ним проводил бы какие-то факультативные занятия если бы он не понимал бы, да, то есть, но это было бы office hours у меня, то есть у меня сейчас тоже есть office hours. Люди приходят получается, но я бы с ним бы индивидуально сделал бы, то есть сказал бы для него день бы выделил, что именно он мог приходить в этот день как бы и спрашивал какие-то вопросы, потому что ну в тишине ему было бы легче понять больше вопросов, да? больше тем можно было б понять. Для тех, кто не ходит получается, ну я бы, во-первых бы ставил бы свои пары в таких лекциях, где есть оборудование получается для таких студентов, вот я бы допустим больше задавал бы заданий онлайн, чтобы они сдавали онлайн, а не распечатывали, не приносили мне там на этот как его… на hard copy получается, потому что щас у нас все там на hard copy приносят, и это неправильно, я считаю. Я бы создал бы такую систему, чтобы они сидя у себя в общежитии либо дома они могли бы получается отправить онлайн эти вещи. Вот для тех же глухонемых, я бы создавал бы допустим лекции с субтитрами получается, то есть они читали бы и получали бы возможность, то есть если бы нужна была… если бы нужен был сопровождающий, сопровождающий мог бы без	Special accommodations Additional classes Individual classes Physical facilitates Task differentiation Different format for lectures	ACCOMODATIONS ACCOMODATIONS ACCOMODATIONS ACCOMODATIONS ACCOMODATIONS ACCOMODATIONS

		проблем находится на моих лекциях и также тоже получать образование, ну как бы бесплатно. И я в принципе, я бы как бы только был бы за. И если б такие люди появились у меня в лекционке, они бы получили бы все стопроцентные знания, то есть я бы сделал все возможное, чтобы их обучение сделать легче у нас, и я бы помогал в дальнейшем с нахождением работы, вот если бы он реально был как бы очень был хороший студент, старался бы, я бы как бы помогал бы ему найти потом свою работу. Им потому что очень сложно найти работу после окончания университета. Нам… нам сложно найти получается здоровым людям, да, но таким еще сложнее, вот.	Access Help with further employment	ACCOMODATIONS ATTITUDES

Appendix D

Coding and themes

ATTITUDES	ACCOMODATIONS	INCLUSION
Mentality	Entrance exams	Benefits of inclusive education
Psychological help from faculty	Infrastructure	Changes in teaching strategies
Assessment	Classroom facilities	Problem with educational standards
Feeling pity	Inconvenient location of classrooms	Issues of further employment
Feeling discomfort around SWD	Lack of library resources for SWD	Need in special training
Special treatment	Inconvenient timetable	Distant education opportunities
Peer attitudes	Homework adaptation	Introducing ‘Special education’ discipline
Bullying	Breaks during classes	Need to involve mass media to raise awareness
Communication problems	Deadline extension for SWD	Lack of specialists
Soviet mentality	Old buildings	VET for SWD
Psychological help	Poor transport system	Incentives for faculty
Unwillingness to teach SWD		Government subsidies
Exclusion from society		Need to raise awareness in legislation
Discrimination		Unreadiness of KZ
Language influence		Disabilities and HE

Appendix E

Informed consent form

Faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive education at one national university in Kazakhstan

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a research study on faculty attitudes toward disability-inclusive education in Kazakhstan. The purpose of this study is to investigate how faculty perceive students with various disabilities and their inclusion into the system of Kazakhstani higher education. If you decide to join the study, you will be asked to take part in a face-to-face interview lasting from 30 to 60 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded with your permission. Your name and any other details that can identify your personality will not be revealed. The name of the institution will also be coded and used for research purposes only. The audio recording will be destroyed upon the completion of the research. If you do not give your consent to be recorded, the researcher will only take notes, which will be kept in a secure locked drawer along with the other hard-copy documents related to the research. Only the researcher and the research supervisor will have an access to the data. All the obtained and produced research documents will be destroyed within two years after the completion of NUGSE Masters Program.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your overall participation will take no more than 60 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: This research does not entail any physical, economic, or social harm. The data will not be revealed to your employer or colleagues. In order to eliminate the possible pressure, the interviews will be held at a place convenient for you. When responding to the questions, you may have to recall your experiences teaching students with disabilities. This may evoke painful memories and cause certain discomfort. You are at liberty not to answer particular questions. Note also that your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your reputation or employment status.

It is reasonable to expect that this study will be beneficial for the stakeholders. You may reflect on your own teaching methods and strategies along with the experiences in teaching students with disabilities. The university administrators can potentially benefit from enhancing professional development among educators to better respond to the needs of the students with disabilities. The study will shed a light on the issue of disability-inclusive higher education and enrich the literature on the topic, which will facilitate further research.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is solely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work, Dilrabo Jonbekova, dilrabo.jonbekova@nu.edu.kz, or the principal investigator, Aigerim Shaikheslyamova aigerim.shaikheslyamova@nu.edu.kz, +77470311312.

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Please sign this consent from if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep

According to the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan an individual under the age of 18 is considered a child. Any participant falling into that category should be given the Parental Consent Form and have it signed by at least one of his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).

Appendix F

ФОРМА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

Отношение преподавателей одного национального университета в Казахстане к включению лиц с ограниченными возможностями в систему высшего образования

ОПИСАНИЕ: Вы приглашены принять участие в исследовательской работе на тему отношения преподавателей к инклюзивному высшему образованию в Казахстане. Цель этой работы выяснить, как преподаватели воспринимают студентов с различными ограниченными возможностями и включение их в систему высшего образования Казахстана. Если вы согласитесь присоединиться к исследованию, мы попросим вас принять участие в интервью продолжительностью от 30 до 60 минут. Интервью будет записано на диктофон с вашего позволения. Ваше имя и любые другие данные, которые могут идентифицировать вашу личность, не будут раскрыты. Название учреждения также будет кодироваться, и использоваться только в исследовательских целях. Запись звука будет уничтожена по завершении исследования. Если вы не даете свое согласие на запись, исследователь будет делать только заметки, которые будут храниться в защищенном закрытом ящике вместе с другими бумажными документами, связанными с исследованием. Только исследователь и научный руководитель будут иметь доступ к данным. Все полученные и подготовленные исследовательские документы будут уничтожены в течение двух лет после завершения магистерской программы NUGSE (Высшая Школа Образования Назарбаев Университета).

ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ: Ваше участие потребует не более 60 минут.

РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА: Это исследование не влечет за собой никакого физического, экономического или социального вреда. Данные не будут раскрыты вашему работодателю или коллегам. Чтобы устранить возможное давление, интервью будут проводиться в удобном для вас месте. Отвечая на вопросы, возможно, вам придется вспомнить свой опыт обучения студентов с ограниченными возможностями. Это может вызвать болезненные воспоминания и вызвать определенный дискомфорт. Вы вправе не отвечать на определенные вопросы. Также обратите внимание, что ваше решение об участии или отказе от участия в этом исследовании, не повлияет на вашу репутацию или статус занятости.

Разумно ожидать, что это исследование будет полезным для лиц, вовлеченных в образовательный процесс. Так, вы сможете поразмышлять о своих собственных методах обучения и стратегиях, а также об опыте обучения студентов с ограниченными возможностями. Администраторы университета могут извлечь выгоду из повышения профессионального развития среди преподавателей, чтобы лучше реагировать на потребности учащихся с ограниченными возможностями. В исследовании будет освещен вопрос о включении студентов с ограниченными возможностями в высшее образование, и обогатит литературу по этой теме, что будет способствовать дальнейшим исследованиям.

ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКОВ: Если Вы прочитали данную форму и решили принять участие в данном исследовании, Вы должны понимать, что Ваше участие является добровольным и что у Вас есть право **отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время без штрафных санкций и без потери социального пакета, который Вам предоставляли**. В качестве альтернативы можно не участвовать в исследовании. Также Вы имеете право не отвечать на какие-либо вопросы. Результаты данного исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в научных или профессиональных целях.

КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

Вопросы: Если у Вас есть вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, процедуры его проведения, рисков и преимуществ, Вы можете связаться с научным руководителем исследователя, Дильрабо Джонбековой, dilrabo.jonbekova@nu.edu.kz

или с исследователем, Айгерим Шайхеслямовой, используя следующие данные: aigerim.shaikheslyamova@nu.edu.kz, +77470311312.

Независимые контакты: Если Вы не удовлетворены проведением данного исследования, если у Вас возникли какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или вопросы, Вы можете связаться с Комитетом Исследований Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета по телефону +7 7172 70 93 59 или отправить письмо на электронный адрес gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если Вы согласны участвовать в исследовании.

- Я внимательно изучил представленную информацию;
- Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будут иметь только исследователи;
- Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин;
- С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен принять участие в исследовании по собственной воле.

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Дополнительная копия этой подписанной и датированной формы согласия предназначена для вас

Согласно Закону Республики Казахстан, лицо в возрасте до 18 лет считается ребенком. Каждому участнику, попадающему в эту категорию, должна быть предоставлена Форма согласия родителей, и она будет подписана, по крайней мере, одним из его родителей (родителей) или опекуна (ов).